

Communist Party of Australia Marxist Leninist

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For the defeat of the Burmese junta and a free and independent Burma!

Written by: Nick G. on 30 January 2025



(Above: Burmese PLA celebrate their arrival in a liberated township)

Very little coverage is given to events in Burma (Myanmar) by the Australian mainstream media.

However, recent developments show the military regime is increasingly besieged by a coalition of anti-regime armed forces, and has to rely on Chinese interference to maintain itself in power.

The various ethnic rebel forces and the Communist Party of Burma's People's Liberation Army are increasingly developing a united front and providing each other with mutual support and training.

The regime is losing large swathes of territory outside the three main cities of the Burmese capital, Naypyidaw, and Rangoon and Mandalay.

Its ability to move its army by land corridors is restricted, and it is relying on airstrikes and long-range artillery bombardment of towns under rebel control. Air-dropped troop reinforcements often fall into the hands of anti-junta forces.

Superpowers and their rivalry over Burma

Both superpowers are keen to direct the outcome of struggles within Burma.

The US imperialists have applied sanctions to the military junta since its takeover, have few direct investments to protect, but are trying to win over the democratic bourgeoisie and landlord forces through an encouragement of a return to a “democracy” within which they can meddle. The 2022 US Burma Unified through Rigorous Military Accountability Act, known as the BURMA Act, mandates sanctions against the junta, and authorises substantial humanitarian aid to support the rival, US-backed National Unity Government (NUG), but not the ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) or the People’s Defence Forces (PDFs).

Chinese interests are more substantial. Among the most important is Kyaukpyu Deep-Sea Port, a crucial part of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), which gives China direct access to the Indian Ocean, reducing reliance on the Malacca Strait from which it could be denied access in the event of war with the US.

There are also the China-Myanmar oil and gas pipelines that run from the Bay of Bengal to China’s Yunnan province, providing Beijing with a shorter and strategically secure energy route, again bypassing the Straits of Malacca. China is financing and constructing key railway and road links to connect Myanmar with Yunnan province.

China has also invested in multiple hydroelectric dams, and built and operated several coal and gas power plants. It has a dominant presence in telecommunications and technology through Huawei and ZTE, and Alibaba and other Chinese platforms have expanded financial technology services in Burma.

Chinese real estate companies are active in real estate projects, particularly in the junta-controlled cities of Yangon and Mandalay. China has developed industrial parks like the Kyaukpyu SEZ to attract Chinese and foreign businesses.

Imperialism, not proletarian internationalism



(Above: Villagers welcome the BPLA)

China claims that it is supporting Burmese sovereignty against threats of foreign (US) interference. A genuinely socialist country should support any state that is standing up to “outside pressure”, but it should not support a state that is oppressing its own people.

In 2017, China supported Aung San Suu Kyi’s military offensive against the Rohingya. When she was overthrown by the junta in 2021, it flirted with support for the various anti-junta ethnic armies and allowed the return to Burma of members of the Burmese Communist Party’s People’s Liberation Army.

It has vacillated between maintaining relations with some of the ethnic anti-Junta armies and the regime, according to where it perceives its investments in Burma can be best protected.

For example, last September, fighters of the Kachin Independence Army, or KIA, seized control of a key military base from the junta at Chipwe township in Kachin State, close to a Chinese hydro-electric power station and a Chinese rare earth mine, prompting China to pressure insurgent forces along the countries’ shared border to agree to halt their offensives against the junta, and closing border crossings through which medicines and food had flowed.

China's Customs Department said that China imported more than US\$1.4 billion worth of rare-earth minerals from Burma in 2023, underscoring the importance of "stability" in regions close to its investments.

On November 6, the head of Burma's military junta, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, travelled to China, meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang in Kunming. China signalled that it desires the bare minimum stability to protect its interests and it felt the junta is the horse to back to achieve this. China has said that it will support the junta's electoral process later this year, a clear indication that it will work to keep the junta in power.

Meanwhile, ethnic armies and the BPLA continue to take territory from the regime. The Kachin and Ta'ang, as well as the Arakan Army in Rakhine, continue to resist China's pressure.

Hostilities between the junta regime forces and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) have recommenced as of January 9, 2025, following the initiation of a new military operation by the junta in Naungcho township.

The Arakan Army (AA) stated on Monday January 26 that it had seized control of the Moehti hilltop outpost in Bago Region on the previous day - five days after it launched its attack. The military outpost is located in the Arakan Mountains, known as the Rakhine Yoma.

Of passing interest to Australians is the role of Julie Bishop as the United Nations' Special Envoy on Myanmar. The former Australian Foreign Minister will no doubt pursue US strategic interests in Burma. It should not be overlooked that in March 2017, the government of PM Malcolm Turnbull rejected a Senate vote calling for a United Nations commission of enquiry into the persecution of the Rohingya.

Several weeks later, it reversed its position and co-sponsored a resolution at the UN human rights forum for the UN to send a fact-finding mission to Myanmar. The change was partly fuelled by an upsurge of reported atrocities against the Rohingya on one hand, and Australia's hypocritical push for membership of the UN Human Rights Council from 2018.

Bishop can be expected to try to do deals to facilitate China's acceptance of the pro-US National Unity Government should the regime fall to the united resistance front.

For now, we can only support the fight of the combined Burmese resistance for national liberation, independence and democracy, and oppose all outside superpower interference that runs counter to the aspirations of the Burmese peoples.
