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AIR POUCH  
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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

8904-424/11-253

FROM : Amembassy RANGOON

146  
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

November 12, 1953  
DATE

REF :

For Dept. Use Only	ACTION	DEPT.
	REC'D	OTHER
	F-E-4	DEIR-2 OLI-6 EUR-5 GUR/1-1 P-1 I-4
	11-20	CIA-7 AR-7 N-1 AIR-1 105-3 WVA-4

SUBJECT: Celebration of Soviet National Day November 7, 1953

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**SUMMARY:** Attendance by government officials at the celebration of Soviet National Day, November 7, was so sparse as to constitute a definite snub. No National Day of any country, however large or small has been treated in so cavalier a manner in Burma since Independence. The reception was also characterized by attendance of large numbers of Communists and Communist-fronters, including well-known figures whose presence was, in itself, sufficient to discourage attendance by many members of the government. Attitudes and incidents observed justify interpretation of the Burmese government's handling of this reception as further evidence that Burmese "neutralism" is indeed relative, and that Burma is not so neutral as to brook such interference in her internal affairs by a foreign power as that evidenced by the intimacy of the Russian Embassy with the BWPP and Commie-front leaders.

Attendance State Dept. declassification instructions on file

Russian Charge d'Affaires DYUKAREV told U KHIN MAUNG, Protocol Officer of the Foreign Office, that one thousand invitations had been extended to attend the celebration at the Strand Hotel on November 7. It is safe to say that at no time were there more than five hundred people present at the celebration, so that, allowing for early departures, there may have been approximately fifty-five percent attendance. This is neither very good, nor really very bad for a reception of this sort in Burma.

The most interesting phenomenon was the almost complete lack of high Burmese government members and high civil servants. Sao HKUN HKIO, the Foreign Minister, whose attendance was dictated by protocol, was literally the only member of the Cabinet present. Sao SHWE THAIKE, Speaker of the House of Nationalities, was the next ranking government official at the reception. An officer of the Embassy asked U Khin Maung about the other members of the Cabinet by name and when U Khin Maung confirmed the belief that they were not there, asked him why. U Khin Maung did not answer, but when it was suggested that it might be because the government officials would prefer not to meet U BA NYEIN, U THEIN PE MYINT, Thakin LWIN and Thakin KODAW HMAING (above-ground Communist leaders), all of whom were present, he laughed gaily in such a way as to imply that the Embassy officer had hit the nail on the head. When asked whether he had spoken to any of the aforementioned gentlemen himself, U Khin Maung answered that he had been ordered to attend this party and make his presence known to the Russian Charge d'Affaires. He said that once he had

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done that he considered his duty accomplished. He said his only object from that time forward was to have a good time, and this did not include talking to Communists. He said that U TUN SHEIN, Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office, who had also been ordered to be present, viewed the matter in the same light. He called attention to the fact that there were no justices of the Supreme Court present, and that U KHIN MAUNG PYU, Chief Secretary of the Government, had also stayed away, although requested to attend.

His Lordship, the Mayor of Rangoon was there but found himself almost completely isolated from the Communists and Communist-front groups who formed more than half of the crowd, because of the fact that he had been required by the AFPFL to lead the sober TUC(B) celebration of the Great October Revolution which was held in competition with the rabble-rousing Commie-front BTUC celebration. Apparently, his past kindnesses in throwing open the City Hall to "peace" rallies and Chinese Communist celebrations were not enough to offset this.

The presence of the Chinese Ambassador, who had returned to Rangoon the preceding day without fanfare, was a feature of the reception and the fact he had not notified his colleagues of his return may have contributed to the early departure of several diplomats who did not wait for the toast. Among these was Ambassador Sultanuddin AHMED of Pakistan who had been acting Dean in the absence of the Chinese Ambassador. At the moment of the toast, the only Ambassador in attendance was the Chinese Ambassador.

According to U MYAT SOE, Kayah State Secretary, the large and rather unruly gathering of gaungbaung-less individuals included the directorates of the Commie-front groups and Communist cells from all sections of Rangoon, including the University. A Chinese Communist women's group was also represented.\*

The Toast

The Foreign Minister's face showed positive distaste as he stood at the side of Dyukarev waiting for silence to propose the toast. When it became clear that the Communists and Communist-fronters were not going to be still, he literally hollered into the microphones that he took pleasure in offering a toast to "His Excellency the President of the Presidium of the USSR". (He used the initials, not enunciating the entire country name. In view of the Foreign Minister's sensitivity to protocol, this is a significant indication of his attitude.) The gathering was then regaled with a recording of the "Red Flag" which was played three times in full. After Dyukarev proposed a toast to the President of Burma, a little snatch, hardly ten seconds long, of the tail end of the Burmese national anthem was played. U Khin Maung said to the reporting officer at this point, "It is easy to see which is the bigger country!"

The British

Mr. ONSLOW, of the British Embassy, told an Embassy officer that everyone in \* There is an observable tendency for the gaungbaung, Burmese headdress, to become a badge of respectability and support of the government. Local Commies do not wear gaungbaungs except when appearing in Parliament as members of the BWPP opposition.

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the British Embassy down to the last Third Secretary had been invited, including the representatives of the British Council. This appears to be in line with the current Russian attempt to drive a wedge between Great Britain and the United States by implying that the British are more friendly to the Russians than is the United States. Mr. Onslow did not say how many officers had been invited; it is estimated that the number was around twenty, in contrast to the seven who were invited from the American Embassy.

#### The Yugoslavs

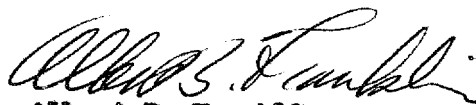
In somewhat bad taste, the Yugoslav Charge, Mr. SIMIC, attended the reception apparently with the intention of making remarks of questionable taste concerning the large number of "unwashed" who were present. The reporting officer did not speak to Simic, but heard about this from two different British individuals who were there.

#### Conclusions

While this Embassy has for some time been of the opinion that there is an observable trend over the last six years in Burma in the direction of closer friendship with the West and increasing suspicion of Soviet Russia, the overt signs of displeasure mentioned above were surprising, particularly the boycotting of the reception by the high Cabinet officers and the Justices of the Supreme Court. It is believed, however, that it would be possible to attach too much significance to this and that the reason for the absences is to found in the fact that the Burmese government had knowledge of the invitations which had been sent to BWPP leaders. The reception would in fact appear to be an additional bit of evidence that the Russians and Chinese in Burma have done themselves much more harm than good by maintaining close relations with local Communist and Communist-front groups which are definitely, and overtly, working against the Burmese government. What is of extreme interest is the fact, brought out by this reception, that the attitude of neutrality which Burmese foreign policy requires in almost all contact with official representation of foreign countries, has its limits, and that the Burmese government feels that the Communists have presumed too far in their attempt to use this neutrality for their own ends.

Action requested: Please send copies of this Despatch to Bangkok, New Delhi, Karachi, Djakarta, Singapore, Taipei and Moscow.

For the Ambassador:



Albert B. Franklin  
First Secretary of Embassy