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NSC BRIEFING

25 March 1954

BURMA

BACKGROUND

I. Historical highlights.

- A. Kingdom incorporated piece-meal into British India in wars 1824, 1852 and 1885.
- B. Remained province India until 1 April 1937 when separated became separate colony.
- C. In August 1943, Japanese granted Burma "independence".
- D. March 1945, Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League (AFPFL), founded by Communists became spearhead nationalist movement.

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- E. Mid-1946, Communist Party Burma (CPB) known as Red Flags, splits with the White Flag Burma Communist Party (BCP) and AFPFL and goes underground.
- F. Early 1947, BCP kicked out of AFPFL.
- G. 4 Jan 48 (4:20 AM -- determined by astrologers as most propitious moment) independence granted by British. AFPFL assumed power and rejected ties with Commonwealth.
- H. Feb 48, BCP goes underground on orders received from USSR via India CP.

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- I. July 48, pro-Commie Peoples Volunteer Organization (PVO) splits, majority (Yellow Armed Band) going underground. Remainder (White Armed Band) remained with govt. Elements of three pro-Commie Burman battalions mutiny and go underground.
 - J. Feb 49 -- Karens go underground. Main force consisted of three battalions in army, elements of one Kachin army battalion and undetermined number of military policemen.
 - K. December 1950, pro-Commie wing of Socialists, who dominate AFPFL, leave party and form Burma Workers and Peasants Party (BWPP) - become above-ground instrument of BCP.

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II. Insurgent forces.

A. Burma Communist Party (White
Flags).

1. Leader - Than Tun
2. Strength - 5-6,000.
3. Location - central
and south Burma.

B. Communist Party of Burma
(Red Flags).

1. Leader - Thakin Soe.
2. Strength - 1-2,000.
3. Location - south and
west Burma.

C. Peoples Volunteer Organization
(Yellow Armed Band).

1. Leader - Bo Po Khun.
2. Strength - 3-4,000.
3. Location - central
and south Burma.

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D. Karens

1. Leader - Hunter Tha Mwe.
2. Strength - 5-7,000.
3. Location - south and east Burma.

E. Arakanese (Mujahinds or Moslems)

Want join E. Pakistan.

1. Leader - Bo Cassim.
2. Strength - 500-1,000.
3. Location - West Burma.

III. Ethnic makeup.

A. Total population - 19,000,000.

1. Burmans - 13,000,000.
Inhabit heartland of Burma, are in the majority in delta and coastlines of Tenasserim.
2. Karens - 3,000,000. in delta, hills of eastern and southern Burma.

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3. Shans - 1,000,000.
Inhabit Shan plateau in
east, north of Karens.
4. Chins - 3-400,000. Located
in Chin Hills of northwest.
5. Kachins - 1-200,000.
Located in northern Burma.
6. Wa's - 1-200,000. Located
in northeast, between Shans
and Kachins.
7. Small number of Lahu's,
Nagas, Lolo's, etc.
Located in Sino-Burma
frontier area.
8. Chinese - 350,000.
Located mostly in towns.
9. Indians - 1,000,000.
Located mostly in towns.

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B. All ethnic minorities resent Burman control in varying degrees, have small degree autonomy and reps. in parliament but want more. Particularly incensed over government's Burmanization policies. Burmas also have hard feeling towards Indians and Chinese because of the latter's ability to surpass economically.

IV. Relations with China.

- A. Burma, in December 1950, became first non-Orbit country to recognize Peiping.
- B. Much of Burma's border with China has never been clearly marked.

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C. 77,000 sq. mi. of north Burma has always been claimed by China, and appears as Chinese territory on Chinese Communist maps. But Burmese occupy.

D. Official relations cordial, trade agreement now being negotiated.

E. However, Peiping embassy in Rangoon involved with underground Communists and BWPP. Russians believed to be too.

F. Burmese, partly from fear, treat Chinese and Russian diplomats with deference.

G. Chinese in Yunnan are also training Shans and Kachins who live on both sides of border.

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H. Peiping believed promoting united front tactics of BCP both underground and above ground. But haven't given much material aid because of disunity and lack of base area.

1. Insurgents seeking to work with other groups in arms against govt.
2. Aboveground Commies clamoring for peace and coalition govt.

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