

U Nu sets up provisional government in Burma

BP880910

Rangoon (Agencies) — Former Prime Minister U Nu, ousted by a military coup in 1962, announced yesterday that he has formed a 25-member provisional government and called for free elections on October 9, apparently without the agreement of other opposition leaders.

U Nu held a press conference at his house in Rangoon to announce the rival government. The announcement, also placed in embassy post boxes yesterday morning, called on foreign states to recognise his parallel government as the legitimate government of Burma.

"I have today informed foreign governments that I am the legitimate prime minister and only the government constituted by me should be recognised by them," the 82-year-old opposition leader said.

"Though I was robbed of my power, I am still the legitimate prime minister according to the constitution passed in 1947," U Nu said.

U Nu was overthrown in a 1962 military coup headed by General Ne Win, who was dominant until his resignation in July.

"I still remain the prime minister until a no-confidence motion against me is passed in the Parliament," U Nu said.

CONDITION

He said he revived his government because conditions in Burma have changed "drastically and marvellously."

U Nu said people of all classes have rejected the government of "Ne Win and his henchmen."

He announced a 25-member council of ministers that included key figures from his government in the 1960s.

General Tin Oo, formerly defence minister and army chief under Ne Win, was named defence minister. Tin Oo, who was sacked in 1976 because of suspicions he sympathised with a coup plot, is believed to retain some of his influence in the current military leadership.

Mahn Win Maung, who served as president in U Nu's last government, was again named president.

U Nu and Mahn Win Maung were also the first prime minister and president respectively of Burma after the country won independence from Britain in 1948.



U NU ... counter-coup? — Reuter

There was no immediate reaction from the military-backed government of President Maung Maung, but other opposition leaders reacted with puzzlement, diplomats said.

"This does not appear to have been coordinated with other major opposition figures and raises questions about their unity," said a diplomat who asked not to be further identified.

Other sources said another opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of national hero General Aung San, expressed "astonishment" at the move.

"I am glad my name is not there. It is simply preposterous," Aung Gyi told newsmen when asked about U Nu's action.

OBTAIN

The announcement placed in embassy boxes said U Nu would stand for election but would immediately turn over power to anyone who obtained a majority of votes. Since his government could not provide ballots and other equipment, elections would be held at mass town meetings and would not "under existing conditions" be conducted in rural areas, the announcement said.

The cabinet line-up:

— U Win Maung: President

— U Nu: Prime Minister

— Bohmu Aung: Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies

— U Tun Aye: Speaker of the Chamber of Nationalities

— Thakin Chit Maung (Vidura): Minister of Agriculture and Forests

— Bo Khin Maung: Minister of Health

— General Tin Oo: Minister of Defence

HOME

— Brigadier General Aung Shwe: Minister of Home Affairs

— Colonel Saw Myint: Minister of Information

— U Vum Ko Hau: Minister of Foreign Affairs

— Thakin Thein Pe: Minister of Economics

— U Aung: Minister of Finance

— U Ba Swe (Pongyi): Minister of Religious Affairs

— Bohmu Tuntin: Minister of Public Works

— U Ye Gaung Myun: Minister of Judicial Affairs

— U Than Sein: Minister of Culture

U Nu's statement said the following would be given portfolios later: Thakin Khin Aung, Thakin Chit, U Ba Tun, U Nyunt Aung, U Thu Wai, Bo Tun Sein, U Saw Ngai Du, Thakin Pan Myaing, U Thein Maung and U San Ohn.

04/1008/50/6605