



**Obstacles and Aid:
Strengthening Myanmar's
Nonproliferation Regime**



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Executive Summary

By Sinclair Prowse and Shelley Brandt

Since Myanmar opened in 2011, it has been developing relationships with the outside world. While the democratic elections of 2015 encouraged the Western world, several large obstacles remain, including human rights violations and concerns about Myanmar's relationship with the DPRK. After the Fourth Myanmar-US/UK Nonproliferation Dialogue in Naypyidaw on December 5-6, 2016, Young Leaders assessed Myanmar's relationships and recommended ways their countries could improve relations with Myanmar, with a focus on strengthening the nonproliferation regime. The following articles are a selection of those recommendations.

In the first article, Lauren Hickok looks at the future of US-Myanmar relations under the Trump administration. She suggests that the administration would do well to engage Myanmar on key issues including political liberalization, respect for human rights, limiting the illicit economy, and participation in global nonproliferation. She explains that a solid bilateral groundwork has been established, and that the relationship will remain sound if productive exchanges are permitted to continue.

Joanna Micah Eufemio discusses Myanmar's relationship with ASEAN and the potential for ASEAN to boost Myanmar's nonproliferation efforts. She argues that ASEAN and its member countries should be working harder to engage Myanmar on this task and could better incorporate the country in the international community.

Andray Abrahamian and Nikita Desai discuss the problem of closer relations between Myanmar and the DPRK. They suggest two areas of focus for the US to reduce this concern. First, tackle Myanmar's drug trade and long standing narcotics industry. Second, monitor Myanmar's democratization process and human rights concerns. They conclude by questioning US leverage to entice Myanmar away from the DPRK.

Brian Moore investigates ways Myanmar can curb illicit financial flows. He explains that the government of Myanmar is working to abide by domestic, regional, and global trade control regimes to support nonproliferation efforts. Despite these efforts, implementation remains a critical challenge, and Myanmar's financial system continues to be highly vulnerable to abuse by illicit actors. He argues that through coordination with the US, Myanmar can bolster its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing efforts.

Finally, Hyuk Kim takes an in-depth look at the Rohingya issue, explaining that this human rights issue is more complicated than simply granting citizenship. He recognizes that Aung San Suu Kyi cannot take action without the support of the general population and suggests several steps to alleviate this issue. Myanmar can facilitate dialogues to encourage diversity and understanding, and international support could be given in the form of humanitarian aid after consultation with the government to avoid aggravating the situation.

The Promising Future of US-Myanmar Relations

By Lauren Hickok

In December 2016, a meeting took place in Washington D.C. between US President Obama and Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi. The meeting reflected the recent transformation of bilateral relations, which had accelerated with the establishment of Myanmar's new government, led by the National League for Democracy.

The future of US-Myanmar relations under the Trump administration remains a mystery, and few experts have clearly delineated the stakes involved. This may be the result of the media's broader fixation with the future of US policy in Asia, which many deem to be at risk, perhaps even destabilizing to regional and global security. Despite the speculation, it is possible that absent a radical change in US policy toward Myanmar, present successes will continue apace. Recently, some experts have proposed that with the initial diplomacy concluded, an intensive program of new initiatives is no longer a prerequisite to bilateral stability. These experts may be correct.

Even if this is true, the Trump administration would do well to engage Myanmar in some way on the following key issues. These issues include: political liberalization, respect for human rights, regulation limiting the illicit economy, broad advancement of regional security, participation in the global nonproliferation regime, and advancement of policies that are broadly supportive of US counterterrorism goals. Progress on the first two topics – political liberalization and respect for human rights – must be sustained to avoid undermining current accomplishments or placing the entire bilateral relationship at risk.

The 2016 US/UK Nonproliferation Dialogue hosted by Pacific Forum CSIS demonstrated that Myanmar has made considerable progress in joining the global nonproliferation regime, having established legislation to implement international treaties, as well as taking other measures to prevent the spread of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons. This is of considerable practical importance to US national security, as concerns have surfaced regarding DPRK interest in engaging Myanmar's officials, experts, citizens, and illicit economy to advance its weapons programs. A variety of news outlets and think tank organizations have reported on this topic in great detail. In addition to joining the global nonproliferation regime, Myanmar has established a host of export controls in keeping with international standards, such as those of the Australia Group. Of all the countries involved in these workshops, Myanmar has taken an especially proactive approach. Legislation has been established quickly and Myanmar's officials have a clear sense of the training and workshops they need to succeed in the realm of nonproliferation. This is fortunate and also unusual. This may be happening in part because Myanmar's ability to make sustained progress on nonproliferation exceeds the pace that it can expect to maintain in systematically addressing and eliminating human rights issue. Regardless, prospects for cooperation on nonproliferation are good and occur as concern over the DPRK nuclear weapons program has escalated.

The US should capitalize on Myanmar's enthusiasm for joining the current nonproliferation regime, developing and implementing legislation, and establishing export controls. There is virtually no cost to pursuing these options. Furthermore, the greater Myanmar's involvement in the global nonproliferation regime, the more natural it will be for

Myanmar to distance itself from the DPRK, hindering DPRK efforts to sustain chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons programs. Myanmar has surprising latitude vis-a-vis the DPRK; US officials who have worked to transform bilateral relations note that the principal US objection is Myanmar's alleged support of the DPRK proliferation networks and not the fact that Myanmar currently maintains diplomatic relations with the DPRK.

Ultimately, success in advancing the bilateral relationship will involve pairing experts from the US and Myanmar to address these diverse issues in a way that advances US national interests – without unduly emphasizing controversial topics that are likely to prove destabilizing.

The US should emphasize a variety of topics important both to US and regional security. For example, pursuing a sound global counterterrorism strategy may involve a productive partnership with Myanmar. One terrorist attack in Myanmar, barely a week before the December CSIS nonproliferation conference, was cited as a motivating grievance in the plight against Myanmar's Rohingya, a historically marginalized Muslim minority that have been subject to a crackdown by Myanmar's security forces. At the very least, the Rohingya issue and its importance to regional and global security deserve to be better understood.

The US would also be wise to recognize that advancing the bilateral relationship provides the opportunity to counter or compete with growing Chinese influence in Myanmar and the region. This is especially important as Myanmar is located at the crossroads of Asia. The trade – licit and illicit – flowing through Myanmar is considerable and of strategic importance. By encouraging Myanmar to crack down on the illicit economy and smuggling networks operating across Myanmar's borders, the US could make substantial strides in countering proliferation networks.

Both the US and Myanmar must be lauded for laying the groundwork for sound bilateral relations. The countries can build on this foundation to establish new initiatives and productive exchanges, hastening Myanmar's political liberalization and tackling a variety of threats to regional security. As this takes place, it will be important for Myanmar to maintain the present NLD-led government, which continues to pursue greater liberalization and democratization while also maintaining a basic respect for human rights. The current relationship does not require substantial involvement to sustain the present level of success, which is fortunate. Ultimately, by placing priority on Myanmar, the US has a great deal to gain. The US could make progress on a variety of issues, including nonproliferation and counterterrorism, all while having a direct impact on the DPRK threat, maintaining a counterweight to Chinese influence in the country, and having a generally positive impact on the broader security situation in East Asia.

A Push to Bolster ASEAN Cooperation for Myanmar's Nonproliferation Efforts

By Joanna Micah Eufemio

Being among ASEAN's newcomers, Myanmar is still perceived by some as an outsider in the organization. Despite being invited to join the organization in 1997 and a successful chairmanship in 2014, there remains a prevailing perception that Myanmar is marginalized within ASEAN. With both the country's continuing process of opening up to the world and the improvement of diplomatic and economic relationships with its ASEAN neighbors, Myanmar is developing important regional relationships that deepen its bond to ASEAN. This is a slow process, and greater assistance from the region would be welcome.

While Myanmar's relationships with ASEAN countries have stabilized in recent years, uncertainty remains as to how political developments within Myanmar may alter this process. There are hints of brewing tension between Myanmar and its ASEAN neighbours on several issues. Most recently, strong contention has continued between the governments of Myanmar and Malaysia over the Rohingya people. As Myanmar takes a larger regional role, the world will be watching how ASEAN member states will aid Myanmar with its domestic challenges and how they will engage Myanmar to cooperate on issues of regional importance.

A crucial point of interest for ASEAN countries is Myanmar's steps toward nonproliferation. With its history of militarization, its open relations with North Korea, and its deep-rooted dependence on China, it is imperative that as Myanmar opens up to the world, it engages with the global nonproliferation regime.

What can ASEAN do?

Foremost, ASEAN, as an organization, can maximize the involvement of Myanmar in its multilateral initiatives. ASEAN has already given emphasis to nonproliferation in a number of strong statements of commitment and through the formulation of the ASEAN Regional Forum Work Plan on Nonproliferation and Disarmament, among others. Encouraging Myanmar to play a larger role in these multilateral initiatives seems to be the most natural step to take if ASEAN wishes to boost Myanmar's nonproliferation efforts.

ASEAN could also engage more in the internal efforts of Myanmar. In practice, ASEAN as an organization is prohibited from involving itself in its Member States' domestic affairs. A departure from this policy occurred in the recent intervention of ASEAN member foreign ministers on the Rohingya issue, prompting Myanmar to grant humanitarian access to the affected Rakhine State. It is too early to tell if this move will set a precedent and start a trend of intervention in domestic issues. It is also too early to assess if intervention, in this particular case, was the suitable method of action. This recent move has made apparent that ASEAN may loosen its policy of non-intervention, provided that Member States deem the issue pressing and if there is a reason on the part of subject States to allow such intervention. If Myanmar allowed intervention on an issue with disputed perspectives, it should be easier still for an issue where there is general agreement within the organization.

The second and equally important facet of ASEAN's assistance is the bilateral

relations of each ASEAN member with Myanmar. There are situations that call for bilateral cooperation, and not the direct involvement of ASEAN. For instance, Myanmar can look to countries that have relatively advanced experience operating in the nonproliferation regime such as Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. These countries can share their best practices and provide technical assistance in the field of legislation and strategic trade controls, among other areas. In addition, Myanmar may forge agreements with ASEAN neighbors, particularly those that it shares borders with (Laos and Thailand), to enhance cooperation on nonproliferation and border control.

The nonproliferation progress of Myanmar is directly related to its bilateral relations with North Korea and China. ASEAN states can help to secure Myanmar's long-term progress in this area by providing alternatives for Myanmar's foreign relations. Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia are among Myanmar's top trading partners and would do well to strengthen ties in other areas. Difficulties integrating into the international community may draw Myanmar closer to North Korea. As such, the utmost care should be taken so that Myanmar does not feel left behind as it attempts to escape isolation.

The ideal way forward for ASEAN is to lessen the risks of departing from Myanmar's current foreign relations dependencies. For Myanmar to consider alternate options, it will need to feel that alternatives are a plausible option – where any losses are offset, or at least minimized, by benefits.

Finally, ASEAN must determine the level of urgency that it will attach to nonproliferation as a regional concern. ASEAN member states must decide how much help they are willing to extend. And Myanmar must calculate how much intervention it will allow. As with most issues in ASEAN, solidarity and the way forward will ultimately entail carefully balancing domestic interests with the organization's objectives.

Myanmar-DPRK relations, a concern for the United States

By Andray Abrahamian and Nikita Desai

On Nov. 13, 2015, five days after Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won the Myanmar general election, the US Treasury put the North Korean ambassador to Myanmar, Kim Sok Chol, on the Specially Designated Nationals (SDNs) List. SDNs have their personal assets blocked and US citizens are prohibited from interacting with them. The next day, Pyongyang Koryo Restaurant in Yangon closed, denying restaurant goers their dose of mediocre Korean food and music. The sanctions were a strong message by the United States: 'Naypyidaw-Pyongyang relations rank near the top of our list of concerns in Myanmar.'

After two generations of military rule, Myanmar's historic elections led to the formation of a democratically elected, civilian-led government. The Obama administration played an important role in the transition toward democracy, gradually lifting sanctions, creating dialogues, and establishing technical assistance through an in-country USAID mission. Moving forward, the US would like Myanmar to take action on several important issues.

Two of these issues are complex, and one – the trade relationship with North Korea – is relatively simple.

First, Myanmar should work to better tackle its drug trade. Myanmar's long standing narcotics industry is a cause for concern. Myanmar is the second largest producer of opium after Afghanistan; production has more than doubled since 2006. Most of the opium is converted into heroin and exported into neighboring countries and then further afield. Moreover, opium cultivation also takes place in Myanmar's northern regions, meaning it is grown and sold in areas that are not controlled by the government. While this protects the livelihoods of some, it also fuels ethnic armed forces that have long resisted central control by the state.

Production and regional distribution of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) operations are also rising. The ongoing involvement of the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces) in the drug trade is a serious concern. According to the 2013 US State Department's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Myanmar has failed to "investigate and prosecute senior military officials for drug-related corruption."

Given the country's constitution, which gives the military a great deal of control and autonomy, drug policies by the new civilian-led government will struggle to address Tatmadaw involvement. Even a successful peace process would not necessarily curb production in the country's hinterlands. Previous crop substitution plans have failed to address this problem and though farmers are willing to grow coffee, beans take up to three years to produce – poppy fields will remain in production for years to come.

A second broad concern for the US is monitoring Myanmar's continuing democratization process and its respect for human rights. This is a pressing issue because of the violent crisis in Rakhine state and reports of severe human rights abuses against the ethnic Rohingya minority. Human rights groups are increasingly reporting the burning of villages,

rape, and sexual assault of women and children of the Rohingya Muslim population by the Myanmar armed forces. Complicating matters, other reports suggest Rohingya insurgents have links to international Islamic terrorist networks.

Former President Obama had on several occasions called upon the Myanmar government to take the Rohingya issue seriously, calling it an ultimate test of the country's democratic future. Over the past few years, the US has poured [over \\$100 million](#) in humanitarian assistance into Myanmar for internally-displaced persons, minority groups, refugees, and those seeking asylum.

In early December 2016, at the Pacific Forum CSIS Myanmar-US/UK Nonproliferation Dialogue, Myanmar participants voiced their position on the Rohingya issue. Emphasis was placed on the idea that the Rohingya are not a victimized 'minority,' but are illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh that threaten Myanmar's peace process. This view is widely held in Myanmar. The international community has been disappointed at Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi's reticence on the matter. Many had hoped the NLD government would do more for the Rohingya. It is difficult to see a breakthrough on this issue given the absence of sympathy for them, the lack of representation in the government, and widespread anti-Muslim sentiment.

Other issues related to democratization will require long-term cultural and institutional changes. The US recognizes this and the fact that constitutional change reducing military influence in government or a weakening of over-used libel/defamation laws (used to silence critics) will take time.

The third and final area of concern is Myanmar's role in weapons proliferation and specifically, the military's relationship with the DPRK. This is an area where the US hopes for a quick victory. The Myanmar government's official position is that there are diplomatic relations but no trade with the DPRK. Suspicions linger in Washington, however, given that Myanmar was an active purchaser of military goods from North Korea in the 2000s. A participant at the December dialogue noted that the old relationship was at best a 'marriage of convenience,' North Korea needed rice from Myanmar, and Myanmar needed weapons. It is possible that the Myanmar military continues to feel a connection to the DPRK as a fellow hold-out against US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region.

US representatives at the Pacific Forum CSIS dialogue emphasized that while a Myanmar-DPRK relationship is not a zero-sum game for the Myanmar-US relationship, the US is keen to see Myanmar sever all trade related to weapons with North Korea. Washington sees this as relatively simple: Myanmar could purchase weapons from another supplier and the US would not object.

From Myanmar's point of view, it is best to hedge and purchase equipment from a range of suppliers. This is an intelligent strategy that ensures Myanmar is not over-reliant on a single exporter. However, Myanmar does face limits. European and US weapons manufacturers will be unlikely to sell to Naypyidaw unless there is some resolution in the peace process with armed ethnic groups or on the Rohingya issue.

Given these constraints, it remains unclear whether Washington will be able to

convince the Tatmadaw to give up its old relationship with Pyongyang. US leverage is not as high as it was a few years ago. The US might be able offer the long term prospect of normalized military-military relations, but can't offer much in the short-term, given ongoing conflicts and related slowdown in peace/democratization movements.

The US will not be able to offer military material as a substitute, but may be able to offer training for the navy or border guard force, so long as the training could not be used in operations against ethnic armed groups or Rohingya. It would be able to generate a feeling of goodwill and trust to the Myanmar military. Will that be enough for Myanmar's top generals?

How Myanmar Can Curb Illicit Financial Flows

By Brian R. Moore

Myanmar is moving at a pace unprecedented in the nation's 49 years since independence. Downtown Yangon juxtaposes ancient pagodas with ultra-modern skyscrapers. The streets of the new capital Nay Pyi Daw are lined with five-star hotels. Young people spend countless hours on their smartphones checking Facebook. The government has made similar strides, adapting to international norms and standards at a speed few predicted. Myanmar is working to abide by several domestic, regional, and global trade control regimes to support nonproliferation. Despite many of these new controls, implementation remains a challenge, and Myanmar's financial system continues to be highly vulnerable to abuse by illicit actors. Discussions at the 4th Annual Myanmar-US/UK Nonproliferation Dialogue in Nay Pyi Daw revealed that Myanmar's officials are aware of existing deficiencies and are eager to coordinate with the United States to advance regulatory controls. The United States should answer this call.

Through coordination and cooperation with the United States, risks can be mitigated, and Myanmar can bolster its anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) credentials.

On the right path

The financing of proliferation is an adjunct to WMD proliferation, and identifying the specific AML and CFT deficiencies in Myanmar's financial system will benefit both Myanmar and the global effort to disrupt proliferation trade networks. Myanmar has demonstrated its commitment to this effort in several ways. Myanmar drafted the Control of Money Laundering Law (CMLL) in 2002 and established the Myanmar Financial Intelligence Unit (MFIU) in 2004. Regionally, it signed the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) in 2007 and ratified the ASEAN Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in 2009. Demonstrating its readiness to cooperate with the international community and join its efforts to fight against terrorism, Myanmar is cooperating with the Office of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) pursuant to UNSC resolutions related to AML and CFT. Additionally, Myanmar joined the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) in 2006, a regional organization committed to the implementation and enforcement of internationally accepted AML and CFT standards as set out by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This is a positive progression from Myanmar's previous label as a "non-cooperative country and territory" (NCCT) by the FATF in 2001 and the similar designation by the U.S. Department of the Treasury as a "primary money laundering concern" in 2003 under Section 311 of the USA PATRIOT Act.

More than just words

However, Myanmar's demonstrated commitment to financial regulation is only as strong as its ability to implement and enforce it. There are several areas in which financial regulations and oversight are deficient. Financial intelligence units (FIUs) play a key role in AML and CFT efforts, serving as the national center for receipt and analysis of suspicious transaction reports (STRs) and other relevant information. An FIU should operate

autonomously with timely access to entities reporting STRs and financial, administrative, and law enforcement information. Myanmar's FIU currently operates as a financial institution subordinate to the Ministry of Home Affairs and under the direct supervision of the Chairman of the Central Control Board (CCB), but has no separate budget from the CCB. In addition, its independence is hampered by the CCB's role in STR processing. Myanmar's FIU is further weakened by inadequate laws to criminalize terrorist financing. According to APG's Mutual Evaluation Report on Myanmar in 2008, despite more than 1000 STR submissions between 2004 and 2008, none were in relation to terrorism financing. Additionally, 2014 BMI Research found that only 20 STRs were filed by businesses between January and October of 2014, comparable to countries such as Iraq and Burkina Faso.

The reporting of STRs is pivotal in Myanmar's attempts to counter proliferation financing. However, weak regulation and limited coordination between agencies authorities have allowed many sectors to remain outside STR reporting and supervision. While the 1993 Myanmar Hotel and Tourism Law prohibits gambling in hotels, the government recognizes that several illegal gaming and casino operations exist near the Myanmar-Thai border, a hotspot for illicit trade and proliferation. These casinos do not submit STRs and their transactions are unregulated by the Central Control Board. Also, the more than 300 nonprofit organizations (NPOs) that operate in Myanmar have not been reviewed to assess vulnerabilities to proliferation financing and are not required to make their records available to authorities, including financial reports/balance sheets. Most challenging in this regard is the vast number of financial transactions that take place outside of the formal financial sector. Several factors encourage the use of informal systems to move money and products in and out of the country. These include distrust in Myanmar banks, limitations on opening foreign currency accounts and lack of foreign correspondent banking, government control of foreign exchange and wire transfers, and the dominant role of the state in banking. Cash couriers and *Hundi* (informal brokers) are estimated to be used by 85 percent of the population, instead of formal, regulated banking institutions. Because these informal systems by nature fall outside the AML/CFT regulations and do not report to Myanmar's financial intelligence unit, they provide a route for illicit actors to launder money and finance proliferation.

International cooperation

The challenges are great, and vulnerabilities in Myanmar's financial system require experienced consultation. Myanmar would benefit from training workshops with US governmental and non-governmental institutions that teach regulatory enforcement methods to related departments, as well as instructing all levels of banking employees how to spot suspicious transactions.

The US Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) could also consult Myanmar's FIU on tools needed to work with reporting institutions and law enforcement. Coordination between intelligence agencies would better equip both countries to identify individuals and entities suspected of proliferation and abuse of the financial sector, allowing agencies and financial institutions to target assets and block transactions. And to address the vast informal sector, the US Embassy in Yangon could host international FinCEN firms to teach local banks the new tools available for reaching the rural and unbanked in cost-effective ways while abiding by AML/CTF standards and regulations.

Tightening Myanmar's financial system to prevent abuse by illicit actors will be of benefit to not just Myanmar, but both the region and the global financial system. This effort should take greater priority in the new and fast-deepening US-Myanmar relationship.

The United States will also need to understand that trade regimes and enforcement mechanisms do not take place overnight, and careful guidance and patience will be key to any progress. As one senior military official and government advisor put it, "In America, you have spent over 200 years to get to where you are. This is the very beginning stage of our transition."

Solving the Rohingya Crisis: More than Mere Citizenship

By Hyuk Kim

International media and nongovernmental organizations have described the “area clearance operation” by the security forces of Myanmar in the northern Rakhine state as an “ethnic cleansing” or “genocide” of the Muslim Rohingya, a minority ethnic group. As stateless people, the Rohingya suffer from a lack of basic human rights, resulting in the denial of freedom of movement, forced labor, and limited education. For this reason, some argue that citizenship should be granted to the Rohingya to improve their situation. It is believed that citizenship is an important and symbolic way of moving forward on this issue. Unfortunately, it is simplistic to suggest that this matter can be resolved by simply granting citizenship to the Rohingya. Many have expressed their disappointment with Aung San Suu Kyi’s lack of political will to resolve the Rohingya crisis, especially given her track-record as a human-rights activist. But there are real challenges to be overcome before any citizenship option is considered as a possible solution for the lingering pain of the Rohingya.

First, social integration between the local Buddhist Rakhinese (Arakanese) and Muslim Rohingya is almost impossible. For Arakanese, the Rohingya are seen as a demographic threat. They are afraid of being outnumbered by the Rohingya due to their high birth rate. In addition, the two groups are culturally incompatible. They have developed distinctively different customs and social values based on their religions that are in direct opposition. In addition, some Arakanese feel marginalized in their community. They believe that most of the aid provided by the international community is helping only the Rohingya, while little attention is given to the fact that they are living in one of the most underdeveloped states in Myanmar. Violence between the two communities, which proliferated in 2012, indicates the difficulty of integrating these two groups.

Second, the general population in Myanmar, including the military, has deep distrust of the Rohingya that has recently been guided by fear of a separatist movement. For much of the general population, the term Rohingya is an invented name, not a historical name. They believe that there are few historical records with specific reference to the Rohingya. The failed attempt to annex the northern Rakhine to Pakistan and the Mujahidin jihadist movement by Muslims in the mid-1990s is unsettling for many in Myanmar. There are many people in Myanmar who believe that the ultimate goal of the Rohingya is the establishment of an independent Muslim state in the Rakhine region. In addition, the emergence of an armed group, Harakah al-Yaqin (HaY), which includes some Rohingya, deepened suspicions of separatism. Although the leaders of HaY claim that their motivation is purely basic human rights, this is still viewed with suspicion.

Considering these factors, it is clear that granting citizenship to Rohingya would not resolve the human-rights issues in Myanmar. There are layers of political and economic complexity that impact citizenship and the recognition of this ethnic group.

A political decision regarding citizenship cannot be made until there is strong public support. This explains the hesitation of Aung San Suu Kyi. No matter how strong a politician is, no policy can be implemented without endorsement by a majority of society. For this reason, there should be a gradual and pluralistic approach to address the Rohingya issue, to minimize possible conflict. It is important to give time to communities around Rakhine to

achieve social integration based on mutual understanding.

The government of Myanmar can act as a facilitator by creating an environment for building mutual recognition. Interfaith dialogues between the Muslims in Rakhine and Buddhists in Myanmar and education embracing diversity are tools to meet that goal. This should be tempered with the understanding that change is likely to occur over generations, not overnight. In addition, leaders of the Rohingya should also work to convince HaY to cease aggression, since it could lead to justification for further discrimination and persecution. Simultaneously, if Myanmar wants to make a global statement, the government should show greater political will to relieve the pain of the Rohingya. Human-rights issues are important for many in the international community, and efforts in this area would benefit the international perception of Myanmar. Granting citizenship to newborn Rohingya could have a positive impact globally as a signal of concrete commitment. The international community should work to better understand the intertwined interests of each community in Rakhine. One practical step forward would be the provision of humanitarian aid after consultation with the Myanmar government to avoid deepening grievances.

APPENDIX A

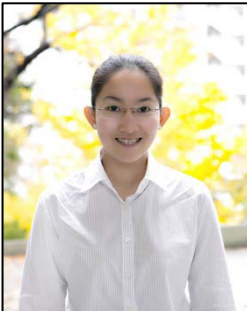
About the Authors



Andray Abrahamian is chief analyst for Exera, a risk management company focused on Myanmar. He is also associate director of research for Choson Exchange, a non-profit that provides entrepreneurship and economics training for North Koreans. He is an honorary fellow at Macquarie University, Sydney and a lecturer at the University of Yangon, where he focuses on Asian Development Models and the Political Economy of East Asia. From 2011 to 2016 he was executive director at Choson Exchange. He has a PhD and an MA in International Relations.



Nikita Desai is director for policy and corporate programs at the Korea Society and a Pacific Forum CSIS Young Leader. She served with the Asia Society and Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. She has consulted for the Asia Foundation, World Bank, USAID, Femmes Africa Solidarité, Alliance for International Women's Rights, and the office of New York Mayor Bloomberg on gender and social development issues. Ms. Desai holds an MA in International Policy Studies, specializing in gender and international development, from Middlebury Institute of International Studies and graduated as a Fulbright scholar with an International MBA from Spain's IE Business School.



Joanna Micah Eufemio is policy staff working in the Political and Security Policy Office of the Presidential Management Staff at the Office of the President of the Philippines. As a presidential staff officer, she is involved in the preparation of briefings and policy papers on political, security, and foreign policy matters for the Presidency. She earned her undergraduate degree in public administration from the University of the Philippines. She was a recipient of the Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship and has recently earned her Master's degree in Political Science in the field of international cooperation policy studies from the Kobe University Graduate School of International Cooperation Policy Studies.



Lauren Hickok is a senior analyst with extensive multi-agency experience crafting and implementing US strategy to counter the development and use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons. She has spent more than a decade providing expertise to the US Departments of Defense, State, and Energy, including State's Biosecurity Engagement Program and at Sandia National Laboratories, where she focused on international cooperation on biosecurity. Lauren conducts research and policy analysis on a variety of DoD Research and Development issues, including analyzing the costs, benefits, and core competencies of the \$67 billion annual budget that sustains the 35,000 scientist and engineers of DoD Laboratory system. Lauren holds an MA in Public Affairs from Princeton University as well as an MA in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and a BA in History from Yale University.



Hyuk Kim is a resident fellow for the Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security (NPNS) and the James A. Kelly Korean Studies programs. Prior to joining Pacific Forum CSIS, Mr. Kim served as a guest researcher at the Dual-use and Arms Trade Control Programme of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, research assistant at Export Control and Non-proliferation Program of the James Martin Center for Non-proliferation Studies, and international trader at Daewoo International Corporation. His research interests cover non-proliferation issues in East Asia, export controls, sanctions, and trade data analysis. Hyuk Kim holds a MA in Non-proliferation and Terrorism Studies, BS in Nuclear Engineering, and University Diploma in International Nuclear Law.



Brian R. Moore is a WSD-Handa Fellow at Pacific Forum CSIS. Prior to joining Pacific Forum, Brian was with the China Power Project CSIS and the Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China & the U.S. Brian analyzes China's foreign policy, economics, and the People's Liberation Army (PLA), North Korea, and illicit trade and terrorist financing in Asia. His work has been featured in Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, and many more. He is also a bi-monthly contributor to Asia Times. Brian holds an MA from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, and a BA in Politics from the University of California, Santa Cruz.