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Trends in  
Southeast Asia

RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS  
IN MYANMAR'S PARLIAMENT:  
AN EMERGING LEGISLATIVE FORCE?

RENAUD EGRETEAU

**ISEAS** YUSOF ISHAK  
INSTITUTE

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## FOREWORD

The economic, political, strategic and cultural dynamism in Southeast Asia has gained added relevance in recent years with the spectacular rise of giant economies in East and South Asia. This has drawn greater attention to the region and to the enhanced role it now plays in international relations and global economics.

The sustained effort made by Southeast Asian nations since 1967 towards a peaceful and gradual integration of their economies has had indubitable success, and perhaps as a consequence of this, most of these countries are undergoing deep political and social changes domestically and are constructing innovative solutions to meet new international challenges. Big Power tensions continue to be played out in the neighbourhood despite the tradition of neutrality exercised by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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# Retired Military Officers in Myanmar's Parliament: An Emerging Legislative Force?

By Renaud Egreteau

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Retired military officers continue to wield considerable influence in Myanmar's post-junta politics. As former soldiers, they have developed a particular mindset and a specific view of society as well as of the place and policy role of the armed forces (or *Tatmadaw*).
- The first post-SPDC legislature (2010–2015) has, however, not been entirely dominated by *Tatmadaw* retirees, as often perceived. These form only a minority in the Union parliament (or *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw*): less than 9 per cent of the legislators — or 12 per cent of the elected representatives — have a military background.
- The lower house (or *Pyithu Hluttaw*) gathers more prominent retired officers than the upper house (or *Amyotha Hluttaw*): forty-one of them, including eighteen former generals can be spotted in the lower house, while seventeen, including three ex-generals, sit in the upper house.
- Retired *Tatmadaw* officers have however been able to capture disproportionate control over most positions of legislative authority in the house, such as the speakerships, as well as several chairmanships and secretariats of key parliamentary committees as well as *ad hoc* legislative commissions. This remains a key indication of where power lies in the upper levels of the current Union legislature.
- Military retirees turned lawmakers offer a diverse sociological profile, although the most senior of them who were elected in 2010 appear to be predominantly ethnic Bamar and Buddhist. They are on average in their mid-sixties and exclusively male, and drawn from multiple military instructional backgrounds.



- Drawing on a series of recent interviews, as well as an initial analysis of individual legislative activities performed by Union-level legislators, this paper identifies three types of Burmese parliamentarians with military background: reluctant members of parliament (MPs), dutiful MPs and high-flying MPs. The differences between these are broadly based on the level of their respective public engagement, the effort displayed in performing their legislative activities while in assembly and outside, their perceived political influence within the house, and their immediate and long-term political goals.
- Although occupying key parliamentary positions, retired officers in the house do not form a cohesive group. They appear to have worked on different policy options, developed different kinds of relationship with the executive authority, and cultivated different forms of interactions with the *Tatmadaw* (their former institution), including its appointed representatives in parliament. It is the party they belong to, as well as personal relationships based on political clientelism, that has so far built cohesion among them, rather than their individual military background.
- As they form a vast pool of loyal and relatively well-educated bureaucrats, military retirees are expected to remain a political force in upcoming legislatures as well. Yet, these emerging political elites may prove increasingly heterogeneous and not necessarily aligned with the policy preferences outlined by the next generations of military leaders — or the opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

# **Retired Military Officers in Myanmar's Parliament: An Emerging Legislative Force?**

By Renaud Egreteau<sup>1</sup>

## **INTRODUCTION**

High-ranking retired military officers commonly wield significant influence over public affairs in democracies and praetorian regimes alike. Upon retirement, former military professionals often choose a second career in civilian government agencies or join business companies. Some undertake the tasks of technical advisors and consultants, while others purposefully embrace political life.

Since the end of the Second World War, a well-established field of scholarship has examined the political, social, and even economic influence maintained by high-ranking military retirees in society. This literature emerged from initial studies carried out in the United States and Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s, at a time when retired generals crowned in glory, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower in the United States and Charles de Gaulle in France, successfully ran for presidential office (Reissman 1956; Janowitz 1960; Biderman 1969, 1973; Yarmolinski 1971, Hong 1979). Recent scholarship has continued to explore the involvement of retired military officials in the Western political and legislative realms (Dowd 2001; Bianco 2005; Corbett and Davidson

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<sup>1</sup> Renaud Egreteau was a visiting fellow at ISEAS from January to May 2015. A Research Associate with Sciences Po's Centre for International Studies (CERI) in Paris (France), he now holds a 2015–16 Fellowship at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. He would like to thank Tin Maung Maung Than, Robert H. Taylor, David I. Steinberg and Andrew Selth for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, as well as the Embassy of France in Myanmar for its assistance.

2010; Horowitz and Stam 2014). The influence of former army generals in various processes of democratic change and transition from military rule to civilian ones in contemporary Africa — especially Nigeria — as well as in the Middle East has also been recently highlighted (Badmus 2005; Peri 2006; Cook 2007; Amaike 2007). In Asia, authors have started to analyse the political clout gained by retired soldiers in the electoral politics of post-Suharto Indonesia and post-Marcos Philippines, among others, and explored the post-retirement civic engagement of Chinese military retirees (Gloria 2003; Mietzner 2011; O'Brien and Diamant 2015).

Myanmar's governing institutions, state bureaucracy and local administrations have long been manned by retirees drawn from the ranks of the powerful national armed forces (or *Tatmadaw*). Whenever one meets a Myanmar individual in a position of power, the odds are that he boasts a military background. Yet, no scholarly study has delved into the world of *Tatmadaw* retirees. Recent scholarship on Myanmar has no doubt though rather tentatively examined the control the *Tatmadaw* has sought to exert on the transition from direct military rule to a hybrid political regime (Callahan 2012; Bunte 2014; Pedersen 2014). Experts have also speculated on the policy role the *Tatmadaw* may still continue to play in the “post-junta” politics of the 2010s (Steinberg 2014; Taylor 2015). The increased scholarly attention on Myanmar's military politics has however been placed either on the new generations of active duty officers now leading the *Tatmadaw*, especially its current commander-in-chief Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing (Maung Aung Myoe 2014) or on the appointed military representatives who constitutionally sit in Myanmar's newly-formed legislative assemblies (Egreteau 2015); but not on the cohorts of retired military officers and former leaders of the State Peace and Development Council (or SPDC, which was disbanded in March 2011) who embarked on a second political, bureaucratic or legislative career.

This paper looks into this black box. It focuses particularly on the bicameral Union parliament — or *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* — that emerged in Myanmar after elections were held in 2010. When the new legislative body first convened in January 2011, swift assumptions about its lack of credibility were routinely made by foreign and Myanmar observers

alike.<sup>2</sup> Many derided a legislature supposedly entirely dominated by military officers, whether in uniform or recently retired, and elected under the banner of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). The party indeed scooped up a solid majority of seats in these controversial elections.<sup>3</sup> However, a closer look at the profile of the elected parliamentarians sitting in both houses of the Union parliament after the 2012 by-elections shows that only 12 per cent of them have a military or police background (Egreteau 2014a, p. 116).<sup>4</sup> This paper identifies and then explores the career patterns of military retirees who have embarked on a second career as legislators — an occupation that only recently re-emerged in Myanmar. I have in particular identified fifty-eight retired *Tatmadaw* officers in the Union legislature: forty-one elected legislators in the lower house (or *Pyithu Hluttaw*), and seventeen in the upper house (or *Amyotha Hluttaw*).

The choice of Myanmar's legislature for this study was a pragmatic one. Unlike governmental institutions and local bureaucracies, most elected members of parliament (MPs) who are military retirees are easily identified. In 2012, a document compiling the mini-biographies of all elected and appointed MPs at the end of the third session (May 2012) was published (The Parliaments of Myanmar 2013). How this document was prepared, and why it was approved for public release remains a mystery. It is incomplete and riddled with inaccuracies. Yet, it contains a wealth of information about the emerging cohort of Myanmar's Union lawmakers. Besides the full name, most recent home address, date of birth, ethnic background, religion, and level of educational achievement,

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<sup>2</sup> Among others: *The Economist*, "Myanmar's Sham Legislature", 27 January 2011; *The Irrawaddy*, "Burma's '15-Minute' Parliament", 22 February 2011; and Aung Din, "15 minutes of fame for Myanmar MPs", *Asia Times*, 24 March 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the *Tatmadaw* has constitutionally secured a quarter of all seats in the legislative assemblies: 166 military delegates are therefore directly appointed by the commander-in-chief to the Union parliament; 110 in *Pyithu Hluttaw* and 56 in *Amyotha Hluttaw*. Only 75 per cent of the parliamentary seats are selected by universal suffrage.

<sup>4</sup> I do not focus in this paper on the military MPs who constitutionally represent a fourth of all legislative bodies.

the document offers more or less substantive chronologies of their professional activities — hence the possibility of spotting retired soldiers and former army bureaucrats. My research also draws on in-depth interviews with elected MPs, Union-level parliamentary committee chairs and secretaries, as well as party leaders — all recently carried out in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. These interviewees do not represent an ideal sample.<sup>5</sup> But they provide some captivating details about the background of the MPs, the perceptions they have of their new occupation and past employer (the *Tatmadaw*) and their perceived political influence in assembly, while offering a sense of how legislative behaviours have gradually been shaped in a resurrected legislature.

The primary task of this empirical study is to identify, and then examine the sociological profile of these ex-soldiers turned lawmakers. It will then analyse their role and influence in parliament, and investigate the nature of their initial legislative behaviour. What do they do and how do they behave in parliament? To which parliamentary committees have they been assigned? Do they form a cohesive group, and are they in a position to act as a powerful legislative lobby? How do they relate to the executive branch and the president’s office, which are more evidently dominated by prominent *Tatmadaw* retirees than the Union legislature? How do they interact with the more junior active duty military delegates commissioned to the Union legislature by the commanding heights of the *Tatmadaw*? Do they form an emerging political elite to be reckoned with? In identifying and exploring the political sway of retired *Tatmadaw* officers in parliament, this study hopes to make a fresh empirical contribution to our understanding of Myanmar’s politics, particularly in the “post-junta” transitional context of the 2010s.

## **THE RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER AS LEGISLATOR (2010–15): A SAMPLE**

There is a general impression among foreign and domestic observers alike that the post-SPDC state institutions sanctioned by the 2008 Constitution

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<sup>5</sup> Between January 2014 and April 2015, I was able to interview only 20 per cent of the legislators I identified as “military retirees”. In this paper, names are only mentioned when the interviewees did not request anonymity.

and shaped after the 2010 elections, are almost exclusively dominated by active and retired *Tatmadaw* officers. However, soon after the by-elections held in April 2012, less than 12 per cent of the 492 elected representatives sitting in the two houses of the Union legislature had a military background.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, only fifty-eight Union-level legislators with an evident career path in the *Tatmadaw* or military training received at one of Myanmar's military institutions can be identified in the first post-SPDC legislature (2010–15): forty-one in Pyithu Hluttaw and seventeen in *Amyotha Hluttaw*. Two military medical doctors can be added to this sample, as well as three retired police officers.<sup>7</sup> The civilian parliamentary bloc in the first post-SPDC *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* — three-quarters of both houses — is therefore not overtly dominated by retired generals and colonels, but rather comprises former civil servants and bureaucrats, teachers, intellectuals, farmers, and Burmese individuals involved in the private and business sector (Egreteau 2014a).

By comparison, 75 per cent of the ministers of the first government formed by President Thein Sein in February 2011 were military retirees (Maung Aung Myoe 2014, p. 247). This share has nevertheless decreased steadily with appointments of civilian bureaucrats and technocrats to ministerial positions in Nay Pyi Taw.<sup>8</sup> Yet, two thirds of the cabinet ministers still boast a military background in mid-2015. Among the deputy ministers, the proportion is almost 50 per cent. Furthermore, only one of the fourteen chief ministers heading Myanmar's fourteen provincial governments in 2015 was not drawn from the ranks of the armed forces.<sup>9</sup> It should however be noted that a substantial number of

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<sup>6</sup> Author's own compilation, based on *The Parliaments of Myanmar* (2013) and regular interviews carried out with elected MPs in Nay Pyi Taw.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed list and brief sociological profile and background, see Appendix 1 (*Amyotha Hluttaw*) and Appendix 2 (*Pyithu Hluttaw*).

<sup>8</sup> Including women. See, among others: Larry Jagan, "Thein Sein Shuffles to Restart Reforms", *Asia Times*, 30 August 2012; *The Bangkok Post*, "Myanmar Civilians Get Senior Government Posts", 6 February 2013; and *The Irrawaddy*, "Burma's Government to Appoint a Second Woman Minister", 11 February 2014.

<sup>9</sup> Ja Lawn Ngan Seng, a Kachin businessman whose father was an MP in the 1950s, was appointed Chief Minister of the Kachin State in February 2011.

these cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and chief ministers were in fact elected MPs in the 2010 polls, but had to resign from their parliamentary seats to be eligible to join the executive branches of government once nominated. They, therefore, only attended the first parliamentary session in Nay Pyi Taw between January and March 2011, before being picked for their respective government positions. Almost all their seats were then filled in the 2012 by-election by legislators from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD). Among the latter, all have a civilian background, save U Win Htein, a former graduate of the Defence Services Academy (DSA) elected for Meiktila constituency.<sup>10</sup> The composition of the Union parliament was therefore more heavily dominated by military retirees when it first convened in January 2011 than during the following five years.

In 2015, a brief sociological profile of the fifty-eight retired military officers identified in the two houses of the Union parliament would read as follows. Exclusively male, the average military retiree is 66 years old: 65.5 years old on average in the upper house, and 66.5 in the lower house. The youngest legislator of the sample was born in 1976, an army captain who retired in 2009 after only ten years of service, and now runs a mining company in the Kayah State. The oldest was born in 1934, joined the army as early as in 1962, before retiring as a lieutenant-colonel in 1985. All the forty-one military retirees in the lower house were Buddhist. In the upper house, only one retired navy sailor presented himself as a Christian; the sixteen others were Buddhist.<sup>11</sup> Besides, forty-nine of these fifty-eight retired officers were ethnic Bamar — 90 per cent of them in the lower house, and 70.5 per cent in the upper house. Among the military retirees in *Amyotha Hluttaw* or Chamber of Nationalities, there were one Kayin, one Chin, one Danu, one Rakhine-Bamar and one

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<sup>10</sup> U Win Htein served fourteen years in the army before his resignation in 1977. Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

<sup>11</sup> An ethnic Chin from Matupi constituency who spent nineteen years in the navy before being forced to retire in 1985. Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

Kayin-Bamar. In *Pyithu Hluttaw*, or House of Representatives, there were two ethnic Rakhine, one Shan, and one Kayin.

Although the data on their respective military training is incomplete, graduates from the prestigious Defense Services Academy (DSA) are more prominent among them: twenty-one in *Pyithu Hluttaw* (including the Speaker, Thura U Shwe Mann) and eight in *Amyotha Hluttaw*. Only two military retirees in *Amyotha Hluttaw* (including the Speaker, U Khin Aung Myint) and ten in *Pyithu Hluttaw* were drawn from the other major military training institution in the country, the Officers' Training School (OTS). In terms of military rank at the time of their retirement, Table 1 shows that twenty-one military retirees in parliament were former generals (from one-star to four-star), twenty-five were colonels and lieutenant-colonels, and four were middle-level officers. Two were from the rank-and-file, a soldier and sailor respectively. The former was an ethnic Kayin air force second officer who spent only five years in the armed forces (1966–71), and the latter an ethnic Chin former navy corporal. A striking phenomenon is the domination of high-ranking retired officers in the lower house: eighteen former generals — from the rank of brigadier (one star) to that of full general (four stars) — and only three ex-generals in the upper house. Drawing on interviews, I can only infer that the lower house has early on been perceived as more prestigious than the other legislative chamber, the *Amyotha Hluttaw*, where lawmaking power was

***Table 1: Ranks at Retirement of Military Retirees Elected MPs in Pyidaungsu Hluttaw***

<b>Rank at Retirement</b>	<b>Pyithu Hluttaw</b>	<b>Amyotha Hluttaw</b>
Brigadier-General and above	18	3
Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel	12	13
Major and Captain	4	—
Others	1	1
N.A.	6	—

*Source: The Parliaments of Myanmar (2013); and personal interviews.*



supposed to reside — although according to the 2008 Constitution, the two houses of the bicameral Union legislature have equal powers.

Lastly, among the fifty-eight military retirees identified in this initial survey, fifty-five of them belong to the dominant Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), one to the NLD (U Win Htein), one to the Chin Progressive Party (CPP) and one to the Rakhine National Party (RNP, formerly Rakhine National Development Party).

## **LOCATING POWER IN THE UNION LEGISLATURE**

Extant literature on parliamentary affairs has long characterized the distribution of power and influence within any legislative body to be an uneven one. Political influence in parliaments is indeed often concentrated in the hands of a few individuals — or frontbenchers. Chief among them are the speaker, the leaders of majority and minority parliamentary blocs (also called “whips”), the chairpersons of key legislative committees and high profile party figures. In the case of Myanmar’s first post-SPDC Union parliament (2010–15), a handful of MPs appear to hold significant power. Among them are many retired *Tatmadaw* officers. Despite forming only 12 per cent of the pool of elected legislators, military retirees are indeed spotted in most positions of authority, such as the speakerships, the chairmanships as well as the secretariats of key parliamentary committees and ad hoc commissions.

In fact, the speakers of each house are former army generals. U Khin Aung Myint, a two-star general and former Minister of Culture during the last years of the SPDC government, was elected speaker of the upper house in January 2011. His counterpart in the lower house, Thura U Shwe Mann, the only four-star general in parliament, was Joint Chief-of-Staff of the *Tatmadaw* between 2001 and 2010 and former number three in the SPDC hierarchy from 2004 until the disbanding of the Council seven years later. However, the two deputy speakers are civilian legislators with educational and occupational backgrounds in Law. U Mya Nyein, deputy speaker of *Amyotha Hluttaw* was a Director General in the Attorney General Office before entering parliament, while U Nanda Kyaw Zwa,

deputy speaker of *Pyithu Hluttaw*, was an advocate with Myanmar's Supreme Court.<sup>12</sup>

Committees are central to the workings of legislative bodies throughout the world. Whoever chairs these parliamentary committees therefore potentially holds considerable authority over policy and law-making. According to the 2008 Constitution, only four committees are required to be formed in each house when the Union parliament first convenes (articles 115a and 147a). These four committees — crucial to the basic functioning of the legislature — are the Bill Committee, the Public Accounts Committee, the Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee, and the *Hluttaw* Rights Committee (Kean 2014, pp. 50–51). All other committees are created — and dissolved, or merged — by the two speakers, according to the policy matters they intend to focus on during each plenary session of their own house. The number of committees thus fluctuates from session to session.

Besides the four initially sanctioned by the constitution, eight other committees were created in *Amyotha Hluttaw* at the start of the second plenary session in August 2011.<sup>13</sup> The formation of nineteen new committees in *Pyithu Hluttaw* was announced by Thura U Shwe Mann at the same time.<sup>14</sup> In early 2015, there were forty-one committees and three joint-committees in the Union parliament. It is the privilege of the Speakers to appoint the chairs and members of these committees, although the position of secretary is routinely left to the consideration of the newly appointed Chair. For instance, Aung San Suu Kyi, Chair of *Pyithu Hluttaw*'s Rule of Law and Tranquillity Committee since its creation in July 2012, has proposed U Win Myint, a NLD veteran politician and

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<sup>12</sup> U Nanda Kyaw Zwa however comes from a prominent military family. His father, Brigadier Tin Pe was a member of Ne Win's Revolutionary Council in the early 1960s. Discussion with author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

<sup>13</sup> *The New Light of Myanmar*, "Second Regular Session of First Amyotha Hluttaw Held for the First Day", 23 August 2011, p. 9.

<sup>14</sup> *The New Light of Myanmar*, "Second Regular Session of First Pyithu Hluttaw goes on for 11th Day", 6 September 2011, pp. 8–9.

former lawyer as Secretary of that committee.<sup>15</sup> Committee members are appointed for one year, but their appointment is renewable. Each committee usually comprises fifteen members. Committee membership seems quite fluid, although the most prominent members and chairs have usually held their positions for several years.<sup>16</sup> A legislator may also be a member of several committees.

In the lower house, a substantial majority of these committees happened to be chaired by former *Tatmadaw* officers: eighteen out of twenty-four (as of early 2015). Two of the four constitutionally-mandated committees are chaired by military retirees: the Government's Guarantee, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee by U Win Sein, a former SPDC Deputy Minister of Immigration and retired brigadier, while the Public Accounts Committee is chaired by an ex-army colonel and former SPDC Deputy Minister for National Planning, U Thu Rein Zaw. Ex-army colonel U Maung Toe, a DSA graduate, is the secretary of the latter committee.<sup>17</sup> Several heavyweights from the USDP also chair other committees in the lower house. Prominent among them is the new Vice Chairman of the party, ex-major general U Htay Oo, who presides over the Committee on Fundamental Rights, Democratic Rights and Human Rights of Citizens. Retired Brigadier U Maung Maung Thein, also a member of the party's central executive committee until his demotion in August 2015, chairs the Committee on Economic and Commerce Development. A former mayor of Yangon, ex-brigadier U Aung Thein Lin heads the Committee on Reforms, Modernization and Development.

A handful of former cabinet ministers of the junta before it was disbanded in 2011 are also committee chairs in the lower house. U Maung Oo, a retired major-general, was the powerful Minister of Home Affairs of the SPDC for seven years (2004–10). He now chairs the Public

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<sup>15</sup> Discussion between author and members of this committee, Nay Pyi Taw, April 2015.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Secretary of the *Hluttaw* Rights Committee in the lower house, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, August 2013.

Administration Committee. The latter's secretary is also a former army colonel, U Tin Maung Oo, who has recently attempted to set up a more coordinated, yet informal, gathering of retired officers in parliament. The Chair of the Population and Social Development Committee in the lower house is ex-major general U Maung Swe, who is also the former SPDC Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (2006–2010). Ex-brigadier U Tin Htut, who was Minister for Cooperatives until 2010, chairs the Committee on Farmers, Workers and Youth Affairs.

A controversial figure recently placed by Washington on the sanctions blacklist for his alleged links to communal, anti-opposition violence as well as corruption was ex-colonel Aung Thaung (an OTS graduate) who was until his death in Singapore in July 2015 the Chair of the Banks and Monetary Development Committee.<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, his family has supposedly been involved in extensive banking undertakings throughout Myanmar: his son for instance owns the United Amara Bank.<sup>19</sup> Both the chair and secretary of the Committee on Transport, Communication and Construction are also ex-army officers, respectively U Thein Swe, a DSA graduate, and U Myo Swe, an OTS graduate. Lastly, although military retirees from the infantry appear more numerous in *Pyithu Hluttaw*, a few navy commanders have been appointed to key committee positions. U Hla Myint Oo, who joined the Navy in 1963, is the Chair of the International Relations Committee, and a special advisor on foreign affairs to the Speaker, U Shwe Mann (whom he accompanies on each of his diplomatic trips abroad).<sup>20</sup> The former Commander-in-Chief of the Navy in the 2000s, U Kyi Min, heads the Committee on Waterways Transport and Development. The committee's secretary is U Aye Pe, another former navy commander who retired after 39 years in the navy.

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<sup>18</sup> *Agence France Presse*, "US Blacklists Influential Myanmar Lawmaker Aung Thaung", 31 October 2014; *New York Times*, "U Aung Thaung, Burmese Politician Accused of Abuses, Dies at 74", 23 July 2015.

<sup>19</sup> *The Irrawaddy*, "Germany Receives US blacklisted MP for Financial Tour", 21 April 2015.

<sup>20</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, April 2015.

He was elected in 2010 from the small constituency consisting of the Preparis and Coco Islands in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>21</sup>

Far more diversity can be observed in the upper house. Only three ex-generals sit there, including the Speaker, U Khin Aung Myint. An OTS graduate, he is the most senior of the military retirees in *Amyotha Hluttaw*, and was thus logically elected to be the Speaker of the chamber in January 2011. The two other retired brigadiers chair respectively the Committee on Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting (U Aung Tun, DSA-16) and the Committee on Monetary and Taxation Affairs (U San Tun, a former head of the Northern Military Command based in Myitkyina, Kachin State). Interestingly, U San Tun occupies concomitantly another crucial position, that of Secretary of the Bill Committee of the upper house.

Among the lower ranks, U Aung Nyein (DSA-15), an ex-colonel, chairs *Amyotha Hluttaw*'s Public Complaints and Petitions Committee, while U Win Naung, another former army colonel who was, among other posts, commander of Mingaladon military base in northern Yangon before 2010, leads the committee on Farmers' Affairs. U Nyunt Tin, who retired from the Air Force in 1989 before entering a second career as a diplomat in the 1990s, succeeded in 2013 as the sole active duty military officer in parliament who had ever chaired a committee (Colonel Maung Maung Htoo). He chaired the International Relations Committee.<sup>22</sup> U Hla Swe, a vocal MP from Magwe who retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2004, acts as Secretary of the Mining and Natural Resources Committee.<sup>23</sup> Only a third of the eighteen committees of the upper house are chaired by legislators with a military background, a far smaller share than in the lower house.

The fact that retired military officers and former SPDC ministers have secured disproportionate control over the chairmanship of key parliamentary committees in the full Union legislature — more notably

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<sup>21</sup> *Myanmar Times*, “In Coco Islands, Voters to Choose from a Handful of Candidates”, 4 October 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

in the lower house — reflects the relative strengths that members of the previous regime’s nomenclature have continued to uphold after 2010. It indeed gives the general impression that whoever has counted in a recent past (right before 2010) — and still aims to remain influential in the near future — had to be appointed as committee chair to retain some influence over the legislative process, as well as a certain status and prestige in society. It also illustrates the crucial influence the two parliaments’ speakers hold. Both appear to have used their institutional prerogative powers to create committees, and appoint as their chairs the legislators who could remain loyal to them. Patronage has indeed long been one of the key features of Myanmar’s political life. Patrons reward their clients and followers, who in turn support them however they can. Beyond the loyalty expected from retired soldiers towards not only the military institution but also its former commanders, the nomination of a large number of high-ranking *Tatmadaw* retirees as committee chairs could also be interpreted as an attempt by the two speakers to balance power within the house, and thus ensure a sort of political equilibrium among powerful, egotistic, and potentially rival figures.

Lastly, it is worth noting that besides their functions as committee chair or secretary, several prominent retired military officers turned legislators have been appointed to Union-level parliamentary delegations or commissions since 2011. Two of them were for instance part of the first negotiations attempted by Thein Sein’s government with the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) soon after war broke out in the northern parts of the country in June 2011. U Aung Thaung was an ex-colonel and U Thein Zaw is a retired brigadier.<sup>24</sup> Given his notorious reputation and the reluctance of the Kachin leadership to continue the peace talks with him on board, U Aung Thaung was removed a few months later from the twelve-member Union Level Peace Committee.<sup>25</sup> A handful of the older military retirees in parliament, who had left the armed forces in the 1980s and 1990s, were also involved in the drafting of the 2008

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<sup>24</sup> *Mizzima*, “KIO, Union-level Peacemaking Group to Talk”, 20 December 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with a member of this first delegation, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

constitution as members of the National Convention. U Kyaw Din, a former police officer who happens to be the oldest representative in the full *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* elected in 2010, was already a member of the first National Convention that convened between 1993 and 1996. U Khin Aung Myint was the Joint-Secretary of the second National Convention that was organized by the SPDC between 2004 and 2007. U Nyunt Tin, U Win Naung and Dr Mya Oo, a retired army doctor (all three sitting in the upper house) as well as U Than Myint, an OTS graduate, and U Saw Ba Thein, an ethnic Kayin who has retired from the Air Force (both sitting in the lower house), were also members of the second National Convention. Several of them were appointed to the two successive parliamentary committees tasked by U Shwe Mann to outline a potential reform of the 2008 Constitution in 2013. A 109-member committee was formed in July 2013, and reduced to a thirty-one-member group in February 2014. Notable among them is U Nyunt Tin (DSA-7), chair of *Amyotha Hluttaw's* International Relations Committee.<sup>26</sup> All of this therefore seems to be a clear indication of where power lies in the upper levels of the first post-SPDC Union parliament.

## **TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF THEIR LEGISLATIVE BEHAVIOUR**

As the literature on legislative politics has long highlighted, parliamentarians perform an array of activities while in assembly. They draft, discuss, and comment on bills, they table motions, they formulate questions for the relevant authorities (usually the representatives of the executive branch), they scrutinize budgets and white papers, they network, build and re-build voting coalitions, and they conduct investigations. By identifying behavioural differences in parliament, scholars of legislative affairs can make distinctions among several types of legislators, according to the level, depth, objective and value of the legislative activity of the MPs (Wahlke et al. 1962; Hopkins 1970). Drawing on a series of recent personal interviews, as well as an initial analysis of individual legislative

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<sup>26</sup> Discussion with author, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

activities performed by MPs in Myanmar’s current Union legislature, I have identified three types of parliamentarians for this research on “retired military officers”. Subjectively, one can categorize these as the reluctant MP, the dutiful MP and the high-flying MP. The differences between these types are broadly based on the level of their respective public engagement, the effort displayed in performing their legislative activities while in assembly and outside, their perceived influence within the house, how they perceive their own jobs — a novel occupation for all of them — as well as their immediate and long-term political goals. It should be noted, however, that these are only emerging patterns observed in the first post-SPDC legislature (2010–15); these patterns and the categorization drawn may not be seen in upcoming legislatures.

### *The Reluctant MP*

Reluctant MPs are chiefly drawn from older groups of MPs who have unenthusiastically embraced legislative life in 2010. As interviews have revealed, dozens of former civil servants, university lecturers, retired bureaucrats and administrators were promptly co-opted in 2010 by the USDP — and to a marginal extent by other political parties, including ethnic-based ones — to be national and local electoral candidates who would compete in the 2010 polls.<sup>27</sup> Despite their advanced age — the oldest civilian MP in parliament was born in 1931 — most were persuaded to serve for one legislative term, apparently to ensure a smooth and pacified transition from the military-run SPDC in 2010 to the second “post-junta” legislature to convene after the general elections scheduled for 2015.

Among them are several military retirees. Most had left the armed forces several years — if not decades — ago, but were nonetheless asked to perform one last “tour of duty” as civilian legislators in the first transitional parliament that was slated to emerge at the end of the SPDC’s seven-step road map. “We were told to fill the gaps”, recalled a

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with a 73-year old retired bureaucrat and member of the lower house, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.



retired lieutenant colonel who joined the USDP just a few months before the 2010 polls, “... and prepare for the next generation [of legislators] in parliament”.<sup>28</sup> From the moment they ran for office in 2010 they knew it was the last run of their career, and that they had to perform one last “mission” for the state. Some of these legislators have not even tried to hide the fact that they entered parliament reluctantly. Session after session, the share of absentees in both houses has increased considerably — up to a third of both assemblies during the 12th parliamentary session that started in January 2015.<sup>29</sup> Incidentally, these half-hearted MPs have seldom been assigned to prominent legislative committees; none appears to have been nominated as chair or secretary. Passive lawmakers, they seldom (if ever) propose draft bills; their inputs during legislative debates are minimal; they rarely table motions or ask questions during plenary sessions and they do not interact with journalists.

But they are there, as loyal backbenchers, in case they are needed by their party — the USDP, chiefly — on a specific vote. “We are the emergency people”, a legislator from the upper house laughed, underlining the experience and loyalty *Tatmadaw* retirees are assumed to have gained in the past, especially if they have joined a ministerial cabinet or a local administration right after their retirement from the armed forces in the 1990s or 2000s, before being elected to parliament in 2010.<sup>30</sup> They joined the parliament, because they were told to do so, and remain above all, loyal soldiers, despite having retired. Political clientelism and the politics of patronage are pervasive in contemporary Myanmar. The patron-client system remains the dominant model of social interactions and political governance. Every Myanmar individual seems to respect and owe allegiance to a “saya”, or teacher, master,

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<sup>28</sup> Discussion with author, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

<sup>29</sup> *Democratic Voice of Burma*, “Shwe Mann Scolds Absent MPs”, 17 February 2015. When the *Pyidaungsu Hluttaw* was convened to vote on the first ever amendment bill for the 2008 Constitution on 24 June 2015, 583 Union-level MPs showed up — out of 664 seats (including 31 vacant seats): see Xinhua. “Voting Results of Myanmar’s Constitution Amendment Bill comes no Surprise: Aung San Suu Kyi”, 25 June 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Discussion with author, Yangon, February 2015.

even “boss”. In the army, at the university, in ministerial cabinets, or in Buddhist monastic schools, ordinary Myanmar citizens appear to selectively recognize the authority (or *awza* in Myanmar) of a handful of individuals. Many *Tatmadaw* retirees who became legislators in 2010 have indeed told me that upon retirement from the armed forces (and sometimes many years after), their “*saya*” — whoever that person was — called on them and asked for their support and continuing service “for the nation”. As a former army lieutenant colonel and DSA graduate recounted, one of his “*saya*” (without naming him) happened to be a leader of a USDP branch in his hometown in a rural constituency near Bago. The *saya* strongly encouraged him to run for office in 2010 — an injunction a client (or *tapyi*, “student” in Burmese) could not refuse his local patron. The military retiree, an ethnic Bamar, enrolled for the first time in a political party (the USDP) and was subsequently elected to the upper house in November 2010, eight years after he had left the infantry.<sup>31</sup> However, one can expect that the number of “reluctant MPs” will shrink in upcoming legislatures. With regular and reasonably free and fair elections, and a more open political society expected to grow in Myanmar, less control by the powers that be will be exerted on who enters politics, and particularly the legislature. It can be assumed that in the near future, most electoral candidates will really want to become MPs, unlike in the 2010 polls.

### *The Dutiful MP*

Several Union-level legislators with military background meet the criteria of what can be categorized as a “dutiful” legislator. Not as reluctant to perform the various duties imposed by regular legislative work as the “reluctant” MPs, the dutiful parliamentarian displays more energy in his daily life as a “lawmaker”. He is often a member of significant parliamentary committees, even a secretary or a chair. For instance, both U Hla Myint Oo (a former Navy officer) and U Nyunt Tin (a former Air Force officer), display similar high ranking profiles. When they were elected as USDP lawmakers in 2010, they entered the third leg

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<sup>31</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

of their public careers, after having first retired from the armed forces — respectively in 1979 and 1989 — and then from state diplomacy (both were ambassadors of their country in the 1990s).<sup>32</sup> As experienced retired officers in their seventies, with extensive bureaucratic experience, they were appointed committee chairs in their respective assemblies. U Hla Myint Oo chairs the International Relations committee of the lower house. U Nyunt Tin was first nominated as the Chair of *Amyotha Hluttaw*'s committee on ASEAN Politics and Security and then of its International Relations Committee.

This category of “dutiful” MPs regularly asks questions during sessions and ostensibly devotes a large part of their time securing benefits for the constituency they represent. While initially requested to join their respective party and run for office — often without much of a choice — the dutiful MP appears to take great care in performing appropriately his new legislative functions, with a clear sense of duty: duty towards his bosses (or *saya*), but also duty towards the state, or sometimes only his own community in the case of non-Bamar legislators. This is indeed the case for military retirees with an ethnic background who left the *Tatmadaw* two or three decades ago. For instance, U Paw Hlyan Lwin, an ethnic Chin and retired navy corporal, is one of the founders of the Chin Progressive Party (CPP). He chose to enter electoral politics in 2010 so that “the Chin people can be heard in parliament”.<sup>33</sup> He was among the first Union-level opposition legislators who were daring enough to ask questions during the first plenary session in March 2011.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, U Thar Sein, a Rakhine MP and former navy lieutenant commander who retired from the *Tatmadaw* in 1980, has also developed the same line of argument: “I’m Rakhine! I want to fight for my people”.<sup>35</sup> He represents the constituency of Kyauktaw in northern Rakhine State — a sensitive area affected by communal riots in 2012.

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<sup>32</sup> Discussion with author, in Nay Pyi Taw, February and April 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

<sup>34</sup> *New Light of Myanmar*, “Proposal to Upgrade Gangaw-Yezwa Road Approved”, 15 March 2011, p. 11.

<sup>35</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

An ethnic Danu and former army lieutenant colonel also recalled that, as a former member of the *Tatmadaw*, he was convinced by his own “*saya*” to also compete for a legislative seat in his own hometown, back in 2010.<sup>36</sup> After having been “encouraged” to retire from the army in 1994 at only forty-three years old, he joined the administration of a ministry in Yangon for a period of ten years. Yet, as the only ex-*Tatmadaw* senior officer of Danu origin, he was expected to act as a reliable and faithful mediator between the local powers (the USDP and the military) and the Danu constituents long after retiring. Since being elected in 2010, he proudly claims that he has relentlessly sought to defend the economic and social interests of his native place, facilitating the construction of roads, schools and Buddhist monasteries and even regularly sponsoring pilgrimages of prominent monks from his constituency to Bodhgaya, the crucible of Buddhism in India.

Many among these “dutiful” legislators have even started to enjoy their new post-retirement occupations, which they seek to perform obediently so as to gain (or regain) a higher status in society, especially at the constituency level. Negative perceptions of the *Tatmadaw* abound throughout Myanmar, and the social and civic engagement of retired officers, especially those of low and middle-level ranks, is often construed as a way for them to repair a bad reputation, while remaining loyal. Most will thus potentially look for re-elections, in 2015 and beyond. For a handful of them, the military career, the discipline and sense of duty they have learned while in army ranks have also been a key asset. As underlined by U Aung San, who graduated from the fifth DSA intake and now sits for the National Democratic Force (NDF) in Yangon’s regional *Hluttaw*:

... we have the will to serve our country, so long as our health and our chance continue. Before, we were soldiers; our mindset was to work for our country. [Upon retirement] in any position we are, we serve for the country.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Interviewed by author, Yangon, February 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Discussion in English with author, Yangon, March 2015.

### *The High-flying MP*

Finally, there are the “high-flying” legislators, those who boast burning political ambitions and consider their contribution to Myanmar’s public life as indispensable. After initial scepticism in 2011, Myanmar’s parliament has become a place to be, and a place to be seen in. A handful of retired military officers choose to portray themselves as proactive policy actors, “working for the good of the nation” — and that of their constituents. Some look for prestige and social status, and consider the legislature as a springboard for higher long-term personal plans. They display strong enthusiasm and activity during plenary sessions, and during closed doors committee debates. They ask questions, almost on a daily basis, including on matters concerning society at large, and not only their own constituency. They regularly prepare draft bills, act as party whip and are in a position to call the shots in the parliamentary committees they commonly chair, or in which they serve as secretary.

The two speakers, U Shwe Mann in the lower house and U Khin Aung Myint in the upper house, fall into this category. U Shwe Mann had, very early in the day, announced his willingness to run for Presidency after 2015.<sup>38</sup> Until his removal in August 2015 from the central committee of his party, the USDP, many commentators have underscored how he has successfully taken control of the parliament and the legislative agenda — especially when he was appointed speaker for the combined Union (upper and lower house) legislature in August 2013 (ICG 2013; Kean 2014; Egretau 2014b). U Shwe Mann has not only given strong policy impetus to parliament, he has also skilfully played his political cards and extended his own networks of loyalties there.<sup>39</sup> U Khin Aung Myint, although a much more unassuming political figure, has also given the impression of gradually consolidating his hold on the upper house, where controversial legislations and proposals openly known to be discarded by

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<sup>38</sup> See, among others, *The Irrawaddy*, “House Speaker Shwe Mann Airs Presidential Ambitions”, 7 June 2013; and Gwen Robinson, “The Contenders”, *Foreign Policy*, 12 July 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Tim McLaughlin, “All the Speaker’s Men”, *Myanmar Times*, 10 April 2014.

Thein Sein's cabinet, tend to be first discussed.<sup>40</sup> This has been especially evident in the run-up to the 2015 polls.<sup>41</sup>

Several military retirees controlling important committees also fit into this category of vocal and active frontbenchers. Among the most powerful cadres of the USDP, a few have appeared to be successfully defending their own interests and clientele while in assembly. The late U Aung Thuang, for example, chaired the committee on banks and monetary affairs in the lower house, while his family is allegedly involved in extensive banking operations.<sup>42</sup> Among retired officers of lower ranks, one legislator in the upper house best epitomizes the “high-flying” type. U Hla Swe, an ex-infantry lieutenant-colonel elected from Magwe region is a blunt, vocal, and outspoken MP. A combat soldier, he spent his army career almost entirely in the frontline, after graduating from the “Teza” military instructional programme (which is neither the prestigious DSA nor the OTS). Since becoming an MP in the upper house, he has tabled a large number of motions and has proudly asked several questions a week since the first session was convened in 2011.<sup>43</sup> He frequently gives interviews to local and foreign journalists, obviously wanting and enjoying being seen as one of the most active MPs in the house. He was even nicknamed ‘Bullet Hla Swe’ for his bluntness in parliament, in particular during debates on the Kachin conflict.<sup>44</sup> He has often openly criticized the government, and even the armed forces, for not adequately addressing the controversial issue of land grabbing that has long been denied by the *Tatmadaw* hierarchy. One can thus expect these prominent high-flyers to run for re-elections, or to be in a position to capture key executive positions after 2015.

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<sup>40</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, August 2013.

<sup>41</sup> Larry Jagan, “Myanmar’s Ruling Party Prepares to go to the Polls”, *Bangkok Post*, 29 May 2015.

<sup>42</sup> *Myanmar Times*, “Parliament Objects to New US Sanctions”, 17 November 2014.

<sup>43</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

<sup>44</sup> *Myanmar Times*, “‘Kachin Ben Laden’ Threatens Myanmar MP”, 23 February 2013.

## INTERACTIONS WITH THE *TATMADAW*'S PARLIAMENTARY BLOC

How independent are the retired officers of a military institution for which they had been working for years? And how loyal are they to the new generations of active duty officers who succeeded them?

The *Tatmadaw*, thanks to the 2008 Constitution, still keeps a large number of policy preserves, even in the Union parliament where it enjoys 166 reserved seats in both houses. What kinds of interactions have the retired officers who were elected MPs in 2010 developed with active duty military MPs seconded to the legislature at the same time? Early critics of the resurgence of Myanmar's parliamentary system after the controversial elections in 2010 have often assumed that the USDP and its 330-odd Union-level parliamentarians would work hand-in-hand with these appointed military delegates. After all, "we come from the same boat", laughed a retired colonel elected in one of Yangon's northern constituencies.<sup>45</sup>

Yet, it very much seems that this has not been the case. The appointed active duty officers in the Union parliament are far more junior to the retired officers sitting in the house located in Nay Pyi Taw. Many of the military retirees stem from very early DSA or OTS batches and were commissioned officers decades ago, back in the 1960s and 1970s. For instance, U Thaug, a former army lieutenant colonel representing the constituency of Kyaukse in the lower house, is a graduate from the DSA's first intake (1955–59).<sup>46</sup> Incidentally, he entered the military academy the year the highest-ranking military MP appointed in 2011 to the upper house was born.<sup>47</sup> The military delegates in both houses are indeed on average in their mid-forties (as of 2015), and therefore fifteen to thirty years younger than most of the retired officers sitting in the same assemblies.

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<sup>45</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

<sup>46</sup> As was Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, the former number two in the SPDC hierarchy.

<sup>47</sup> As of early 2015, there were four brigadiers in each house. All other military MPs were of lower ranks.

A lieutenant colonel who left the army in 1994 has argued that despite the generational gap, there is mutual respect between retired and active duty officers in parliament.<sup>48</sup> But, as underlined by another retired officer (who now represents a rural constituency north of Bago), discussions among them are seldom carried out outside the legislature premises. Active duty *Tatmadaw* officers have long formed an isolated elite in postcolonial Myanmar. Military delegates in parliament normally go back to their military life once the plenary session ends, as well as after each day of legislative debates.<sup>49</sup> They seldom attend workshops and capacity-training offered to all MPs by local or international organizations in Nay Pyi Taw or Yangon.<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, opportunities for civilian MPs to establish close working relationships with military MPs are quite rare, unless there is a strong family connection, or a very close personal friendship that existed before their entrance into parliament. Only in the parliament's halls and corridors, in the library or restaurants, in closed-door committee rooms can an informal dialogue be established between civilian and military legislators. The latter also seem to follow only their respective "whips" in the two houses (the eight brigadiers and high-ranking active officers). As a parliamentary bloc, military delegates have never attempted to build voting coalitions within the house. They have neither negotiated political partnerships nor bargained on legislative deals with other civilian MPs, including the retired army officers of the USDP.<sup>51</sup> The Ministry of Defence is crystal clear on that point and likes to reiterate that the *Tatmadaw* must not be involved in "party politics", but only in "national politics". Therefore military parliamentarians should not settle deals, bargain votes or draft common bills with representatives of political parties, even if

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<sup>48</sup> Interviewed by author, Yangon, February 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Discussion between author and members of the USAID-funded Parliamentary Resources Centre, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

<sup>51</sup> For more details, see Renaud Egretteau, "Military Delegates in Myanmar's Union Legislature", *ISEAS Perspective 2015, no. 21* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2015).



they share a common goal and similar military backgrounds.<sup>52</sup> The same pattern can be observed in the 14 provincial assemblies. As the Speaker of Yangon's regional parliament — himself a former army colonel — recently underscored, once one leaves the armed forces, one no longer controls or influences the behaviour of active officers.<sup>53</sup> The *Tatmadaw* functions as a separate entity distinct from other civilian institutions, including the local and national legislative bodies on which it keeps an eye in the post-2010 system.

Yet, old soldiers never die, as the saying goes. One could thus presume that, as former members of an institution that has been built on discipline, loyalty, and cohesiveness, ex-military officers continue to display similar behaviour once retired, and that they are expected to remain loyal to the armed forces long after they have left the institution. However, the literature on civil-military relations has frequently emphasized the key role that former army officers have in the criticism, and even opposition, to the policies and strategies of their successors — in democracies and military regimes alike. Retired generals, such as Fidel Ramos in the Philippines, have led the opposition to military rule and facilitated various processes of democratic transition (Gloria 2003). Others have acted as powerful critics to the defence policies and strategic perceptions shaped by civilian-led governments (Corbett and Davidson 2010; O'Brien and Diamant 2015). Recent interviews I have conducted in Nay Pyi Taw have as a matter of fact revealed that a quiet criticism of the past, and careful denunciations of the *Tatmadaw*'s misdeeds, have been increasingly allowed in Myanmar's parliament. Former officers turned legislators have publicly stood against what they perceive as wrongdoings allegedly covered up in the recent past by the armed forces. It is as if they were vested in distinguishing themselves from the misguided previous military regimes — that of General Ne Win (1962–88) and of the junta that ruled between 1988 and 2011. Land-grabbing

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<sup>52</sup> Interview conducted in the Ministry of Defence, by author, Nay Pyi Taw, February 2015.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with U Sein Tin Win, Speaker of Yangon's *Hluttaw*, by author, Yangon, March 2015.

by the *Tatmadaw* has even become an issue routinely discussed in both chambers of the Union parliament since 2012, although the military MPs and the Defence Ministry have proved increasingly uncomfortable with the insistence of some elected representatives on the issue, including ex-soldiers.<sup>54</sup> Among others, U Hla Swe, an outspoken ex-army lieutenant colonel and representative for Gangtaw (Magwe Region), was appointed in 2012 as chair of the land-grab investigation parliamentary commission. He has himself daringly pointed out some manifest land grab operations by local army battalions standing in his own constituency — and he is obviously proud of highlighting the *Tatmadaw*'s misdeeds.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, one could expect a certain level of understanding between ex-high-ranking officers and their active duty successors — at least on the continuing policy role of the *Tatmadaw* in the post-SPDC hybrid political system, as well as on future constitutional reforms. None of the retired officers interviewed in the house since 2014, while acknowledging the political sensitivity of the presence of the *Tatmadaw* in parliament, has appeared inclined to either challenge the legislative intrusion of the military, or support a quick withdrawal of its appointed delegates from the Union parliament any time soon. Many have however repeatedly brought into the discussion the example of post-Suharto Indonesia, where the number of military representatives in parliament was gradually reduced from the late 1990s onwards and finally fully withdrawn in 2004 (Mietzner 2009). They frequently argue that this could be a model for Myanmar to follow, though at a later stage in the ongoing transition.

## AN EMERGING LEGISLATIVE ELITE?

Theories on legislative studies suggest that there are many incentives for legislators presenting similar profiles and policy preferences to form

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<sup>54</sup> See, for instance, *Mizzima*, “*Tatmadaw* Apologises for Land Grab”, 6 February 2015; and *Myanmar Times*, “Hilton, Max hotels Benefit from Military Land Grab”, 23 April 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Interviewed by author, Nay Pyi Taw, January 2014.

cohesive parliamentary sub-groups, including within the ranks of their own political parties. Have retired *Tatmadaw* officers been able to build a particularly cohesive legislative force in the *hluttaws* since 2011? Do they present the characteristics of an emerging parliamentary elite, distinct from other elected legislators, those who do not have a military background as well as from the more junior military officers seconded to the parliament?

Most of the interviews I recently collected have pointed to a lack of cohesion among former high-ranking soldiers in the first post-junta legislature. No informal sub-group of ex-officers-turned-lawmakers, has been created in parliament. It was only in early 2015, during the 12th plenary session that a former army colonel in the lower house attempted to organize such an informal gathering of ex-*Tatmadaw* officers for the first time. But the gathering was only organized to solicit donations from them.<sup>56</sup> The *Tatmadaw* had indeed suffered heavy casualties since the Kokang conflict broke out in the northern territories in February 2015. Money was collected and sent to families of soldiers who were killed or wounded during the *Tatmadaw* offensive against the Kokang militia. That was, apparently, the first time such an initiative specially designed by and for retired officers who are MPs was held inside (and even outside) the Union parliament.

The ex-military officers turned legislators do not seem to have shaped a broad, cohesive, and well-organized “lobby” in parliament, at least in this first post-SPDC Union legislature (2010–15). Initial findings show rather that it is the party — the USDP essentially — that serves as the core venue for discussion and debate on legislation and policy choices. It is the pressures from the party that appear to produce cohesion and discipline among MPs, and not their own belonging to a broad network of ex-military men.<sup>57</sup> Factionalism has certainly emerged within the ranks of the USDP though, particularly around charismatic political

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with a former navy commander by author, Nay Pyi Taw, April 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with a member of the USDP’s central committee, by author, Nay Pyi Taw, July 2014.

figures such as the two speakers, Thura U Shwe Mann and U Khin Aung Myint; and around other heavyweights of the party's central executive committee: U Htay Oo, U Thein Swe and U Thein Zaw.<sup>58</sup> However, the loose fragmentation into party "factions" is based more on personal relationships and the traditional patron-client system that has long prevailed in Myanmar society, than anything else.

Being drawn from army ranks thus does not seem to be a sufficient condition to capture power and political influence in the current legislature. One needs first and foremost a long association with the functional machine that has been the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA, formed in 1993) well before it was transformed into a political party (the USDP) in 2010.<sup>59</sup> The most influential elected legislators in both houses indeed appear to have all been involved in the emergence of the USDA in the mid-1990s. This seems to be one of the reasons why one finds many powerful ex-colonels or lieutenant colonels who retired from the *Tatmadaw* some twenty to twenty-five years ago, in key parliamentary positions, assigned to the most significant committees and tasked to perform critical political negotiations on behalf of the speaker, in comparison with higher ranking retired officers (ex-generals) who may have retired only recently and were not involved in USDA politics. Political patronage and personal loyalties are thus essential in parliament as well as in Myanmar's politics in general, far more than having belonged to an exclusive network of retired military officers that would rely only on connections established during their own careers in the armed forces.

Yet, one cannot exclude the gradual shaping of a specific profile of Myanmar parliamentarians to be reckoned with in upcoming legislatures; that of the ex-army officers aiming to defend the autonomy of the civilian and political spheres from the armed forces, and even potentially assert

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<sup>58</sup> Larry Jagan, "Myanmar's Ruling Party Prepares to go to the Polls", *Bangkok Post*, 29 May 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with a retired lieutenant colonel, by author, Yangon, February 2015.

themselves as powerful and legitimate opponents to the SPDC-linked nomenclature.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, the secondment of active and retired officers to administrative functions has been the norm since Ne Win's regime, and this feature will hardly change overnight. Since the 1990s, the number of high-ranking officers in the *Tatmadaw* has increased considerably. The need to provide them with appropriate occupations once retired is therefore particularly challenging in the post-junta context (Steinberg 2014, p. 54). The military retirees form a cohort of relatively well educated elite that enjoys more or less extensive networks of political affinities. Despite the "glasnost" moment and the opening up of Myanmar society since 2011, this military-linked elite is still not matched by an equivalent civilian elite holding key administrative functions. The potential challenge from the handful of high-profile Myanmar individuals trained in the West who have returned from exile since 2011 is also unlikely to be manifested; though some now hold high-level government positions. Most Myanmar youths with international degrees and foreign experience are attracted to the local non-governmental organization (NGO) or international non-governmental organization (INGO) community, or to the booming private sector. Thus, military retirees will likely continue to fill the gap and occupy key bureaucratic and political functions in the near future.

## CONCLUSION

Although forming only a minority in the house — less than 12 per cent of the elected representatives of the Union legislature — retired military officers have been able to exercise disproportionate control over most positions of legislative authority. The two speakerships, as well as a substantial number of committee chairs and secretaries have military background. This remains a key indication of where power lies in the upper levels of the Union legislature. It also reflects a general pattern

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<sup>60</sup> Aung San Suu Kyi herself yearns for such pragmatic figures drawn from army ranks: *Financial Times*, "Myanmar: Suu Kyi Search for 'One Brave Soldier'", 8 February 2015.

observed since the *Tatmadaw* took power some five decades ago. Most top-level positions in the state and local administrations as well as governing institutions have long been occupied by active or retired military officers.

However, retired officers in the house do not form a cohesive group. They appear to have worked on different policy choices since the *hluttaws* first convened in 2011. Interviews have also revealed that they have construed their relationships to the executive authority differently, while cultivating different forms of interactions with the present *Tatmadaw* — including its appointed parliamentary delegates.

It is the party they belong to, as well as personal relationships based on patronage networks and political clientelism, which has so far built cohesion among them, rather their individual military background and a shared past in the armed forces. Yet, as they still form a vast pool of loyal and relatively well-educated bureaucrats, Burmese military retirees are expected to remain a political force. The elections scheduled for late 2015 will offer a first indication of whether they can continue to form a significant category of political actors in the house, one that may still prove to be heterogeneous, but not necessarily aligned with the policy preferences outlined by the new generations of military leaders — or that of the opposition led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

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## Appendix 1

### Selected Backgrounds of Retired Military Officers in Amyotha Hluttaw

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Selected Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U Tin Myint	Nil	Lt-Colonel	Army (1962–85), BSPP member, Chair Dike-U Township Council (1985–88). Brought up in Dike-U.	USDP	Bago-03 (Dike-U)	Bamar	Buddhist	1934
U Ye Myint	DSA-17	Lt-Colonel	Army 1976–2002, DG at Ministry of Information (2002–08). Native of Nyaunglebin.	USDP	Bago-04 (Nyaunglebin & Kyauktaga)	Bamar	Buddhist	1953
U Myint Tun	DSA-13	Lt-Colonel	Army 1971–2001, then DG of Fire Services Department, Yangon until 2010.	USDP	Bago-10	Bamar	Buddhist	1950
U Aung Nyein	DSA-15	Colonel	Army 1973–2005. Director Printing & Publishing at the Ministry of Information (2005–10).	USDP	Magwe-02	Bamar	Buddhist	1951

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*Appendix 1 — cont'd*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Selected Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Aung Tun	DSA-16	Brig-General	SPDC Deputy Minister of Commerce 2003–10.	USDP	Magwe-11	Bamar	Buddhist	1952
U Hla Swe	Teza	Lt-Colonel	Nickname “Bullet”. Army 1976–2004. DG at Ministry of Information 2004–07 (Minister’s office, then Myanmar Radio-TV), Gangfaw PDC.	USDP	Magwe-12	Bamar	Buddhist	1960
U Tin Maung Win	DSA-7	Lt-Colonel	Chairman District LORC, District PDC. Local patron of USDA-USDP.	USDP	Mandalay-03	Bamar	Buddhist	1944
U Khin Aung Myint	OTS-40 (1970)	Major-General	SPDC Minister of Culture (2006–10), Joint-Secretary of National Convention II (2004–07). Director Public Relations & Psychological Warfare, ex-Commander of Min. of Defence Compound (Ministry Defence, 1997–2006).	USDP	Mandalay-08 (Yamethin-Pyawbwe)	Bamar	Buddhist	1946
U Soe Thet	?	Colonel	?	USDP	Tanintharyi-01	Bamar	Buddhist	1955

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Selected Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Nyunt Tin	DSA-7	Lt-Colonel	Air Force (1961–89), Ambassador (Indonesia, France, Canada), MISIS Secretary from 2004. Member of National Convention II. Graduate of St-Paul's, Yangon.	USDP	Yangon-02	Bamar-Rakhine	Buddhist	1945
U Win Naung	Nil	Colonel	Commander Mingaladon Station (Yangon). Member of National Convention II	USDP	Yangon-05	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
U Paw Hlyan Lwin	Nil	Corporal	Navy 1966–85 (1st grade seaman). Jailed 1986–88. Worked at Seaman Employment Control Division, Min. of Transport (1989–2002). Native of Matupi.	CPP	Chin-09 (Matupi)	Chin	Christian	1945
U San Tun	Nil	Brigadier-General	Army 1974–2010, ex-Deputy Commander Northern Region, Myitkyina (1999–2010).	USDP	Kachin-11	Bamar	Buddhist	1951

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*Appendix 1 — cont'd*

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Selected Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U San Pyae	DSA	Colonel	Ex-Director of Military Training, Ex-Chief Trainer at Command & General Staff College, ex-DG at department of Border Trade. Brought up in Mogaung, College in Myitkyna.	USDP	Kachin-07 (Mogaung)	Bamar	Buddhist	1954
U Saw Tun Mya Aung	OTS	Lt-Colonel	Army 1968–97. General Staff Officer at Western Command (Sittwe 1994–97). Director at State Pri Yatti Sasana University (Yangon 1997–2009) and Deputy-DG at SPDC Ministry of Religious Affairs.	USDP	Kayin-05	Kayin	Buddhist	1947
U Kan Nyunt	Teza	Colonel	Honorary certificate from C-in-C in 1992. Retired from Army in August 2010. BSPP member 1974–88.	USDP	Kayin-02 (Hpa'an)	Kayin-Bamar	Buddhist	1956

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Selected Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Shu Maung	DSA-15	Lt-Colonel	Army infantry (1973–94). DG at Ministry of Forestry (1994–2004). Hotel business, owner of Nawarat Hotel (Sittwe). Native of Pindaya.	USDP	Shan-08 (Pindaya) + Head of Danu Special Zone	Danu	Buddhist	1951
Dr Mya Oo	Nil	Lt-Colonel	Army doctor. Ex-Chairman at Mingaladon Military Hospital. SPDC Deputy Minister of Health (1997–2010). Member National Convention II.	USDP	Bago-09 (Paungde, Shwedaung, Thebon)	Bamar	Buddhist	1940
U Hla Thein	Nil	Captain	Army doctor. Frontline duties LID66, LID88, LID99 and LID55. USDA Township executive. Owner of Clinic.	USDP	Mon-06	Mon	Buddhist	1949

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Appendix 1 — *cont'd*

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Selected Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U Kyaw Din	Police Academy Insein (1948)	(Pol) Lt-Colonel	Oldest MP, Chair of Kayah State Council (1974). Commander District Police in 1983–85. Retired from Police in 1985. BSPP Central Committee (1985–88). Member of National Convention I + II. Father of U Khin Maung Oo, Kayah Chief Minister (2011–15).	USDP	Kayah-02	Kayah	Buddhist	1931

Tatmadaw = 17, Medical = 2, Police = 1

**Legend:**

- BSPP = Burma Socialist Programme Party (*Lanzin*)  
 CPP = Chin Progressive Party  
 DG = Director General  
 DSA = Defence Services Academy  
 LORC = Law and Order Restoration Council  
 OTS = Officers' Training School  
 PDC = Peace and Development Council  
 Teza = School for apprentice military officers (under/officers)  
 USDP = Union Solidarity and Development Party

## Appendix 2

### *Selected Backgrounds of Retired Military Officers in Pyithu Hluttaw*

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U Htay Oo	OTS-43	Major-General	BSPP member. Commander of LID99. Southwestern Regional Commander. SG of USDA. SPDC Minister of Cooperatives (2003–04) + Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation (2004–10). Vice-Chair of USDP. Brought up in Hinthada.	USDP	Hinthada	Bamar	Buddhist	1950
U Tin Htut	OTS-29 (1963)	Brigadier-General	Commander of LID33. Commander of Eastern Regional Command + SPDC Minister of Electric Power (1997– 2006) + Minister of Cooperatives (2006–10).	USDP	Zalun	Bamar	Buddhist	1942



*Appendix 2 — cont'd*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Soe Naing	DSA	Major-General	Army 1972–2006. Northwestern Regional Commander then Southeastern Regional Commander. SPDC Minister of Hotels & Tourism. Brought up in Chauk.	USDP	Pyapon	Bamar	Buddhist	1955
U Win Than	DSA (1987)	?	Army. Lost a leg in Phar Pon frontline (hero medal) + Deputy-DG at SPDC Ministry of Railways (1999). Brought up in Thar Paung.	USDP	Thar Paung	Bamar	Buddhist	1965
U Maung Toe	DSA	Colonel	Commander of Battalion No. 142 (Momaik, Kachin State) + strategic Command 3 (Myawaddy). Owner of Manager Pearl Enterprise (Fisheries)	USDP	Minhla	Bamar	Buddhist	1950

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Min Swe	?	Colonel	Deputy Director Road Transport Corporation + Managing Director of Myanmar Railways. USDP Secretary. Brought up Dike-U.	USDP	Dike-U	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
U Soe Myint	?	Colonel	Matriculation at Nyaunglebin (1958). Ministry of Labor (1962–63). Joined the Army. Consultant for MEC (2000–03).	USDP	Nyaunglebin	Bamar	Buddhist	1940
U Win Sein	DSA	Brig-General	Hero medal. SPDC Deputy-Minister Labor, then Deputy-Minister of Immigration (2006–10). Brought up in Ayemon (Kawa Tsp).	USDP	Kawa	Bamar	Buddhist	1946
U Pike Htwe		Major	USDA since 1993 + General Manager (?). Brought up in Kanma Tsp.	USDP	Kanma	Bamar	Buddhist	1961

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*Appendix 2 — cont'd*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Aung Thaug	OTS-31 (1964)	Colonel	Navy. SORC Deputy Minister of Trade + SPDC Minister of Industry-1 (1997–2010). Brought up in Thaug Thar Tsp.	USDP	Thaug Thar	Bamar	Buddhist	1940 (died in 2015)
Thura U Shwe Mann	DSA-II	4-star General	Awarded 'Thura' in 1989 (vs. KNLA at Manerplaw). Commander LIDII (1996–97). Member of SPDC (1997–2010) + Tatmadaw Joint Chief of Staff (2001–10). Brought up in Kanyuntkwin (Bago).	USDP	Zeyathiri	Bamar	Buddhist	1947
U Hla Myint Oo	Nil	Lt-Commander	Navy 1962–78. Diplomat + Ambassador (1979–98). Deputy-Minister at Civil Service Board (1998–2010). Native of Pymmana.	USDP	Pymmana	Bamar	Buddhist	1942

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Maung Oo	DSA	Brigadier-General	Western Regional Commander (Sittwe). SPDC Minister of Home Affairs (2004–10). Forced to resign from Army in 1977. Tuition teacher 1977–88. NLD member since 1988. Jailed 1989–95 and 1996–2010.	USDP	Tat Kone	Bamar	Buddhist	1950
U Win Htein	DSA-5	Captain		NLD	Meiktila	Bamar	Buddhist	1941
U Pyay Maung	Nil	Major	Joined army in 1962. Farmer. Brought up in MaDaYar Tsp.	USDP	Ma Da Yar	Bamar	Buddhist	1946
U Thauang	DSA-1	Lt-Colonel	Retired from Army 1970. Transferred to Ministry Foreign Affairs (1970–71). BSPP Deputy Minister of Mines (1983–88). Ambassador USA (1991–96) + SPDC Minister of Science & Technology (1996–2010). Brought up in Kyaukse.	USDP	Kyaukse	Bamar	Buddhist	1937

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*Appendix 2 — cont'd*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Aye Mauk	OTS-44	?	Managing Director Myanmar General & Maintenance Industries. Brought up Mahlaing Tsp.	USDP	Mahlaing	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
U Thein Aung	OTS	?	DG and advisor to Minister in SPDC Ministry of Industry-1. Brought up in Wakema (delta).	USDP	Meiktila	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
Thura U Aye Myint	OTS+DSA?	Brigadier-General	BSPP. Commander LID33. SPDC Deputy-Minister of Construction + SPDC Minister of Sports. CEC of USDP (since 2012 as Secretary).	USDP	Wet Let	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
U Than Myint	OTS + NDU (China)		BSPP. DG in SPDC Ministry of Mines + National Convention II. Brought up in Salingyi Tsp.	USDP	Salingyi	Bamar	Buddhist	1949
U Kyi Min	DSA	Admiral	Navy Commander-in-Chief (2000–10). Brought up in Dawei Tsp.	USDP	Dawei	Bamar	Buddhist	1943

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Myint Tun	Teza (1975)	?	Army 1975–2010.	USDP	Kawthaung	Bamar	Buddhist	1956
U Aung Thein Linn	DSA	Brigadier-General	Commander LID101. SPDC Deputy-Minister of Industry-2 (1997–2003) + Yangon Mayor (YCDC, 2003–10). Educated at St-Michael (Yankin Tsp).	USDP	South Okkalapa	Bamar	Buddhist	1949
U Aye Pe	DSA + NDU (China)	Colonel (or Commander)	In the Navy (1967–2006). From Pyaymyo Tsp.	USDP	Coco Islands	Bamar	Buddhist	1946
U Maung Par	Nil	Colonel	In the Army 1964–92 + Deputy-Mayor of Yangon (YCDC, 1996–2010). Brought up in Kyaukpadaung Tsp.	USDP	Seikkyi	Bamar	Buddhist	1941
U Lun Thi	DSA	Brigadier-General	Ex-Principal Artillery Training School. SPDC Minister of Energy (1997–2010).	USDP	Kunchangon	Bamar	Buddhist	1940
U Maung Maung Thein	DSA	Brigadier-General	SPDC Minister of Livestock & Fisheries. Brought up in Pazundaung Tsp.	USDP	Khayan	Bamar	Buddhist	1946

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*Appendix 2 — cont'd*

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U Tin Maung Oo	?	Colonel	Retired from Army in 2010. (leading role, ex-army officers in Pyithu Hluttaw). Brought up in Tamwe.	USDP	Shwepyitha	Bamar	Buddhist	1960
Thura U Aung Ko	DSA	Brigadier-General	Army 1969–97. SLORC Deputy-Minister of Science & Technology + Deputy-Minister of Religious Affairs (1997–2010). CEC of USDP. Brought up in Kyaukpadaung Tsp.	USDP	Kanpalet	Bamar	Buddhist	1948
U Lun Maung	DSA-12	Major-General	SPDC Prime Minister Office (Than Shwe, 1997–2003) + SPDC Auditor General (2003–10). Brought up in Minhla Tsp and studied in Bhamo.	USDP	Bhamo	Shan	Buddhist	1948
U Ohn Myint	DSA	Lt-General	Chief of BSO-6 (2009–10). From Patheingyi Tsp.	USDP	Hpakant	Bamar	Buddhist	1954
U Phone Swe	DSA	Brigadier-General	SPDC Deputy-Minister of Home Affairs (2003–10). Brought up in Nammad Tsp, studied in Mogaung Tsp.	USDP	Mogaung	Bamar	Buddhist	1954

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Myo Swe	OTS (Hmaawbi)?	Lt-Colonel	Army. Chairman of Bhamo PDC until 2010. Brought up in Myitkina Tsp.	USDP	Tanai	Bamar	Buddhist	1951
U Thein Zaw	DSA (1968–1972)	Brigadier-General	SPDC Minister of Post & Telegraph (2001–10) + concurrently Minister of Hotels & Tourism (2002–10). Brought up in Myitkyina Tsp.	USDP	Myitkyina	Bamar	Buddhist	1951
U Ye Htut Tin	OTS (1999)	Captain	Army 1999–2009. Retired as captain. Own mining business in Phar Saung (Managing Director of Ye Htut Kyaw Mining Co.).	USDP	Phar Saung	Bamar	Buddhist	1976
U Thu Rein Zaw	OTS	Colonel	SPDC Deputy-Minister of National Planning (2005–10). Studied at Dagon-1.	USDP	Kawkaareik	Bamar	Buddhist	1958
U Saw Ba Thein	Nil	2 <sup>nd</sup> officer	Air Force 1966–71. Transferred to Agriculture Ministry until 1999. Member of National Convention II. Brought up in Thatoon.	USDP	Thatoon	Kayin	Buddhist	1948

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*Appendix 2 — cont'd*

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Military Education</b>	<b>Rank at retirement</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>
U Thein Swe	DSA-13	Major-General	Army 1971–2001. Minister at Khin Nyunt's Office (2003–04) + SPDC Minister of Transport (2004–10). Ex- 2nd Burma Rifles. DG at Ministry of Immigration in Yangon. Brought up in Manaung Tsp.	USDP	Ann	Bamar	Buddhist	1949
U Aung Sein	DSA	?		USDP	Manaung	Rakhine	Buddhist	1943
U Thar Sein	Nil	Lt-commander	In the Navy 1963–80. Then Singapore-based Shipping Co. until 1996. Native of Kyauktaw Tsp, at Norman School in Sittwe during WWII.	RNDP (RNP)	Kyauktaw	Rakhine	Buddhist	1937
U Maung Maung Swe	?	Major-General	Army 1974–2006. Commander of Northern Region then Coastal Region (2001–06). SPDC Minister of Social Welfare (2006–10)	USDP	Nam San	Bamar	Buddhist	1950

NAME	Military Education	Rank at retirement	Background	Party	Constituency	Ethnicity	Religion	Year of Birth
U Haw Shauk Chan	Nil	Police officer	From Kokant region local police/militia.	USDP	Kong Long	Kokang	Buddhist	1944

Tatmadaw = 41, Police = 1

**Legend:**

- BSPP = Burma Socialist Programme Party (*Lanzin*)
- CEC = Central Executive Committee
- CPP = Chin Progressive Party
- DG = Director General
- DSA = Defence Services Academy
- LORC = Law and Order Restoration Council
- OTS = Officers' Training School
- PDC = Peace and Development Council
- RNP = Rakhine National Party
- Teza = School for apprentice military officers (under/officers)
- Tsp = Township
- USDA = Union Solidarity and Development Association
- USDP = Union Solidarity and Development Party

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