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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 10, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JAMES E. CONNOR 

The attached was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Senator Mansfield hand-carried this to me this A.M..... Assuming we have counterpart funds, why shouldn't we do this? If so, I can't believe we need a change in law. Ne Win visit?"

Please follow-up with appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney
Max Friedersdorf
Jerry Jones

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Gen. Scofield

Gen. Mansfield had
carried this to me this A.M.
Assuming we have
counterpart funds why shouldn't
we do this?
If so, I can't believe
we need a change in law.
Mr. Win visit?

United States Senate
Office of the Majority Leader
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 7, 1975

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

I had hoped to have a chance to talk with you about the situation in Burma before this on a personal basis, but because of cancellation of meetings with the Leadership and other matters, it has not been possible to do so.

What I wanted to do was to call to your attention the fact that in the first half of August, I sent a telegram to you from Rangoon, urging that you give consideration to allocating a small donation, on the order of \$5000 or \$10,000, as a contribution from the United States to help repair earthquake damage to the temples at Pagan, Burma.

The earthquake was in early June and shortly thereafter the Embassy, in a telegram to the Department, recommended that the United States make a small donation in foreign currencies as a token of U. S. sympathy. The cultural unit in State took a sympathetic attitude and recommended that it be authorized, but the request was rejected by the Management people in State on the basis that there was no legal authority for either a dollar contribution or a contribution in U. S.-owned foreign currencies (the U. S. owns some \$65 million in Burmese currencies).

Following the turndown by the Management people in State, the Cultural Affairs and East Asia groups who were sympathetic went to AID to see if something could be arranged for a token contribution through their programs and again it was determined that the law did not permit it.

It is my understanding that my telegram addressed to you personally was referred to the State Department and this stimulated renewed activity in the bureaucracy to see if something could be worked out. Following my return to Washington, various members of my staff had conversations with various people in State and AID about the matter to impress upon them my interest in the problem. Many weeks ago, I asked to be supplied with any changes in the law that were thought necessary to obtain access to a small portion of the U. S.-owned foreign currencies but up to this date, I have not received any information to that effect.

November 7, 1975

It was suggested by one State Department official that funds be made available to Burma indirectly through either the Asia Foundation or the Asia Society, both of which receive substantial amounts of U. S. funds, but this indirect course was not suitable to show direct concern by the United States Government about the earthquake problem.

The Executive Branch people contend that the foreign currencies cannot be made available for this purpose without authority in an appropriations bill and, if it is true that there simply is no way that a token dollar contribution can be made, it would seem to be a simple matter for the Executive Branch to let me know what changes in the law are needed to use a small amount of the foreign currencies. As it is now, we have not received any explanation in writing as to what their legal problems are or, in fact, any type of response to my request.

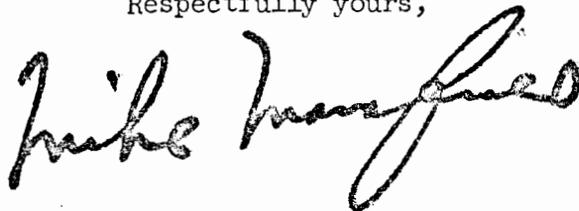
I would hope that you could give this matter your personal attention because while the amount being considered is small, the effect, I think, would be of great significance in a country as isolated as Burma.

Furthermore, I would recommend that you give the most serious consideration to extending an invitation to President Ne Win to visit this country and, in that way, achieve a greater rapport between our two nations.

My views on Burma have been set forth in the confidential report I made to you on certain Southeast Asian countries some weeks ago.

With best personal wishes, I am

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike Mansfield". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Mike Mansfield".