

Interview with
Alan Clements
and
General Bo Mya, Karen National Union
Chairman, Democratic Alliance of Burma
through an interpreter
December 19, 1990

AC: Now that a new Burmese government has been established, what role will General Bo Mya play in this new government?

BM: The General himself and his whole organization will stay outside the formation, but will give all the support that is necessary to the new National Coalition Government.

AC: I understand that General Bo Mya and the KNU have a few thousand troops. Is this correct?

BM: About 20,000 under the command of General Mya.

AC: Will the General now put his troops, under his leadership, to act as the military under this new government in order to resist SLORC?

BM: Yes, he will use these troops to help the government.

AC: Is it true that your intelligence sources have said that SLORC recently received over 1 billion dollars worth of weapons from China?

BM: That is what he's heard form the outside world and from some people.

AC: Did they receive Mig jets also, and a few tons of chemical weapons?

BM: Yes, General Mya has heard that.

AC: How large is the SLORC army?

BM: Approximately over 200,000.

AC: How many troops do the General and the consolidated ethnic minorities have together, 40 or 50 thousand?

BM: That cannot be stated very definitely, but we are in a strong position.

AC: I understand that one of the objectives of the DFB (Democratic Front of Burma) is to go on the offensive soon to liberate the Burmese people from SLORC oppression. Is this true?

BM: Yes, we will fight very soon. Every day we are fighting against them already.

AC: But now, with the unification of all the ethnic minorities and the support of the new Coalition Government of Burma, is there a specific strategy to infiltrate Rangoon and Mandalay?

BM: Yes, there is.

AC: From my observation, this group that has newly formed and unified has incredible moral depth and a spirit that is quite profound. Does the General feel that success is imminent, or will this be a long, protracted civil war as it's been for forty years?

BM: It will be a long time until SLORC is overthrown. It depends on the aid and support we get from democratic countries. If we get it, the struggle will be over soon.

AC: How does the General feel that SLORC will respond to yesterday's announcement of the formation of the National Coalition Government?

BM: They will be mad, very angry.

AC: I understand that Mannerplaw, where we are today, is likely to be bombed shortly. Is this true?

BM: That is quite correct.

AC: The General seems undisturbed by this.

BM: They cannot bomb this place every day. Sometimes they will come and bomb this place. Formally they have bombed this place several times, but there has been no effective damage or destruction here.

AC: Khin Nyunt and Saw Maung, the leaders of SLORC, have the most highly advanced jets, and they have weapons. What does the General feel about the use of chemical weapons here?

BM: The General doesn't think they can do what they like at this point, because of public opinion, world opinion.

AC: So the thought is that if they were to bomb this place or act too violently, it would outrage the democracies of the world as well as the Burmese people.

BM: That is precisely it.

They have fought against the KNU for forty years, from the beginning of the revolution, and yet they can never annihilate us, although we are inferior in arms and all that. That is the reason why the General thinks we cannot be beaten. Now again they will try their best, but they will never be able to defeat the armed forces of the revolution. Our troops will prevail.

You remember that in World War II, Hitler and his people were on the wrong side. Like the Nazis, Saw Maung and SLORC will finally suffer.

AC: This revolution with the KNU has been going on for forty years now. What is the central objective of this revolution that is beginning now with the DFB (Democratic Front of Burma)?

BM: The saga is being done to gain democracy, freedom of the people, and all the rights that should occur for the ethnic nationalities of the entire country. The ethnic groups would like to have their self-determination.

AC: Does the DAB represent all the ethnic minorities that have been oppressed in Burma?

BM: All the ethnic nationalities and also the Burmese people. In short, the DAB is fighting for the whole country.

AC: Soon I'll return to America. I'd like to invite the General to please say anything he would like, on behalf of this new Coalition Government, asking the American people for support. What would he like to say to appeal to these peoples?

BM: We are ready and now willing to support the National Coalition Government up to the hilt, all out support. The General also wants outside people, whoever they might be, especially democratic countries, to come to the support of the National Coalition Government.

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