

BURMA

ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BURMA¹

845C.00/1-1447: Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

SECRET

LONDON, January 14, 1947—1 p. m.

246. 1. Both Laithwaite² and Smith³ expressed fervent hopes last night at impressive British Govt reception for Burmese leaders that talks with Burmese leaders will be successful. Smith said that at second meeting yesterday British suggested division of work among committees. (Emb's 228, January 13.⁴) Burmese replied that they preferred to operate as single group, implication being, according to Smith, that members Burmese delegation desire to watch each other.

2. Aung San⁵ and Tin Tut⁶ spoke cordially of Packer⁷ and of interest in Burmese problems. They promised to get in touch with Embassy when talks are further advanced.

3. Dalton, Chancellor of Exchequer, was overheard to say to Aung San that he should come along to British Treasury for talks "after everything else has been decided".

4. Temperate character Aung San's response to Attlee's⁸ speech of welcome pleased both Laithwaite and Smith.

GALLMAN

¹ For previous documentation on the interest of the United States in independence for Burma, see *Foreign Relations*, 1946, vol. VIII, pp. 1 ff.

² Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, British Deputy Under Secretary of State for Burma.

³ F. W. H. Smith, British Acting Assistant Under Secretary of State for Burma.

⁴ Not printed; it reported that the first meeting was "purely formal." (845C.00/1-1347)

⁵ Head of the Burma Mission to London and Deputy Chairman of the Burmese Executive Council; also Counselor for Defense and External Affairs and President of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) of Burma.

⁶ Counselor for Finance of the Burmese Executive Council and member of the Burma Mission to London.

⁷ Earl L. Packer, Consul General at Rangoon.

⁸ Clement R. Attlee, British Prime Minister.

845C.00/1-1547 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

SECRET

LONDON, January 15, 1947—6 p. m.

295. Following his policy of personally keeping Embassy informed re Burma talk developments, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite had following to say this morning:

1. Aung San's opening speech January 13 was restrained and helpful. Speech of Thakin Ba Sein⁹ was more political and "tub thumping". Other members of delegation have disassociated themselves from Ba Sein's remarks.

2. Little has happened so far. Delegation was supposed to have presented yesterday to British its agreed demands but at meeting Aung San reported that his colleagues could not reach agreement among themselves re demands. Laithwaite understood that delegates reached agreement only at 2 a.m. this morning. Burma delegation will file its demands at today's meeting when discussions point by point will begin.

3. Laithwaite said that while text Burmese demands could not be made available to Embassy at this time they differed little from various public statements made by Burmese leaders. Delegation appears to feel strongly that elections for legislature should not be held but that indigenous inhabitants Burma should instead elect Constituent Assembly. Laithwaite said that it seemed more reasonable to Burma Office, and would be far easier from parliamentary point of view, if legislature is elected first and then that part of it representing indigenous inhabitants is transformed into Constituent Assembly. However, Burmans seem to set great store by this point which probably will be discussed at length. In view of charges from some quarters that AFPFL has certain totalitarian tendencies, he did not feel that abandonment of legislature elections was a particularly sound AFPFL move.

4. Re tribal areas, Burmans have demanded free access with view to persuading inhabitants to become willingly part of Burma proper. Apparently a kind of whirlwind political campaign in tribal areas by leading Burmese parties is contemplated. To some degree Aung San's reassuring statements paragraph 2 Embassy's 252, January 14,¹⁰ re full freedom for all races and religions were window dressing. British had no objection to free access but "it will be hard to prove

⁹ Member of Burma Mission to London and of the Burmese Executive Council (Transport and Communications), leader of the Dobama Asiayone Party.

¹⁰ Not printed.

either way whether people tribal areas are willing to join Burma proper". Before giving up their special responsibilities in these areas British will have to be convinced that inhabitants have exercised their free choice.

5. Laithwaite characterized situation described Rangoon's 29, January 11 ^{10a} as part of AFPFL's policy of keeping up a good head of steam in Burma for emergency use. Aung San is not convinced that talks will be successful and is anxious to be able to move as outcome London conversations may require.

6. Laithwaite said that he was increasingly impressed by Aung San's ability and strength of character.

7. Laithwaite promised Embassy another report Friday.¹¹

GALLMAN

845C.00/1-2247 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

LONDON, January 22, 1947—6 p. m.

465. U Saw ¹² presented Packer's letters of introduction at Embassy London January 21 and talked very freely.

2. U Saw feels strongly that Governor of Burma ¹³ erred in giving leadership to Aung San instead of to himself whose party is really majority party eclipsed by terrorist tactics of AFPFL Fascists who are "really Communists at heart". This view plus his long internment by British Government (he believes his movements are closely watched in London) appear to color all his thinking.

3. U Saw is not convinced that anything will come of the London talks but he admits that while he suspects British good faith no evidence has come to his attention in course of talks which would justify these suspicions.

4. U Saw thinks that proof of British good faith will be the manner in which they handle tribal areas. He is convinced that tribal areas are willing to come in with Burma proper on satisfactory guarantees which his own party is perfectly willing to give.

^{10a} Not printed.

¹¹ This telegram was repeated by the Department as No. 25, January 16, 7 p. m., to Rangoon and as No. 32 to New Delhi. The Department in its 285, January 17, 6 p. m., to London, welcomed the British attitude as "eminently reasonable". (845C.00/1-1547) Further British reports were made on January 18 and 21 (not printed), and progress was reported.

¹² Member of Burma Mission to London and of Burmese Executive Council (Education); leader of Myochit Party and former Premier.

¹³ Maj. Gen. Sir Hubert E. Rance.

5. U Saw described Communist strength in Burma as "small" and said that Communists were divided between those in touch with Moscow via China and those working with Indian Communists.¹⁴

6. U Saw expressed deepest distrust of Aung San, who he said is wearing to meetings "the uniform of a Japanese officer from which the Order of the Rising Sun has been removed so recently that the marks of it can still be seen".

7. Questioned re strength of Pan-Asianism in Burma, U Saw said that he did not think that it had much hold largely because the Burmese people hate Japanese so thoroughly and consider it to be a made-in-Japan idea. U Saw thought that China with help of U.S. would eventually assume leadership of Asia.

8. U Saw said that as Minister of Education he was anxious to appoint an education officer in U.S. to look after Burmese Government students, the number of which he hopes to increase.

9. U Saw is consulting London eye specialist re removal of two remaining particles of glass from right eye and will remain here for treatment after Burma delegation departs. He is also considering visit to American eye specialist.

GALLMAN

701.45C11/1-2247

The British Embassy to the Department of State

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

G48/2/47

As the United States Government are aware, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are engaged in discussions in London with a representative delegation of Burmese political leaders on the constitutional future of Burma. In the course of their discussions, it has transpired that the Burmese delegation attach great importance to Burma's being represented diplomatically in Washington, Nanking and Bangkok. The delegation claim to have received an intimation that the United States Government would be disposed to consider favourably an exchange of diplomatic representatives between Burma and the United States.

2. His Majesty's Government would accordingly be grateful to learn whether, in anticipation of the probable early realisation of full self-government by Burma, when she will enjoy a position similar to that

¹⁴ On January 24 the Communist Party Burma and the Red Flag Cultivators Union were declared illegal and several leaders were arrested.

now enjoyed by India, the Government of the United States would be prepared to accept, in principle, the exchange of diplomatic representatives with Burma. They consider that the representatives might appropriately have ministerial rank, but wish to suggest that the determination of the precise status to be accorded to them be left until a later date. His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador is instructed to give an assurance that the Government of Burma would be prepared to accept the appointment of a diplomatic representative of the United States on a reciprocal basis.

3. The discussions which are being held with the Burmese Delegation in London are likely to be concluded by the 28th January. When a statement on the outcome of the conversations is prepared, the Burmese Delegation will almost certainly wish to include a reference to the question of the exchange of diplomatic representatives with certain countries. His Majesty's Government would therefore be grateful if a very early answer could be returned to this enquiry and if in the meantime it could be treated as strictly confidential.

WASHINGTON, 22nd January, 1947.

701.45C11/1-2247

The Department of State to the British Embassy

AIDE-MÉMOIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

With reference to the second paragraph of the British Embassy's *aide-mémoire* (G48/2/47) of January 22, 1947, the United States Government accepts in principle the exchange of diplomatic representatives with Burma. It might be preferable, pending the holding of elections and the clarification of the Burmese political and constitutional situation, that in the initial stage the representation be of a character indicated by the titles diplomatic agent or agent general, it being understood that the officers concerned would hold the personal rank of minister.

The United States Government has no objection to the announcement on January 28 or at the conclusion of the discussions with the Burma delegation in London that the exchange of diplomatic representatives between Burma and the United States was taking place at once. The public announcement would not state the exact character of representation, which would be determined by subsequent developments and negotiations.

WASHINGTON, January 23, 1947.

701.45C11/1-2347 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, January 23, 1947—6 p. m.

391. [Here follows report of an exchange of views between the United States and British Governments regarding Burmese diplomatic representation.]

Dept desires leave question exact titles open until last moment. If Burma situation and wishes Burmese indicate unusually great importance attached immediate exchange fully accredited ministers, situation may be reconsidered. In accordance Depairgram to Rangoon A-100 Dec. 30,¹⁵ Dept informed Brit Emb informally that prior exchange diplomatic representatives GOB must define Rangoon consular district as including all Burma. This connection Dept proposes that U.S. diplomatic agent Rangoon also have title Consul General. Andrus¹⁶ left for London Jan 24 with background latest Dept thinking this question.

Sent London, rptd Nanking 89 Bangkok 44 Delhi 48.

MARSHALL

845C.00/1-2347 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, January 23, 1947—4 p. m.

483. U Ba Pe¹⁷ of Burma delegation presented Packer's letter of introduction to Embassy today and in general conversation made following points:

1. While he had only attended two meetings so far Ba Pe said that he had been favorably impressed by sincerity with which Prime Minister was conducting talks.

2. Ba Pe feels that purpose London talks is to decide how, rather than whether, 1935 axe [Act¹⁸] will be buried.

3. Ba Pe volunteered that "British have their own difficulties" re Parliament and British public opinion and said that Burma delegation would agree to convention mentioned by Laithwaite (Embassy's 382, January 18, paragraph 4¹⁹) "there being no alternative".

¹⁵ Not printed.

¹⁶ J. Russell Andrus, of the Division of Middle Eastern and Indian Affairs.

¹⁷ Member of the Burmese Executive Council (Commerce and Supply) and of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League. He had arrived late for the London meetings.

¹⁸ The Government of Burma Act, 1935.

¹⁹ Telegram not printed; paragraph 4 concerned a suggested temporary convention under which the Governor would withhold the use of his powers (845C.00/1-1847).

4. There were "very few" Communists in Burma "but they have loud mouths" which gives them false appearance of importance. He said Communists were split into two groups, one of which works closely with Indian Communists.

5. The "frontier areas" are a British creation. He thought the "really backward people" of these areas probably did not exceed 100,000. Although there were difficulties he thought that the greater part of tribal area wanted independence and wanted it within the structure of Burma proper.

6. He said that conversations regarding financial questions began yesterday. He hoped they would prove fruitful and that at early date US-Burman trade relations could progress.

7. Ba Pe said that as soon as dollars were available Burma wanted to increase number of Burma Government students attending US colleges and in this connection Burma desired to send official to US to look after their welfare. Asked whether this official would be attached to the British Embassy in Washington temporarily, Ba Pe replied that "this is just what we want to avoid".

8. Ba Pe approved secrecy with which talks have been conducted so far. He thought that within few days enough progress will have been made to issue a joint communiqué.

GALLMAN

845C.00/1-2747 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

SECRET

LONDON, January 27, 1947—9 p. m.

US URGENT

570. Embassy's 533, January 25.²⁰ Following is Laithwaite's fifth report re Burma talks:

1. Laithwaite, tired but triumphant, said that he was "well pleased" with talk results which will be published tomorrow following Prime Minister's full statement to Parliament. He said agreement is as outlined previously to Embassy and is being telegraphed in full to British Embassy, Washington tonight for early delivery to Dept.

2. At 11:15 p. m. last night when delegations had apparently reached agreement all points, U Saw and Ba Sein, who had previously given no evidence of their disagreement, announced that time had come when they must disassociate themselves from the agreement.

²⁰ Not printed: it reported conversations with Laithwaite and MacDougall. The former had been informed of the Department's attitude as given in telegram 391, January 23, to London, p. 6, and had assured the Embassy that he understood and agreed (845C.00/1-2547).

They said they had kept silent up to now in deference to majority opinion and that if withdrawing at this point caused inconvenience they were sorry but they had misunderstood procedure of talks. Prime Minister and Aung San pressed both U Saw and Ba Sein for reasons for disassociation. Neither produced any alternatives but said that agreement "did not go far enough". Further questioning elicited from U Saw fact that he would like to see elections held for legislature even though British Govt (Embassy's 533, January 25, paragraph 3 ²¹) and other members Burma delegation had reached agreement far beyond this point. Aung San raised question of immediate resignations of U Saw and Ba Sein but British said this should be dealt with after delegation's return to Burma.

3. Commenting upon this last minute action, Laithwaite said that it was too bad that unanimity of Burma delegation had been broken at very end by their two politicians who desire to make political capital of their disassociation after their return to Burma. Their action probably will be seized upon in Commons tomorrow by Churchill ²² opposition as a stick with which to beat Govt. Actually disaffection these two could not mar the solid work accomplished. As outside estimate he considered that Ba Sein and U Saw together do not represent more than 10% of politically conscious Burmese, remaining 90% being AFPFL or Communist sympathizers.

4. One section of agreement reads: "There shall be appointed forthwith a high commissioner for Burma to represent Burma Govt in London. HMG will request govts of countries with which Burma wishes to exchange diplomatic representatives to agree to such an exchange." Laithwaite said that Burma delegation had accepted this, which might be somewhat less than impression conveyed to Dept by British *aide-mémoire*.²³ (Dept's 390, Jan 23.²⁴) Actually Aung San has been informed of US acceptance in principle of exchange of diplomatic representatives and of US thought that agent-general or diplomatic agent might be suitable title at outset. China has also accepted in principle without comment. Siam has accepted in principle but without enthusiasm. As Laithwaite understands situation, Burmans have no fixed ideas regarding when, how or with what title their diplomatic representatives other than to UK will go abroad. Details re above will be worked out in Burma during coming weeks. Laithwaite said that Dening, Assistant Under-Secretary State, FonOff, wished to

²¹ This paragraph provided for elections to a constituent assembly only.

²² Winston S. Churchill was leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons.

²³ Dated January 22, p. 4.

²⁴ See telegram 391, January 23, p. 6.

talk to Embassy about US intentions so that "We will not go astray on timing".

5. Dening, seen immediately afterwards, expressed thanks for Dept's acceptance in principle of exchange of diplomatic representatives with Burma. He referred to telegrams reporting conversations between British Embassy, Washington and officers of Dept in which Dept indicated its willingness to appoint its Consul General Rangoon diplomatic agent immediately upon announcement of a favorable outcome of London talks. He mentioned also a conversation in which it had been indicated in Washington that possibility existed of US ambassador being appointed to Siam in which case US might follow similar line of [*in?*] Burma. Dening said that while US course of action is entirely up to US, FonOff thought in circumstances announcement by US tomorrow of appointment diplomatic representative might be "a bit hasty". FonOff considered in light of portion of agreement quoted above that every purpose would be served by US statement that exchange of diplomatic representatives with Burma had been agreed upon in principle. He thought it preferable to leave questions of time, title, et cetera, to be worked out later with Burmese Govt which, presumably, having now made informal approaches via British Govt would soon present through British Govt formal requests to US, China and Siam for exchange of representatives indicating rank they had in mind. He thought that after delegation returns Burmans might also discuss question with Packer. Dening said that he was telegraphing tonight to British Embassy, Washington to approach Dept in this sense. (Note: Thanks presence Andrus, Embassy has been in fortunate position to correct faulty impression given Dening by British Embassy, Washington that Dept is pressing for earliest possible exchange of diplomatic representatives and contemplated unilateral action this regard.)

6. Both Laithwaite and Dening felt that any publicity or comment favorable to new agreement would be helpful, particularly in light of disaffection U Saw and Ba Sein, and possibility Parliamentary debate. If, after seeing text of agreement Dept issues any statement, Embassy would appreciate receiving it telegraphically.

7. Rangoon may be interested paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

8. Sent Dept only.

GALLMAN

845C.00/1-2847 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

RESTRICTED

LONDON, January 28, 1947—7 p. m.

US URGENT

606. Prime Minister read to packed and attentive Commons today a statement summarizing provisions of the agreement reached between British and Burma delegations (Lord Pethick-Lawrence²⁵ at same time read same statement before Lords). Text of this agreement was issued simultaneously.²⁶

(2) Prime Minister mentioned that two of Burmese delegation had seen fit to disassociate themselves from agreement at last minute but that they had no constructive alternatives to offer and their refusal to sign did not impair solid accomplishments contained in agreement. Mr. Churchill immediately rose and asked Prime Minister whether his statement meant simply "go" or whether it meant both "go and pay". Attlee who appeared to have great measure of support on both sides of House refused to be drawn by Churchill into an exchange of type which latter led on December 20. Attlee said that at this stage there was no question of either going or paying because people of Burma would make their free choice as to whether to remain in British Commonwealth and because financial matters were covered by loans which were fully justified by ravages of war suffered by Burma, both at the hands of enemy and by orders of British commanders in prosecution of war.

(3) Prime Minister's statement indicated that Parliamentary Under Secretary for Dominions, Mr. A. G. Bottomley, would depart in near future for Burma to study wishes for future of Burmese people in general and tribal areas in particular. He would be available for consultation with Burmese nationals but he would not carry with him comprehensive instructions or powers.²⁷

(4) General impression received by Embassy observers present was that Prime Minister's deft handling of opposition obviated difficulties

²⁵ British Secretary of State for India and Burma.

²⁶ British Cmd. 7029: *Conclusions reached in the Conversations between His Majesty's Government and the Delegation from the Executive Council of the Governor of Burma, Presented by the Prime Minister to Parliament by Command of His Majesty January 1947.*

²⁷ In an analysis of the agreement, Mr. Andrus in telegram 612, January 28, 7 p. m., from London, stated that "Burma's interim status fully equal to India's. External affairs and defense no longer given special reserved treatment." (845C.00/1-2847)

inherent in disaffection of two Burmese delegates and forestalled any phrase making by Churchill.

Sent Dept 606, repeated New Delhi 10; Department please pass to Rangoon as our No. 6.

GALLMAN

845C.00/1-2747 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom

SECRET

WASHINGTON, January 29, 1947—1 p. m.

US URGENT

461. Following press release issued Jan 28 re Burma settlement.

"The Department of State welcomes the announcement that the conversations between the British Government and Burmese political leaders in London have ended with a mutually satisfactory settlement placing Burma well on the road to full self-government. We look forward to increasingly cordial relations with this emerging Asiatic country."

Re exchange diplomatic reps Dept will await formal approach from Brit Govt and GOB before taking any action this matter. Urtel 570 Jan 27.

We are inclined believe in view certain differences authority proposed Burma Interim Govt and that present Indian Interim Govt in fields finance, defense and foreign affairs it would be more appropriate initiate representation on diplomatic agent level pending further developments. Your discretion this tentative view may be conveyed to Brit Govt and GOB when formal approach made in order their reactions may be cabled when you request Dept's instructions.

Rangoon requested cable its appraisal significance abstention U Saw and Ba Sein from London settlement.

Sent London 461, rptd Rangoon 48,²⁸ Nanking 110, Bangkok 59.

MARSHALL

845C.00/1-2947 : Telegram

The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

LONDON, January 29, 1947—6 p. m.

639. Embtels 606 and 612 of January 28.²⁹ At first opportunity after conclusion Burma talks Tin Tut and Thakin Mya³⁰ called at Embassy.

²⁸ In telegram 48 to Rangoon, paragraphs 2-5 of telegram 570, January 27, from London (p. 7), were repeated.

²⁹ Latter not printed, but see footnote 27, p. 10.

³⁰ Latter was a member of the Burma Mission in London and of the Burmese Executive Council (Home); he was a leading member of the Thakin, later Socialist Party and of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

Both seemed highly pleased regarding success of talks. Tin Tut said delegation would not have signed agreement unless, as was the case, it was confident of obtaining widespread support for it in Burma. Following points arose in conversation:

1. April elections for Constituent Assembly will proceed as scheduled. Assembly is expected to convene May and may require "from 6 months to a year" for constitution framing.

2. Bottomley participated London talks and left for Panglong yesterday to sound out tribal leaders and to be chairman Committee of Enquiry. This Committee is scheduled to report by May. Tin Tut stressed fact that he and his colleagues intended leave minorities no legitimate grounds for dissatisfaction.

3. Aung San held press conference this morning, at which reporters were eager to know whether Burma would remain in Empire. Aung San replied cautiously that this would be settled later. Tin Tut expressed to Embassy his belief there was considerable prospect Burma choosing dominion status.

4. Tin Tut said that projects boards would be either wound-up completely or taken over by Government of Burma as promptly as possible. Tin Tut confirmed that 87,000,000 pounds loan never realized in full, and said that now much lower total will be fixed without string. He said no decision yet as to how many projects boards functions would be retained by GOB after British companies retire from projects' management.

5. U Saw and Ba Sein were said to have taken little active part in discussion and to have indicated disagreement only late Sunday night. Apparently, according to Tin Tut, they hoped there would be no agreement and that they would be chosen by Governor to form new government. Tin Tut said both will be ejected from Cabinet if they do not resign.

6. Tin Tut raised question exchange diplomatic representatives and said British Government would formally approach Department soon this subject. Embassy reiterated Department's position as conveyed British Embassy, Washington, pointing out Indian precedent for diplomatic agents with personal rank minister pending Constituent Assembly elections. Tin Tut seemed to appreciate Indian analogy and said that in any case it was doubtful that Burmese Minister could reach Washington "for at least 3 months", by which time he "hoped Department would agree to exchange fully accredited Minister".

7. Tin Tut raised also Burma's desire for early membership in International Bank and International Fund. He said British have agreed support Burma's applications and expressed hope US support would also be forthcoming.

8. Ba Pe left for Burma 29th. Remainder delegation except U Saw returning special plane 30th.

9. Embassy referred to desire to [of?] both US and British Governments that one or more Burmese participate lend-lease talks here beginning February 4 and inquired whether San Lin now in London as Junior Burmese representative on Burma Currency Board might be assigned to participate. Tin Tut said San Lin wished return with delegation but Tin Tut would decide during day whether San Lin would remain for talks.³¹ Embassy understands similar suggestion was made to Tin Tut yesterday by Burma Office.

Sent Department 639; Department repeat to Rangoon 9 and New Delhi 13.

GALLMAN

845C.00/2-247 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, February 2, 1947—noon.

88. While there is feeling in some quarters Aung San has lost prestige because he signed agreement embodying much less than he had demanded (some say he got nothing, others that he got 75 per cent), it appears doubtful he will suffer greatly within AFPFL itself. Test will come at forthcoming AFPFL Supreme Council meeting; if passed successfully he must then ease off popular enthusiasm (which he has aroused) for direct action (my 75, 29th³²). Seems to me he can to his followers logically plug Constituent Assembly as means to independence before January 31, 1948, and plug momentarily at least Panglong Conference (which will include other than Shan leaders and will be followed immediately by Shan council at Taunggyi; which Governor plans attend later) as meeting place to gain hill peoples' support of thesis must now adopt that they should get simultaneously what Burma gets; and if any success at Panglong, he can plug it accordingly. Obviously British have picked him for immediate future Burma ship of state, and it seems unlikely he can renege on agreement since (1) he would thereby lose British support and consequently any early hope to bring hill peoples into any close degree of union with Burma proper under AFPFL administration and (2)

³¹ In telegram 645, January 30, 11 a. m., from London, it was reported that N. R. Chakravarti, Secretary of the Finance and Revenue Department (Pay Commission) of Burma, would represent Burma (845C.00/1-3047).

³² Not printed.

his immediate political future would seem to hang on ability to popularize agreement.³³

U Saw and Thakin Ba Sein may possibly have to resign or have their resignations accepted by Governor (for failure to go along with AFPFL setup);³⁴ out of office they are not likely to be very dangerous to AFPFL in immediate future; if Aung San star later begins to set, they will be ready for comeback (Deptel 48³⁵).

Possibility inclusion Ba Maw³⁶ in revamped Executive Council as well as Communist representative (if AFPFL and Thein Pe-Than-Tun³⁷ group patch differences) not to be overlooked.

Sent Department 88; repeated London 21.

PACKER

811.42745C SE/2-547: Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

RESTRICTED

LONDON, February 5, 1947—6 p. m.

786. To Packer from Boyd:³⁸ During opening talks Burma settlement February 4, we agreed present Chakravarti letter describing general proposals cultural exchange. He will attempt secure immediate approval Government of Burma. Letter briefly describes possible joint arrangements for professorial and student exchange, for sending scientists and other American specialists to Burma, for translation and publication American books in Burmese, and purchase Burmese documents and museum exhibits, emphasizing fact that Government of Burma would be consulted regarding each project. Letter concludes: "I am sure that our Consulate General Rangoon will be able explain Fulbright Act³⁹ more fully if requested by your Government."

If consulted by Government of Burma we prefer Consulate General avoid discussion financial aspects these proposals.

Department please send Rangoon as 11. [Boyd.]

GALLMAN

³³ The Governor's Executive Council on February 5 ratified the London agreement, and the AFPFL Supreme Council next accepted it as an instrument by which to work for speedy attainment of independence.

³⁴ Both men resigned from the Executive Council in February, and the Council was then reorganized to fill the vacancies.

³⁵ See footnote 28, p. 11.

³⁶ Burmese Premier during the Japanese occupation.

³⁷ Leaders of the so-called White Flag Communists who had left the AFPFL in 1946.

³⁸ Alden W. Boyd, representing the Lend-Lease Administrator (Lane).

³⁹ Approved August 1, 1946; 60 Stat. 754; see Department press release of February 14, 1947, Department of State *Bulletin*, February 23, 1947, p. 364.

845C.00/2-747 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, February 7, 1947—10 p. m.

103. Governor informed me following effect 5th :

He is hopeful irresponsible youth in AFPFL will listen to reason and follow lead of Aung San whom he considers entirely sincere but whose ability to carry out his program and put over London agreement is open to question. It will be difficult for Aung San apply brakes effectively to movement which he started against constituted authority and which in places has reached stage of incipient rebellion. Communists likely to give Aung San further trouble. AFPFL second string men recently sent into districts having some success in restoring order but dacoits ⁴⁰ still have lots of arms despite surrender of many since amnesty.

Governor recently informed Aung San that as soon as elections are won latter will have to be firm and stop strikes which are ruining country. Thakin Ba Sein and U Saw not considered to head organization sufficiently strong at present to be source of polling danger to Aung San. Is hopeful something can be worked out between hill peoples and Burmese to make Burma one country. Intends to go to Shan Federal Council at Taung-Gyi which opens on 15th.

Elections postponed week until April 9.

Sent to Department as 103, Department relay to London as 24.

PACKER

845C.00/2-1047 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, February 10, 1947—11 a. m.

112. Made short call on Aung San morning 6[th]. He seemed less confident than when I saw him last, some weeks ago. He was very tired and not very communicative.

He said two most important subjects for immediate attention are reaching agreement with hill peoples and convening of Constituent Assembly at which Burma's future will be decided. When asked about military provisions of agreement he smiled and said British troops might be stationed in Burma "for a long time to come."

I asked how he felt about London Mission. He said constitutional processes sometimes produce difficulties in achieving desired action.

U Tin Tut was informed in London, he said, that rank Burmese

⁴⁰ Murderous robbers acting in gangs in Burma.

representative Washington might be Diplomatic Agent at beginning but would be raised to Minister after elections. In response to his query. I informed him Indian representative in Washington will be Ambassador; this interested him. He said Burmese representative when selected in near, but not immediate, future could hardly reach Washington until after elections. Immediately after my departure he had meeting scheduled to discuss continuing spread of strikes which may soon include clerks various enterprises.

I asked what he could tell me re Communists from Burma attending Empire Communist Conference scheduled London shortly. He replied both Burmese groups ⁴¹ had been invited but he thought there might be difficulties in their getting to UK.

Sent Dept 112, repeated London as 26.

PACKER

845C.00/2-247

Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs (Henderson) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] February 10, 1947.

It is not believed that the policy outlined in the attached telegram ⁴² is inconsistent with our policy in China.

The communists in various countries and areas of the world pursue tactics which differ widely according to the political, economic and social situation in these territories. Since their tactics vary, it is not possible for us to approach the communist problem in each country in the same manner.

The situation in Burma differs widely from that in China and the communist tactics also differ:

1. In the first place, the communists in China are in physical control of large portions of that country; they are fairly well supplied with arms and are in a position, if they so desire, to wage civil war on a large scale. In Burma, on the other hand, the communists are not as yet in possession of any defined areas, but are dispersed throughout the whole country.

2. Burma, which has heretofore been under British rule, is in the process of achieving full self-government. We are anxious that this process will be completed without the outbreak of civil war. On the other hand, the communists, if permitted to strengthen their influence in Burma, would not be adverse to armed conflict. Our policy, therefore, of preventing them from gaining influence by obtaining a foothold in the government is similar to that in China in that it is one of preventing, if possible, civil war.

⁴¹ The Red Flag Communists were led by Thakin Soe.

⁴² *Infra.*

3. In this connection, it should be pointed out that an amicable understanding with the British has recently been reached in London only because the Burmese national leaders broke away from a united front with the communists several months ago. Restoration of this united front is almost sure to mean the sabotaging of the agreement and of a return to a policy based upon threat of force.

4. The present Burmese national leadership is by no means reactionary and advocates a liberal program of social and economic reform. In this respect these leaders differ from the more reactionary elements in the Kuomintang.

In our opinion, therefore, only by excluding the communists will the nationalist democratic elements in Burma be able to unite among themselves to an extent which will make possible the setting up of enlightened self-government in that country.

It is, of course, possible that the communists will in any event endeavor to stir up armed conflict. Nevertheless, their exclusion from the government offers our best hope that this conflict will not develop into hostilities on a broad scale.

LOY W. HENDERSON

845C.00/2-247 : Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon*⁴³

SECRET

WASHINGTON, February 11, 1947—10 a. m.

58. For action by Packer only. We have noted statement contained urtel 88 Feb 2 re possibility inclusion communist representative in revamped Executive Council. Experiences other govts in similar position cause us believe inclusion of communists in a Burmese govt is likely to add to difficulties of Burmese in setting up genuinely democratic form of self-govt. It has been found in general that although communists are glib in advocating democracy and self-govt they endeavor in practice to prevent dependent peoples from setting up any kind of govt not susceptible to communist influence or control. Furthermore it seems clear that they are anxious that Burma should attain independence from Brit Empire by violence rather than by peaceful means in order to injure Brit prestige in Far East, to encourage violence elsewhere in Asia, and to facilitate strengthening of communist influence in Burma. We believe that unless Burmans are able to isolate communists at once latter may be successful in penetrating politically inexperienced liberal and intellectual groups and bringing disunity among patriotic democratic Burmans, and in creating much difficulty for Burma in future.

⁴³ Repeated to London as telegram 790, February 17, 7 p. m.

You are authorized therefore in your discretion to take advantage of such informal opportunities as may present themselves to let Aung San and other responsible Burman leaders understand that for them to include communists in high govt positions would afford latter opportunity for disruptive activities, would give them added importance in eyes Burmese people and might eventually prove disastrous to Burmans as well as to other peace-loving peoples in Asia.

MARSHALL.

845C.00/2-1247 : Telegram

*The Chargé in the United Kingdom (Gallman) to the
Secretary of State*

CONFIDENTIAL

LONDON, February 12, 1947—6 p. m.

978. Embassy today presented Andrus to Sir Gilbert Laithwaite and F. W. H. Smith, Burma Office, who made following points in general conversation :

1. Aung San and co-signers have somewhat to British surprise "behaved like gentlemen" since their return. Laithwaite has noted with pleasure fact that Aung San has resisted temptation to parade in Burma as victor over vanquished British. As example of good feeling which Burma Delegation appears to have for British, Laithwaite cited a "purely gratuitous" telegram sent to Attlee by Burma Delegation expressing its thanks for friendly reception and treatment accorded it while in London. A.F.P.F.L. recently cabled condolences regarding death Ellen Wilkinson.⁴⁴

2. Present prospects from Panglong were "excellent".⁴⁵ Laithwaite understood that arrangements are likely to be made for appointment Shan Councillor and Kachin and Chin Deputy Counsellors.

3. Sir Gilbert discounts opposition U Saw and other "ex-Premiers".

4. Communists next to A.F.P.F.L. in strength, with Thein Pe group representing about $\frac{2}{3}$ Communist strength. Laithwaite understood there was possibility this group re-entering Cabinet if A.F.P.F.L. will agree to receive it. He sees group as right wing of Burmese Communists, who probably place Burma above international communism. He said that there was no evidence link between Burmese communism and Russia, except perhaps through Joshi and Indian Communists.

5. Laithwaite believes it politically impossible Aung San or other

⁴⁴ British Minister of Education.

⁴⁵ The Panglong agreement was reported in telegram 119, February 13, from Rangoon, not printed; for text of agreement, signed at Maymyo, April 24, 1947, see British Cmd. 7138: *Burma, Frontier Areas Committee of Inquiry, 1947, Report to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and to the Government of Burma, Presented by the Secretary of State for Burma to Parliament by Command of His Majesty June, 1947, p. 13.*

Burmese politician to come out for dominion status this time, which accounts for Aung San's noncommittal statements this subject. He thought that while logically Constituent Assembly might settle this issue early its deliberations, it was likely that for same political reasons, decision might be deferred as long as possible.

6. Laithwaite said that his greatest immediate concern was Rangoon strike, which may be attributed to agitation in Burma during London talks which could not be shut off immediately. He hoped Aung San on return from Panglong would get to grips with situation.

Sent Dept 978; repeated Rangoon 13.

GALLMAN

845C.00/2-1347: Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom

WASHINGTON, February 14, 1947.

767. Following text 121 Feb 13 Rangoon to Dept:

New Times 13th reports Saw Tha Hto secretary All Burma Karen Congress cabled HMG through governor saying Karen Congress emphatically protests against London agreement because of "inadequate Karen quota" in proposed Constituent Assembly and "undefined" number Karen seats in interim legislature; also failure recognize claim for separate Karen state; also failure consult Karen opinion. Karen Congress decided for non-participation unless satisfactory modifications London agreement are made by March 3rd.

MARSHALL

845C.00/2-2747: Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RANGOON, February 27, 1947.

150. *New Times* 27th reports Than Tun Communist Party has announced intention of participating in elections⁴⁶ and also desire "to work in unity with AFPFL to make elections successful also to prevent opportunist Mahabama, Myochits, Thakins and others from wrecking Constituent Assembly". Statement continued "we desire to put an end to civil strifes which are likely to help imperialist". Statement concluded said *Times* "Communist Party would not oppose AFPFL but would contest only in those places where party had a strong majority."

PACKER

⁴⁶ Scheduled for April 9 and 11.

701.45C11/3-547 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in China

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, March 5, 1947—7 p. m.

271. Burma seems unlikely propose diplomatic exchange with US and China until after April elections. Question level diplomatic exchange still unsettled. Recent change US establishment Bangkok to embassy may cause Burmans wish same treatment. Please ascertain discreetly whether Chinese expect exchange ministers or ambassadors with Burma.⁴⁷

Sent Nanking, repeated Rangoon ⁴⁸ and London.⁴⁹

ACHESON

845C.00/3-2547 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, March 25, 1947—11 a. m.

234. Supreme Council United Hill Peoples now in session at Tounggyi has just decided Hill Peoples will participate in work of Constituent Assembly. Manner of participation still to be worked out.⁵⁰

Repeated London as 51.

PACKER

845C.00/3-1947

The Acting Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, March 27, 1947.

The Acting Secretary of State refers to the Consulate General's telegram 206 of March 19, 1947 and to the Department's telegram 100 of March 21, 1947 ⁵¹ and forwards herewith two copies of the proposed

⁴⁷ Telegram 495, March 9, 1 p. m., from Nanking, reported that the Chinese Foreign Office expected that the diplomatic representative to Burma would be an ambassador, as in the case of India and Siam, which were contiguous countries (701.45C11/3-947). This telegram was repeated by the Department on March 12 as No. 1139 to London and as No. 86 to Rangoon.

⁴⁸ As No. 78.

⁴⁹ As No. 1050.

⁵⁰ Telegram 335, April 28, from Rangoon, reported the signing on April 24 at Maymyo of the "unanimous report Frontier Areas Inquiry Committee on best method associating frontier areas peoples with framing Burma's new constitution". (845C.9111 RR/4-2847) This Committee was headed by Lt. Col. D. R. Rees-Williams, member of the British House of Commons; for text of report, see British Cmd. 7138.

⁵¹ Neither printed. In telegram 206 Mr. Packer advised the inclusion of all Burma in the American consular district in advance of taking up the question of establishing diplomatic relations; in telegram 100 the Department replied that it was defining the Rangoon consular district as all Burma in a draft of a Burmese-American consular convention to be sent to Rangoon, copies of which would be airmailed early with the aim of signing the consular convention simul-

consular convention with the United Kingdom.⁵² Changes have been made in the United Kingdom draft convention in order to enable this draft to be more suitable as the basis of a consular convention between the United States and Burma.

It is requested that this draft be studied to ascertain whether any of its provisions require revision before submission to the appropriate Burmese authorities and that the Department be informed by cable, referring to page and line number, of any suggested changes.⁵³ If no amendments are deemed necessary, a copy of the draft should be presented to the appropriate Burmese authorities with the explanation that it is hoped that the consular convention can be signed following and on the same day as the exchange of notes which establishes diplomatic relations between the United States and Burma. At an appropriate stage of the negotiations the Burmese authorities should be informed in writing that the sentence at the end of Article I, paragraph 1 "The sending state may prescribe the consular district to correspond to each consular office" will be interpreted by the United States to mean that this country may, if it wishes, prescribe the Rangoon consular district as comprising the whole of Burma—Shan States, Kachin hills, Chin hills, etc.

The consular convention should be prepared for signature at the appropriate time by either the Burmese Department of External Affairs or the Consulate General. For information regarding the negotiation and conclusion of treaties and other international agreements, including information regarding preparation of documents for signature, see Foreign Service Regulations, Chapter XI. It will be necessary to have a full power issued by the President authorizing the United States plenipotentiary to sign the convention. The Officer in Charge will be informed by cable when the full power has been issued and when he may proceed to the signature of the convention.

701.4145C/4-1047: Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

Washington, April 10, 1947—1 p. m.

127. If Aung San successful in elections⁵⁴ and election outcome

taneously with the exchange of notes establishing diplomatic relations (845C-00/3-1947).

⁵² Not printed.

⁵³ Telegram 300, April 17, 8 a. m., from Rangoon suggested some changes in the draft and pointed out that all of Burma was not yet under the same administration (711.45C21/4-1747).

⁵⁴ In the elections the AFPFL won 191 seats, the Communists 7, and Independents 12. The 7 Communists represented 4 constituencies; 22 had been candidates in 13 constituencies. One of the 7 later was lost at sea and replaced by a non-Communist.

indicates probability peaceful transition to reasonably stable Burmese national govt, please seek early opportunity ascertain from him on informal basis his estimate date when Brit will present formal GOB request exchange dip reps and level representation he prefers. You may tell him such info would be helpful connection advanced personnel planning by Dept.

Sent Rangoon, repeated London.⁵⁵

ACHESON

845C.9111 RR/4-1947: Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RANGOON, April 19, 1947.

304. *New Times*, 19th, reports Aung San in addressing record crowd on Burmese New Year Day said first step in AFPFL program is arrangement for withdrawal foreign troops. Also said question dominion status or independence immaterial but alliance foreign powers will be essential when full self-government achieved.⁵⁶ "At present there is only Britain and America to whom Burmese can turn as they are only two great foreign powers." Favored formation of southeast Asia Union with Indonesia, Siam, Indochina, Malaya for "establishment economic solidarity." Said "Those persons creating disturbances in country are not resisters imperialism but Communists".

New Times also reports Aung San said, 17th, at luncheon honoring Siamese delegation Inter-Asian Conference, "Our mutual interest and our past experience require we stand together. With this end in view we propose appoint diplomatic representative in Siam early date."

PACKER

701.45C00/4-2247: Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, April 22, 1947—5 a. m.

IMMEDIATE

314. As Aung San will not return Rangoon from trip up-country until May 2, I today raised with Shwe Baw, Secretary Dept Foreign

⁵⁵ As No. 1583.

⁵⁶ At the AFPFL convention on May 20 a 12-point resolution regarding Burma's constitutional organization was adopted, and amended soon afterward. This was reported in telegrams 412, May 22, and 425, May 24, from Rangoon. It provided that "Independent Sovereign Republic of Burma shall be a union comprising" the various areas of Burma. This resolution would be introduced at the outset of the session of the Constituent Assembly, and a committee would be formed to negotiate with the British Government for transfer of power to Burma. (845C-00/5-2247 and /5-2447)

Affairs who same time Secretary to Executive Council, subject matter Department's telegram 127, April 10. He informed me as follows:

Government of Burma has decided not appoint Ambassadors abroad this time but start representation with Ministers who will be sent Delhi, Nanking, Bangkok and Washington. Matter raising their rank to Ambassador probably be considered in couple years. He understands HMG has already undertaken arrange exchange Ministers; in fact telegram already received indicating China already agreed that basis.⁵⁷

I did not mention receipt Department instructions but based my inquiries several current press reports subject diplomatic representatives abroad including United Press despatch from Washington and local Reuter reports. Consequently any use Department may wish make of above vis-à-vis British Foreign Office could be on basis voluntary report.

Please relay London as 63.

PACKER

701.45C11/5-3147

Memorandum by the Secretary of State to President Truman ⁵⁸

WASHINGTON, May 28, 1947.

Subject: Proposed Exchange of Ambassadors with Burma

It is probable that, in the near future, the British will request this Government to agree to an exchange of ambassadors between Burma and the United States. This move would be in accord with the January 27 agreement between Burmese political leaders and members of the British Cabinet.

The recent Burmese elections resulted in an overwhelming victory for the moderate Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League. The elected members will form a constituent assembly and an interim legislature along lines similar to the assembly and legislature in India. I believe that Burma's constitutional status is now as advanced as that of India and that we should agree to an exchange of ambassadors.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ In telegram 370, May 10, Mr. Packer reported a conversation on May 8 with U Aung San who seemed to be thinking of an ambassadorship to the United States for U So Nyun, Commissioner of the Corporation of Rangoon (701.45C11/5-1047). Mr. Packer mentioned the matter of a consular convention also and reported in telegram 433, May 27, 10 a. m., that the Burmese Government was ready to examine a draft (711.45C21/5-2747).

⁵⁸ Notation on the original by President Truman: "Approved Harry S. Truman May 31, 1947".

⁵⁹ In telegram 197, May 27, 1 p. m., to Rangoon, the Department stated that the Burmese Government should ask the British Government to make a new approach to the United States with a specific request for exchange of ambassadors if representation at that level was desired (701.45C11/5-2147).

Although American trade with Burma was not large before the war, the expected abolition of Imperial Preference makes expansion possible. Scheduled American airline service through Burma is starting this month and will be expanded in the near future. Burma's strategic position between India and China is an important consideration.

Please inform me whether you agree to an exchange of ambassadors if the expected request is received from the British.

G. C. MARSHALL

845C.011/5-2947

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Consul General at Rangoon
(Packer)⁶⁰*

CONFIDENTIAL

[RANGOON,] May 28, 1947.

U Chan Htoon ⁶¹ called this morning to suggest the desirability of a message being sent by the American Government to the President of the Constituent Assembly along the lines of our message to the President of the Indian Constituent Assembly last December. He said that such messages were expected from the Governments of the Netherlands, China, and India. I said that I would be glad to bring the matter to the attention of my Government.

We then discussed at some length the AFPFL draft constitution. I said that I understood the provisions regarding religion had caused something of a stir. He said that this was true, and went on to say that the provisions were opposed by the All-Burma Buddhist Association and the All-Burma Pongyi Association, both of which desire to have Buddhism adopted as the state religion in view of the fact that perhaps 80 or more percent of the population of the whole of Burma (including the frontier areas) are Buddhists. He said that unless the old-line politicians pick up this topic as a point in respect of which to criticize the AFPFL, he thought it was easily possible that the provisions of the draft would be so altered before the Constituent Assembly finishes its work as to make Buddhism the state religion. If, however, the old-line politicians (Ba Maw, U Saw, etc.) oppose the present provisions of the draft constitution, it is probable the country will consider the objection purely a political one and not one of principle, and consequently the present provisions may stand.

⁶⁰ Copy transmitted to the Department in covering despatch 344, May 29, from Rangoon; received June 16.

⁶¹ Constitutional Adviser to the Government of Burma.

In respect of the provisions concerning the formation of political units within the Union of Burma, he thought the following might be the ultimate classification of the units named:

Union State	—	Shan States Federation
Autonomous State	—	Kachin State; Karenni State
National Area	—	Chin Hills
National Minority	—	Karens (outside Karenni)

I asked to what extent the Yugoslav Constitution had been used in drafting the AFPFL draft. He replied that it had been used very little. He then went on to say that the American Constitution had been used largely in the drafting of the provisions relating to citizenship, rights of equality and rights of freedom; that the South African Constitution had been of help in the drafting of the provisions relating to the Autonomous State and National Areas, and that the Canadian Constitution had been used in drafting the provisions relating to the Union State. The Soviet Constitution had furnished the title "Chamber of Nationalities".

He said a point that was to receive further consideration was that relating to the tenure of office of the Judiciary. He thought also that the provisions relating to the Frontier Areas were likely to be changed before the Constituent Assembly concludes its work, revisions being contemplated in pre-Assembly work scheduled between the AFPFL committee and representatives of the Frontier Areas.

He said that there would probably be only three sessions of the Constituent Assembly: the opening session when the Assembly would organize and divide itself into committees; the second session when the committees would report and their work would be considered; the third session when the Constitution would be adopted, clause by clause.

He said further that he did not know what might be done with regard to establishing a relationship between the Nagas and Was and the Union of Burma.

E[ARL] L. P[ACKER]

845C.00/5-3147

*Memorandum of Conversation, by the Consul General at Rangoon
(Packer) ⁶²*

CONFIDENTIAL

[RANGOON,] May 28, 1947.

I called on U Aung San today by appointment at 3:00 o'clock.

[Here follow three paragraphs on minor matters of interest.]

I referred to the AFPFL draft constitution and said that I had gathered from the constitution and press reports that it was proposed

⁶² Copy transmitted to the Department in despatch 345, May 31, from Rangoon; received June 18.

that a declaration of independence be made at the first session of the Constituent Assembly. He said that this would take place and that a Negotiations Committee would be appointed to negotiate with HMG for the transfer of power. I asked him when the transfer of power would occur. He said, possibly by May of next year. I asked if this date might also see the end of General Briggs' forces in Burma.⁶³ He did not reply definitely on this point.

I asked if he could tell me what attitude was going to be adopted concerning the investment of foreign capital. He said that he had planned a conference which would meet the end of the first week in June to consider Burma's rehabilitation.* It would be composed of officials of the Government and others who would go into the question of Burma's needs and work out some sort of a program. Their work would go on coterminously with the work of the Constituent Assembly. It would consider the question of foreign financial aid.

I said that I supposed that in view of his remarks about nationalization, foreign capital would want to know exactly how far he expected to go in his nationalization program before risking entering Burma. I asked if he could tell me how far he planned to go. He said his plans had not been mapped out very definitely; that he thought that the major industries would ultimately be nationalized, but that the whole program would have to be approached cautiously and taken up over a considerable period. He mentioned oil as one of the industries to be nationalized. He said that posts and telegraphs, as well as railways, were already nationalized and operated by the State.

I asked if he could define his attitude toward such enterprises as the American Baptist Mission and other American missionary organizations in Burma. He said the attitude would be to let any and all religions work here.

I said that I had heard mention of difficulties developing regarding the creation in Burma of a State religion under the proposed new Constitution and that opposition had developed to the provisions of the proposed draft Constitution. He said that it was true—it was again a political move—that there were a good many *pongyis* on the AFPFL side, and if necessary they would come out for the AFPFL; that he did not actually expect any difficulties to develop. The provisions of the draft Constitution would be adopted without important change.

⁶³ Gen. H. R. Briggs was in command of British and Indian troops in Burma.

*Mention of this appeared in the press of May 30, and May 31, 1947. [Footnote in the original.]

I asked if he could tell me anything about his ideas concerning a Southeast Asia Federation. He said, smilingly, it was a propaganda matter, a long range affair; and it would have to be worked out according to circumstances over the years. I asked if he could tell me whether the provisions in the draft Constitution concerning Frontier Areas were substantially what was proposed in the Committee of Enquiry's report. He said the report had made some recommendations along this general line; that the terms of reference of the Committee were limited; that it had recommended a scheme for representation of the Shans, Kachins and others in the Assembly. (He did not appear to attach much weight to the report.)

I asked if he could estimate for me the strength of the People's Volunteer Organization, the Socialist party, and the All-Burma Peasant Union. He gave these figures: P.V.O. 200,000; the Peasant Union and Socialist party each about 800,000 (N.B. these figures differ considerably from the estimate given by U Kyaw Nyein, Member for Home Affairs; see Rangoon Despatch No. 335 dated May 27, 1947⁶⁴).

I said that as he undoubtedly knew, I should be glad at any time to be of any assistance possible in connection with Burma's establishing a Foreign Service; that I had asked for a copy of our Foreign Service Regulations, which I would give to U Shwe Baw when received; that it might be helpful. I said that another matter which I thought might be of interest to him was the possibility in connection with the training of a Foreign Service of sending members of the staff of the Burma diplomatic mission in Washington to classes given at several universities in Washington which catered especially to students of government and intending Foreign Service Officers. I said that I knew from personal experience that several of the legations and embassies in Washington sent their junior officers to these schools for courses in which they were especially interested, and it might be that were advantage taken of these facilities, a number of junior Burmese Foreign Service Officers could obtain training and courses of study that would not be available to them elsewhere; that perhaps more officers could be assigned in order to take advantage of these facilities than actually would be needed to do the work of the mission.

I said that I had received the notification which he had had sent to me expressing the willingness of the Government of Burma to consider a draft consular convention, and that I had informed Washington to that effect. I said that I knew that one point in which Washington was particularly interested was the scope of the consular district of the American Consulate General in Rangoon which was limited to the city of Rangoon. Consequently when I went to northern

⁶⁴ Not printed.

Burma on a trip (Aung San and I had met at Panglong in February), I was from the HMG point of view out of my district. Washington did not like it and had taken the matter up with London, but the Burma Office remained adamant. He would recall that I had mentioned this matter to him in one of our conversations last fall. Aung San called in U Shwe Baw, and after they conversed together in Burmese for a few minutes, he said that the matter had been more or less decided in principle, and that there would be no difficulty in the matter. U Shwe Baw nodded concurrence.

I referred to our recent conversation in which the matter of the Kachin Memorial Agricultural and Mechanical School had been discussed. He said that this matter had been decided favorably and that I would receive notice of it in a few days.⁶⁵

E[ARL] L. P[ACKER]

711.45C21/5-2747 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, June 2, 1947—4 p. m.

204. Urtels 433 May 27,⁶⁶ 423 May 24, 385 May 13⁶⁷ and 300, Apr 18 [17].⁶⁸ Dept expects forward revised draft consular convention near future. Since draft unlikely to be cleared necessary GOB departments by date exchange notes establishing Dip representation, you may exchange notes on consular district with GOB prior that time. Following draft suggested:

Have honor refer conversations and communications relative extent consular district American Consulate General Rangoon. As you are aware my Govt has prescribed the whole of Burma as consular district its Rangoon office. I would appreciate note from you indicating your agreement this position. At such time as GOB may establish Consulate US, my Govt will recognize comparable right GOB prescribe limits its consular district.

MARSHALL

⁶⁵ In despatch 356, June 5, from Rangoon, Mr. Packer reported on this matter and transmitted an unsigned, undated communication from the Burmese Department of Foreign Affairs, to the effect that the proposed school would be welcome to both Burma and the Kachin community (811.42745C/6-547).

⁶⁶ See footnote 57, p. 23.

⁶⁷ Neither printed.

⁶⁸ See footnote 53, p. 21.

845C.00/5-2847 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

SECRET

WASHINGTON, June 5, 1947—7 p. m.

209. Urtel 439 May 28.⁶⁹ When you know name president (or other presiding officer) Constituent Assembly kindly convey following message to that official.

"With approach June 10 ⁷⁰ I extend to you as president Constituent Assembly and through you to Burmese people sincere good wishes US Govt and people of US for successful conclusion important task you are about to undertake. Burma's peaceful and steady progress in rehabilitation being watched with sympathetic interest. Freedom loving people throughout the world hope that you will lay foundation for stable and peaceful nation. Signed George Marshall, Secretary of State."⁷¹

ACHESON

701.45C11/6-247

The Secretary of State to the British Ambassador (Inverchapel)

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of Great Britain and has the honor to inform him that the United States Government agrees to exchange diplomatic representatives with Burma with the rank of Ambassador.⁷²

The Secretary will be grateful if the British Government will ascertain whether the Government of Burma desires that the United States Consulate General at Rangoon be raised to the rank of Embassy immediately with the present incumbent as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim.

It would also be appreciated if the British Government would ascertain the wishes of the Government of Burma with respect to the nature and timing of public announcements concerning the foregoing.

WASHINGTON, June 6, 1947.

⁶⁹ Not printed, but see opening paragraph of memorandum of May 28, p. 24.

⁷⁰ Telegram 471, June 9, from Rangoon reported that this phrase was changed to "On this historic occasion" in the text transmitted by Mr. Packer to the Chairman of the Assembly, Thakin Mya, for the opening ceremony on June 10 (845C.-00/6-947) ; see Department of State *Bulletin*, June 29, 1947, p. 1314.

⁷¹ An appreciative reply from the Chairman, dated June 13, was quoted in telegram 544, July 1, 11 a. m., from Rangoon (845C.00/7-147). For text of reply, see Department of State *Bulletin*, July 13, 1947, p. 101.

⁷² In note 301, June 2, the British Ambassador had requested information regarding this matter (701.45C11/6-247).

701.45C11/6-647 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, June 6, 1947—7 p. m.

211. [Here follow report of British note of June 2 and text of reply, *supra*.]

Ref Para 3 of reply Dept will suggest following draft public statement at appropriate time:

"The US Govt has responded favorably to request of GOB that ambassadors be exchanged between two countries. By agreeing to establishment of Dip relations US Govt recognizes Burma's new international status arising from agreement concluded between Brit Govt and Burmese leaders on Jan 27, 1947. Elections have been held pursuant to that agreement and Constituent Assembly is now in session.

Mr. Earl L. Packer, at present US Consul General at Rangoon, will act as Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the US Emb pending the designation and arrival in Burma of an American Amb. It is expected that a newly-appointed Burmese Ambassador will leave for Washington in near future."

Your discretion inform GOB that, ref Para 2 of reply to Brit Emb, Dept is quite willing postpone raising ConGen to Emb until Burmese Amb arrives Washington if GOB so prefers.

Ref public statement every care will be taken to prevent premature release to radio.

Sent Rangoon 211 repeated London 2437.

MARSHALL

845C.00B/6-1047 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, June 10, 1947—10 a. m.

472. Usher⁷³ and I have recently made calls on important contacts designed obtain information and opinions relative current strength of Communists in Burma. *Inter alia*, we have seen member for Home Department, Inspector General of Police, latter's deputy (CID), Tin Tut, Ba Pe, Shwe Baw, Kyaw Nyein, election officials, newspaper editors.

Difficult gauge Communists' true strength. Member Home Affairs considers both Red and White Flag groups number not exceed 20,000. CID considers their total strength neighborhood 100,000 (10,000 Red Flag, 90,000 White Flag). IGP considers Communists and supporters constituted 20 percent (roughly 3 million) entire population Burma

⁷³ Richard E. Usher, Vice Consul at Rangoon.

proper, this figure seems exaggerated. Roughly 125,000 voters voted Communist recent election.

GOB recently considered banning White Flag Communists but apparently feels to do so would drive two underground organizations together (significant this connection underground Red Flag ranks recently augmented by White Flag deserters, perhaps indicating chiefly Burman love of the illicit). AFPFL has recently considered and rejected suggestions in press for AFPFL Communist reunion (now appears probable neither banning or reunion likely near future, consequently equally unlikely early entry of Communist into Executive Council). I have not overlooked contents Deptel 58, February 11, in my conversation and have expressed personal not official opinions friend of Burma that would be inopportune effect reunion with Communist or entry of Communists into Government at present moment when Burma is seeking establish diplomatic relations foreign countries and enter UN, adding any such happening would be interpreted as indicating either Communist strength is greater than had been thought. . . . Two informants thought if reunion effected it would mean Communists would have to discard Communist label possibly joining left wing Socialists (Socialists now only political party in AFPFL, there are nine mass organizations in AFPFL).

Indian Communist Goshal ⁷⁴ is now in Burma, probably representing Joshi. Efforts apprehend him have been unavailing but some of his papers have been seized. Aung Gyi who attended Empire Communist Conference London (mytel 145, February 25 ⁷⁵) believe be still in UK. Assumed here he is in touch with Moscow representatives there. Perhaps Embassy London could uncover something of interest regarding both Goshal and Aung Gyi.

In light of Ba Pe's recent expulsion and of charges against him his statement of interest that left wing Socialists maneuvered him out of AFPFL because of his outspoke opposition their efforts insert Communist doctrine into AFPFL policies and effect readmission White Flag Communists to AFPFL. That such was cause expulsion specifically denied by Aung San and others, who attribute Ba Pe's expulsion to graft.

It would be helpful in connection Deptel 58, February 11, if Department would forward me in several copies data descriptive specific instances recent Communist maneuvers US or elsewhere—something

⁷⁴ Known also as Maung Ba Tin.

⁷⁵ Not printed.

authentic, for instance, along line described page 6 airmail edition *Newsweek* April 14.⁷⁶

Relay London as 110.

PACKER

711.45C21/6-1447 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, June 14, 1947—3 p. m.

486. June 5 handed Shwe Baw letter addressed to Aung San re consular district along line Deptel 204, June 2. I referred conversation reported mytel 385, May 13,⁷⁷ and subsequent conversation with Aung San (my confdes 345, May 31⁷⁸) at which Shwe Baw was present during which Aung San said would be no difficulty in the matter. Shwe Baw to my surprise then (June 5) said Aung San understood I had been referring proposed consular convention. (I had covered matter consular district in informal memorandum re consular convention left with Aung San May 8—mytel 385.) Shwe Baw added, however, he foresaw no difficulties re consular district matter. I requested prompt action of [on] my letter.

Questioned by me on subsequent occasion Shwe Baw referred old question of China. I recalled to him Dept's conversations British Embassy Washington (Deptel 286, November 26⁷⁹) substance of which I sent to Bickford⁷⁹ at the time in letter Shwe Baw had seen, emphatically said I felt Washington would take very unfavorable view any refusal our request and read him penultimate sentence Dept's A-10, December 30.⁷⁷ He said he would see what could be done.

I believe favorable reply will be received shortly but nevertheless suggest Dept refrain from fixing time for public announcement (Deptel 211, June 6) re exchange diplomatic representatives until receipt information from me consular district matter settled satisfactorily.

Copies above-mentioned memorandum and GOB memorandum in reply (mytel 433, May 27⁸⁰) by pouch.⁸¹

PACKER

⁷⁶ An informal letter dated June 24 by Raymond E. Murphy of the Department stated that no material of the type desired was available, but certain publications were transmitted as of possible help.

⁷⁷ Not printed.

⁷⁸ See footnote 62, p. 25.

⁷⁹ W. R. Bickford; then British Secretary of the Department of Defense and External Affairs.

⁸⁰ See footnote 57, p. 23.

⁸¹ Despatch 365, June 14, from Rangoon, not printed.

845C.00/6-1747 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, June 17, 1947—9 a. m.

499. Following, *inter alia*, are recommendations contained Frontier Areas Commission report ^{81a} mentioned my 491, June 14.⁸²

"We recommend Frontier Areas members Constituent Assembly have same status in Assembly as members elected from Ministerial Burma and be entitled participate fully deliberations of Assembly and be eligible for places on such committees as Assembly may appoint. We further recommend participation representatives from various parts Frontier Areas in work Constituent Assembly should not be regarded as committing them to union or federation with Burma. As further protection to Frontier Areas we recommend no proposal relating mode of government in federated Shan states, Kachin Hills, Chin Hills and Karenni States shall be deemed to have been carried in Assembly unless it has been voted for not only by majority of members of Assembly present, but also by majority of members present of the unit concerned. Similarly, we recommend no proposal relating constitution of federated Burma shall be deemed to have been carried unless it has been voted for not only by majority of members of Assembly present, but also by majority of members present of Frontier Areas which will form states in federation."

Relay London as 122.

PACKER

845C.00/6-1847 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, June 18, 1947—4 p. m.

IMMEDIATE

507. Thakin Nu ⁸³ who is proceeding London 19[th] by air informs me he is heading "good will" mission. When I stated BBC announced this morning mission had to do with transfer of power, he replied "Oh, Tin Tut already has instructions regarding that". He stated no question of Burma accepting dominion status exists, decision leave Commonwealth having already been taken some time ago. I questioned him as to significance of omission frontier areas representative from his mission. He said there was no significance; that mission was hurriedly arranged; that Wolkt [*new?*] proposal had just been made to

^{81a} British Cmd.7138, cited in footnote 45, p. 18.

⁸² Not printed.

⁸³ Elected on June 14 as President of the Constituent Assembly. On June 16 Aung San introduced his resolution declaring Burma's status as an independent sovereign republic, and the resolution was unanimously adopted the next day. During the presiding officer's absence, his duties were to be rotated among eight other members of the Assembly.

him that he include a Karen in mission; that frontier areas and Karen representatives would go on other good will missions abroad in near future. Shan Sawbwa knew nothing last night of Thakin Nu's mission, indicating thoughtlessness or deliberate intention omit them on part of AFPFL.

Thakin Nu will be accompanied by Kyaw Nyein, member for home and judicial affairs, and U Ko Ko Gyi who is AFPFL leader.

Shwe Baw informs me Tin Tut already in London will become third ranking member of mission. More details when available.⁸⁴

Sent Dept as 507, repeated London as 126.

PACKER

845C.00/6-2847: Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RANGOON, June 28, 1947.

539. Following is summarized translation of communiqué issued [by] General Secretary AFPFL 26th.⁸⁵

"For information public hereby announce: That since passage resolution by Constituent Assembly that Burma become sovereign republic question dominion status does not arise, this point should be clearly understood;

That because at present sovereign powers reside with HMG it will be necessary when constitution independent republic been drawn send official negotiating committee England arrange transfer of power. Thakin Nu delegation now in England is goodwill mission to smooth way for future negotiations of official negotiation committee;

That because in pursuance Constituent Assembly's corollary resolution Burma will secede from British Empire, future relationship Burma and United Kingdom becomes important problem. Delegation will make preliminary arrangement regarding this relationship in unofficial and friendly manner;

That present interim government exercises only those powers transferred to it by Attlee-Aung San agreement;

That therefore present interim government desires HMG transfer powers of government to it during interim period without waiting for conclusion discussions Constituent Assembly, but it wishes have dominion powers transferred in same manner as powers have been transferred to Indian interim government. This will form one of subjects for discussion by Nu delegation with HMG;

⁸⁴ The Embassy in London reported in telegram 3408, June 21, 2 p. m., that Tin Tut in London had suggested that Dominion-status legislation be prepared in the British Parliament, along with that for India, pending completion of the Burmese constitution in the autumn (845C.01/6-2147). Similar information was contained in telegram 546, July 2, 10 a. m., from Rangoon (845C.00/7-247).

⁸⁵ The full text was transmitted to the Department in despatch 444, August 4, from Rangoon, not printed.

That for reasons set forth above Nu delegation is urged obtain for Burma interim government as great a degree of supreme power as possible and that this delegation's work will not prove detrimental to interests of independence and on contrary will speed achievement of independence."

Sent Department as 539; repeated London as 136.

PACKER

711.45C21/7-347 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, July 7, 1947—5 p. m.

252. Urtel 550, July 3.⁸⁶ Revised draft consular convention sent with

Vice Consul Thurgood⁸⁷ may be presented GOB unless you believe presentation now would delay receipt satisfactory reply your letter June 5 to Aung San on subject extent consular jurisdiction.⁸⁸

Re your last para Dept expects GOB suggest date. (See final sentence Dept reply Brit Emb Deptel 211 June 6) Dept considers that

1. Brit note June 2⁸⁶
 2. Dept reply June 6
 3. Brit answer to questions asked by Dept and Brit request for agreement on So Nyun
 4. Dept reply through Brit Emb
- will constitute "notes establishing diplomatic relations". Only additional prerequisite public announcement is receipt by you of satisfactory answer your June 5 letter.

Your proposed title: "Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the United States of America."

MARSHALL

845C.00/7-1047 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, July 10, 1947—7 p. m.

3791. Following obtained informally July 9 from Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, Burma Office:

1. There have been no positive developments in connection with Burmese good will mission visit to London now terminated. Thakin Nu has returned to Burma with an appreciation of parliamentary difficulties entailed for British Govt in connection with extending

⁸⁶ Not printed.

⁸⁷ Harriet C. Thurgood, Vice Consul at Colombo, on June 6 was appointed temporarily as Vice Consul at Rangoon.

⁸⁸ See telegram 486, June 14, from Rangoon, p. 32.

interim Dominion status to Burma as requested by mission. British have firmly and politely said "no" to mission's suggestion, but have undertaken, after Thakin Nu's report to Aung San, to announce British willingness to expedite Burma legislation as soon as Burma constitution is ready. If legislation is to be introduced this fall, great deal of work this summer regarding defence, finance, nationality problems, treaty obligations, winding up of services, contractual obligations, passports, etc., etc., will be required.

2. Thakin Nu will point out to Aung San that if Burma legislation is completed by January 1948 this will be considerable advance on June 1948, the date originally contemplated for India, and with which, until India speed-up, Burmans were satisfied. Members good will mission have reiterated their reluctance as individuals to see Burma leave Commonwealth but have expressed view that public feeling is such in Burma that idea of Commonwealth status could not be made popular at this time. Mission stressed fact that Communists would make capital of such a swing in AFPFL policies (Embassy's 3514, June 26, paragraph 4⁸⁹).

3. Laithwaite said that excellent evidence that Burmans now enjoy full powers in [is] fact that Governor signed immigration bill although he advised strongly against it. Burma has had a very bad press in India regarding this bill and Laithwaite thought Burma would be well-advised to avoid treating Indian and Chinese feelings lightly. Laithwaite was repeatedly hearing tales of Chinese infiltration and troop concentrations. He said that these were the kind of difficult problems which Burmans must expect henceforth now that they have chosen to travel alone.

4. Laithwaite said that spirit of talks with good-will mission was excellent throughout.⁹⁰

Sent Dept 3791; please relay Rangoon as 38.

DOUGLAS

845C.00/7-1947: Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL
IMMEDIATE

RANGOON, July 19, 1947—5 p. m.

603. I saw Governor Rance at 3 p. m. He confirmed death of six members Executive Council named mytel 601, July 19⁹¹ and said another person killed was U Ohn Maung, Deputy Secretary Transport

⁸⁹ Not printed.

⁹⁰ Telegram 3727, July 8, from London, reported that the Burma Office issued an announcement on July 7 regarding the mission and stated that an exchange of high commissioners had been agreed upon (845C.00/7-847).

⁹¹ Not printed; among the six members killed were Aung San and Thakin Mya.

and Communication Department (who recently returned Rangoon for duty and [who had] mytel 244, March 31⁹² been selected be member staff of [So] Nyun's Embassy, Washington). Governor said further four so far unidentified bodies at morgue; U Ba Gyan, member for rehabilitation and public works, only slightly wounded. Assailants who escaped wore 12th Army uniforms and drove through town and into Secretariat grounds in military jeep.

Governor stated further:

Thakin Nu has agreed form new Executive Council members to be announced shortly. British intelligence officer reported yesterday Thakin Soe Communists issued report there would be important news today. Two members Executive Council who were present but escaped injury (Aung Zan Wei and U Mya) suspect U Saw of responsibility for assassinations.⁹³ I saw both a moment at Government House and expressed shock and regret today's events; both considerably shaken; assume they will continue as members Council.

Governor been seriously worried last few days by reports reaching him of possible disturbances; anyone's guess who really responsible for assassinations; been fearful opposition groups would band together against AFPFL with view achieving its downfall; future is uncertain.

Government House issuing this evening announcement today's events; curfew will be imposed beginning 7 o'clock tonight.

Now reported 1,000 Sten guns also obtained when 200 Sten guns mentioned my 601 released.

Relay London as 145.

PACKER

845C.00/7-2247 : Telegram

The Ambassador in the United Kingdom (Douglas) to the Secretary of State

SECRET

LONDON, July 22, 1947—7 p. m.

U.S. URGENT

3993. Following obtained informally today from Sir Gilbert Laithwaite, Burma Office.

1. While Rangoon murders have been great shock, Laithwaite found promptitude with which new government was formed under Thakin Nu, for whom he had a great respect and regard, a good augury for

⁹² Not printed.

⁹³ Telegram 605, July 20, noon, from Rangoon, reported the arrest of U Saw and the formation of a new Executive Council under Thakin Nu, who would also be Counselor for Foreign Affairs (845C.00/7-2047). Further incriminating evidence against U Saw was reported in telegram 621, July 23, 2 p. m., from Rangoon (845C.00/7-2347).

future. So far he has received no reports of trouble in Burmese countryside although "obviously Burma is powder keg at moment". Both Government and Thakin Nu deserve great credit for their quick action in crisis.

2. Murders were "very puzzling business" particularly since they not associated with any opposition *Putsch*. He was reserving judgment on U Saw's complicity but he thought quantity of arms uncovered in U Saw's house is large even for present day Burma. He read Embassy impressive list of weapons, ammunition and hand grenades found at U Saw's. Laithwaite regards it quite possible, as Tin Tut thinks (Embassy's 3975 of July 21⁹⁴), that motive behind killings was political vendetta. When first report came in, Burma Office officials suspected Communists but no evidence has yet come to hand confirming these suspicions, and Than Tun, leader White Flag Communists who is Aung San's brother-in-law, has issued statement of sympathy and appears to be working with new Government. No recent reports have been received regarding recent operations of Red Flag Communists.

3. As Attlee stated in Commons yesterday, murders will cause no change in British policy vis-à-vis Burma.

4. Only new development in immediate future will be agreed announcement to be issued in Rangoon and London in time for morning papers July 24. When goodwill mission to London finished talks July 2 an agreed announcement was worked out and referred to Aung San for approval. Aung San raised "some minor drafting points" and Thakin Nu returned to Burma to iron these out. After telegraphic exchanges of views with London, announcement was approved by Aung San and his government, probably one of Aung San's last acts. Thakin Nu is anxious to get out announcement as soon as possible and July 24 is agreed date. Laithwaite hopes announcement will be of some help to Thakin Nu who led goodwill mission and upon whom credit may redound.

5. With explanation that text would be handed Department by British Embassy Washington prior to publication,⁹⁵ Laithwaite read announcement to Embassy representative.

6. Announcement indicates goodwill mission London reached agreement with British Government on following points.

a. British Government is pledged to earliest possible transfer of power and to working out with Burmese representatives intermediate steps covering such questions as nationality, defense, finance, etc.,

⁹⁴ Not printed; it mentioned an attempt some months earlier on the life of U Saw (845C.00/7-2147).

⁹⁵ This was done on July 24. The agreement was made public the same day in London and Rangoon, and the new Burmese Provisional Government with Thakin Nu as Prime Minister was announced the same day.

while constituent assembly is sitting with a view to completing these talks by September when Burmese constitution is expected to be ready.

b. British Government pledges itself to introduce Burmese independence legislation at beginning next session of Parliament. It is indicated clearly that Burmese themselves will choose their form of government.

c. From date of announcement, interim government in Burma will be known as the Provisional Government. The announcement refers to the Burmese "Cabinet" and indicates that the title "councilor" will be replaced by the title "minister".

7. Laithwaite said that c above is the section to which goodwill mission attaches importance since it will be cited as the measure of goodwill mission's success. He said it was pretty obviously "just a change of labels", constitutionally speaking the Councilors would be Ministers in name only, although actually they have full powers.

Department please pass to Rangoon as 41.

DOUGLAS

711.45C21/7-347 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, July 25, 1947—6 p. m.

281. Deptel 279, July 25.⁹⁶ Note to Brit Emb agreeing appointment So Nyun did not raise question extent consular jurisdiction although Brit Emb was told informally that US position was unchanged. Make every effort secure from Thakin Nu satisfactory written answer along lines indicated urtel 550 July 3.⁹⁷ Answer should precede issuance press release suggested Deptel 211 June 6.

Sent Rangoon, repeated London 3182.

MARSHALL

⁹⁶ Not printed; it reported that the Department was informing the British Embassy on July 25 that the request for *agrément* to appointment of U So Nyun as Ambassador of Burma to the United States had been approved (701.45C11/7-2547).

⁹⁷ Not printed. In telegram 610, July 22, 8 a. m., from Rangoon, Mr. Packer reported he had suggested to the Burmese that his Government might find acceptable written assurance from the Government of Burma that it would (1) inform the British Government of its desire to recognize the consular district as including the whole of Burma and (2) in any case to recognize it at the earliest practicable moment (845C.00/7-2247). The Department replied in telegram 285, July 30, 1 p. m., that such assurance was satisfactory and should be obtained before announcement of exchange of diplomatic representatives (845C.00/7-2247).

845C.00/8-247 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, August 2, 1947—noon.

661. I called on Thakin Nu August 1. He was very cautious all his comments which summarized as follows:

(1) Responsibility for assassinations. Does not feel he should comment concerning anyone's guilt this stage. Special tribunal will be established try accused persons.

(2) Legislative Council. No useful purpose served now by appointment Legislative Council; presumably Constituent Assembly will convert itself into provisional legislature after adoption constitution.⁹⁸

(3) Burma and Empire. Timing of transfer of Power to Burma dependent upon completion work Constituent Assembly September and action thereafter British Parliament in adopting necessary legislation.

(4) Nationalization and attitude toward foreign capital. Premature state what policy be decided upon regarding nationalization. Regarding foreign capital, he asked what I had in mind. I said American nationals own stock in, for example, Burma Corporation and probably others including petroleum companies and asked attitude toward such American investments; also toward new capital which might help Burma's reconstruction. He was reluctant give forthright answer, but indicated this question has been considered by Government. (His reluctance possibly due situation vis-à-vis Communists—see subsequent telegram—or possibly merely desire be evasive this time.)

(5) Missionaries and their work. No reason to assume there will be any change Burma's long-time policy toward missionaries; they are doing useful work. More follows.⁹⁹

Relay London 159.

PACKER

845C.00/8-447 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, August 4, 1947—3 p. m.

666. Continuing series mytel 661, August 2.

6. Unity with Communists. I referred Joshi letter (mytel 643, July 29¹) and asked if it were true that negotiations taking place for

⁹⁸ Telegram 781, September 16, from Rangoon, reported that the draft constitution, as approved by the Constitution Committee, was presented by Thakin Nu to the third session of the Constituent Assembly which convened on September 15 (845C.011/9-1647).

⁹⁹ Telegram 666, *infra*.

¹ Not printed.

Communist unity. Thakin Nu replied little he could tell me on subject; since tragedy there was demand throughout country for unity for some satisfaction of this demand required; a strong leader generally recognized as such, like Aung San, in position act in certain way but his own position not yet established. Replying my hypothetical question he said if Communists rejoin AFPFL, some Communists probably be given portfolios in government. I commented on Communist tactics along lines Deptel 581 [58]² and suggested further it might be worth while considering what foreign reaction would be to inclusion Communists in new government if consideration not already given matter. I mentioned situation in Italy and France, also Communist obstructive tactics Security Council. He asked if I had any definite proof Communists in Burma in contact Moscow. I said been trying obtain information re existence or nonexistence such contact for months but with little success; he possibly had more information than I on subject; I personally thought probable some connection exists. I cited Joshi's letter as evidence existence one source from which directions being sent from outside Burma to Communists in Burma and added Joshi presumably in touch Moscow (I inferred AFPFL decision on readmission Communists not yet taken. Am inclined basis foregoing believe such readmission and early appointment Communists to government portfolios likely. At present Thakin Nu apparently not member any political party).

Thakin Nu said he had seen in London Aung Gyi (mytel 145, February 25³) who had visited continent including Yugoslavia but not Russia. I asked if Aung Gyi had applied for Soviet visa; he replied he did not know. I said I assumed Aung Gyi had been in touch during empire Communist conference with Communists from Moscow which might be partial response his inquiry regarding contacts with Moscow.

Relay London 160.

PACKER

845C.00/8-547 : Telegram

The Secretary of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, August 6, 1947—6 p. m.

3370. Rangoon's telegram 672 Aug 5 follows:

"Shwe Baw informs me that after his exposition at Cabinet meeting Aug 2 matter of US desire have all Burma included in consular district this office, telegram was sent HMG setting forth Burma's desire accede our request. I told him Dept had recently again expressed its views (Deptel 281 July 25) to Brit Emb Washington.

² February 11, p. 17.

³ Not printed.

Shwe Baw has temporarily resumed his duties as Secretary Foreign Affairs Department at urgent request Thakin Nu. He hopes obtain long leave in about a month and may visit US. He believes So Nyun who now Secretary Council Ministers will relieve him as Secretary Foreign Affairs Department."

Dept would appreciate information re Brit reaction Burmese request for advice.

MARSHALL

125.7557/8-947 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Consulate General at Rangoon

CONFIDENTIAL

WASHINGTON, August 21, 1947—7 p. m.

314. Deptel 312 Aug. 20, repeated London 3590.⁴ Brit Emb rep was informed Aug 20 of Dept's hope remaining steps toward establishment Emb Rangoon and Bur Emb Washington would be taken promptly. He promised inquire of FonOff whether *Agrément* on So Nyun had been communicated GOB (urtel 693 Aug 13⁵). In discussing matter we referred to your conversations with GOB re Rangoon consular district and stated we were somewhat surprised at seeming necessity for lengthy deliberations Rangoon and London this subject. Brit Emb rep stated his view this was matter for GOB decide and we agreed. We pointed out it was not our intention magnify consular district question into major political issue but it was our earnest hope GOB would in due course concur in our viewpoint. We agreed in conclusion negotiations should not continue be prolonged because of consular district question. In view foregoing Dept has no objection prompt announcement (Deptel 211 June 6) at time suggested by GOB.⁴

Sent Rangoon, repeated London 3611.

LOVETT

711.45C21/9-1647 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RESTRICTED

RANGOON, September 16, 1947—10 a. m.

IMMEDIATE

780. Received letter from So Nyun, Acting Secretary, Department Foreign Affairs, dated September 12, reading as follows (abbreviated verbatim text) :

⁴ Not printed.

⁵ For statement released to the press simultaneously in Washington and Rangoon on September 18, see Department of State *Bulletin*, September 28, 1947, p. 648.

"In reply your letter June 5, am directed ask you convey United States Government agreement Government of Burma remove in due course present limits consular district United States Consul General Rangoon. Formal action achieve that purpose will not however be taken till agreement is reached on text consular convention between two Governments."

See my despatch 365, June 14.⁶ While I consider this reply somewhat ungraciously phrased, I recommend Department accept it as satisfactory in view all circumstances.⁷

If Department approves, I will now present text (Department's instruction June 20) proposed consular convention urging prompt action.

PACKER

711.45C/9-1947 : Telegram

The Consul General at Rangoon (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RESTRICTED

RANGOON, September 19, 1947—9 a. m.

IMMEDIATE

786. I am releasing following statement to press for publication Rangoon morning 20th (verbatim text).

"Earl L. Packer, American Chargé d'Affaires ad interim, today issued the following statement:

"The establishment of diplomatic relations and the exchange of diplomatic representatives between the United States and Burma is a milestone in the development of relations between the two countries, signifying American recognition of Burma's changing political status."

The Government of the United States is deeply interested in developments in Burma and west coast Asia and looks forward to Burma's early emergence into full and independent statehood, with resulting possibilities for international collaboration in a peaceful world.

The United States Government is hopeful that cultural and economic relations between Burma and the United States may develop to the mutual benefit of both countries.'"⁸

PACKER

⁶ Not printed, but see telegram 486, June 14, from Rangoon, p. 32.

⁷ Mr. Packer explained in telegram 4, September 19, 1 p. m., that he was told the Burmese "intend give us what we asked for". (711.45C21/9-1947)

⁸ Mr. Packer's next telegram was numbered 1, September 19, 5:10 a. m., beginning a new series; it reported establishment of the Embassy on September 19, with himself in charge. Telegram 2, September 19, 10 a. m., indicated that the Consulate General had ceased to exist, but a consular section had been set up in the Embassy. In telegram 3, the same day, Mr. Packer reported that the Government of Burma would grant immediate *agrément* to appointment of a U.S. ambassador. (124.45C/9-1947)

845C.00/9-1947 : Telegram

The Chargé in Burma (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, September 19, 1947—11 a. m. [p. m.]

11. Made formal call as Chargé on FonMin afternoon 19th leaving with him formal note concerning my assumption Chargé and advance copy text release contained mytel 2 [786], September 19.

In course conversation he stated reply not yet received from Russia concerning proposed diplomatic representatives.

On question AFPFL-Communist reunion, he said such reunion would not occur in any case until after elections (note—probably 18 months or more away). Decision at that dependent Communist election strength.

He said differences with Communists are personal. I expressed astonishment and said I thought they resulted largely from Communist attacks on Government while participating therein. He repeated assertion that differences personal, saying Communist "dirty fellows" and resorted unfair tactics.

Purport Deptel 58, February 11, discreetly mentioned. He remarked is a Socialist and familiar with Communist tactics.

PACKER

845C.01/9-2647 : Telegram

The Chargé in Burma (Packer) to the Secretary of State

RANGOON, September 26, 1947.

32. Yawngphwe Saopha unanimously elected Provisional President Union Burma and Thakin Nu unanimously elected Provisional Prime Minister Union Burma by Constituent Assembly 25th effective when constitution becomes effective.⁹ Thakin Nu also authorized sign treaties. Assembly adjourned *sine die*.

PACKER

845C.00/10-2447 : Telegram

The Chargé in Burma (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, October 24, 1947—5 p. m.

92. Mytels 77 and 78, October 17.¹⁰ Called on Governor 18th accompanied by Acly.¹¹

⁹ The draft constitution was adopted unanimously on September 24. In despatch 67, October 21, from Rangoon, Mr. Packer transmitted a text of Prime Minister Nu's speech on this occasion and observed: "Russia's unremitting propaganda regarding the 'workers paradise' has been effective among Burma's present day AFPFL leaders." (845C.011/10-2147)

¹⁰ Neither printed.

¹¹ Robert A. Acly, Second Secretary of Embassy in Burma and Consul at Rangoon.

Governor confirmed seriousness Karen situation (mytels 68, 13 and 70, October 14¹²) said he had received letter from Karens for transmission Prime Minister Attlee stating they are in possession arms which do not intend surrender. He refused transmit officially but sent copy London informally. Burmese know situation exists but seem feel less serious than it actually is: they are making Smithdun, who is Karen and Sandhurst graduate, head of Burma Army which still under General Thomas. Latter will relinquish command Burma Army when British Military Mission shortly (mytel 46, October 2¹³) begins function. This fact should tend allay Karen's mistrust as Smithdun would not while filling this position use army against Karen. Burmese also appointing Karens to important local positions in Karen areas for purpose overcoming Karen suspicions. Karens continued distrustful particularly fearing long term situation not knowing what may be policy future Burmese leaders.

Re Karenni states, representatives of which visited Rangoon some of whom participated work Constituent Assembly (mytel 13, September 22¹³) Governor said, did not see how more representative delegation could have been sent from Karenni states. Ten representatives had come including all local Chiefs of State except in one case where brother of Saw Bwa had come instead of Saw Bwa, who had remained behind deal with any situation that might arise from return to Karenni of Boki, Karen leader who been causing difficulties some time.

Relay to London as 13.

PACKER

845C.01/11-1047

*Memorandum by Mr. Edward Dahl, of the Division of South Asian Affairs, to the Chief of the Division (Hare)*¹⁴

SECRET

[WASHINGTON,] November 10, 1947.

January 6, 1948 has been mentioned a number of times as the date on which Burma will achieve independence.

Parliament is debating the treaty signed by Thakin Nu and Mr. Attlee on October 17, 1947.¹⁵ The constitution which was approved by

¹² None printed.

¹³ Not printed.

¹⁴ Notation on the original by Mr. Hare: "Ret'd with thanks. RAH".

¹⁵ British Cmd. 7360: *Burma—Treaty between the Government of the United Kingdom and the Provisional Government of Burma.*

the Constituent Assembly on September 24, 1946 will be the basis of the Republic of the Union of Burma.¹⁶

In the treaty the UK agreed to cancel £15,000,000 of the loan to Burma for ordinary budget and the frontier areas budget. This will leave a balance of only £5,000,000 in this category. There is, however, an additional loan of £25,000,000 (Total £30,000,000) expenditure on projects.

There will be some nationalization as soon as the new government is in power, but it is not anticipated that this will be as drastic as one might believe. The outcome is unpredictable as this time, but it is believed that nationalization of industry, agriculture, etc. will be handled on different bases.

The tribal situation has not been entirely solved by the acquiescence of the various leaders of the Shans, Kachins and Karens to join the union. The opposition among the Karens is particularly strong that the group of Karens who agreed to join the union were not a representative group. The Mons are also writing to various governments putting forward their plea for independence from the Union of Burma. The dacoity situation¹⁷ has improved somewhat since the trip taken by Thakin Nu, the Prime Minister, and Than Tun, the Communist leader. The latest information we have is that the Government is organizing semi-private vigilante bands in order to capture or kill the dacoity leaders.

The economic situation is particularly optimistic in that Burma anticipates exporting 1,500,000 tons of rice during the 1947-48 season. There is little doubt that the rice will be produced, but there may be a large carry-over because of the lack of shipping facilities. At the present time the First Secretary, U Myat Tun, is in Washington attending the IEFEC conferences.¹⁸ U Myat Tun is very anxious to ship to Europe and has completed agreements to ship to some of the European countries. This is a very optimistic move as it shows Burma is eager to return to a pre-war shipping basis as soon as possible.

The election of the Sawbwa of Yawngphwe, a Shan Chieftain, as Provisional President and later first President of the Union of Burma leads one to believe that the new Government of Burma will in truth be a union of the tribes and the Burmese.

¹⁶ The Burma independence bill received royal assent on December 10; the act of Parliament was entitled "Burma Independence Act, 1947", chapter 3 being "An Act to provide for the independence of Burma as a country not within His Majesty's dominions and not entitled to His Majesty's protection and for consequential and connected matters." (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1947).

¹⁷ Reference to murderous robbers acting in gangs.

¹⁸ The Burmese Ambassador, U So Nyun, presented his credentials to President Truman on December 10.

Although imports from the United States are restricted at the present time because of dollar shortage, these restrictions will be lifted in the case of non-luxury items soon after independence. There is every indication, however, that the spirit of nationalism is strong enough in Burma that the restrictions will not be lifted on luxury consumer items.

845C.00/11-1347 : Telegram

The Chargé in Burma (Packer) to the Secretary of State

CONFIDENTIAL

RANGOON, November 13, 1947—3 p. m.

IMMEDIATE

151. Prime Minister informed me yesterday plans invite Communists to join AFPFL after Communists disarmed. Aware danger Trojan horse tactics but feels Burmese Communists not directed by Moscow while religiosity of masses precludes strong support for Communists. Indicated timing Communist readmission not immediate.¹⁹

Re volume anti-U.S. stories in Burmese press suggesting launching counteroffensive but doubted potency mass propaganda since masses do not read press. Alternatively suggested concrete US assistance maternal and infant welfare as most efficient means winning favor masses. Indicated his retirement would occur 6 months after independence achieved and successor would be Bo Let Ya.²⁰

Stated recovery of arms from Karens would not be commenced at this time but politically impossible make public statement that effect.

PACKER

811.42745C/12-1347 : Telegram

The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Burma

RESTRICTED

WASHINGTON, December 19, 1947—6 p. m.

125. Suggest following re speech Embtel 200 Dec 13:²¹

"Burma and the US today agreed to a program of educational exchanges whereby \$200,000 (RS 660,000) per annum will be spent on projects of mutual benefit to the two countries. This is Burma's first treaty with any foreign country to be signed in Burma. Blank signed for the Government of Burma, and R. Austin Acly, Chargé d'Affaires

¹⁹ Telegram 163, November 19, 11 a. m., from Rangoon, reported the breakdown of negotiations between the AFPFL and Communists, with the former blaming the latter for student strikes, rice robberies, and opposition to the agreement with the United Kingdom (845C.00/11-1947).

²⁰ Deputy Prime Minister after resignation from Burmese Army in September; Counselor for Defense since July.

²¹ Not printed.

ad interim of the American Embassy, for the US.²² The agreement sets up a US educational foundation in Burma to administer certain funds due the US Govt under the surplus property agreement signed at London on Feb 28, 1947, signed for Burma by U Kyin, Chief Secretary. That agreement provided for the payment of Burma of the rupee equivalent of \$5,000,000 for railway locomotives and equipment, jeeps, trucks, river vessels, cranes, generators, and other equipment turned over by the US Govt to the Govt of Burma for civilian use.

This agreement is very similar to the one signed with China on Nov 10 1947.²³ Agreements are also being negotiated with the Republic of the Philippines, New Zealand, and are proposed for Iran, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Belgium, and other countries. The Fulbright Act, under which the educational foundation will operate, is predicated on a desire to cement international understanding and goodwill by developing interchanges of students, specialists, and scholars on an unprecedented scale. The Act provides that partial payment may be made in local currencies which will then be used by the US for educational purposes. The present agreement provides that \$200,000 (RS 660,000) per year will be made available to the educational foundation for certain educational enterprises. These include the financing of 'studies, research, instruction, and other educational activities of or for citizens of the USA in schools and institutions of higher learning located in Burma, or of the citizens of Burma in US schools and institutions of higher learning located outside the continental US, including payment for transportation, tuition, maintenance, and other expenses incidental to scholastic activities; or furnishing transportation for citizens of Burma who desire attend United States schools and institutions of higher learning in the continental US.' It should be noted that only such enterprises as can be financed by grants of Burmese currency can be carried out in this program. Furthermore, grants may be made only to individuals, not to institutions. Due wartime losses suffered by Burmese institutions, this program may be of great importance to rehabilitation of the Burmese nation. However Americans will be sent only on invitation of Burmese institution concerned. One of greatest benefits lies in increasing knowledge, understanding, of Burma in US through American scholars who have taught or studied in Burma. The Fulbright program may make possible the translation of American text books into Burmese, payment of round trip passage in rupees to America for Burmese scholars proceeding for further education to the US, as well as teaching and research in institutions in Burma.

The Foundation will have eight directors under the chairmanship of Dr. Frederick L. Jochem, Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy. Doctor Tin Aung, U Cho, and Sao Saimong have been nominated by the GOB and appointed by the Chargé d'Affaires of the AmEmbassy as Burmese representatives on the Board. Other members will be Dr. J. Russell Andrus of AmEmbassy, Mr. Martin P. Detels, Jr., of the AmEmbassy Treasurer, and two American educators resident in

²² The agreement was signed by Tin Tut, Counselor for Foreign Affairs of Burma, and Chargé Acly at Rangoon, December 22; 62 Stat. (pt. 2) 1814. Mr. Acly transmitted the original to the Department in despatch 304, December 23 (not printed).

²³ 61 Stat. (pt. 4) 3582.

Burma, as yet to be appointed. Agreement and program which it makes possible are a manifestation of the keen interest of the US and people in the welfare of Burma and her people."

LOVETT

845C.00/12-2947: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Embassy in Burma*²⁴

RESTRICTED

WASHINGTON, December 29, 1947—1 p. m.

134. Deliver following message from President Truman to Sao Shwe Thaik, Saopha of Yawnghwe, President Union Burma January 4:

"It is fitting that on this day, the day of the birth of a new nation, a sovereign independent republic, the Union of Burma, I should extend to you, to the Prime Minister and to the people of the Union, on behalf of the people of the United States of America, my sincere best wishes. We welcome you into the brotherhood of free and democratic nations and assure you of our firm friendship and goodwill, anticipating that the Union of Burma will take its rightful place among the nations of the world and by constructive participation will assist in the advancement of the welfare of all mankind. We in this country have confidence in the people of Burma and in their leaders. I am sure that our friendship will continue in the future and will be expressed in the same close and cordial relations as have existed in the past. Signed Harry S. Truman, President of the United States of America."

The above will be released to the press for publication Washington papers morning 4th. Arrange release Rangoon papers.

LOVETT

Editorial Note

On December 29, Ambassador Edwin F. Stanton in Siam was designated President Truman's Personal Representative with rank of Special Ambassador to attend the celebrations incident to the independence of Burma at Rangoon January 4 to 7, 1948.

²⁴ Initialed by President Truman prior to dispatch.

CHINA

[For documentation regarding relations of the United States with China in 1947, see volume VII.]