Foreign and Domestic Consequences of the KMT Intervention in Burma

by Robert H. Taylor

DATA PAPER: NUMBER 93
SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ASIAN STUDIES
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NEW YORK
JULY, 1973

PRICE: $3.50

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE KMT INTERVENTION IN BURMA

THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

The Southeast Asia Program was organized at Cornell University in the Department of Far Eastern Studies in 1950. It is a teaching and research program of interdisciplinary studies in the humanities, social sciences, and some natural sciences. It deals with Southeast Asia as a region, and with the individual countries of the area: Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The activities of the Program are carried on both at Cornell and in Southeast Asia. They include an undergraduate and graduate curriculum at Cornell which provides instruction by specialists in Southeast Asian cultural history and present-day affairs and offers intensive training in each of the major languages of the area. The Program sponsors group research projects on Thailand, on Indonesia, on the Philippines, and on the area's Chinese minorities. At the same time, individual staff and students of the Program have done field research in every Southeast Asian country.

A list of publications relating to Southeast Asia which may be obtained on prepaid order directly from the Program is given at the end of this volume. Information on Program staff, fellowships, requirements for degrees, and current course offerings will be found in an *Announcement of the Department of Asian Studies*, obtainable from the Director, Southeast Asia Program, 120 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850.

FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE KMT INTERVENTION IN BURMA

by

Robert H. Taylor

Data Paper: Number 93
Southeast Asia Program
Department of Asian Studies
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Price: $3.50

© CORNELL UNIVERSITY SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM 1973

International Standard Book
Number 0-87727-093-7

PREFACE

One of the most neglected episodes in the history of post-war Asian international relations has been the invasion of Burma by the Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang) troops of Chiang Kai-shek and the enduring consequences of this action. Beginning in 1950 and continuing for more than a decade, Kuomintang military operations had a major impact on Burma's internal political life and foreign policy, with consequences which are still operative. Indeed, the pattern and dynamics of power in present-day Burma cannot be adequately appreciated without an understanding of this phenomenon.

Conceived in Washington as part of a grand strategy to contain the People's Republic of China, the plan to utilize remnants of Chiang's forces for the purpose of harassing and weakening the Peking government from bases wrested from the Burmese was an ignominious failure. These Kuomintang troops had little stomach for the risks involved in military probes back into China and instead moved deeper into Burma, occupying and pillaging extensive areas. Modern U.S. military equipment was airdropped to them in such quantity that they were able to provide many of these arms to Shan and Karen insurgents with whom they made tactical military alliances against the government of Burma. As a consequence, centrifugal ethnic political forces in the country were significantly strengthened.

Although the CIA played a major role in this affair during both the Truman and the Eisenhower administrations, no substantial treatment of it appeared in the American press until April 1966 when *The New York Times* included it in a general over-view of CIA activities. Moreover, Western studies of Asian international relations, even those confined to Southeast Asia, have nearly all eschewed all but the most limited reference to this matter and have usually avoided any reference to the CIA's pivotal role. The only exceptions known to me are Oliver Clubb Jr.'s brief (four pages), but forthright, treatment in his *United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia*, published in 1962, and his earlier Rand Corporation study dealing with the 1950-1954 period, "The Effect of Chinese Nationalist Military Activity in Burma on Burmese Foreign Policy." But his accounts and that of *The New York Times* cover only a small part of the

story, with even Clubb's longer Rand Corporation study dealing with just the beginning years.

Continuing U.S. government secrecy has made it difficult to marshall the data necessary for providing anything approaching a full account. Only investigation of a wide range of sources, research informed by an extensive knowledge of both modern Burma and Asian international relations, could make possible fitting the many scattered pieces of pertinent data into a coherent and meaningful picture. This has been Robert Taylor's achievement in preparing this first comprehensive study of the nature and consequences of what the Burmese refer to as "The Kuomintang Aggression."

Those who wish to understand the problems of contemporary Burma as well as those interested in the facts of postwar Asian international relations and American Far Eastern policy should be grateful to Mr. Taylor for his scholarly account of a development of major importance whose character and dimensions have until now been so obscured.

George McT. Kahin
Ithaca, July 15, 1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The intrusion of Chinese Nationalist troops into the Union of Burma, soon after Burma regained independence, posed serious problems of internal and external security for the new government. These troops, normally referred to as the KMT,[1] entered northern Burma from Yunnan Province following their defeat by the army of the People's Republic of China.

Internally, the primary problem faced by independent Burma was the need to integrate into one state the five major ethnic groups that composed the Union. These groups historically had had only tenuous ties with each other, and the four minorities distrusted the Burman majority. The intervention of the KMT into the minority areas greatly increased the magnitude of the problem of national unity and allowed the minority regions to become more powerful vis-à-vis the central government while increasing the minorities' distrust of it.

Both internal and external factors motivated the government of Burma to pursue a neutralist foreign policy. Since different groups within Burma desired to support one or the other bloc in the Cold War, the government felt it necessary to follow a neutralist policy in order to avoid antagonizing either the pro-Western minorities or the pro-Soviet or pro-Chinese communist groups. Burma is located between neutralist India to the west, the People's Republic of China to the north, and war-torn Laos and pro-United States Thailand to the east. Situated in the middle of these states with differing ideologies and deep antagonisms, Burma has tried to remain on friendly terms with all of them. The existence of an anti-communist Chinese army on the borders with China, Laos and Thailand has made the maintenance of an independent foreign policy increasingly necessary but increasingly difficult.

The nations neighboring Burma and the United States have all displayed an interest in the KMT in Burma. The People's

---

1. KMT are the initials of the Kuomintang or Chinese Nationalist Party. The Burmese and most other sources cited in this paper refer to these Chinese Nationalist troops as the "KMT." This usage will be followed in this paper.

Republic of China obviously would not look favorably on an anti-communist army on its southern border. Thailand's anti-communist foreign policy and historical distrust of Burma explains part of that government's interest in the KMT. The United States was actively involved in supporting the KMT in Burma. The actions of all of these governments have deeply affected Burma's foreign and domestic policies.

This paper is an attempt to describe the history of the KMT intrusion into Burma and to analyze the consequences of that intrusion on the domestic and foreign politics of Burma. An analysis of the effects of the KMT intervention must be rather speculative because of the nature of the available information and the difficulty of making causal links between activities and events. It is possible, however, to draw a general pattern of what the KMT and their supporters have done in Burma and what the response of the government of Burma has been.

The sources used in this paper are those which are readily available in English. They are normally government statements, documents and newspaper accounts or research based on these sources. The government sources, whether from Burma, the United States, Thailand or other countries, must be suspect as they have been made available by these governments normally for their own purposes. Newspaper accounts are either themselves based on government supplied information or on second-hand reports from usually unspecified informants. When different sources substantiate each other it is more likely that the information can be considered reliable.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

The Union of Burma is a multi-ethnic state composed of five major ethnic groups. These are the Burmans, the Karens, the Shans, the Kachins and the Chins. Other smaller groups include the Mons, the Arakanese and the Karenni, and recently immigrated Chinese and Indians. The Burmans, who compose more than 70 per cent of the total population, occupy the central interior of the country and the delta of the Irrawaddy River. The other major groups live in the mountainous arch that encircles the Burman areas. Historically, the kings of Burma had governed these other peoples through their hereditary rulers who had been the king's vassals. It was only after the end of British rule that an attempt was made to include the non-Burman peoples within the framework of the central government.[1]

The integration of the minorities into a national union has been difficult for several reasons. Among these are traditional antagonisms characterized by ethnic chauvinism or racism. British administration did nothing to lessen these animosities and halted any indigenous efforts to overcome them. The British allowed the Frontier or Excluded Areas, as the minority areas were called, to remain essentially untouched in their political system and to be administered separately from the Burman areas.[2]

---

1. John F. Cady, *A History of Modern Burma* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 39-44; Josef Silverstein, "Burma," in *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, ed. by George McT. Kahin (2nd ed., Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964), pp. 96-98.

2. After Burma had been separated from India in 1937 and given a parliamentary form of government within the Burman areas of the country, the Governor, who administered these areas without the advice of the Burman ministers, adopted a program intended "to raise them both in education and in material prosperity to a standard at least comparable with that of their brethren in the plains and to enable them at some future time an equal place with the Burmans in the development of British Burma."

The Governor felt the division of the hill peoples from the Burmans was justified because (1) the hill peoples lived primitive,

The first constitution of Burma attempted to solve the problems of ethnic conflict by establishing subordinate state governments for the four largest minorities and the Karenni. The minorities were thus to obtain a degree of autonomy from the ethnic Burmans. As Tinker notes, this unique form of federalism was "a form of atonement for the age-old suspicion of the Burmese which the hill peoples could not at once discard."[3] Four states were established plus a Special Division of the Chins.[4] The Constitution and related legislation listed in detail the powers and rights of the states, including the right of secession by the Shan State and the Kayah or Karenni State after 1958. In fact, however, the "federal structure was more nominal than real. . . ."[5] For only a

---

isolated lives and, excepting those who had served in the army, all were illiterate, (2) since they spoke no language but their own which were spoken only by small numbers of people in isolated valleys it was difficult to communicate with them, (3) there was "an inherited hostility between the men of the hills and the men of the plains. . . . The hillmen look down on the Burman as the descendant of a race whom his ancestors could raid and rob with impunity, while the Burman despises the hillmen and looks upon him as a wild and uncivilized savage." Letter, Governor A. D. Cochrane to the Secretary of State for Burma, the Marquess of Zetland, 15 March 1940, Burma Office File 1600/40 in the India Office Library and Archives. The group which most objected to Burmans being given a role in the governing of the hill areas was the Shan *sawbwas* who as the hereditary rulers of the Shan States had the most to lose by the introduction of central government rule in their areas.

For a further discussion of some of the questions raised here, see Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, pp. 544-545; Kyaw Thet, "Burma: The Political Integration of Linguistic and Religious Minority Groups," in *Nationalism and Progress in Free Asia*, ed. by Phillip W. Thayer (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1956), pp. 156-168; Peter Kunstadter, "Introduction: Burma," in *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations*, ed. by Peter Kunstadter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), Volume I, p. 77.

3. Hugh Tinker, *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence* (4th ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 30. British usage normally refers to the majority ethnic group as the Burmese as Tinker does in the above quotation. Following Silverstein, Burman is used in this paper in the ethnic sense and Burmese in the political sense, meaning all the citizens of Burma. Silverstein, "Burma," p. 76, n. 1.

4. The Karen State was formed by Constitutional Amendment in 1951.

5. Silverstein, "Burma," p. 119.

brief period were the minorities' suspicions of the Burmans lessened by the constitutional provisions.[6]

The neutralist foreign policy which Burma has pursued has sometimes leaned toward the West and at other times toward the socialist states. In the initial three years after independence Burma was linked rather closely to the West and especially with Great Britain. The Nu-Attlee Agreements, signed in October, 1947, provided for British advisors and material assistance to the new Burma army. Burma supported the United Nations' actions in Korea and voted with the United States and other Western nations on seven of the first nine UN resolutions dealing with the Korean War. Burma abstained on two resolutions. It was not until the United Nations passed a resolution branding the People's Republic of China an aggressor on January 30, 1951, that Burma clearly rejected a pro-Western position.[7]

Post-independence relations with Thailand and Nationalist China were slow in developing. Diplomatic relations were not established with Thailand until approximately eight months after independence.[8] Despite the fact that in their earlier wars Burma had always been the aggressor, many Burmese were wary of Thailand because of the two countries' earlier rivalries, because of Thailand's alignment with the United States after World War II and because of beliefs that Thailand might have designs of Burmese territory.[9]

Burma recognized the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek in 1948 but contacts between the two govern-

---

6. The relations of the Karens and the Shans to the central government are especially important for understanding the KMT intervention as the KMT occupied areas primarily of Shan and Karen populations. For the Karens see Saw Hanson Tadaw, "The Karens of Burma," *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 42 (1959), pp. 31-40; for the Shans see Josef Silverstein, "Politics in the Shan States: The Question of Secession from the Union of Burma," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18 (November, 1958), pp. 43-57.

7. Isabelle Crocker, *Burma's Foreign Policy and the Korean War: A Case Study* (Santa Monica, California: The RAND Corporation, 1958), p. 55.

8. August 24, 1948. William C. Johnstone and the Staff of the Rangoon-Hopkins Center, *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations* (Rangoon: Rangoon University, 1959), p. 12.

9. In a survey, Burmese newspaper editors saw border problems with Thailand a grave threat to Burma's security. *New York Times*, April 28, 1949.

ments were few. A local agreement was made between the Chinese Nationalist commander in Yunnan, and Kachin and Shan chiefs in Burma, "for cooperation in suppressing banditry and for mutual respect of the frontier."[10] Although Burma demonstrated an initial apprehension of the Chinese communist government when it came to power in October, 1949, it was the first non-communist state to recognize the new government. Nationalist China broke diplomatic relations with Burma the day after the People's Republic was recognized.[11] Diplomatic relations were not established with the Chinese People's Republic (CPR) until June 8, 1950.[12]

Although Burma initially voted with the West in the United Nations on the Korean War, the government made it clear that this did not mean that friendly relations were not to be maintained with all countries, including the CPR. In December, 1950, Burma joined with other African and Asian governments in the UN in an effort to resolve the Korean War through a proposal for a ceasefire and a conference on Asian problems.[13]

Burma did not show much interest in close ties with the United States, and presumably U.S. policy makers felt that Burma was primarily in the British sphere of interests. Although Burmese officials met with United States Secretaries of State in 1948 and 1949, little appears to have resulted from these meetings.[14] The United States may have offered in these meetings to assist the government of Burma in putting down the insurgents then rampant in the country, but the government of Burma refused such offers of assistance.[15] In September, 1950, the United States agreed to grant eight to ten million dollars under the Economic Cooperation Admin-

---

10. Russell H. Fifield, *The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 1945-1958* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 197.

11. December 17 and 18, 1949. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 17.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 15.

15. In 1967 U Thant told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S. would have given Burma assistance "in 24 hours" to put down the communist insurgencies. *A Conversation with U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations by Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, March 22, 1967* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972), p. 1.

istration to Burma for a ten-month period ending June 30, 1951. At the same time, however, a U.S. arms aid mission left Burma off its itinerary because of signs it would not be welcome there.[16] The U.S. did send Burma ten river patrol boats in November, 1950.[17]

Of primary concern to the government of Burma during the years 1948-1951 was the civil war in Burma. The civil war itself was an important factor in shaping the neutralist foreign policy of Burma. The government was essentially faced with two insurgencies. One insurgent group favored alliance with the Soviet Union while the other supported closer ties with the West, including the United States. The government, caught between these two irreconcilable positions, attempted to compromise by not aligning with either major power.

The civil war began in March, 1948, when the Communists resorted to arms against the government. Their motives were as diverse as their leadership but they posed a substantial threat to the new government. The Communists were soon followed by the People's Volunteer Organization (PVO) which was the para-military arm of the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. Most of the PVO's joined with the Communists. Dissident Karens, seeing the government's weakness in the face of the Communist-PVO revolts, also rebelled. Organized as the Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO), they sought greater autonomy within Burma if not existence as an independent state. The KNDO had contacts with British citizens and wanted the Burmese government to adopt a pro-Western foreign policy. A small group of Moslems known as Mujahids and some Mons also revolted.[18]

Estimates vary as to the number of rebels during the civil war. Prime Minister Nu estimated in 1949 that there were 10,000 KNDO's and 10,000 Communist-PVO insurgents.[19] The map of p. 8 suggests the extent of rebel control in the first half of 1949. Gradually the Burma army was strengthened and the rebels were forced to retreat. Many surrendered to the government during periods of amnesty, and by 1950 it

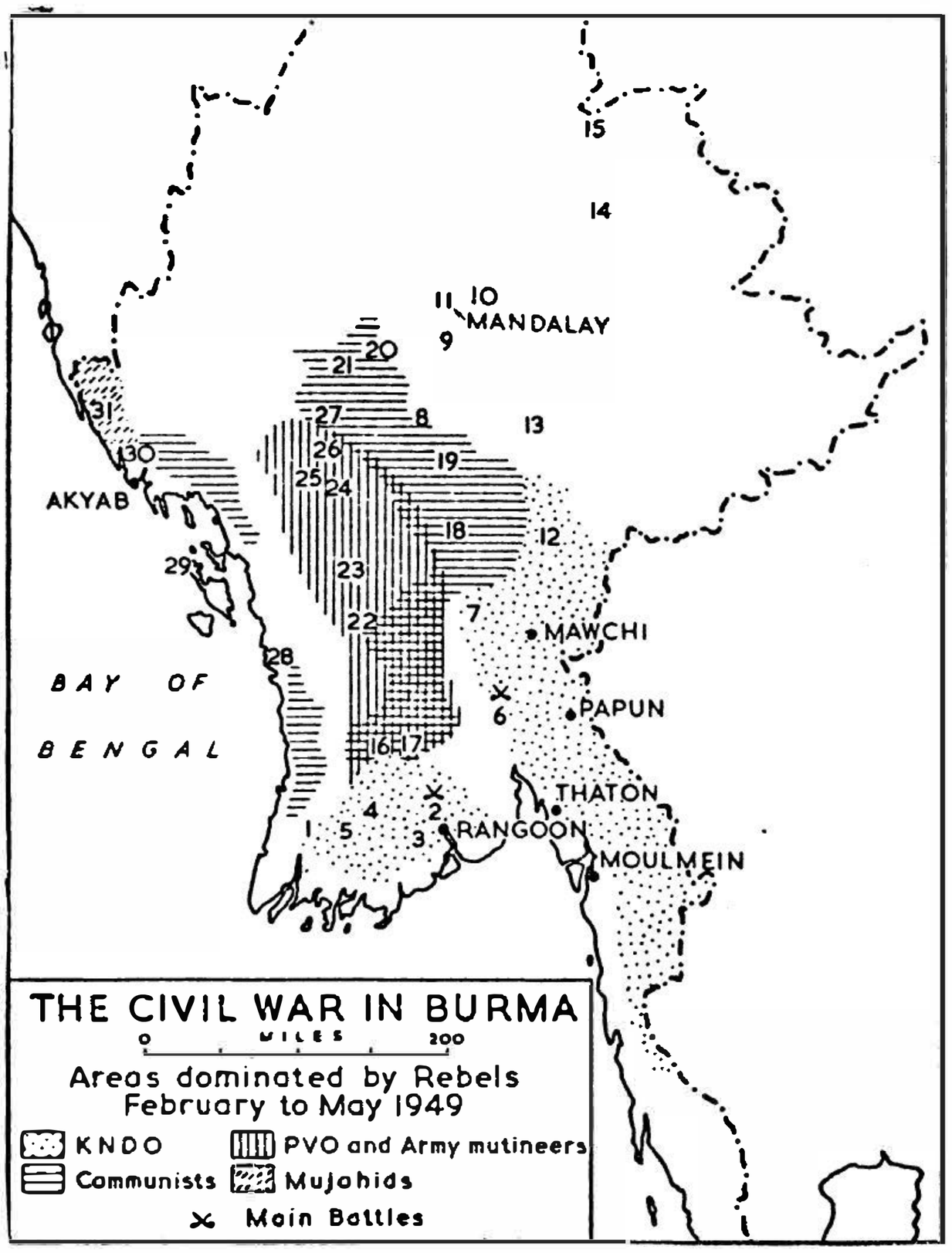
---

16. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 16.

17. "Military Assistance to Burma," *The Department of State Bulletin*, 23, No. 595 (November 27, 1950), p. 856.

18. Tinker, *Union*, Chapter 2: "The Background of the Civil War, 1948-1960," pp. 34-61; Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, pp. 578-605.

19. Tinker, *Union*, p. 47.



From Hugh Tinker from *The Union of Burma*
Published by Oxford University Press
under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

appeared that the government would soon eliminate almost all pockets of resistance. The success of the army in great measure was due to its advantage over the rebels in arms and discipline. While the rebels had superiority in numbers, they never were able to coordinate their activities because of their differing goals and ideologies.[20]

Just as the government felt it could turn its attention from the problems of civil war to the tasks of national integration and economic construction, a new threat arose. The new threat was a remnant Nationalist Chinese Army fleeingt from the victorious People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Yunnan Province into northern Burma. The new force possessed the two military assets the Burmese insurgents had lacked, a good supply of arms and discipline.

---

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

CHAPTER III

THE KMT EMERGENCY, 1949-1954

When the Communists achieved power in China in October, 1949, they did not effectively control the area along the Burmese border. Largely mountains and jungles, this area is sparsely populated by various tribal groups who often straddle the international border. These conditions provided the defeated KMT armies in Yunnan Province an excellent place to which to retreat. The Burma-China border was not clearly defined or marked in many areas and the government of Burma, like the new government of China, had little control on its side of the boundary. Many of the KMT troops were reported to be natives of Yunnan and presumably some of them knew the border region well.

According to Chinese sources, the People's Liberation Army did not enter Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, until February, 1950.[1] It can be assumed that it was several months after that before the PLA was able to penetrate the mountains of southern Yunnan. The KMT troops remaining in southern Yunnan resisted the PLA advance by conducting guerrilla harassment operations. The Chinese press later reported that

> Following the peaceful liberation of Yunnan, remnant forces of the running dog of American imperialism, Bandit Chiang, instigated landlords and armed secret service agents to organize riots, murder cadres and seize grains and funds, availing themselves of the political vacuum existing at the time and the complicated national frontiers and mountain terrain. They even formed bands of several thousand men and attacked and occupied our *chu* and *hsiang* governments.[2]

---

1. Chen Tien, "Yunnan--China's Gorgeous Frontier," *Wen Hui Pao* (Hong Kong), June 13 and 14, 1955, translated in United States Consulate-General, Hong Kong, *Survey of the Current Mainland Press* (SCMP), 1092, p. 39.

2. Kunming *Yunnan Jih Pao*, March 4, 1954, in *ibid.*, 783, supplement, p. xix.

This indicates that the CPR was not able to control effectively the border region for some time and the KMT was able to organize resistance to the government. Land reform and other campaigns in the border areas were usually two or more years behind the rest of China because of the lack of government control and the desire not to alienate the minority peoples from the new government. As late as July, 1950, reports from Saigon indicated that 4,000 KMT troops already in Burma were returning to Yunnan to carry on guerrilla warfare. They had been dissuaded by French officials from enteringt Indo-China.[3] As the PLA advanced further into southern Yunnan, more KMT's entered northern Burma.t

During most of 1948 the government of Burma showed little concern over the activities of the Chinese on the northern border. There was one report of clashes between government of Burma troops and Chinese guerrillas.[4] Late in the year Prime Minister Nu, in a broadcast speech, noted that Chinese refugees were "pouring over the border" from Yunnan. He suggested that this posed a threat to the peace of Burma and apparently felt that among the refugees might be Communists sent to infiltrate the country.[5]

The government of Burma reported that in April, 1949, a force of 2,000 Chinese "army deserters" apparently from Yunnan entered the Kengtung area of the Shan State and burned Shan villages.[6] A survey published by Burmese newspaper editors stated that "armed Chinese bands" were "roaming at will over three-fifths of Kengtung.[7] Organized KMT units, according to the *Sawbwa* of Kengtung, passed through his state in early 1949 on their way to join the Free Laos Movement in neighboring Indo-China, but they were defeated by the French and returned to Yunnan.[8]

An organized unit of approximately 200 KMT's entered Kengtung State in January, 1950. They were joined in March by 1,500 troops who brought with them 500 dependents.[9] The

---

3. *New York Times*, July 13, 1950.

4. *Ibid.*, April 9, 1948.

5. *Ibid.*, December 6, 1948.

6. *Ibid.*, April 11, 1949.

7. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1949.

8. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1950.

9. Union of Burma, Ministry of Information, *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma* (Rangoon, 1953), p. 9.

KMT's who entered Burma were members of the Eighth Army commanded by General Li Mi, the 26th Army under General Liu Kuo Chwan and the 93rd Division under Major-General Mah Chaw Yu.[10] The 93rd had been forced from Burma by the Japanese during World War II.[11] None of these units had made great records of military accomplishment either in World War II or during the Chinese civil war.[12]

The Burma army had interned some of the first KMT troops who had entered Burma but later arrivals refused to submit to the Burmese. The KMT commander in Kengtung, in June, 1950, demanded that the Burma army release the interned KMT's, and he announced he would attack if the Burma army attempted to capture his men.[13] The KMT had established a headquarters at Tachilek and were attacked there by the Burma army in July, 1950. By then their total strength had increased to 2,500 men.[14] General Li Mi established a new headquarters at Monghsat in late 1950 and recruited more troops from Chinese and Shans on the border. Most of the Shans had to be bribed or threatened into joining. By April, 1951, the KMT had increased to 4,000.[15] The government of Burma reported that 100 Nationalist Chinese troops arrived in Kengtung in late 1950 to organize three training camps.[16] Diplomatic sources in Rangoon reported that Chinese volunteers from Malaya, Thailand and Burma were joining the KMT and that they were being supplied daily by air from Thailand.[17] By mid-1951, the problem was becoming more serious for the Burma government. The KMT had spread further west and crossed the Salween River to prey on villages there.[18]

---

10. Tinker, *Union*, p. 50.

11. *New York Times*, March 13, 1950.

12. Maung Maung, *Grim War Against the KMT* (Rangoon: Private Printing, 1953).

13. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 9, Exhibit document 1, pp. 139-141.

14. Tinker, *Union*, p. 52.

15. *Ibid.*; Tibor Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds* (London: Turnstile Press, 1955), p. 148.

16. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 9.

17. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 23.

18. Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, p. 621.

In January, 1952, reports indicated that well-armed KMT troops "were moving daily from Formosa, through Thailand to join General Li's army. . o ."[19] Their strength had increased to at least 8,000 men in Burma[20] and many of the troops were armed with United States-made weapons.[21] The Thai policeo arrested a Chinese newspaper editor in Bangkok for recruiting Chinese Thais to join the KMT.[22]

Estimates of the total number of KMT's vary but the *New York Times* reported that there were 12,000 KMT's in Burma by February, 1952.[23] Nine hundred more arrived from Formosa in late February.[24] By March, 1953, it was reported that 30,000 KMT's were on the border.[25] General Li Mi claimed to command 30,000 troops.[26]

As noted above, the KMT were being supplied by air drops in 1951. C-46 and C-47 transports flew supplies in at least twice a week.[27] By March, 1952, planes were landing supplies at a KMT airfield at Monghsat.[28]

The KMT were also supported by banditry and opium smuggling. They monopolized the Shan opium trade and used the revenue to buy guns in Thailand. A Chinese, posing as a merchant, but probably a KMT officer, conducted an opium for guns business in Chiengmai.[29]

---

19. *New York Times*, January 29, 1952.

20. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 26.

21. *New York Times*, January 29, 1952.

22. *Ibid.*, February 2, 1952.

23. *Ibid.*, February 11, 1952.

24. *Ibid.*, February 22, 1952.

25. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1953.

26. *Time*, 61, No. 20 (May 18, 1953), pp. 30-31.

27. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, pp. 10-11, 15.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

29. *New York Times*, March 9, 1952; Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Chronology of International Events and Documents* (London), No. 9, p. 216; "The Atlantic Report on the World Today: Burma," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May 19, 1954, p. 6.

In their first few years in Burma, the KMT launched several attacks and border raids on the Chinese Communists in Yunnan. They were never successful and were always driven back by the PLA. Once in early May and again in July, 1951, major offensives were attempted.[30] Assaults were also attempted in August, 1952,[31] and again in January, 1953.[32] In the last effort the KMT were badly routed. Reports indicated that only 20 per cent of the 30,000 troops involved in various operations returned from Yunnan.[33] Following this effort, the KMT apparently concentrated their efforts on controlling the border with China and took the border post of Kyotkok, opposite Wan-t'ing in Yunnan, from the Burma army.[34] The Burma army was soon able to retake the post, however.[35]

According to the government of Burma, the KMT also attempted to create border incidents which would have caused Burmese and PLA troops to fight each other. The KMT would post as either Burma Army or PLA soldiers and attempt to draw fire from one side onto the other. Incidents of this nature were reported to have occurred on August 26, September 14, December 23, 1951, and January 23, 1952.[36] The Burma army and PLA commanders apparently did not fall for these ploys. KMT units also fought each other.[37] Some had reportedly been infiltrated by Communists but hostility may have developed over opium collection and other activities.

By 1953 the KMT virtually occupied Kengtung, Manglun and Kokang States in the Shan State. The map on page 15 illustrates the extent of KMT domination. They had forced the administration of the government of Burma to flee the area and had themselves assumed the functions of de facto government, including tax collection. They built over one hundred miles of road, seventy in Burma and thirty in Thai-

---

30. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, pp. 13-14.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

32. *Nation*, February 15, 1953.

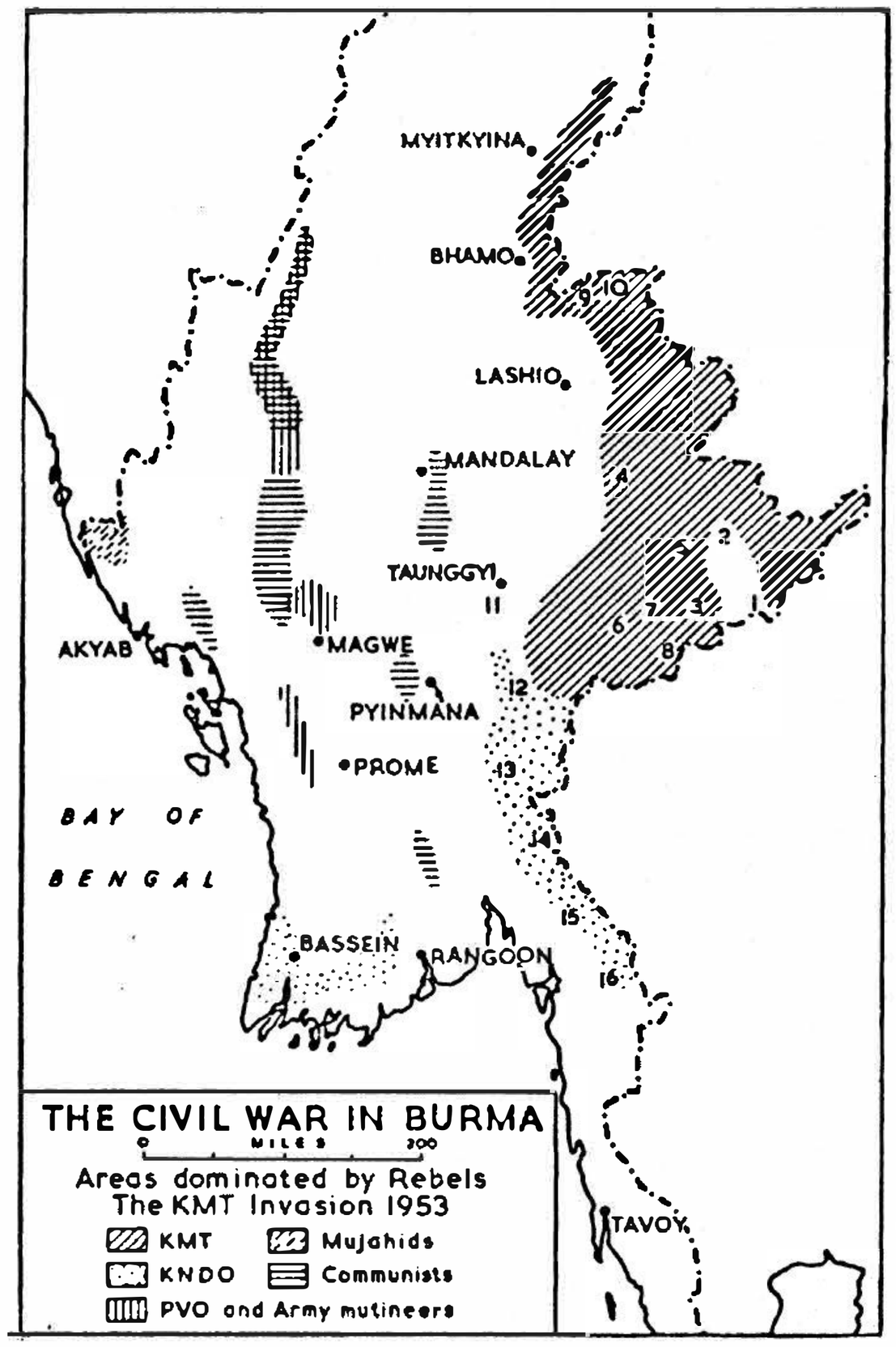
33. *New York Times*, March 2, 1953.

34. *Bangkok Post*, February 20 and 23, 1953.

35. *Ibid.*, February 25, 1953.

36. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 15.

37. *Nation*, February 22, 1953.



From Hugh Tinker from *The Union of Burma*
Published by Oxford University Press
under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

land.[38] The KMT, according to the government of Burma, even issued calls for the Burmese to overthrow the central government.[39]

The KMT entrance into northern Burma prolonged the civil war and disrupted efforts toward ethnic integration and economic and political development. The activities of the KMT had four negative effects on the ability of the government to end the insurgencies and unify the nation. First, the KMT intervention required Burma troops to be moved to the north. Second, the KMT increased the supply of arms and ammunition available to the insurgents. Third, the KMT's depredations demonstrated the inability of the government to protect the people, which in turn weakened their loyalty to it. Fourth, the concentration of government troops in the Shan State resulted in increased distrust of the Burmans by the Shans.

Before the KMT entered Burma it appeared that the government would soon be in control of all the country. In 1949 the government had gone on the offensive and the rebels, both the Communist-PVO's and the KNDO's, were retreating. During 1950 and 1951, the government slowly consolidated its control and carried on a "slow process of attrition" against the rebels.[40] When the government diverted its limited forces against the KMT, the rebels were again able to take the offensive. To cope with the KMT, over 25,000 Burma army soldiers were sent north. This left less than 20,000 troops to face the various insurgencies.[41] As the figures in Table I suggest, the army was able to reduce further the number of rebels after the KMT entered, but none of the groups was eliminated as had been expected.

Initially the KMT kept to themselves within the Shan State and did not collaborate with the other anti-government forces. In late 1951, however, they began to turn their attention away from Yunnan and toward Burma. They first colluded with and sold weapons to the Karen National Defense Organization.[42] In January, 1952, the government of Burma

---

38. *Ibid.*

39. These claims are documented in Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, especially pp. 16-18 and documents in the appendix.

40. Tinker, *Union*, p. 48.

41. Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, pp. 148-149.

42. Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, p. 621; *Nation*, January 23, 1953.

Table I

Insurgents in Burma, 1951 and 1953

	December, 1951	April, 1953
BCP (Communists)	6,000	4,000
Red Flags (Communists)	1,800	600
PVO's	15,000	4,000
KNDO's	12,000	3,700
Mujahids	2,000	300
KMT's	7,000	12,000
Total	43,000	24,600

Source: *Nation*, April 16, 1953.

reported 100 KMT's had established contacts with the KNDO.[43] The next month Saw Shwe, a Brigadier in the KNDO, reportedly traveled to Bangkok to meet with General Li Mi.[44] By mid-year a loose alliance had been formed between the KNDO and the KMT.[45] In August, KNDO leaders met with KMT officials in Chiengmai to arrange arms aid.[46] In April, 1953, the Rangoon *Nation* reported a captured letter from Major-General Saw Ohn Pe, the leader of the KNDO delegation, to General Li Mi's headquarters, discussing "European instructors for the training of students."[47]

Although the initial KMT aid to the KNDO had been limited to weapons and advisers,[48] by February, 1953, combined bands of KMT's and KNDO's were fighting together. The KMT's were reported to be wearing KNDO uniforms.[49] On February 9, a joint group of 300 attacked Loikaw in the Karenni State.[50]

---

43. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 11.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

45. Tinker, *Union*, p.e 52.

46. *New York Times*, August 26, 1952.

47. *Nation*, April 1, 1953.

48. *New York Times*, January 17, 1953.

49. *Nation*, February 1 and 16, 1953.

50. *New York Times*, February 10, 1953.

In March combined units were attacking within 10 miles of Rangoon.[51] In April, a combined group of 2,500 KMT's and KNDO's launched an attack from Thailand on the Moulmein area, 350 miles south of Kengtung. A Reuters dispatch said the attack was part of an effort to remove pressure on the Kengtung area by Burma army troops and to open a port to get supplies by ship from Formosa.[52] Combined units were found within 80 to 150 miles of Rangoontin August, September and November of 1953.[53]

A variety of factors made a KMT-KNDO alliance useful for both groups. Both found the neutralist foreign policy of Burma unsatisfactory. Both looked to the West for aid. Collusion between the two forces also brought together their differing resources so that both could be more effective against the army. While the KMT had weapons and other military supplies, the KNDO had contacts with the population in some areas and had easier access to food supplies.

The various groups of communist rebels benefited from the KMT intervention. When the Burma army launched assaults against the KMT in July, 1950, and during the Autumn of 1951, the Communists were able to advance.[54] The Burman Communists apparently had established "joint operational commands" with the KNDO in late 1952.[55] The Communists were probably receiving United States-made weapons from the KNDO which received them from the KMT. Prime Minister Nu believed this to be the situation.[56] Others stated that the Communists were getting arms directly from the KMT.[57]

---

51. *Bangkok Post*, March 20, 1953.

52. *New York Times*, April 21, 1953.

53. *Ibid.*, August 17 and September 4, 1953. William C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy: A Study in Neutralism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 321.

54. Tinker, *Union*, pp. 50, 52.

55. *Nation*, January 23, and February 10, 1953.

56. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1953; "Chinese Kuomintang and Burmese Communists Are Friends," *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. I, No. 3 (January, 1954), pp. 22-23.

57. Statement by U Ba Swe, the Burmese Minister of Defense, in Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 31; Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, p. 168.

Whatever the precise details, it seems apparent that the KMT did increase the quantity of weapons available to the antitgovernment forces, and, as a result, improved those forces' position vis-à-vis the Burma army. The net effect was to decrease the government's control of the rebel areas, expand the area of rebel activity and strengthen the rebels' belief that they could defeat the government.

The KMT attempted an alliance with the *Sawbwas* of the Shan State. They appeared to champion their cause against the central government but the *Sawbwas* did not join with them.[58] Silverstein has suggested the KMT intervention may have temporarily strengthened the desire for Shan unity in the Union.t[59] In the long run, however, the KMT intervention had a negative effect on Shan-Burman relations. The large number of Burman troops in the area, and the imposition of martial law in 22 of the 33 Shan States because of the KNDO's and the KMT's,t[60] increased the antagonisms of the Shans toward the central government.t When, in 1958, Shan separationt ist feelings were on the increase, the negative experience of the army'ts rule was an additional argument for greater autonomy.

The government of Burma had adopted a mildly socialist economic policy which was intended to reconstruct the war-destroyed economy, raise the standard of living of the people, and convince the leftists that the government was not a tool of foreign capitalists and that they did not need to resort to arms to accomplish economic reforms. Because of the civil war and its extension as a result of the KMT intervention, economic development was set back.t[61] Land reform, a key aspect of the government program to gain peasant support, was not implemented to a large extent until 1954 even though it had been planned in 1948.t[62]

In 1952 the government spent approximately 40 per

---

58. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 18.

59. Josef Silverstein, "The Struggle for National Unity in the Union of Burma" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, 1960), p. 401.

60. Silverstein, "Politics in the Shan State,t" p. 51.

61. Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, p. 624.

62. Charles A. Fisher, *Southeast Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography* (London: Metheun and Co.t, Ltd.t, 1966), p. 415.

cent of its revenue on internal security.[63] In 1954, after the KMT problem had lessened, the government still budgeted 28 per cent of its expenditure for anti-rebel activity.[64] While not all of this expenditure was the direct result of the KMT intervention, a large portion was.

In the eastern Shan State, especially near Kengtung, consumer prices increased rapidly when Thailand closed the border between Chiengmai and Kengtung city because of Burma Army-KMT military activity on the border.[65] Much of the trade of Kengtung was with northern Thailand. The loyalty of the Shans to the central government was precarious in any case, and this economic hardship imposed on them, along with the depredations of the KMT and the Burma army, did not improve relations between the central government and this region. Also, the termination of United States economic aid, discussed below, delayed or forced the abandonment of a number of projects designed for economic and social development.[66] In summation, the KMT intervention forced the government to delay its ambitious economic programs, and, as a result, it was less able to convince the Burmese, regardless of ethnic background, that the government deserved their loyalty.

Among the political elite in Rangoon, there was little disagreement on how to handle the KMT intervention during the 1950-1954 period. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League held a large majority in the legislature and the elite, including the army, apparently supported U Nu's efforts to solve the problem. The leading critic of the government's handling of the crisis was the small Burma Worker's and Peasant's Party. It offered in November, 1952, to organize a private army to rout the KMT but the government turned down the offer.[67] The Communists and PVO rebels also offered to join the government in attacking the KMT but

---

63. *New York Herald Tribune*, March 31, 1953.

64. *New York Times*, April 23, 1955.

65. Tinker, *Union*, p. 359.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

67. Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, p. 622 n. 1; see also Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), p. 25; Geoffrey Fairbairn, "Burma and the 'Cold War,'" *Australian Outlook*, 6 (September, 1952), pp. 147-148; Fifield, *Diplomacy*, pp. 202-203; *Nation*, March 6, 1953.

on terms which the government would not accept.[68] Presumably they wanted amnesty, weapons and Burma's alignment with the Communist bloc.

From 1950 to March 1953, the government attempted to solve the problem through military means and by negotiating with Nationalist China for the KMT's internment or evacuation through the good offices of the United States and India.

Military efforts by the government of Burma against the KMT extended from 1950 to the 1960's, but the discussion here will be limited to the period from 1950 to September, 1954, the end of the first evacuation of the KMT's to Formosa. The Burma army had attempted to intern the KMT when they first began to enter Burma. The first few were interned but they later escaped and split into small bands.[69] After issuing an ultimatum to the KMT that they either surrender their arms or leave the country, the Burma army in Kengtung launched its first major operation against the KMT in June, 1950.[70] By July it appeared the attack had been successful as the KMT were reported to be retreating into Yunnan.[71] The army was able to secure the Kengtung-Tachilek road and to take Tachilek from the KMT.[72]

With the cessation of major military operations the KMT were able to return to Burma and resume their activities. The Burma army launched a second attack on them, known as "Operation Frost," in November, 1951.[73] Additional efforts were made to rout the KMT during 1952,[74] but apparently because of the increased strength of the KMT the conflict was stalemated. In February, 1953, the army launched another major campaign against the KMT,[75] but by early March they

---

68. Fifield, *Diplomacy*, p. 203.

69. *New York Times*, July 6, 1950. KMT troops which had entered French Indo-China had been interned in accordance with international law. Between 1949 and mid-1950 between 55,000 and 60,000 were interned by the French. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1951.

70. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 9.

71. *New York Times*, July 11, 1950.

72. *Ibid.*, September 9, 1950; Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 9.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

74. Johnstone, *Chronology*, pp. 25, 27.

75. *New York Times*, February 17 and 25, 1953.

were spread more widely than they had ever been.[76] By this time, according to Burmese sources, the KMT had ample weapons and ammunition plus new Dodge and Ford trucks. The concentration of equipment was the "largest Burma had ever seen."[77]

The government offensive continued into March, in an effort to form a pincer to force the KMT back into Yunnan.[78] A monitored radio command ordered the KMT to retreat east of the Salween River. It was reported that the KMT were "rushing supplies and ammunition from Thailand to consolidate and hold at all costs their positions in Kengtung State."[79] Although Burmese sources indicated the KMT's were retreating from Monghsat in March,[80] they were still located there in early April.[81]

This flurry of military activity in February and March was possibly in response to an increase in KMT activity in January, but it was also probably designed to coordinate with the plan of the government to take its complaint against Nationalist China to the United Nations General Assembly in late March. It might have been intended also to convince the KMT that they would have to leave Union territory or face constant military harassment.

The government of Burma in 1951 requested India and the United States to use their good offices to assist in getting Nationalist China to evacuate the KMT. Burma had originally planned to take the problem to the UN General Assembly in 1951 but was dissuaded from doing so by United States diplomats in Rangoon who proposed using U.S. good offices first.[82] The U.S. Ambassador at that time, David McK. Key, and later his successor, William J. Seband, attempted to get the State

---

76. Tinker, *Union*, p. 53.

77. *Nation*, March 5, 1953. The Burma air force bombed the KMT headquarters at Monghsat on February 26, 1953. *New York Times*, February 27, 1953.

78. *Ibid.*, March 8, 1953.

79. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1953. The *Bangkok Post* reported that the order was for the KMT to spread out and stand firm. March 17, 1953.

80. *New York Times*, March 15, 1953.

81. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1953.

82. Frank N. Trager, Note 7a, pp. 1216-1218 of *Burma*, ed. by Frank N. Trager (New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, 1956, 3 volunes).

Department to pressure the Nationalist Chinese government but their efforts received little response in Washington.[83] As India had little influence in Taipeh and the U.S. government applied no pressure on the Nationalist government, these diplomatic attempts to find a solution to the KMT problem failed. Burma finally turned to the United Nations General Assembly in March, 1953.

On March 2, 1953, Prime Minister Nu made a major speech on the KMT in the Burma legislature. In it he announced the decision of the government to ask the United Nations to label Nationalist China an aggressor against Burma and to assist Burma in solving the KMT problem. In the speech he outlined the three options the government felt it had. These were:

> (1) To take the matter to the United Nations Organization;
> (2) To negotiate with the Chinese National Government in Formosa, through the good offices of those governments which have diplomatic relations with it, with a view to the withdrawal of the KMT forces from the Union territory;
> (3) To counter-attack the KMT aggressors by the armed forces of the Union.[84]

U Nu stated that options (2) and (3) had been attempted and had failed. Reluctantly, therefore, Burma was forced to take the first alternative.[85]

Previously, Nu said, Burma had not exercised option (1) for three reasons. First, the government feared that "the Chinese Nationalist Government [might] flatly repudiate its own responsibility for the KMT forces . . . by declaring that they are deserters from the Nationalist forces. . . ."[86] If this were to happen, Burma would have no other recourse than to attempt a military solution as the UN would have no jurisdiction in the matter. Second, ". . . the Chinese

---

83. *Ibid.*; see also Frank N. Trager, Patricia Wohlgemuth and Lu-YutKiang, *Burma's Role in the United Nations, 1948-1955* (New York: Institute for Pacific Relations, 1956), p. 10. The *New York Times* reported that "it appears that the State Department is merely passing on the Burmese Government's complaint rather than urging General Chiang's Government to take action." May 16, 1951.

84. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 1.

85. The *Bangkok Post* reported on March 12, 1953, that Prime Minister Nu had been very reluctant to take the KMT matter to the UN.

86. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 1.

Nationalist Government [might] come out with more blatant assertions that the so-called KMT forces in Burma are in fact soldiers of the People's Republic of China wearing KMT uniforms."[87] Third, Nu stated,

> Since the KMT aggressors are also enemies of the People's Republic of China, the latter will naturally take a keen interest in this matter. Therefore, will the step or steps taken by the United Nations antagonize the People's Republic of China and make the present simple case of aggression a much more complicated issue?[88]

In both the second and third reasons, Nu expressed the fear that Burma could become the site for a major war between the CPR and the members of the UN. This was not an unrealistic apprehension. Since November, 1950, Chinese "volunteers" had been fighting UN forces in Korea. Already the UN had branded China an aggressor and the policies of the United States, Nationalist China and some of their allies in the UN were vigorously anti-CPR. The second reason raised the possibility that the UN might send forces into Burma against the CPR, while the third raised the possibility that the CPR might send troops into Burma against the KMT and/or the United Nations. In either event, Burma would be a battlefield in a two-front UN war with China.

Since the earlier efforts of the government of Burma at military and diplomatic solutions had failed, Burma had no choice but to take the risks involved and request UN assistance. Nu stated that the CPR would be kept fully informed of all the efforts of the government to find a solution in the UN. The situation was getting more acute and action had to be taken soon, because the KMT were becoming more aggressive within Burma.[89]

Foreign observers cited three reasons for Burma finally seeking UN assistance. One, as U Nu indicated, was the growing danger the KMT posed to the government, especially the strengthening of the KMT-KNDO alliance.[90] A second was the fear that the United States and Nationalist China were plan-

---

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

90. Virginia Thompson, "Burma and the Two Chinas," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, 23 (May 15, 1953), p. 1; Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, p. 140.

ning a general war against China through Burma. This will be discussed in greater detail below but, briefly, such actions as President Eisenhower's removal of the Seventh Fleet from the Formosan Strait in early February, the stalemate in the Korean War and the general atmosphere of "rolling back communism" which emanated from Washington, heightened this fear.[91]

The third reason "was to impress further upon Communist China the sincerity of [Burma's] efforts to end the Nationalist threat."[92] This seems unlikely in light of Nu's speech of March 2 and the attitude of restraint demonstrated by the CPR. A more likely reason may have been the belief that the publicity which the KMT intervention would receive, if debated in the UN and in the world press, would pressure the United States and Nationalist China to change their policies and evacuate the KMT.

In preparation for going to the UN, the government of Burma notified the United States that it did not desire the U.S. economic aid program to continue past June 30, 1953.[93] Although there were other reasons for the Burmese decision to terminate the U.S. aid program,[94] the crucial factor was the

---

91. Thompson, "Burma and the Two Chinas," p. 1. For example, the following reports appeared in the *Bangkok Post* immediately before and after Nu's March 2 speech which give something of the nature of the prevailing atmosphere. On February 24 it was reported that Nationalist Chinese guerrillas had successfully landed on the south Chekiang coast of China on February 19. On February 25 it was reported that the retiring Director of the U.S. Military Assistance Program, who had recently toured Southeast Asia and Formosa, would recommend in his final report that the U.S. aid the "10 million Chinese in Southeast Asia" who were "ready to support the Nationalist war effort against their Communist held homeland."
    The apprehensions that the government of Burma felt must have been intensified by the comments of President Eisenhower that Stalin's recent death would be a possible cause for "explosions in Iran or Burma." *Bangkok Post*, March 5, 1953. Later that year the non-communist government of Iran was overthrown with the assistance of the U.S. CIA. Richard J. Barnet, *Intervention and Revolution: America's Confrontation with Insurgent Movements Around the World* (New York: Meridian Books, 1968), pp. 226-228.

92. Fifield, *Diplomacy*, p. 203.

93. See *The Department of State Bulletin*, 38, no. 720 (April 13, 1953), p. 530, for the text of the letter of Foreign Minister Sao Hkun Hkio to the U.S. Ambassador, William J. Sebald.

94. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, pp. 64-66. Because of the obvious anti-communist nature of the U.S. aid program, it had never been

Burmese belief that the U.S. was supporting the KMT in Burma. In fact, the original letter requesting the termination of all aid contained language referring to the KMT intervention. It was removed by an informal agreement between the Foreign Minister of Burma and the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon.[95] The decision to end U.S. aid was determined by the need not to appear linked in any compromising manner to a state which would have an active part in the discussion and any subsequent UN action. Also, terminating the aid agreement was an important means of demonstrating to the United States government the displeasure of the government of Burma with the U.S. role in the intervention.

On March 25, the Burma government cabled the United Nations to ask that the government of Formosa be charged with aggression. Six days later the UN Steering Committee agreed to recommend that the complaint of Burma against Nationalist China be placed on the agenda of the General Assembly.[96]

Before the matter could be debated in the UN, efforts to solve the problem outside the UN were made. After conferring with the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, the Thai government offered to permit the KMT passage through Thailand to Formosa.[97] The United States began a concerted effort to forestall a UN debate because it was stated that such a debate would serve only the advantage of the Soviet Union and would drive a wedge between the United States and the governments of Asia. The U.S. also offered to pay for the removal of the KMT's from Burma.[98] Nationalist China also attempted to avoid a UN debate on the question.[99] Possibly the more basic reason the U.S. and Nationalist China desired to avoid a debate was that full disclosure of all the circumstances surrounding the KMT intervention would prove embarrassing to them.

---

popular in Burma with either politicians of the left and sometimes the center and with the press. For a further discussion see John D. Montgomery, *The Politics of Foreign Aid: American Experience in Southeast Asia* (New York: Praeger for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1962), pp. 32-33 and 140-146.

95. Frank N. Trager, *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1966), p. 321.

96. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 32.

97. *New York Times*, March 28, 1953; *Bangkok Post*, March 27, 1953.

98. *New York Times*, April 8, 1953.

99. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1953.

The Burmese draft resolution to the UN was explicit and pointed directly to the Nationalist Chinese regime as the responsible party. It said in part:

> The General Assembly . . .
> *Notes* that the armed forces of the KMT Government of Formosa have committed acts of infringement against the territorial integrity of the Union of Burma and acts oft violation of its frontiers.
>
> *recommends* to the Security Council:
> a) to condemn the KMT Government of Formosa . . t
> b) to take all necessary steps to ensure immediate cessation of acts of aggression . . .
>
> *calls upon* all states to respect the territorial integrity of the Union of Burma. . . t[100]

In the debate in the UN Political Committee (Committee I) on the charges of Burma, the Nationalist Chinese Ambassador denied that his government had any control over the KMT in Burma but admitted that it did exercise some influence over General Li Mi and his officers.[101] Nearly all the other governments supported the charge that the KMT had seriously violated the territorial integrity of Burma but most did not support the strong language of the draft resolution submitted by Burma.[102]

On April 22, the UN Political Committee approved a Mexican draft resolution with several amendments proposed by Lebanon rather than the draft resolution of Burma. This substitute resolution was approved 57 to 0 in the Political Committee, with Burma and Nationalist China abstaining. The following day the General Assembly accepted the amended Mexican resolution unanimously except for Nationalist China's abstention. Burma voted for it primarily out of gratitude to the nations which had supported Burma in the debate.

The resolution passed by the General Assembly was much less stringent than Burma's draft had been. It included no reference to a request for Security Council action and did not refer directly to the Chinese Nationalist government. Rather it referred to unspecified "foreign forces" in Burma. The resolution also said:

---

100. Text taken from Trager, *Burma's Role in the UN*, pp. 10-11.

101. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, pp. 43-47.

102. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-72; see also the comments of the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., *The Department of State Bulletin*, 28, No. 723 (May 4, 1953), p. 664.

> The General Assembly
> *Deplores* this situation and condemns the presence of these forces in Burma and their hostile acts against that country.
>
> *Declares* that these foreign forces must be disarmed and either agree to internment or leave the Union of Burma forthwith . . .
>
> *Recommends* that negotiations now in progress through the good offices of certain member states should be pursued . . .
>
> *Urges* all states:
> to afford . . . Burma . . . all the assistance in their powers . . . to refrain from furnishing any assistance to these forces. . . .[103]

To the government of Burma this resolution was far from adequate. The weak UN response to the KMT intervention somewhat embittered the Burmese in their attitude toward the UN. As Burma's Ambassador to the UN, James Barrington, later said, "It seemed that the United Nations had two yardsticks for measuring aggression; that the shorter and more handy one is used when Communists are involved, and a longer one is used if self-proclaimed anti-communists are involved. . . ."[104]

The negotiations referred to in the UN resolution were discussions between the United States, Thailand, Nationalist China and Burma to establish some means of solving the problem. The proposal of Thailand and Nationalist China to evacuate some KMT's was the basis of these negotiations. The United States was the prime mover behind them.[105] On May 8, 1953, the United States formally proposed a four-power military conference to be attended by Nationalist China, Thailand, Burma and the U.S., to reach an agreement on evacuation. These discussions eventually led to a partial evacuation of the KMT from Burma. That story will be taken up after discussing the roles of Nationalist China, the People's

---

103. Trager, *Burma's Role in the UN*, p. 12. The full text of all the resolutions introduced is found in Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 29.

104. "The UN Through Burmese Eyes," pp. 8-9, speech at Colby College, Waterville, Maine, March 18, 1954, quoted in Trager, *Burma's Role in the UN*, p. 13.

105. The Burmese were convinced that the United States would have to apply pressure on Formosa if Burma was ever to agree to a cease-fire with the KMT as they demanded. *New York Times*, April 20, 1953.

Republic of China, Thailand and the United States in the first KMT crisis.

The Chinese People's Republic did not intervene in Burma against the KMT and this restraint is probably the chief reason why a major war did not occur in Burma in the early 1950ts. PLA troops did enter Burmese territory in pursuit of the KMT on several occasions but "such units were always withdrawn upon Burma'ts protest with the explanation that local commanders had made technical errors."t[106] There was one report of a CPR effort to infiltrate and take over the KMT in Burma but it was not substantiated and no further retports of such efforts are known.t[107]

Early in the KMT intervention the CPR stated that it would not tolerate Burma'ts harboring antitCommunist troops on her border. This statement raised apprehensions in Rangoon that the PLA might invade northern Burma. There apparently was a Burma-CPR military clash in early 1950, but it was of little consequence.[108] In March, Prime Minister Nu said that persons wishing to disrupt the harmonious relations between Burma and the CPR were spreading a myth of Burmese-CPR hostility.t[109] In October, Nu further said that his government had firm assurances from Peking that the PLA would not pursue the KMT into Burma.t[110] If the Chinese had entered Burma in pursuit of the KMT prior to these assurances, the government of Burma probably wished to deny the fact so that other states, such as Nationalist China or the United States,

---

106. Frederick C. Teiwes, "Force and Diplomacy on the Sino-Burmese Border,t' in *The Next Asia: Problems for U.S. Policy*, ed. by David S. Smith (New York: The International Fellows Program Policy Series, Columbia University, 1969), p. 201.

107. *New York Times*, July 16, 1952.

108. *Ibid.*, March 13, 1950. In June, 1950, in a radio broadcast, the government of China said it would not accept the construction in Burma of airfields for use by U.S. or British air forces. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 19. On January 31, 1951, the Associated Press reported that 3,000 PLA troops had entered northern Burma to investigate a rumor that the United States was building antair base at Putao (formerly Fort Hertz). *New York Times*, February 1, 1951. This report was denied by the government of Burma in a letter from U Maung Myat Kyaw to the *New York Times* dated February 17, *Ibid.*, February 26, 1951.

109. *Ibid.*, March 9, 1951.

110. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 24.

could not use these incursions as a pretext for a larger anti-Chinese war.

In December, 1951, the CPR issued a statement claiming that the U.S. was aiding the KMT in Burma.[111] On January 31, 1952, U Zaw Lin, the Burmese representative, reportedly told the UN General Assembly that Burma was considering asking China to aid her in dislodging the KMT. Burmese spokesmen the next day said that Zaw Lin had been misinterpreted, and Burma was not considering requesting CPR aid.[112] In April, 1952, PLA troops were reported to have clashed with the KMT inside Burma.[113] It is not possible to determine whether such a clash did occur or whether the report was fostered to create the appearance of enmity between Burma and China.

During the spate of KMT activity in January and February, 1953, there was a reported offer of CPR aid to the Burma army. They rejected the offer. Since the report of the offer was made by a staff officer in northern Burma, perhaps it was intended merely as an offer of aid in a limited area.[114] Apparently no high level government discussions between Rangoon and Peking over PLA assistance occurred at this time. However, when U Kyin Thein spoke on the United Nations radio in late March, he said his government expected aid against the KMT from both UN-member states and non-members as well. Many observers interpreted this to mean that he expected CPR assistance.[115]

On balance, the government of Burma felt that the Chinese government had responded with restraint and had a "correct attitude" toward the KMT provocation. The CPR was probably content to allow the Burma government to handle the KMT.[116] The Chinese were certainly aware that a neutral Burma would be better protection to their southern border than a pro-Western, anti-communist Burma would be. If China had intended to rout the KMT, Burma might have either joined or been forced into the anti-communist bloc and the CPR's problems would have been more serious. Also, China was occupied

---

111. *New York Times*, December 28, 1951.

112. *Ibid.*, February 1 and 2, 1952.

113. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1952.

114. *Ibid.*, February 26, 1953.

115. *Ibid.*, March 28, 1953.

116. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, p. 190.

at that time by the necessity of internal reconstruction following World War II and the revolution, and by the war in Korea. Leaving the KMT problem to the Burmese made the most sense to the Chinese. To have themselves attacked the KMT in Burma would have been "playing the imperialist's game."

The government of Nationalist China, as U Nu suspected, denied that it had any direct control over the KMT in Burma. The government of Burma's white paper, *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma*, and Burma's presentation in the UN, were in large measure briefs to prove that Nationalist China was in control of the KMT troops in Burma. The documentation presented there is fairly conclusive. This discussion will merely sketch in broad outline the interrelationship between the KMT in Burma and the Formosan government, relying on both Burmese and non-Burmese sources of information.

When the KMT entered Burma in late 1949 and early 1950, they were effectively cut off from the Nationalist government. In June, 1950, General Lai Iang Tia of the KMT 26th Army traveled to Bangkok to consult with the Chinese Nationalist Military Attaché there. He went to obtain instructions from the Nationalist government for his army.[117] General Li Mi, who had been appointed the President of Yunnan Province as well as Commander-in-Chief of the Yunnan Anti-Communist and National Salvation Army, reportedly went to Formosa for consultations in November, 1951.[118] He was back in northern Burma in late January, 1952, presumably with orders from Taipeh.[119] In February he was in Bangkok,[120] at about the time that several hundred KMT troops returned to Burma from Formosa where they had received training.[121] Li Mi apparently had frequent contacts with the Nationalist government through Bangkok and Taipeh during this period.

In February, 1953, immediately prior to the decision to go to the United Nations, General Li Mi was back in northern

---

117. Interview published in *Lak Maung*, a Thai newspaper and reproduced in Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, Exhibit Document No. 2, p. 142.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

119. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 26.

120. *New York Times*, February 22, 1952.

121. Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, p. 140.

Burma.[122] Also, at this time, the Nationalists pressured the French government in Indo-China to release 35,000 Chinese Nationalist troops interned there so that they could go to Burma.[123] The French rejected the request.[124]

On March 28, 1953, "the Nationalist Chargé d'Affaires in Bangkok issued a statement saying that the troops in Yunnan were under the direct command of military headquarters in Formosa, that they were employed in undemarcated territory where the authority of the Burmese government was at least questionable, and that their operations were really an extension of the struggle against Communism in Korea, Indo-China and Malaya."[125] In this statement the Nationalists admitted their direct command over the KMT but suggested the possibility that they were operating only in Yunnan or in parts of Burma claimed by Nationalist China as part of Yunnan, and thus of no concern to Burma or the United Nations.

It was known that there was a direct supply line by air from Formosa.[126] Additional evidence linking the Nationalist government to the supply and reinforcement of the KMT in Burma was noted above.

The motives of the Chinese Nationalist government in keeping an army in Burma are not difficult to determine. There was probably an emotional attachment to these troops by Taipeh. This was one of the last anti-communist Chinese armies left on the Asian mainland. More important, however, was the desire of Chiang Kai-shek ahd his followers to reconquer the mainland from the Communists. They believed their best hope of achieving this was through a general war on

---

122. Determined by documents found in the possession of three Caucasians killed while fighting for the KMT. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 38.

123. *New York Times*, February 19, 1953, and *Nation*, February 18, 1953.

124. *Nation*, February 19, 1953. The French had interned these troops initially on the islands of De Phu Aoc and I Ire off Nha Trang and later they had been used as laborers in the coal mines near Hanoi and the rubber estates in the south.

125. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Chronology of International Events*, 9, p. 190.

126. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 10; "Atlantic Report: Burma," p. 6. The KMT continued to receive material and financial assistance from Formosa after the UN resolution called for an end to such activities. *New York Times*, July 24, 1953.

several fronts with the CPR. The Korean War provided one context for such a war. The activities of the KMT in Burma were designed to entice the PLA into entering Burmese territory. If Burma and the CPR would engage in conflict over these possible incursions, then there would be a second context for a general anti-CPR offensive. As O. E. Clubb, Jr.t, has written, Nationalist China "evidently hoped to turn the Korean War into a general offensive against Communist China, in which the United States would shoulder the main military burden of restoring the Nationalists to power.t"[127]

Thailand's role in supporting the KMT intervention is less simple to understand. Relations between Thailand and Burma had been frozen during the period of British rule in Burma. Following the regaining of independence, relations were not friendly.t[128] The KMT intervention was assisted by the Thai government, primarily by allowing and perhaps aiding the flow of supplies and reinforcements to the KMT in northern Burma through Thailand. The Karen and other rebels in Burma also received arms and other supplies through Thailand.

In May, 1951, the government of Burma protested to Thailand the running of guns into Burma through Thai territory. Reportedly rebels in Burma were exchanging rubber and wolfram from rebel-held areas in Burma for weapons in Thailand.t[129] Weapons continued to flow into Burma from Thailand although the Thai delegate to the UN denied this during a heated debate in the UN over the KMT intervention in late January, 1952.[130]

---

127. Oliver E. Clubb, Jr., *The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1962), p. 86. See also the *New York Times* special series on the CIA, April 26, 1966.

128. Within four months of independence, the government of Burma announced that Burma troops had clashed with Thai guerrillas. *Ibid.*, April 9, 1948. As noted above, many influential Burmese believed Thailand had territorial designs on Burma, especially the Tenasserim Coast. The eastern parts of the Shan State had been given to Thailand by the Japanese in World War II.

129. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1951.

130. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 26. According to the Thai government, the Thai police did arrest a Chinese for recruiting men to join the KMT in Burma. *New York Times*, February 2, 1952. In July, 1952, KMT General Ma Chaw-Yee, who had been wounded in what was described in the report as an attempted Communist takeover of a KMT training camp during a graduation exercise, was flown by helicopter to Thailand for treatment. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1953.

In February, 1953, the government of Burma requested that Thailand stop the flow of KMT's into Burma from Thailand. The government of Thailand denied that there was any such flow.[131] In April, after Burma had gone to the UN, General Phao, the head of the Thai police, ordered the Thai-Burma border closed. This was intended as a gesture to show that neither Thailand nor the United States was aiding the KMT in Burma.[132] General Phao was one of the Thai officials most intimately connected with supplying the KMT and with the opium trade in the area.[133]

The military efforts of the government of Burma to defeat the KMT added an additional strain to Thai-Burmese relations. In October, 1953, two Thais were killed and five injured when a Burmese plane bombed a Thai village near the border.[134] After this incident Thai Prime Minister Pibul Songgram threatened to shoot down any Burmese planes which strayed over Thai territory.[135]

In the UN debate on the KMT intervention in 1953, Thanat Khoman, the Acting Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN, denied any Thai complicity in the KMT matter.[136] The

---

131. *Bangkok Post*, February 17, 1953.

132. *New York Times*, April 5, 1953.

133. *Ibid.*, April 18, 1953; David Wise and Thomas Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 132-133. General Phao had received considerable support to build up the police in Thailand from the Sea Supply Corporation which was a United States Central Intelligence Agency front in Bangkok. Frank C. Darling, *Thailand and the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1965), p. 114. General Phao had close connections with pro-KMT Chinese leaders in the Bangkok Chinese business community. One Chinese leader was described as "... one of the richest and most pro-KMT" Chinese in Bangkok who was "... virtually a member of one of the most powerful cliques in the Thai ruling class. In a sense, he is the banker and business agent of Police General Phao, for whom he speaks in Chinese councils." This important ally of General Phao lived in a palatial home near the residence of the U.S. Ambassador in Bangkok. G. William Skinner, *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 99-100.

134. *New York Times*, October 16, 1953.

135. *Ibid.*, October 29, 1953.

136. *Ibid.*, April 29, 1953.

government of Burma never formally accused Thailand of such activities. The statement of U Myint Thein to the UN on this point is worth quoting at length:

> The question naturally arises--where have these new arms come from? How is it possible for an original force of 1,500 comparatively lightly armed men to grow in the space of less than three years into a force of 12,000 well armed men? Obviously this could not happen in the hinterland of Burma unless some outside power were furnishing the inspiration, leadership, direction and equipment. Even if we had no other evidence, by the process of elimination we would inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the outside power was Formosa. How all this material was transported into Burma is something we do not wish to delve into too deeply here since the material is already in. Obviously all of it could not have been brought in by aircraft although we know that planes have been used for some time.
>
> I submit, Mr. Chairman, I have made a case that first, hostile and alien units are operating in my country. We are not concerned, nor is it relevant to us as to what their ostensible aim is. We have no desire to make statements which could lead to the construction that governments of other countries are involved. Such statements should be avoided since they may add to the tension that exists today in the international sphere. But we do say that these troops who call themselves the 26th Army or the Anti-Communist Salvation Army or the Peace Guerrillas and who are definitely Chinese with some occidental instructors or advisers, are within the territorial limits of our country and are creating havoc and fighting the Burmese forces.[137]

In hopes of not antagonizing Thailand and in getting Thait cooperation in the removal of the KMT, the Burmese apparently felt it was best not to discuss the Thai role.

It is difficult to determine precisely the motives of the Thais in assisting the KMT. Personal profit and funds for political party activities made through the opium and gun trade may have motivated individual officers, including General Phao. Thai Premier Pibul Songgram contended that the KMT in Burma were a buffer between Thailand and an aggressive, expansionist Communist China.[138] Whether Pibul actually believed this or merely used anti-communismtas a rationaliza-

---

137. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 41.

138. *New York Times*, June 3, 1953.

tion for other goals cannot be determined. Perhaps more important was the desire for territorial aggrandizement at the expense of Burma. As Alastair Lamb has written, ". . . any serious decline in the power of the Burmese central government--especially if it were to occur in a period of active anti-Chinese American influence in mainland Southeast Asia--might well tempt the authorities in Bangkok to give thought to territorial expansion in that westward direction which had once been blocked by European imperial frontier policy."[139]

In his UN speech, U Myint Thein asked how did 1,500 lightly armed Nationalist Chinese troops in less than three years grow into 12,000 well armed troops. The government of the United States, or at least an agency of it, was responsible for supplying much of the weapons, ammunition, other supplies and perhaps leadership of the KMT in Burma. The United Statest role is discussed here in two sections. First is a brief sketch of how the United States supplied the KMT, and, secondt, an analysis of why the United States got involved in such an affair.

Many Burmese feared that the United States, through its economic aid program, was attempting to use Burma as a pawn in the Cold War. The government of Burma denied that there was any truth to such apprehensions.[140] However, rumors and reports of suspicious activities by American citizens continued to make the Burmese, especially left-wing politicians, suspicious of the motives of the United States.[141]

In December, 1951, China claimed that the head of the U.S. Military Advisory Group in Thailand had contacted the Nationalist Chinese Military Attaché in Bangkok and had then flown to Formosa for further consultations on aid to the KMT.[142] The London *Observer* reported that there was "indisputable evidence that Americans were helping the 93rd [KMT]

---

139. Alastair Lamb, *Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem* (London: Pall Mall, 1968), p. 158.

140. Cady, *History of Modern Burma*, p. 620; Montgomery, *The Politics of Foreign Aid*, pp. 31-33.

141. Fairbairn, "Burma and the 'Cold War'" In early 1951 there were rumors that the United States was building an air base in northern Burma at Putao (formerly Fort Hertz). *New York Times*, February 1, 1951. In November of the same year a wrecked U.S.-made helicopter was found in northern Burma. Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, p. 140.

142. *New York Times*, December 28, 1951.

Division. Two Americans accompanied it in its ignominious offensive last autumn [into Yunnan], and when retreat followed a Thai police helicopter was sent to evacuate them. . . ."[143] KMT troops who surrendered to the Burma army said that they had been assisted into Burma by an American organization in Bangkok.[144]

In the debate at the UN General Assembly meeting in Paris in late January, 1952, the Soviet Union and other socialist governments accused the United States of supporting the KMT in Burma. The Burma delegate acknowledged that the KMT had outside sources of supply but refused to specify what governments were responsible.[145] Western sources in February stated that the KMT's did possess new, post-World War II United States weaponst The KMT's claimed they would "kick the communists out of Yunnan with United States and British help."[146] There were also reports that U.S. engineers were assisting the KMT in the construction of an airfield at Monghsat in February, 1952.[147] In April, 1952, the U.S. Ambassador to Burma, David McK. Key, resigned and was succeeded by William J. Sebald. It was later revealed that Key resigned because the U.S. Department of State did not inform him of U.S. assistance to the KMT.[148]

Rumors and reports of U.S. aid to the KMT continued through 1952 and 1953. "An unimpeachable Ameritan source in Southern Shan State" reported "that the Chinese troops [were] handing the Shan villagers slips of paper in return for commandeered supplies on which [was] written: 'The Americans will pay.t"[149] In March, 1953, Defense Minister Ba Swe said that his government had evidence that some American citizens had been training and arming the KMT. He said he had no proof that they were U.S. government agents.t[150] On March 27,

---

143. Quoted in Maung, *Grim War*, p. 144e

144. *Ibido*

145. *New York Times*, January 29 and 30, 1952e

146. *Ibid*.o February 11, 1952.

147. *Ibid*.o February 22, 1952e

148. Thompson, "Burma and theeTwo Chinase" p. 2; Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 28; Warren Unnae "CIAe Who Watches the Watchmane" *Harper's Magazine*, 216 (April, 1958)e p. 49.

149. *New York Times*, January 20, 1952.

150. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 32.

1953t three Caucasians who had been fighting with the KMT were killed by the Burma army.t[151] Two of them wore United State army uniforms. In their possession were diaries and notebooks in which were New York City and Washington, D.C., addresses. They were apparently small arms instructors for the KMT.t[152] The War Office of the government oftBurma said the three were Americans. The U.S. Embassy denied this and suggested that the three were Germans.t[153] Later, the Thai police announced that the three were indeed Germans. Two were said to have been deserters from the French Foreign Legion and one a bandit.[154] Whatever their nationality, the papers in their possession did indicate to the Burmese that the U.S. government was responsible for their behavior.t[155] Again in April there was a report of several white men killed by the Burmese, but their bodies were reportedly removed by the KMT.t[156] The KMT in the spring of 1953 had weapons that the United States had introduced in Korea just eighteen months earlier, including 77mm recoilless cannon which were highly mobile in jungle situations.t[157]

It is not certain whether the Burmese government avoided accusing the U.S. government for diplomatic reasons or if the Burma officials were not informed about the operations of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Asia. Defense Minister Ba Swe did say in an interview that the "China Lobby" was supporting the KMT.[158] The China Lobby has been a

---

151e *New York Times*, March 27, 1953; *New York Herald Tribune*, March 27, 1953.

152e *New York Herald Tribune*, March 31, 1953; *Nation*, March 27, 1953; their pictures were published in the *Nation*, March 30, 1953.

153e *New York Times*, March 31, 1953.

154e *Ibid.*, April 9, 1953.

155. Maung, *Grim War*, pp. 67-68e

156. *Nation*, April 6, 1953; *Bangkok Post*, April 7, 1953.

157. *New York Times*, April 18, 1953.

158. *Ibid.*, March 12, 1953; Mende, *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*, p. 148. For accounts of the China Lobby see Congressional Quarterly Service, *China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1965* (Washington, D.C., 1967), pp. 23-28, and Ross Y. Koen, *The China Lobby in American Politics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1960)e
One organization in the China Lobby was the Committee to Defend America by Aiding Anti-Communist China. One of the vice-chairmen

powerful force in shaping U.S. foreign policy in Asia. It had had close ties with the CIA through the agency's many activities on Taiwan.[159] Later, in 1953, the "Burmese secret service" accused two U.S.-owned companies of selling arms to the KMT. These corporations were the Southeast Asia Corporation and the Bangkok Commercial Corporation. Neither was listed in Dun and Bradstreet or other reference directories of American businesses.[160] Perhaps they were CIA fronts, as was Sea Supply Company in Bangkok.[161] U Myint Thein told the UN Political Committee in November, 1953, that Western Enterprises Incorporated supported the KMT.[162] This corporation was a CIA front in Formosa.[163]

In April, 1952, Sirdar J. J. Singh, President of the India League of America, reported that former U.S. Air Force pilots were flying supplies to the KMT in Burma.[164] He was undoubtedly referring to pilots for Civil Air Transport (CAT), the airline founded by General Claire Chennault in 1946. CAT operated out of Formosa and its planes were seen over Burma.[165] CAT was closely connected with American intelligence operations in Asia throughout the 1950's and has

---

of this committee was Gen. William J. Donovan, first head of the CIA's predecessor organization, the O.S.S., and later U.S. Ambassador to Thailand. Koen, *China Lobby in American Politics*, pp. 59-60.

159. Andrew Tully, *CIA: The Inside Story* (New York: Morrow and Company, 1962), p. 200; Roger Hilsman, *To Move a Nation* (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1967), p. 314.

As noted above, General Phao and the KMT were involved in the opium trade in Burma and Thailand. There is, in the words of Koen, "considerable evidence that a number of Chinese officials have engaged in the illegal smuggling of narcotics into the United States with the full knowledge and connivance of the Chinese Nationalist Government. . . . The narcotics business has been an important factor in the activities and permutation of the China Lobby." Koen, *China Lobby in American Politics*, p. ix.

160. *New York Times*, August 12, 1953.

161. Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, p. 131.

162. *New York Times*, November 6, 1953.

163. Tully, *CIA*, p. 201.

164. *New York Times*, April 8, 1952.

165. "Atlantic Report," p. 6.

since been absorbed by Air America, the unofficial airline of the CIA in Laos.[166]

In March, 1953, Homer Bigart, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune*, obliquely made reference to official U.S. involvement in supporting the KMT. He wrote:

> Officially, the United States never supplied or advised the Li Mi contingent. But up to a year ago Bangkok was full of cloak and dagger operatives and some American citizens unquestionably shuttled back and forth on mysterious missions between Bangkok and Li Mi's airstrip north of Kengtung. The State Department always kept its skirts clear of these colorful folk.[167]

Virginia Thompson reported the CIA's involvement in the *Foreign Policy Bulletin* of the Council on Foreign Relations of May 15, 1953. Two of the persons apparently least informed about the KMT involvement of the U.S. were the two U.S. Ambassadors to Burma in the early fifties, William J. Sebald and David McK. Key. Ambassador Sebald was told of these activities by General Ne Win. Both men resigned in protest of being kept uninformed of their government's activities--activities of which they presumably disapproved.[168]

Any analysis of the motivations of the U.S. government in supporting the KMT in Burma must take into account U.S. policy toward China in the early 1950's and especially the Korean War. The Communist revolution in China had been a traumatic event for the United States. The stalemate in the Korean War". . . added force to the feeling that the only solution to the problem of Communist China was that country's total defeat."[169]

Throughout the final years of the Truman administration there was tension between those who wanted a general war with China and those who favored a foreign policy which sought to limit the presumed spread of communism in Asia, while concentrating on more important goals in Europe. Those favoring total war with China included General Douglas MacArthur, General Claire Chennault and members of the China

---

166. *New York Times*, April 5, 1970.

167. *New York Herald Tribune*, March 22, 1953.

168. Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, pp. 230-231; Trager, Note 7a, pp. 1216-1218 of *Burma*.

169. Clubb, *U.S. and Sino-Soviet Bloc*, pp. 54-55.

Lobby. President Truman and the State Department apparently preferred a policy designed to "limit communist expansion."

On December 30, 1949, President Truman approved a National Security Council study which set the goals of U.S. foreign policy in Asia. In the words of the Pentagon Papers study, these goals were tot". . . block further Communist expansion in Asia."t[170] To carry out the goal of blocking "further Communist expansion" the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended to the Secretary of Defense in April, 1950, that steps be taken "to reduce the pressure from Communist China. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted the evidence of renewed vitality and apparent increased effectiveness of the Chinese Nationalist forces.t't[171]

A strategy of blocking "further communist expansion in Asia" is sufficiently vague to be given different interpretations in different places and at different times. It is reported that President Truman offered to fly Indian troops into Tibet in 1950, as part of this strategy.t[172] While Truman interpreted U.S. strategic interests as being essentially defensive, others saw them as offensive.t[173]

---

170. Neil Sheihan, *The Pentagon Papers* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p. 9. The National Security Council study went on to state, "The United States on its own initiative should now scrutinize closely the development of threats from Communist aggression, direct and indirect, and be prepared to help within our means to meet such threats by providing political, economic and military assistance and advice where clearly needed to supplement the resistance of other governments in and out of the area which are more directly concerned."

171. Alfred W. McCoy with Cathleen B. Read and Leonard P. Adams II, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 128, citing Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Memorandum to the Secretary of Defense," April 10, 1950, in *The Pentagon Papers*, Senator Gravel edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), Volume I, p. 366.

172. Neville Maxwell, *Indiaôs China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), note, pp. 71-72, citing A. B. Shah, *Indiaôs Defence and Foreign Policies* (Bombay: Manaktala, 1966), p. 87.

173. For this reason writers have sometimes confused what U.S. intentions were in supporting the KMT. McCoy, for example, at one point says that the U.S. intention was to "seal the Burma-China borderlands against a feared Chinese invasion of Southeast Asia" whereas at another he says that the CIA supported the KMT so that they would invade Yunnan "on the theory that the Chinese masses would

General MacArthur wanted to use troops from Nationalist China in the Korean War.[174] This policy was rejected by Truman apparently because of apprehension that it would widen the conflict with China. On March 24, 1951, eighteen days before he was relieved of his command by President Truman, General MacArthur issued a statement from Tokyo calling for a "decision by the United Nations to depart from its tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea, through an expansion of our military operations to its coastal areas and interior bases [to] doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse."[175] General Claire Chennault, the head of Civil Air Transport and a very close advisor to Chiang Kai-shek, testified in 1958 that a plan did exist to implement MacArthur's idea of a broader war against China, to end the stalemate in Korea and to remove the Communist government from the mainland. He said:

> . . . It is reported--and I have reason to believe it is true--that the Nationalist Government offered three full divisions . . . of troops to fight in Korea, but the great opportunity was not putting the Nationalists in Korea. It was a double envelopment operation. With the United Nations forces in Korea and the Nationalist Chinese in southern areas . . . the Communists would have been caught in a giant pincers. . . . This was a great opportunity--not to put the Nationalist Chinese in Korea, but to let them fight in the south.[176]

President Truman did not order a wider war with China. He argued that MacArthur and other advocates of such a policy were not keeping in mind what he perceived as the greater threat to Europe posed by the Soviet Union.[177] If the United

---

rally to their banners" and overthrow the communist government. *The Politics of Heroin*, p. 91 and p. 305.

174. Carl Berger, *The Korea Knot: A Military-Political History* (Revised ed.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1964); p. 127.

175. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

176. United States, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, Committee on Un-American Activities, April 23, 1958, *International Communism (Communist Encroachment in the Far East):* "Consultation with Maj. Gen. Claire Lee Chennault, United States Army" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958); pp. 9-10.

177. Berger; *Korea Knot*, p. 133.

States had joined Nationalist China in a major war with the CPR, the U.S. would have had to do the greater share of the fighting. Truman later wrote, "All-out military action against China had to be avoided, if for no other reason than because it was a gigantic booby trap."[178]

If Truman would not countenance a general war with China, why did the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency support the KMT in Burma for the purpose of creating a war on China's southern border? Perhaps the CIA with the support of influential U.S. citizens in and out of government, such as members of the China Lobby, and with the collusion of the government of Nationalist China, acted without the approval and knowledge of President Truman. Although some believe the CIA support of the KMT was instigated "at the top of the State Department,"[179] there is no hard evidence to support nor to gainsay such a contention. There is good reason to believe, however, that the CIA supported the KMT in Burma for the purpose of harassing "Peking to a point where it might retaliate against Burma, forcing the Burmese to turn to the United States for protection."[180]

A comparison of the chronology of KMT military actions against Yunnan with the chronology of the Korean War reveals several parallels. The first major KMT assault on Yunnan was made in the first week of May, 1951, just after the April 23 offensive of the Communist forces in Korea.[181] The second major KMT offensive took place in July, 1951, while truce talks were beginning at Kaesong, Korea. The third KMT attack came in August, 1951, while cease-fire talks at Kaesong were in a delicate stage.[182] In November, UN forces were ordered to cease all offensive operations. A stalemate ensued in Korea until the end of the war,[183] during which KMT activities increased in Burma. New U.S. equipment and fresh Chinese Nationalist troops entered Burma via Thailand from Formosa

---

178. *Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1956), p. 378, quoted in Berger, *Korea Knot*, p. 125.

179. Unna, "CIA: Who Watches the Watchman?" p. 49.

180. As reported in the *New York Times* special series on the CIA, April 26, 1966. See also Clubb, *U.S. and Sino-Soviet Bloc*, p. 86.

181. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 10; Robert Leckie, *Conflict* (New Yorkt Putnam, 1962), p. 15.

182. Burma, *Kuomintang Aggression*, p. 10; Leckie, *Conflict*, p. 15.

183. Leckie, *Conflict*, p. 16.

in early 1952.[184] CIA agents are reported to have entered Burma to visit the KMT commanders during 1952.[185] However, the KMT did not attempt another major assault on Yunnan until the last week of January, 1953.[186] While this comparison demonstrates little that is conclusive, it does suggest that U.S. interest in the KMT increased with the stalemate in the Korean War.

In 1952, President-elect Eisenhower apparently concluded that the KMT were of no military value and he tried to convince Chiang Kai-shek to remove them.[187] At the time, the *New York Times* reported that "although the United States once displayed some interest in the potential of the Nationalist guerrillas, their failure to develop this potential in regard to China and their excesses in Burma have persuaded official observers that they are more of a headache than an asset."[188]

It is not likely that the government of Burma was aware of the changing U.S. attitude toward the KMT. The President's act of February 2, 1953, "to rescind the order preventing attacks from Formosa against the Chinese mainland, as a token of America's determination 'to broaden the war against China if the Korean stalemate continued,'"[189] appeared to the Burmese as a sign that the KMT were going to try earnestly to create a war on the Sino-Burmese border. The increase in KMT activity in Burma early in 1953 may have been more to impress the United States of their military utility than to create a war with China.[190] The government of Burma most likely would not have known this either.

The Burmese may also have believed that the KMT might be used by the CIA to threaten their government if its neutralist foreign policy became too conciliatory toward the People's Republic of China.[191] Western observers were pre-

---

184. *New York Times*, January 29 and February 22, 1952.

185. Tully, *CIA*, pp. 196-197.

186. *Nation*, February 15, 1953.

187. Hilsman, *To Move a Nation*, p. 300.

188. *New York Times*, May 28, 1953.

189. Clubb, *U.S. and Sino-Soviet Bloc*, p. 55.

190. "U.S. Headache in Burma: Chiang's Old Army Becomes a Trouble Center," *U.S. News and World Report*, 34, No. 5 (April 10, 1953), p. 53.

191. Wise and Ross, *Invisible Government*, p. 130.

dicting in April, 1951, that Rangoon would become an "important international Communist liaison center."[192] At about this time the Soviet Union and the CPR were opening embassies in Rangoon. The Viet Minh also opened an office in Rangoon at this time but it was later closed at the request of the government of Burma.[193] Given the socialist domestic policy of the Burmese and the inability of most U.S. officials to distinguish between socialism and "aggressive communism," it is conceivable that some U.S. officials may have wanted to pressure the government of Burma to conduct a pro-U.S. foreign and domestic policy. Also, U.S. policy makers may have felt that the KMT might prove useful as an anti-communist military force if the Communist insurgents should have appeared to have been winning the civil war.[194]

Officials in various parts of the United States government apparently perceived the utility of the KMT from different perspectives. The President, and perhaps the State Department, appear to have seen the KMT as a useful force to "block Chinese communist aggression" into Southeast Asia. The CIA seems to have wanted to use the KMT primarily as a force to harass the Chinese government into invading Burma so as to force Burma into the Western camp within the UN. After that had been done, then it presumably would have been much easier for U.S. forces under UN auspices to go to war with China through Southeast Asia. Whatever the exact goals and motives of the U.S. government, it is clear that the CIA actively supported the KMT in Burma from 1951 to 1953 and that at least some officials of the U.S. government hoped to open a second front against China through Burma during thet Korean War stalemate.

Whether motivated by Burma's request for United Nations' assistance or by the decision that the KMT was not a practical anti-CPR military force or both, the United States in March, 1953, set into motion steps to evacuate some of the

---

192. *New York Times*, April 13, 1951.

193. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 24.

194. Members of the CIA's predecessor organization, the OSS, had served in Northern Burma during the Second World War. As a result of that experience, they concluded that it was possible to organize minority hill peoples and others to wage guerrilla wars in the countries of Southeast Asia because the majority of the population of these countriest". . . were isolated and dissociated from the history of their time." Roger Hilsman, "Foreword" to Vo Nguyen Giap, *Peoples War, Peoples Army* (New York: Bantam, 1968), pp. xxi-xxii.

12,000 KMT troops in Burma. In early May the United States called for talks among Burma, Nationalist China, Thailand and the U.S.[195] Burma refused at that time to join such talks but did send a delegation to Bangkok to meet with Thai and U.S. officials when the talks began on May 22, 1953. Burma was unwilling to meet with the Nationalist Chinese.t[196] However, when it appeared that a settlement was within reach, the Burmese delegates did meet with all three delegations on June 16, 1953.[197]t Soon after the enlarged talks began, the Burmese became disgruntled by the Nationalist Chinese reiteration of the claim that they had no control over the KMT in Burma. Also, the Nationalist Chinese were unwilling to offer protection for Burma's observers at Monghsat, the KMT headquarters, during the evacuation period.[198] Reportedly, the United States attempted to mediate these disputes.[199] On June 22, the U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, Edwin F. Stanton, announced that an evacuation procedure had been agreed upon by all four parties. Stanton said the evacuation was to last three to four weeks.[200]

The leaders of the KMT troops in Burma refused to acknowledge the evacuation plan and said they would not withdraw.[201] Under apparent U.S. pressure, the Formosan government sent several officers to Bangkok and northern Burma to persuade the KMT to be evacuated.t[202] The KMT leadership claimed that their troops had no desire to withdraw[203] and that they were the only force stopping an invasion of 150,000 PLA troops into Southeast Asia. Burmese and Thai officials disputed the KMT claimt[204] The KMT later requested that they be established in a "neutral zone" between China and Burma

---

195. *New York Times*, May 9, 1953.

196. *Ibid.*, May 14, May 22, May 24, 1953.

197. *Ibid.*, June 17, 1953.

198. *Ibid.*, June 18, 1953.

199. *Ibid.*, June 19, 1953.

200. *Ibid.*, June 23, 1953.

201. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1953.

202. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1953.

203. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 35.

204. *New York Times*, July 8, 1953.

as a mobile anti-communist force for use in case of Communist aggression in Southeast Asia. They wanted U.S. support ino such a venture.[205] The troops claimed that most were indigenous to northern Burma and southern Yunnan and should not be sent to Taiwan. Despite the disparity of the situations, they demanded voluntary repatriation as had been practiced in the Korean War.[206]

In the face of this KMT intransigence, the Burmese became most annoyed. On July 30, Defense Minister Ba Swe said that Burma was going to the UN to have Nationalist China declared an aggressor and unseated from the UN.[207] Finally, on August 8, General Li Twe-fen, deputy commander of the KMT in Burma, after returning to Bangkok from Taipei, announced that 1,700 troops would be withdrawn. He claimed the rest of the KMT were local residents and would not be willing to go to Taiwan.[208] Approximately one month later, Dr. Shao Yu-an, the Nationalist Chinese Ambassador to South Korea, was sent to Burma by Chiang Kai-shek for the avowed purpose of persuading the KMT to withdraw.[209]

As the Bangkok evacuation talks dragged on into mid-September, with no solution in view, Burma again threatened to go to the UN unless Nationalist China implemented the withdrawal agreement of June 22.[210] On September 17, the Burma delegation withdrew from the four-power talks in Bangkok because the Nationalist Chinese would not agree to their demand that 5,000 KMT's be withdrawn in three months and that the remaining 7,000 be out of Burma at the end of six months.[211]

In late September, the air force of Burma began bombing Monghsat to prepare the way for an army assault on the KMT.

---

205. *Ibid.*, July 24 and August 1, 1953.

206. *Ibid.*, July 24, 1953.

207. *Ibid.*, July 31, 1953. At about the same time some KMT troops began leaving Burma and entering northern Thailand. *Ibid.*, August 1, 1953t

208. *Ibid.*, August 9, 1953.

209. *Ibid.*, September 4, 1953.

210. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 36.

211. *Ibid.* U Ba Swe felt that the Nationalists wanted only token evacuation and that further negotiations under these circumstances were valueless. *New York Times*, October 6, 1953.

The announcement of these military efforts came after a Thai announcement that the first 200 KMT's were to be withdrawn October 5. The government of Burma denied any knowledge of the Thai announcement.[212] On October 6, the bombing of Mong-hsat was halted to permit the KMT to withdraw.[213]

As these events developed, the government of Burma was asking that the KMT question be placed at the top of the agenda of the UN Political Committee.[214] The United States argued that the UN should defer any action on the matter.[215] Over this U.S. objection, the KMT intervention was placed on the UN agenda.[216] The UN debated the affair again in late October but took no new action.[217] Burma's delegate, U Myint Thein, while noting that the Chinese Nationalist government was directly responsible for the KMT's in his country, argued that if the United States was willing to deny support to Chiang Kai-shek because of the KMT's refusal to withdraw, they would depart promptly. The UN tabled the issue on November 5 pending the results of the evacuation.[218]

The negotiations in Bangkok continued during October. U Ba Swe, on October 5, stated that only Nationalist China had not agreed to the evacuation plan.[219] Finally, on October 29, a joint U.S.-Thai-Nationalist Chinese communique was

---

212. *New York Times*, September 27 and 30, 1953.

213. *Ibid.*, October 7, 1953.

214. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 37.

215. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., said in the UN, "Our information leads us to believe that developments of the next several weeks may considerably alter the situation, and the United States therefore feels that consideration of the matter should be deferred in the hope and expectation that these developments will materialize and reduce the tension in that area." *The Department of State Bulletin*, 29, No. 746 (October 12, 1953), p. 497.

216. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 37.

217. The Burmese delegation released at the UN letters reputedly written by General Li Mi and others, to their troops, telling them to stay in Burma, to build an airfield, recruit more troops and continue as an anti-communist base on Chinats border. *New York Times*, October 31, 1953.

218. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 38.

219. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

issued in Bangkok stating that 2,000 KMT's, including their families, were to be withdrawn starting November 7, that Nationalist China would no longer supply the KMT, and that those which remained in Burma would be disavowed.[220]

The withdrawal occurred in three phases. The first began November 7 and continued into December, 1953. The second and third phases were conducted during the periods February 14-28 and May 1-7, 1954, respectively.[221] The first phase of the evacuation was halted the day after it had begun because the Thai police refused to permit Burmese observers at the Thai border to supervise the evacuation.[222] The evacuation process was resumed November 13 after the Thai police permitted a Burmese observer team to enter Thailand.[223]

There is no agreement between Burmese figures and those of the U.S. and Nationalist China on the total number of the KMT's evacuated. At the end of the first period of evacuation in November-December, 1953, the Joint Military Committee reported that 1,810 troops and 439 dependents had been evacuated to Taiwan.[224] Other sources suggest that less than 2,000 were withdrawn. There is general agreement that not all the

---

220. *New York Times*, October 31, 1953.

221. United Nations Document A/2739, pp. 5-6. During the evacuation KMT troops were given safe conduct through Kengtung State to Tachilek on the Thai border. There they were to turn in their weapons and go by truck to Chiengmai, Thailand, to be flow to Formosa. The cost of the flights to Formosa was to be shared by Burma, Nationalist China and the United States. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 38.
    It is safe to assume that the United States paid most of the bill. The U.S. Embassy in Bangkok contracted with Civil Air Transport to fly the KMT's out at a cost of one hundred and twenty-three dollars per person. "Out of Burma to Join Chiang," *Life*, 35 (December 7, 1953), p. 35.

222. *New York Times*, November 9, 1953. Also, there was a dispute over the nationality of 58 Shans who were among the first contingent of 204 KMT's leaving Burma. The Burmese claimed they were KMT recruits from Burma while the Nationalist Chinese claimed they were Yunnanese. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 38. The *New York Times* for November 10, 1953, reported there were 39, not 58, Shans in the group. The Shans told U.S. officials at the border they had been recruited by the KMT within the week preceding their evacuation.

223. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1953; Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 38.

224. United Nations Document A/2740, p. 5.

people evacuated were Chinese troops.[225]

Out of the total of 12,000 KMTts in Burma, the Burmese government reported to the UN that 5,329 men and 1,142 dependents had been withdrawn by September 1, 1954.[226] The Joint Military Committee reported a somewhat higher number of withdrawals, plus the removal of almost 1,300 weapons and 50,000 rounds of ammunition sent to Taiwan. In late May, 1954, General Li Mi announced the dissolution of the Yunnan Anti-Communist and National Salvation Army from his office in Taipei.[227]

The government of Burma again asked for a UN debate on the KMT intervention in the fall of 1954, but the UN took no action.[228] After more than four years of military and diplomatic efforts, Burma still was left with more than 6,000 Nationalist Chinese troops within its borders.

---

225. Many were Shans, young boys and women. Also, relatively few weapons were turned in and those which were, were "museum pieces" of little value. Tinker, *Union*, pp. 53-54. *The Department of State Bulletin*, 30, No. 758 (January, 1954), pp. 32-34. Because the first KMT evacuees turned in no weapons in violation of the evacuation agreement, "U.S. Ambassador to Thailand Gen. William Donovan cabled the U.S. Embassy in Taiwan, demanding that the KMT be ordered to bring out their weapons. On November 9, the U.S. Ambassador to Taiwan, Karl L. Rankin, replied that if the United States did not ease its pressure, China threatened to expose CIA support of the KMT in Burma. Donovan cabled back that the 'Chicomst and Soviets already knew about the CIA operations and kept up his pressure. When the KMT withdrawal was later resumed, the soldiers carried rusting museum pieces as their arms.' McCoy, *Politics of Heroin*, p. 133, citing an interview with William vanden Heuval who had been executive assistant to Ambassador Donovan.
    The final report of the Joint Military Committee stated that the evacuated KMT's had turned in a total of 1,312 weapons, including 29 pistols, 588 carbines, 484 rifles, 69 machine guns, and 22 mortars. UN Document A/3740, p. 9.

226. United Nations Document A/2739, p. 6.

227. *New York Times*, May 3, 1954.

228. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, p. 232.

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUED EFFECTS OF THE KMT INTERVENTION, 1954-1961

The partial evacuation of the KMT relieved some of the pressure on the government and army of Burma. While the remaining 6,000 KMT's never posed the problem for internal security the initial 12,000 had, they were still a concern for the government.

The most troublesome activity of the KMT was their continued assistance to the insurgent movements of the minorities, especially the Shans and the Karens. While many details of these activities are not available in Western sources, it is known that the KMT did continue their collusion with the KNDO throughout the 1950's and they began assisting the Shan National Army in its secessionist efforts.

The Burma army continued to apply military pressure on the KMT throughout the 1950's.[1] At the same time the army

---

1. In July, 1954, the army clashed with 500 KMT's forty miles north of Kengtung. *New York Times*, July 2, 1954.
   In April, May and June, 1955, the Burma army conducted "Operation Yangyiaung" against the KMT. Tinker, *Union*, p. 55. This coincided with the army offensive against the KNDO begun in March and followed an ambush on a party of Burma troops near Tachilek in January which had included General Ne Win. *New York Times*, January 23, 1955. The *New Times of Burma* reported in February, 1955, that twenty-seven plane loads of KMT's from Formosa had landed at Muong Sing airfield in Laos and were filtering into Burma, but the report was never substantiated. *New York Times*, February 21, 1955. Operation Yangyiaung appeared to be at least a partial military success. In March, before Operation Yangyiaung officially began, the Burma army captured a KMT headquarters at Mong Yaun, thirty miles south of Monghsat. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Chronology of International Events*, 11, p. 175. In April, Burma army troops captured six mountain positions from the KMT in thetsouth of the Shan State. *New York Times*, April 9, 1955. Later in April the KMT launched an attack on Tachilek but were unable to take the town. *New York Times*, April 21, 1955. Clashes continued around Tachilek into May. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Chronology of International Events*, 11, pp. 312-313.
   Military operations continued against the KMT after 1955, during

pursued the KNDO who continued to slip across the Thai border for trade and protection.[2] As late as April, 1961, the Rangoon *Nation* reported that the South Burma Command of the army had released a series of captured documents which were alleged to demonstrate that the KMT in Burma was still receiving orders from General Li Mi in Formosa and that the KNDO had been in contact not only with local KMT commanders but also with Formosa through the Kawthulei embassy in Bangkok.[3] The documents were also reported to show that the KNDO leadership had been in contact with high officers of the Thai army. The documents indicated, the *Nation* said, that arms, ammunition and money were being supplied to the KNDO from Nationalist China, through the Kawthulei office in Bangkok.[4] While these reports are not conclusive evidence of a KMT-KNDO alliance, they suggested to the Burmese that aid continued long after Nationalist China and Thailand had promised to endo their assistance to anti-government forces.

Most of the Shans remained loyal to the central government throughout the KMT emergency but restiveness increased as the time neared for the feudal *sawbwas* (hereditary rulers) to be compensated for relinquishing their traditional powers to the central government.[5] Shan dissatisfaction with the government of Burma increased in the late 1950's. In 1960, the Shan National Army was established to fight for the secession of the Shan State from Burma.[6] The Shan troops, most of whom were located around Kengtung, the area of the largest KMT concentration, were motivated primarily by a dislike of the Burma army. The Shans reportedly got some of

---

every dry season but they were of smaller scale. Most of the important fighting occurred on or near the Chinese border and will be noted below in conjunction with the discussion of the Sino-Burmese border treaty and the second evacuation.

2. Tinker, *Union*, p. 57. Combined KMT-KNDO units were reported in 1956 to be sacking towns within 50 miles of Moulmein. *New York Times*, February 4, 1956. In 1959 KMT's were still assisting rebel bands within 80 miles of Kentung City. There they had taken up ambushing trucks. *Ibid.*, June 8, 1959.

3. Kawthulei is the Karen name for their homelande

4. *Nation*, April 24 and 25, 1961e

5. Geoffrey Fairbairn, "Some Minority Problems in Burma," *Pacific Affairs*, 30 (December, 1957)e p. 311.

6. George Patterson, "The Shans in Arms," *The Far Eastern Economic Review*, 49 (July 22, 1965), p. 178.

their weapons from the KMT.[7] In addition to providing much of the motivation and weaponry for the Shan rebellion, the KMT also provided instructors for the Shan National Army.[8]

The KMT's motivation in supporting the Shan rebels may have been primarily economic. The KMT in Burma had adopted opium production and smuggling as early as 1952. With the ending of opium smuggling out of Yunnan by the mid-1950's,[9] the value of poppy production in the Shan States increased.[10] When the Burma army took the town of Wanton from the KMT in 1959, they found three plants for the processing of opium, morphine and cocaine.[11] Rewards for the murder of Burma Immigration officers made in 1961, were probably offered by the KMT because these officials could have hampered the smuggling of drugs out of Burma.[12]

The most important domestic political event in Burma during the late 1950's was the establishment of a caretaker military government which took power on October 29, 1958, and governed until 1960. A split within the ruling Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League caused by "personal antagonism, structural defects and the changing political climate" was the primary cause of the approval of military government by the Burma legislature.[13] The roots of these causes lay in the inability of the Nu government to solve a variety of problems to the rest of the elite's satisfaction. Among these was the problem of increasing armed anti-government activities throughout the country.[14] While the KMT interven-

---

7. The KMT were apparently receiving these arms by air as "foreign travelers" in the Kengtung area reported "frequent landings and departures of aircraft from the Chinese controlled region." *New York Times*, February 12, 1960.

8. *Nation*, March 3, 1961.

9. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin*, p. 88, citing U.S. Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, "The World Opium Situation" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), p. 27.

10. KMT attacks on villages in the Shan State such as the one reported in the *Nation* of January 3, 1960, were probably designed to extract opium from the indigenous villagers.

11. *New York Times*, May 20, 1959.

12. *Nation*, January 16, 1961.

13. Silverstein, "Burma," pp. 89-90, 125.

14. Tinker, *Union*, p. 61. The KMT had increased their activities on the

tion cannot be held responsible for the 1958 crisis in Rangoon, it was a contributing factor. The chief goal of the military caretaker government was the suppression of insurgents, including the KMT.[15]

As regards Burma's foreign policy, the continued presence of the KMT in the Shan State posed an additional problem for Burma. China continued its cordial relations with Burma and the existence of the KMT seemed to ensure their cooperation with Burma. In 1954, Premier Chou En-lai assured the government of Burma that it had no reason to fear China as long as Burma remained neutral.[16] The border treaty that Burma and China negotiated was the most difficult problem the two governments dealt with in the late 1950's.[17]

In 1955 and 1956, PLA troops entered the Wa State of Burma. The border in this area was not clearly defined and both the Communist and Nationalist Chinese governments claimed territory that Burma contended was Burmese.[18] Analysts differ over what motivated the Chinese to enter the Wa State. One interpretation is that PLA troops entered Burma in pursuit of fleeing KMT troops. The Burmese could not permit the existence of CPR troops within their borders and the government protested the incursion. Confronted with the Burmese protest, the CPR responded by denying the legitimacy

---

Chinese border during border negotiations then underway between Burma and China. Teiwes, "Force and Diplomacy," p. 212.

15. Trager, *Burma*, p. 182.

16. "Conversation with U Thant . . . by . . . Foreign Relations Committee," p. 2.

17. Some KMT's were reported to have deserted their units in Burma and returned to Yunnan in 1954. *New York Times*, January 19, 1954.
The CPR adopted a policy of rewarding KMT's who returned from Burma. Theytwere greeted in public ceremonies and given land whicht had been set aside for them during land reform. SCMP 1469, p. 24. As late as 1959, 82 KMT's were reported to have returned to Yunnan. The CPR directed propaganda to them from across the border. SCMP 2122, p. 20.

18. For background see Martin Norins, "The Tribal Boundaries of the Burma-Yunnan Frontier," *Pacific Affairs*, 12 (1939), pp. 67-79; Hugh Tinker, "Burma's Northeast Borderland Problems," *Pacific Affairs*, 20 (1956), pp. 324-346; Richard J. Kozicki, "The Sino-Burmese Frontier Problem," *Far Eastern Survey*, 26 (1961), pp. 89-90; Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 210-213; Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Modern Burma* (London: Cresset, 1962)t

of the "colonial" border.[19] Another interpretation is that the border crisis was created by the CPR to be used later as a model for settling border disputes with India and the Soviet Union.[20] Whatever the validity of either of these analyses, this incident prompted the beginning of negotiations to settle the border conflict with China by both the Nu civilian and Ne Win military governments.

Meanwhile, the Burma army continued its efforts to rout the KMT from the border areas.[21] These military efforts may have been designed to put pressure on the Chinese negotiators by demonstrating that the Burmese government did control the disputed territory. Also, they may have been intended to forestall any KMT efforts to tempt the PLA to cross into Burma. On January 28, 1960, General Ne Win signed the Sino-Burmese Boundary Agreement which concluded the border negotiations. A Boundary Treaty was signed by U Nu on October 1, 1960.[22] The treaty was favorable to Burma's interests.[23]

In January, 1961, Chou En-lai with a delegation of 400 visited Rangoon for seven days. The visit showed the cordial relations that existed between Burma and China.[24] The following April, U Nu and Chou En-lai met again, this time in Yunnan. There they issued a joint communique which reaffirmed the "necessity for Sino-Burmese cooperation in dealing with the KMT remnants still at large in the border regions." An agreement had apparently been reached previously which allowed Burma's or China's troops to cross the border up to ten kilometers in pursuit of the KMT.[25]

After 1954, the governments of Burma and Thailand made

---

19. Daphne E. Whittam, "The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty," *Pacific Affairs*, 34 (1961), pp. 89-90.

20. Teiwes, "Force and Diplomacy," p. 215.

21. *New York Times*, March 29, 1957; March 31, 1959; May 19, 1959.

22. Whittam, "Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty," pp. 180-181.

23. See Map 3 in Silverstein, "Burma," p. 165.

24. *Bangkok Post*, January 3 and 5, 1961.

25. Daniel Wolfstone, "Burma's Honeymoon with China," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 33 (August 24, 1961), pp. 353-355. Earlier reports of such an agreement had been denied by U Nu. *Bangkok Post*, December 21, 1960.

efforts to improve relations with each other.[26] After the evacuation, many of the KMT in Burma would flee into Thailand when Burmese military pressure on them increased. Those who were caughtoin Thailand in 1954, were reported to have been detained and given daily allowances by the Thai government until they could be sent to Taiwan.[27] In August, 1954, Burmese officials went to "Bangkok to discuss ways of easing tensions along the Thai-Burmese frontier."[28] Apparently their discussions were fruitful as the border was soon reopened at five places and entirely opened in late November.[29]

In January, 1955, a Thai goodwill mission arrived in Rangoon.[30] In February, the Burmese Ambassador and Thai police officials met in Chiengmai to discuss common border problems, especially the remaining KMT's in the area.[31] In the following months, as the Burmese increased their military efforts against the KMT, the Thai border police strengthened their border security operations.[32]

In June, 1955, as a gesture of friendship, the Burmese government agreed to compensate Thailand for the death of two Thais killed in a Burmese anti-KMT bombing raid of October, 1953.[33] In November, the Thai Economic Affairs Ministry announced a plan to assist the Burma army in supplying troops along the common border.[34] After returning from a trip to Rangoon, Thai Prime Minister Pibul Songgram said that Thailand had promised to aid the Burmese against the KMT.[35] In

---

26. Silverstein, "Burma," p. 166.

27. *New York Times*, July 4, 1954.

28. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 43.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 37; *New York Times*, September 2, 1954.

30. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 49.

31. Royal Institute of International Affairs, *Chronology of International Events*, 11, p. 166.

32. *New York Times*, March 3, 1955. As a result, the Thai border police reported that they caught seven fleeing KMT's in early April. This was the largest number of KMT's ever caught at one time in Thailand, according to the Police. *Ibid.*, April 3, 1955.

33. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1955.

34. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 58.

35. *New York Times*, December 20, 1955.

1957, Burma and Thailand ratified a treaty of friendship, and negotiations were concluded in September, 1958, on border problems.[36]

Despite these friendly exchanges between Thailand and Burma, there remained a basic distrust. In February, 1956, the government of Burma requested Thai cooperation in ending the "continued smuggling of U.S.-made arms to the KMT guerrillas,"[37] but apparently nothing was done. Thai Prime Minister Pibul's response to the CPR incursion into the Burmese Wa State was not in Burma's interest. Pibul accused the CPR of aggression and suggested that his government would participate in military action against China if the UN requested it.[38] Burma had made no mention of desiring any UN response to the PLA incursion. Tensions again increased in 1959 when a Burmese plane was reported by the Thai government to have strafed and bombed a Thai village killing one and injuring five. The Burmese had been attacking rebels on the border.[39] The cooperation the KNDO received in Thailand throughout this period must have heightened Burmese suspicions of the Thais.

When some of the KMT fled Burma they sought refuge in Laos as well as in Thailand. Burmese military officers met with the General Staff of the Laotian Army in March, 1955, to discuss their mutual problems with the KMT.[40]

The fighting in Laos between the Pathet Lao and the U.S.-supported right-wing forces in 1960 "produced a sudden flourish of Kuomintang military activity in late 1960, both in Burma and in Laos."[41] There were reports in Rangoon that the KMT had established a new headquarters in the border area and were being supplied twice a week by air.[42] In early

---

36. Johnstone, *Chronology*, pp. 78, 93.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

39. *New York Times*, June 14, 1959.

40. Johnstone, *Chronology*, pp. 52-53.

41. Clubb, *U.S. and Sino-Soviet Bloc*, p. 88.

42. *New York Times*, October 4, 1960. These flights may also have been connected with the fact that "in 1960 and 1961 the CIA recruited elements of Nationalist Chinese paramilitary units based in northern Thailand to patrol the China-Burma border area. . . ." McCoy, *Politics of Heroin*, p. 265, citing an interview with Lt. Col. Edward G.

April, 1961, the Chinese Nationalist consulate in Vientiane, Laos, said 4,000 KMT troops had been airlifted from Nam Tha to Ban Houie Sai. Arthur Dommen has written that "it appears extremely likely" that this airlift "was closely tied to American efforts to persuade the Soviets to cooperate in reaching a settlement in Laos."[43] This increase in KMT activity in late 1960 and early 1961 led to a Burmese military response which resulted in the second KMT crisis.[44]

By the late 1950's it had appeared that the KMT no longer was a major issue in Burmats foreign and domestic politics. However, with the renewal of United States' interest in using the KMT in Laos, and the renewed drives of the Burma army against the KMT, the KMT once more became a center of attention.

Lansdale. It is more likely that they were used to "probe" for intelligence than "patrol" the border.

Chiang Kai-shek claimed on December 28, 1960, that CPR troops had entered northern Burma and that these troops were somehow connected with the Pathet Lao. *New York Times*, December 29, 1960. The government of Burma denied there were any CPR troops in Burma. *Ibid.*, December 30, 1960.

43. Arthur J. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization* (New York: Praeger, 1964), p. 193.

44. Burma's relations with the United States had been severely strained by the first KMT crisis and remained that way throughout most of the 1950's. The U.S. Ambassadorship in Rangoon remained vacant for eight months after Ambassador Sebald resigned in July, 1954. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 50. U Nu traveled to the United States in 1955 as did General Ne Win in 1956. *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 63. They met with various civilian and military officials in Washington but little apparently resulted from the talks. The press reports of their trips make no mention of their having discussed the U.S. role in the KMT intervention with U.S. administration officials.

Economic aid was resumed in the form of the purchase of Burmese rice in Burmese currency in 1956 by the U.S. The funds derived from these sales were used to hire technical advisers for the government. In 1957 the Burmese accepted a loan of $25 million in U.S. currency and $17 million in Burmese currency. Silverstein, "Burma," p. 167. In 1958 the two governments signed an agreement providing for the purchase of U.S. military equipment by Burma. Johnstone, *Chronology*, p. 91. It was not until 1959 that the Burmese sufficiently trusted the motives of the U.S. economic aid program that they were willing to accept a gift of $37 million. *New York Times*, July 7, 1959.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND KMT CRISIS, FEBRUARY-MARCH, 1961

Either in response to the increase in KMT activities in Laos or the need to protect the joint Burmese-Chinese teams surveying the new border, the Burma army launched "Operation Mekong" against the KMT in December, 1960.[1] It involved both air and ground attacks on KMT bases. By early January, 1961, the campaign appeared to have been a success. A number of KMT bases and a KMT airfield at Mong Pa-liau were captured. The KMT's fled into Thailand and Laos. In Thailand they met little resistance from the Thai police and soon began returning to Burma. Three thousand KMT's went to Laos where some of them reportedly joined with the troops of General Phoumi Nosavan.[2]

As the KMT's infiltrated back into Burma, the Burma army moved against them. By mid-February it was estimated that over 4,000 KMT's were established in eastern Kengtung State at five bases.[3] It would seem probable that the major reason for the KMT's maintaining their bases in Burma was in order to operate in Laos where, as a result of the 1954 Geneva Accords, there could be no U.S.-supported bases.[4] When the Burma army captured the headquarters of KMT General Lao Li at Kenglap, they reportedly found "the general atmosphere one of American comfort." They found ample supplies of U.S.-made weapons in crates with the U.S. aid operations insignia stamped on them. Included in the reports were claims that the KMT possessed weapons as large as 75 mm anti-aircraft guns. At Paliao, another KMT base, the Rangoon *Nation* reported the KMT's had left behind "bulldozers,

---

1. Ng Wing Bo, "Exit of the KMT?" *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 (March 30, 1961), p. 579; *New York Times*, January 11, 1961; *Nation*, January 12, 1961. Thai officers were sent for liaison with the Burmese troops during this anti-KMT campaign. *Bangkok Post*, December 31, 1960.

2. *Nation*, February 8, 1961; Ng Wing Bo, "Exit of the KMT?" p. 579.

3. *Nation*, February 16, 1961.

4. The author is indebted to Prof. George Kahin for this point.

rollers and other heavy equipment.[5] The *Nation* may have exaggerated the finds somewhat as the Acting Foreign Minister, Dr. E Maung, in his report to the legislature on Operation Mekong, claimed no such finds of heavy equipment.[6] These disclosures nevertheless set off a series of demonstrations in Rangoon, including an attack by students on the United States Embassy. When U.S. military attachés from Rangoon visited the KMT base at Mong Pa-liau they reportedly did not photograph any of the U.S. equipment made after 1960. They also refused to comment on the newer equipment.[7]

On February 16, the Burma air force shot down a U.S. Navy-type PB4Y long-distance patrol bomber which was dropping supplies to the KMT troops that were fleeing into Thailand and Laos. The Burma air force lost one pilot and plane, and a second plane was damaged in the encounter. Both the PB4Y and the Burma fighter crashed in Thai territory.[8] Burmese officials were initially denied permission to inspect the crashed plane in Thailand although the wreckage was inspected by a United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel.[9] The Thai government later reported that the PB4Y had been stripped of all its markings and the five crewmen were gone by the time Thai officials arrived at the crash sight.[10]

The Free China Relief Association claimed that it had chartered the plane to fly supplies to Chinese refugees in the Burma-Thai-China border area.[11] From what evidence is

---

5. *Nation*, February 16, 1961.

6. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1961. The report listed the following captured items: 75 rifles, 15 Bren guns, 6 carbines, 1 revolver, 9 81mm and 60mm mortars, 3 wireless transmitters, a quantity of anti-personnel and anti-tank mines, spare wheels for C-46 aircraft, assorted ammunition, 1 jeep, 2 three-ton trucks, military uniforms, 1 generator, 3 days rations for 5,000 men, buildings to house 2,500 men.

7. *Ibid.*, February 24, 1961.

8. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1961; *New York Times*, February 17, 1961. The plane was initially identified as a B-24. A PB4Y is a B-24 modified for Navy use.

9. *Nation*, February 17, 1961.

10. *Ibid.*, February 22, 1961.

11. The Free China Relief Association claimed there were 150,000 Chinese refugees in the area. It was an organization with very close connections with the Nationalist Chinese government, if not a part of the government. *New York Times*, February 18, 1961.

available it seems that the Nationalist Chinese were ferrying U.S.-made arms and equipment into Burma and Laos for use by the KMT. The United States had been supplying the Formosan government with large quantities of arms throughout the 1950's. The Burmese found it difficult to believe that the U.S. government was not at least informed of these operations if not involved in them and heldtthe United States at least indirectly responsible for the matter.

In early March, the KMT's began returning again to Burma and the Thai government reported that all of the KMT troops had left Thailand.t[12] The KMT apparently linked up immediately with various bands of Karen and Shan rebels and recommenced their attacks on towns and villages in the border area.t[13]

The government of Burma again attempted diplomatic as well as military methods of solving the KMT problem. The government promptly protested to the United States government the continued supply of U.S. arms to the KMT via Nationalist China.t[14] Many Burmese believed, as they had in 1953, that the U.S. was Chiang Kai-shek's only patron, and if the U.S. insisted Chiang stop these operations, he would have to comply.[15] Burma also complained to the United Nations of the continued violation of Burma's territorial integrity by Nationalist China.t[16] The Formosan regime denied that it was sending arms to the KMT but it did apologize to Thailand for the crash of its plane in Thai territory.t[17]

The new Kennedy administration in Washington responded to the Burmese protest by informing Taiwan that it opposed the continued presence of the KMT's in Burma and Laos, and that it would assist in removing them. The U.S. government also denied it was supporting the KMT.[18] Nationalist China replied that it would continue its relief airdrops to the KMT, although it would cooperate in any "voluntary"tevacua-

---

12. *Ibid.*, March 5 and March 7, 1961.

13. *Ibid.*, March 9 and March 12, 1961.

14. *Ibid.*, February 18, 1961.

15. *Nation*, February 20, 1961.

16. *New York Times*, February 23, 1961; *Nation*, February 23, 1961.

17. *New York Times*, February 21 and February 24, 1961.

18. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1961; *Nation*, March 5, 1961.

tion of the KMT troops.[19] It appeared that the crisis was going to be a repeat of the 1953 crisis, albeit on a smaller scale. Nationalist Chinese officials said most of the KMT's refused to leave Burma to go to Taiwan.[20]

However, within two weeks of the U.S. response to the Burmese protest, Thai Prime Minister Sarit Thanarat announced that an evacuation of the KMT's from Chiengmai in Civil Air Transport planes would begin March 17.[21] The details of the evacuation are not clear. It is not known how many KMT's were evacuated to Taiwan or whether they were located in Thailand, Laos or Burma. About 4,000 evacuees is the number most often cited in Western sources.[22]

---

19. *New York Times*, March 4 and March 7, 1961.

20. Of 3,500 KMT's, only about one-third were expected to want to be evacuated. *Nation*, March 10 and March 11, 1961.

21. Officials on Taiwan said the KMT's would be flown out in Nationalist Chinese planes. *Nation*, March 17, 1961.

22. The Nationalist Chinese reported that they had evacuated 4,211 KMT's by early April, 1961. *New York Times*, April 6, 1961. The Rangoon *Nation* of March 30, 1961, said only about 2,000 KMT's had been removed from Burma by that time. Perhaps the differences is accounted for if 2,000 were flown out of Laos.

    On March 14, approximately 1,200 KMT's were seen at Ban Houei Sai, on the Mekong River, crossing into Thailand from Laos. Perhaps they were going to Chiengmai for evacuation. Dommen, *Conflict in Laos*, p. 193. A United Press International dispatch of April 12 stated that the last of 4,000 KMT's were being airlifted out of Vientiane. *New York Times*, April 12, 1961. The *Nation* reported that the KMT's were being evacuated from two unknown airfields. *Nation*, March 30, 1961. Presumably one was Chiengmai and perhaps the other was Vientiane. From the available information, there is no way of knowing with certainty.

    According to mainland Chinese sources, at least 2,000 KMT's, supplied from Taiwan, continued to fight on the side of the rightist forces in Laos after the completion of the second evacuation. They were reportedly located in Houi Sai Province and along the northern border of Thailand. "Chinese Press Opinion: The Chinese People Cannot Remain Indifferent," *Peking Review*, Vol. V, No. 21 (May 25, 1962), p. 19.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE KMT INTERVENTION FOR BURMA IN THE 1960's

The second KMT crisis occurred approximately halfway through the period between the two Ne Win military governments. "Dissatisfaction among the minorities with control from the Burman-dominated center was the single most important problem of the 22 months" of this period of civilian government.[1] U Nu attempted to play down the degree of insurgency in the country. In August, 1961, he estimated that only 750 KMT's remained in Burma. He said that there were 3,000 KNDO's, 2,000 Shan rebels and 1,500 Communist rebels.[2] Earlier he predicted that the Shan rebellion would die out within a year as the Shan rebels were no longer receiving arms from the KMT.[3] In January, 1962, Nu said that only the Shan and Karen rebels posed a threat to the government. The Communists, KMT's and Kachin insurgents were no longer of concern.[4]

Within two months of these optimistic statements, General Ne Win and the army conducted a coup that removed Nu and replaced the civilian government with a military one. While there were other factors motivating the military,[5] the increase in insurgent activity, especially among the Karen National Defense Organization, prompted the military to act.[6]

---

1. Richard Butwell, "The Four Failures of U Nu's Second Premiership," *Asian Survey*, 2 (March, 1962), p. 7.

2. *Nation*, August 16, 1961.

3. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1961. In October Nu said that the insurgency situation was "not very serious" and that "only pockets of resistance" remained. *Ibid.*, October 24, 1961.

4. *Ibid.*, January 28, 1962.

5. Butwell, "Four Failures of U Nu's," p. 2; F. K. Lehman, "Ethnic Categories in Burma and the Theory of Social Systems," in *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations*, ed. by Kunstadter, pp. 94-98.

6. Trager, *Burma*, pp. 191-192.

Ne Win apparently feared that Nu was going to concede too much to the minorities' demands and allow the disintegration of the Union. The demands of Shan and Karen rebels, although they had had some legitimacy in the eyes of some Burmans before, now met with much less sympathy, especially from the military because of the minorities' collusion with the KMT.[7] Soon after the coup, the army increased its activities against the insurgents.[8]

It cannot be demonstrated that the KMT problem provided justification for the 1962 coup, but certainly the continued support provided the Shan, Karen and perhaps the Kachin rebels by the KMT, through their arms and training in the 1950's and early 1960's, was an important contributing factor. If the army had not had to contend with the KMT in the early 1950's, the insurgency problem would have persisted, if at all, on a much smaller level. The continual support of modern U.S. weapons to the insurgents via Nationalist China increased the rebels' military power vis-à-vis the government. Being strong, the minorities felt they did not need to compromise their demands. Prime Minister Nu appeared to give in on many points to meet the demands of the minorities. The conciliatoriness on Nu's part appeared to Ne Win and the army as giving in to unreasonableness, and they intervened before Nu could conclude his efforts to restore domestic peace by granting greater regional autonomy.

Since the 1962 coup, insurgency among the minorities has apparently increased. While the army government was able to negotiate a satisfactory solution with some right-wing KNDO's in 1964,[9] unrest among left-wing Karens and Shans continued.[10] In 1965 a "Council for National Liberation" was founded by not only Karens and Shans opposed to Ne Win but also some Mons and Burmans.[11] The minorities and disaffected Burmans looked to U Nu in the early 1970's to unite them and overthrow Ne Win.

---

7. Frank N. Trager, "The Failure of U Nu and the Return of the Armed Forces in Burma," *Review of Politics*, 25 (July, 1963), p. 318.

8. A KNDO headquarters was captured as was a combined Shan-KMT base at Naungplan. *Ibid.*, p. 322.

9. *New York Times*, March 14 and April 13, 1964.

10. Delia and Ferdinand Kuhn, *Borderlands* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 193; Patterson, "The Shans in Arms," p. 183; *The Guardian* (Manchester), November 3, 1971.

11. Parke Fulham, "Burma Guards Her Secrets," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 51 (March 3, 1966), p. 404.

The KMT are still active in the Shan State. While they no longer fight for political reasons, they do have an interest in limiting the government's control over their areas of operation. The lucrative opium trade the KMT now conduct would be seriously hampered, if not ended, if the government of Burma could successfully integrate the Shan State into the Union. The KMT have an interest in keeping the central government's control of the border regions minimal.[12]

Since 1961, a probable majority of the remaining KMT in northern Southeast Asia, some of whom by now must be second generation troops, have resided in the Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Nan provinces of Thailand. The most recent estimate of their number is that they are still 5,500 to 6,000 strong.[13] In a most profitable business, the KMT cross into Burma to escort 90 per cent of the opium grown in the Shan State to the international drug traders in Bangkok and Saigon.[14] As a result of the KMT presence in the eastern Shan State the central government has been unable to control the area effectively, thus permitting CIA-organized intelligence teams to cross Burma from Laos into southern China. These activities continued at least up to President Nixon's visit to China in 1971.[15]

---

12. The author is indebted to O. E. Clubb, Jr., for this point.

13. *New York Times*, December 13, 1972.

14. McCoy, *Politics of Heroin*, pp. 246-247, 315.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 334, citing an interview with William Young in Chiengmai, Thailand. See also Michael Morrow's Dispatch News Service International report in the *American Report*, October 2, 1970, p. 3.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to show that the KMT has played a role of some magnitude in Burma's political, economic and ethnic problems. As long as insurgencies continue, the stability of the Union will be in question. At crucial points in contemporary Burmese history, the KMT have provided the resources and often the manpower to ensure that the insurrections would continue.

The two major political crises of Burmese politics, the military takeovers in 1958 and 1962, are partially the result of the government's inability to reach a satisfactory political accord with the largest minorities. Efforts of the second Ne Win government to solve the problem of insurgency through military means have not been successful. U Nu, now in exile in Thailand, had hoped to use the dissatisfactions of various groups to unseat Ne Win and to return to power with the support of the minorities.[1]

Continued insurgent activities in certain areas of Burma have contributed to the problems attendant to the restructuring of the economy in the 1960's and 1970's. Instability in some areas has resulted in labor shortages and the interruption of cultivation. Exports of minerals such as wolfram and tin have also been limited because of the inability of the central government to obtain these minerals located in the minority areas.[2] Foreign exchange has also been lost because of the smuggling operations in minerals like wolfram and jade.

The Burmese have been convinced that their neutral foreign policy is the primary factor that has allowed them to remain independent of the great powers in the Cold War.

---

1. Sterling Seagrave, "Report: Burma," *Atlantic Monthly*, 225, No. 4 (April, 1970), pp. 32-40. Nu has since "quit the leadership of the United National Liberation Front because of his opposition to the right of secession demanded by his ethnic minority allies in the Front." Richard Butwell, "Burma: The Politics of Survival and Renewal," *Current History*, December, 1972, fn. 1, p. 249.

2. Fisher, *Southeast Asia: A Geography*, pp. 454-457.

Whether discussing their relations with the People's Republic of China or the United States, all the major Burmese leaders since independence have said that neutralism has been their greatest protection. Since Burma is the only neutral nation in Southeast Asia today, they may perhaps take some pride in their accomplishment.

While Burmese neutralism was originally motivated in part by the positive goal of maintaining friendly relations with all nations, it has become an increasingly negativet policy determined by the Burmese apprehension of losing their independence to one of the major powers. Today Burma is one of the most isolated countries in the world. The KMT crises made apparent to the Burmese the danger of their country becoming a pawn in the U.S. campaign against China and neutralism. Yet a strict neutralist foreign policy has continued to be their best protection.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Newspapers and Periodicals

Bangkok Post, 1953-1954, 1960-1961.

The Nation (Rangoon), 1952-1953, 1961.

New York Herald Tribune, March-April, 1953.

New York Times, 1948-1973.

The State Department Bulletin, United States Department of State, 1949-1969.

Survey of the Current Mainland Press, United States Consulate-General, Hong Kong, 1954-1962.

B. Books

Barnet, Richard J. *Intervention and Revolution: America's Confrontation with Insurgent Movements Around the World.* New York: Meridian Books, 1968.
A review of U.S. involvements in the politics of other countries.

Berger, Carlo *The Korea Knot: A Military-Political History.* Revised Edition. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964.
A standard history from the United States' perspective, with good chapters on the pre-war and post-war situations in Korean politics.

Burma, Union of. Ministry of Information. *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma.* Rangoon, 1953.
A well-documented and fair presentation of the Burmese argument up to July, 1953.

Cady, John F. *A History of Modern Burma.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958.
The standard history of modern Burma which presents useful information on the Burmese perception of the KMT intervention.

Clubb, Oliver E.t, Jr. *The Effects of the Chinese Nationalist Military Activities in Burma on Burmese Foreign Policy.* Santa Monica, Californiat The RAND Corporation, 1959.
Presents the military and diplomatic history of the KMT intervention through the evacuation of 1953-1954, but the conclusions, especially that the problem was one of Burmese-CPR relations and has had no effect on Burmese foreign policy since 1954, are incorrect.

————. *The United States and the Sino-Soviet Bloc in Southeast Asia.* Washington, D.C.t The Brookings Institution, 1962.
An excellent discussion of international politics in Southeast Asia since World II with a good discussion of the motivations of the U.S. and Nationalist China in supporting the KMT in Burma.

Congressional Quarterly Service. *China and U.S. Far East Policy, 1945-1965.* Washington, D.C., 1967.
A useful source book.

Crocker, Isabelle. *Burma's Foreign Policy and the Korean War: A Case Study.* Santa Monica, California: The RAND Corporation, 1958.
Traces the reaction of the Burmese government from the beginning of the Korean War to the armistice showing the increasing Burmese disillusionment with the policies of the West.

Darling, Frank. *U.S. and Thailand.* Washington, D.C.t Public Affairs Press, 1965.
An insightful discussion of some of the consequences for Thailand of United Statest foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

Dommen, Arthur J. *Conflict in Laos: The Politics of Neutralization.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964.
Although written from the perspective of the United States government, it is a useful account of the politics of Laos since 1954.

Fifield, Russell H. *The Diplomacy of Southeast Asia, 1945-1958.* New Yorkt Harper, 1958. Chapter 6: Burma.
A cursory discussion of Burma's relations which underemphasizes the Burmese view.

Fisher, Charles A. *Southeast Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography.* Londont Metheun and Co., Ltd., 1966.t Chapter 14t The Union of Burma.
A very useful geography which relates political events to social, economic and geographic factors.

Hilsman, Roger. *To Move a Nation*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1967.
The history of how part of the Kennedy administration, especially Hilsman, viewed Southeast Asia.

————. "Foreword" to *People's War, People's Army* by Vo Nguyen Giap. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.
A revealing picture of the perspective of a liberal U.S. official toward the nature of war in Southeast Asia.

Johnstone, William C. *Burma's Foreign Policy: A Study in Neutralism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963.
A helpful study but unfortunately badly distorted by a preoccupation with the Cold War.

————, and the Staff of the Rangoon-Hopkins Center. *A Chronology of Burma's International Relations*. Rangoon: Rangoon University, 1959.
While not complete, this is a useful listing of many of the major events in Burma's foreign relations as found in official government statements and Burmese and U.S. newspapers.

Koen, Ross Y. *The China Lobby in American Politics*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1960.
While never officially published because of pressures on the publisher by the China Lobby, the few copies available present an important study of the power of non-official foreign policy making.

Kuhn, Delia and Ferdinand. *Borderlands*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962. Chapter 3: Burma's Borderlands.
An interesting account of the Shan insurrection by two Americans who visited the border area in the early 1960's.

Kyat Thet. "Burma: The Political Integration of Linguistic and Religious Minority Groups." *Nationalism and Progress in Free Asia*. Edited by Philip W. Thayer. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956.
An account of minority problems in Burma which places a large share of the blame for the problem on the nature of British colonial policy.

Lamb, Alastair. *Asian Frontiers: Studies in a Continuing Problem*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1968. Chapter 8: Burma.
A factual discussion of the border relations of Burma with all of her neighboring states, especially good on the Sino-Burmese border settlement of 1960.

Lehman, F. K. "Ethnic Categories in Burma and the Theory of Social Systems." *Southeast Asian Tribes, Minorities and Nations*. Edited by Peter Kunstadter. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967.
Sets forth the proposition that many of Burma's minority problems are caused by a misunderstanding of the traditional relations between Burmans and the minorities.

McCabe, Robert Carr. *Storm Over Asia*. New York: New American Library, 1967.
An emotional journalistic account of Ne Win's Burma but it does link Burma's foreign policy with the KMT intervention.

McCoy, Alfred W. with Cathleen B. Reed and Leonard P. Adams II. *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
A semi-sensationalist discussion of the drug trade in Southeast Asia which, while adequately giving the outlines of the trade, can be misleading.

Maung Maung. *Grim War Against the KMT*. Rangoon: Private Printing, 1953.
A witty presentation of events in the Shan State as the Burma army attempted to rout the KMT in the early 1950's.

Maxwell, Neville. *India's China War*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.
A fine discussion not only of the 1962 border war between India and China, but of the nature and history of British border policy toward China.

Mende, Tibor. *South East Asia Between Two Worlds*. London: Turnstile Press, 1955.
The best presentation of the initial intervention and the Burmese response by a French journalist who visited the Shan State and interviewed a variety of Burmese officials.

Montgomery, John D. *The Politics of Foreign Aid: American Experience in Southeast Asia*. New York: Praeger for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1962.
A review of aid in Southeast Asia from a semi-official U.S. perspective.

Royal Institute of International Affairs. *Chronology of International Events with Documents*. Volumes 8, 9, 10, 11. London: 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955.
A useful source of information coming from the British press.

Sheihan, Neil, editor. *The Pentagon Papers*. New York: Bantam Books, 1971.
The *New York Times* version.

Silverstein, Josef. "Burma." *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*. Second edition. Edited by George McT. Kahin. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.
A survey of Burmese politics since independence.

Skinner, G. William. *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1958.
An important study of power within the Chinese community and between the Chinese community and the government of Thailand.

Teiwes, Frederick C. "Force and Diplomacy on the Sino-Burmese Border." *The Next Asia: Problems for U.S. Policy*. Edited by David S. Smith. New York: The International Fellows Program Policy Series, Columbia University, 1969.
An interpretation of the 1955-1960 border dispute between China and Burma which sees it primarily from the Chinese perspective as a model for other border disputes.

Thompson, Virginia and Richard Adloff. *Minority Problems in Southeast Asia*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1955.
A standard work in its time which touches briefly on the KMT in Burma and the U.S. CIA's role in the intervention.

Tinker, Hugh. *The Union of Burma: A Study of the First Years of Independence*. Fourth edition. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
The best single discussion of the civil war in Burma from 1948 to 1960.

Trager, Frank N., editor. *Burma*. Three volumes. New Haven, Conn.: Human Relations Area Files, 1956.
A useful but uneven collection of essays on aspects of politics, economics and society in Burma.

————. *Burma: From Kingdom to Republic*. New York: Praeger, 1966.
A useful work but in many ways an apology for the Ne Win military government.

———————, P. Wohlgemuth, and Lu-Yu Kiang. *Burma's Role in the United Nations, 1948-1955*. New York: Institute of Pacific Affairs, 1956.
An excellent presentation of how Burma voted in the UN from 1948 to 1955.

Tully, Andrew. *CIA: The Inside Story*. New York: Morrow and Co., 1962.
A journalistic treatment of the CIA which includes a vague chapter on the CIA's activities in Burma and Formosa.

Wise, David and Thomas B. Ross. *The Invisible Government*. New York: Random House, 1964.
Another journalistic treatment of the CIA which includes a chapter on the KMT intervention which is useful but undocumented.

C. Articles in Journals and Magazines

"The Atlantic Report on the World Today: Burma." *Atlantic Monthly*, 193 (May, 1954), 4-9.
A review of current events which notes the importance of the KMT intervention.

Banerji, S. C. "Burma: Coup and Aftermath." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 36 (April 12, 1962), 97-101.
An informed presentation of the causes of the 1962 coup as explained in Burma at the time.

Brant, Charles S. "They Won't Go Home: Chiang's Guerrillas in Burma." *Nation* (U.S. weekly), 179 (September 25, 1954), 257-259.
A discussion of the KMT's refusal to leave Burma, written by an American anthropologist who had visited northern Burma.

"The Burma-China Frontier Dispute." *World Today*, 12 (February, 1957), 86-92.
Excellent background on the problem.

Butwell, Richard. "The Four Failures of U Nu's Second Premiership." *Asian Survey*, 2 (March, 1962), 3-11.
An instant analysis of the March, 1962, coup and the reasons for it.

———————. "Burma: The Politics of Survival and Renewal." *Current History*, 63, No. 376 (December, 1972), 249-253.
A contrived view of events in Burma in 1972.

"Chinese Kuomintang and Burmese Communists Are Friends." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. I, No. 3 (January, 1954), 22-23.
Discusses how the KMT and Burmese communists aided each other in an effort to draw the attention of the United States government to the situation.

"Chinese Press Opinion: The Chinese People Cannot Remain Indifferent." *Peking Review*, Vol. V, No. 21 (May 25, 1962).
This article briefly notes the activities of the KMT in Laos during the preceding year.

Deane, Philip. "Burma Defiant." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. I, No. 11 (September, 1954), 41.
By a British journalist, the piece emphasizes the necessity of Burmese neutralism as a result of the KMT intervention as well as other factors.

Fairbairn, Geoffrey. "Burma and the 'Cold War.'" *Australian Outlook*, 6 (September, 1952), 145-152.
An informative discussion of Burmese perceptions of the United States in Asia before the KMT crisis reached a climax.

———. "Some Minority Problems in Burma." *Pacific Affairs*, 30 (December, 1957), 299-311.
Cursory presentation of Burman relations with the Shans and Karens.

Fulham, Parke. "Burma Guards Her Secrets." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 51 (March 3, 1966), 403-405.
An unsympathetic treatment of Burma's efforts to deal with her problems alone.

"The Hill Tribes of Thailand and the Place of Opium in Their Socio-Economic Setting." *Bulletin of Narcotics* (UN), 20, No. 3 (July-September, 1968), 7-17.
Excerpts from a larger report on opium production and trade in Thailand which has been approved for publication by the Thai government.

Holmes, Robert A. "Burmese Domestic Policy: The Politics of Burmanization." *Asian Survey*, 7 (March, 1967), 188-197.
A creative if not perfect attempt to show the relationship between Burmese domestic policy and foreign policy under Ne Win.

"KMT Routed Off Bhamo." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. I, No. 7 (May, 1954), 38.
An account of an anti-KMT operation of the Burma army in 1954.

Kozicki, Richard J. "The Sino-Burmese Frontier Problem." *Far Eastern Survey*, 26 (1957), 33-38.
A summary of Burmese-Chinese border relations to 1956.

Maung Maung. "Thailand and Burma Write New History." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. 2, No. 2 (December, 1954), 22-24.
A brief report on efforts to improve Thai-Burman relations in 1954 following the first KMT crisis.

Ng Wing Bo. "Exit of the KMT?" *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 31 (March 30, 1961), 579-581.
The most complete single discussion of the second KMT crisis.

Norins, Martin R. "Tribal Boundaries of the Burma-Yunnan Frontier." *Pacific Affairs*, 12 (March, 1939), 67-79.
The best presentation of the ethnic patterns of the border region.

"Out of Burma to Join Chiang." *Life*, 35 (December 7, 1953), 60-66.
Good pictures of the first KMT's leaving Burma.

Patterson, George. "The Shans in Arms." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 49 (July 22, 1965), 177-183.
A review of the Shan insurgencies.

Silverstein, Josef. "Burma: Ne Win's Revolution Reconsidered." *Asian Survey*, 6 (February, 1966), 95-102.
A survey of events in Burma during 1965.

———. "Politics in the Shan State: The Question of Secession from the Union of Burma." *Journal of Asian Studies*, 18 (November, 1958), 43-57.
First rate discussion of the prospects for Shan secession from the Union in 1958.

———. "Problems in Burma: Economic, Political and Diplomatic." *Asian Survey*, 7 (February, 1967), 117-125.
A survey of events in Burma during 1966.

Tadaw, Saw Hanson. "The Karens of Burma." *Journal of the Burma Research Society*, 42 (1959), 31-40.
A sound discussion of Karen-government relations in Burma.

Thompson, Virginia. "Burma and the Two Chinas." *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, 23 (May 15, 1953), 1-2, 8.
The brief article that first specifically noted the CIA role in the KMT intervention.

Thomson, John S. "Burma: A Neutral in China's Shadow." *Review of Politics*, 19 (1957), 330-350.

————. "Burmese Neutralism." *Political Science Quarterly*, 72 (1957), 261-283.
Both of these articles are good examples of the distortion involved in interpreting Burmese foreign policy as merely an attempt to fend off China and ignoring the importance of events like the KMT intervention.

Tin Soe, Capt. "Operation Yangyiaung." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. 2, No. 9 (July, 1955), 17-21.
A report of the anti-KMT campaign conducted by the Burma army in March, April, May, 1955.

————. "Winning Through Together." *The Guardian* (monthly), Vol. 1, No. 8 (June, 1954), 32-33.
A report on "Operation Bayinnaung" against the KMT.

Tinker, Hugh. "Burma's Northeast Borderland Problems." *Pacific Affairs*, 29 (1956), 324-346.
More background on the Sino-Burmese border question.

Trager, Frank N. "The Failure of U Nu and the Return of the Armed Forces in Burma." *Review of Politics*, 25 (July, 1963), 309-328.
An explanation of the 1962 coup as caused by Nu's ineptitude and Ne Win's fortitude.

Unna, Warren. "CIA: Who Watches the Watchman?" *Harper's Magazine*, 216 (April, 1958), 46-55.
Notes Ambassador Key's response to the CIA support of the KMT.

"U.S. Headache in Burma: Chiang's Old Army Becomes a Trouble Center." *U.S. News and World Report*, 34 (April 10, 1953), 51-53.
This curious article implies that the U.S. had once had an interest in the KMT in Burma but dropped it in early 1953.

Whittam, Daphne E. "The Sino-Burmese Boundary Treaty." *Pacific Affairs*, 34 (1961), 174-183.
An interpretation of the border conflict as resulting from the CPR having pursued KMT troops over the border into Burma.

Wolfstone, Daniel. "Burma's Honeymoon with China." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 33 (August 24, 1961), 353-355.
Briefly traces Burma's relations with China, including the border dispute and the second KMT crisis.

D. U.S. Government Sources

United State House of Representatives, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session. Committee on Un-American Activities, April 23, 1958. *International Communism (Communist Encroachment in the Far East)*: "Consultation with Maj. Gen. Claire Lee Chennault, United States Army." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1958.

United States Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *A Conversation with U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations by Members of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, March 22, 1967*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

E. Unpublished Sources

Silverstein, Josef. "The Struggle for National Unity in the Union of Burma." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Government, Cornell University, 1960.
An essentially historical review of the Burmese effort to solve the minority problem.

Young, Kenneth Ray. "Nationalist Chinese Troops in Burma--Obstacle in Burma's Foreign Relations: 1949-1961." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of History, New York University, 1970.
A curious attempt to rewrite the history of the KMT intervention by ignoring the domestic consequences of it and denying the role of the United States government in supporting it.