

China in Burma's Foreign Policy

Ralph Pettman



Few of the smaller nations today, particularly in south-east Asia, have succeeded in remaining unaligned with one or other of the great powers. Burma is one that has.

This paper traces the course of Burma's foreign policy towards China since World War II. It shows how, though at times relations have been strained as during the anti-Chinese riots, Burma has succeeded in maintaining amicable relations with China without committing herself to the Chinese camp. Though China dominates Burma's foreign policy, she has not succeeded in making Burma merely a satellite state wholly dictated to by the Chinese regime.

PLEASE RETURN TO :-
EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Ralph Pettman is a graduate of Adelaide University and of the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has specialised in international relations with particular reference to south-east Asian affairs and is now Lecturer in International Politics at the Flinders University of South Australia.

RECOMMENDED RETAIL PRICE \$2.50
PUBLICATION DATE 7.12.73

This book was published by ANU Press between 1965–1991.

This republication is part of the digitisation project being carried out by Scholarly Information Services/Library and ANU Press.

This project aims to make past scholarly works published by The Australian National University available to a global audience under its open-access policy.

Contemporary China Papers No. 7

General Editor S. T. Leong

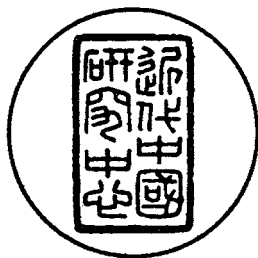
Other Papers

- 1 Leong Sow-Theng, *Sino-Soviet Relations. The first phase 1917-1920*. 1971
- 2 Robert O'Neill, *Peking-Hanoi Relations in 1970*. 1971
- 3 Audrey Donnithorne, *The Budget and the Plan in China: Central-local economic relations*. 1972
- 4 Stephen FitzGerald, *Talking with China: The Australian Labor Party visit and Peking's foreign policy*. 1972
- 5 Colin Mackerras, *Amateur Theatre in China, 1949-1966*. 1973
- 6 Robert Taylor, *Education and University Enrolment Policies in China, 1949-1971*. 1973

CONTEMPORARY CHINA PAPERS NO. 7

China in Burma's Foreign Policy

Ralph Pettman



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESS CANBERRA 1973

First published in Australia 1973

Printed in Australia for the Australian National
University Press, Canberra

North, South, and Central America: International
Scholarly Book Services, Inc., Portland, Oregon

Southeast Asia: Angus & Robertson (S.E. Asia)
Pty Ltd, Singapore

Japan: United Publishers Services Ltd, Tokyo

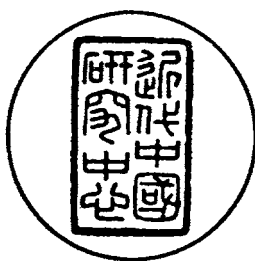
© Ralph Pettman 1973

This book is copyright. Apart from any fair
dealing for the purposes of private study, research,
criticism, or review, as permitted under the
Copyright Act, no part may be reproduced by any
process without written permission. Inquiries
should be made to the publisher.

ISBN 0 7081 0569 6

Library of Congress Catalog Card no. 73-87665

Text set in 10pt Monotype Imprint and printed by
John Sands Pty Ltd, Sydney. Designed by David
Walker, A.N.U. Graphic Designer.



There is a sense in which the idea of China, as it were, walks about in the world, its very presence among the global company acting upon the minds of the leaders and their led in lands to which its more direct influence hardly extends. In the case of Burma this phantom walks no more, but squats in all its physical immediacy along an extended and vulnerable line from Laos to India. As a result the Burmese are repeatedly cast by others, and indeed often cast themselves, in the metaphorical role of a Little Red Ridinghood who suspected all along that Grandmama was indeed a wolf. The big teeth have never been far out of mind, a fact that breeds a brand of political determinism well-expressed by the Burmese observation: 'China spits and we swim'.

The proximity of the People's Republic of China (PRC) dominates Burma's foreign political concerns, and its leaders have evolved a policy of non-alignment that seeks to prevent or at least minimise Chinese intervention in Burmese affairs. Those who have set out to explain Burma's policies readily recognise the primacy Peking assumes when viewed from Rangoon. There is some debate, however, on what this primacy means when judgments are made about the nature of Burmese non-alignment. A good example of the more critical of the academic assessments is that offered by W. C. Johnstone in his well documented study of Burma's self-professed state stance.¹ In the absence of any fear of reprisals by Western nations, he argues, U Nu, and Ne Win after him, endorsed a neutralist line that in reality favoured the communist bloc. In other words, while he is prepared to recognise that 'Burma's geographic contiguity with Communist China has always involved special considerations for the Burman policy makers', and admits that the 'Burmans regard their foreign policy of neutralism as successful to date', it still seems to him that

they may have been led into such a close relationship with the PRC as to have all but obscured any objective use of their fundamental neutralistic principles.² The continued success of Burma's merit diplomacy, its pursuit of friendship with all, and aid without strings, derives, he says, more from the Cold War than the work of any regime in Rangoon. The Burmese have been the incidental beneficiaries of the post-war big power balance—the central rivalry between Russia and the US. And in the long run he sees such a stance as unworkable. 'Fatal entrapment' by the communist bloc is Burma's most likely fate. Short of that, Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues will scarcely hesitate from 'extensive attempts' to turn Burma into a Laos or North Vietnam. Either way Burma's politicians, 'parochial', 'prideful', untutored in the obvious (to Johnstone) lessons of history and international diplomacy, are destined to turn their country into China's back door on the Bay of Bengal.

Johnstone's study is now ten years old, and much has happened relevant to his thesis since it was written. In the light of some more distanced look at the events he examined, as well as later ones, is the analysis he put forward a fair judgment of Burma's political record? Is it indeed a fair comment upon the policies and intentions of the PRC? This paper is an attempt to answer these two questions from a summary review of Sino-Burmese affairs since World War II.

Burma was officially declared independent on 4 January 1948. On 19 April, sponsored by the Nationalist Government of China which was still at that time the nominal government of the mainland, it became a member of the United Nations. The Kuomintang had helped fight in Burma against the Japanese and had expressed willingness to exchange ambassadors as early as September 1947, before Burmese independence had even been declared. Chiang Kai-shek sent a representative to the Independence Day celebrations, but relations with the Nationalists remained, in a period of confusion for both regimes, understandably minimal. The border issue, which was to figure so prominently in relations between Burma and the PRC, was revived with the Nationalist government's refusal in 1948 to accept from the new state its annual rent of 1,000 rupees for the Namwan Assigned Tract. This effectively abrogated the permanent lease that had operated since the Sino-British Boundary Agreement of 1897. But the initiative was never taken up, for the Chiang regime collapsed soon after.

Sino-Burmese relations since Burma's independence, the primary focus here, may conveniently be divided into four broad historic episodes. Immediately after independence there were no such relations to speak of though there was some testing by U Nu and his associates of their new interstate freedom and the fetters that this freedom paradoxically seemed to impose. When the PRC was finally established in October 1949 its first foreign policy response was much less tentative than that of the Burmese, and it established from the beginning those grounds for apprehension that lay thereafter behind all Burma's China policies. The initial

Chinese stance mellowed rapidly, however, and Sino-Burmese relations passed into an obviously amicable phase that had its high point in the border agreement of 1960. This second stage wound down with the sixties and was finally exhausted by the Cultural Revolution. The third and divorced mode, precipitated by the recriminations of Cultural Revolution diplomacy, persisted until the end of 1970, after which there was a gradual return to diplomatic normalcy.

As a duly constituted and legally sovereign state, and a member of the new world forum, Burma felt the need very early for some definite kind of international posture. Decisive and discrete directives were not forthcoming, however, until 1950. For nearly two years, then, there was debate and question, probe and reassessment. Never having had to sustain a foreign policy before, a pre-determined idea of what was in Burma's best interests was understandably lacking. The search for an agreed orientation toward world affairs was confounded not only by uncertainty, but by domestic concerns as well: 'Insurgency, it might be said, was a twin brother of independence'.³ The communists had only recently gone underground, the Red Flag Communist Party of Burma (CPB) under Thakin Soe in July 1946, and the White Flag Burmese Communist Party (BCP) under Thakin Than Tun in March 1948. Than Tun's insurgency was the more significant one from the very beginning. He had been prominent in the nationalistic Thakin movement before the Japanese invasion and a minister in the war-time cabinet, as well as Secretary-General of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) coalition since its inception. In that party he had generally been considered second only to Aung San before Aung San's assassination. Continually thwarted by Aung San in their attempts to extend their influence within the coalition, communist representatives were, on 10 October 1946, excluded from the Central Executive Committee of the AFPFL, though Than Tun and his supporters remained in the larger party under Aung San and then under U Nu until after independence. In defiance of the ban they continued their vigorous anti-AFPFL campaign from within the ranks.⁴ Links were also maintained with other communist parties outside the state. Than Tun attended two conferences in India in early 1948 where the world communist movement's proposed tactics for colonial liberation were discussed, and the decision to undertake direct moves against the government was taken by the BCP Politburo and Central Committee on his return. In March the BCP Conference in Pyinmana resolved that 'the AFPFL must be destroyed by all possible means'.⁵ Evidence of a link between this resolution and the Cominform policy of world revolution, declared in Poland in September 1947, is purely conjectural, though the timing would strongly suggest it, and the March Conference is also said to have endorsed Goshal's copy of the Indian Communist Party's revolutionary program. Open revolt, initiated on 27 March from Bandoola Square on the first anniversary of the

resistance movement, was followed by that of Aung San's Peoples' Volunteer Organisation (PVO) and finally, in February 1949, by a large part of the Karen minority. The various insurrections failed to coalesce and the Rangoon government perilously survived.

Against this background tentative feelers were put out to possible international allies. 'Our nation as indeed all other nations, cannot live without allies', Aung San is reputed to have said.⁶ U Nu, not unreasonably from his country's position of acute weakness, repeated this advice himself and sent Foreign Minister E. Maung and General Ne Win to seek economic and military assistance from outside. 'In a world where the battle is to the strong, our country cannot stand alone'.⁷ Given the communist content to the rebellions, initial applications for support were made to Britain and the United States. The gist of the first collection of U Nu's speeches, *Towards Peace and Democracy*, substantiates this stance. Before the Burmese Parliament on 14 June 1949, he declared: 'Although our independence is over a year old, we have until now no economic or defence treaty on which we can fall back in time of need. It is obvious that we cannot go on in this fashion indefinitely'.⁸ And as late as March 1950 U Nu was reported as saying that the 'greater advantage' lay in 'closer relations with the Western democracies'.⁹

The turmoil in China, in the concluding stages of its revolution and then in the initial stages of communist consolidation, lent especial urgency to these missions. U Nu at least once publicly proclaimed the presence of refugees from across the Chinese border as a 'threat to peace'.¹⁰ Great Britain, which viewed the collapse into chaos of its former colony with economic and strategic concern, discussed the crisis with India, Ceylon, and Australia in February 1949, and so was not unprepared for the Burmese visit in the summer of that year. By June 1950 they had engineered a loan to Burma of £6 million, with Britain herself providing over one-half the money, but it was never used. The Americans for their part did not respond to U Nu's suggestion that a security pact be set up with Burma, though in October 1949 they gave him eight patrol boats, and by September 1950 they too had contracted to provide economic and technical aid. This alternative assistance probably explains why the Burmese did not use the Commonwealth money, an association they had already refused to join. The acceptance of even this relatively untainted aid was not without its opponents, and U Kyaw Nyein, a leading critic, especially condemned its implications, while using the opportunity to raise a neutralistic flag. U Nu attempted to meet such criticism by balancing off the international contributions, and on Martyr's Day, July 1952 he publicly invited similar assistance from the Russians and the Chinese, but nothing was forthcoming at this stage from either quarter.¹¹ Thus while U Nu found his state to a limited extent economically catered for, in a strategic sense it was left very much alone by the one world bloc that could have been most expected to help.

The Soviet Union advocated at this time a policy quite adverse to the Burmese leaders. With the build up of the communist revolt in Burma they came to consider the newly independent government, despite the Marxist persuasion of many of its members, more as puppets of the recently departed imperialists than anything else. The Cominform, set up in October 1947, endorsed the Soviet 'two camp' thesis and generally denounced the idea of neutralism. Thus in order to win Soviet approval Burma had to be wholeheartedly for the communist bloc or else it was automatically against it. And the Burmese leaders were far from ready to make such a one-sided commitment. The call to action that went out to indigenous communist parties, and the radical exposition by the Yugoslav delegates before the First Congress of Southeast Asian Democratic Youth in Calcutta in February 1948 attended by Thakin Than Tun, was part of that thesis. It was not one a Burmese government could ignore. However, the locus of Russian interest still lay in Europe¹² and support for insurgent groups in South-east Asia was much more ideological than material. There is little evidence of specific directives to particular insurrectionists or insurrectionary movements as part of a grander design for world revolution.¹³ Nevertheless the declaratory policy was sufficiently clearly expressed to disenchant a set of leaders who had only recently won their country's independence from Western nations, and might have viewed Russia more favourably than this initiative prompted them to do.

The new Chinese Government inclined to the Soviet view, though this diplomatic correspondence belied a certain, not so latent, difference between the two.¹⁴ U Nu observed retrospectively in 1957 that they seemed to prefer 'to give our Communists their moral support, apparently regarding us as stooges of the West'.¹⁵ Beyond ideological belligerence they provided just enough concrete assistance to the underground Burmese communists to create a feeling of unease in Rangoon as to China's ulterior ends. Peking Radio sponsored daily broadcasts by Bo Aung Gyi in support of Thakin Than Tun,¹⁶ and in November 1950 Thakin Than Tun reportedly struck an agreement with Mao in Peking for 'technical assistance',¹⁷ though the validity of the report is open to question. Journalistic rumour or not, the existence of Chinese aid was officially denied in Rangoon,¹⁸ and U Nu also felt obliged to deny before Parliament, in March 1951, rumours of Chinese infiltration: 'Whatever Chinese personnel the underground Communists have are not Red Chinese soldiers but some Chinese chow chow sellers from our country whom our Communists have collected and dressed in uniform to deceive Communist rank and file whose morale is declining'.¹⁹ But U Nu's conciliatory stand was well entrenched by this time.

The initial Chinese stance was, then, scarcely accommodating, and the typical statements they made immediately before and after coming to power seem to bear this out. In 1948 Liu Shao-ch'i described world politics in terms of a division between

two mutually antagonistic camps . . . the world imperialist camp, composed of the American imperialists and their accomplices—the reactionaries of all countries of the world' and 'the world anti-imperialist camp, composed of the Soviet Union and the New Democracies of Eastern Europe, and the national liberation movements in China, Southeast Asia and Greece, plus the people's democratic forces of all countries of the world When these two camps are in sharp conflict [a state of tense struggle], people line up with one side or the other [if they don't stand on one side then they must stand on the other].²⁰

To commemorate the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Communist Party of China, 1 July 1949, Mao himself wrote: 'It is impossible to sit on the fence . . . Not only in China but throughout the world, without exception, one inclines either toward imperialism or toward socialism. Neutrality is merely a camouflage; a third road does not exist.'²¹ Here he echoed what he had earlier expressed in 'On New Democracy': 'In the international situation of today, the "heroes" in the colonies and semi-colonies must either stand on the side of the imperialist front and become part of the force of world counter-revolution or stand on the side of the anti-imperialist front and become part of the force of world revolution. They must stand either on this side or the other, for there is no third choice'.²² An unequivocal situation called for unequivocal allegiance. Anything less was nothing but deception, whether intended or not.

With the experience of their own success so recent, the Chinese government fully endorsed the struggles of communist movements throughout Asia. In public forums they treated these movements as the legitimate heirs to their own protracted fight for power. The elites in the newly independent Asian states were likewise viewed by Chinese leaders as a sort of unsavoury deposit left behind by the recently departed imperialists. A good clean revolutionary sweep was necessary. Shen-Yu Dai offers somewhat oblique evidence of the generalised stance as applied to Burma. P'an Lang, the 'writer-spokesman of the winning Communists in China', branded Burma's independence as the result of 'bourgeois appeasement toward imperialism', and Ch'en Yuan, another Maoist analyst, found the country scarcely better than a 'miserable colony'. Burma was further accused of retaining British advisers to run the government and allowing American capital to dominate the economy. It was thus seen as a potential 'springboard of aggression'.²³ But there are more direct examples of the declaratory Chinese attitude. The World Federation of Trade Unions Conference of Asian and Australasian Countries, which began in Peking on 16 November 1949, made it clear that, at this initial stage, China's ideological and material strength would be squarely behind only the communist parties and communist-led nationalist movements of South-east Asia.²⁴ This conference was the first big international gathering to be held in communist-controlled Peking, and in his inaugural speech Liu Shao-ch'i warmly supported the fighters of 'national liberation wars' in Malaya, Indonesia, Indo-China, the Philippines, and most significantly here, Burma. These fighters, he said, were acting 'entirely correctly.

They have merely applied the methods employed by the imperialists in conquering the colonies on the imperialists themselves'.²⁵ Other speeches at the same conference were characterised by harsh attacks on the non-communist national leaders of the region such as Nehru, Hatta, Sukarno, and again, U Nu. As the Burmese delegate declared: 'Thakin Nu was selected as Prime Minister by the imperialists and a puppet government of anti-working class reactionaries was set up to carry out the secret negotiations, in accordance with the new strategy of British imperialism, for re-establishing imperialist domination'.²⁶ The Soviet proposal that the conference 'appeal to the working masses of Holland, France, Great Britain and the USA asking them to urge their governments to stop immediately the intervention in Indonesia, Vietnam, Burma, Malaya and South Korea and to withdraw their troops from these countries' was 'greeted with applause',²⁷ and by the fifth sitting this had been officially resolved.²⁸ The conference set up as its monument what amounted to a Far Eastern Cominform to support communist revolution in southern Asia.²⁹ 'In addition to the grave responsibility of leadership in restoring the national economy and productivity', Liu Shao-ch'i told a mass rally on 3 November '[the Chinese working class] has also to shoulder the grave responsibility of assisting the working class and working people of capitalist countries and especially of colonial and semi-colonial countries in Asia and Australia'.³⁰ For nearly a year after the establishment of the PRC a militant and revolutionary momentum was sustained in a fairly unequivocal way. At least official declarations were of this kind. The world was construed in terms of two armed camps, with China a resolute member of the Soviet one. The wounds of colonialism, it was argued, could only be cauterised by a real and searing struggle. The impetus of nearly thirty years of war was not easily expended, and could be seen pressing up behind demands for the armed occupation of Formosa, and behind the move into Tibet. Externally it was dissipated in a new and defensive fight on the eastern front—Korea.

But this is not the whole story. Behind the collective hard-line stance is tantalising evidence of less than solidarity in the 'anti-imperialist' ranks. Not until the end of 1950, over a year after the establishment of the new regime, not until their entry into the Korean War that is, did these ranks apparently close. In a Central Committee speech made in September 1962 and attributed to Mao, mention is made of Stalin's lack of confidence in Peking and his fear that China would simply be a second Yugoslavia. The Sino-Soviet Treaty of February 1950 was also, it seems, far from the automatic endorsement of socialist solidarity it seemed at the time.³¹

Furthermore, while Peking's *declaratory* policy remained unyielding, throughout this first year the Peking government was in fact prepared to deal in a correct, if distant, fashion with the leadership it continued to abuse in Rangoon. Only two

days after Burma extended its recognition to the new Republic, Peking expressed its own willingness to begin negotiations about diplomatic nexus, and this at a time of evident White Flag success. While verbally in support of insurgent revolution, they seemed in practice to be much more interested in state to state affairs. There is also little evidence in this initial period—October 1949 to October 1950—of concrete assistance to the communist insurrectionists within Burma, despite the precarious security of the official Burmese regime that the Chinese ostensibly decried. In November 1950 the White Flags were purportedly given a pact for ‘technical assistance’ by Peking. The press report of this pact has never been corroborated, but if true, such an agreement could largely be explained as a response to U Nu’s aid deal with the Americans in September. The anti-communist proclivities of the source of the report, however—the Rangoon *Nation*—would lead one to treat it with caution. Just what was transferred in material terms under the pact, if it existed at all, has never been ascertained. Certainly, if a fact, it was less than decisive at a time when the Rangoon regime hung by a thread.

Thus from the date of their accession to power the Chinese leaders in Peking pursued a more flexible and moderate foreign policy toward Burma than the ‘lean to one side’ rhetoric would suggest. Anyway, by the first anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic, significant initiatives had begun elsewhere, and the Chinese were probably glad by then of the support the Burmese seemed prepared to offer.

Burma was caught between limited response from the West, and unaccommodating and indeed subversive initiatives from the communist bloc. Its initial policy of casting about for allies fell to the ground. And yet Burma’s strategic position dictated that there be something more than a policy of drift. ‘We are hemmed in like a tender gourd among the cactus. We cannot move an inch.’³² Any external directives had to be carefully drafted. The area of manoeuvre was felt to be very small. And it seems a fact, as W. C. Johnstone observes, ‘that the nations of neither power bloc . . . thought it worth while . . . to make a sustained effort to capture Burma for their side’.³³

In December 1949 Burma recognised Mao’s regime, being the first Asian country to do so. The act was by no means unanimously endorsed by Burmese leaders, and E. Maung, the Foreign Minister, clearly qualified it by stating that recognition did not imply approbation.³⁴ Nevertheless ambassadors were exchanged, and in August of the following year U Myint Thein, the first Burmese ambassador, was entertained by Mao Tse-tung and a list of dignitaries at dinner in Peking.³⁵ The same month Ambassador Yao Chung-ming arrived in Rangoon with a staff of twelve. He presented his credentials, donated 500 rupees to the Shwedagon pagoda, and before the nation’s press extended his government’s ‘sincere friendship and

goodwill'.³⁶ Burma early took China's part on the Taiwan question, refusing to recognise the Chiang Kai-shek regime there, and it sought with some persistence the admission of mainland China to the UN. It refused, despite Anglo-American pressure, to recognise Bao Dai's Vietnam. In September a second Burmese ambassador, U Hla Maung, was sent to Peking to replace Thein who had been recalled in June, and he similarly expressed 'full realisation of China's importance and her potential role in the political concepts and trend of events in the East'.³⁷

Burma's official recognition was received in a begrudging way that was consistent with China's hard-line declaratory stance. In an article on 'Diplomacy and Friendship' in *People's China*, January 1950, it was noted that while the USSR and the People's Democracies had 'immediately and without calculation of selfish interest' established diplomatic relations with China, it was only after three months and more that the governments of several other nations such as Burma and India also decided to establish diplomatic relations. 'As clearly indicated by the governments of these countries, the victory of the Chinese people has been so overwhelming and decisive that they are left with no alternative.' The same article developed a further theme that was to re-emerge again with reference to Burma only in the third and likewise dislocated phase of the Cultural Revolution. 'It must be clearly borne in mind', it was declared, 'that . . . genuine friendship is confined to the people of these countries only. Their governments are of a different frame of mind'. Thus while solidarity could be expressed with the 'people' of almost every non-communist country, the motives of their governments, imperialistic and capitalistic, remained highly suspect. China, it was claimed, would have to maintain an 'attitude of unabated vigilance'.³⁸ The exchange of ambassadors, however, belies this attitude, and is the least ambiguous indication of Peking's approach to the matter. The opening of diplomatic channels clearly took precedence over ideological purity.

The communist victory in China had had direct implications for the Burmese. For one thing, the ending of the long civil war left Burma facing one and a single-minded government, tempered in revolt, and leading a potentially world powerful and directly adjacent state. By September 1949 it was clear that security guarantees would not be forthcoming from the West, and the overtures to the Chinese after that marked the beginnings of Burmese conciliation. The timing of Burma's change of direction would suggest that Mao's assumption of power marked the turning point. In a speech before Parliament on 28 September 1949 U Nu disclaimed all interest in 'anti-Left or anti-Right pacts',³⁹ and at a mass rally on 11 December he asserted: 'our circumstances demand that we follow an independent course and not ally ourselves with any power bloc . . . we should do away with any inclination to "long for the aunt at the expense of the mother"'.⁴⁰ And most significantly,

given the unresolved questions of their common border, at a Martyr's Day speech on 19 July 1950 he declared that: 'in relations between two countries, there are occasions when one side should forgo its legitimate claims with a view to maintaining future cordial relations'.⁴¹

At this stage moves toward China amounted in fact to no more than an equalisation of international influence, and the placing of China beside Britain and the US as a major state with whom the Burmese were prepared to have relations was quite consistent with the general external stance of non-alignment that Burma was beginning to build up. This soon developed, however, into something more than equalisation, which given the exaggerated significance China naturally possessed in Burmese perspectives was an understandable response.

In October 1950 China entered Korea to protect what it felt to be key interests in the area, including its industrial base in Manchuria. It also began the subjugation of Tibet. Burmese leaders evaded the Tibetan question as something in which they did not wish to take sides, while regretting nonetheless 'this drastic action'. Information Secretary U Thant declared in a radio broadcast: 'Our country has not the least desire to take sides on the Sino-Tibetan affair, but Burma with its policy of abhorrence of aggression of any character is certainly not happy at the news. . . . Burma believes in the settlement of differences by peaceful means'.⁴² The Korean War was a more complex question, and drew a variable response from the Burmese. They voted in the UN to send troops to defend South Korea, voted against a Russian demand for the withdrawal of these troops, abstained from one and voted against another Soviet charge of US aggression against China, and provided 400 tons of rice themselves for relief to the south. On 1 February 1951, however, they opposed an American sponsored General Assembly resolution branding China as the aggressor, and abstained on another that requested an embargo by members on strategic items to North Korea and the PRC. Each move was carefully justified: on Burma's initial support U Nu said that 'what was foremost in our thoughts was the expectation of UN assistance when our country is subjected to aggression';⁴³ the US resolution of condemnation would not, it was claimed, contribute to peace since 'the problem extended far beyond a mere finding of whether or not Communist China had committed an act of aggression' and Peking could not be expected to co-operate with a body that had already condemned it;⁴⁴ on the question of sanctions against China and North Korea, as they explained, there was no practical effect for the Burmese since Burma's exports to China for 1950 had amounted to no more than 1.1 per cent of its total exports and contained none of the specified goods. Burmese faith in the UN, as a specific solution to their dilemma of where to go for assistance should they be attacked themselves, was mitigated somewhat as cold-war in-fighting made the limitations of that organisation more clear. This in turn underscored Burma's faith in non-

alliance, and such a realisation pervades the second collection of U Nu's speeches, *From Peace to Stability*. 'If we choose one bloc', he said on 5 September 1950, 'will the other look on with folded arms?'⁴⁵ Disappointment with the UN's performance was evident and it was soon to become much more relevant to Burma's own strategic situation. The anti-communist newspaper *The Nation* was not alone in pronouncing Burma's voting tactics 'an admission of fear'.⁴⁶

The issue that began to dominate Sino-Burmese relations, and continued to do so until the end of the decade and then beyond, was that of their common border. Just where that border lay had been in perpetual dispute, by war since Kublai Khan, and by negotiation at least since the British annexation of Upper Burma in 1880. The Chinese communists were not averse to settling the issue, and as early as March 1951 U Nu had received a specific assurance through the Embassy in Peking of Chinese intent: 'There are no problems between Asian countries like China, India and Burma which cannot be solved through the normal diplomatic channels . . . we see no difficulty in sitting down together and demarcating the boundary. China has no territorial ambition'.⁴⁷

The border was brought into sharp focus for Burma with the retreat into her easternmost Shan state by General Li Mi, the last Nationalist governor of Yunnan, and the remaining two divisions of the Kuomintang 8th Army—remnants of the 26th division under General Liu Kuo-chuan and of the 93rd under Major General Ma Chaw-yi. An estimated 1,700 such refugees in early 1950 rose by local recruitment to an estimated 12,000 in February 1953.⁴⁸ Whatever the precise number, it exposed somewhat traumatically Burma's long north-eastern flank. Still fully extended at the time by internal insurrection, any substantial supply of arms and support to the rebels by China could conceivably have brought about the collapse of the Rangoon regime. With Li Mi's retreat there was the additional opportunity for communist pursuit, a pursuit that could then have been used to justify direct military intervention by the People's Liberation Army in Burmese politics. On both counts the Chinese exhibited an evident restraint—some more positive sign that the Burmese leaders had found something like favour.

Harassed by Burmese forces, who in June and July clashed several times with his troops, Li Mi established his headquarters at Mong Hsat near the Thai-Burma border, and was amply supplied there by air. His ostensible objective was the overthrow of the new government in China. Given such provocation the Chinese required little excuse for a direct offensive, as U Nu was well aware, but the Burmese kept them constantly informed of Kuomintang movements, and on 25 March 1953, placed the whole matter before the UN as an earnest to Peking of their efforts to dislodge the invaders. Aggression was admitted, though the General Assembly refused to endorse Burma's specific accusation of Taiwan, and watered down the

consequent resolution to this effect. Detailed evidence of Li Mi's movements between Mong Hsat and Taipeh and of the ultimate source of Li Mi's supplies was, to Burma's great disgust, put aside. Cold-war considerations came once again to predominate. Ill-equipped to fight the well-armed Kuomintang troops, and rebuffed by Taiwan which disclaimed all control over what its leaders nevertheless called the 'Yunnan Anti-Communist National Salvation Army', U Nu had had little option but public appeal of this kind. He received somewhat less than full satisfaction.

Pursuant upon the UN resolution, a four-nation Commission was set up⁴⁹ under Colonel R. D. Palmer, US military attaché in Bangkok, to work out the details for evacuating the Kuomintang. The refusal at first by General Li Tse-fen, deputy commander of the Kuomintang forces in Burma, even to consider the agreed plan of withdrawal, and then after consultations in Taiwan with Li Mi, to offer the evacuation of only 1,700 of his men, finally caused the Burmese to withdraw from the discussions on 17 September. The negotiations continued without them. The Burmese resumed their military operations against the Kuomintang forces around Mong Hsat and, in March 1954, succeeded in taking the airstrip. They kept up the military pressure throughout the subsequent evacuation period.

Evacuation was managed in three waves, from November 1953 to May 1954, but was nowhere near complete. Li Mi formally relinquished his command in May 1954 and announced that none of his troops were left, which simply meant that he disclaimed responsibility for those that were. An estimated total of 6,000 men, women and children were airlifted out, some fled into Thailand to trickle back after the pressure diminished in June, the local recruits returned home, and the rest presumably went over to China. The first wave brought in the sick and non-combatant, with unserviceable or obsolete weapons, even flintlocks. But both the standard of the evacuees and of their weapons, which were all returned to them after repatriation, went up in the following February and April waves. Burma pursued the matter through the diplomatic channels of the UN, as well as militarily on the ground, and in October 1954 an Ad Hoc Political Committee unanimously adopted a resolution requesting the Kuomintang troops that were left to disarm. Many remain to this day. In April 1961 Ch'en Yi and U Nu agreed to co-operate in moves to eliminate the troublesome remnants and to co-ordinate their efforts to this end. In 1967 up to 6,000 were believed to be living still in the border area where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet, using their arms to protect the opium trade, and living in fortified villages. The figure seems inflated, however. 'Opium wars' between rival factions are common and in November of that year the three adjacent countries concerned dispatched troops to the area to put down one such conflict that had become more than usually disruptive.⁵⁰

One government that achieved somewhat less than success in this particular

affair was that of the Americans. Their support for the Taiwan regime did much to discredit them in Burmese eyes, though there is early evidence of an American effort on Burma's behalf.⁵¹ Nevertheless, American weapons came in through Thailand, and the Kuomintang troops, who had been equipped in 1950 with Chinese, Italian, and Czech weapons, were by 1953 almost exclusively armed with American carbines.⁵² There was, inevitably, talk of Central Intelligence Agency assistance, though the US government officially denied this, and Dean Acheson as early as January 1952 had refuted statements by the Burmese Ambassador in Peking and by the Burmese press that the Kuomintang were being supplied by the US and led by American officers. Ne Win certainly charged America with complicity, and the charge was easily extensible beyond this.⁵³ But basically the Burmese felt that they could not accept economic aid from a government which at best sustained the Kuomintang's mentors in Taiwan, and at worst actively abetted that regime's wayward Garibaldi in Burma. There were additional minor factors,⁵⁴ but the dualism in assistance was the crucial one. 'We found ourselves in the anomalous position of receiving aid from the United States Government on the one hand, and on the other fighting against an army which was controlled and supported by the Formosan authorities whose continued existence was dependent on large scale American aid At no time was there any suggestion that the US Government itself had lent its support to the Kuomintang adventure'.⁵⁵

Burma also needed some striking gesture with which to placate the Chinese, which is the important point here. Resolving the anomaly by ending American aid served that purpose too. It has been argued, despite U Nu's disclaimer, that the Burmese sensed an American plot to raise the level of regional tension and implicate the Chinese, thereby forcing Burma to join an American organised anti-communist military consortium to contain China. Burma had been willing to consider just such an alliance in 1949 when the Americans were not, but by 1952 U Nu had opted for a version of external neutrality.

The most pertinent question here is why China decided, if there was such a specific decision, not to respond at this critical time either by aiding the insurrectionists or by military intervention.

This was no doubt partly due to a more general amelioration. With the Korean War there had begun, it seems, some sort of reassessment by the Chinese of their original declarations and the ideologically aggressive foreign policy statements they had earlier made. There were tentative indications that the more accommodating aspects of Peking's original initiatives were being brought to the fore. Mention has already been made of the stance adopted by Ambassador Yao Chung-ming at the end of 1950. By the end of 1951 an official cultural mission had been sent from China to India and Burma. A few months later, in April 1952, the Burmese sent their Minister of Culture, U Tun Pe, on a return visit for the May Day celebrations,

and Peking set up a Sino-Burmese Friendship Association as a result. Tun Pe on his return was warm in praise of his reception. He had met Mao in Peking and Madame Sun Yat-sen in Shanghai, and in June the government was apparently contemplating a trade agreement with China.⁵⁶ A Burmese land reform study mission under the Minister of Land Nationalisation, which arrived in Peking for the 1 October celebrations, was also received personally by Mao.

By this time Burma's outlook on China had been heavily clouded by the Kuomintang retreat. The crisis clearly prompted a placatory stance on Burma's part which it took care to strike, and the visible beginnings of later and much less belligerent responses from Peking were gratifyingly sustained. There were, it should be remembered, domestic reasons for the change of emphasis on China's part. The Korean War, coming so soon after Mao's assumption of power, drained an economy ill-prepared to cope with such an immediate and extensive extraneous burden. Time was needed to begin economic reconstruction, and it could be bought only at the price of external peace. Thus in October 1952 an Asian and Pacific Peace Conference was held in Peking at which Chinese communists publicly proclaimed for the first time a credo of 'co-existence'. The contrast with the Trade Union Conference of 1949 was marked. Instead of ringing support for revolutionary war, the conviction was expressed that: 'The people throughout China, the Asian and Pacific regions and the whole world all are urgently demanding that war be checked and a just peace restored and maintained'. Instead of direct aid to national communist revolutions it was declared that: 'In order to achieve real peace, the national independence of all countries must be respected and ensured. No country must interfere in the internal affairs of another country in any manner . . . We believe that countries with different political systems and different ways of life can co-exist peacefully . . . we advocate the employment of the means of peaceful negotiation, and not the means of war, for the settlement of international disputes'.⁵⁷ The message could not have been clearer, though it was somewhat muted in practice by continuing assistance to the Viet Minh in Indo-China. Truce talks had, however, been going on in Korea since July 1951, and the belligerence of the policy against Taiwan can be and was explained by both the mainland and island regimes as a domestic matter. Interstate practice was not totally at odds with the new and pacific preachments. 'It is impossible', it was held, 'that real peace can be founded on a basis of one country enslaving another or arbitrarily encroaching on another's sovereignty'.⁵⁸ On Burmese evidence they seemed prepared to demonstrate that they meant what they said.

In accordance with this evolution, Mao's 'two inclinations' thesis disappeared. Later editions of 'On People's Democratic Dictatorship', for example, repeated the sentiment that 'all Chinese without exception must lean either to the side of imperialism or to the side of socialism' but no longer held this sentiment to be of

significance 'not only in China but throughout the world, without exception'. In other words, two vital sentences of international import no longer appeared.⁵⁹ Stuart Schram points out that the texts of most of Mao's writings were substantially amended before their initial publication to remove the inconsistencies inherent in his policy shifts over time, and to remove 'theoretical errors'.⁶⁰ The task of revision obviously did not end with the first publication of a text, and was in fact continuous with policy.

Beyond evidence of this more general shift in declaratory emphasis, there were specific dictates that variably kept the Chinese from aiding Burma's insurgents, or from directly intervening there. Factors of expediency probably lay behind the gestures of restraint. Blatant and substantial material aid to the Burmese revolutionaries could have drawn an undesirable response from the regime in Rangoon by sending them irrevocably over to the other side. New and alien bases on the southwest flank would hardly have been welcomed, for the Chinese were already feeling the pressures of American containment. There was presumably little desire to add another front to the Korean one, where truce talks dragged on for two years. Burma was probably not high on any list of Chinese priorities in the area, and attention was taken up, if not actively preoccupied, by Taiwan, and by the French war in the former Associated States of Indo-China. The latter was concluded under the Geneva Agreement at the same time as Li Mi's withdrawal.

The key consequence as far as the Burmese were concerned was that the Chinese leaders had been accommodated without a confrontation. In U Nu's opinion, China had adopted 'a most helpful and understanding attitude' for which he would 'always remain grateful'.⁶¹ The crisis over the Kuomintang retreat, America's implication in it, and the accompanying Chinese propaganda campaign from early in 1952 attempting to verify that implication, laid the groundwork in Burma for a policy that, having arrived at equi-distance, went on to deferentially favour the Chinese. In 1952, for example, Chinese communist troops did enter disputed border territory in pursuit of the Kuomintang, where they remained until 1957 when their presence was finally admitted by Chou En-lai himself.⁶² Burma did not protest about them at any time before 1956, when further incursions finally prompted a request for their withdrawal. Similarly the Asian Socialist Conference, sponsored by Burma in January-February 1953, condemned totalitarianism in the USSR and its dependencies but avoided any such condemnation of China.⁶³ In March 1953 Burma sent its first shipment of strategic materials—scrap and rubber—to the Chinese in a Polish freighter.⁶⁴ Cautious acquiescence had become the watchword.

The pursuit of 'neutralism' and 'non-alignment' is a variable thing. To these portmanteau terms U Nu gave an official Burmese content in his opening address to the Pyidawtha Conference in 1952. He identified four basic ingredients: friendly

relations with all nations, acceptance of aid from any foreign country that did not attach conditions and hence delimit Burma's sovereignty, the right to decide all issues on their own merits from Burma's point of view, and assistance to any country needing help. Just how subjective such a foreign policy response can be is one of its most conspicuous attributes. Under similar strategic conditions, Thailand for example adopted a diametrically opposite position. And Pakistan, far from remaining non-allied, sought to ally with all major power blocs. The Burmese certainly did not pursue the policies they did as an act of voluntary conversion. Rather, they made predictive assessments of possible disadvantage, and opted, given their strategic vulnerability, for a purposeful deference. This was made more palatable by a declaratory foreign policy of friendship with all. Placating Peking did not mean a total loss of independence, or anything like it. The country was not thrown open to the Chinese, and its government did not become a mere satellite. It did mean in practice, however, certain modifications in foreign policy and a certain consideration toward China that was not shown elsewhere. Meaningful governmental autonomy was to be preserved, but at a price. This price included a temporary rejection of the Americans, diplomatic courtesies, and much symbolic respect.

By 1954, China's expansive and obviously more accommodating international mood had become unmistakable. Attention was devoted to modernising the economy, planning and developing the Chinese vision of the communist state. International peace provided time and resources for this mammoth effort. Peking tended to play down the clustering of world states into camps and the automatic distinctions they had formally, at least officially, applied. Non-communist states were no longer necessarily enemies, and the growing group of neutralistic leaders could under certain circumstances be used against America and its allies. Certainly the sympathy of this group for the Western camp was historically as tenuous if not more so as that for the Eastern one. Several countries in the region professed a desire not to be caught up in entangling military alliances of the contemporary Cold War kind, and China set about championing this cause to its own ends. Issues of revolution and 'national communism' were played down, while Peking sought to demonstrate its own independence from Great Power plots and its sympathy with all anti-imperialist Asians.

Not only was the 'two camps' thesis dropped, but a more flexible set of tactics took its place. Two years later, in April 1956, *People's China* printed 'On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. Written by the editorial department of the *People's Daily* about the harm that a doctrinaire attitude could do to the revolution and the necessity of learning from one's mistakes, it contained a

clear discussion of the revised way to deal with neutralists, and well depicts Peking's strategy over this period.

Stalin put forward a formula that in different revolutionary periods, the main blow should be so directed as to isolate the middle-of-the-road social and political forces of the time. . . In certain circumstances it may be correct to isolate the middle forces, but it is not correct to isolate them under all circumstances. Our experience teaches us that the main blow of the revolution should be directed at the chief enemy to isolate him, while as for the middle forces, a policy of both uniting with them and struggling against them should be adopted, so that they are at least neutralised; and, as circumstances permit, efforts should be made to shift them from their position of neutrality to one of alliance with us . . . when some of our comrades crudely applied this formula of Stalin's . . . the result was that, instead of isolating the real enemy, we isolated ourselves.⁶⁵

The Chinese leaders were not about to repeat the experience. As the struggle continued, they saw no reason for not eliciting regional support, or at the very least ensuring that there be no regional antagonism. Nearby countries might not ally with China, but they could still be prevented from allying with the US.

All this, it should be remembered, was still phrased in terms of 'revolution', so that it was still at least in a declaratory sense a matter of the good against the bad, and not just of the strong against the weak. 'China . . . was a big empire . . . and although she is economically and culturally backward today, nevertheless, under changed conditions, great-nation chauvinist tendencies will certainly become a serious danger if we do not take every precaution to guard against them'.⁶⁶ This last statement was a frank semi-official admission of the political temptations inherent in physical and military might. Richard Lowenthal⁶⁷ has pointed to these temptations, to the dissatisfaction and frustration that lay behind them, to the discrepancy between China's power potential and its actual influence and recognition in the world, as the key characteristic of Chinese foreign policy, despite disclaimers about great nation status like the one above. Frustration among its leaders and the feeling that China had a rightful position in the world which was being unfairly denied it was not chauvinism, but it did express the Chinese sense of their own presence and of the potential significance of that presence. A sense of presence indicates a degree of self-confidence, and from 1954 on China was to display an increasing degree of such self-confidence. As if to endorse this stance China was to join the world powers as an equal at Geneva, in May 1954, to settle the Indo-China war.

With regard to Burma it had been clear for some time that the underground communists were not about to take control, and relations between the two countries began to take on an officially fraternal air. Burma refused from the beginning to join SEATO and declared it an unwarranted incitement of China, though there have been accusations of more direct pressure on this point.⁶⁸ Rosemary Brissenden's assertion that Burma, while not taking part, was not basically hostile to

SEATO is imprecise.⁶⁹ The Chinese clearly abhorred the alliance: 'the purpose of the United States', Chou En-lai told the National People's Congress, 'is to destroy the Geneva Conference agreements . . . to split Asia, show its hostility to the People's Republic of China . . . and create new tensions'.⁷⁰ Burma at no point risked aggravating this abhorrence. In April 1954 Burma made its first trade deal with the Chinese⁷¹—a three-year barter agreement involving the export by China of cotton goods, coal, silk, tea and light industrial products, in exchange for 150,000 to 200,000 tons of rice a year, raw cotton, timber, beans and rubber. Twenty per cent of the payment was made in cash. With the world rice market declining, Burma needed outlets for her major product, and China was a willing and significant new market. In June Chou En-lai, on his way from Geneva back to Peking, spent two days in Rangoon and had his first meeting with U Nu. He came via New Delhi, where Nehru joined him in endorsing the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence', and on 29 June in a joint statement U Nu endorsed these principles too. Mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-intervention, equal status and peaceful reciprocation, became the rhetorical touchstones for a much friendlier relationship. It was affirmed that 'the people of each nation should have the right to choose their own state system and way of life without interference from other nations. Revolution cannot be exported . . . outside interference with the common will expressed by the people of any nation should not be permitted'.⁷² U Nu considered this visit the real turning point in Sino-Burmese relations⁷³ and tackled Chou on some pertinent issues involved, bringing to his notice, for example, evidence of the help China was then giving to the Burmese communists. Substantiating documents were subsequently sent to Peking.

The 'five principles' had an important effect in Asia generally at this time for they were a direct appeal to an expression of the anti-colonial and anti-Western sentiments that permeated the declaratory attitudes of a whole clutch of uncommitted states. Apprehension about China and Chinese intentions was widespread, and the 'principles' were a welcome step toward alleviating much underlying fear. In November-December 1954 U Nu made his first visit to China, meeting Mao who gave a banquet in his honour. U Nu was still quite prepared, however, to speak his mind. The question of Chinese sanctuary and assistance to Burmese guerrillas was again raised, and China promised to uphold its commitment to non-interference.

U Nu also urged the Chinese leaders to come to terms with the Americans. A communiqué issued during the visit contained a Burmese assurance that they would not allow Western bases to be established against China on their territory, as well as the agreement 'that each country would encourage its own nationals residing in the other country . . . to respect the laws of the country in which they reside . . . and not to take part in the political activities of that country'.⁷⁴ This

and the declaration of non-interference are somewhat ironic in the light of later events, but at the time they were germinal. Particular undertakings were made for the re-establishment of an air service, suspended in 1949, between the two countries, for the restoration of highway traffic, for the conclusion of a posts and telegraphs agreement, and for the setting up of regional consulate offices.

Boundary talks were also foreshadowed, or at least there was a further undertaking to settle the question of its indeterminate demarcation along the lines of the general assurance of March 1951. Official Chinese atlases were still being published in 1953 with most of this border marked and a generalised claim to the Burmese lands north of Myitkyina. These maps also carried notes to the effect that final settlement awaited the establishment of a 'People's Burma' and the completion of the revolution there.⁷⁵ The 1954 agreement was the first real step beyond such conflicting and insubstantive claims toward a genuine solution. The Peking Convention between China and Great Britain in 1886 had in fact contained a provision for defining the border but it had never been carried through, and the Chinese maps, of which the above-mentioned were typical, continued to show large discrepancies to Burma's disadvantage. But U Nu found more evidence in Peking of friendly intent than of opposition. And on his return to Rangoon he was pointedly reassuring on the Chinese attitude to Burma's internal affairs, repeating that to him the Chinese had 'categorically stated they had no connection with the Burmese Communists'.⁷⁶

This spirit of moderation characterised the Bandung Conference (18-24 April 1955). Burmese scepticism as to the feasibility or value of such a conference diminished, George Kahin implies, with India's intention to attend, and disappeared altogether with the acceptance of Nehru's proposal that China also be asked to come.⁷⁷ Disagreement over whether the Chinese should be invited or not, though all the five Colombo powers who sponsored the conference recognised China, had earlier led U Nu to cast doubt on whether Burma would participate at all.⁷⁸ During the conference U Nu arranged several meetings between Chou En-lai and other delegates, to whom the Chinese Prime Minister was something of an unknown quantity. Chou En-lai himself dealt in a patient and statesmanlike way with a number of diplomatic attacks, remaining accessible to other delegates throughout, and pursuing his active round of extra-conferential initiatives. U Nu carried his mediatory attitudes over into his American tour (June-July 1955) and he repeatedly commended China's peaceful stance there.

In line with its positively pacific policy Peking sent a second cultural delegation to Burma, and followed it up with an agricultural mission. Special efforts were made to convince the Buddhist Burmese that the Chinese regime was not anti-religious. U Win, Burma's Minister of Religious Affairs, visited China, and a Chinese Buddhist mission came to Rangoon. Ne Win took a military delegation to

Peking in October 1955, and was received by Mao. His visit was returned in January 1957. Cultural exchanges continued in increasing numbers from 1955 to 1958, a feature repeated in the years 1960 to 1961, a good index to the convivial state of Sino-Burmese relations for these more pacific periods when U Nu was in power.⁷⁹ In 1956 Madame Sun Yat-sen made a goodwill visit to Burma, India, and Pakistan, and in Rangoon police arrested the editors of three anti-communist Chinese language newspapers because of unfavourable references to the visit.⁸⁰ In 1956-7 Chou En-lai made his grand Asian tour, which included Burma. He took the opportunity while there to further endorse the 'five principles' and non-interference, and urged Burmese Chinese to abide by Burma's laws, to give that state their primary allegiance, and to integrate into its society. Goodwill was clearly the order of the day.

The beneficence of all this activity was somewhat dissipated for Burma by evidence of financial assistance, through the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon, to communist candidates in the April elections of 1956, also by a large increase in illegal Chinese immigration into Burma, and most drastically, by the incursion of Chinese troops into disputed territory along Burma's border zone.⁸¹ These events seemed to contravene the 'five principles', and U Nu, though not in office wrote a letter of appeal to Chou En-lai. The military incursion in particular swung the focus of Sino-Burmese relations firmly back to the border. The crossings had been extensive in the far north above Myitkyina, and in the Wa state. It was possible that Chinese leaders were angling for a concession of Kachin territory to bottle up the Khambas of eastern Tibet, who had been in revolt against them since early 1955. Right of passage here would also have provided a corridor into Naga-land, and in return Peking could have offered to withdraw from the less strategic Wa area. In a similar way China was later to play off north-east Assam for Ladakh with India. But evidence is inferential on this point.

By the end of 1955 the Chinese had established close contacts with Kachins on both sides of the border, and five 'autonomous' areas for national minorities had been set up near the Burmese frontier in Yunnan. The Lweje Conference in February 1956 was an attempt by the Burmese to consolidate the support of the Kachin leaders against sustained propaganda from the PRC. Headed on one side by the Home Minister Bo Khin Maung Gale and on the other by the Secretary-General of the Yunnan Provincial Government it was the first real border conference, though a 'most limited and preliminary gesture . . . marked by uncertainty . . . and suspicion' in this regard. The Chinese were essentially spectators at a meeting arranged by the Burmese to hear the complaints of their own border peoples,⁸² but any lasting settlement of such complaints would certainly have required Chinese co-operation. China's putative desire was for a buffer zone along the border, and while the whole of Burma might be encouraged to fill that role, a more

specific belt could well have been envisaged among the ethnically diverse groups along the boundary itself.

In August 1956, as border incursions intensified, U Hla Maung was recalled from Peking for consultations. The Burmese Foreign Office admitted its 'serious concern' but decried the sensationalist stand taken by the Rangoon newspaper *The Nation*, which had first broken the news to the Burmese public. U Nu, still President of the AFPFL but not Prime Minister, went to Peking in November 1956 for a round of talks. Repeated clashes very effectively intensified these negotiations, but to retaliate in kind, as U Nu realised, was out of the question—tantamount in fact to a 'goat trying to fight an elephant'.⁸³ The speech U Nu made in China before the Political Consultative Conference was characteristically frank, and a plea to his hosts to 'live and let live' was evident throughout:

the Burmese dislike intensely any kind of subjugation or control direct or indirect and any attempt to control or subjugate us would be resisted . . . The two of us have neither the inclination nor the time to quarrel or to fight or to commit aggression on each other's land . . . [but] a mere declaration of acceptance of a principle is not enough. Both our countries must make special endeavour to their utmost that the principle is strictly observed [*sic*].⁸⁴

He returned with an assurance that the crossings had been a mistake and a result of the ill-defined border, and Chinese troops in the Wa state were subsequently withdrawn. A joint communiqué indicated that congruence was actively being sought on the issues that were central to a conclusive settlement.⁸⁵ U Nu favoured a package deal that swapped the Namwan Tract for three Kachin villages, but Kachin leaders opposed this, so while U Nu remained in Peking, U Hla Maung went back to Burma for discussions with Prime Minister Ba Swe, returning to China with the Kachin State Minister and two Kachin leaders. No agreement was reached, however, and U Nu later suggested that the Chinese were not entirely free on the border issue from domestic recalcitrance themselves. 'It would appear', he said in April 1957, 'that the elephant is stuck at the tail'.⁸⁶

Generally U Nu attributed Chinese respect for the Burmese position to the outgoing and independent way in which their foreign policy heretofore had been pursued; 'as the years passed, and the Chinese saw from our actions that we were the stooges of nobody . . . they changed their attitude'.⁸⁷ Though U Nu set great store by his sincerity and an honest approach, it is debatable how much this impressed the Chinese. Peking probably found it convenient to its own strategy to woo a group of non-committed states, Burma among them, which had emerged much stronger in Asia than the communist parties they contained. And U Nu's optimism was not enough to alleviate apprehension elsewhere. Deputy Prime Minister U Kyaw Nyein, on his return from a goodwill mission to China in December 1957 and January 1958 and a meeting with Mao, remarked: 'we . . . fear with the fear of a small country for a powerful neighbour. Dr. Sun Yat-sen said in

his book "San Min Chu Yi" that Annam and Burma were in the domain of China and Chiang Kai-shek in "China's Destiny" made a like claim'.⁸⁸ For Nyein at least the historical precedents were compelling.

By 1958 the patina on China's co-existent stance in the world had begun to fade. For domestic as well as external reasons, Peking declared its support for Khrushchev in his drive against Hungary, a drive that Burma deplored.⁸⁹ This augured a hardening of the international communist line generally. Closer to home, China was involved once again in armed action, against India, and in Tibet for the second time in a decade. But the amicable Burmese nexus was actively maintained. Missions continued to be exchanged. The Chinese Embassy became the biggest and most important in Rangoon, while Burma, at least as reported by *Hsinhua*, moved strongly against Chinese Nationalist political activity among its Chinese minority, banning outright all Nationalist organisations, though tacitly permitting local activity on the part of the communists.⁹⁰

Nevertheless, all was not well in Burma. On 28 October 1958 General Ne Win took power in an attempt to stabilise a second slide into internal political chaos. The Chinese ambassador in Rangoon offered his prompt felicitations to the new leader, and at an official function in Peking Defense Minister P'eng Teh-huai and Foreign Minister Ch'en Yi singled out the Burmese Military Attaché and asked him to convey to Ne Win the congratulations of the Chinese government.⁹¹ But it was business as usual. The caretaking military administrators took care to continue U Nu's policy of friendship and deference toward China. It is notable, though, that an observer was sent for the first time to a SEATO Conference in Thailand.

The Chinese were afraid that the violence in Tibet might alienate the Burmese government and cause it to reassess the pro-Peking cast of its neutralistic policies. New China News Agency (NCNA) quotations from Burmese newspaper comment at the time reflected this concern. Thus the Rangoon *Burman* was reported from its editorial as saying: 'The Western bloc and its satellites are attempting to incite Buddhist feelings against the Chinese'. The paper urged the Burmese, and by repetition so urged the Chinese, to consider the rebellion carefully. Correctly viewed, it was claimed, the action against the Tibetan rebels was not an action against Buddhists or Burmese as such. Other Burmese papers were variously reported, and by extension the Chinese likewise maintained that the rebellion was launched by foreign imperialists, and more particularly by America, that it was an internal affair of China, that if unchecked the Tibetan highlands would have become an American rocket base, and that the Western bloc was using Buddhism to attack China. Burmese Buddhists should beware, it was declared, of unwittingly becoming the tools of the imperialists in their anti-communist activities.⁹² When the issue came before the UN in October 1959 there was a similar response from the Chinese media.

Officially the news of the suppression of the Tibetan uprising in March 1959 was met with indifference in Rangoon. Four labour leaders were sent by Ne Win to attend the May Day celebrations in Peking at Chinese invitation. A cultural mission attended the tenth Independence Day celebrations on 1 October. The Burmese press, however, and Burmese opinion generally, were not all as acquiescent as NCNA's selective reportage suggested. A feeling of unease was widespread. U Nu referred to 'these unfortunate developments' and urged an all-Chinese commission to look into the possibility of granting independence. *The Nation* ran a front-page cartoon of Krushchev awarding Mao the 'Order of Hungary'. The highest Buddhist ecclesiastical authorities in Rangoon were appalled. There was a demonstration in Mandalay led by the presiding Abbot to ask the Dalai Lama to Burma, and a mass demonstration of over one thousand people at the Shwedagon pagoda. The time was ripe for China to play her placatory trump.

On 28 January 1960, just before the Burmese elections and almost on the eve of Khrushchev's tour of India, Indonesia and Burma, Ne Win was invited to China and was able to underline his interim Prime Ministership by signing there a Boundary Agreement and a ten-year Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Non-Aggression that went with it.⁹³ Sino-Burmese relations reached as a result a cordial plateau that was to last for several more years. Chou En-lai, at the farewell banquet for Ne Win's delegation to Peking, declared: 'We have every reason to maintain mutual friendship and co-operation but no reason whatsoever to set ourselves against each other. Our two peoples are "pauk phaws" —cousins or kinsmen. At the cost of three Kachin villages (Hpimaw, Gawlum and Kangfang) that command the Hpimaw pass into China and an insignificant section of the Wa state under the jurisdiction of the Panhung and Panlao tribes, by agreeing to place the eastern approaches of the Diphu pass within China and not Burma, and given a guarantee of non-alliance which was built into Article 3 of the Treaty of Friendship ('each contracting party undertakes not to carry out acts of aggression . . . and not to take part in any military alliance directed against the other'),⁹⁴ Burma received the Meng Mao triangle (the Namwan Assigned Tract) and an agreed demarcation along watershed lines.

Both sides, it seems, were somewhat recalcitrant in arriving at this settlement. As well as more substantive issues, there had been considerable debate about the precise area of the bits of territory to be exchanged, and on the precise demarcation of the rest. The Chinese, if not actually stalling, had been in no hurry to conclude the agreements, and selected a time opportune to themselves. On the other hand domestic Burmese politicking produced its own intransigence. The package deal that U Nu had brought back in 1956 had needed little concession then to be complete, but Kyaw Nyein, it has been claimed, blocked further agreement to deny his political opponent the credit that would accrue from such a settlement.

Kachin leaders were also not easily reconciled. Only a political neutral like Ne Win was in the end able to marry the major camps at home and edge on the final result, and in the negotiations he emphasised his non-partisan credentials.⁹⁵

Burmese apprehension and wariness did not then evaporate. The main comfort they could claim was that any blatant move by the Chinese across the border could now be clearly labelled as aggression, without the blurring factor of disputed sovereignty. The benefits conferred in such a case would depend, they knew, very much on the situation at the time and on how much international pressure might be mounted and brought to bear on China to retract. And there was always the alternative for the Chinese of aiding insurrection, or simply of stage-managing any incursion they might want to make.

There has been considerable speculation as to why China finally agreed, and on such modest terms, to negotiate away a quasi-legitimate opportunity for agitation. Certainly there was some urge to have an agreed line at last.

The traditional Chinese state at many points did not have precise boundaries. It faded away into areas of less and less concern . . . until the Great Unknown was reached In the early nineteenth century there was no such thing as the internationally recognised boundary of China and the Chinese were not interested in such a concept . . . [but] the first thing a modern state has to have is a clearly defined boundary.⁹⁶

From 1949, however, when it declared its intention of re-examining past treaties, China did not pursue any one border policy, and its relations generally with the states that geographically bounded it were extremely varied. For ten years no new border was concluded anywhere, though China had no objection to talking about such things.

More specifically, it is argued that at a time when China had just put down an uprising in Tibet, was fighting over the line with India, and was in conflict with Indonesia about the status of Indonesian Chinese, Chinese leaders could have felt that their image of magnanimity was in need of a little brightening, and Burma became the incidental beneficiary. Burma was to be evidence of the fact that 'co-existence' was still operable. It is also possible that the Chinese wished to forestall the formation of a Colombo Power or another non-communist southern Asian military grouping against themselves, in response to what the Indians at least considered to be aggression and concrete proof of Chinese territorial ambitions. In a subsequent border agreement with Nepal, China did not press for a military non-alliance clause, partly, presumably, because of SEATO, and its relevance to Burma but not to the Nepalese. Again, from their own point of view, definition of the boundary may have simply been an attempt to secure a tangible buffer in the south-west, more certain than that of the minority peoples who lived there, and whose sympathies lay mainly with their immediate personnel. The Burmese treaty was later cited by Peking in its propaganda thrusts against the Soviet Union as evidence

of China's desire peacefully to adjust its frontiers, and in the following two years similar agreements were reached with the governments of Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. By such timing it would seem that the Burmese agreement was part of a more general strategy.

U Nu returned to office in February 1960. Chou En-lai and Ch'en Yi came to Rangoon in April on their way to India, and invited U Nu to Peking. At the end of September U Nu and Ne Win went to China and U Nu signed the detailed Boundary Agreement treaty that had been worked out meanwhile by a joint committee. A mammoth rally in Peking's Workers' Stadium commemorated the occasion. In a friendly soccer match between the Burmese Army Team and one from Peking, Burma lost. The Burmese government presented rice and salt to Chinese living near the border and the PRC reciprocated with printed cloth and porcelain plates. Trade missions were exchanged and in December Chou En-lai, at the head of the biggest delegation ever sent abroad by China, came to Rangoon to sign the instruments of ratification. In Rangoon's Chinatown security precautions included a request for all flower-pots to be removed from window-sills, and over thirty Burmese-Chinese were arrested for the interim. The Chinese announced an interest-free easy-repayment loan to Burma of approximately £30 million, and Chou was awarded the order of 'Supreme Upholder of the Glory of Great Love', especially created for the occasion. In October 1961 large celebrations in Peking accompanied U Nu's acceptance there of the final protocol.

After the army coup d'etat in 1962 Burmese foreign policy showed no substantive change, though it did take on a retractionist and non-involved air partly because the change of leadership meant a change in personality and policy style, and partly because of domestic pre-occupations that increased into the sixties. As Ne Win is reported to have remarked, 'you don't invite company when you're cleaning house'.⁹⁷ Intensely nationalistic, veterans of the fight for independence and the fight against insurrection, Burmese military men naturally maintained a stance of neutralism. Ne Win's military coup was met in Peking with public equanimity. The general was congratulated on his investiture as Chairman of the Revolutionary Council, and the Chinese Ambassador in Rangoon noted with satisfaction his desire for continued friendly relations with the PRC.⁹⁸

Cordial and frequent diplomatic exchanges between Burma and China continued into the 1960s. Liu Shao-ch'i came in April 1963 to discuss the Sino-Indian border dispute; Chou En-lai came in February 1964 after his African tour. In July Chou En-lai and Ch'en Yi returned and deplored the deteriorating situation in Laos and South Vietnam, reaffirming meanwhile Article 3 of the Treaty of Friendship that pledged non-aggression. Ne Win, who had taken control of the government again in 1962, met Mao Tse-tung himself in Peking in July 1965, and Liu Shao-ch'i and

Ch'en Yi revisited Rangoon in April 1966. Liu used Burma's continued abstinence from SEATO to castigate the US for expanding the war in Vietnam, and to defend the National Liberation Front (NLF), and the final communiqué of that visit endorsed Burmese support for China's UN application and their continued opposition to the 'two China's' policy. Liu reiterated the gratitude of his government for Burma's support.

In December 1962 six non-aligned countries, Burma among them, met in Colombo on Ceylonese invitation to discuss the Sino-Indian border conflict. The month before, China had declared its own cease fire. 'When it came to making specific and positive recommendations some delegations were obsessed with the cease-fire and seemed to regard it as an end in itself. Two of the delegates thought that the conference should merely promote the resumption of negotiations and confirm the cease-fire.'⁹⁹ The two 'negativists' were, predictably enough, Prince Sihanouk and General Ne Win. Ne Win, his country trapped geographically between the protagonists like U Nu's 'tender gourd', clung to the ethical non-commitment of neutralism. He could ill afford to take the part of one side or the other, or to pronounce on the rights and wrongs of an issue so strategically close to home. 'We, as a conference, must refrain from making any attempt to determine or pass judgement in any way on . . . the positions being adhered to by the two parties to the dispute . . . we are seeking to mediate not arbitrate, and . . . these two functions do not go together'.¹ In particular, he was concerned that the conference should not propose anything antagonistic to or inadmissible in China's eyes. The final recommendations endorsed the Burmese position, but Ne Win did not participate in the subsequent trafficking between India and China that was carried on by the other delegations as they attempted to reconcile the two.² And no firm and final conclusion was reached despite repeated attempts to win the acceptance of the two major states involved.

In July 1963 a partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was concluded in Moscow and made open to all states for signature. Some measure of Burma's independence from Peking has not unreasonably been inferred from the fact that although China (and France) opposed it, the Burmese endorsed this document. The Chinese claimed that the treaty was incomplete, and called for a conference of all countries to discuss a total ban. Burma felt that the only practicable formula for effecting nuclear disarmament lay first with the major armed powers. A similar measure of autonomy has been made from evident Burmese annoyance at Chinese broadcasts that included a White Flag anniversary message to China on that state's fifteenth national day, 1 October 1964. These greetings accused the Burmese government of having obstructed negotiations, held under truce with the communist insurrectionists in 1963, and they condemned Ne Win's dependence on 'external direction'. Neither charge Ne Win took lightly. 'The civil war in Burma', the message declared,

'has been going on for nearly 17 years now . . . the peace talks failed because of sabotage by imperialism, internal reaction and revisionism. The Communist Party of Burma will continue to uphold the three banners of national independence, democracy and peace in the country, and will strive for the establishment of a new Burma of real independence, politically and economically'.³ The Chinese were praised for their adherence to the 'five principles', for their friendship, and for their pursuit of co-existence. The last the party claimed to 'know personally'.

It is not clear why Peking permitted this slight, though the tension had always been there at the friendliest of times, like steel within the straw. Officially there had been no comment for a decade on the insurgency in Burma, and no further comment followed this one until 1967. It was a pointed reminder to Ne Win of the darker side to Sino-Burmese relations, and an interesting, though probably unrelated, harbinger of things to come. China had supported the truce talks referred to, which Ne Win announced in April 1963. The truce consisted of an amnesty program for all rebels who surrendered before July, and an invitation to talks in June, with a guarantee of safe conduct to the talks. Chinese support ran at least to the extent of allowing, if not actively encouraging, thirty members of the White Flag party in China to return to Rangoon. The insurrection was obviously by this time not being won, and the Chinese may have felt that they would have a better chance working through dedicated and sympathetic cadres above ground. The subsequent slight may have been allowed in annoyance at Ne Win's unaccommodating attitude at the talks. If so, Ne Win was no less annoyed at the failure to reach an agreed peace, and arrested a large number of the members of the above-ground National United Front as a result. Perhaps the Chinese felt that Burma under Ne Win generally lacked anti-imperialistic fervour. Perhaps it was meant to encourage the Burmese condemnation of developments in Indo-China that Ne Win had failed to offer during Chou En-lai's and Ch'en Yi's visit to Rangoon in July of 1964. Or Burmese xenophobia may have aroused fears that beneath the exclusivist cover an alliance was being forged with the US.

There was no official reaction as such from Rangoon, but then there had never been over-much overt administrative reaction to the clear and known links between China and the White Flags. Domestic Burmese response was evident elsewhere, however. The Rangoon press roundly condemned China for its game of 'fire in one hand and water in the other'.

Ne Win sought more vigorously than U Nu had to balance the influence of major states within Burma, often by eliminating such influence altogether, or as much as possible. The American Ford and Asian Foundations and the Fulbright program were excluded, as was the British Council. Foreign state information outlets were cut off and their news agencies restricted. The NCNA office was searched and propaganda sheets confiscated. Educational services began to be

sought from the USSR rather than from Europe or America. Discriminatory legislation, mainly economic in form, that bore down hard upon the commercialised Indian and Chinese minorities, caused a mass exodus of the former back to India. For the Chinese it was not so easy since they refused to return to the People's Republic, on the whole preferring instead to go to Taiwan. The Burmese government, however, did not maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan, having consistently over the years urged its subjugation to the communists. Chiang Kai-shek refused to accept refugees from such a recalcitrant country anyway.

In February 1963, along with other foreign-owned banks, the two Chinese and Peking-controlled ones were nationalised. These had been an important source of influence for China within the Burmese-Chinese community, and it had used a liberal loan policy through them to co-opt nominal supporters and penalise those who were not. Loyalty had to be expressed to Peking in various ways and children had to be sent to pro-Peking schools. China did not object to the Burmese ban, for the policies affected others as well as itself, and the Chinese probably did not want to alienate the new regime at this early stage. In fact they donated the bank assets 'to the Burmese people', an act of generosity that won no reciprocal political favours, perhaps because the donation had been made at a time of imminent revelation of the banks' records to the government.⁴ 'Nationalisation' continued equally against all, extending finally from the economy into the schools.

Chinese schools in Burma had traditionally formed an independent sub-group outside the state educational system, run by their own Burmese-Chinese authorities. By 1962 there were 259 Chinese schools in Burma attended by 39,000 pupils; 183 with an estimated 22,000 students were pro-Peking.⁵ In 1952 all Chinese schools had been required to register under Private Schools legislation, but both compliance and government enforcement had been marginal. In 1964, however, Ne Win produced new regulations limiting the mobility of teachers and making a school's permit revokable if it was found to be teaching subjects against the state or not compatible with governmental policy. Again compliance was difficult to enforce, but the government could not have been overly concerned, for one of the features of Chinese education was the extent to which Burmese-Chinese did not in fact avail themselves of it. The number who did were a clear minority of the whole, though enough admittedly, at any one time, to embarrass the government should they have wished to do so.

The Burmese-Chinese were somewhat of an unknown quantity. There had been considerable underground migration from China into Burma over the years, and any estimate of their number was and is now largely a guess. Their number, however, never reached a critical level with respect to the twenty-five million or so Burmese, and they assimilated assiduously. They tended, as had the Indians, to gravitate into commerce and certain skilled occupations. Chinese culture and an

awareness of the PRC was maintained, though somewhat less than comprehensively as indicated by the student figures above, through the schools, through the chambers of commerce, through trade unions and so on. This presented no tangible threat until 1967. Most Chinese were probably non-political by inclination, and readily appreciated the precarious nature of their position in Burmese society. They offered limited scope for PRC subversion and it was only in Rangoon that Burmese-Chinese became the victims of a vengeance keen enough to kill. Peking probably appreciated this fact, and along with its desire to see Burma at worst simply neutral, the proscription in December 1965 of all foreign-owned foreign-language newspapers, an act that closed down five Chinese-language ones of which four were controlled by Burmese-Chinese sympathetic to Peking, drew no evident response from the Chinese leaders.

On a tour of ten foreign countries from June to September 1966 Ne Win made an official visit to America, but at no time did he venture opinions on Vietnam, and he refused to attack the US involvement in the way that China did. Generally he had resisted China's attempts, evident during Chou En-lai's visit of July 1964, and Liu Shao-ch'i and Ch'en Yi's visit of April 1966, to draw out a Burmese stance on American intervention there. No opinions were ventured on other issues of regional importance, like Laos, or the Malay-Indonesian confrontation. Principal emphasis was placed on achieving state stability and unity, on culling out the old colonial elements from the economy, placing it onto a state-directed footing, and on eliminating meanwhile all domestic opposition and criticism. The Chinese loan granted at the turn of the decade was drawn on for selected projects with something less than a sense of precipitance. Care and correctness characterised all relations with the outside world.

In contrast China continued the second shift in its foreign attitudes mentioned above, though Burma remained largely unaffected. After consolidating the 'Bandung' strategy and its tenuous 'front' of communist and neutral states, united in unforgiving memory of colonialism, and dedicated to peaceful co-existence, further circumstances caused this construction to fall into disrepair. As one decade yielded to the next, Chinese policy came under pressure and was revised. With the failure of the Great Leap Forward and the revolt in Tibet, with the nibbling war against India, and increased ideological rivalry throughout the world with the Soviet Union, Peking became in declaratory fashion more militant. Complete support was declared only for Afro-Asian governments that actively spurned or fought against America and its allies, like the NLF in Algeria, and, eventually, Indonesia. Deferential regimes like the Cambodian at this time, and to a lesser extent the Burmese, were given earnest of China's peaceful designs, though more muted deference could bring its rebukes as Burma found in 1964. Toward the rest active public hostility became again the order of the day. China's attempts to win

anti-American and anti-Soviet endorsement beyond its own region led to the promotion of a second Bandung in 1965. In South Vietnam the NLF were not winning the final victory as had been hoped, and the Americans were building up their own offensive. The second conference, though never held, was clearly designed to register effective unity against imperialistic aggression of this kind, and the response of individual countries like Burma was solicited to this end. From Burma's own point of view, however, things continued more or less as before. The halcyon glow that had suffused the Chinese nexus in the late fifties continued into the sixties with the reciprocal satisfactions of the border agreement. Only with the extension of the Cultural Revolution did it drain irretrievably away.

The Cultural Revolution was both a domestic and a diplomatic affair for China. The diplomatic myth of the world's masses worshipping Mao that gained wide currency at the time was a proselytic fantasy, but it clearly reflected the domestic struggle within China, and the political rivalries this struggle represented. 'Revolution' triumphed over the more pragmatic pursuit of Chinese national interests. Flexible strategies evaporated. Other governments, with few exceptions, became peripheral under the circumstances and were treated as such. As long as the people of the world could be pronounced loyal to Mao, supporters argued, China could never become isolated and Chinese diplomacy could likewise be declared a triumph. Ne Win might well be a fascist gangster, but the Burmese 'people', armed with Mao's thought and China's friendship, would ultimately prevail. 'You are afraid that the Burmese people will master the great thought of Mao Tse-tung' ran a note to Ne Win from the Chinese Embassy on 11 July 1967: 'make revolution against you and seize your power from you, oppose you, strike you to the ground, stamp on you and keep you down forever'.⁶ The rhetoric of revolution and the currency of foreign relations became one. The gap widened between the aspirational and operational aspects of external policy as what was said coincided less and less with what was done.

There was in China itself a critical 'foreign policy as domestic policy pursued by other means' element in all this, for global adoration of Mao and the global validity of his thought reinforced Mao's formal political authority in China, as well as the legitimacy of his named successor, Lin Piao. But this particular discussion must be left here, for what is under review is not the Cultural Revolution itself but its effect on other states, and, in particular, on Burma.

Melvin Gurtov, among others, has detailed the struggle over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China during the crucial months of 1967, and its complete takeover by Red Guards for two weeks in August. Control of embassies by lesser officials, seeking to demonstrate their loyalty to Mao and the universality of his word, as well as the reduced control from Peking as the Foreign Ministry struggled

for its own political survival, resulted, he argues, in the Ministry actually losing control over certain embassies, including that in Burma. Most importantly: 'the sharp turns in Peking's relations with Burma . . . may well have been dictated not by a conscious prior determination of Peking but by local Chinese representatives, who seem to have presented Mao with the unenviable choice of backing down before resistance to displays of loyalty or supporting the "just cause" of officials and overseas citizens'.⁷ To the extent that this is true then the Chinese propagandist attack on Burma at the time was officially a somewhat involuntary one. The stabbing by a Burmese rioter of a Chinese Embassy official in Rangoon certainly gave the Chinese leaders the opportunity to legitimise their subsequent attacks, but it is possible that if the domestic situation in the PRC had stabilised earlier there would have been no such attacks at all.

By September 1967 Chou En-lai had regained sufficient control of the country's foreign policy to intervene and conciliate when Cambodia threatened to withdraw its ambassador from Peking. In Sihanouk's case friendship was dutifully reaffirmed by the PRC. If Chou En-lai sent similar signals to Ne Win at the same time, the Burmese either did not read them as such, or chose to ignore them for their own ends. Though by September Ne Win had already shifted the shaft of his attack from the Chinese government to the BCP, the following month he withdrew the Burmese ambassador to China and went on to take a number of non-placatory measures after this. He was out to make a point of his own, and perhaps as a consequence the declaratory Chinese hard line against the Ne Win regime did not abate for nearly a year.

The vagaries of the time are clarified somewhat by a more detailed outline of events.

The first half of 1967 abounded in the by-then familiar courtesies and reciprocations. Early in January Peking held a reception to celebrate the nineteenth anniversary of Burma's independence and the seventh anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship.⁸ The Burmese ambassador returned the occasion the following day. Ch'en Yi, the guest of honour at the Burmese reception, spoke of the true practice of the 'five principles', of the Burmese as 'pauk phaws', of Chinese support for Burma in its struggle to oppose imperialism. 'In its international relations' he is reported as having said 'the Union of Burma has steadfastly followed a policy of independence, peace and neutrality'.⁹ Nevertheless Chinese greetings commemorating the occasion were published by the government controlled Rangoon *Guardian* sixteenth down the list of international messages, and second to last.¹⁰ They consisted of a short and markedly restrained note signed by Ch'en Yi. American felicitations signed by Lyndon Johnson headed the list. On the same day the year before the Chinese had been placed first, and the message had been signed

by Liu Shao-ch'i and Chou En-lai. Through such nuances the drift in diplomatic history may tentatively be detected.

In March the Chinese ambassador to Rangoon and twenty-one of his staff were withdrawn for 'consultations'. A Maoist group controlled the Embassy from then on, led by the chargé d'affaires Hsiao Ming, and propaganda activities were stepped up. Badges were distributed to Chinese students attending the small private school groups that were organised to circumvent governmental regulations nationalising all non-state schools. Little Red Books became freely available.

The same month Burma signed a boundary agreement with India that, the NCNA claimed,¹¹ deprived China of 90,000 square kilometres of rightful territory and gave it to the Indians. It is rumoured that during the demarcation talks the Chinese had warned the Burmese government against reaching any agreement,¹² but ratification was nonetheless made, with the trijunction pushed north to the Diphu Pass. Demarcation was begun from the undisputed end, presumably so as not to force a confrontation, but the rivalry at the other was not resolved. Likewise the Chinese boundary agreement with Burma had also left the demarcation of its Indian end undefined.

The Burmese leaders remained conciliatory throughout, and in April repatriated back to China at Chinese request several hundred refugees who had fled from growing domestic turmoil and Red Guard persecution. On 12 April, the *Guardian*¹³ published a remarkably objective account of Burmese neutralism that reflected on the 'almost statistical thoroughness' with which Burma had negotiated its course between Russia, China, and America, and the attempts that had been made to meet in advance the possible reasons for great power intervention. The article supplied incidental evidence of Chinese forbearance to that date: 'up till now Burma shares with Cambodia alone the doubtful distinction of having been spared the wrath of Mao Tse-tung's propaganda organs. How much longer will the smiles continue?' Even as late as 12 May, at a reception held by the China-Burma Friendship Association to mark its own fifteenth anniversary, hopes for further development of the traditional 'pauk phaw' relationship between the two countries were still being expressed.¹⁴

In June goodwill started to wane. Beginning insignificantly as the refusal by Chinese students in two state high schools in Rangoon to remove their Mao badges while at school, as the government had decreed, the situation rapidly built up into large-scale anti-Chinese riots. The role played by Chinese Embassy personnel at this time is ambiguous. Certainly they had considerable propagandist effect, organising and orchestrating the local 'rectification' campaign, and encouraging protestations of loyalty to Mao. How far they actually instigated the original incident, despite Burmese statements to this effect, is not clear, but on 22 June the first demonstration by Chinese students was at least observed, if not in fact

superintended, by a car from the Embassy containing the Rangoon NCNA correspondent Yu Min-sheng and three Red Guards from the Embassy staff. They also handed out Mao badges.

After a weekend pause the riots spread. Many Burmese-Chinese were killed and much property was destroyed. The government appealed for tolerance 'in the larger interest of the relations between two friendly nations',¹⁵ and evacuated a large number of Chinese, mostly students, to a military camp outside Rangoon. Publicity was given in official newspapers to an incident in which three Burmese nationals were injured while protecting a Chinese neighbour—evidence of Burma's continued goodwill. And great stress was laid on an image of forbearance and magnanimity.

On 27 June students in a Chinese-dominated school imprisoned the staff and marched around the yard shouting Mao's thoughts. A diplomatic car was seen to arrive and pamphlets and Red Books were again distributed. Angry crowds retaliated by setting fire to the Overseas Chinese Teachers' Federation building and attacking the gates of the Chinese Embassy. On 28 June mobs again stormed the Embassy and Burmese Army guards fired shots into the crowd to disperse them, wounding three people. Two men who scaled the compound wall stabbed and killed a Chinese 'aid official' Liu Yi, and wounded another staff member, a 'diplomatic courier', Tsao Pa-lin. Given such tangible provocation the Chinese government was prompt and outraged in its response. Hsiao Ming initiated what was to become a hostile stream of such notes by lodging the first strong diplomatic protest. The Burmese government was accused of organising the riots, and there were demands for the punishment of the rioters, for relief of the victims' families, for a public apology, for a guarantee of the safety of the Chinese Embassy, and for an 'immediate end to the Fascist atrocities against Overseas Chinese'.¹⁶ A similar protest that accused the Burmese government of instigating and engineering the incidents was lodged with the Burmese ambassador in Peking.¹⁷ The text of this protest included, however, a statement that friendly relations were in the fundamental interest of the two peoples, a sentiment not included in similar notes at the time to India and Britain, and a subtle signal perhaps of the line Peking would have preferred.

The following day the Chinese government declared that it would not be returning its ambassador to Rangoon. Burmese leaders invoked section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code banning public meetings and demonstrations, the Chinese Embassy was sealed off, a cordon was thrown around Chinatown, nine nationalised Chinese schools were closed down, and a strict curfew was imposed. An editorial in the *Guardian* made considerable play of the argument that subversive and unscrupulous elements had used the disorders to their own ends,¹⁸ stirring up the crowds by spreading rumours to the effect that local Chinese had slapped a Burmese

lady teacher, and urinated on the national flag, and that the Burmese ambassador to Peking had been killed. 'It is quite clear', they declared some days later

that what took place was not caused by racial hatred. There are in Burma many Chinese who have come to love and appreciate both the land and its people . . . there have been many instances of Chinese life and property being saved by Burmese neighbours, some of whom were actually hurt in doing this. The cause of the disturbance was the well-planned actions taken by a well-organised and carefully controlled group of Overseas Chinese, it is more than apparent. For some reason, they have taken the arrogant and Big Nation chauvinistic stand that they can live in a foreign country and refuse to comply with the laws of that country in force . . . it is this which the Revolutionary Government cannot possibly tolerate . . . and which caused the people to demonstrate against them. Unfortunately these demonstrations got carried away by mounting passion, and in the end the Government was having to protect the very people who challenged its authority.¹⁹

Thus the semi-official analysis clearly played down at this point Chinese accusations that Burmese-Chinese had been persecuted, and played up the presence of a dissident minority. A clear attempt was still being made not to accuse the Chinese government directly. The initial Burmese response, then, was firm but cautious.

Mass demonstrations began on 29 June in Peking in front of the Burmese Embassy there, and continued until 3 July. They were duplicated in Shanghai and Kunming. On receiving Hsiao Ming's first protest, the Burmese leaders had denied all charges of instigation, and declared the riots an internal affair in which the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon was not entitled to interfere. On learning of the Peking demonstrations they even lodged a protest of their own against what they termed an 'unfortunate development' that would 'adversely affect the sincere effort of the Burmese government to restore the normal situation in Burma and to maintain and preserve the friendly relations between the two countries'.²⁰ Needless to say the message was spurned, but it served to demonstrate the independent attitude the Burmese leaders were prepared to sustain in the face of mounting Chinese invective. Radio Peking and *Hsinhua* joined in a concerted campaign of accusation and abuse:

The Ne Win government has all along pursued anti-Communist and anti-people's policies . . . the people's discontent with the government has been growing. The armed struggle waged persistently by the Burmese National Democratic United Front formed by the Burmese Communist Party and other revolutionary organisations has been steadily developing. . . . In this situation the Burmese government is carrying out frantic anti-China and anti-Chinese activities with the obvious aim of fanning up reactionary nationalist sentiments to cover up the class contradictions inside the country and to divert the strong resentment against the reactionary government . . . to attack and weaken the forces and influence of the Burmese Communist Party and to stabilise its own rule.²¹

The Burmese people were found to be the only true allies of the Chinese people. No one could destroy this friendship, it seems. With the seizure of power in 1962

Ne Win—Burma's Hitler, Khrushchev, and Chiang Kai-shek all rolled into one—and his militarist fascist clique discarded the fig-leaf of bourgeois democracy and revealed their true selves. They were, in the end, however, only the hatchet-men for the real instigators, for the Soviet revisionists and the American imperialists, all so much filthy political trash. Proof of collusion lay in Ne Win's September trip to the United States and his subsequent visit to Japan. Lifting such a rock had only caused it to drop on his own feet.²²

Subsequently Chinese spokesmen attempted to use Burmese fears of their tenuous border by accusing them of military provocation. There had been repeated violation by troops and aircraft of China's air and land space, they claimed, and looting, arson and murder had been carried out by the Burmese there. Seven Chinese civilians they said had been killed in Yingchiang County, Yunnan Province, in the previous few months alone.

The Burmese people were also exhorted to rise up in revolt under the leadership of the local communists, and open support was finally declared for the White Flags. An official message to this effect was sent by the central committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to Thakin Than Tun on 14 August, and a statement by the BCP to the people of Burma was published by the *Peking Review*. Thakin Ba Thein Tin, first vice-chairman of the central committee of the BCP and leader of that party's delegation to Peking, met the ashes of the Embassy official Liu Yi on their return by special plane. Chou En-lai and other high officials also attended. Thakin Tin's speech denouncing Ne Win, made at a memorial rally for the murdered 'martyr', was published to commemorate the BCP's twenty-eighth anniversary.²³

The domestic struggle in China seemed to have had a marked radicalising effect upon the White Flags, though BCP politics were never without their own tensions and conflicts. One group of the party had lived as a liaison in Peking since 1950, only returning in 1963 with two other groups when Ne Win declared an amnesty to negotiate peace and legal recognition. The negotiations broke down, and this intensified a split in the party between those favouring reconciliation and those prepared to fight on. A number of the returnees remained in Burma and went underground again with the rest of the BCP. At a central committee meeting in 1964 they backed Thakin Than Tun in promulgating what became known as the '1964 line'—to 'meet offensive with offensive, riding triumphantly to power'.²⁴ The 'three dares . . . dare to die, dare to fight, and dare to win' were extolled. There was to be no compromise with the 'revisionists' and the contrasting ameliorative 'line of 1955'. The factions were modelled, ostensibly, after the Cultural Revolution, and a 'Life Forum' and Red Guard movement was set up in 1965. It is evident that the divisions of Chinese domestic politics impinged much earlier upon the White Flag party than they did upon other domestic Burmese groups. It is also evident

that this internecine strife flourished without PRC recognition, and the Chinese only ceased to ignore Than Tun and his faction-ridden party after the events of the summer of 1967.

The Burmese for their part escalated the response. Ne Win's one concession was to send a note regretting Liu Yi's death and promising to provide for his family. He refused further support to Chinese aid technicians in the country and ordered their withdrawal. China discontinued the program and took out all 412 personnel. Ne Win refused to allow the Embassy staff to investigate the riots, or visit the wounded. He refused to allow the Chinese government to send an aircraft to evacuate Chinese casualties for treatment, and held and searched cases of supplies sent from Peking. The Mandalay *Ludu*, Burma's last Maoist paper, was shut down. He expelled the NCNA correspondent, Yu Ming-sheng, for political activities, and media reports began to include Peking in their more generalised denunciation of subversive elements. Thus Radio Rangoon 'revealed' that the Chinese communist students who had provoked the rioting had been trained in China for more than a year, and that plans for the revolt had been 'drawn up in Peking'.

Demonstrations in support of the government began occurring throughout the country. The official media stressed their unrelated and spontaneous nature, presumably in an attempt to give the lie to Chinese propaganda that differentiated between the Burmese people and their leaders. The cause was invariably claimed to be the 'arrogant insulting and offensive' nature of broadcasts that came over for four and a half hours each day in the Burmese language from Radio Peking. Only secondary emphasis was laid on the local communist insurgency, Maoism, and the behaviour of the Chinese embassy. 'Peking seems to have taken to heart the dictum of Hitler that if a lie is a big one and repeated often enough, someday someone may believe it . . . stop listening to the pernicious VOICE OF PEKING' declared a *Guardian* editorial.²⁵ In cities, towns, and rural villages, the demonstrations continued and grew. In the sixteen days from 30 June to 15 July it was estimated by the Burmese press that public protests had taken place in 281 places around the country and that hundreds of thousands of Burmese had participated. Students spear-headed this mass move, dutifully turning out of schools to be joined by workers and peasants. Effigies and pictures of Mao Tse-tung and Thakin Than Tun were variously tried, bashed, burned, buried, drowned and otherwise abused. Patriotic symbols abounded. The Union flag and photographs of Aung San were paraded, the national anthem sung, and demonstrations invariably ended up at the local independence monument. Shouted slogans and anti-Peking posters, at least as reported in Rangoon papers, assumed a certain uniformity: 'respect our sovereignty', 'the Lanzin must succeed', 'do not touch our Bogyoke sparks will fly', 'Chinese who love Mao go back to China', and 'Mao Tse-tung may he fall'.

In the attempt, presumably, to negate Chinese accusations of a 'white terror'

against their brethren, the Burmese media also reported spontaneous declarations of support and loyalty from Chinese communities throughout the country. Chinese elders undertook to see that no Mao badges would be worn, and several stories of Burmese-Chinese participation in the demonstrations against Peking were published. Editorials urged the local Chinese in their own interests to stand up against all 'evil forces'.²⁶

A note of self-righteousness and indignation pervaded government analyses of the situation at this time.

Whatever the People's Republic of China may have chosen to say, the present trouble between this huge country and Burma is not of Burma's making . . . Shocked into a cruel disillusionment that her diligent scruples in nurturing neighbourly friendship and in pursuing strict neutrality in international power-politics were not being respected as hoped, Burma, nevertheless, cannot be threatened into compromising her sovereignty or her strictly neutralist policy.²⁷

Such sentiments also carried the elements of reconciliation.

By the end of July the focus of criticism was shifted from the Chinese government to the BCP and its insurgent allies, partly because the BCP meanwhile had stepped up its own offensives. At a graduation ceremony of In-Service Ideology courses the main enemy of the country was identified as the Communist Party of Burma, for years, it was claimed, a consistent saboteur of the nation's economy.²⁸ The BCP were considered to be totally subject to Peking, an accusation that enabled the actions of the local communists to be used to condemn the Chinese government, particularly as the level of terrorist activities had begun to resemble that of 1950. Conversely the discredit accruing from the riots and Peking's attitude toward them was used to discredit the insurgents. All in all, however, it seems the time had definitely come to cool things down. Demonstrations began to take the form of 'work protest', free labour donated by workers in a carefully orchestrated but more constructive use of anti-Chinese feelings, and Burmese accusations became once again indirect.

Official divorce persisted. In October the Burmese withdrew their ambassador from Peking, though they did not break off relations. In February 1968 eleven Chinese elders were given seven years' gaol each for their part in fomenting disruption in one of the schools on 22 June the previous year. Their trial drew a strong protest from the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon. In contrast Khin Maung, the Burmese accused of knifing Liu Yi, was convicted only of criminal trespass and given the maximum sentence of three months, which it appears he had already served whilst awaiting trial. This move was also scarcely designed to alleviate the tension.

From early 1968, however, Ne Win sought tentatively and directly to normalise relations again. He had little success. In February 1969 there were reports of a

meeting with high-ranking Chinese representatives during Ne Win's visit to Pakistan.²⁹ Though the Chinese for their part had not broken off diplomatic contact altogether, they made few official reciprocal gestures, and despite the argument that the aberrations of the Cultural Revolution did not indicate a significant shift in Chinese foreign policy, their notes to the Burmese government remained harsh and hostile. The reasons for the continued antagonism were never made specific, but Ne Win's observation in 1965 that 'when lovers quarrel the ensuing hatred is more bitter' was more than borne out by events.³⁰

In the *Peking Review* lists of BCP successes in Burma and greetings from that party on various auspicious occasions alternated with strong protests against the Burmese government. The release was demanded of the eleven elders, as was that of eight Burmese-Chinese found guilty of wrongfully confining students. Ne Win's government was accused of killing a Chinese teacher stationed in Namkham as well as harassing border inhabitants. The Chinese Red Cross offered 10,000 yuan for the relief by its Burmese counterpart of typhoon victims in Arakan, but presumably this demonstrated solidarity with the people, not with their government. In April 1969 Lin Piao made his Political Report to the CCP Ninth National Congress, and despite his re-endorsement of the principles of peaceful co-existence, firm support was declared for the revolutionary struggle of the people of Burma. Considerable space was given over by Chinese media to statements of condolence at the time of the death of the White Flag leader Thakin Than Tun, though Peking's acknowledgment of this setback was inexplicably delayed. In August 1969, the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the BCP was warmly greeted by the Chinese, and return greetings from the White Flags on the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic were placed by the *Peking Review* at the head of the list. Significantly, however, despite the ideological endorsement, there seems to have been little change in China's lack of *material* support for the Burmese insurrectionaries, and this at a time when the White Flags were as hard pressed as they had ever been.

In June and September 1967 Than Tun had expelled, then had executed, three of the party's eight-man politburo: Goshal (Thakin Ba Tin), a founder and major theoretician of the party, Yebaw Htay, who had led the negotiating team, and Yan Aung, one of the historic 'Thirty Comrades'.³¹ The opportunity may have been as much one for settling old scores as for enforcing ideological orthodoxy, but ideological currents continued to run deep. The factioning became even more complex when the purified Maoist section began to devour itself. The following year Than Tun's erstwhile supporters, Bo Tun Nyein, Yebaw Tun Shein, and six university students, were similarly slain. Than Tun himself was shot dead by an apprehensive supporter on 24 September 1968. Five days before, on information supplied by local villagers, government troops had overrun the BCP central head-

quarters in the Pegu Yoma foothills, Toungoo district. Than Tun's diaries for 1966, 1967, and 1968 were captured, and these documented the bloody purification of high party echelons outlined above. Thakin Zin declared himself the new party leader, with Ba Thein Tin as vice-chairman, but the purges continued. On 8 January 1969 Soe Than, the leader of the Delta forces, was tried and liquidated for taking the 'wrong line'. A tape-recording, enunciating the charges and made by Than Tun before his death, was played at his trial.³² The new headquarters were reported to be without a radio transmitter, and to have dwindled to a force of 150 men, only thirty or forty of whom were armed. In April they were overrun for a second time by government troops, betrayed by a university student who had gone underground in 1967 but had surrendered after becoming 'disillusioned'. Aung Gyi,³³ one of the most important of the remaining leaders, was killed in the ensuing pursuit. By April 1969 only twelve of the twenty-seven Peking returnees were left in the party. Without supplies or sanctuary, news reports detailed the deaths of a succession of White Flag leaders of long standing.³⁴ The ranks were visibly wearing thin.

With little favourable response from the Chinese the Burmese government sought refuge in new protestations of its non-involved international stance. In March 1968 Ne Win declared before a peasants' seminar in Rangoon: 'We have to rely on our own strength in everything. We cannot depend on anybody. We should not try to find fault with anyone. We do not want to quarrel with anyone'.³⁵ At Belgrade in July 1969 the Burmese delegate to a Consultative Conference of non-aligned countries argued against the formation of a third world bloc: 'the launching of a process of intensified activity of non-aligned countries, would sooner or later bring the non-aligned countries as a group into a confrontation with power blocs and organisations . . . the policy of non-alignment would be jeopardised'.³⁶

In his opening address to the fourth Seminar of the Socialist Programme Party in November 1969 Ne Win began to exhibit a little of U Nu's self-avowed frankness, and brought official attention once more around to the border. The year before he had hinted at Chinese complicity in the continued insurgency there: 'We have to be very careful lest our bullets go into the other country'.³⁷ This time he was more open, announcing that eight major engagements and ten minor ones had occurred in the area since then at the cost of considerable casualties.

The engagements which I have enumerated were provoked by Burmese Communists in the wide stretches Hpimaw, Gawlum and Kengtung north The forces which are up against us openly declare that they are bolstered by external aid, but we do not wish to bear any grudge or bitterness against anyone. . . . One question may be asked: do we have the strength to retaliate if you wish? And I must honestly answer, no. . . . Now specifically to mention China with which our present problem is connected, we should like to restore the cordial and friendly relations which formerly prevailed . . . but it takes two to make a friendship, and it is up to the other side also to try . . . we shall not resort to the shortsighted policy of looking

elsewhere for aid in the solving of our problem. Restoration of friendship is our constant objective.³⁸

Thus Ne Win specifically assured the Chinese of a Burmese neutrality reinforced by positive partiality to Peking, an assurance tempered, it seems, by patience. Despite visits to Malaysia and Singapore and sustained co-operation with India over limiting Chinese aid to the Nagas, Ne Win refused to move toward the Soviet Union or the United States in any conspicuous way, and specifically declared his intention not to do so. The Burmese assumption that the Chinese would come to dominate the area remained unshaken. The cheek toward the north was kept carefully turned. 'In South East Asia today there are powerful forces at work—forces which have their origin outside the region', Ne Win said in Singapore in April 1968. 'The interplay of these forces will influence the future of South East Asia . . . [but] we in Burma believe that ultimately only forces of the region will prevail and play a vital role in determining the kind of South East Asia we shall have to live in'.³⁹ He refused to move away from an internationally disengaged stance and cautiously awaited a rapprochement. He was not alone in judging this stance the most opportune. The thirty-three members of the National Unity Advisory Committee, despite ideological differences over his constitutional proposals, unanimously recommended reviving friendly relations with neighbours, especially with Thailand, and most importantly, with China.

A tentative traffic in formalities was slowly revived. On 19 July 1968 the Chinese chargé d'affaires in Rangoon participated in a Martyr's Day ceremony honouring Aung San. There were no Chinese greetings for Burma's Independence Day anniversary in January 1969, but in August the Chinese acting military attaché in Burma gave a reception to celebrate the forty-second anniversary of the founding of the PLA to which a number of Burmese officers, officials, and public figures were invited. In September the Burmese Foreign Minister reiterated Burma's traditional support for China's admission to the UN, and on 1 October the Acting Foreign Minister Hla Han attended a reception by the Chinese Embassy in Rangoon to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the People's Republic. In Peking, however, reciprocal receptions only included representatives from the White Flag BCP. Thus at the 1 October celebrations in Peking for 1970 the only Burmese representative was Thakin Ba Thein Tin, and NCNA reports still detailed the successes of the 'Burmese people's revolutionary armed struggle' against the 'reactionaries'.⁴⁰

For the Burmese part they began releasing Chinese jailed after the disturbances and appointed an army colonel as counsellor to the Burmese Embassy in Peking. In February 1970 their chargé d'affaires there gave a celebration to mark the twenty-second anniversary of the Union of Burma and leading members of the Chinese departments concerned attended. The New China News Agency, if somewhat tersely, carried the item. In April 1970 King Mahendra of Nepal visited

Ne Win and presumably his rapport with Peking was prevailed upon for further mediation.

Finally, in September 1970, a new Chinese chargé d'affaires arrived in Rangoon on the weekly plane from Kunming. The Burmese eagerly interpreted this as a significant restoration of the old relationship, and on 1 October Ne Win sent felicitations to Chou En-lai.⁴¹ Later in the month full diplomatic relations were unilaterally resumed, ready proof of Rangoon's intentions, with the naming of an ambassador to Peking—former Colonel U Thein Maung, a senior official from the Ministry of Defence.⁴² Much to Burmese delight the Chinese reciprocated early in the new year by appointing Chen Chao-yuan ambassador to Rangoon, thus restoring full bi-lateral recognition.⁴³ In August 1971 Ne Win visited Peking at China's behest, and was received by Mao. A joint statement with Chou En-lai looked forward to fraternal relations of a more normal kind, and was soon followed by a nine-man Chinese mission that set about rebuilding China's assistance program, so rudely interrupted by the events of 1967.

In summary, then, the governmental component of the Burmese response was firstly cautious but firm, then self-righteously indignant, then condemnatory, and only after some time conciliatory again. The internal upheavals in China caused by the Cultural Revolution had been reported in detail in Burma through the government press long before the June riots. There had been some apprehension too over its possible repercussions. When trouble did come Ne Win was far from compliant, and this episode gave a most marked autonomous tinge to an otherwise acquiescent relationship.

There is an important question here of the extent to which Ne Win used the stimulus provided by the Cultural Revolution to his own domestic and foreign policy ends. Thus it has been suggested that Ne Win in fact engineered the riots as the Chinese accused him of doing, using his secret police and rent-a-crowd tactics to touch off a little carefully orchestrated xenophobia.⁴⁴ Drastic nationalisation policies and a bad season had caused considerable discontent at home, and the opportunity presented by the Cultural Revolution to bait the dragon might suggest a deliberate manipulation by the Burmese elite of an external stimulus to internal ends, an opportunity, that is, to draw the line on a relationship that had become altogether too stifling and exclusive to be very beneficial. There is a point, presumably, where the desire for independence outweighs any perception of possible disadvantage to security, and Ne Win could have decided that that point had been reached. The stage-managed quality of the demonstrations that followed throughout the country support such a conclusion, though the killing of the Embassy official may indicate that once begun, the process was not easy to control, and ran to excess.

The domestic Burmese response was diverse and complex. Firstly there were the instigating actions of a small number of Chinese students, aided and abetted by certain members of the Burmese-Chinese community, as well as by Chinese Embassy personnel. Secondly there was the riotous response to these instigations by other Burmese, possibly organised and abetted by the government itself. Thirdly there were the mass demonstrations that continued for a month throughout Burma against continued Chinese belligerence, possibly again under the prompting of the government. Fourthly there was the response by insurgent groups, and especially the White Flags, a response that was far more protracted than those indicated above and much more thorough-going.

'Communism in Burma took root untended and unappreciated by the outside world.'⁴⁵ By and large, it stayed that way. China over the years supported the White Flag insurrection, at little cost to itself in material terms, partly for ideological reasons since committed revolutionary guerrilla warfare highlighted the tactics at which its leaders felt most adept, and partly for strategic reasons in keeping open its contacts should Ne Win's government have finally failed. But this backing, except for the first and last few years, was far from unequivocal, and even at its most overt it was never decisive.⁴⁶

Acceptance of communist refugees into China from Burma was kept at a minimum, and those in China were allowed back only in restricted numbers, presumably so as not to lay Peking open to the charge of interference in Burmese affairs. Even as the White Flags initiated their aggressively Maoist phase after 1964 no more assistance seemed forthcoming, and friendly relations with the Burmese government were maintained. At precarious times for the regime in Rangoon, such as that around 1950, the limitations the Chinese placed upon their assistance was crucial. It is interesting that Peking has not, on the whole, made more of the opportunities for subversion provided by proximity, and in this respect U Nu's positive and forthright independence and Ne Win's neutralistic isolationism may have served Burma well.

Half-hearted support and half-hearted international recognition then, along with a lack of cohesive leadership and weak organisation, characterised the Burmese communist parties from their beginning, and they have all but ceased now to present a serious alternative in themselves to the regime in Rangoon. Nevertheless in his November 1969 Lanzin speech Ne Win still declared, somewhat resignedly, that: 'If one searched the world for a country which has such a variety of insurrections at play one would find only Burma'. Ethnic as well as communist revolts were implied here, and soon afterwards it was announced that military training was to be stepped up and the People's Militia expanded. But this may be more convincingly explained as an attempt to raise morale and 'socialistic consciousness' among a people under pressure from economic misrule, rather than as a direct response to

increased insurrectionary activity. A military regime would presumably have placed some store by the productivity-boosting disciplines of martial service and the politically mobilising attributes of training that assumed some sort of external menace.

The problem of communist underground insurrection and its above ground agencies had indeed been complicated for the Rangoon government by the revolt of ethnic minorities. These minorities have all desired a greater degree of political autonomy within the ethnically Burman-dominated union. On the same grounds they have had little inclination to subordinate themselves to communist leadership despite promises of independence. The correct handling of the minority nationalities, as the NCNA has pointed out,⁴⁷ was the key to seizing victory for the revolution, though the communists largely failed to find that key and the ethnic minorities were never as important in Burma's *China* perspectives as a result.⁴⁸ The most important step in this direction was a loose White Flag-Karen (the National Democratic United Front) coalition, now in abeyance with the decimation of the BCP in the south. The Cultural Revolution had no specific effect on these minority revolts. In more general terms, however, Ne Win has always related Burma's continued autonomy to Burma's struggle for unity: 'Unless we Burmese can learn to run our own country', he once said, 'we will lose it'.⁴⁹ His coup d'état in 1962 was directly linked to the decentralisation demands made during the preceding elections by ethnic minorities, and to the fact that U Nu recognised these demands. A combination of repression and discussion has been used since then, and border lines were negotiated at least partly to make support and retreat for insurgent groups that much less difficult to control. Only the Laotian boundary remains undefined.

The general insignificance of ethnic insurrection to Burma's *China* perspectives must, however, be qualified in one important case. A Burmese Kachin, Naw Seng, who has been reported commuting between Burma and China ever since August 1950, finally returned from China late in 1967 to set up a command north of Lashio. For some time the Chinese tried to get the White Flag remnants up nearer the Yunnan border and Chinese policy seems to have been concerned for years on ringing itself with a buffer of dissident or at least submissive groups and tribes; a zone where sovereignty may be imprecise, but where Chinese influence predominates.⁵⁰ Though sovereignty was defined along the border in 1960, Ne Win's report of clashes in the area up to November 1969 indicated a concentration of insurgency there, and some partial success for a Chinese buffer policy if this was indeed what they sought to achieve.

In conclusion then, it is argued that whereas the variable and shifting unknowns in the Sino-Burmese nexus have rested significantly on the Chinese side of the equation, the constant quantity has been mostly on the Burmese. The vagaries of

Chinese foreign policy have been briefly outlined here. The Burmese response, however, has largely but not exclusively been one of acquiescence.

There was a difference in style and emphasis from U Nu to Ne Win, but not significantly one of foreign policy content. U Nu placed more stress on the contribution to world peace that he thought the moral force of non-aligned small nations could represent. This moralistic approach has since been abandoned. Ne Win's only attempt at international mediation was during the Sino-Indian border conflict—a very specific and immediate issue as far as the Burmese were concerned, and one in which they sought consistently and tentatively not to antagonise China. The whole thrust of Burma's external behaviour has been and is still to avoid such offence. An anxious outlook has prompted an independent policy, but it is a precarious independence, bolstered by a carefully conducted partiality.

Though the traffic in goods, in statesmen, and in statements of opinion has been a reciprocal one, in terms of effect and influence Sino-Burmese relations have been distinctly one-sided. Chinese policy has blown warm, cool, or just indifferently. Its exponents have been careful, except for the uncontrolled events of 1967, not to blow too hard. Burma under its sail of non-alignment has trimmed and tacked with admirable precision. The invasion of Tibet, the war in Korea, the invasion by the Kuomintang, the border incursions of 1956, the overflow of the Cultural Revolution, China's qualified support for the communist insurgents, all had effects on Burma that did not emerge as a revision in foreign policy. Early recognition of the communist regime, the PRC, Article 4 of the Treaty of Friendship, mediation over the Sino-Indian border war, recommendation to the UN, support on the issue of Formosa, the acceptance of aid, and the publicised forbearance in governmental treatment of Burmese-Chinese in 1967, all betray a desire to please. Burma has absorbed adverse Chinese actions as she has gratefully accepted more ameliorative ones. Burmese leaders are well-equipped with perceived predictions of disadvantage, and have endeavoured to tread lightly and carry a little stick.

The nature of this one-way process is clearly demonstrated by the extent to which it has circumscribed Burmese alliances. Foreign aid has been controlled beyond self-denial to the point of positive disadvantage. No Burmese government has been prepared to endorse American policy in the region, and any multilateral defensive organisation, after the initial period of post-independence confusion, was actively avoided. As early as May 1950 the Burmese declined an invitation to attend the Baguio Conference in the Philippines because of its cold-war connotations. With the advent of the Sino-Soviet dispute and with regard to their proxies in Burma, Ne Win banned everybody equally. Only minimal contact was pursued with Russia, and only as an aftermath of the Mao-badge riots did the Rangoon press include Soviet articles sympathetic to Burma and derogatory to the Chinese.

There is a significant reservation, however. The acquiescent quality of this process has not been wholly so. Burma has stopped short of automatic adjustment and has maintained some room for independent manoeuvre. The fact that relations were sustained with the US and Russia at all, the nuclear test-ban treaty vote, the Burmese response to Chinese transmission of White Flag greetings in 1964, and most evident of all, Burmese behaviour in 1967, are indications of inter-state adjustment less than ideal from China's point of view. Independence, however delimited, has been a real touchstone in Burmese foreign policy, and Ne Win took this to its logical extreme by closing down the avenues through which outside states, and particularly China, pursued their own political objectives in Burma at Burma's expense. Thus nationalisation, while increasing governmental control over centres of dissident activity, was also used to exclude external influence. The media were muzzled, propaganda outlets from other states shut down, and the activities of foreign embassies circumscribed. The cost in domestic repression and economic inflation was considerable but Ne Win clearly felt that state autonomy, like charity, began at home.

To the extent also that the upshot of Sino-Burmese relations has not been wholly one-way, the lengthy analysis of them by W. C. Johnstone must remain incomplete. Non-alignment is ultimately the ability of a state's leaders to decide for themselves to be no longer non-aligned, to decide for themselves how significant a threat may be and what sort of response should be made to it, and not to have such a decision thrust upon them by some military ally concerned with its own strategic preconceptions and not necessarily with those of the country concerned. Johnstone argues that in pursuit of this end Burma's non-alignment has in practice produced its own negation. 'while the Burmans regard their foreign policy of neutralism as successful to date, it may have led them into such a close *rapprochement* with Communist China as to have virtually nullified, in fact, the practical application of those principles upon which their neutralist foreign policy has been based'.⁵¹ Not taking sides in a cold-war context has led Burma to apply a double standard to other states' actions and to favour one side only. 'Friendship with all', Johnstone claims, 'has become in fact friendship with one.' Impartiality has produced partiality. Independence conceals implicit appeasement, if not actual subservience. Apprehension has become all-pervasive, for 'no Burmese could guess at what moment the olive branch of peaceful coexistence would be lost in a deluge of China's millions moving south'.⁵²

The passage of time and events has largely dispelled Johnstone's fear of the total subservience that might develop from the friendship that existed before 1962. Indeed he interprets Burma's behaviour up to the time he published his book as an ingratiating servility that totally obscured that state's independence. 'The olive branch of peaceful coexistence' was in fact withdrawn eventually, but there was no

ensuing flood. The Burmese live with China, and are aware of its presence as they seek to preserve their sovereignty. China so far has tolerated Burma, though more recently such declared toleration has centred more often, as it did in the early fifties, on the Burmese 'people' rather than their government. Burma's neutrality has been distinctly deferential. The stance was self-chosen as the least possible price to pay for being left alone. Johnstone is justified in pointing to this deference, for in it lies the essence of Sino-Burmese relations, and their acquiescent quality. If Burma had sought active assistance in combating its insurgencies, if it had allied with the Americans to an extent that prompted more substantial aid from the Chinese to domestic insurrectionists, it could by now have been a communist country wholly, or in a similar predicament to Laos or Vietnam. The partitioning lines are there, a militarily-controlled American-supported southern and central heartland against a communist-controlled Peking-supported ethnically diverse north and north-east. Thus while the initiatives in the Sino-Burmese nexus have lain with the Chinese government, Burma has by and large had to wait upon Peking. Johnstone is not justified, however, in claiming this deference to be either self-defeating, abject, or obsequious. The conclusive answer to this apprehension lies in Burma's demonstrable room for manoeuvre, in the considerable extent to which the relationship has been, in fact, reciprocal. The most successful European parallel is Rumania, rather than, say, Finland, for Burma adjusts but it does not grovel; it adapts but no longer kowtows. On balance, it is a stance that seems to have won China's respect.

Notes

- 1 W. C. Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 276.
- 3 *The Working People's Daily* (Rangoon: Ministry of Information), 9 November 1969.
- 4 See U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People* (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1958), Appendix I, p. 48.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 Aung San, 'An Address to the Anglo-Burman Council', Rangoon, 8 December 1946.
- 7 Presidential address at All-Burma AFPFL Conference, *Towards Peace and Democracy* (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1947), p. 33.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 209.
- 9 *New Times of Burma*, 7 March 1950.
- 10 Radio speech, December 1948. See R. Butwell, *U Nu of Burma* (California: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 172.
- 11 *The Nation* (Rangoon), 21 July 1952.
- 12 Kaznacheev, who graduated from the Soviet International Relations Institute in 1957, was the first such graduate with any knowledge of Burmese. Aleksandr Kaznacheev, *Inside a Soviet Embassy* (London: Robert Hale, 1962).
- 13 J. Frankel, 'Soviet Policy in Southeast Asia', Ch. 8 in M. Beloff, *Soviet Policy in the Far East 1944-51* (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 209 and the section on Burma, pp. 233-8.
- 14 On 24 September 1962, Mao is reported to have told the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee that: 'After the revolutionary victory [they] again suspected that China would be like Yugoslavia and I would become a Tito. Later on [I] went to Moscow to conclude the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance [14 February 1950], which also involved a struggle. He [Stalin] did not want to sign it, but finally agreed after two months of negotiations [December 1949-February 1950]. When did Stalin begin to have con-

fidence in us? It began in the winter of 1950, during the Resist-America Aid-Korea campaign'.

Mao also referred to earlier differences when the Soviets 'did not allow China to make revolution by saying that there should not be any civil war, and that we must collaborate with Chiang Kai-shek. Otherwise the Chinese nation would perish. At that time, we did not carry this into effect, and the revolution was victorious'. *Chinese Law and Government*, Vol. 1, no. 4 (Winter 1968/9), pp. 88-9.

- 15 U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People*, p. 36.
- 16 John Cady, *A History of Modern Burma* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1958), p. 624.
- 17 *The Nation* (Rangoon), 27 Dec. 1950.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 27 Dec. 1950, 24 June 1951, 25 June 1951.
- 19 U Nu, *From Peace to Stability* (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1951), p. 197.
- 20 Liu Shao-ch'i, *Internationalism and Nationalism* (Peking, written Nov. 1948), p. 32 [Translation by Dr W. Brugger].
- 21 Mao Tse-tung, *On People's Democratic Dictatorship* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1950), p. 11.
- 22 Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1954), vol. 3, p. 125.
- 23 Shen-Yu Dai, 'Peking and Rangoon', *China Quarterly*, no. 5 (Jan.-March, 1961), pp. 131-2.
- 24 *The Times* (London), 28 Nov. 1949.
- 25 *NCNA*, 23 Nov. 1949.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*, 29 Nov. 1949.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 20 Nov. 1949.
- 29 *South China Morning Post*, 29 Nov. 1949.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 See note 14.
- 32 *Burma Weekly Bulletin*, 9 Sept. 1950, p. 133; U Nu speech to Parliament, 5 Sept. 1950, in *From Peace to Stability*, p. 102; *The Nation*, 24 Dec. 1954.

- 33 Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, p. 261.
- 34 Butwell, *U Nu of Burma*, p. 172. There is some discrepancy between the claim made by Pannikar that U Nu had asked India to defer its recognition until Burma had done so, and U Nu's claim that Burma had not recognised China earlier at India's request. The two do not directly conflict, however.
- 35 *The Nation*, 13 Aug. 1950.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1950.
- 37 *NCNA*, 27 Sept. 1951.
- 38 *People's China*, vol. 1, no. 2 (16 Jan. 1950), p. 3.
- 39 *From Peace to Stability*, p. 22.
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-3.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- 42 *The Nation*, 7 Nov. 1950.
- 43 Isabelle Crocker, *Burma's Foreign Policy and the Korean War* (California: RAND Corporation P-1576-RC, 1958), p. 12.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 45 *From Peace to Stability*, p. 102.
- 46 *The Nation*, 2 Feb. 1951, editorial.
- 47 *From Peace to Stability*, p. 197.
- 48 *Kuomintang Aggression Against Burma* (Rangoon: Ministry of Information, 1953), Foreword.
- 49 Burma, America, Thailand, Taiwan.
- 50 Reuter's dispatch, November 1967 (undated).
- 51 Burma had considered bringing the problem before the UN as early as November 1951, but was apparently dissuaded by American Ambassador David Key while he attempted to get the US to intervene. Certainly in January 1952 the US Chargé d'Affaires (H. B. Day) in Burma declared that at Burmese request the US had pressured Taiwan 'to the extent that it is possible for one sovereign Government to put pressure on another'. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (28 March-4 April 1953), p. 12837.
- 52 *Kuomintang Aggression in Burma*, p. 40, though American

weapons were not prominent in lists of those finally surrendered. See for example *The Nation*, 3 May 1954.

- 53 'The CIA was intimately involved in the Nationalist troops, but Sebald's superiors, men just below John Foster Dulles—were officially ignorant of the fact'. (Sebald was American Ambassador in Rangoon at this time). D. Wise and T. Ross, *The Invisible Government* (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 131. The presence of Americans with the Kuomintang troops was officially denied (*The Nation*, 29 Jan. 1952), but U Myint Thein declared before the UN the presence of 'occidental instructors or advisors'. (*KMT Aggression in Burma*, p. 40). The bodies of three white instructors found after one battle with Kuomintang troops were, according to the Thai CID, German deserters from the French Foreign Legion, not Americans (*The Nation*, 9 April 1953), but the source of this report still leaves room for doubt.
- 54 For example, Gordon Seagrave, an American missionary doctor in the northern Shan states had been tried for aiding the insurrectionist Karen National Defense Organisation, though the courts were very sympathetic to the case. And America was encroaching at the time on Burma's rice markets.
- 55 U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People*, p. 42.
- 56 *The Nation*, 28 June 1952.
- 57 *People's China*, no. 20 (16 Oct. 1952), Supplement, p. 4.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 Mao Tse-tung, *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), p. 7. The eighth edition in 1961, for example, was 'a revised translation'.
- 60 Stuart Schram, *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* (New York: F. Praeger, 1968), p. xiii.
- 61 U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People*, p. 30.
- 62 *NCNA*, 9 July 1957: Report to the National People's Congress on the Sino-Burmese Border Question.
- 63 *The Nation*, 9 Jan. 1953.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 27 March 1953.
- 65 *People's China*, no. 8 (16 April 1956), p. 10.

- 66 'More on the Historical Experience of the Proletarian Dictatorship', *People's China*, no. 2 (16 Jan. 1957), Supplement, p. 14.
- 67 R. Lowenthal, 'Communist China's Foreign Policy', in Tang Tsou, ed., *China in Crisis*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 1.
- 68 Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, p. 169.
- 69 See G. Modelski, ed., *SEATO: Six Studies* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1962), p. 226.
- 70 Speech to the first session of the National People's Congress, 23 September 1954, in H. Arthur Steiner, *The International Position of Communist China* (American Institute of Pacific Relations, 1958), p. 22.
- 71 *The Nation*, 23 April 1954.
- 72 *A Victory for the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence* (Peking: Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs, 1960), p. 2.
- 73 U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People*, p. 36.
- 74 *A Victory for the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, p. 4.
- 75 *Chung-Hua jen-min kung-ho-kuo fen-sheng ti-t'u* (Provincial Atlas of the PRC, Shanghai, 1953); note map 46.
- 76 *The Nation*, 21 Dec. 1954.
- 77 G. Kahin, *The Asian-African Conference* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 2.
- 78 Butwell, *U Nu of Burma*, p. 187.
- 79 B. Lynn Pascoe, 'China's Relations with Burma: 1949-1964', in A. Cordier, ed., *Columbia Essays in International Affairs 1965* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) gives a list of exchanges on p. 193.
- 80 Shen-Yu Dai, 'Peking and Rangoon', p. 135.
- 81 For the original highly coloured and alarmist reports of this incursion see *The Nation*, 11 July 1956-22 Oct. 1966.
- 82 Daphne Whittam, 'Lweje in Retrospect', *The Nation*, 13 Feb. 1956.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1956.
- 84 *Ibid.*, 3 Nov. 1956.

- 85 See the text of U Nu's excellent summary of Sino-Burmese border negotiations in *The Nation*, 29 April 1960.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 10 April 1957.
- 87 U Nu, *Premier Reports to the People*, p. 36.
- 88 *The Nation*, 9 Jan. 1958.
- 89 'There . . . but for the Grace of God go we!' as Ambassador Pe Kin declared before the UN. *Burma Weekly Bulletin*, vol. 5, no. 4 (10 Jan. 1957), p. 325.
- 90 *NCNA*, 18 March 1958. U Nu, at a press conference on 11 March, confirmed this ban in an act of parliament.
- 91 *The Nation*, 1 Oct. 1958.
- 92 *NCNA*, 3, 7, 22, 30 April 1959; also UN reports 15, 20 Oct. 1959.
- 93 Article 6 Section 3 provided: 'Unless either of the Contracting Parties gives to the other notice in writing to terminate it at least one year before the expiration of this period, it will remain in force without any specified time limit subject to the right of either of the Contracting Parties to terminate it. . . .' Officially the treaty is still effective.
- 94 *A Victory for the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence*, p. 40.
- 95 U Nu's summary, *The Nation*, 29 April 1960.
- 96 Arthur Huck, *The Security of China* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1970), pp. 27-8.
- 97 *The Guardian* (Ministry of Information, Revolutionary Government of Burma), 12 April 1967.
- 98 *The Nation*, 26 March 1962.
- 99 G. H. Jansen, *Afro-Asia and Non-Alignment* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 337.
- 1 *The Nation*, 12 Dec. 1962, address to opening session.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 31 Dec. 1962-25 April 1963.
- 3 *NCNA*, 2 Oct. 1964.
- 4 Harold Hinton, *Communist China in World Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 419.
- 5 D. Murray, 'Chinese Education in Southeast Asia', *China Quarterly*, no. 20 (Oct.-Dec. 1964), p. 79.

- 6 NCNA, 11 July 1967.
- 7 M. Gurtov, *The Foreign Ministry and Foreign Affairs in China's 'Cultural Revolution'* (RAND Corporation, Memorandum RM-5934-PR, 1969), p. 82.
- 8 NCNA, 3 Jan. 1967.
- 9 Ibid., 4 Jan. 1967.
- 10 *The Guardian*, 4 Jan. 1967.
- 11 NCNA, 2 Nov. 1967.
- 12 *The Times of India*, 5 Nov. 1967.
- 13 *The Guardian*, 12 April 1967, p. 8.
- 14 Ibid., 12 May 1967.
- 15 Ibid., 27 June 1967.
- 16 BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, Second Series FE/2504 (30 June 1967).
- 17 NCNA, 28 July 1967.
- 18 *The Guardian*, 29 June 1967.
- 19 Ibid., 2 July 1967.
- 20 NCNA, 1 July 1967.
- 21 Ibid., 29 June 1967.
- 22 A good example of Chinese vilification is the article 'Ne Win Revolutionary Government is Courting Doom by madly opposing China', *Peking Review*, vol. 10, no. 29 (14 July 1967).
- 23 Ibid., vol. 10, nos 35 and 36 (25 Aug. and 1 Sept. 1967).
- 24 Ibid., 25 March 1969.
- 25 *The Guardian*, editorial 'Pernicious Voice', 6 July 1967.
- 26 Ibid., 11 July 1967.
- 27 Ibid., editorial, 10 July 1967.
- 28 Ibid., 30 July 1967.
- 29 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (20 Feb. 1969), p. 311.
- 30 *Foreign Policy of the Revolutionary Government of the Union of Burma* (Burma Socialist Programme Party, Central Organising Committee, Rangoon, 1968), pp. 32 and 44.
- 31 In 1962, according to the admissions of a defecting BCP 'general' published by *The Nation*, 19 March 1962, the central

committee consisted of sixteen members—six belonging to the Politburo (Thakin Than Tun, Goshal, Thakin Chit, Thakin Zin, Ko Htay and Ko Tin Tun); nine being chairmen of regional committees (Bo Myo Myint, no. 1 region; Thakin Pe Tint, Central Burma region; Ko Mya, Lower Burma region; Ko Soe Than, Delta region; Bo Yang Aung, Upper Burma region; Ko Tun Sein, Tenassarim region; Ko Myaw Mya, Arakan region; Ko Toka, Shan region; Ko Tun Maung, North West region); and Ko Ye Tut, acting secretary of the Central Military Committee. By 1970 most of these had been captured, liquidated, or killed in action.

- 32 *Working Peoples' Daily* (Rangoon), 25 March 1969, and for further executions of 'revisionists' see BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, FE/3524/B/2 (4 Nov. 1970), and FE/3419/B/2 (2 July 1970).
- 33 Aung Gyi joined the party in 1945, a Rangoon University graduate. He attended the British Empire Communist Party conference in London (Feb. 1947) with Ba Thein Tin, and the Asian Congress in Calcutta (Feb. 1948). He set up the Central Committee in Peking in 1950, headed the Party Education Department, and was personally responsible for forming the Life Forum and Red Guard movements of 1965. He was directly implicated in all the major party executions.
- 34 For example, in October 1969 Soe Maung (BCP Shan State committeeman, graduate of Rangoon University, 1941, second in command of the BCP army 1950, organiser of the Shans under direct instructions from Thakin Than Tun) was reported killed. And for the death of Tin Tun, General Secretary of BCP Headquarters, Politburo member, see BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, FE/3557/B/1 (17 Dec. 1970).
- 35 *New York Times*, 19 March 1968.
- 36 *Working Peoples' Daily*, 11 July 1969 and 26 July 1969, and for a comparison with U Nu's continued outgoing approach see text of his speech at the Universities Service Centre, Hong Kong, 22 Oct. 1969 and at the Overseas Press Club, New York, 10 Sept. 1969.
- 37 *New York Times*, 19 March 1968.

- 38 For text see *Working Peoples' Daily*, 9 Nov. 1969 and *Forward* (Rangoon), vol. 8, no. 8 (1 Dec. 1969), pp. 6-15.
- 39 *The Guardian*, 14 Jan. 1969.
- 40 BBC, *Summary of World Broadcasts*, Second Series, FE/3459/A3/2 (18 Aug. 1970), and FE/3536/A3/5 (17 Nov. 1970).
- 41 *Ibid.*, Second Series, FE/3497/C/23 (2 Oct. 1970).
- 42 *Far Eastern Economic Review* (17 Oct. 1970).
- 43 This was part of a world-wide initiative by China, *ibid.* (13 Feb. 1971), p. 4.
- 44 J. Stirling, 'Why Ne Win stood up to Mao Tse-tung', *Observer Foreign News Service* (London), 28 July 1967.
- 45 J. Badgley, 'The Communist Parties of Burma', in R. Scalapino, *The Communist Revolution in Asia* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 292.
- 46 Thakin Soe, leader and inspiring force of the Red Flags, seems always to have been too individualistic to tolerate Chinese influence. In April 1968 the Burmese government press reported a major split in his party, with a splinter group of 100 men openly challenging his authority. In June two central committee members surrendered and by November 1969 Soe's group had, it is alleged, been reduced to a harassed band of about thirty, their main occupations being 'extortion' and 'debauchery'. 'The leaders are very well off. They have foreign liquor, Horlicks and cigarettes in abundance.' (*Working Peoples' Daily*, 4 Jan. 1968, 'disclosure by a deserter'). Be this as it may, their political significance is now nil. And in November 1970 Soe himself was surrendered to the Burmese army by a member of the Red Flag Central Committee.
- 47 *NCNA*, 27 April 1969.
- 48 It is probably true to say, however, that ethnic dissidents have overall been more troublesome to the Burman leadership in Rangoon than have the White or Red Flags. The ethnic insurgencies have remained fragmented throughout Burma, but Ne Win's emphasis on unity through national dominance does not augur their rapid end. Basic regional demands have centred on control over resources and control over units of the Burmese army stationed in the various local areas.

The Shans divide at least three ways. One device has been for Shan units to surrender formally, and to be rearmed after taking an oath of allegiance to the Rangoon government, whereupon they promptly return to smuggling opium, a traffic which dominates the Burma-Yunnan-Laos-Thailand corner. The northernmost Shan province of Kokang, however, has reportedly allied itself with China.

The Karens split between the pro-communist faction led by Kyaw Mya Thein and Bo Kyin Pe, and the right wing faction under Bo Mya and Mahn Ba Zan, the latter having led the left wing until the collapse of the 1963 peace talks. Open clashes between the two factions have been reported (*Working Peoples' Daily*, 7 May 1969). A third group of Karen rebels agreed to a truce in 1964 after Ne Win promised concessions to Karen autonomy.

The Kachin Independence Army (the military wing of the Kachin National Organisation) under Zau Seng and his two brothers appears to have been dwindling since its formation in 1962. Ne Win has pursued a denial policy against it in an attempt to starve its members out but rice and salt, the two essentials, have been brought in from Yunnan by Chinese Kachins, and China seems to have relaxed its border to allow this traffic in return for access through Kachin territory to India and Tibet.

A more recent factor was U Nu's attempt to weld these ethnic groups into some kind of popular front capable of overthrowing Ne Win. In June 1970 he was reported as having signed an agreement with the Mon and Karen rebels of the south-east, but little seems to have come of this (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 Aug. 1970, p. 9).

- 49 *The Hindu*, 27 July 1967.
 50 See note 48.
 51 Johnstone, *Burma's Foreign Policy*, p. 276.
 52 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Contemporary China Papers

The Contemporary China Centre was established in The Australian National University in 1970. It is an inter-disciplinary body, which gives cohesion to the studies of modern China carried out in various disciplines within the University. Its functions include co-ordination of research and co-operation with other Australian and overseas universities and with interested persons outside the academic world.

The work of the Centre involves three major Schools of the University: General Studies, Social Sciences, and Pacific Studies. Each is represented on the Centre's Advisory Committee, of which Professor D. A. Low, Director, Research School of Pacific Studies, is chairman and Miss Audrey Donnithorne and Dr S. T. Leong, from the same school, are, respectively, Head and Deputy-Head.

Mainly the studies in the Contemporary China Papers, which will be the work of scholars at The Australian National University or visitors associated with its China program and of members of other Australian universities, will reflect the Centre's chief focus of interest: modern China and its foreign relations since 1949. They will also, however, include historical studies as well as, occasionally, studies in related fields written by non-specialists.

The aim of the series is to present some of the research being carried out in Australia on modern China, a subject of profound significance in international relations and one that stimulates lively interest and debate.

Information about future papers may be obtained from
The Australian National University Press
Box 4, P.O.,
Canberra, A.C.T. 2600, Australia