



**DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE**  
**(U) Social-Cultural Dynamics**

2 November 2015

### (U) Burma: Rising Tensions from Monks' Elections Influence

(S// (b)(3);50 USC 3024(i) /NF)

(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

#### (U) Scope Note

(S//NF)

(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

### (U) Monks Shore up Government Party Support, Protect Military Interests

(C// (b)(3);50 USC 3024(i) ) The military and ruling Union State and Development Party's (USDP) efforts to counter strong backing for opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party probably have led the government to permit, and take advantage of, the political influence of members of a leading nationalist religious movement. Since late last month, the USDP campaign has capitalized on anti-Muslim messaging from the radical fringe of the monk-led Committee for the Protection of Race and Religion (Ma Ba Tha). These monks have accused the NLD of undermining Burma's social and Buddhist religious and social norms by supporting Muslims.<sup>7</sup>

(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

- > (C//NF) Last month, military commander Min Aung Hlaing cautioned the military and their families to vote for the "correct" candidate, who would be willing and capable of protecting Burmese race and religion.<sup>7</sup>

(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

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(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

- > (U//~~FOUO~~) This month, a senior member of Union Election Commission (UEC) said it has no authority to prevent religious figures or organizations from speaking out on politics, according to press reporting.<sup>10</sup> Leading Monks have been publicly endorsing President Thein Sein, encouraging followers to support the USDP, and has linked the NLD to a vote for Muslims.
- > (U//~~FOUO~~) As of last month, President U Thein Sein sought to enhance his nationalist Buddhist image by reminding voters that the government had disenfranchised Rohingya Muslims and had passed the four Ma Ba Tha-initiated laws on "race and region," according to press reporting.<sup>11</sup> A campaign advertisement by the USDP praised the Thein Sein government's enactment of the "race and religion" laws as protecting national security by restricting interfaith marriage, religious conversion, polygamy, and family size.

**(U) Ma Ba Tha Monks Effective Use of Social Media**

(S//NF)

(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

The following two pages are denied in full under the following exemptions: (b)(1);(b)(3); 50 USC 3024 (i); Sec. 1.4 (c)

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(U) SOURCE ENDNOTES

(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i)

1 (S) (U) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

2 (U) <www.bbc.com>. Accessed 15 Oct 2015; 8 Oct 2015; BBC; Myanmar's Ma Ba Tha Monks Flex Their Political Muscle.

3 (U) <www.reuters.com>, Accessed 26 Oct 2015; Reuters; Special Report: Buddhist monks incite Muslim Killings in Myanmar, 8 Apr, 2013.

4 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

5 (U) <www.bbc.com>, Accessed 15 Oct 2015; 8 Oct 2015; BBC; Myanmar's Ma Ba Tha Monks Flex Their Political Muscle.

6 (U) OSC RESTON VA; SER2815893807048894; 300203Z SEP 15; (U) BURMA: MA BA THA, USDP: ELECTION BEDFELLOWS?; Classification of extracted material is U; Overall classification is U.

7 (U) OSC RESTON VA; SER2815182215618491; 220426Z OCT 15; (U) BURMA: VOTE FOR 'CORRECT' CANDIDATES, SAYS MILITARY CHIEF; Overall classification is U

8 (U//SBU) STATE; 15 RANGOON 800724; 131106Z OCT 15; (U//SBU) BURMA: SCENESETTER FOR ONSA BEN RHOES OCT 18-20 VISIT; Classification of extracted material is U//SBU; Overall classification is U//SBU; Source is diplomatic reporting.

9 (U) OSC RESTON VA; SER2815188251724533; 021529Z OCT 15; (U) BURMA: GUARDIANS OF 'RACE AND RELIGION' TARGET NLD; Classification of extracted material is U; Overall classification is U.

10 (U) OSC RESTON VA; SER2815108262580638; 021951Z OCT 15; (U) BURMA: UNION ELECTION OFFICIAL SAYS HANOS TIED ON MA BA Tha; Classification of extracted material is U; Overall classification is U; Classification of extracted material is U; Overall classification is U.

11 (U) OSC RESTON VA; SER2815892584549194; 250123Z SEP 15; (U) BURMA: MA BA THA TAKES AIM AT DEFAMATION ACCUSATIONS; Classification of extracted material is U; Overall classification is U.

12 (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

13 (U) <www.bbc.com>, Accessed 15 Oct 2015; 8 Oct 2015; BBC; Myanmar's Ma Ba Tha Monks Flex Their Political Muscle.

14 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

15 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

16 (U) [Redacted] (b)(3);50 USC 3024(i)

17 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

18 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

19 (S//NF) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

20 (S) [Redacted] (b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

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21 ~~(S//NF)~~   
(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

22 ~~(S//NF)~~   
(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i)

23 (U)  RESTON VA; SER2013121303746878; 130137Z DEC 13; (U) BURMA: GROUP OF SITTWE RAKHINES PROTEST DUTCH DOCTORS Without Borders Over 'Discrimination'; Overall classification is U.

24 ~~(S//NF)~~   
(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

25 ~~(S//NF)~~   
(b)(1);(b)(3);50 USC 3024(i);Sec. 1.4(c)

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