

Burma: Situation Update

November 2009 - January 2010

BURMA: SITUATION UPDATE

The Elections

On 4 January this year -- Independence Day of Burma -- military chief Senior General Than Shwe announced that "Now, the new State constitution has been approved with massive support of the people. Plans are under way to hold elections in a systematic way this year. In that regard, the entire people have to make correct choices, then."

Likewise, Burma's Foreign Minister U Nyan Win also told his Southeast Asian counterparts in January that elections would be held this year and that they would be "fair and credible".

With such promises from the military government leaders, an election is certain to take place later this year. But, anyone interested in Burma is still very much in the dark about the country's political situation. The junta has set no date for the election, nor has it promulgated any law allowing political parties to form. No one has any idea when the campaign will begin or who will be permitted to run.

"The current political situation is like the blind groping in the darkness," said Khin Maung Swe, a spokesperson for the National League for Democracy (NLD), speaking by phone from the party's headquarters in Rangoon's Shwegondaing Township.

The generals have kept everyone guessing while they proceed with their own plans. The regime does not see the 2010 election as an exit strategy but to use it as the foundation for the military's long-term domination of Burma's political system. After the election, the 2008 Constitution will come into force and the military will continue dominate every aspect of political and social life in the country.

Since every aspect of the election is secret, the only political institutions prepared are military junta-supported Union Solidarity and Development Association, the Myanmar War Veterans Organization, and the National Unity Party -- formerly the military-run Burma Socialist Program Party.

Political institutions unaffiliated to the military claim they do not have enough time to prepare for the elections.

The Democratic Party

The Democratic Party led by U Thu Way, who said his party had no options but to work under the military written constitution, has expressed support for the elections since the very beginning. But, it is now saying that it was reconsidering its decision.

U Thu Way said, "Electoral laws and regulations have not been made public until now and, therefore, the Democratic Party is reconsidering its decision to enter the elections. Time given for the campaign is not enough for the party to prepare for the polls. Trying to make it possible will be very difficult for us. It is already difficult building our party and also finding candidates for the elections who are trusted by the people. Since the time given is not sufficient, it becomes even more difficult for us. If we can get about nine months, we will try to contest in the elections. If not, we will have to reconsider. "

Democratic Party General Secretary Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein also said, "They have spoken enthusiastically about the elections but have really done nothing about it. Of course, we are ready in spirit. We are always ready to work for the betterment of the country and the people. We have served time in prison and have encountered all sorts of difficulties but we keep ourselves ready with our hopes. And, our party has not been granted any rights at all".

Union of Myanmar National Political League (UMNPL)

Even the "Third Force" political institution like the "88 Generation Students and Youth (Union of Myanmar)" and the "Union of Myanmar National Political League", which have been receiving assistance from the military in order to counter the real "88 Generation Students" group and the National League for Democracy, share a view that the government should grant equal rights to all political parties as well as announce electoral law and other regulations quickly.

The UMNPL leader Ko Aye Lwin said "No, we are not ready. To be honest, it is like appearing for the matriculation examination. We can never claim to be ready until we sit down at the desk for the examination. We will have to continue working."

Union Democracy Alliance

Nay Myo Way, spokesperson for another "Third Force" -- the Union Democracy Alliance, said: "It will be too arrogant of us to say that we are ready. So, no, we are not ready. But, even though we are not ready, we are in the lead because there is no one before us. We are also not ready in terms of what our needs are. But, we are ready in terms of our beliefs as well as in spirit to form our organization. We are ready in terms of our work program. As far as our strength is concerned, we do not intend to build ourselves into a national party because we do not think everyone should be involved in politics. But, everyone should understand politics and be politically alert. Not everyone needs to become a party member. That is our belief."

National League for Democracy

The National League for Democracy says it remains firmly committed to its "Shwegondaing Declaration", which calls for a review of the Constitution, political dialogue between the junta and opposition groups, and the release of more than 2,000 political prisoners, including party leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been detained for more than 14 of the past 20 years.

The military government has not responded to the call by the National League for Democracy.

In the meantime, **Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**, general secretary of the National League for Democracy, whose house arrest was extended by the junta for another 18 months after a US citizen John Yettaw swam into her lakeside residence without invitation, continues to be under house arrest.

Talks with junta official

Understanding that she needed to break the deadlock with the military regime, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote to Senior General Than Shwe in September 2009, saying that she wanted to work with the authorities on finding ways to lift international economic sanctions. In response Liaison Minister U Aung Kyi met with her twice in October.

In November, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi wrote another letter to Senior General Than Shwe. In that letter, she asked that she be allowed to pay her respects to the ailing elderly senior executives of the NLD, hold a meeting with all NLD Central Executive Committee members, including U Tin Oo, and have a face to face meeting with Senior General Than Shwe to discuss matters which will be beneficial to the country.

On 9 December, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was permitted to call on three ailing NLD executives -- party Chairman U Aung Shwe, Secretary U Lwin, and executive U Lun Tin.

U Aung Kyi, who was the minister for labor was appointed the liaison minister in October 2007 to act as a go between the junta and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Again on 15 January this year, U Aung Kyi met with the Nobel laureate for about half an hour but the talks between the two have not been made public. NLD Spokesperson U Khin Maung Swe said, "a meeting was held between the two from 1300 to about 1325. That is the news we have received... No press release has been issued yet. Usually a press release is issued only when both sides agree to do so."

U Aung Kyi has met with the NLD leader ten times so far.

Trial of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

On 22 December 2009, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the appeal filed by defense lawyers for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to quash the verdict of a lower court in August. The court had sentenced her to three years imprisonment which was reduced to 18 months of house arrest with a directive from Senior General Than Shwe.

Lawyer Kyi Win presented arguments for Aung San Suu Kyi against the verdict which was handed down after Suu Kyi allegedly "sheltered" US citizen John Yettaw, who swam to her lakeside compound-cum-prison in May. Explaining the situation, Defense Lawyer U Nyan Win said, "A divisional court has recognized that the 1974 basic constitution no longer exists, yet the verdict on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is passed under that constitution's law... We argued that the

restriction order given under the specific law is illegitimate, and thus so is the verdict based on that restriction order. We emphasized that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi did not committed any crime. The prosecution argued that there was no official order statement on abolishing the 1974 constitution and that the opening chapter of the 2008 constitution only said that the 1974 constitution was 'terminated' but not 'abolished'. But in our opinion, whether it said 'terminated' or 'abolished,' the meaning is that the law cannot be used anymore."

On 18 January, defense lawyers presented their argument to seek Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release while the prosecution also filed an appeal against the lower case ruling that the 1974 constitution was "abolished". After hearing the appeals from both sides, the Supreme Court announced that a ruling will be made once the case is reviewed.

Defense lawyers expect the verdicts to come in about a month.

NLD Adds More Members to Central Executive Committee

The National League for Democracy elected nine new members to the Central Executive Committee, bringing the total number of executives to 20.

Explaining the move, NLD spokesperson U Khin Maung Swe said: "Generally speaking, the move was undertaken because township, state and divisional branches were asking us to reinforce the Central Executive Committee so that the executives who are getting old can be helped. So, we elected new members to assist in the political duties of the elderly executives, whose ages are now 80, 85 or more. Another point to mention here is that if we are to continue our political journey ahead, the NLD needs to be strong so that efforts for democracy will be effective. That is the reason why the Central Executive Committee is being expanded".

The move by the NLD headquarters has been criticized by a small number of regional NLD organizers who wanted the headquarters to recruit new executives from different regions.

In response to the criticism, U Khin Maung Swe said: "We respected their wish and elected the new executives as soon as possible. But, we cannot please everyone. If we did that, we could not have moved as fast as we did. In fact, the NLD only has organizing committees in the townships. It is not possible to hold party congresses or establish actual township party branches yet. Our party is not even a cadre party yet. We have to select people from the top level to set up bodies temporarily so that we can do our work. In the future when party congresses can be convened, we will act according to standardized rules and regulations."

In addition to the central executive committee at its headquarters, the NLD also has been reorganizing its women and youth wings all over the country. In that regard, U Khin Maung Swe said: Central Women Wing members have been visiting different states and divisions to establish local women wings.

Meanwhile, according to U Khin Maung Swe, NLD youth leaders have youth wings in 64 townships.

NLD Secretary U Win Tin and Executive U Win Kyaing have also been touring Mandalay to meet with township organizers in the division and nearby regions. The visit to Upper Burma by the two NLD leaders is the first in many years since the military authorities have restricted the travel of all leading NLD members.

The new NLD Central Executive Committee:

Chairman:	U Aung Shwe	(Nine new members)
Vice Chairman:	U Tin Oo	Dr Than Nyein
General Secretary:	Aung San Suu Kyi	U Ohn Kyaing
Secretary:	U Lwin	U Win Myint
Members:	U Win Tin	U Tun Tun Hein
	U Khin Maung Swe	Dr Win Naing
	U Than Tun	U Nyan Win
	U Soe Myint	U Thein Nyunt
	U Hla Pe	U Hantha Myint
	U Lun Tin	Dr May Win Myint
	U Nyunt Wai	

The Military

State Secrets Leaked

In mid-2009, the international media was surprised to see detailed information on the Internet about military projects secretly being undertaken in Burma and about the weaponry the leading members of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) were trying to acquire from Russia and North Korea.

SPDC Vice Chairman Vice Senior General Maung Aye, who visited Russia in 2006, sought help to set up a nuclear reactor, procure guided missile systems and jetfighters, and arrange training for military personnel in nuclear technology and modern weaponry.

Third ranking SPDC member General Thura Shwe Mann visited North Korea in 2008 and his interest also revolves around acquiring weaponry as well as expertise and technology in digging secret underground tunnels which were being undertaken in Burma since 1996.

The information leaked to Burmese blogs overseas and the exiled media concerned reports about major projects under the supervision of Senior General Than Shwe himself. It was about militarization and war preparations in Burma -- acquiring modern weaponry, fighter jets, a

nuclear reactor, digging underground tunnels all over the country, including ones in the capital Nay Pyi Taw which serve as bomb shelters as well as places to hide large number of troops.

As a result of the news leaks, the Military Affairs Security rounded up many military officials, including middle-ranking majors and colonels, in departments that had access to the information. These detainees were crosschecked and interrogated for a few weeks.

In November last year, legal charges were officially filed against three men. On 6 January this year, the Special Court in Insein Prison sentenced two of them to death in addition to passing long prison sentences. The third received a 15-year jail term. The two alleged accused -- ex-Major Win Naing Kyaw and Kyaw Thura -- who received the death sentences under the Emergency Act were found guilty of leaking "state secrets" when they allegedly sent information to ex-Major Aung Lin Htut -- a former intelligence official assigned to the Burmese Embassy in Washington DC but is now an asylee in the United States.

A Thai-based military affairs observer suggests that the three defendants may have sent the information out of the country but the military intelligence has yet to discover the real persons, mostly likely military officers, who provided the information to the three accused.

New Commanders Appointed

A meeting of top military leaders and commanders regularly held in Nay Pyi Taw during the last quarter of the year usually involves promotions and reshuffling of high-level commanders. But the meeting held in November last year, only reassigned middle-ranking officers -- General Staff Officers-1 -- as commanders of Tactical Operations Commands and Military Operations Commands. The military has not announced where the original commanders went when those reassigned took over their positions.

Observers say the original commanders may be assigned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and / or being prepared for civilian duties after the elections. Officers reassigned are:

Lt Col Aung Zaw Oo under Lt Gen Ye Myint's Military Affairs Security was appointed as commander of No 5 Military Operations Command based in An of Arakan State.

Lt Col Aung Zaw Aye from Vice Senior General Maung Aye's Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Army as commander of No 14 Military Operations Command in Mong Hsat of Shan State.

Lt Col Thaik Soe was appointed as tactical operations commander of No 99 Light Infantry Division, Lt Col Thein Tun Oo as tactical operations commander of Kunlong, and Lt Col Win Min Tun as tactical operations commander of Mong Mit.

With the exception of the first appointment, the rest of the officers are appointed to regions where ceasefire forces are located.

Col Win Thein from the Army-Air Force-Navy Coordination Office under General Thura Shwe Mann was appointed as the deputy commander of the Northeast Command based in Lashio -- the force which fought the Kokang ceasefire group.

A military affairs observer U Aung Kyaw Zaw based at the Sino-Burmese border said he was surprised that "no changes were announced at the higher level". With middle-ranking officers getting promotions, "Where did the original commanders go? We did not hear any new appointments to the divisions or regional commands. Did they get transferred to the civilian side or were they being prepared for the elections? A lot of reshuffling is also going on in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with the 'leakage of state secrets'".

So far, the military regime has not made any official announcement nor has it confirmed any of the appointments.

Foreign Ministry Reshuffle

A document dated 23 November 2009 and signed by Director General U Tin Soe, on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, transferred 22 officials, including 12 directors, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and over 20 staff members of various Burmese embassies.

Among the most senior officials transferred were: U Han Thu, director of the MOFA Planning Department, who was appointed as counselor to the Burmese Embassy in Washington, DC; and Daw Yin Yin Oo, director of the MOFA Political Department, as counselor to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Deputy Directors U Myo Thant Pe of the Political Department was appointed as the counselor to Beijing, U Myint Thu of the ASEAN Affairs Department as counselor to Jakarta, Indonesia; U Ba Hla Aye of the International Organizations Department as counselor to New Delhi; U Chan Aye of the Consular Affairs Department as counselor to Geneva; and U Kyaw Tin Shein of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Department as first secretary to the Burmese Embassy in Washington, DC.

The directive did not explain why so many senior officials were being transferred simultaneously. But, observers believe that the move is connected to the case of ex-Major Win Naing Kyaw and Kyaw Thura, who received death sentences for leaking state secrets.

Unrest in the Military?

The most serious threat to the Burmese generals can only come from within the Burmese Defense Services. Realizing the situation, the generals have always tried to meet the needs of their own soldiers. But, in mid-January this year, reports filtered out that soldiers in the 66th and 77th Light Infantry Divisions based in Rangoon Division were jointly filing petitions to their commanders to give them pay raises.

The commanders were said to have forwarded reports about the situation in their divisions to their superiors, hoping that they would help resolve the problems. Instead, the War Office was

said to have dispatched commando units to surround the two divisions to pressure the soldiers seeking wage raises. The incident appeared to have concluded peacefully.

No official announcement has been made so far but sources in the military confirmed that similar unrest is reported among troops in the Coastal Region Command and the Western Command in Arakan State.

Ethnic Nationality Armies

Beginning from 1989, the Burmese military started negotiating ceasefire arrangements with armed ethnic groups and succeeded in making 17 major ethnic forces and breakaway armed factions the major groups cease hostilities. With elections to be held this year, the military leaders have decided that they were no longer going to allow parallel armed forces to exist in the country.

Although ceasefire groups were earlier promised that they can exchange arms for peace once a "democratic" government is in place after elections, the generals are now insisting that all armed ethnic groups must transform into Border Guard Forces under the command of the Burmese Army.

Ethnic political organizations battling for autonomy in their regions are concerned that they would lose their armed wings and effectively diminish their negotiating leverage vis-a-vis the regime.

The conditions set by the Burmese military when ceasefire groups transform into Border Guard Forces are:

1. Ethnic forces sizes must be reduced and join a Border Guard Force under the Burma Army
2. Each battalion will consist of 18 officers and 308 other ranks (a total of 326)
3. Each battalion will have 30 officers and NCOs from the Burma Army, and 296 officers and other ranks from the ceasefire group
4. Each battalion will be commanded by a Burma Army officer of major rank, who would manage day-to-day administration, and two ceasefire officers. Administration, personnel, and materiel support and other departments are to be manned by the Burma Army officers
5. All ethnic soldiers over 50 years of age must retire

The military government has assigned Lt-Gen Ye Myint, chief of military affairs security and secretary of the Transformation Committee for the Border Guard Force, to handle the ceasefire groups.



New Light of Myanmar, 11 Nov: Rangoon -- Burma Army commanders help an officer of the Border Guard Force put on Burma Army insignia at the ceremony to mark formation of Border Guard Force of Kachin State Special Region (1) (NDAK) held in Lupi region of Kachin State on 8 November.

Under pressure from the military commands in northern Burma, many of the small groups have either surrendered or agreed to become militias as suggested by the Burma Army. But, major ethnic ceasefire forces like the United Wa State Army (UWSA), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), the New Mon State Party (NMSP), Shan State Army (North) [SSA-North], and the Mong La or National Democratic Alliance Army-Eastern Shan State (NDAA-ESS) -- with each group commanding several thousand men and UWSA reportedly having 30,000 to

36,000 armed troops -- remain defiant. The UWSA, the SSA-North, and the NDAA-ESS have also inked a defense alliance pact with each force promising to come to the aid of the other if it comes under attack by Burmese.

Each of these ethnic groups has come up with counter offers and excuses to simply refuse the terms of the military government and tensions are rising to the level that fighting can resume at any moment. These groups have also been preparing for possible combat with the Burmese army by recruiting and training soldiers and producing small arms and ammunition.

The Burma Army is also busy deploying its troops to consolidate control over areas near the armed ethnic groups along its borders -- both those with China and Thailand. Wherever possible, Burmese troops have cordoned off areas belonging to armed ethnic forces.

The following is the status of the Burma Army and the ethnic ceasefire groups:

Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDA) or the Kokang group

The Kokang group led by Peng Jiasheng was the first group targeted by the Burmese Army for destruction. The generals wanted not only to overpower the Kokang group but also to make an example to instill fear in the other ethnic armies.

In August 2009, giving various excuses, including allegations that the Kokang group was illegally producing weapons and hoarding drugs, the Burma Army invaded Laogai, the capital of Kokang, and overran Kokang territory in a few days.

China gets involved

What was unseen, perhaps, was that the territory hosted a significant number of Chinese nationals, many of whom are from neighboring Yunnan. With thousands of Chinese and other refugees fleeing across the border and Yunnan having to house them, China became concerned. China reinforced its police and military units along the border and a rare rebuke from the Foreign Ministry. A statement released from Beijing on August 28 said China "hopes that Myanmar can appropriately solve its relevant internal problems and safeguard the stability of the China-Myanmar border". It went on to request that the government "protect the safety and legal rights of Chinese citizens in Myanmar".

Myanmar in turn apologized for any Chinese casualties that occurred during the hostilities and thanked Beijing for its assistance in caring for refugees. According to Chinese officials in Yunnan province, around 37,000 refugees streamed across the border in the wake of the recent fighting.

Similarly, PRC Vice President Xi Jinping, who visited Burma early this year, also said during his visit that the problems at the border should be resolved peacefully through national reconciliation and dialogue.

Burmese troops may have overrun Kokang in a matter of days but their miscalculation there brought China into the conflict and made the generals reconsider its brute force strategy against ceasefire groups. With China's warning, the Burma Army is now showing restraint in dealing with other ceasefire groups.

United Wa State Army

(Strength: 30,000 - 36,000)



The strongest among all ethnic ceasefire forces is closely allied to and almost completely dependent on China for survival. The UWSA was given until 31 December 2009 to agree to the military government's Border Guard Force proposal but the UWSA refused to respond and the deadline passed without any incident.

(Picture: UWSA Militia in Namteuk)
The UWSA said the military government had not replied to its five-point counter offer and it was

not going to heed the junta's demands. The UWSA's offer is:

- (1) To give five years worth of wages in lump sum to people over 50 years of age who has to retire;
- (2) To allow Wa troops to control its territories in southern Shan State at the Thai-Burmese border;
- (3) To give wages to the 30,000 members of the UWSA and allow them to settle in Wa region;
- (4) That the proposal to assign 30 State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) troops to each Wa unit was unacceptable; and
- (5) To provide guarantees that Wa soldiers who were former members of the Burma Communist Party will not be charged or jailed.

Meanwhile, reports from Wa territories suggest that the UWSA has been conducting militia training for all residents. The trainings which last around 45 days involved small arms use and basic militia tactics also included female trainees.

Another report from Kachin sources, but not independently confirmed, says about 15,000 former Wa soldiers in China have joined forces with the UWSA. These Wa soldiers have had combat experience as former Chinese soldiers..

Mong La Group or NDAA-ESS

(Estimated strength: 5,000)

The territory of Mong La is run by Lin Mingxian, a former Red Guard during China's Cultural Revolution who today has a private army of about 3,000 men, separate from but allied with the Wa forces.

Relying on the UWSA to come to its aid, NDAA-ESS has also refused to become a Border Guard Force. The fate of Mong La region is closely linked to the survival of the UWSA.

Mong La region is where Chinese along the border come to seek economic benefits and lead a decadent life. The region is known for its gambling dens, prostitution, and other illegal activities. Mong La's rubber plantations feed Chinese factories' demand for latex. Extreme poverty -- thatch huts and farmers tending fields with buffalo -- lives side by side with unexplained wealth -- mansions, walled compounds and expensive cars Mitsubishi Pajeros and Toyota Prado Land Cruisers, vehicles that cost well upward of \$100,000 in southern Burma because of onerous import duties -- are seen here.

Kachin Independence Army

The Kachin Independence Army which has resisted pressure from the military government has counter-proposed that it would transform its units into Regional Guard Forces instead of Border Guard Forces because its troops are not stationed solely along the border. The Burmese military rejected it.

Following that the KIA proposed that it be included in the administration of the region but that was also rejected. The KIO then said that it was prepared to give up arms if the Burmese military were to accept the principles of the Panglong Agreement.

Following the offer, Burmese military commanders and the KIA met in Myitkyina and the commanders said they wanted to have a clear picture about what the KIA was demanding.

The negotiations were between Brig Gen Soe Win, commander of Northern Command, Kachin Vice Chairman Maj Gen Gauri Zau Seng.

After the talks, KIA leaders returned to Laiza, KIA headquarters at the Sino-Burmese border to discuss the matter with other leaders. The KIA will have to convene its Central Committee and Politburo meetings and discuss Panglong Agreement issues which have direct impact on the lives of the Kachin people and the KIO. They will meet the Burmese Army once again when they are ready.

Panglong Agreement

The Panglong Agreement was the outcome of the conference held in Panglong, Shan State, on 12 February 1947 for the liberation of Burma from colonial rule and the establishment of the Union of Burma. The agreement was signed by 23 delegates, including several members of the Governor's Executive Council led by General Aung San and delegates from Chin and Kachin Hill Tribes and Shan State. Chin, Kachin, and Shan delegates signed the agreement without objection because they believed that by joining the Burmese contingent they would get independence sooner. In other words, it was a pact which the Burmese and other ethnic nationality leaders signed to build the Union and to live through weal and woe together.

New Mon State Party

(Estimated strength: 3,500)

The New Mon State Party has not only rejected the Border Guard Force proposal but has openly declared that it was not going to contest the elections held by the military government because it is not designed to bring about democracy or ethnic rights in Burma.

Based in southern Burma on the Thai Burma border, the NMSP stands alone against the Burma Army. There are no ethnic alliances to come to its aid should fighting resume.

The NMSP, however, has wide support from the Mon people and an extensive network of sympathizers and guerrillas.

Shan State Army (North)

(Estimated strength: 5,000)

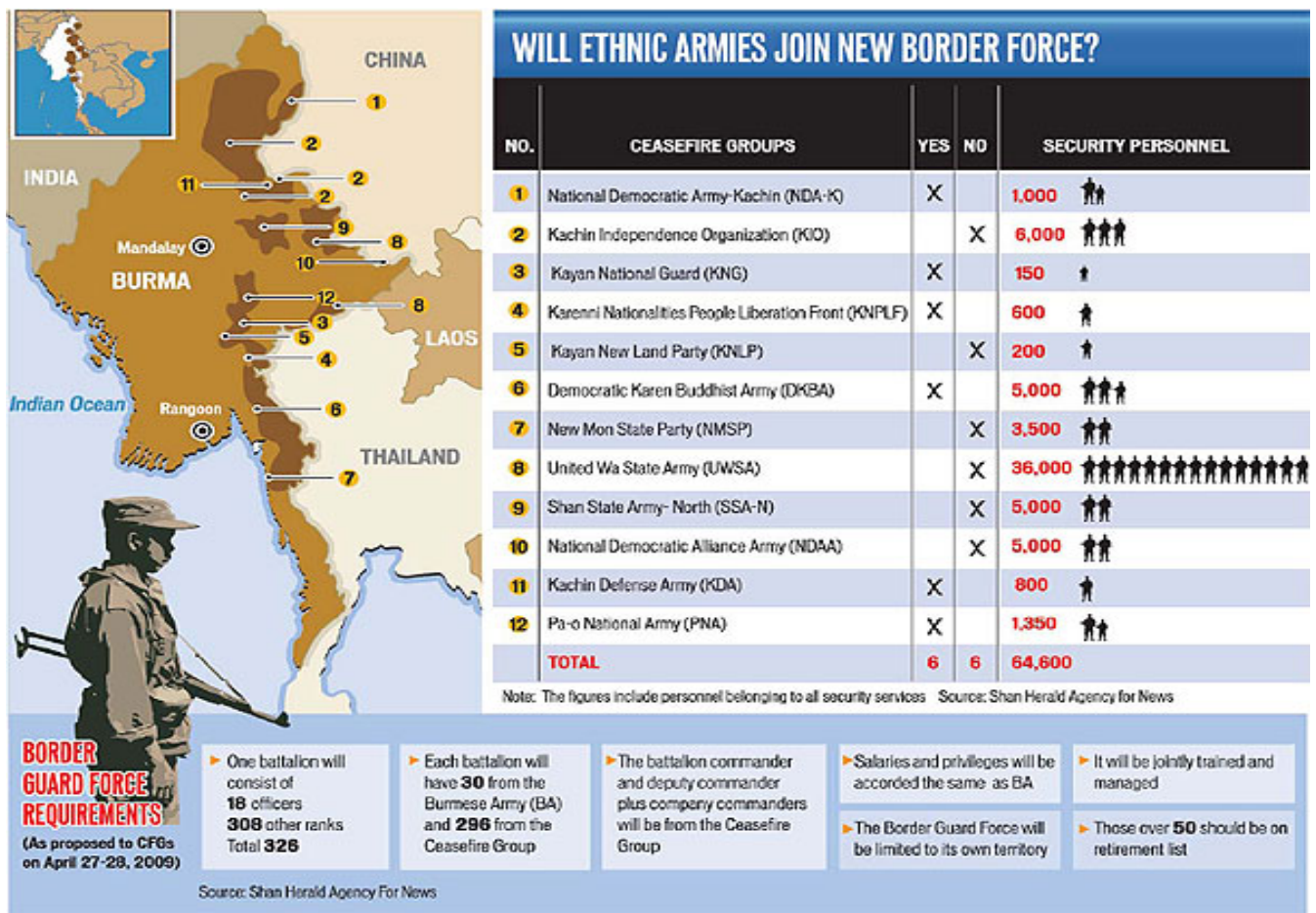
The Shan State Army (North) has informed the military government that it would transform into Border Guard Force but is refusing to provide the list of SSA soldiers who would join the Border

Guard Force. SSA leaders have been holding meetings with its military commanders several times and in different places.

It appears that the military commanders who oppose the Border Guard Force idea are reluctant to give their soldiers to join a force under the Burma Army. They are resisting SSA political leaders' demand to come up with a list.

The SSA, an ally of the UWSA and the NDAA-ESS, is closely watching what its allies would do.

The following graphic from Shan Herald Agency for News shows the situation of the ceasefire groups:



Pay Raises for Low-Wage Government Employees

The Burmese military government will be raising the wages of public service personnel beginning from the end of January. Reports about the pay raise, which have been spreading around government offices even though the government has not announced it yet, is another news of the New Year that came after the government announced that it was increasing telephone charges by three-fold.

The government has also been raising taxes for commercial establishments, beginning to retrospectively collect taxes from the entertainment industry and celebrities, as well as introduce new taxes in different sectors.

Under the pay raise scheme, workers earning between 15,000 kyats and 80,000 kyats, will get an additional 20,000 kyats each.

News has also been floating around that pensions for retired personnel would be included in the pay raises and that ministries have been collecting data for the wage increases. A public service worker has this to say:

But, even before the pay raise has come into effect, commodity prices have started to rise and workers are concerned that their wage raise will go to waste.

Sources:

- *Shan Herald Agency for News*
- *Democratic Voice of Burma*
- *Myanmar Radio & Television*
- *Irrawaddy*
- *NCGUB information*