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United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

Why Burma Democratized

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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AUTHOR:

Keefer, Gary A.

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Lynn M. Tesser
Approved: Lynn Tesser
Date: 24 Feb 2017

Oral Defense Committee Member: Dr. Eric Y. Shibuya
Approved: E Shibuya
Date: 24 FEB 2017

Executive Summary

Title: Why Burma Democratized

Author: Major Gary A. Keefer, United States Marine Corps

Thesis: The Burmese Junta transitioned from authoritarian rule to democracy because the military officer corps had a stake in preventing transitional justice and retaining control of the only stable and powerful institution in the state. Civil society, non-violent resistance, non-governmental organizations, and human rights organizations were important, but none of these entities forced the Junta to capitulate and transition. The consistent international geopolitical and economic package of incentives and disincentives was the reason why the Junta perceived there were no longer options for the state to provide functions necessary for legitimacy. Only when the Junta perceived no other alternatives to achieve performance legitimacy did it direct controlled transition to ensure continued control of the Tatmadaw, Burma's military-as-institution, and prevent a new government from pursuing transitional justice.

Discussion: In 1988, the authoritarian military led government in Burma to experience its first serious challenge to power due to its inability to create an equitable and economically prosperous society through socialist isolationism. Transitioning power in 1990 following elections would have cost military leaders control of the only stable power source in the country, the Tatmadaw, and would have led to transitional justice against many of those leaders. Instead, the new council of military rulers opened the country to foreign investment and trade in an effort to create the conditions of economic prosperity. Rather than providing the Junta with the financial means to achieve domestic performance based legitimacy, opening its economy further exposed the military government to the effects of international economic pressure. For 25-years, the Junta attempted to capitalize on perceived alternatives to transition until it was clear that controlling the transition was the only way to retain control of the Tatmadaw and prevent transitional justice.

Conclusion: Burma has experienced liberalization and has transitioned power to a new democratically elected government. Burma's democratization was a complex, protracted, and dynamic process, and remains open-ended. It occurred through a patient and consistent package of geopolitical and economic incentives and disincentives. This analysis of the circumstances surrounding Burma's transition provides a contemporary and relevant study for democratization theory, and offers United States policy makers an example of how to promote democratic reforms while avoiding the unsustainable financial and human resource costs necessary for military conflict or an extensive foreign aid package.

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Introduction

An analysis of Burma's democratic transition is important for Burma analysts, democratization theorists, and United States policy makers. For Burma analysts, it is important to acknowledge democratization has occurred and to understand the circumstances that led to democratic reforms. For democratization theorists, Burma offers a successful contemporary example that demonstrates democratization theory remains relevant beyond Eastern Europe and South America immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union. In accordance with democratization theory, the non-democratic Burmese regime did seek economic development as a means to retain power, but through international cooperation and not domestic economic freedom as current theory suggests. Burmese democratization demonstrates that social and political liberal reforms began with external encouragement in order for that cooperation to persist. For United States policy makers, an analysis of Burma offers an example of how to promote democratic reforms in another nation while avoiding the unsustainable financial and human resource costs necessary for an extensive foreign aid package or the use of force.

Whether or not Burma has democratized will be contested for many years because the terms democracy and democratization are contested.¹ Burma does not currently exhibit all the minimum standards for democracy,² but many existing uncontested democracies would fall short of these minimum standards as well.³ Burma has unquestionably accomplished policy liberalization and democratic transition.⁴ It remains to be seen if further democratic reforms will satisfy remaining political opposition to cooperate with and remain part of the union,⁵ if the military will allow continued democratic rule, or if peaceful transition of power will occur when another party wins election. Democratization is a complex, protracted, dynamic, and open-ended process,⁶ that should be defined using Burmese values and expectations of government in this

case.⁷ A discussion of whether Burma has completed this process is beyond the necessary scope of understanding why the authoritarian regime allowed progress toward, “more rule-based, consensual, participatory politics.”⁸ While it is appropriate to debate whether or not Burma has democratized, there is no doubt the country has experienced democratization through policy liberalization that began in August 2011, fair and free elections in October 2015, and peaceful democratic transition in March 2016.

There are no comprehensive academic studies related to Burmese liberal reforms and democratic transition published since the first democratically elected government took control. Relevant studies related to democratic reform in Burma appear along its road to democratic transition. Studies appearing before 2009 focused on the circumstances that should have led to Burmese domestic policy reform.⁹ Those appearing after the constitutional referendum in 2009 generally discussed with historical skepticism whether transition would occur, and the circumstances required for continued democratization.¹⁰ Those studies are useful in the context of time throughout this comprehensive analysis to better understand the motivations and evolving alternatives of the actors who initiated transition.

Transition theory is also useful in a comprehensive evaluation of why Burma democratized.¹¹ When discussing the path of democratization, it is necessary to classify the political system and leadership of the regime because those factors define the possible paths a state can take to transition. Prior to democratic transition, Burma most closely reflected an authoritarian political system led by a hierarchal military regime.¹² The final element in democratic transition theory is to identify the actors that initiate and control the transition. In order to clearly define the actors, the evaluation must identify motivation which by definition is an evaluation of why the nondemocratic state transitions.

To best identify the actors that initiated democratic transition, the evaluation must begin with the first signs of internal and external pressure for the government to shift from authoritarian rule. Though the prospects of liberalism reflected in individual freedoms and government limits on power¹³ were not great in 1988, the evaluation must begin here. This was the first sign that Burmese civil society would not accept continued authoritarian rule simply by coercively uniting disparate ethnic and political groups. In 1988, ‘performance legitimacy’¹⁴ clearly overcame society’s acceptance of the government’s rules of the game and justness of political power.

In the transition of power from the Ne Win to the Junta¹⁵ authoritarian governments, the Junta attempted to gain legitimacy without changing the political system. The military-as-institution, the Tatmadaw, had enduring interests in a functioning state that transcended the interests of the government. In 1988, the cost of transition to a democratic government meant exposing leaders to transitional justice and losing control of the country’s only viable power structure, the Tatmadaw.¹⁶

The Junta believed it could gain legitimacy by delegitimizing its opponents¹⁷ and by building a modern and equitable society with improved living standards. Economic prosperity is closely tied to both justness of political power and performance legitimacy,¹⁸ and the Junta believed if it could transform the economy and create conditions of economic prosperity there would be no reason to transition power. In transition theory of an authoritarian political system, economic trends are less important than the perception of alternatives and legitimacy of the population or major institutional actors.¹⁹ In this case, the perception of alternatives for the government and legitimacy as judged by the population were vital to eventual liberalization and democratic transition. For 25-years after the transition of power in 1988, the Junta refused to

relinquish power as long as it perceived there were other alternatives to improve economic prosperity.

With constitutional reform in 2009, transition to a more liberal government in 2011, and transition to a democratic government in 2016, the Junta initiated and controlled liberalization and democratic transition in Burma. The Junta transitioned because military officer corps had stake in preventing transitional justice and retaining control of the of the only stable and powerful institution in the state. Civil society, non-violent resistance, non-governmental organizations, and human rights organizations were important in pressuring international governments and building capacity to eventually replace the authoritarian regime. However, none of these entities forced the Junta to capitulate and transition. The consistent international geopolitical and economic package of incentives and disincentives²⁰ was the reason why the Junta perceived there were no longer options for the state to provide the functions necessary for legitimacy. Only when the Junta perceived no other alternatives to achieve performance legitimacy did it direct a controlled transition to ensure continued control of the Tatmadaw and prevent a new government from pursuing transitional justice.

Subsequent sections of the paper provide a chronological overview of the Junta's perceived economic alternatives to regain performance legitimacy. I begin with the transfer of power from Ne Win to the Junta in 1988, the first-time military leaders realized Burmese society would no longer accept authoritarian rule by coercion alone. When the Junta's attempts to unilaterally promote foreign investment failed to produce lasting economic improvements, I turn to an evaluation of the effectiveness of Burma's pivot to regional economic partners to regain performance legitimacy. As the Junta's relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) soured, I analyze the Junta's pivot toward regional hegemonic

powers. Included is an analysis of the various risks involved in a relationship with the Junta by all partners, including regional hegemons, demonstrating that Burmese military leaders perceived there were no remaining viable alternatives to produce socioeconomic improvements and retain power. I conclude with an evaluation of how the Junta transitioned power to preserve control of the Tatmadaw and limit transitional justice.

A Transition from Isolationist Socialism

In 1962, the Burmese military led by General Ne Win forcefully took control of the country, gaining legitimacy by uniting communist and socialist factions unable to reconcile political differences.²¹ Ne Win nationalized every aspect of Burma's economy and isolated it from the world in an effort to create an equitable society through state ownership and central planning. In 1988, it was clear performance legitimacy overcame society's acceptance of the government's rules of the game and justness of political power. Ne Win turned the government over to a military council led by senior General Saw Maung²² following the government's brutal crack-down on a series of nation-wide protests in September 1988; that military council would rule the country until 2011.

The immediate problem for the Junta was that the political system had 'captured' the state in Burma. That is, the authoritarian rule of the military, regardless of the name given to the regime, was not distinguished from the state.²³ The Junta was immediately judged by opposition groups and society with the same performance legitimacy as Ne Win. Only a political system distinct from the military would have been granted legitimacy by some other means,²⁴ buying that regime time for performance legitimacy. The name change was not enough for the Junta to buy time, so as a part of assuming power it promised free elections and improvements to the economy. In 1990, the Junta lost the election to the NLD and refused to transition power,

turning to violence and coercion for an immediate alternative to performance legitimacy. By suppressing protests and arresting charismatic opposition leaders such as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD), the Junta believed it could buy time to build performance legitimacy through socioeconomic improvements. Its first attempt was to open Burma to foreign trade and investment.²⁵

Foreign investment demanded a level of political stability and legal reform in Burma to demonstrate promise of a financial return on the investment. After the 8888 Uprising,²⁶ the United States led many Western countries in imposing sanctions on Burma.²⁷ After the Junta refused to transfer power to the NLD in 1990, those sanctions prevented future foreign investment by companies in many Western countries and otherwise drew corporate attention to the risks associated with and relationship with the Junta and overall Burmese political instability. The Junta maneuvered to decrease the appearance of political instability by signing cease-fires with seventeen of the country's armed groups²⁸ and established the Foreign Investment Law. The cease-fires allowed the armed groups some autonomy within Burma,²⁹ while providing the government and many of its officials funding through drug-trafficking.³⁰ The Foreign Investment Law was meant to attract foreign capital investment, improve infrastructure and technology, and provide jobs.³¹ While many countries and companies waited for more concrete political stability, others saw an opportunity to profit on the cheap labor, timber, mining, and oil that were previously inaccessible under Ne Win's isolationist policies.³²

In 1995, the Junta was confident their policies had improved the economy enough that popular resistance was no longer a threat.³³ Confident in internal security it released Aung Suu Kyi, believing the humanitarian gesture would convince the West to lift sanctions, leading to further economic improvements and more enduring performance legitimacy. However, foreign

investors were unwilling to pay for infrastructure improvements and those that did invest found it difficult to cash-out profits over the course of contract terms.³⁴ With pressure from the United States and international human rights organizations, neither the International Monetary Fund nor the World Bank were willing to support infrastructure improvements.³⁵ The Junta's continued failure to transition power and continued human rights abuses, including a government orchestrated attack on an NLD convoy in late 1996, drove the European Union and United States to double-down on economic policies limiting Western investment in Burma.³⁶

Due to the high political and financial costs of doing business in Burma, companies that previously chose to invest in Burma began pulling out at the end of their contracts.³⁷ Instead of providing the Junta with the financial means to achieve domestic political legitimacy, the Foreign Investment Law increased exposure to international criticism and economic pressure. Undeterred by its unsuccessful attempt at producing meaningful foreign investment from the West, the Junta perceived it still had alternatives to improve economic conditions and gain internal legitimacy.

Alternative – Regional Economic Partnerships

In 1997, the Junta attempted to counter the effects of Western sanctions and improve its domestic economy by turning to its more willing neighbors, ASEAN. Defying Western pressure to distance itself from Burma, ASEAN invited the Junta to join the regional community.³⁸ ASEAN believed Burmese domestic reform would occur gradually through the kind of constructive engagement associated with the “ASEAN Way” rather than simply criticizing the Junta's policies from a distance.³⁹ Using Indonesia as an example to emulate, the Junta believed joining ASEAN would give it political legitimacy,⁴⁰ access to the international markets through an existing collective posture, and political power for its authoritarian rule.⁴¹

In an article examining Burma's economic condition from 1988 to 1998, Stephen McCarthy demonstrated the need for Burma to shift its focus to regional partners to improve its domestic economy.⁴² He correctly recognizes that if the West desired to influence Burma, it should do so through those regional partners.⁴³ However, McCarthy stops shy of recognizing the importance of the sanctions in driving Burma into the arms of regional partners, and the importance of ASEAN as a regional economic partner in absorbing the impact of those sanctions. Coordinated sanctions with all countries was not necessary to adversely impact Burma's economy as McCarthy suggests.⁴⁴ Expanded integration into an international economic community had the same long-term impacts on the Junta as coordinated sanctions. Expanded economic partnerships exposed the Junta to the will of a community. In the case of ASEAN, each member nation was most concerned for its own domestic economic security. The collective community made adjustments to its own policies to influence the Junta's domestic policies as they negatively impacted the partner nation's economic security.

The Junta believed joining ASEAN would give it financial access for domestic political legitimacy, but could not have foreseen the impacts of the Asian financial crisis in the Spring of 1997. The crisis caused social and political unrest in Indonesia that ultimately led to the end of its authoritarian regime in 1999. In order to avoid closer ties with China in the midst of the financial crisis, ASEAN sought greater alignment with the international community.⁴⁵ With Burma's greatest regional and international advocate gone, its relationship within ASEAN changed as quickly as Burma's human rights record stymied ASEAN's deeper economic integration with the West.

ASEAN nations and Japan withdrew from Burma in an effort to consolidate and improve domestic resource shortfalls created by the financial crisis.⁴⁶ Coupled with international

sanctions, the Asian financial crisis caused foreign investment in Burma to fall from \$1.26 billion in 1997 to \$17.46 million in 2002.⁴⁷ Furthermore, each member nation sought to increase trade with the West, forcing a debate throughout 1998 and 1999 within ASEAN regarding increased involvement by the association into member nations' intra-state issues. The informal agreement that emerged was called "enhanced interaction", and it allowed individual member nations to make unsolicited comments on the domestic affairs other member nations if the issue had interstate implications.⁴⁸ Enhanced interaction marked a shift in ASEAN's traditional diplomatic and security culture, but it offered a means of demonstrating to the West ASEAN's concern for human rights, meeting Western diplomatic demands for increased economic integration with the region. While sufficiently disruptive to ASEAN's culture of non-interference,⁴⁹ enhanced interaction worked for years as a means for member nations to act in accordance with their own national interests, while allowing the association as a whole to maintain the appearance of collective non-interference.

ASEAN opened Burma's economy to the international community, improved its domestic economy, and provided the Junta political maneuver space around Western sanctions and condemnation. However, this new economic relationship gave ASEAN nations more political leverage over the Junta,⁵⁰ inviting more pressure, albeit less coercive, once the Junta's policies began negatively impacting ASEAN member nations.

In May 2003, a Burmese government sponsored mob attacked an NLD convoy, killing an estimated seventy civilians associated with the non-violent political opposition group. Police arrested surviving civilians associated with the NLD, including Aung Suu Kyi, once again placing her under house arrest.⁵¹ The Depayin Massacre⁵² drove new American sanctions and embarrassed the association in the eyes of the international community.⁵³ For the first time in its

nearly 40-year history, ASEAN took a collective stance against a member nation. In the joint statement, ASEAN called for national reconciliation, insisted restrictions be lifted on political prisoners, and encouraged the Junta to develop a roadmap to democracy.⁵⁴ This was an unprecedented collective statement,⁵⁵ and it was successful in convincing the Burmese government to act for the sake of the collective using ASEAN's increased economic ties as leverage. Before the end of the summer, the Junta published a seven-phased 'Roadmap to Democracy'. A senior government official later said that without the additional pressure that resulted from the Depayin Massacre, the Junta could have continued to rule.⁵⁶

Scholars that examine the addition of Burma into ASEAN all acknowledge that ASEAN believed it could slowly turn Burma toward progress through non-interference.⁵⁷ As transition theory describes it, ASEAN might have been successful at 'opening the gate' to democratic efforts through diffusion, or crowd behavior,⁵⁸ if ASEAN's zeitgeist of economic interdependence and non-interference was weaker than its potential positive democratic influence. Whether or not Burmese and ASEAN scholars examine the success or failure of diffusion, each acknowledges a change in posture by ASEAN toward Burma through "enhanced interaction" to promote reforms in an effort for the collective community to regain international credibility; none analyze the effects of increased pressure by ASEAN on Burma.

While Burmese officials did not officially refer to ASEAN's collective unsolicited comments in 2003 as interference in its domestic affairs, it became clear to the Junta that continued international economic partnership would cost it autonomy. As Ramcharan points out, the Junta maintained its relationship with ASEAN because any unsolicited pressure by ASEAN is relative non-interference compared to other nations and international organizations.⁵⁹ However, the impacts of the regional pressure cannot be ignored; it caused the Junta to rethink

its regional friendships⁶⁰ and retreat back to isolation in order to maintain autonomy.

Furthermore, the Junta still perceived alternatives for improving its domestic economy.

Another Alternative – Regional Hegemonic Partnerships

Scholars analyzing the prospects of Burmese democratization after the Depayin Massacre were encouraged that Junta promises would lead to reform.⁶¹ Ashley South was optimistic about a transition of power, and championed the importance of local non-government organizations in preparing civil society to participate in national-level policy development and support local development.⁶² He examined violent and non-violent prospects of further democratic reform, and his analysis attempted to focus foreign government effort and funding during a transition. South's analysis is most valid in the larger analysis of encouraging democratic reform. The importance of international human rights groups and NGOs working in a country have access to the population, and should be used to encourage democratic reform. South points out that support to violent groups is dangerous because the government is likely to further entrench itself in existing policy, and that non-violent NGOs work best within existing policy to effect change.⁶³

Thawngmung acknowledged the government's positive gestures in reform. She argued that any future democratic reforms in Burma would not look like the Western ideas of liberal democracy.⁶⁴ The military would have to maintain some degree of power, while still offering some level of representation to the people.⁶⁵ Burmese democratization would include more political, social, and religious freedom, but military control in any form would not limit the power of government over Burmese society and citizens.⁶⁶ While Thawngmung's insights were ultimately reflected in the 2008 Constitution, in 2003 there was neither historical precedent nor any specific reason in her argument for pressure to ultimately lead to reform. In fact, Thawngmung was skeptical permanent reforms would come to fruition, arguing that the

military government has two real objectives, “resumed foreign assistance and improved international image,” and that once those are achieved, the Junta may reverse any movement toward democratization.⁶⁷ It was possible for the vague reforms in 2003 to be reversed because they were superficial enough. Even after the referendum in 2009 reversal was still possible, only more difficult. However, after the transition to a Junta installed civilian government in 2011, a reversal of reforms would have required a coup d’état. Predicting any transition in power in 2003 would ignore the Junta’s perception of other alternatives that would allow it to maintain power.

Following the Depayin Massacre, the Junta needed to counter pressure from ASEAN and increased pressure from the West for domestic political reform. While the Junta wanted to move back into isolation, the country was still suffering from the effects of a February 2003 banking crisis so it could not retreat too far.⁶⁸ With opium production as the Junta’s most reliable source of income,⁶⁹ the Junta turned to international partners that would enable it to fulfill the 1988 promise of economic improvements, ultimately giving the Junta domestic legitimacy for power. In conjunction with a shift into isolation, the Burmese government began to look to other regional partners as an alternative means of improving its domestic economic.

While maintaining its membership status within ASEAN, Burma began to demonstrate a preference to China. Burmese-Chinese relations have long roots but have long been strained over border activity,⁷⁰ generally related to drug-trade and refugee flow into China. Like many regional nations, the Burmese government has been skeptical of China’s intentions, explaining why the Junta originally looked to ASEAN instead of China.⁷¹ China offered money, defense integration, non-interference, and protection from Western pressure on the United Nations (UN) Security Council. For China, a relationship with Burma offered access to natural resources, the

potential to improve border security, and influence to shape concerns over drug-trade and refugee flow across the Chinese border.⁷²

Burma forfeited the rotating ASEAN Chairmanship in 2005 amidst private pressure from other ASEAN member nations, and was a clear indication of a shift away from ASEAN back into isolationism and the courtship of China.⁷³ Burma sought further infrastructure investment, financial loans, and economic and defense integration with China. China became the largest importer of Burma's natural resources, absorbing the effects of Western sanctions and providing an economic alternative to ASEAN.⁷⁴ In the post-Depayin Massacre era, China and the drug-trade financially supported the Junta's institutions of power. China dominated capital investment through infrastructure projects and became Burma's largest supplier of defense material, defense integration, and largest trading partner.⁷⁵

Not only did Burma demonstrate an increased economic preference to China, it also demonstrated a diplomatic preference to China over ASEAN in international relations. As a means of protecting its own financial interests, China repeatedly used its position on the UN Security Council to shield the Junta from international criticism.⁷⁶ While not completely or publically rejecting ASEAN, Burma rebuked ASEAN in the eyes of the international community by demonstrating its lack of influence over the Junta. For instance, in March 2006 Burma denied an ASEAN Envoy access to political prisoners because the Junta viewed it as an attempt by ASEAN to interfere in its internal politics.⁷⁷ Burma also denied an ASEAN envoy access to the country in 2007 in light of ASEAN's collective statement condemning the Burmese military killing of civilians in September 2007.⁷⁸ The Junta's actions were more than a hint at pivoting toward China, its actions were a clear rejection of ASEAN.

In an effort to reduce its overdependence on China,⁷⁹ the Junta began to build on its relationship with Russia. Burma relations with Russia began in 1955 with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The USSR expanded its sphere of influence and security buffer, while offering guarantees that the Soviets would not support the Communist Party of Burma.⁸⁰ While the two countries never ceased relations, they were always limited because of Ne Win's isolationist policies.⁸¹ After the fall of the USSR, the new Russian government shifted priorities, and it was not until Russia formalized relations with ASEAN in 2004 that the two countries resumed broadened interaction.⁸²

With Burma-ASEAN relations strained, Russia offered Burma an economic alternative to China and ASEAN in absorbing the impacts of Western sanctions and protection from the West in the UN. In April 2006 Burma opened the door for increased economic relations with a senior-level diplomatic visit to Russia.⁸³ Russia and Burma began relations in defense, nuclear energy, and technology, but their largest exchange was in economic cooperation.⁸⁴ Russia wrote contracts with Burma in joint oil exploration and exportation, and twice looked at nuclear energy deals.⁸⁵ Money was always the limiting factor in defense, nuclear, and natural resource contracts. Russia wanted too much money and it required Burma to pay upfront in full, unwilling to accept the same economic risk as China.⁸⁶ Russia was also concerned about the risk associated with investment given the internal unrest in Burma. Though Russian relations improved, it never provided the economic alternative to China and ASEAN the Junta sought.

The Junta's maneuver away from ASEAN proved not to offer it complete political autonomy. During a UN Summit in September 2007, Burma was in the second month of the largest demonstrations since the 8888 Uprising. Hundreds of thousands of civilians, monks, and nuns gathered in the streets across the country to protest the economic impacts of the

government's removal of subsidies on fuel in what became known as the Saffron Revolution.⁸⁷ The Tatmadaw overreacted during multiple non-violent protests, killing, arresting, and detaining hundreds of demonstrators. ASEAN Foreign Ministers met in New York and later released a statement on behalf of the association expressing concern about the impacts Burma's internal affairs had on ASEAN's reputation and credibility, urging restraint, and calling for the release of political prisoners.⁸⁸ China also likely pressured the Junta in private for economic and social reforms because of the security situation,⁸⁹ offering their own reforms as an example to emulate. Chinese officials were concerned for the safety of Chinese nationals doing business in Burma, the increased flow of refugees across the border, protection of capital investments,⁹⁰ and drug-trafficking across the border.

The Saffron Revolution left the Junta with no other viable economic alternative to increasing economic prosperity. Kyaw Hlaing said in 2012, "the combined effect of Western sanctions, criticism from the international community, the activities of pro-democracy groups and especially the Saffron Revolution, convinced the [Junta] that [it] could not rule the country indefinitely without undertaking some political reforms."⁹¹ If the Junta wanted to achieve legitimacy through improved economic conditions, it had to accept the conditions of international partners.

A New Constitution

After the Saffron Revolution, the Junta perceived it no longer had the means of retaining power while improving economic conditions in the country.⁹² Economic reform required international economic integration, and now more than ever the Junta realized that international partnerships required domestic reform and a loss of political maneuver space.

In February 2008, the Junta announced the Constitutional Convention had approved a new constitution, set a date for a referendum in 2009, and a general election in 2010. The move was met with historical skepticism because most opposition inputs into the decade-long convention were ignored by the Junta.⁹³ There were charges that the new document was just another policy change to placate to the international community and allow the Junta to continue to their rule.⁹⁴ The Junta believed that requiring Than Shwe to step down as a part of the new constitution⁹⁵ would appease those that believed a top-down regime change was necessary for reform. However, Than Shwe retained control of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) and, the new constitution created military seats in both houses of the new legislature.⁹⁶ Additionally, under the new constitution the military had twenty-five percent of parliamentary seats reserved, unelected, for it in the new legislature,⁹⁷ enabling continued military dominance of the government.

In early May 2009 amidst internal and external criticism regarding the constitutional referendum, a category four cyclone loomed off the coast of Burma. The Junta ignored international calls to postpone the referendum until after the storm passed and the humanitarian crisis in the coastal areas of the country was under control. The vote was held in two-thirds of the country as scheduled and two weeks later in areas devastated by Cyclone Nargis. Despite internal and external opposition to the Constitutional Convention and the humanitarian impacts of the cyclone during the referendum, the Junta reported a ninety-nine percent turnout and a ninety-two percent approval for the referendum.⁹⁸ All the circumstances surrounding the constitution's drafting process, the referendum, and the results fueled criticism that the Junta would continue to control the government under a new document and a new name.⁹⁹

Despite the new constitution and promise of elections, the Junta largely fulfilled the low expectations of critics by continuing its historical path of suppressing non-violent opposition. Even after the Constitutional Referendum passed, the Junta once again arrested opposition leader Aung Suu Kyi. Regional criticism of the Junta reached its height when ASEAN clearly and collectively violated its non-interference policy.¹⁰⁰ In response to Aung Suu Kyi's house arrest in May 2009, ASEAN issued a collective statement reminding Burmese leaders of their responsibility to protect and promote human rights as a member of ASEAN.¹⁰¹ Burma responded publicly in part by saying Burma was treating Aung San Suu Kyi in accordance with Burmese law, and that the statement from the ASEAN Chairman violated the ASEAN Charter and was, "tantamount to interfering in Burma's internal affairs."¹⁰²

While the incident reinforced criticism that the new constitution offered no real hope of reform, the response was a clear signal to the Junta that it could no longer hide behind the promise of democratic reform and escape criticism. It also further solidified for the Junta that if it was going to continue the appearance of reform, it would have to seek support to legitimize the upcoming elections. Since taking control in 1988, the Junta demonstrated it was less concerned with popular support of its reforms than it was for the support of its regional neighbors. Regional support for the election was critical for further economic cooperation, yet superficial enough to retain power. Many Asian leaders expressed support for the elections to encourage further liberalization rather than risk setting back reform.¹⁰³

Hope for Reconciliation?

Internal support for the election was limited due to government violence, government disbanding major opposition parties, and government preventing prominent opposition leaders from running for office. All the conditions set by the Junta in their total control of the process

certainly emboldened the argument that the election was a means for the Junta to legitimize itself. Coupled with its twenty-five percent of unelected seats in parliament, the military USDP party controlled eighty-three percent of the newly elected government. The election was neither fair nor free.

In March 2011, the ruling Junta transitioned power to the elected government under control of the USDP and President Thein Sein. Few expected reforms because Than Shwe still controlled the SPDC and the Tatmadaw remained intact with its leadership and structure with orders to take control of the government if the political parties failed.¹⁰⁴ While both the constitutional referendum and election processes clearly limited representative powers in the government, transitioning of power that had not occurred in 1990 demonstrated a real path to reform to the international community and domestic opposition. Knowing that the new constitution would be honored by the Junta provided a path, a document, and a set of rules that could be followed to pursue further reform. By the end of the summer 2011 additional hope was revealed in the transition as new liberal leaders in the new government demonstrated a willingness to impose their will on the process of transition, regardless of the constitutional authorities their position offered.¹⁰⁵

The largely USDP government under President Thein Sein and Speaker Shwe Mann, pursued policies of reconciliation and liberalization beginning in late 2011. These policies included opening reinstating opposition political parties, meeting with high profile opposition leaders, releasing political prisoners, passing labor legislation, allowing for more free parliamentary elections, and signing cease-fire agreements with long-time rebel groups. The importance of the former SPDC Chairman, Than Shwe, and the Tatmadaw's lack of action during the transition cannot be understated. Popular in the government during Than Shwe's

almost 20-year domination were the ‘Three M’ Rules,’ “ma-lote...ma-shote...ma-pyoke,”¹⁰⁶ meaning, “do nothing that upsets Than Shwe...strictly follow the orders of Than Shwe...so no one loses their job.”¹⁰⁷ Than Shwe undoubtedly retained the power, connections, and ability to intervene, and the Tatmadaw retained the material and personnel resources to execute their own plan if it desired. However, neither interceded to regain control of the government while either liberal reforms were enacted or when Thein Sein met with Aung Suu Kyi in August 2011.

Kyaw Yin Hlaing is the only scholar to analyze political reforms in Burma since the transition of power in 2011.¹⁰⁸ Sources for his article, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," contend that the military and government officials did not intercede because they cared deeply for the people and ultimately wanted development for the country.¹⁰⁹ Hlaing makes an important observation that allowing the Tatmadaw to maintain influence in the government limited their need to regain control.¹¹⁰ His sources also speculate that Than Shwe’s decision not to get involved was him drawing on, “lessons from the demise of authoritarian leaders during the Arab Spring,”¹¹¹ which began in April 2011. However, Hlaing’s article is largely an analysis of compiled interviews that took place between 2009 and 2012 with former government and military leaders in Burma, speaking with autonomy. While his access in a government that was largely closed since the late 1950’s is unprecedented, his analysis gives more credence to what these officials would like the international community to believe to potentially avoid transitional justice, and less to the Junta’s lack of remaining options to achieve either domestic or international legitimacy.

The reasons former government officials did not intercede are less important to encouraging future transitions than the conditions under which they occurred. After the Saffron Revolution, the Junta realized the risk of retaining control of the government was too great to

retain control of the only stable and powerful institution in the state. The Junta was the institutional actor that took control of transition as a means to control the Tatmadaw and prevent institutional justice. Furthermore, neither the Constitutional Convention nor the referendum were fair or free. The result, however, distributed authority and created democratic institutions for formally addressing grievances.¹¹² Together with the presence of more liberal leaders in government, non-violent pro-democracy groups, domestic ethnic minorities, international human rights groups, and NGOs were able to work with the structure created by the Junta to promote political change.¹¹³ Restated, if any reforms were achieved outside the structure created by SPDC and Tatmadaw leaders, it would have prompted hardliners to stage a coup or replace the more liberal leaders in the new government.

Former leaders demonstrating respect for the institutions they built in new constitution and allowing reforms from within those institutions also begot positive reinforcement from the international community, permitting foreign investment in Burma in late 2011.¹¹⁴ The United States sent Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Burma in December 2011,¹¹⁵ signaling increased diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian relations between Burma and the West. While sanctions were not removed until 2016, the United States, European Union, and Japan increased economic integration with Burma as early as the end of 2011, making significant improvements to Burma's domestic economy.¹¹⁶ Improving relations with the West and ASEAN encouraged more reform and the improved domestic conditions kept the military and former leaders from intervening. This increased integration with the West and other Asian nations has significantly reduced China's economic and diplomatic influence in Burma,¹¹⁷ and reduced the central government's dependence on drug-trade revenues.

Liberal reforms by the Thein Sein government paved the way for the first fair and free elections in November 2015 where the NLD won enough seats to form a government. For the first time in Burmese history, a peaceful transition of power occurred between a military backed government to a democratically elected civilian government in March 2016. After 53-years of oppressive military regimes, there is hope for human rights, economic stability, and representative government in Burma, but the government still has many battles ahead associated with drug-trade and religious conflict.

The intra and inter-state violence associated with Burmese drug-trade and the community destruction associated with drug addiction continue to be a problem for the new Burmese government. Opium production and trade was historically a large source of income, violence, and external conflict for the Burmese government under the Junta. Shan and Kachin States are historically Burma's largest sources of armed rebel groups and illegal opium production.¹¹⁸ In some cases, cease-fires between the Junta and the armed groups provided regional autonomy and a source of funding for the government through opium production in those states. During periods of limited economic partnership with the international community, profits from opium trade was the Junta's largest and most reliable source of income.¹¹⁹ However, it was also a source of great tension with China, Laos, and Thailand because of refugees fleeing the periodic unrest and concerns over the community destruction created by drug-addiction.¹²⁰

Burma remains the second largest producer of opium in the world. While opium trade is no longer a direct source of income for Burma's central government, it is still a large source of income for the Tatmadaw and government leaders in the military backed USDP.¹²¹ The Tatmadaw continues to use kick-backs from opium sales to increase their own strength and to build loyalty among militia leaders in Shan and Kachin States. In turn, the loyal militia leaders

further increase the strength of the Tatmadaw and help keep a lid on rebel groups. Attempts by the Thein Sein government and China to improve infrastructure in these rural states have only improved drug-trafficking. Some international groups and local NGOs are calling on the government to reform current drug policy in an effort to curb the violence and drug addiction associated with opium in Burma.¹²² However, until the government can help farmers replace the income associated with growing poppy,¹²³ any attempts to change and enforce more strict drug laws will only further fuel violence.

Human Rights are still an issue for the NLD controlled government of Burma, separated by only a few years as victims of human rights violations themselves. In another clear departure from ASEAN's non-interference policy, the Malaysian Prime Minister led protests against the Burmese government in December 2016 on behalf of the Muslim Rohingya minority in Burma.¹²⁴ Under Burma's Constitution, the Rohingya are not considered citizens and are therefore denied voting rights. Demonstrations by the growing Muslim minority in Burma have caused international autonomy and national security concerns for the government,¹²⁵ leading to Tatmadaw force against the Rohingya.¹²⁶ The Associated Press says that the rising intercommunal and government violence has killed hundreds, placed more than 100,000 in camps, and forced more than 56,000 refugees into neighboring Malaysia since 2012.¹²⁷ Expanding voting rights and controlling the Tatmadaw will be necessary for the new government in order to demonstrate continued democratic reform and prevent Islamic violent extremism from taking root as a response to continued oppression.

Conclusion

While Burma's democratically elected government still faces domestic conflict, international pressure for further liberalization, and a struggle to gain control of all the military's

activities, there is little evidence to dispute democratization. Burmese democratization was a complex, protracted, and dynamic process, and remains open-ended. During the process, domestic uprisings demonstrated to the Junta the potential alternatives if it failed to achieve improved economic prosperity. NGOs were vital to developing grass roots, domestic, and non-violent resistance capable of building political capacity to rule democratically. International NGOs and human rights organizations were critical in pressuring international governments and companies to apply economic pressure to the Junta. However, none of these factors alone can be credited with the capitulation of a government successful at suppressing internal opposition for more than 50-years.

As long as the Junta perceived alternatives to achieve economic prosperity there were no incentives for transition to a new system of government at the risks of transitional justice and losing control of the Tatmadaw. Western sanctions and condemnation acted as a consistent package of geopolitical and economic incentives and disincentives described in democratization theory. Regional economic and diplomatic partnerships provided the Junta political maneuver space and perceived economic alternatives, but ultimately reinforced the consistent package of incentives and disincentives. Twenty-five years of patience and consistency eventually led to the Junta's perception that there were no longer alternatives to provide the state functions necessary for performance legitimacy.

Future endeavors by the United States to encourage democratization will require strategic patience and a consistent package of economic and diplomatic incentives and disincentives, while encouraging international and regional economic interdependence to increase leverage and offer alternatives for all actors to maneuver. Patient and persistent encouragement using

economic pressure and international partners consumes vastly fewer resources than what is required to establish effective and responsible governance following the use of military force.

¹ Laurence Whitehead, *Democratization: Theory and Experience*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 6-11. The Burmese certainly have a different understanding of democracy, and according to recent polling data, even reject liberal democracy; see also endnote 7.

² Robert Dahl's list of minimum conditions for democracy are not only provided and defined as 'generally accepted' for theory (Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy is...and is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 3 (1991): 81-82.).

³ Whitehead, 11-12.

⁴ Linz and Stepan define the differences between liberalization, democratic transition, and democratic consolidation. Using these distinctions, Burmese reforms that took place from 2009-2015 can accurately be described a liberalization, with democratic transition taking place in March 2016 to the first freely elected government (Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press (1996), 3-4.).

⁵ Linz and Stepan stipulate that democracy is consolidated when, "Behaviorally, democracy becomes the only game in town when no significant political groups seriously attempt to overthrow the regime or succeed from the state," (*Ibid.*, 3-4). Also, see Whitehead for a discussion as to why this standard is too rigid (Whitehead, 26-30).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 27-32.

⁷ Polling data from April 2016 reveals that Burmese citizens embrace elected government, but value the community over individual rights. The data demonstrates that the West cannot define 'democratic consolidation' using Western ideas of liberal democracy (Bridget Welsh, Kai-Ping Huang, and Yun-han Chu, "Burma Votes for Change: Clashing Attitudes Toward Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 2 (2016): 132-136.).

⁸ Democratization defined. Whitehead, 27.

⁹ For examples see: Jürgen Haacke, "'Enhanced Interaction' with Myanmar and the Project of a Security Community: Is ASEAN Refining or Breaking with its Diplomatic and Security Culture?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal Of International & Strategic Affairs* 27, no. 2 (2005); Ashley South, "Political Transition in Myanmar: A New Model for Democratization," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 26, no. 2 (2004); and Ardeth Maung Thawngmung, "Preconditions and Prospects for Democratic Transition in Burma/Myanmar," *Asian Survey* 43, no. 3 (2003).

¹⁰ For examples see articles written in: Kyaw Yin Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, ed. Kyaw Yin Hlaing (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press); and Rohit Kumar Mishra, "The Bear in the Golden Land: An Assessment of Russia-Myanmar Ties," *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies* 18, no. 1 (2014).

¹¹ Linz and Stepan articulate all the elements of democratic transition theory in the first five chapters of their book, *Problems of Democratic Transition*. The context of their theory discussion is focused on Eastern Europe and South America, but the theory is still valuable for evaluating Burmese democratic transition (Linz and Stepan, 3-83).

¹² Only an authoritarian regime has the possibility to be controlled by a hierarchal regime (*Ibid.*, 66). The officer corps sees itself as a permanent part of the state apparatus, deriving power from the functioning state apparatus, requiring a stable and functional government to retain the military apparatus. (*Ibid.*, 66-68)

¹³ Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy" *Foreign Affairs* 76, no.6 (2007): 22.

¹⁴ "Performance legitimacy" is the extent in which citizens evaluate the state's performance from a public perspective. Bruce Gilley, "Political Legitimacy in Malaysia: Regime Performance in the Asian Context," in *Legitimacy: Ambiguities of Political Success or Failure in East and Southeast Asia*, ed. Lynn White (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Company, 2005), 32.

¹⁵ The Junta is the 'military-as-government' described by theorists. Here, Junta describes both the State Law and Restoration Council (SLORC) and State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). Both were ruling military bodies in Myanmar from 1988-1997 and 1997-2011 respectively. The military rule during

this period is described differently from the Ne Win military rule from 1962-1988 based on the military councils, though some would argue it was merely an attempt to legitimize the rule of Senior General Saw Maung (1988-SLORC) and Senior General Than Shwe (1997-SPDC). While all Burmese governments from 1962-2011 could be described as Tatmadaw, the Burmese Armed Forces, a distinction is necessary between the military-as-institution and the military-as-government which was composed of leaders from the Tatmadaw.

¹⁶ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 5 and 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁸ Linz and Stepan, 77-79.

¹⁹ System blame was intentionally removed because as Linz and Stepan stipulate system blame is less important for an authoritarian government, especially in one where the political system, state, and the military-as-an-institution were perceived as the same (*Ibid.*, 77).

²⁰ Linz and Stepan describe three different types of international pressure, 1) use of force, 2) gate opening (which will later be described as what ASEAN attempted), 3) economic subversion, 4) zeitgeist, 5) or a hegemonic package of incentives and disincentives.

²¹ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 1-3.

²² Saw Maung was preceded by Maung Maung and Sein Lwin. They both served less than a month during the transition of power that culminated with Saw Maung taking control of the government on September 18, 1988.

²³ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 5.

²⁴ Linz and Stephan posit that only a democratic regime would be given breathing space of about eight years for economic improvements with the promise of elections on the horizon (Linz and Stepan, 79).

²⁵ Thawngmung, 446.

²⁶ The nation-wide protests became known as the 8888 *Uprising* because they began with students in the capital city, Yangon, on August 8, 1988 (8/8/88). The protests lasted for more than 40 days, ending on September 18, 1988 when Ne Win orchestrated a simultaneous violent suppression of the protests and coup d'état of his own government; essentially turning it over to a council of military rulers.

²⁷ Michael F. Martin, *US Sanctions on Burma: Issues for the 113th Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, January 11, 2013), 2, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42939.pdf>.

²⁸ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 5.

²⁹ Thawngmung, 447.

³⁰ Stephen McCarthy, "Ten Years of Chaos in Burma: Foreign Investment and Economic Liberalization Under the SLORC-SPDC, 1988 to 1998," *Pacific Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2000): 249-250.

<http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/217681711?accountid=14746>.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 235.

³² *Ibid.*, 234-235, 238-239.

³³ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 20.

³⁴ Stephen McCarthy, "Ten Years of Chaos in Burma: Foreign Investment and Economic Liberalization Under the SLORC-SPDC, 1988 to 1998," 239.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 250-251.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁸ Stephen McCarthy, "Burma and ASEAN: Estranged Bedfellows." *Asian Survey* 48, no. 6 (2008): 911, 917. <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/224229593?accountid=14746>.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 917.

⁴⁰ Andreas Harnsono, "Love at First Sight: SLORC Meets ABRI," *Inside Indonesia*, no. 52 (October-December 1997): 16. <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edit52/andreas.htm>.

⁴¹ Gary Keefer, "ASEAN Non-Interference: Neglected but Relatively Intact," (unpublished manuscript, last accessed January 14, 2017), Microsoft Word file, 2.

⁴² McCarthy, "Ten Years of Chaos."

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 262.

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- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 252.
- ⁴⁵ Emmerson, Black Swans,
- ⁴⁶ McCarthy, "Ten Years of Chaos," 253-254.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 253-257.
- ⁴⁸ Haacke, 189.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 190.
- ⁵⁰ Michael J. Green and Daniel Twining, "Democracy and American Grand Strategy in Asia: The Realist Principles Behind an Enduring Idealism," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 30, no 1 (2008): 19, <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/205223793?accountid=14746>.
- ⁵¹ Haacke, 207-208.
- ⁵² The Burmese government orchestrated attack became known as the Depayin Massacre because it took place outside the Burmese city of Tabayin, sometimes transliterated Depayin.
- ⁵³ McCarthy, "Burma and ASEAN: Estranged Bedfellows," 920.
- ⁵⁴ Association of Southeast Nations, *Joint Communiqué of the 36th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting*, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, June 17, 2003, <http://asean.org/joint-communication-of-the-36th-asean-ministerial-meeting-phnom-penh>.
- ⁵⁵ McCarthy, "Burma and ASEAN: Estranged Bedfellows," 920.
- ⁵⁶ Kyaw Yin Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34, no. 2 (2012): 204. <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/1221999231?accountid=14746>.
- ⁵⁷ See Haacke, 190-191; Ruukun Katanyuu, "Beyond Non-Interference in ASEAN: The Association's Role in Myanmar's National Reconciliation and Democratization," *Asian Survey* 46, no. 6 (2006): 826-828; McCarthy, "Estranged Bedfellows," 917; Robin Ramcharan, "ASEAN and Non-Interference: A Principle Maintained," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22, no. 1 (2000).
- ⁵⁸ "Open the gate (Linz and Stepan, 73). Diffusion (*Ibid.*, 76).
- ⁵⁹ Ramcharan, 82.
- ⁶⁰ McCarthy, "Burma and ASEAN: Estranged Bedfellows," 912.
- ⁶¹ South and Thawngmung.
- ⁶² South, 233-234.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 243.
- ⁶⁴ Thawngmung, 457-458.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 457-459.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 444, 457.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 443.
- ⁶⁸ Thawngmung, 451.
- ⁶⁹ McCarthy, "Ten Years of Chaos," 261.
- ⁷⁰ Thawngmung, 451-452.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 451.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 451-452.
- ⁷³ McCarthy, "Burma and ASEAN: Estranged Bedfellows," 924-926.
- ⁷⁴ Ian Storey, "US-Myanmar Defence Cooperation: From Disengagement to Limited Engagement," *ISEAS Perspective* (2012): 6.
- ⁷⁵ Mishra, "The Bear in the Golden Land: An Assessment of Russia-Myanmar Ties," 219 and 222.
- ⁷⁶ Storey, "US-Myanmar Defence Cooperation: From Disengagement to Limited Engagement," 6.
- ⁷⁷ British Broadcasting Company, "Burmese Analysts Discuss ASEAN Envoy's Failed Visit," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, March 31, 2006*, <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/460653571?accountid=14746>.
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- ⁷⁹ Mishra, 223.
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 217.

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- ⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 218.
- ⁸² *Ibid.*, 216-217.
- ⁸³ *Ibid.*, 218.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.
- ⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 219-221.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁸⁷ The series of demonstrations across Burma from August 2007 through October 2007 would later be called the Saffron Revolution.
- ⁸⁸ George Yeo, *Statement by ASEAN Chair: Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs*, ASEAN Secretariat, New York, USA, September 27, 2007.
- ⁸⁹ Wall Street Journal, "Myanmar Seeks China's Support of Election," *Wall Street Journal (Online)*, September 2009, <http://search.proquest.com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/docview/750094601?accountid=14746>.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁹¹ Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," 203.
- ⁹² Thawngmung, 457.
- ⁹³ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 5.
- ⁹⁴ ASEAN continued to be skeptical. For example, at its Ministerial Meeting in Singapore in July 2008, ASEAN was in a rare position to issue a strong rebuke to Burma following the extension of Aung Suu Kyi's detention in late May. British Broadcasting Company, "ASEAN Urged to Tackle Burma Issue," *BBC News*, December 12, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk>; Human Rights Watch, "Burma: Constitutional Convention a Façade for Military Rule," *Human Rights Watch*, July 18, 2007, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2007/07/18/burma-constitutional-convention-facade-military-rule>; Seth Mydans, "Myanmar Constitution Guidelines Ensure Military Power," *New York Times: Asia Pacific*, September 4, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/04/world/asia/04myanmar.html>.
- ⁹⁵ Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," 205.
- ⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ⁹⁷ British Broadcasting Company, "New Burma Constitution Published," *BBC News*, April 9, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7338815.stm>.
- ⁹⁸ *Ibid.*
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- ¹⁰¹ Association of Southeast Nations, *ASEAN Chairman's Statement on Myanmar*, Bangkok, Thailand, May 16, 2009, <http://www.mfa.go.th/main/en/media-center/28/1608-ASEAN-Chairmans-Statement-on-Myanmar,-18-May-2009,.html>.
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- ¹⁰³ Wall Street Journal.
- ¹⁰⁴ Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 42.
- ¹⁰⁵ Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," 209.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰⁸ Hlaing edited a book, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda*, in 2014 regarding reconciliation in Burma. However, all the essays in this book were written prior to the transition of power in 2011. Hlaing offers in the introduction that despite the liberalizations that had occurred at the time the book was published, the collective authors decided not to update their essay because each wanted their writings to reflect sentiments up through a few months after the 2011 transition (Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 14.).

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- ¹⁰⁹ Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," 204.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 209.
- ¹¹² Hlaing, *Prisms on the Golden Pagoda: Perspectives on National Reconciliation in Myanmar*, 56.
- ¹¹³ Hlaing, "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar," 198.
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- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*
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