

June 5, 1964

**Chinese Foreign Ministry Report, 'On the Topic of
Strengthening Our Work in Burma'**

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Summary:

Report explain that Ne Win's government is now suffering from a domestic coup and international isolation, therefore, support from China is important, which also satisfies China's national interests. Following the Premier's instructions, ambassador Geng Biao should plan a meet with Ne Win to discuss these points.

Credits:

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Chinese

Contents:

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The embassy's informed the Foreign Ministry that it had received a situation report that soldiers in the China-Burma zone, with Commanding Officer Sheng Wen [sic] as their leader, might possibly hold a government coup, which they were planning to enact within two weeks of May 30. "Aside from closely monitoring Burma's political situation and carrying out necessary internal preparations, are we permitted, in a suitable fashion, to send a standard notice to Ne Win advising him to be careful, without specifically mentioning the Sheng Wen coup?" The Soviets publicly support Burma, but this is merely out of mutual profit; the Soviets cannot reasonably help Burma, being so far away. If something were to happen, 'distant water cannot quench a nearby thirst.' After peace talks broke down, we continued our amicable relationship with Ne Win, particularly on the issue of treatment of expatriate Chinese. We absolutely did not become awkward toward them, as India did. Rather, while they suffered heavy pressures and faced economic difficulties, we persistently implemented helpful measures, offering them more trade goods. This is surely enough for them to feel that we are fine friends, that our aid toward them [is] genuine. "America does not recognize Ne Win. They constantly rally support from their allies to topple Ne Win's government. Changes in Burma are a threat to our strategic base."

To counter Sheng Wen's possible coup action, the embassy analyzed, "Despite rightist inclinations in the Ne Win government's domestic and international policy, which we begrudge to some degree, we still desire to uphold friendly relations between China and Burma. If the Ne Win government can continue to support itself for a period, it would be to the advantage of our two countries' progressive development...Seeing that Burmese attacks and persecution toward Chinese expatriates has basically stopped, we should consider: I- Strengthening China-Burma friendliness education for expatriate Chinese and reversing their government's confrontational feelings. II- On the issue of property compensation for detained Chinese expatriates, no more negotiations are to be conducted with the Burmese government for now. III- Militant Chinese expatriates' justifications for the Burmese struggle should be controlled appropriately.

The following is the Foreign Ministry's request to the [CCP] Central Committee for instructions regarding strengthening its work in Burma:

On June 9, after deliberating, the Foreign Ministry wrote, "Our unanimous belief is that despite relations between the two countries being a little chilled, they are still essentially normal. At present Ne Win is politically extremely isolated. Economic difficulties are ponderous. There is even danger of his being assassinated due to the imperialism and rightist forces that are threatening to topple and overthrow the government. Ne Win can be slack on reactionaryism, but there are acute disagreements between him and the American imperialists. The relations between him and the Soviets are not deep, while his attitudes toward us are, all in all, quite good. Judging by the current circumstances in Burma, no matter what kind of political power takes the stage, it will certainly [be] more to the right than Ne Win, and the U.S., England, Japan and other national powers will use this opportunity to make deep incisions. This is disadvantageous for us and for the people of Burma."

Following the Premier's instructions, it was determined that ambassador Geng Biao should plan a meeting with Ne Win to discuss the following three points: 1- Spreading a situation report notice throughout Burma that there were people plotting a coup. 2- Inquire whether Burma's current economic situation needed any urgent assistance. 3- Demonstrate that if Ne Win thought it was necessary, the Premier or General Chen [Yi] could go to Rangoon and exchange ideas with him.

"As far as our work on Chinese expatriates in Burma, we must carry out the struggle for their long-term survival in Burma. As for the current issues facing their survival, it is important, according to appropriate foreign relations negotiation practices, to go to the Burmese alongside our Chinese expatriates and, through reasonable intercession,

seek a resolution. We will not strike up a popular insurrection, nor will we make public disclosures.”

In the Foreign Ministry’s cable with instructions for Geng Biao’s meeting with Ne Win, it said, “Right now Ne Win faces difficulty with domestic and international relations. He needs to find help, and lately he has appeared friendly to us. This does not seem like a coincidence. We should take this opportunity to ‘send coal during snow,’ working with vigorous ardor. Therefore, go via Colonel Lun (no need to inform the Foreign Ministry) for a meeting alone with Ne Win. Inform him of points 1-3.