Myanmar
Rice

Myanmar gained its independence from Britain in 1948, and became a parliamentary system. The first Prime Minister was U Nu, a member of the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL). Soon after he took office, Myanmar descended into civil war, with Nu's government and party being challenged by various factions of the BCP (Burmese Communist Party). In 1956, parliamentary elections were held, and, after an AFPFL, U Nu decided to step down as Prime Minister in order to reorganize his party (Charney 2009, 86). He handed over power to his deputy Prime Minister, U Ba Swe. This is not a SOLS change. U Ba Swe remained in power until U Nu wanted to resume his prime ministership (on March 1, 1957. This is not a SOLS change. However, the civil war continued on, and soon after U Nu resumed office the AFPFL suffered a schism (Charney 2009, 91). It now consisted of two factions: the "Clean AFPFL" (led by Nu) and the "Stable AFPFL" (led by Ba Swe). As instability gradually became more prevalent in the government, Nu made the decision to hand over power to a military caretaker government. Originally, this government, under its 'Prime Minister' Ne Win, was supposed to hold power for six months, but it instead remained in power until April 4 1960. Because it is labeled a caretaker government and it was in power for 18 months only, we code no SOLS change here. (Note that this decision follows our rule, but is questionable. Geddes does code a military regime here. Unfortunately, by our rules the country is democratic at the time and we need to disregard Geddes' coding.)

In February 1960, the military government held elections and U Nu's "Clean AFPFL" won, making U Nu Prime Minister again. This is a SOLS change. Shortly thereafter, the "Clean AFPFL" renamed itself the Pyidaungu (Union) Party (UnP). However, stability did not return to the country, and on March 2, 1962, Ne Win (who was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army) staged a coup, a SOLS change, establishing a Revolutionary Council as the governing body of Myanmar. At this point, and until 1988, Geddes classifies Myanmar as being a military-personalist regime. In the 1970s, Ne Win decided that he needed a civilian base of support alongside the military, so he created his own party, the Party of the Socialist Program of Burma (PSPB, the only legal political party from 1974-1988) (Charney 2009, 134). In 1974, Ne Win also created a new constitution, which returned Burma to nominal civilian rule under the PSPB, though Ne Win was still in charge (holding the title of President, as opposed to Prime Minister).

The next transfer of power occurred in 1988. Student demonstrations against the repressive tactics of Ne Win's government had broken out throughout the country. The government attempted to quell the riots, but was unable to, and on July 25 1988, Ne Win stepped down from office. He was replaced by the PSPB General Secretary, Sein Lwin. This is not a SOLS change. However, the student riots continued, and on August 12, Sein Lwin also stepped down from the office of President. He was replaced by another member of PSPB, Maung Maung (a civilian, who had been the Chief Justice/senior legal officer of the PSPB government, and had helped draft the 1974 constitution) (Charney 2009, 153). Again, as he was a high-ranking official in Ne Win's party, we do not code this as a SOLS change.

Maung Maung was as unsuccessful as his predecessors as quelling the riots and discontent that were prevalent all over Myanmar. A National League for Democracy was formed,

and its leaders began to demand free multi-party elections, which were scheduled for September 1988. Violent riots continued, however, and the situation culminated with a military coup, led by Saw Maung (who was apparently a close associate of Ne Win (Charney 2009, 158), but, as his regime was purely military, we code this transfer as a minor SOLS change, because it is no longer military/personalist) on September 18, 1988. Myanmar was now under complete military rule, and continues to be so up to the present day. In 1992, after Saw Maung purportedly suffered from a nervous breakdown (Charney 2009, 177), he was replaced by the conservative general Than Shwe. This is not a SOLS change, as Than Shwe was a high- ranking military official.

In 2016, Htin Kyaw, of the National League for Democracy (NLD), was elected president, the first elected civilian leader in over 50 years (BBS News 2016). This marked Myanmar's transition to a democracy. The transition to Kyaw from his predecessor Thein Sein is coded as a SOLS change as they have different political affiliations. Within a week of Kyaw being in office, the NLD majority parliament created a new position, state counsellor, for the NLD party leader Aung San Suu Kyi (McKirdy 2016). Suu Kyi was barred from running for president due to a constitutional clause regarding family members with foreign nationalities. The position of state counsellor made the presidency largely ceremonial, essentially making Suu Kyi ruler by proxy. The Archigos data does not extend this far, but we expect that Suu Kyi will be the effective leader beginning on April 6, 2016. The transition in effective leader from Kyaw, the president, to Suu Kyi, the state counsellor, is not coded as a SOLS change because they are from the same party.

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