

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES
INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

A Change in System, a Change in Friends?

The Impact of Myanmar's Democratization on its
Foreign Relations

Anna L. Nicolaus

FIRST READER:

DR. FRANS-PAUL VAN DER PUTTEN
(CLINGENDAEL)

SECOND READER:

PROF. DR. MADELEINE HOSLI
(LEIDEN UNIVERSITY)

LEIDEN, JUNE 10, 2015

ABSTRACT

Myanmar's recent decision to embark on a democratization process came as a surprise to many in the international community; although the initial announcement of a "roadmap to democracy" was brushed aside by many, Myanmar has undergone great political liberalization and has begun to transform its political system. The aim of this thesis is to discover how the process of democratization impacts a nation's foreign relations. Through a longitudinal qualitative case study, this thesis aims to answer to what extent democratization has effected Myanmar's foreign relations with the United States and China. As geostrategic interests can act as a primary motivator for states to engage with one another, this thesis aims to disentangle the impact that democratization and strategic interests have on an increase in foreign relations. As the United States sees domestic legitimacy as an essential prerequisite for the formation of foreign relations with other nations, an increase in Myanmar's democratic quality has allowed the two nations to increase their foreign relations. By gaining leverage in the international community through an increase in domestic legitimacy, Myanmar has been able to fulfill its objective of practicing an independent and non-aligned foreign policy. While this has meant that Myanmar has been able to reduce its political and economic dependence on China, their foreign relations have not decreased.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables and Figures	3
Figures List of Acronyms	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Background Literature.....	4
3.Theoretical Framework.....	8
4.Methodology.....	11
5. Quality of Democracy	13
6. Myanmar’s Foreign Policy Objectives.....	19
6.1. Pre-Democratization.....	19
6.2. Foreign Policy Objectives under Democratization	21
7. Myanmar-US Relations.....	22
7.1. Pre-Democratization (1988-2003)	22
7.1.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations.....	22
7.1.2. Economic Relations.....	23
7.1.3. Military Relations.....	26
7.2. Relations Amidst Democratization (2003-2015).....	27
7.2.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations.....	27
7.2.2. Economic Relations.....	29
7.2.3. Military Relations.....	31
7.3. Analysis.....	31
8. Myanmar-China Relations.....	34
8.1. Pre-Democratization (1988-2003)	34
8.1.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations.....	34
8.1.2. Economic Relations.....	35
8.1.3. Military Relations.....	37
8.2. Relations Amidst Democratization (2003-2015)	37
8.2.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations.....	37
8.2.2. Economic Relations.....	40
8.2.3. Military Relations.....	46
8.3. Analysis.....	47
9. Conclusion.....	49
Works Cited.....	52

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The Eight Items of the MOT Scale.....	9
Table 2. The Seven Items of the LOA Scale.....	10
Table 3. Summary of Political Liberalization & Democratic Transition.....	18
Table 4. FDI in Myanmar by Country.....	35
Table 5. Major Export Partners (1988-2000).....	36
Table 6. Major Import Partners (1988-2000).....	36
Table 7. FDI in Myanmar by Country (2003-2015).....	45

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. US FDI in Myanmar (1990-2009).....	24
Figure 2. US Imports from Myanmar (1992-2009).....	25
Figure 3. US Exports to Myanmar (1992-2009).....	25
Figure 4. US Exports and Imports to Myanmar (2003-2015).....	30
Figure 5. Trade by Partners (2006-2010).....	40
Figure 6. Kyaukphyu-Yunnan Pipeline.....	41
Figure 7. Malacca Strait and Pipeline.....	41
Figure 8. Trade by Partners (2014).....	41

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMRDP – All Mon Regional Democracy Party
ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations
FDI – Foreign Direct Investment
HRW – Human Rights Watch
IMET – International Military Education and Training
KMT – Kuomintang
MNDAA – Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army
NAM – Non-Aligned Movement
NC – National Convention
NDF – National Democracy Force
NDSC – National Defense and Security Council
NLD – National League for Democracy
ODA – Official Development Assistance
PRC – People’s Republic of China
SLORC – State Law and Order Restoration
SNDP – Shan Nationality Democracy Party
SOE – State Owned Enterprise
SPDC – State Peace and Development Council
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USDP – Union Solidarity and Development Party

1. Introduction

When Myanmar first introduced its “roadmap to democracy” in August 2003, this came as a surprise to many in the international community (Jones 2014, 794). The autocratic military regime that had ruled the country since 1988 suddenly openly committed itself to introducing a democratic system in the country. While at first there seemed to be little embrace of this ‘roadmap’ as it lacked a specific timeframe, seven years later the nation held its first elections since 1990 (Jones 2014, 788). Myanmar had for two decades been shunned by most in the international community, it was labeled as a pariah state and subjected to heavy sanctions from many (particularly Western) nations (Taylor 2009). Yet over the past few years Myanmar’s international standing has seemingly improved; a visit by President Obama in 2012 was the first ever visit by a US head of state (Dalpino 2014).

The purpose of this thesis is to assess how democratization has affected Myanmar’s foreign relations. Particularly, this thesis will analyze Myanmar’s relations with two of the world’s most important actors: the United States and China. It will be evaluated if foreign relations with these nations have increased or decreased since the democratization process began. It will be attempted to disentangle to what extent any increase or decrease can be directly attributed to the democratization.

2. Background Literature

At the most basic level, a democracy entails a regime that satisfies at least the following criteria “universal, adult suffrage; recurring, free, competitive and fair elections; more than one political party; and more than one source of information” (Morlino 2004, 10). Democratization is a process that liberalizes a nation’s political system in order to become a democracy. The transitioning from an authoritarian system can come in different forms; for example, there can be a revolution, a military invasion from another country, economic collapse, or, as is the case in Myanmar, elites themselves can initiate a change in the political system.

In the vast literature on democratization, there are several domestic factors that may lead elites to democratize; however, usually there is a combination of elements, such as a demand for political change, being viewed as illegitimate rulers, and a willingness to change (Přibáň 2012, 109). When a ruling autocratic regime initiates a change in the constitution, this usually allows for the protection of interests by this group (Přibáň 2012, 113).

There are different arguments that have been presented about why Myanmar’s military government decided to embark on its road to democracy. There are some internal and external factors that help explain the transition. Internal arguments include the notion that the political liberalization process was merely an attempt at consolidating the military’s power by transforming the system to “indirect military rule with civilian window dressing” (Croissant and Kamerling 2013, 108). Changes in the constitution have “[...] solved the problems inherent in a change in leadership among the armed forces for junta” (Bünte 2014, 760).

Yet the argument of institutionalization of power has been contested, as some argue that there was no serious threat that made institutionalization imperative (Jones 2014). According to Jones (2014), Myanmar found itself in a position where it was strong enough to embark on this change; most military regimes only take power temporarily to deal with certain instabilities that a civilian government cannot adequately handle. As most of the numerous ethnic separatist movements had signed a ceasefire agreement, the military government felt that a transition to a civilian government was possible (Jones 2014). Additionally, the military regime was also able to guarantee “[a]dequate protection of personal and corporate interests and ideologies under the successor regime” (Jones 2014, 784). For Jones (2014) the degree of liberalization is proof that the democratization process is more than a mere ‘window dressing’ scenario.

There are also some external factors that may have contributed to the decision to democratize, however most scholars agree that these dynamics were secondary. The sanctions that the Western world placed on Myanmar began in the late 1980s, causing doubt as to whether this was the deciding factor to democratize, “[...] especially since Myanmar has other international partners like China, the ASEAN states and Russia, which render the effect of Western sanctions ineffective” (Croissant and Kamerling 2013, 121). As a senior politician of the former military regime stated, “[s]anctions and protests had made us look like a rogue state. Sanctions did not paralyze us. We could continue to rule the country for a long time even if Western countries did not lift sanctions” (as quoted in Kyaw Yin Hlaing 2012, 204). Even if “some liberalizing aspects of the 2008 constitution were probably created with the hope of better relations with Western democracies, this motivation alone cannot explain the political transformation we witnessed in recent years” (Croissant and Kamerling 2013, 121). Hence, although there is disagreement over the causes of democratization, most scholars point to internal factors as being the primary motivation to liberalize.

There are many benefits for a country’s political, economic, and social dimensions that come with the liberalization of the political order. However, as the focus of this thesis is to analyze the impacts of democratization on foreign relations, only the most relevant aspects of democratization will be discussed. Primarily, democratization brings with it legitimacy. There are four basic domestic aspects that make democratic regimes a legitimate system of power to many scholars; these are the legality, performance, authority, and consent (Holbig 2011, 168). The legality of a democratic system is enshrined in its constitution; the regime that operates under this legality then is seen to perform in a way that serves the common interest of the people (Holbig 2011). Domestically, legitimacy is enhanced as the state is expected to make collective decisions and that “[...] the least privileged will demand policies that give them more access to material resources, promote a more equitable distribution of wealth, and improve the well-being of the many, rather than the few” (Carbone 2009, 129). The authority in a democratic system is also understood to be legitimate as parties in a democratic system operate under a constitution and are the “rightful source of authority” (Holbig 2011, 168). Finally, a democratic regime is legitimate because it needs the consent of the people,

which is expressed through regular votes, or the possibility to express a lack of consent through mass protests.

Especially for Western democracies in the international system, these sources of domestic legitimacy that are increased through democratization also bring benefits with them when operating in the international arena. Western nations in the international community view democratically elected governments as more legitimate than an autocratic regime, as an elected head of state is a reflection of the choice of the people. Hence, it is often assumed (primarily by the West) that an effect of democracy is that it “strengthens the state” by “increasing international legitimacy” (Carbone 2009, 128).

Even in democratizing states where democracy is still incomplete, there is electoral pressure, theoretically making the government accountable to its people. Hence, especially in such states, there needs to be “at least a modicum of adequate performance” to generate a feeling of legitimacy amongst the citizenry, who are likely to abandon their support of the system if they feel there is no liberalization occurring (Carbone 2009, 135).

This domestic legitimacy as seen in the eyes of other democratic states not only has to do with dealing with a representative government, but Western nations by and large prefer to cooperate with other democracies. This is because many have come to see democracy as a system that embraces certain philosophical ideals and values such as the protection of human rights and peace (Fierlbeck 2008). The democratic peace theory stipulates that democracies are less likely to go to war with each other (Fierlbeck 2008).

Economic interests may also sometimes be better served by democratizing. Democracy has been widely believed by the West to promote economic development. If democratization has allowed the rule of law to take hold in the country, other nations will not be as hesitant to conduct business in this country. The rule of law should allow for protection of foreign investments in the country through the improvement of property rights for example. Democracies are also purported to have more liberal economic policies and open trade than non-democratic states (although this is not necessarily always the case) (Carbone 2009). This mechanism can then lead to a democratizing country to become part of global trade. Due to these reasons some Western nations (particularly the United States) are adamant about democracy promotion in their foreign policy.

However, it must be noted that democracy promotion takes a backseat to other political interests of the US (and other Western democracies). Security, stability, economic, and geostrategic interests are usually given priority in foreign policy (Risse and Babayan 2015). Due to these interests, one can observe close ties with non-democratic nations such as Saudi Arabia as economic and geostrategic interests in this monarchy trump reasons for democracy promotion for the United States (Börzel 2015). At times democracy promotion coincides with some of these goals; given the democratic peace theory, security may at times be better attained through the democratization of a nation (Risse and Babayan 2015). But several examples from history show that democratization can

cause instability, which can trigger concerns over economic and geostrategic interests, and in several such cases, the US and other Western democracies chose to support autocratic regimes rather than promote democracy (Börzel 2015).

Theoretically democratizing the political system should promote foreign relations (especially with Western democracies), as there is deemed to be more legitimacy in the authority. This domestic legitimacy creates ground to maneuver in the international community with more independence and the absence of pressure from Western states that call for democratization. However, in democratizing nations institutions are usually reformed and unconsolidated, meaning that they tend to be weak; there is little incentive “to actively pursue foreign relations in the context of cooperation within regional institutional mechanism” as the focus of democratizing governments is usually placed on more urgent issues such as avoiding “domestic problems that may arise following democratization” (Wirajuda 2014, 15). Yet, some democratizing countries will use a more active foreign policy, rather than look inward, as it can help advance domestic imperatives (Wirajuda 2014). As the process of democratization can be used as a tool to improve a nation’s image through fostering domestic and international legitimacy (Wirajuda 2014), this move may assist in advancing domestic interests.

When Brazil democratized in the mid-1980s, it made use of its new source of legitimacy to pursue an active foreign policy to remedy economic problems by forming Mercosur; this organization was to help foster regional trade, “[...] reduce economic dependence on the US, as well as to counter American hegemony in the region” (Wirajuda 2014, 16). When political elites initiate a democratization process, “[they] calculate that the benefits they could receive from some democratic powers (such as political support in the international organizations, increased trade quotas, technology transfers, arms sales, low-interest credits and so on) would help bolster their position” (Yilmaz 2002, 75). Additionally, “[c]ountries are required to democratize in order to receive financial aid or be able to open up to foreign investment” (Wejnert 2014, 262). This demonstrates that although democratizing nations theoretically tend to look inward, as they are internally weak, there may be pragmatic motives for capitalizing on a newly found source of legitimacy to further domestic aims.

However, not all democratizing countries enjoy legitimacy in the international (or Western) community. When speaking of democratization there needs to be a distinction between true democratization where a full-scale transition to democracy is the aim, and authoritarian regimes which implement “[...] limited reforms [...] seeking to stabilize power rather than implement full-scale transition to democracy” (Přibáň 2012, 106). Some nations, such as China, have undergone “democratization without democracy” by allowing some liberalization to permit limited participation by the citizenry, but under full control and execution of the ruling party (Přibáň 2012, 106).

While this type of liberalization is clearly not true democratization, and may lack legitimacy by Western nations, it must be underscored that the same four aspects of domestic legitimacy as discussed above, can also be translated to the international stage. Legality can not only come through operating under a constitution, but legality is also derived from operating in the international system

by inserting oneself into international institutions (such as the United Nations, or the World Trade Organization) and signing documents of international law (such as the UN convention on Human Rights) (Holbig 2011, 171). International legitimacy can also be derived from performing in the international arena through “involvement in the global economy” for example (Holbig 2011, 171). Furthermore, the aspect of authority can also be seen in the international sphere where countries cooperate with each other to further international aims; this can garner respect and thereby states are given authority in the international space. Finally, consent can also be seen a source of international legitimacy, as consent is given in the context of “external recognition by the international community [via] ‘alliance partners’” for example (Holbig 2011, 171).

When approaching regime legitimacy from this angle, democracy is not necessarily the only political system that satisfies aspects of regime legitimacy in the international arena. Autocratic China, for example, is a major player in the international arena, being a member of many influential organizations such as the UN Security Council (UNSC) (Holbig 2011). Furthermore, most political systems in Southeast Asia are some sort of hybrid-regime (or hybrid-democracy) that is neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic (Chong 2008). In many of these states there is a “[...] coexistence of liberal economics and illiberal politics or political conservatism” (Mukherjee 2010, 686); these states are still very much involved in the global economy, without having a democratic political system. Many states that are autocratic or have a hybrid-regime derive their legitimacy from these aspects of international legitimacy. Democracy promoting nations such as the US on the other hand place a larger emphasis on domestic legitimacy, which can usually only be attained through embedding a democratic political system.

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the effect that democratization has on foreign relations. Myanmar has been selected to serve as a case study. The primary research question of this thesis is: *To what extent has democratization in Myanmar had an impact on its foreign relations with the United States and China? Has democratization allowed for an increase in its foreign relations? Has democratization brought about a decrease in relations with either nation?*

3. Theoretical Framework

Democratization can have an effect on foreign policy, by improving domestic legitimacy. If a nation deems domestic legitimacy as important, then the democratization of another country, and the liberalization of the political system can cause an increase in relations between these two countries. In the eyes of Western nations, domestic legitimacy is best accomplished through a democratic political system (Holbig 2011). When a nation is viewed as being domestically legitimate, then this improves the nation’s international image (Wirajuda 2014). In the absence of criticism, condemnation, and isolation by other nations who protest a lack of domestic legitimacy (and democracy), a country gains more leverage to be active in its foreign relations whereby it can better realize its foreign policy objectives and strategic interests.

Domestic legitimacy is usually tied to democracy, as aspects of legality, performance, authority, and consent are best accomplished through a democratic political system. Hence, domestic legitimacy will increase with the quality of democracy; the better a nation's democracy is, the more domestic legitimacy it has. Of course definitions of what a 'good' democracy is vary. While indices such as Freedom House or the Polity IV scale could be used to assess the quality of democracy, some scholars argue that such indices can be "deficient and distorted" (Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 60).

Most scholars agree that there are three different components that must be analyzed to assess the quality of democracy; these are the procedure, content, and result (Morlino 2004). Schneider and Schmitter (2004) created a framework to assess the quality of democracy in democratizing nations; they analyze the mode of transition, liberalization of the autocracy, and the consolidation of democracy. The mode of transition, or the procedure, is "a political process of establishing or enlarging the possibility of democratic participation and liberalization" (Přibáň 2012, 107); this can be important as this may have implications on the success of democracy taking hold (Schneider and Schmitter 2004). Schneider and Schmitter (2004) have identified eight items that can measure the mode of transition in a democratizing nation (see table 1).

Table 1. The Eight Items of the MOT Scale

M1	Social/political movements opposing the existing regime enter into public negotiations with it
M2	There exist open conflicts within the administrative apparatus of the state over public policies and these are acknowledged by the government
M3	Formal legal changes are introduced that are intended to limit arbitrary use of powers by regime
M4	Constitutional or legal changes are introduced that eliminate the role of non-accountable powers of veto-groups
M5	A constitution has been drafted and ratified that guarantees equal political rights and civil freedoms to all citizens
M6	Founding elections have been held
M7	The founding elections have been free and fair
M8	The results of the founding elections have been widely accepted

Source: Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 66.

The second element (that of content) is measured by assessing the liberalization of the autocracy. The aim of this measure is to evaluate the political liberalization that has occurred (Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 60). Of course, different scholars highlight different political and civic rights that are necessary to measure this liberalization, but Schneider and Schmitter (2004) selected those points on which there seems to be most consensus as being necessary to accomplish political liberalization (see table 2).

Table 2. The Seven Items of the LOA Scale

L1	The regime makes significant public concessions at the level of human rights
L2	The regime has no (or almost no) political prisoners
L3	The regime demonstrates increased tolerance for dissidence/public opposition by social groups or formal/informal organizations (e.g., parties, associations or movements)
L4	There exists more than one legally recognized independent political party
L5	There exists at least one recognized opposition party in parliament or constituent assembly
L6	There exist trade unions or professional associations that are not controlled by state agencies or governing parties
L7	There is an independent press and access to alternative means of information that are tolerated by the government

Source: Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 64.

The result, or the consolidation of democratization, is clearly also an essential element to assess how political liberties are taking hold in a nation. However, for the purpose of this study, consolidation will not be considered, as Myanmar's democratization process is still in its infancy and certain measures, such as the evaluation of power rotation after elections (Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 68) cannot be adequately measured, as there has so far only been one election cycle, with the second general elections to take place in late 2015.

Once the quality of democracy, and thereby the domestic legitimacy, has been evaluated, it is necessary to decipher how the process of political liberalization has impacted the formation of foreign policy within the country, as this guides a nation's foreign relations. Although the literature is scarce on this topic, there are certain domestic factors that can affect the foreign policy behavior of a democratizing state (Wirajuda 2014). Democratization tends to affect a nation's institutions as these often undergo change when such a process takes place; in light of weak institutions, certain actors, particularly military and economic actors attempt to secure protection of their interests (Wirajuda 2014, 18). Such actors want to ensure continuity in the aspects of foreign policy that were beneficial to them. At times the process of creation and carrying out of foreign policy is enlarged when the political landscape is liberalized and more actors become involved (Wirajuda 2014). However, often times democratizing nations still vest foreign policy decisions with the executive (Wirajuda 2014).

The assessment of who dictates foreign policy in a democratizing country is important because it must be clear who is making decisions and what the primary interests are that are being pursued. If the executive is relatively unchanged and still in control of foreign policy, it will mean that the underlying goals of foreign policy may also be unchanged. However, if there is a change in actors or in foreign policy, while this may be a result of democratization, such changes may have caused an increase or decrease in foreign relations. Yet, the aim here is to decipher how domestic legitimacy and the overall improvement of democracy (not just the enhancement of decision makers) effect foreign relations.

Not only are domestic issues relevant but it must also be assessed how other nations view the democratization process of a nation. Although the majority of nations have a democratic political system in place, democratizing may not always be favorable with other nations. For example, although at the end of the Second World War capitalist states were very supportive of democracy, with the advance of the Cold War some of these democracy promoting nations “preferred authoritarian regimes over democratic ones for reasons such as thwarting revolutionary movements or speeding up economic development” (Yilmaz 2002, 70). Furthermore, Western states may prefer autocratic regimes if certain goals such as their “[...] economic growth, energy supply, or security” are at risk (Börzel 2014, 5). Hence, the US may increase its foreign relations with a country regardless of its domestic legitimacy and political system, if geostrategic interests are deemed more important.

As democratizing can enhance legitimacy and thereby increase foreign relations with other democracies, this increase in foreign relations can cause political and economic competition for autocracies that have had strong relations with the democratizing nation previous to the political liberalization process (Chen and Kinzelbach 2014). This means that countries that do not place an emphasis on domestic legitimacy and engage in foreign relations regardless of the political system can see a decrease in relations due to new competition resulting from an increase in foreign relations with other nations. Because democratization can affect a nation’s relations with other non-democracies, these countries may view democratization as unfavorable. Yet autocratic states will only undermine democratization if they see the democratization of another country as a risk to “their political and economic interests or their political survival” (Börzel 2014, 2). These risks must however be grave enough in order to trigger an undermining of democratization.

4. Methodology

In order to answer the research question a qualitative case study will be performed. This will be a longitudinal study to compare how foreign relations between Myanmar and the US and Myanmar and China have changed due to the democratization process. To compare the effects that democratization has had on foreign relations, the study will be broken down into a pre-democratization period and a democratization period. The timeframe selected is from the military’s State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) take over in 1988 (which is when pressure on Myanmar from the international community began to rise very sharply) until August 2003 when the roadmap to democracy was officially announced (Taylor 2009); the second period in study starts when the democratization process began in August 2003 until 2015. This thesis will make use of process tracing, as this is the most effective method to find a causal relationship between two variables (Collier 2011). The dependent variable in this thesis is the foreign relations of Myanmar (Myanmar-US and Myanmar-China); the independent variable is democratization in Myanmar. This thesis will attempt to draw a causal relationship between democratization and the increase or decrease of foreign relations. Some control variables that must be accounted for are changes in foreign policy actors and

objectives, strategic interests (including geopolitical, economic, and military interests) of the US and China, and economic crises that may have affected relations.

Myanmar has been selected as the democratizing country, because it is a special case. The last wave of democratization occurred in the early 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, causing an increase of political freedoms around the world. However, although there are now more countries than ever that use a democratic system, it seems that political freedoms have been on a steady decline over the last decade (The Economist 2014). Myanmar's military regime endured especially long compared to other such governments (Taylor 2012). The type of transition is also one that is interesting as it did not occur out of an invasion, the end of war, revolution, or any such circumstance, but instead was an initiation from the ruling officials themselves. Myanmar's democracy and foreign policies are evolving after it was labeled as a pariah state by most of the international community for the last two decades, which makes a good case to observe changes in foreign relations.

The US and China were selected as these countries well represent two different approaches; the US has officially long been a promoter of democracy and has been one of the leading countries to pressure Myanmar for political change. To contrast the US, China, a country with close ties to Myanmar, was selected to observe how a non-democratic regime reacts to a nation's democratization process.

First the quality of the democracy in Myanmar will be evaluated. This is necessary in order to assess the domestic legitimacy of the regime. If it is found that the country has not politically liberalized, there is no internal source of legitimacy for the regime. However, if the regime is found to be more democratic than not, this would support domestic legitimacy, an aspect that is apparently important for Western states such as the United States. To assess the quality of democracy Schneider and Schmitter's (2004) measure of democratization (see table 1 and 2) will be applied. The level of liberalization of the autocracy and the mode of transition will be weighed. Levels of consolidation will not be measured due to lack of data. The more questions that can be answered with 'yes', the better the quality of the democracy in the country is.

Next, it will be deciphered how democratization affected policy creation. Foreign policy objectives and actors before and during the democratization process will be assessed. Democratization may cause a change in actors and or policy, which can cause a change in foreign relations with other nations. However, if there are no major changes, this could signify that democratization did not impact foreign policy itself. If this is the case, any increase or decrease in foreign relations can more likely be attributed to an increase in domestic legitimacy that other nations recognize, rather than the country being steered in a new direction.

Foreign relations will be measured along three different levels; first political and diplomatic relations will be assessed. This will be done by evaluating the levels of political and diplomatic interaction between states before and during the democratization process. One aspect of this will entail a political discourse analysis, a process that assesses "[...] the text and talk of professional politicians

or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels” (van Dijk 1997, 12). Assessing the tone and language used, will shed light on the relations that two nations share and how relations evolved. Furthermore, the kind and number of political and diplomatic visits and ties will be analyzed. An increase in visits (and the level of officials visiting) and diplomatic representation shows an increase in political and diplomatic relations.

Secondly, economic relations will be evaluated. The amount of foreign direct investment (FDI), official development assistance (ODA), and bilateral trade will be used to measure economic relations. An increase in FDI, ODA, or trade with Myanmar marks an increase in economic relations. Furthermore, economic policies such as sanctions and trade agreements will be evaluated. By looking at these indicators before and during the democratization process, an increase in economic engagement will mark and increase in economic relations and vice versa.

The third and final measure of foreign relations will be military relations. Training programs, joint operations, and access to military bases are examples for military relations. Arms sales, although also an economic aspect, will be considered as a military tie. Any increase or decrease in these aspects can mark an increase or decrease in military relations.

A crucial aspect will also be to identify key events (such as the 2003 announcement of the roadmap to democracy, the 2008 referendum on the constitution, the 2010 elections, and the by-elections in 2012) and how foreign relations changed after each of these points. If an increase in Myanmar’s political liberalization or democratization is followed by an increase or decrease in foreign relations, it is most likely that democratization triggered a fluctuation in relations. However, geostrategic interests must also be controlled for. Such strategic interests can entail political, economic, or military interests. At times democratization and strategic interests may overlap, making it difficult to disentangle the two variables. The best method for disentangling these variables will be to look at the sequence of events; if there is an increase in relations, previous to an increase in democratization, then democratization cannot be held accountable for the change, but rather possible geostrategic interests. Hence, it will be necessary to identify the strategic interests that the US and China have in Myanmar.

5. Quality of Democracy

Before analyzing the quality of democracy, an overview of recent democratization events will be given. In May 2003 Aung San Suu Kyi, recently released from house arrest, travelled to the north of Myanmar when her motorcade was attacked in Depayin by a violent mob, leading to several casualties (Haacke 2006). This incident triggered criticism from some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), who pressed Myanmar for political change. Thailand hosted an international forum to discuss a ‘roadmap’ for a political transition in Myanmar (Haacke 2006). After an initial meeting, Myanmar declined further participation in such fora, arguing that political change

was a domestic issue. In August 2003 Myanmar declared its own “roadmap to democracy”; although no timeframe was given, the following steps were outlined to guide the process (Taylor 2009, 491):

1. Reconvening the national convention (NC)
2. A genuine step-by-step implementation of a “disciplined democratic system” that would be outlined by the NC
3. Drafting a constitution
4. Holding a referendum to adopt the constitution
5. Holding legislative elections
6. Convening legislatures
7. Formation of a government and constitutional bodies

The NC’s drafting of the new constitution took place from 2004-2007 and a national referendum was set for May 2008 (Bünthe 2014, 752). The first general elections, voting on the lower and upper house of parliament, were held in November 2010 (Reuters 2011). Results showed that the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), “an offshoot of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, [...] a mass organization with approximately 12 million members that was established by the SLORC in 1993 to support its political agenda” (Bünthe 2014, 752) won 76% of the votes (Reuters 2011). President Thein Sein (leader of the USDP) was elected by the Presidential Electoral College, which is comprised of two committees of MPs; one committee from the upper and lower house of parliament and a committee of military officers who also serve as MPs (Reuters 2011).

By-elections were held in 2012 to fill 45 seats that became vacant due to the appointment of ministers and deputy ministers (BBC News 2012). The National League for Democracy (NLD) who had boycotted the previous elections, won 43 out of the 44 seats it contested (BBC News 2012). The second general elections will take place in late 2015; senior government officials have noted that election observers from the EU and the US will be invited to help oversee the elections (Reuters 2014).

To measure the quality of the democracy that is being implemented in Myanmar, the mode of transition will be first analyzed; although the mode of transition is not necessarily important in the long-run, some argue that the mode of transition “[...] can produce relatively enduring rules that will guide the subsequent regime – determining not so much whether it will be democratic or not, but what type of democracy it will be” (Schneider and Schmitter 2004, 65). The more successful factors such as negotiations with opposition groups and the authoritarian regime are, the more likely it is that the democratization process will result in a liberal democracy (Přibáň 2012, 108). It seems that “negotiated transitions more effectively avoid severe democratic defects than system changes steered from above or forced from below” (Merkel 2004, 54). Myanmar’s democratization process was an internal decision of the ruling military government.

Schneider and Schmitter (2004) include the following eight items that help shed a light on the democratic quality of the mode of transition:

- M1.** Social/political movements opposing the existing regime enter into public negotiations with it
- M2.** There exist open conflicts within the administrative apparatus of the state over public policies and the government acknowledges these
- M3.** Formal legal changes are introduced that are intended to limit arbitrary use of powers by the regime
- M4.** Constitutional or legal changes are introduced that eliminate the role of non-accountable powers of veto-groups
- M5.** A constitution has been drafted and ratified that guarantees equal political rights and civil freedoms to all citizens
- M6.** Founding elections have been held
- M7.** The founding elections have been free and fair
- M8.** The results of the founding elections have been widely accepted

The first item, M1, is scored as ‘yes/no’. When the NC reconvened in 2004 to draft a constitution, 633 representatives of ethnic minorities, and some 13 individuals who had been elected in the 1990 elections participated in negotiations (Taylor 2009, 490). While several political parties were involved in the process, the most significant opposition party, the NLD boycotted the process in protest of the government’s holding of political prisoners (Taylor 2009, 494). Some important issues such as the demand to recognize self-administered groups were adopted in the constitution, marking clear concessions by the military regime (Taylor 2009, 490). While negotiation and concessions occurred, the non-participation of the NLD overshadowed the process, as their presence would have improved the legitimacy of negotiations. Hence, item M1 receives a ‘yes/no’ score.

Item M2 is categorized as ‘no’; this is because the system in Myanmar is highly centralized and the administrative apparatus is still largely under the control of the executive, which is dominated by the pro-military USDP (Nixon et al. 2013, 21). Despite calls by President Thein Sein to reform the system there is a lack of conflict on public policy.

The third item, M3, scores as ‘no’ because of the superior military role permitted by the constitution. Not only can the military take control in a state of emergency, but “[t]he army can also act independently to protect the sovereignty of the state and compliance with the terms of the constitution. This supererogatory role is justified by the claim that the army stands above politics as a ‘national’ institution and therefore acts selflessly for the good of the state and nation” (Taylor 2009, 498). Furthermore, the constitution introduced the National Defense and Security Council (NDSC), an 11 member body that is dominated by military men such as the commander in chief and the ministers of defense and border affairs (Taylor 2009, 502). The NDSC can place states, regions, or the entire country under a state of emergency and thereby rule the nation and dissolve the government until new elections are scheduled (Taylor 2009, 502). The legal changes introduced can lead to an arbitrary use of powers by the regime, rather than limit such powers.

Item M4 renders a ‘no’. The constitution reserves 110 out of the 440 seats of the lower house for “[...] representatives who are the Defence Services personnel nominated by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services” (Article 109 paragraph b). In the upper house, 56 out of 224 seats are reserved for the Tatmadaw (Myanmar’s military) (Article 141 paragraph b), effectively reserving 25% of all parliamentary seats. This reservation of seats becomes particularly problematic, as the constitution “[...] shall be amended only by a vote of more than seventy-five percent of all the representatives of the [parliament]” (Article 436 paragraph b). Requiring a supermajority and reserving 25% of parliamentary seats for the Tatmadaw means “[...] the army has secured for itself internal autonomy and administrative authority to override civilian power” (Taylor 2009, 488). Hence, a non-accountable veto power exists in parliament.

Item M5 is answered as ‘yes’. The constitution shows a vast improvement compared to the previous regime’s guarantee of rights. Freedoms of expression, opinions, peaceful assembly, association, culture, language, and religion are all provided under Chapter VIII of the constitution. It has however been criticized that rights are reserved for citizens only and not extended to everyone (International Media Support 2012). The on-going Rohingya crisis exemplifies this shortcoming, as this group is denied citizenship (Al Jazeera 2015). Furthermore, the constitution states that no civil or political rights shall be contrary to community peace and tranquility (Article 354), creating a possible pretext to crackdown on liberties. Additionally, the inability of Aung San Suu Kyi to run for president, due to her having (British) children that “owe allegiance to a foreign power” (Article 59 paragraph f) may cause some to conclude that not all citizens are guaranteed equal rights. Yet despite these issues that recently garnered media attention, by-and-large, citizens are guaranteed equal rights in the constitution. How well these rights are protected is a separate matter that will not be discussed here.

M6 is also answered as ‘yes’. Founding elections took place on November 7, 2010 (Reuters 2011). Item M7 however, renders a ‘no’ in this analysis. “The landslide victory of the USDP” party, are widely regarded by as “[...] the outcome of massive manipulations of the vote count” (Bünté 2014, 753). Western governments including EU members, the United States, and Australia declared the elections unacceptable by international standards, labeling them neither free nor fair (BBC News 2010b).

Although Western governments dismissed the results, a different tone struck by Asian nations; Vietnam, ASEAN’s 2010 chair, welcomed the elections (Khiem 2010). While Jakarta spoke of some irregularities, the government officially “welcomed” the elections and it was agreed, “[...] acknowledging the results of the Myanmar elections as the elections themselves were a step toward democracy” (The Jakarta Post 2010). Although there were calls of foul play, the elections seem to have been accepted by the international community. Five years after the elections Western states have not made calls to annul or repeat the 2010 elections. Furthermore, despite the NLD’s boycott of the elections, the party now occupies seats in parliament, showing that they have accepted the 2010 election results. It seems that the results are widely accepted, deeming item M8 as ‘yes’.

Next attention will be turned to Schneider and Schmitter's (2004, 64) liberalization of the autocracy scale, which is composed of the following items:

- L1.** The regime makes significant public concession at the level of human rights
- L2.** The regime has no (or almost no) political prisoners
- L3.** The regime demonstrates increased tolerance for dissidence/public opposition by social groups or formal/informal organizations (e.g. parties, associations or movements)
- L4.** There exists more than one legally recognized independent political party
- L5.** There exists at least one recognized opposition party in parliament or constituent assembly
- L6.** There exist trade unions/professional associations that are not controlled by state agencies/governing parties
- L7.** There is an independent press and access to alternative means of information that are tolerated by the government

As discussed, it must be said that Myanmar's new government has made concessions to guarantee human rights. Although these may not always be implemented, by placing these rights in the constitution, it can be said that a public concession has been made, allowing item L1 to be labeled as 'yes'.

Item L2 also renders a 'yes' as Thein Sein's government has shown that "[o]ne of the clearest markers of progress on human rights improvements in Myanmar has been the release of hundreds of political prisoners [...] since 2011" (Human Rights Watch 2015; hereafter HRW). In 2014 the government announced the release of 3,000 prisoners, including many political prisoners, leaving only a small number behind bars (BBC News 2014). This progress is in danger of being reversed quickly, "as dozens of activists and protestors have been imprisoned" in the past few months (HRW 2015). Hence, although progress is fragile, Myanmar has shown serious improvement in terms of political prisoners.

L3 is scored as 'yes'. Although there is room for improvement, the government has shown a surge in tolerance. Some may argue that the recent crackdown on student protestors in March 2015 displays intolerance by the government, and although true, it must also be noted that these students protested peacefully for months before police forces stepped in (Deutsche Welle 2015; hereafter DW). Government officials agreed to discuss the student's demands and a "joint agreement" was in the workings when the protests intensified (DW 2015). Liberalization clearly is occurring, perhaps not as smoothly as some desire, but progress should not be dismissed.

Items L4 and L5 both deem a 'yes' as more than one independent party exists, and a number of opposition parties are represented in government. Not only is the NLD represented in government, but also a number of other political parties such as the National Democratic Force (NDF), and several ethnic parties including the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) and the All Mon Region Democracy Party (AMRDP) (CIA 2015).

Item L6 is granted a ‘yes’. Much progress has been made under the new government, as can be evidenced by “[...] a major expansion of freedom for working people to organize trade unions, with legislative change allowing for the rapid growth of a legal trade union movement” (Henry 2015, 69). The relatively new Myanmar Trade Union Federation has even organized several commemorations and small strikes (Henry 2015). After years of repression, trade unions have been instrumental in Myanmar’s progress on labor laws and economic reform (Henry 2015).

Item L7 also scores as ‘yes’. Many indices of human rights and political freedoms such as Freedom House “underestimate the degree of democratic change” particularly with regard to media freedom (Brooten 2013). Myanmar is making great progress in this department. Some even argue that press freedom “[...] is now greater in Myanmar than in some neighbouring countries” (Taylor 2013). Laws concerning the media are being revised with the input of journalists (many of whom have returned from exile) and academics (Brooten 2013, 695). Restrictions on disseminating information are even too loose, according to some, when considering that social media has been a major platform for anti-Muslim hate speech (Al Jazeera 2015).

Table 3. Summary of Political Liberalization and Transition to Democracy Scale

MOT Scale	Score	LOA Scale	Score
M1	Yes/No	L1	Yes
M2	No	L2	Yes
M3	No	L3	Yes
M4	No	L4	Yes
M5	Yes	L5	Yes
M6	Yes	L6	Yes
M7	No	L7	Yes
M8	Yes	-	-

The liberalization of the autocracy has been vast and when the current situation is compared to conditions under the previous regime the difference is striking. However, Myanmar still receives criticism from the international community, particularly from the West when rights and freedoms are infringed upon. The progress made must not be underestimated, but it must also be realized that this progress can quickly be reversed. When considering the scores of the mode of transition, the progress of democratization is not as clear (see table 3). It was noted earlier that the importance of the mode of transition is debatable, but these results give an impression of how the direction of democracy is progressing. Myanmar’s constitution describes the political system as “a genuine, disciplined multi-party democratic system” (Article 7). While the liberalization of the autocracy has increased during the democratization process, the set-up or the mode of transition keeps the political system under tight control of non-accountable veto-powers.

Transitioning to a democracy from an autocratic regime means that a state will at least temporarily be a hybrid-regime (Merkel 2004). The coming years will show how well democracy will be consolidated. However, the difficulty of amending the constitution due to non-accountable veto powers makes it seem as though Myanmar is becoming an institutionalized hybrid-regime; as mentioned, this is neither a fully democratic nor autocratic system, but shares aspects of both. The different components of hybrid-regimes that most scholars can agree on: “[t]he democratic aspect corresponds to: (1) the institutionalisation of periodic elections; (2) which results in the formation of a multi-party legislature in which the opposition is represented. The authoritarian component, in turn, refers to: (3) the presence of few limits to the arbitrary power of the chief executive; and (4) frequent violations of the citizens’ political and/or civil rights” (Cassani 2014, 550). Although in Myanmar democratization has allowed for a great increase in political and civil rights, the ability to arbitrarily use power makes violations of these rights possible.

Assessing Myanmar’s democratization process has uncovered that currently the nation seems to be a hybrid-democracy. In its international relations, this means that Myanmar can draw legitimacy from both domestic aspects that pertain to democracy (Levitsky and Way 2002, 59) and the international strategies for gathering legitimacy (legality, performance, authority, and consent) that do not require a democratic system (Holbig 2011).

6. Myanmar’s Foreign Policy Objectives

6.1. Pre-Democratization

Burma¹ attained independence in 1948, but rejected becoming a Commonwealth nation (Taylor 2009). In the late 1940s Burma faced a (partially US financed) insurrection by the Kuomintang (KMT) (Taylor 2009). During the Cold War Burma found itself becoming entangled in a power struggle with the West and communist China, who was funding communist groups in Burma (until the late 1980s), fueling a communist revolt against the new government (Haacke 2006). In 1954, China and Burma signed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (based upon principles of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty), still a guiding document in Myanmar’s foreign policy (Haacke 2011, 117).

Burma was also a founding member of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in 1961. The goal of Burma’s foreign policy was characterized by “positive neutrality” during this time (Haacke 2006, 15). In light of the proxy wars of the Cold War and growing regional tension, Burma’s primary concern in its foreign policy was to remain independent and neutral to avoid becoming entangled in the Cold War.

¹ Burma was the official name of the nation until 1989 when the SLORC changed the name to Myanmar to mark a transition. Burma will be used to refer to the country prior to the official name change.

A coup by the Tatmadaw (Myanmar's armed forces) in 1962 brought General Ne Win to power. The country was on the brink of disintegrating, due to the demands of independence from several ethnic groups. The constitution that had been in place did not adequately address ethnic grievances; some groups had been promised independence, some autonomy, and others were sidelined. This internal conflict resulted in a military coup, which saw the country implement the "Burmese Way to Socialism"; the military consolidated its power by nationalizing assets and taking over foreign owned businesses and banks (Clapp 2014). Burma cut ties with most nations and expelled foreign organizations. A rise in nationalism caused xenophobic attacks on Chinese in the country, partially a reason for Beijing to support the Communist Party of Burma in their efforts to overthrow the government (Taylor 2009).

Burma's policy of isolationism was primarily by choice. Upon the establishment of ASEAN in 1967, Ne Win declined to join the organization (Haacke 2006, 41). By the late 1960s Burma's economy was in ruins due to isolationism and a mismanaged economy; the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank were sought out to help the ailing economy. Ne Win realized Burma could not turn its back to China and instead began normalizing relations in the 1970s. In 1979 Burma left the NAM as Beijing saw this organization as becoming increasingly pro-Moscow (Clapp 2014). In 1981 Ne Win declared that Burma was committed to an "independent and active foreign policy" (Haacke 2006, 15). The Ne Win period was marked with external forces that effected the internal instability of the nation, "Ne Win's overriding foreign policy objective was consistently and single-mindedly one of avoidance: to avoid foreign interference in Burma's chaotic civil wars, to avoid being forced to choose sides in the Cold War, and to avoid becoming embroiled in the postcolonial wars enveloping Southeast Asia. Surrounded by great-power competition that threatened to spill over into Burma, he held all contenders at bay and carefully balanced his relations with each" (Clapp 2014, 13).

In 1987 the UN categorized an isolationist and economically ruined Burma as a Least Developed Country in order to attain debt relief (Taylor 2009). Burmese found this humiliating in the international limelight. Amongst this bleak outlook for the country's economy a series of protests began in early 1988. Unable to appease the citizenry, Ne Win stepped down and the Tatmadaw took over to restore economic and political order. Protests continued which were met by military force. It is estimated that the 1988 protests saw somewhere between 3,000-10,000 civilians killed (Taylor 2009, 388).

The military created the SLORC to bring necessary reforms to the state. Internationally the SLORC was not well received due to the brutal repression of protestors; donor countries refused Myanmar assistance (Haacke 2006). But China, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, practiced pragmatic engagement under the good-neighborly policy (Clapp 2014). The SLORC declared "the establishment of a free-market sector in the economy, inviting foreign investment and opening the country to tourism" as well as multiparty elections (Clapp 2014, 13). Amidst the protests that were taking place Aung San Suu Kyi became politically active and led the newly formed NLD. She was

placed under house arrest in 1989 out of fear that new protests could erupt (Taylor 2009). Elections were held in 1990 yet, the SLORC refused to uphold the NLD's landslide victory, claiming that the 1947 constitution the NLD wanted to revert to would cause national disunity, as the federalist constitution would disunite the ethnically fragmented nation (Clapp 2014).

Although several countries were already refusing to grant soft loans and development aid in protest of the coup, sanctions were not widely developed by the West until a few years later. The SLORC needed to reintegrate itself into the international community after the isolationist rule of Ne Win; especially joining organizations of "likeminded states" was important, causing Myanmar to rejoin the NAM in 1992 (Taylor 2009, 464). Most foreign policy efforts were "[...] geared to defending the state from the consequences of the political pressure and economic sanctions that came to be directed against its managers" due to detaining Aung San Suu Kyi, repressing political freedoms, and continued human rights abuses (Taylor 2009, 464). Upon isolation by the West, Myanmar began to seek more regional interaction. In 1997 Myanmar was allowed to join ASEAN, a move Myanmar appreciated as it desperately hoped membership would help attain international legitimacy (Haacke 2006).

6.2 Foreign Policy Objectives under Democratization

Currently foreign policy is still very much in the hands of the executive, who are dominated by the USDP, which consists primarily of former military figures. The current foreign minister, U Wunna Maung Lwin began working for the ministry of foreign affairs in 1999; he served as ambassador to Israel and France, but when assigned ambassador to Washington DC, the US government rejected the appointment (Irrawaddy 2011). Instead, he went on to act as Myanmar's permanent representative in Geneva becoming foreign minister in 2011 (Irrawaddy 2011). Democratization can have an impact on foreign policy as new actors from the opposition may take on a larger role in foreign affairs (Wirajuda 2014). U Wunna Maung Lwin's appointment however, shows continuity in Myanmar's diplomatic representation. Aside from the ministry of foreign affairs, diplomatic relations is a core competency of the NDSC whose eleven-member body is dominated by the Tatmadaw (Taylor 2009, 502).

The objectives of Myanmar's foreign policy have also remained the same. As outlined in the constitution: "[t]he Union practices independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy aimed at world peace and friendly relations with nations and upholds the principles of peaceful co-existence among nations" (Article 41). Furthermore, "[t]he Union shall not commence aggression against any nation" and "[n]o foreign troops shall be permitted to be deployed in the territory of the Union" (Article 41 paragraph a and b). Other principles that guide Myanmar's foreign policy are a respect for equality among nations and peoples; maintaining friendly relations with neighbors; supporting and participating in the UN; pursuing international peace; opposing colonialist, imperialist, or hegemonic

behavior; practicing international, regional, and bilateral cooperation; and “acceptance of foreign assistance which is beneficial to national development, provided there are no strings attached” (MOFA Myanmar 2015). Clearly, Myanmar has maintained a steady course in their principles of foreign policy, as the core values of independence, non-alignment, and active foreign policy “[...] have figured centrally in the policy declaration of every administration since independence” (Pedersen 2014, 56).

Myanmar has since independence been committed to a foreign policy of non-alignment, peaceful-coexistence, respect for sovereignty, and most importantly, independence. Under Ne Win Myanmar chose to isolate itself, but since 1988 the government has reached out to pursue an active independent foreign policy (although often facing isolation by the West). The continuousness of foreign policy actors and principles during recent reforms can control for any changes in foreign relations that could stem from domestic adaptations due to the democratization process. As both of these factors remain more or less unchanged, any increase or decrease in foreign relations with states cannot be attributed to new players being involved with foreign policy or new guidelines that may steer the nation in its foreign relations.

7. Myanmar-United States Relations

7.1. Pre-Democratization Relations (1988-2003)

7.1.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations

Historically, as today, “Myanmar’s foreign policy towards the United States has been largely reactive. This reflects the regime’s understanding that while it wishes to resist US pressure, it has very little if any leverage to alter the dynamics and tone of the bilateral relationship” (Haacke 2006, 64). After the coup in 1988 the regime sought to open Myanmar up towards the world, but was met with isolation, particularly from the US. After the SLORC takeover, the serving US ambassador, Burton Levin, “[...] consciously decided not to meet with the authorities because it might confer a degree of legitimacy on their actions. When he finally did meet with [the authorities], there was agreement that there would be no publicity” (Steinberg 2010, 181). The US furthermore displayed their opposition to the coup by refusing to refer to the nation as Myanmar after the SLORC’s re-naming 1989 (Haacke 2006). After failing to uphold the election results, Washington heavily criticized the government and demanded a change in government; a call to honor the election results continued throughout the 1990s (Haacke 2006). When Levin’s term ended in 1990, Myanmar rejected the nominated replacement, Frederick Vreeland, due to his “strong human rights statements” (Steinberg 2010, 182); Washington then failed to nominate a new ambassador, thereby “downgrading diplomatic relations to the chargé d’affaires level” (Dalpino 2014, 27).

Throughout the 1990s bilateral ties were cold and little interaction between the two governments existed. Myanmar did begin cooperation with the US Drug Enforcement Agency on joint

surveys on poppy-yield in 1993, but was reluctant to cooperate on the same scale on anti-money laundering operations (Haacke 2006, 65). During the early 1990s an increasingly strong ‘Burma lobby’ began to form in the United States consisting of exiled Burmese and domestic human rights groups (Taylor 2009, 468). In 1995 Madeline Albright, then serving as US ambassador to the UN, met with Aung San Suu Kyi who had recently been released from house arrest (Taylor 2009, 468). At the time the regime in Myanmar had reconvened the NC to draft a new constitution; however, after Albright’s meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD boycotted the “undemocratic” process and no longer attended meetings, causing the government to expel the NLD from the NC (Taylor 2009, 491).

When Albright became Secretary of State in 1997, she worked closely with the Burma lobby, increasing US political pressure on the SLORC. The same year, Washington imposed travel restrictions on several military officers and their families (Clapp 2010). In August 1998, the NLD created the Committee Representing the People’s Parliament, grounded in the results of the 1990 election; the military regime “considered [this] to be an attempt to create a parallel government” (Haacke 2006, 66). They furiously “accused the US embassy in Yangon of orchestrating [Aung San Suu Kyi]’s political challenge” (Haacke 2006, 66). The US on the other hand condemned the SLORC/SPDC of having rejected a “historic opportunity” by not respecting the People’s Parliament (Haacke 2006). Political and diplomatic ties remained strained. Aung San Suu Kyi was again put under house arrest from 2000-2002; upon her release “Yangon again found Washington largely unimpressed” and instead the US pressed the government for a stronger commitment and to hold talks with Aung San Suu Kyi (Haacke 2006, 66).

The situation became increasingly tense when Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD members embarked on a trip to the north of Myanmar when her convey was attacked by a mob in Depayin. There were a number of casualties, but Aung San Suu Kyi was removed from the situation by government forces; she was then put in “protective custody” (Haacke 2006, 66). Although details are uncertain, there were widespread allegations of the government having hired the mob. The then Secretary of State Collin Powell attributed the attack to “thugs representing the thugs in power” (Haacke 2006, 66). This insensitive and undiplomatic language clearly demonstrates the animosity that dominated this pre-democratization period between Myanmar and the US.

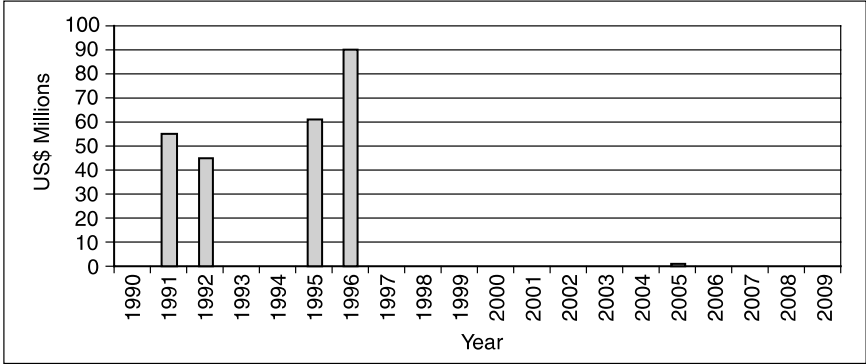
7.1.2. Economic Relations

Although USAID (US Agency for International Development) was not suspended in light of the military coup in 1962, by 1964 Ne Win’s government and the US mutually agreed to suspend further US ODA due to disagreements on projects and US disapproval on Burma’s socialist policies (Steinberg 2006, 224). Desperately seeking assistance, the Burmese government reached out to the United States in 1978, requesting aid; “[t]hat program, focused on basic human needs, lasted until the coup of 1988” when the US shut down the program (Steinberg 2006, 224). On top of suspending aid,

the US, a gateway to much of the international aid arena, “[...] since the late 1980s, blocked loans by the IMF, World Bank and Asian Development Bank” (Haacke 2006, 62).

While ODA was suspended in light of the SLORC coup, the US did continue to pursue FDI in Myanmar. Although some years lack official data, the following graph (figure 1) gives an idea of how steadily US FDI continued into Myanmar.

Figure 1. US FDI in Myanmar (1990-2009)



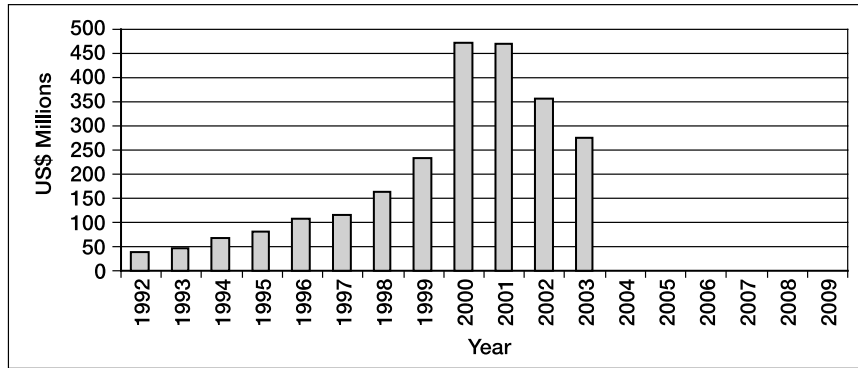
Note: Data on US FDI to Myanmar are not available for the years 1990, 1993–94, and 1997–2003. According to BEA, this does not reflect lack of investment. Rather, the data was “suppressed to avoid disclosure data of individual companies”. From 2006–08, Myanmar received no FDI from the United States. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis is in the process of reviewing the FDI data for 2007–09; the data presented here may not reflect the most recent estimations.

Source: *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32(3): 438.

Despite the missing numbers, it is apparent that FDI was not cut between 1988-2003. Total FDI by the US to Myanmar from 1988-2005 equaled US\$243.565 million, invested in a total of 15 projects (Taylor 2009, 465).

Bilateral trade also continued as the coup did not initially lead to sanctions. Pre-coup exports to the US in 1985-1986 were worth US\$20.77 million; from 1995-1996 this number sharply increased to US\$216.22 (Taylor 2009, 465). US imports continued to grow throughout the 1990s (see figure 2). Myanmar was proving to be a country with vast natural resources and a low wage workforce, beneficial conditions for US companies to invest in the nation.

Figure 2. US Imports from Myanmar (1992-2009)

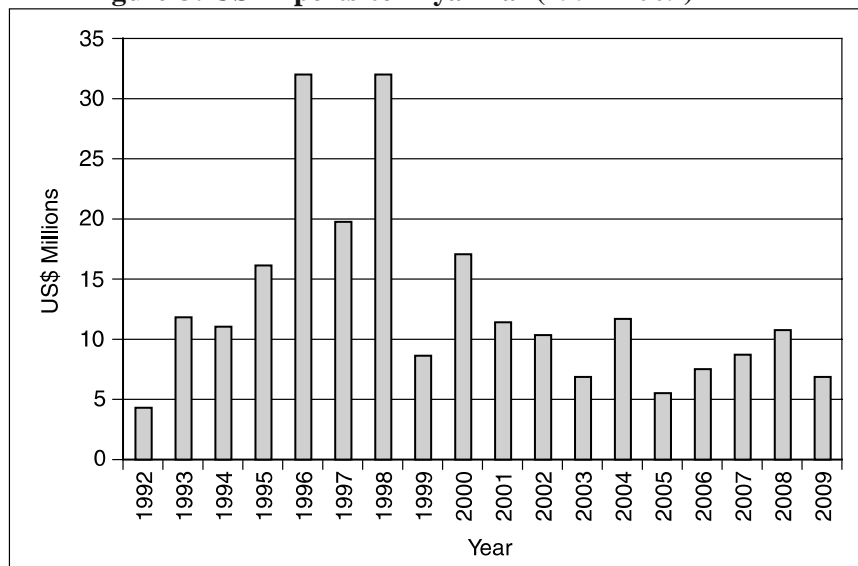


- Notes: 1. US imports from Myanmar increased 616 per cent during 1992–2003, from \$38.5 million to \$275.5 million.
 2. In 2003, President Bush signed Executive Order 13310, which bans all imports from Myanmar. US imports from Myanmar were zero during 2004–08 and \$0.1 million in 2009.

Source: *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32(3): 438.

US exports remained strong throughout the 1990s (see figure 3). However, due to increasing political pressure, some US companies began withdrawing from Myanmar previous to sanctions. Pepsi Cola was one of the last large US companies to leave Myanmar in 1996 (Taylor 2009, 467). Frustrated with a lack of action by the federal government, some US states and cities, including Massachusetts, New York, and San Francisco imposed their own restrictions on conducting business with Myanmar (Dalpino 2014, 27). As the Burma lobby continued to pressure the Clinton administration, Washington began to impose sanctions. In 1997, under Executive Order no. 13047, any new investments by US individuals or companies in Myanmar were banned (Steinberg 2010, 181).

Figure 3. US Exports to Myanmar (1992-2009)



Note: US exports to Myanmar decreased 59.6 per cent during 2000–09, from \$17 million to \$6.9 million.

Source *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 32(3): 437.

A drastic drop in bilateral economic relations occurred in 2003 (see figure 2). This is when former president George W. Bush imposed new sanctions on Myanmar in reaction to the Depayin incident. In July 2003, US Congress passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, preventing Myanmar from making use of the US banking system, tightening travel restrictions for military officials and Myanmar government employees, and freezing Myanmar's assets in the US (Steinberg 2010). Furthermore, “[a]ll Burmese imports into the US were stopped – including textile imports, which had amounted to some US\$356 million annually” (Steinberg 2010, 182).

7.1.3. Military Relations

Myanmar and the US do not share a great history of military alliances. As mentioned, the United States covertly supported KMT forces that had fled into Burma's territory after WWII. The US ceased KMT funding several years later. Yet despite this animosity, the US had a record of training Burmese military officers in the United States. In between 1948-1962 1,277 military officers (and a number of other ranks) received international military education and training (IMET) from the US (Riley and Balaram 2013, 114). These 1,277 accounted for 66.3% of all the military personnel that received training abroad during the mentioned time frame (Riley and Balaram 2013, 114). From 1979-1988 the US was also the largest provider of IMET to Tatmadaw officers, training an average of 40 officers a year (Riley and Balaram 2013, 115). The US IMET program in Myanmar was deemed necessary as it could protect political, security, and economic interests; by professionalizing the military, and exposing them to the US system, the IMET program could “encourage democratization” (Riley and Balaram 2013, 112).

All forms of training support and cooperation immediately ceased with the 1988 coup and the US immediately imposed an arms embargo on Myanmar (Steinberg 2006). Only low-level cooperation on drug operations between the two armies existed for the rest of the century. As the US was struggling with a heroin problem in the early 1990s, “[...] the United States supplied equipment and helicopters to carry out narcotics surveillance and interdiction. The equipment was to be used solely for antinarcotics activities, but it became apparent that it was used against the Karen rebels, who shot one down, and also used to transport military officials on non-narcotics-related trips” (Steinberg 2006, 224). Notwithstanding the tense relations between the US and Myanmar, the US chose to keep military attachés in their embassy “providing a modest but desirable avenue of professional contact between the two militaries”, unlike the EU who withdrew all such personnel in 1996 (Steinberg 2010, 181). Relations remained cold and at low levels for the remainder of the century.

7.2. Relations Amidst Democratization (2003-2015)

7.2.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations

Upon the announcement of the roadmap to democracy in August 2003 the US showed no sign of encouragement or satisfaction, most likely due to the Depayin incident, which triggered a row of sanctions. Within days of the announcement, the US stated that Aung San Suu Kyi “had gone on hunger strike”, a claim that was proven to be false by the International Committee of the Red Cross (Haacke 2006, 68). Failure to acknowledge the roadmap and broadcasting false information deeply disappointed the Myanmar government. In October 2004, after a political shuffle, Myanmar recalled its ambassador from Washington (Steinberg 2010); the US then refused to exchange ambassadors for nearly a decade.

Relations continued to degrade, and US language towards Myanmar became increasingly harsh and undiplomatic. In January 2005 Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice fell just short of naming Myanmar as a part of the “axis of evil”, instead calling Myanmar an “outpost of tyranny” (Dalpino 2014, 27). Just a few months later in, in June, the Deputy Secretary of State called Myanmar “[...] a ‘cancer’ that could spread to the wider region” (Haacke 2006, 70). Rice furthered her criticism by condemning “Asian nations for not speaking out against the Yangon regime” (Haacke 2006, 71). Following Rice’s trajectory, President Bush said the “people of Burma live in the darkness of tyranny” (as cited in Haacke 2006, 71). To top off a year of diplomatic condemnation and humiliation for Myanmar, in December, the US successfully pushed for an informal UNSC discussion on Myanmar’s political and humanitarian situation (Haacke 2006, 72). The SPDC had little leverage and few responses to this diplomatic offensive against them other than dismissing criticism.

The so-called 2007 Saffron Revolution (a series of protests led by monks) was met with a heavy hand by the Tatmadaw. While attending a meeting of the UN, “[...] Rice said America was ‘watching very carefully’ the protests and denounced Burma’s ‘brutal regime’ (BBC News 2007). The US and the UK had already brought Myanmar’s human rights abuses to the UNSC in January 2007, several months before the protests began, but China and Russia vetoed sanctions against the nation (Steinberg 2010). After the Saffron Revolution, the US was not successful at placing Myanmar on the UNSC agenda to condemn the crackdown.

Politically, the relationship continued to degrade; in late April 2008 the SPDC published the new constitution and announced a national referendum on the document for May 10 (BBC News 2008a). On May 3 Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar causing huge devastation and an emergency crisis. The international community quickly offered assistance, but local authorities refused to let foreign aid agencies enter the country (BBC News 2008a). First Lady, Laura Bush, in a speech said that the referendum should not go ahead, and if it does it “[...] should not be seen as a step toward freedom, but rather as a confirmation of the unacceptable status quo” (The Guardian 2008b). However, the

referendum went ahead with an apparent voter turnout of 99%, of which 92.4% voted for the document; the results were dismissed by the US (BBC News 2008b).

When Obama took office in 2009, the administration immediately began to place greater emphasis on East Asia than the previous two administrations had. While the refocus to Asia was already stated in 2009, the terminology of the US Pivot was first used in 2011 when an official policy was outlined that highlighted a diplomatic, economic, and strategic investment in Asia (Wei 2013). Obama announced that his administration would try to approach Myanmar in a more pragmatic vein (Clapp 2010). In August 2009 the first visit by a US congressman to Myanmar took place; in November Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell also visited the nation and spoke to government officials, opposition members, and minority representatives (Clapp 2010).

The first elections under the new constitution in November 2010 were widely regarded as a sham by the international community. A White House statement by Obama noted that “[...] the vote had not met ‘any of the internationally accepted standards associated with legitimate elections’, and called for the immediate release of Ms Suu Kyi and all other political prisoners in Burma” (BBC News 2010b). Yet the tide began to turn quickly. After the government released 240 political prisoners in October 2011 and Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest in November 2010, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Myanmar in December 2011, the first secretary of state to do so since 1955 (Schoff 2014, 45). The April 2012 by-elections were endorsed by Washington and met with congratulatory remarks. Upon the results Clinton noted, “[e]ven the most repressive regimes can reform, and even the most closed societies can open” and promised continued US support for democratization (Huffington Post 2012). Furthermore, she announced an engagement plan with several steps such as exchanging ambassadors; in June Derek Mitchell was sent to Myanmar as the first ambassador since the coup (Schoff 2014).

Allowed to travel abroad for the first time since returning to Myanmar, Aung San Suu Kyi visited the White House and met with Obama in September (Schoff 2014). The ultimate warming of diplomatic relations came a few months after the April by-elections, in November 2012 when Obama became the first US president to visit Myanmar (Schoff 2014). President Thein Sein visited the White House in 2013, marking the first visit of a president of Myanmar since 1966 (The Guardian 2013). This visit was particularly discernible, as Obama went against US protocol, addressing Myanmar by its official name instead of Burma (The Guardian 2013). Obama repeated the historic visit to Myanmar two years later in November 2014. On this visit however, Obama addressed certain issues that were hinting at a regression of democratic progress; critique was voiced over the failure to amend the constitution, which currently prohibits Aung San Suu Kyi to run for president. Additionally Obama made veiled references to the Rohingya crisis occurring in Rakhine state (The New York Times 2014). As this situation has increasingly worsened, the US has urged Myanmar to take part in relieving this humanitarian crisis, making the political and social conditions in Myanmar responsible for the crisis (The New York Times 2015).

7.2.2. Economic Relations

The announcement of the roadmap did little to change the bilateral relationship, as Washington imposed new sanctions in 2003 following the Depayin incident. The Saffron Revolution led to even further sanctions by the Bush administration. The president signed Executive Order 13348, expanding asset freezes onto those held responsible for corruption and human rights abuses in Myanmar; furthermore, assets were frozen of those who financially or materially sustained the government (Steinberg 2010). Even before Cyclone Nargis hit in May 2008, President Bush ordered more sanctions (in the form of asset freezing) with the signing of Executive Order 13464 (Steinberg 2010). Sanctions were tightened even further in July when congress passed the “Block Burmese JADE (Junta’s Anti-Democratic Efforts) Bill” prohibiting jade and ruby imports, even if processed in another country (HRW 2008).

The US did grant aid in light of Nargis, and also allowed remittances to be sent to Myanmar (Steinberg 2010). In the years of “[p]ost-Nargis, modest amounts of USAID funding were allocated to civil society groups in Myanmar for a range of humanitarian activities” (2013, 52). ODA for 2011-2012, allocated to humanitarian, democracy, and health activities, totaled at US\$38 million (Rieffel and Fox 2013, 52). A breakthrough in the aid relationship occurred in 2012 after the by-elections. Upon Obama’s visit in November, the USAID office was re-opened in Myanmar, and a total of US\$170 million was pledged for the following two years (Schoff 2014, 46). Official figures show that US ODA in 2013 totaled US\$53.763 million, and in 2014 US\$65.527 million (ForeignAssistance.Gov 2015). This money was primarily spent on humanitarian projects, democracy building, and peace and reconciliation projects (Rieffel and Fox 2013, 53). Until March 2015, total humanitarian assistance to Myanmar by the US government has been US\$9.505 million (USAID 2015, 4).

FDI from the US into Myanmar from 2004-2005 was negative (see figure 1) meaning the profits of investments exceeded any new investment. From 2006-2008 the United States did not make any FDI in Myanmar. This lack of investment is due to the heavy sanctions that were placed on Myanmar, and the stigma attached to investing in a country that was seen as undemocratic and accused of violating human rights. The most recent numbers of US FDI inflows into Myanmar are from 2011 and 2012, which amounted to US\$1 million annually (United States Trade Representative 2014; hereafter USTR).

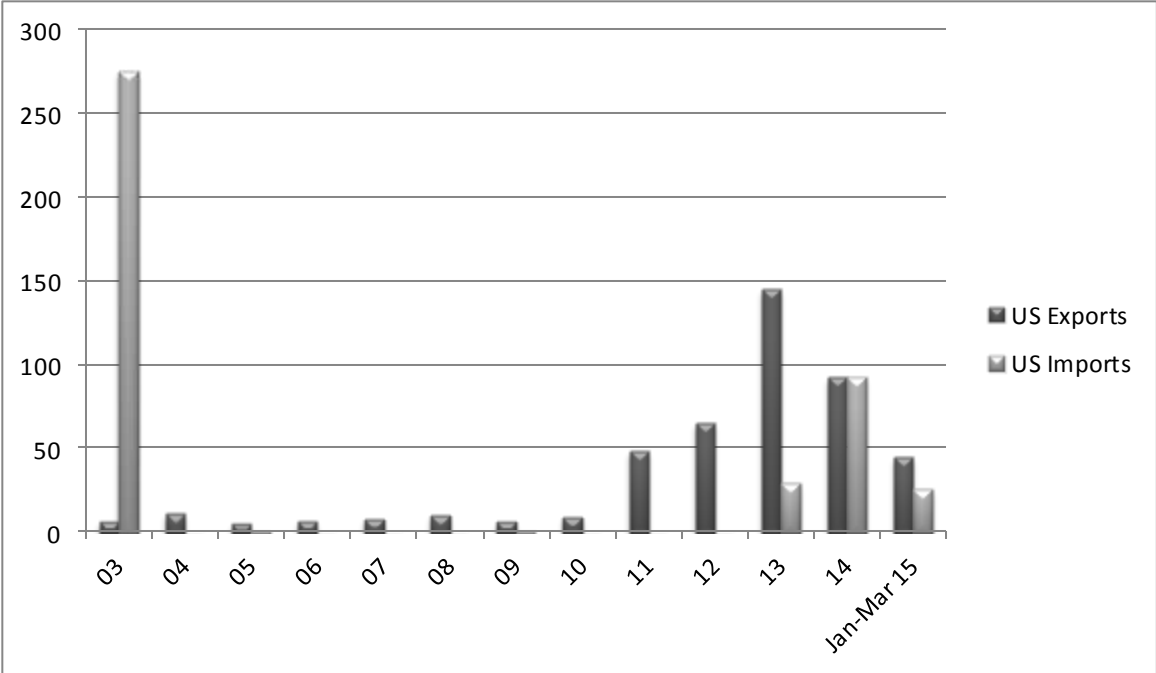
Investment numbers slowly increased (see table 7) as Washington began retracting sanctions; in July 2012, two months after the by-elections, Obama lifted the ban on new investments and the restrictions on providing financial services to Myanmar were loosened; this was followed by an opening of US government financial provision and US support of financial assistance from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (Schoff 2014, 46). By November 2012, the import ban was also uplifted, with the exception of rubies and jadeite (Schoff 2014, 46). In 2013 a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement was signed, “[...] creating a

platform for ongoing dialogue and cooperation on trade and investment issues [...] the two governments will work together to identify initiatives that support the ongoing reform process and development activities” (USTR 2014). In early 2014 Washington made short-term and mid-term financing through the Export-Import Bank of the United States available (Schoff 2014, 46).

Since these steps a number of companies (such as PepsiCo, Microsoft, Coca Cola and Visa) have entered Myanmar (Schoff 2014, 47). Easing sanctions has increased both imports and exports (see figure 4). Yet, unlike the EU and other Western nations, the US has retained certain restrictions that make investment tedious. While US citizens are allowed to invest in Myanmar, anyone “[...] who invests \$500,000 or more in Burma, or invests in Burma’s oil & gas sectors, is required to complete the [Responsible Investment] reporting requirements” (Embassy of the United States 2015). Under the Responsible Investment scheme, companies must report regularly on human rights, labor rights, environmental standards, corruption levels, and other issues. There are additional restrictions on US citizens and companies investing in Myanmar, such as the inability to invest in a company that is owned by the military, or by individuals who are on a Specially Designated Nationals list (consisting mainly of military officials held accountable for human rights violations) (Schoff 2014).

These restrictions and the necessity to report regularly in detail to Washington has led to only “a very small scale” investment by the US in comparison to other states (see table 7). Yet, the US sees these restrictions as necessary, in order to retain certain political leverage with the government.

Figure 4. US Exports and Imports to Myanmar (2003-March 2015; in US\$ millions)



Source: United States Census Bureau.

7.2.3. Military Relations

Military-to-military relations continue to be minimal between Myanmar and the US. Other than sending assistance after Nargis, interaction has been insignificant. Since 2012 few interactions have occurred: “[p]articipation in the first two annual US-Burma Human Rights Dialogues in Naypyidaw in October 2012 and informal pull-aside meetings with Burmese counterparts at multilateral forums like the ASEAN Defense Minister’s Meeting” (Schoff 2014, 48); cooperation on missing US soldiers from WWII and workshops and exchanges that aim to promote international norms, civilian control, and rule of law (Schoff 2014). Furthermore, the US invited Myanmar to observe the annual US-Thai Cobra Gold Exercise in 2013 and 2014 (Schoff 2014). In 2015 Myanmar did not attend the meeting, this may however be due to a scale back after the military coup in Thailand, rather than a turning of the US-Myanmar relationship. There have apparently been unofficial remarks stating the US would potentially allow arms sales if Myanmar shows improvements on human rights issues (The Irrawaddy 2014).

7.3 Analysis

Clearly, there has been an increase in foreign relations between Myanmar and the United States in recent years. Politically, economically, and militarily ties continued to worsen during the 1990s and the early 2000s. Because the United States places a large emphasis on domestic legitimacy, namely that the government operates within certain parameters of legality, performs for the benefit of its people, has the rightful authority, and has the consent of the people (Holbig 2011), it refused to interact with Myanmar, as it did not fulfill these criteria to the satisfaction of the US. The 1988 coup was illegal in the eyes of Washington, and the suspension of the constitution by the SLORC also gave the government no source of legality. The US showed its disapproval immediately by halting aid, arms sales, IMET programs, as well as not renewing their ambassador. Not upholding the election results decreased the legitimacy even further in the eyes of the US, as the consent of the citizenry was not respected. Continued calls for upholding the election results showed that the US did not see the Tatmadaw as the rightful source of authority.

Domestic pressure in the US, in the form of the Burma lobby, came amidst failure of the SLORC to perform adequately, a huge blow for Myanmar’s legitimacy in the eyes of the US. Increased reports of human rights abuses and repeated sentences of house arrest for Aung San Suu Kyi showed a clear lack of performance on the side of the government. Even before the first round of sanctions were imposed, companies such as Pepsi Cola left Myanmar voluntarily as their image suffered. While the first round of sanctions in 1997 was not as stringent, the sanctions following the Depayin incident displays a clear sense of illegitimacy in the eyes of the US. Even the announcement of the roadmap did nothing to trigger a rapprochement by Washington; instead, the language used by the US became continuously undiplomatic. Calling Myanmar a cancer, an outpost of tyranny, as well

as spreading false information about Aung San Suu Kyi being on hunger strike, marks a low point of diplomatic relations.

Although the 2008 constitutional referendum should have garnered claims to domestic legitimacy for Myanmar's government as it shows a step towards improving the legality of the regime, the US disapproved of the referendum. This may partially be attributed to claims of fraud but also to the lack of performance by the government to deal with the humanitarian crisis caused by Nargis.

Obama's presidency showed a marked change in the approach towards Myanmar. The US Pivot was a geostrategic move that was motivated by a need to counter China, who has become a regional hegemon (Wei 2013). Engaging in Myanmar is meant to counter China's dominance in the nation. Additionally, one of the pillars of the US Pivot is to increase multilateral ties and to grow closer to Southeast Asia as a region, and a key to this is the US-ASEAN relationship (Donilon 2012). Under the George W. Bush administration, Washington stepped on ASEAN's toes, as it pressured the organization to take measures against Myanmar. However, as one of ASEAN's primary policies is that of non-interference, it did not take well to US pressure, and furthermore thought of the US sanctions on Myanmar as counterproductive (Haacke 2012). Hence, practicing pragmatic engagement with Myanmar has been a key to realizing the US Pivot.

Although it may be argued that any rapprochement since Obama became president can be attributed to geostrategic interests, it can be seen that relations continued to increase only as democratization increased, and thereby legitimacy increased. The 2009 visits of a congressman and assistant secretary of state showed engagement, but on a lower level; after some efforts in enhancing legitimacy by heeding claims to release Aung San Suu Kyi and hundreds of political prisoners, Hilary Clinton paid a high level visit in late 2011. Although the 2010 elections were considered not to have met international standards, the language used was different from that under the Bush administration; Laura Bush's reaction to the 2008 constitution was characterized by words such as "unacceptable". The 2012 elections sparked far more enthusiasm than any other previous step towards democratization, most probably because Aung San Suu Kyi was elected to serve in parliament, showing an increase in legitimacy, as the Thein Sein regime proved to uphold the consent of the people.

Some may argue that the Obama administration overemphasized the importance of the by-elections. Only 43 seats, a meager 5% of the total seats, were up for election (of which the NLD won all but one) which according to HRW was a move by the government to "legitimize its reform process" and not "a real test of whether the government is committed to free and fair elections" (HRW 2012). It may seem that Washington's endorsement of the results, sending an ambassador, and lifting most of the sanctions was a move to further the US Pivot. Nonetheless, these moves also coincided with other forms of political liberalization such as the formation of independent labor groups, relaxation on media censorship, realization of political parties, granting the right to peaceful demonstrations, releasing hundreds more political prisoners, etc. Hence, while the results for the NLD

may have been minimal, other progress did show an increase in domestic legitimacy by improving on levels of performance, “respecting the principle of popular sovereignty” (authority), respecting the consent of the citizenry, and operating within a legal system (Holbig 2011).

Obama’s visit in 2012 was truly historic, but again, his pledge of US\$170 million in ODA that was primarily reserved to assist in humanitarian development and promote democracy, shows that the US is committed to improving domestic legitimacy. If the US were solely interested in gaining a larger sphere of influence in the nation, the reservations on US investments (responsible reporting) are counterproductive. The EU’s exports to Myanmar in 2014 worth US\$494 million and EU imports from Myanmar worth US\$392 million (European Commission 2015) clearly exceeds US exports (US\$92.9 million) and US imports (US\$93.4 million). Therefore, retaining certain investment restrictions (that intend to improve domestic legitimacy) is causing the US to miss out on an economic presence in the country. This may demonstrate that the US Pivot and geostrategic interests in the country is not the only motivator for increased engagement, as these restrictions are hindering the fulfillment of geostrategic goals.

Military engagement remains low. The US may be fearful of becoming engaged with a military that has in the past committed human rights abuses. If cooperation were to take place and new rumors of violations of human rights were to arise, this would be a stain on the Obama administration, apparently a risk Washington is unwilling to take. However, it must also be noted that military engagement does not serve a purpose for the US Pivot. While the US is showing a larger military presence in the Asia Pacific region, Myanmar has not been a point of interest; instead countries such as Vietnam and long-term allies Japan and the Philippines are more important to the US military strategy of creating a naval presence to deter China’s territorial aspirations in the South China Sea (Kurlantzik 2015).

The US Pivot may have triggered an engagement with Myanmar that would not have occurred without such a geostrategic goal. However, as can be seen by the diplomatic and economic developments, rapprochement usually hinged on points of domestic legitimacy and democratization. The release of Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners, by-elections, and political liberalization, were all necessary for the US to justify an increase in foreign relations with Myanmar. At the moment Myanmar seems to be more of a hybrid-democracy, and much of the progress in the US-Myanmar relationship is easily reversible; hence, the upcoming elections in late 2015 will be crucial. If Myanmar shows continued improvements in its domestic legitimacy, this will most likely trigger stronger ties with the US. If on the other hand Myanmar takes a step in the other direction, the US may take measures to decrease the interaction with Myanmar. This election will also be a test as to how sincere Washington is in its goal of promoting democracy. If elections are not free and fair, and the relationship continues on the same trajectory, the US may indeed be more interested in fulfilling its geostrategic goals.

8. Myanmar-China Relations

8.1. Pre-Democratization Relations (1988-2003)

8.1.1. Political and Diplomatic Relations

The two neighbors share a vast border of nearly 2,200 km (Denmark 2014, 77), which makes good relations important. In Burmese the relationship is described as *paukphaw*, which has been loosely translated as cousins². The *paukphaw*'s relations have had a number of ups and downs over the past decades; Burma was the first non-communist country to acknowledge the Republic of China (PRC) and the two went on to sign the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence that still guides their relationship today (Denmark 2014, 77). However, Ne Win's isolationist rule and the xenophobic attacks on Chinese in Burma in 1967 clearly strained the relationship. Yet on the brink of economic disaster, Ne Win turned to China and despite Burma's foreign policy of independence, Ne Win left the NAM to appease the PRC.

The Tatmadaw coup in 1988 occurred only weeks before the Tiananmen Square incident; the "international predicaments" of the two regimes brought the two "into closer alignment" (Haacke 2006, 26). Myanmar's president, Than Shwe paid a state visit to China in 1989, marking the beginning of strong political ties between the SLORC and China (Haacke 2006, 26). When the UN General Assembly (UNGA) tried to pass the first draft resolution on Myanmar's alleged human rights abuses in 1990, following the failure to uphold the election results, China blocked the vote (Haacke 2006).³ As China strictly follows a principle of non-interference in domestic issues, it did not condemn the SLORC.

Throughout the 1990s, the *paukphaw* continued to grow closer; in 1994 upon the visit of Premier Li Peng, China was named Myanmar's "most trusted friend" (Haacke 2006, 26). Although Myanmar lacks the international influence that China has, it has continuously provided support for the PRC's 'One-China' policy (Haacke 2006). Upon the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Kosovo, Myanmar criticized the US: "The United States and NATO member countries that usually accuse one-sidedly and blindly these or those countries of violating human rights are now violating [...] principles of the UN Charter and diplomatic norms prescribed by the Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Violating the Geneva Convention on Diplomatic Relations and attacking the embassy is not a matter for saying 'sorry'" (Federation of American Scientists 1999).

Despite the seemingly strong *paukphaw*, Myanmar has acknowledged that China is the dominant 'cousin' and has been afraid of becoming dependent on China. Throughout the 1990s Myanmar has tried to diversify its political allies, turning to nations such as Russia and India (Haacke 2006); joining ASEAN in 1997 was a major step towards fulfilling this goal (Cook 2012, 271). Nonetheless, politically, Myanmar has continuously found a strong shield in China; shortly after the

² The literal translation of the word is "one womb away" (Haacke 2006, 28).

³ This was the only UNGA resolution on Myanmar that was blocked by China (Haacke 2006).

Depayin incident the two nations co-chaired the ASEAN Regional Forum’s Intercessional Meeting on Confidence Building, where “Beijing helped Myanmar to confront its critics proactively and toned down criticisms of the regime” (Haacke 2006, 31).

8.1.2. Economic Relations

Shortly before the 1988 protests, China and Myanmar restarted cross-border trade (Cook 2012, 271). When the SLORC took office, they set Myanmar on a course of an open-door policy, trying to revert the economic havoc the previous isolationist regime had caused (Kudo and Mieno 2009). Upon Than Shwe’s 1989 visit to Beijing, China began playing a major role in developing (particularly northern) Myanmar by building infrastructure such as roads, bridges, power stations, and telecommunication structures; in return for these projects, Myanmar granted Chinese companies the right to explore Myanmar’s natural resources (Haacke 2006).

Despite China’s development assistance, the Tatmadaw was concerned about their ever-increasing economic reliance on China. Looking to diversify FDI, Myanmar turned towards the ASEAN economies. Through the early 1990s Myanmar was able to attract FDI from various sources, including ASEAN nations and the West (Haacke 2006). However, Asian FDI started to crash with the 1997 Asian financial, which also coincided with the first US sanctions against the nation (Haacke 2006). From 1998-1999 FDI dropped by one third, and new commitments almost equaled zero during this time (IMF 1999). In the late 1990s Myanmar again found itself to be largely dependent on China. Yet, China’s overall official FDI (from 1988-2003) is minimal compared to other nations (see table 4).⁴

Table 4. FDI in Myanmar by Country (1988-2003; measured in US\$ million)

Rank	Country	Official Approved FDI
1	United Kingdom	1560.974
2	Singapore	1419.601
3	Thailand	1290.203
4	Malaysia	660.747
5	Hong Kong	501.218
6	France	470.370
7	United States	243.565
8	Indonesia	241.497
9	Japan	208.921
14	China	61.151

Source: Myanmar Investment Commission.

⁴ Unlike the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (such as the US) China does not differentiate between ODA and other official flows (Bräutigam 2011). While in the West ODA and FDI are strictly separated, China does not make such differentiations hence such numbers cannot be clearly outlined. Investment figures are probably higher than in table 4 as these only consider officially approved FDI.

In 2000 China and Myanmar signed a Framework Document on Future Cooperation, “[...] aimed for closer economic cooperation in the areas of trade, investment, agriculture, fishery, forestry and tourism” (Haacke 2006, 28-29). Chinese state owned enterprises (SOEs) “had officially contracted more than 800 projects with a total value of US\$2.1 b” between the 2001 visit of China’s President Jian Zemin until the end of 2002 (Haacke 2006, 29). Investment continued to pour in; in early 2003 China granted US\$200 million in the form of a preferential loan to build a hydroelectric power plant (Haacke 2006).

Although these examples show China’s leading role in developing infrastructure, China’s economic presence is often overstated, especially in terms of trade. China has been in strong competition for Myanmar’s primary trade partner, not usually placing as top partner (see table 5 and 6)⁵.

Table 5. Major Export Partners (in percent of total exports)

	1988		1990		1995		2000	
1	Singapore	9.7	Thailand	26.5	Thailand	16.9	United States	22.4
2	Thailand	9.5	Singapore	11.3	Singapore	16.0	Thailand	11.8
3	Hong Kong	9.1	India	10.8	India	12.2	India	9.4
4	Japan	8.4	Japan	8.3	China	11.3	China	6.4
5	India	7.0	China	8.1	Indonesia	8.0	Japan	6.1

Source: Kudo 2008, 90; Kudo and Mieno 2009, 112.

China only entered the ranks in 1990, as there was no cross-border trade before 1988. Even in terms of imports, China was continuously in contention with other Asian nations (see table 6).

Table 6. Major Import Partners (in percent of total imports)

	1988		1990		1995		2000	
1	Japan	39.0	China	20.6	Singapore	29.9	Thailand	18.3
2	United Kingdom	9.1	Singapore	17.9	China	29.0	China	18.0
3	Germany	6.7	Japan	16.6	Thailand	14.2	Singapore	15.8
4	United States	6.0	Germany	4.8	Japan	7.4	South Korea	10.5
5	Singapore	5.8	Thailand	4.7	South Korea	4.1	Malaysia	8.4

Source: Kudo 2008, 90; Kudo and Mieno 2009, 112.

Because China does not differentiate between FDI and ODA, numbers of aid are not available. However, Myanmar did “[...] benefit greatly from Beijing’s willingness to offer grant aid, preferential loans and even debt relief [...] assistance given between 1997 and 2006 amounted to approximately US\$30 million in grant aid, approximately US\$500 million in loans, and [approximately US\$1.5 million] in debt relief” (Haacke 2010, 119). Despite a lack in official numbers, it is clear that China greatly assisted Myanmar in terms of development since 1988, although bilateral trade was not as significant.

⁵ Trade statistics of Myanmar’s economy in the 1990s are unreliable and different source show different figures. These numbers should be taken as an estimate and not definitive numbers.

8.1.3. Military Relations

Under the leadership of Ne Win, Myanmar refrained from large-scale arms purchases from the world's superpowers, as this would have undermined Myanmar's policy of non-alignment (Kudo 2008). However, after Than Shwe's visit to Beijing, Myanmar changed its approach. In 1990 the Tatamadaw made the first large-scale arms purchase from China, worth US\$1.2 billion (Haacke 2006, 26). The next major acquisition came in 1994 worth US\$400 million (Haacke 2006, 26). Having a strong military in Myanmar was in China's interest, as ethnic separatist movements that operate along China's vast border with Myanmar can cause instability and have at times led to spillovers into China's territory (Cook 2012).

Not only did China become a major source of arms, but China also assisted Myanmar in training operations. In 1996 a military cooperation agreement "containing provisions for intelligence exchanges" was signed (Haacke 2006, 27). Many observers became concerned at China's military presence in Myanmar, as there were "[...] reports of China delivering and allegedly operating equipment for [signals intelligence] activities on Great Coco Island [and] Ramree Island off the Rakhine coast" leading some to believe that China wanted to collect intelligence on events in the Bay of Bengal and India's Andaman Islands (Haacke 2006, 26). Furthermore, large scale "[...] civil and military development projects, including the upgrading of airstrips and ports" led some to believe that these "could potentially serve as forward operating bases for the People's Liberation Army Navy and even support a permanent Chinese military presence in the future" (Haacke 2006, 27).

Yet speculations were unfounded; despite ongoing debate about possible Chinese military bases in Myanmar, no evidence has been found. Allowing bases would seriously undermine Myanmar's non-alignment. Furthermore, to avoid becoming dependent on China, the Tatmadaw has sought out other arms providers such as Russia, Singapore, Pakistan, Portugal, Israel, South Africa, India, Serbia, and the Ukraine (Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng 2009).

8.2. Relations Amidst Democratization (2003-2015)

8.2.1. Political and Diplomatic Ties

Upon the announcement of the roadmap, China showed support and expressed that this was "the best route to democracy and national reconciliation" (The Guardian 2008a). When Thailand proposed the Bangkok Process and invited states to participate in a debate on a possible political roadmap for Myanmar, China only accepted the invitation once Myanmar decided to attend (Haacke 2006). Reconvening the NC was also endorsed by Beijing; as the process began to stall in 2006, Chinese senior officials visited Myanmar where "[t]hey apparently urged the process forward, as shortly after this visit the [NC] was called back into session unexpectedly" (Clapp 2014, 17). In 2007 China seemed to be walking diplomatic tightrope; as Beijing was preparing to host the Olympics the following year, it was already in the international limelight due to issues such as Tibet. In January the

UNSC held a vote on a resolution on Myanmar, which China (together with Russia) vetoed (Clapp 2014). Apparently after the veto, China's State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan visited officials in Myanmar to hold serious talks, urging the regime to improve the "domestic and international situation" (The Guardian 2008a).

Criticism on China did not slow as the year progressed, due to the Saffron Revolution. When the protests began in August China remained silent. On September 13 Beijing commented on the situation for the first time, stating that China hoped Myanmar will "push forward a democracy process that is appropriate for the country and restore internal stability as soon as possible, properly handle issues and actively promote national reconciliation" (Storey 2007). After the government crackdown two weeks later, China urged all parties involved to "exercise restraint" so that the situation would not "escalate" (Storey 2007). Western nations attempted to bring Myanmar forward to the UNSC, but China stopped this from proceeding (Storey 2007). The bloody crackdown reflected poorly on China, as it had just protected Myanmar from international sanctions in January. China then urged Myanmar to allow a visit by the UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari (Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng 2009).

Despite international criticism of holding the referendum in May 2008 in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, China in the spirit of non-interference did not comment on the referendum. When China's foreign minister visited Myanmar in December, he said he hoped "the government would continue to promote [Myanmar's] stability, democratic process and economic development based on the principle of independence and self-determination" (Maung Aung Myoe 2011, 132). In the run-up to the 2010 elections, China tried to rally support within the international community for Myanmar; while framing it as an "internal matter", China said "[w]e hope that the international community will provide constructive help for Myanmar's upcoming election and avoid bringing negative effect to bear on Myanmar's political course and regional peace and stability" (BBC News 2010a). Unlike Western nations, "China welcome[d] Myanmar's smooth general election" (Xinhua 2010). After the 2012 by-elections, China's foreign ministry released a statement expressing hope that the results "will be conducive to promoting political reconciliation in Myanmar and boosting stability and development of the country"; furthermore, they called on nations to "completely lift their sanctions against Myanmar" (Bloomberg 2010).

Despite China's unwavering support for reforms in Myanmar, there seemed to have been a temporary "cool down" in relations.⁶ Whereas four high level visits took place between the pauphaw from March 2009 to April 2011, no visit of such ranks took place again until September 2012 (Sun 2012). Additionally, the language used was markedly different; "enhancing mutual trust" was at the forefront of talks, which according to experts only occurs "[...] when there is a bankruptcy of such trust" (Sun 2012, 66). This cool down may be attributed to Washington's rapprochement with

⁶ This "cool down" is largely attributed to the suspension of a large dam project by President Thein Sein (see section 8.2.2.).

Myanmar that began to gain momentum in late 2011 with Clinton's visit, lifting sanctions, and assigning an ambassador.

This rapprochement may also have been responsible for Myanmar's lack of support for China in ASEAN. During a July 2012 summit, upon the attempts by the Philippines and Vietnam to condemn China over territorial disputes in the South China Sea, "Myanmar 'stood aside' and 'didn't even lift a finger' to assist China", leaving it up to Cambodia to protect China (Sun 2012, 63). While many expected Myanmar to back China within ASEAN, the lack of support on this issue reflects Myanmar's policy of non-alignment and independence. During Myanmar's chairing of ASEAN in 2014, the issue of the South China Sea was much discussed, but Myanmar handled the situation well and fully in line with its foreign policy objectives; in the documents concluding the chairmanship Myanmar treaded carefully and avoided "naming names and pointing fingers at any party" (Sun 2014, 8). Parties were urged to "exercise self-restraint and avoid action which could undermine peace and stability" (Sun 2014, 8).

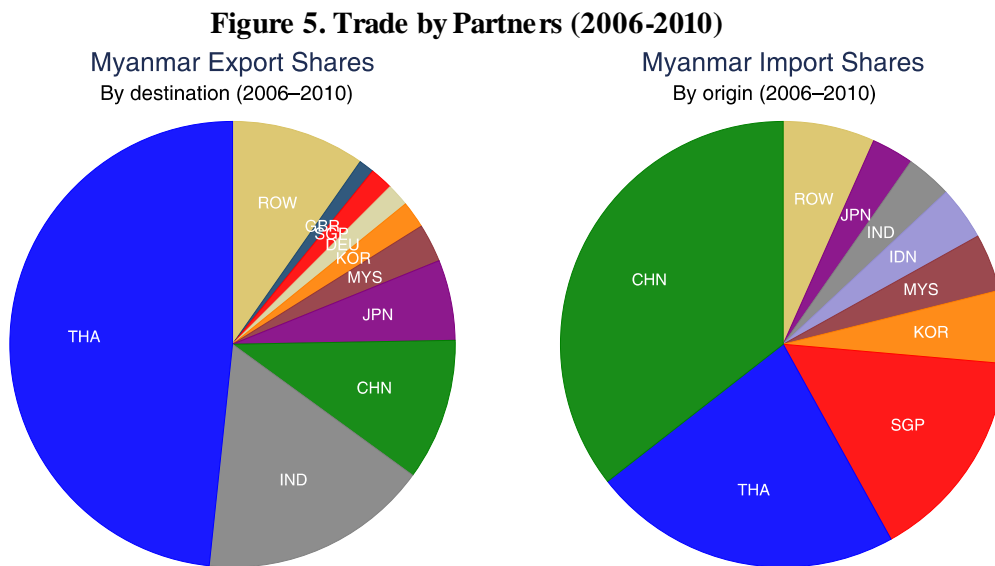
In response to a diplomatic cool down, and growing anti-Chinese sentiment, China emplaced a "media-savvy" ambassador, Yang Houlun, in 2013 (Fan 2014, 3). Yang is extremely interactive with the media, which the press appreciates, as "[...] before it was very difficult to interview the ambassador or any Chinese officials. They [China] really lost their relationship with the people [but] now they are trying to rebuild it" (Fan 2014, 4). Within the first eight months of his ambassadorship Yang conducted 17 interviews and actively uses social media platforms (Fan 2014). While public diplomacy is not a new feature to Beijing, there has been a great increase. The PRC is attempting to "[...] promote Chinese values, such as non-interference in domestic affairs, and to try to create a positive image or perception about those values" (Fan 2014). By hosting roundtable talks with civil society groups, engaging in cultural performances, creating the China-Myanmar Friendship Association, and implementing developmental programs through Chinese NGOs, China is hoping to accomplish its goals (Fan 2014).

China has also been proactive in maintaining a strong relationship with Myanmar's government. The PRC has begun to interact with the NLD and other opposition groups. China's ambassador to Myanmar met with Aung San Suu Kyi in early 2013 and discussed "[...] the country's reform process and development, agreeing to push the people-to-people exchange for mutually beneficial cooperation" (Xinhua 2013). Several months later Beijing invited a group of twelve senior members of the NLD to visit China to "[...] enhance party-to-party relation[s]" (Xinhua 2013). China has also been paid visits by other opposition parties such as the NDF, SNDP, and the AMRDP (Xinhua 2013).

In light of the current migrant crisis taking place in Southeast Asian waters, China has remained silent on the issue, unlike many nations who place blame on Myanmar. China's adherence to non-interference in domestic affairs has continued to help shield Myanmar from international criticism. However, the paukphaw does seem to also be developing certain economic tensions.

8.2.2. Economic Relations

At the turn of the century, Myanmar became increasingly economically dependent on the PRC. China continued to invest heavily into developmental projects; shortly after the announcement of the roadmap, a US\$150 million hydroelectric power project was signed. The two countries signed a memorandum of understanding in 2004 to boost economic relation (Haacke 2006). Trade numbers continued to increase in the early years of 2000; numbers rose from US\$1.07 billion in 2003, US\$1.145 billion in 2004, to US\$1.209 billion in 2005 (Haacke 2006, 30). China's role in Myanmar's imports and exports has been significant throughout 2006-2010, especially in terms of imports (see figure 5).



Source: Asian Development Bank (2013).

As China's economy continued to soar at the turn of the century, its hunger for natural resources grew. Myanmar, rich in oil and gas (and minerals), has been of interest to China to secure its energy needs. In 2004 talks began over a proposed gas pipeline that would run from Myanmar's Kyaukpyu in Rakhine state to China's border state, Yunnan (Storey 2006). In late 2005, the SPDC and PetroChina struck a deal that would see Myanmar supply China with natural gas from the offshore Shwe gas field over the next 30 years (Storey 2006). Construction on the nearly US\$2 billion 800 km long gas pipeline began in 2008, and only a year later construction on a parallel running oil pipeline began (see figure 6) (Renwick 2014).

Figure 6. Kyaukphyu-Yunnan Pipeline



Source: The Economist.

Along with the construction of the pipeline came the development of the Kyaukphyu deep-sea port, allowing China to feed oil from the Middle East and Africa into the pipeline (Renwick 2014). Both of these projects have been completed and are now transporting energy from Kyaukphyu to Yunnan. This project has been critical for China, as transporting oil through Myanmar allows it to circumvent the Malacca Strait (see figure 7), which in 2009 saw over 85% of China's oil imports pass through (Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng 2009). Due to increasing piracy and a growing US naval presence in the region, China wanted to be able to circumvent this route. Furthermore, China is currently also building a rail line that will link Yunnan to the Bay of Bengal, allowing landlocked Yunnan access to the sea (Renwick 2014).

Figure 7. Malacca Strait and Pipeline



Source: The Economist.

As the two countries continued to sign numerous deals, allowing China access to Myanmar's natural resources, many have called Myanmar a client state of China; some have even gone so far as accusing Myanmar of using its natural resources as a payoff for China's protection in the international community. The signing of a gas exploration deal just shortly after China vetoed a UNSC resolution in 2007 has been used as an example for this so-called payoff. However, the reality is that due to the absence of Western companies, China has played a significant role in developing "Myanmar's quest to become a diversified energy exporter" (Haacke 2006, 30). Energy does not only flow to China; currently pipelines are also being built to India and Thailand, and South Korea and Singapore are also clients of Myanmar's energy resources (Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng 2009).

The pipelines are expensive project that will link Myanmar and China for years to come. However, Myanmar recently showed that it is not dependent on Chinese development projects. Due to the loosening of sanctions by other states, and an increased presence of countries such as Japan, Myanmar lessened its reliance on China. The most drastic example of this came in September 2011 when President Thein Sein suspended the Myitsone hydropower project (see figure 6) (Haacke 2012). The SOE, China Power Investment Corporation, began construction on the US\$3.6 billion project in 2009; however, the project that would deliver 90% of generated electricity to China grew increasingly unpopular, mainly due to a proposed dam that was to flood an area roughly the size of Singapore, displacing nearly 10,000 (mainly ethnic Kachin) people (The Economist 2011). President Thein Sein reasoned that the dam was "contrary to the will of the people" (The Economist 2011); this marked an unprecedented respect for the will of the people. However, many analysts say that this was a symbolic gesture, aimed at protesting an "overbearing Chinese influence" (Haacke 2012, 57).

While this project has garnered the most media attention, Myanmar has suspended other projects, including the Letpadaung copper mine in November 2012 (only two weeks after Obama's historic visit and a pledge in US\$170 million in US ODA). After revising the contract with the SOE Wanbao Mining Ltd in March 2013, the investment on the project increased from "[...] US\$600 million to US\$997 million, cutting [Wanbao Mining's] share of profits from 49 per cent to 30 per cent (Burma government receiving 51 per cent, up from 4 per cent under the original contract)" (Renwick 2014, 79). Such suspensions are unprecedented; the Letpadaung project portrays the leverage that Myanmar's government now has, due to the relaxation of Western sanctions and more competition from other nations; the increase of 47% of profits for the government is massive, and may not have been possible a few years earlier.

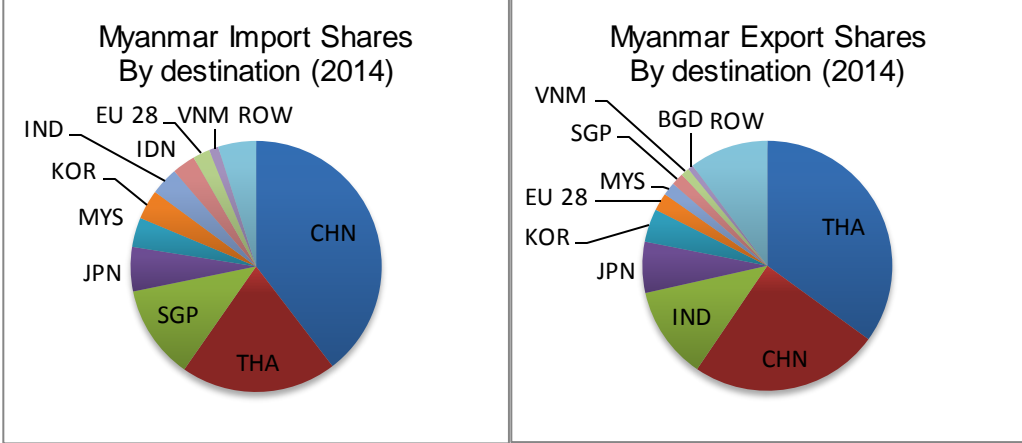
Whether the reason for these suspensions is indeed a growing respect for the will of the electorate, or merely a protest of China's economic presence is unclear, yet either way, the message has been received in China. Wanbao Mining pledged more than US\$1 million a year for "[...] social investments in villages around the mining site. The company will also channel 2 per cent of profits towards corporate social responsibility [CSR] projects once the mine is in operation" (Renwick 2014,

79). It seems that “Beijing has privately ordered Chinese [SOEs] to do something they rarely did before – embrace Western-style [CSR] practices and act sensitively towards the local people who live near their project sites” (Fan 2014, 4). In 2013, China’s Enterprises Chamber held a press conference at the embassy in Yangon, announcing (together with 35 Chinese companies) an initiative to practice CSR (Fan 2014).

Protests along the pipeline project have brought the “Pipeline Friendship Association” (established by China National Petroleum Corporation) to life, launching infrastructure, welfare, health, education, and disaster relief projects (Fan 2014). According to the Chinese government, more than US\$71 million has been invested in CSR projects by SOEs (Renwick 2014, 79). Additionally, China’s embassy has begun holding “[...] lectures on Burmese culture, religion, ethnicity, etiquette, habits and customs for hundreds of Chinese investors and businessmen in the country since 2012” (Fan 2014, 5).

Recent developments have clearly made China nervous of their economic future in Myanmar. After the 2011 suspension of the Myitsone dam, China’s investment fell by more 90% in 2012 (Miller 2014, 96). While China is still the strongest investor, other nations have recently begun to invest quite strongly in Myanmar (see table 7). These include nations such as the United Kingdom, which was largely absent in the first decade of the century. Additionally, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and India have also increased investment since the first elections in 2010. However, there is no doubt China will continue playing a major role in Myanmar’s economy. China continues to be one of the strongest trade partners, and this is not likely to change in the near future (see figure 8). Just in November 2014, 20 trade deals worth US\$8 billion were signed (South China Morning Post 2014).

Figure 8. Trade by Partners (2014)



Source: European Commission: Trade in Goods with Myanmar (2015).

Being Myanmar’s neighbor, and a major exporting country, means that China will continue to enjoy vast amount of trade with Myanmar, especially considering the enormous projects such as the pipelines that connect the two. Although Chinese imports are strong (especially since they manufacture affordable products which is all Myanmar can currently afford), China has not been the

top export destination for Myanmar in recent history. China's role has often been overemphasized, disregarding the role that countries such as Thailand, India, and Singapore have played. However, the suspension of various Chinese development projects has sent a strong signal to China. China can no longer harvest Myanmar's natural resources without taking the will of Myanmar's people and government into consideration. Myanmar has gained more leverage in the international community, and is looking to diversify its FDI and trade partners. Especially Japanese investors are popular, and although these tend to be hesitant and take time to make commitments, their economic influence is growing (Jones 2014).

Table 7. FDI in Myanmar by Country (2003-March 2015; measured in US\$ million)

Rank	Country	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	Total
1	China	2.820	126.550	0.700	281.222		855.996	2.500	8269.229	4345.728	231.773	56.920	516.904	14690.342
2	Thailand	22.000	29.020	6034.400		16.220	15.000	15.250	2146.000		1.3	529.072	165.679	8973.941
3	Singapore				81.000	38.000		39.230	226.170		418.233	2300.121	4292.808	7395.562
4	Hong Kong	3.000						6.000	5798.277		84.839	107.102	619.808	6619.026
5	S. Korea	34.900			37.000	12.000	-3.990		2676.399	25.572	37.942	81.205	181.996	3083.024
6	United Kingdom	27.000			272.980				799.000	99.831	232.700	156.864	850.759	2439.134
7	Malaysia							237.600	76.750	51.864	4.324	616.108	6.724	993.37
8	India				47.500	137.000				73.000	11.500	26.040	208.886	503.926
9	Japan		2.713			1.370	3.758	-12.000	7.140	4.318	54.063	55.711	65.930	183.003
	USA												2.041	2.041

Source: Myanmar Investment Commission.

Note: The USA does not rank as number 10, but has been added for comparative value.

8.2.3. Military Relations

The paukphaw continue to have strong military ties. As China's arms continue to improve in quality, Myanmar continues to be a major arms client of its neighbor. Myanmar along with Bangladesh made up 28% of China's total arms sales between 2010-2014 (Financial Times 2015). Additionally, China continues to train military personnel such as pilots (Li 2012). However, Myanmar is not reliant upon arms sales from China.

The string of pearls network, as dubbed by Western analysts, is a project by China to ensure greater presence in the Indian Ocean. This has entailed assisting nations such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Myanmar to develop ports (Steinberg 2010). While some have accused China of buffing up its naval capabilities and building quasi-bases, such allegations are unsubstantiated. These developments are apparently of a mercantilist nature. Myanmar will not allow China a permanent military presence as the 2008 constitution prohibits any foreign military bases (Article 42 paragraph b).

Most of the military ties between the two nations have taken place along the border. In 2011 a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership was signed, which includes a pledge to "strengthen border management cooperation, [and] conduct timely communication on border affairs" (Li Chenyang 2012). Continuing such efforts are necessary, as events in recent years have shown the vast border between the two nations remains volatile. Numerous ethnic rebel groups such as the United Wa State Army, the Shan State Army-North, the Kachin Independence Army, and especially the Myanmar Nationalities Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) have caused border tensions.

The Kokang region in Shan state has been particularly complex, as roughly 90% of inhabitants are ethnic Han-Chinese with a Myanmar passport (Becker 2015). Already in 2008, Myanmar asked China to disarm the ethnic Han MNDAA after a flare-up, as the group is allegedly receiving arms from Chinese sources, and funds their activities through illegal trade with China (Haacke 2010). In 2009 fighting again spread across the border, causing tension between the neighbors. Also in Kachin State, fighting along the border has been a sore in the relationship (Renwick 2014). Earlier in 2015, fighting between the MNDAA and the Tatmadaw again spilled over into China.

Conflicts in Kokang have caused tension between China and Myanmar due to several reasons. China is not only worried about violent spillovers, but also about an influx of refugees, who as ethnic Han speak Mandarin, and have relatives living in Yunnan. Some Chinese feel that there is a need to protect ethnic Han, regardless of their passports (Becker 2015). Yet China does not want to get involved in the issue. Stability is the priority, also because of the pipeline that runs through Shan, and China does not want to jeopardize trade, as 24% of Yunnan's trade is with Myanmar (The Economist 2015). For Myanmar, an

outbreak in fighting is a setback to national peace and reconciliation. Although both China and Myanmar are interested in resolving the conflict, their approaches differ. A surge in military support from the general population due to unstable ceasefire agreements has caused an increasingly confrontational approach from the Tatmadaw (The Economist 2015). China on the other hand wants the matter to be resolved peacefully, as it is weary of a conflict entailing ethnic Chinese in a region where it is trying to increase cooperation with nations where anti-Chinese sentiment is growing (Becker 2015). It remains necessary for the two to continue military cooperation along the borders, as peace and stability is in everyone's best interest.

8.3. Analysis

Democratization in Myanmar has not increased foreign relations with China, but has also not necessarily decreased. The pauphaw has continued to grow since 1988. As both countries were facing international criticism and isolation, the two forged strong ties diplomatically and politically. Furthermore, as border trade opened, and Myanmar stepped away from Burmese socialism, the two became economically linked. Also militarily, China has consistently been the greatest source of arms supply to the Tatmadaw. China continuously engaged Myanmar throughout the 1990s and early 2000s despite a lack of democracy. This is because unlike the US and other Western nations, China does not regard domestic legitimacy as a basis for interacting with other states (Holbig 2011).

China itself derives its legitimacy from the international space; by being a member of international organizations, participating in international fora, and signing international declarations China derives a sense of international legality. Legitimacy also originates from performing by being involved in the global economy, and advocating "balanced [and] harmonious international development" (Holbig 2011, 171). Cooperating with the international community to maintain sovereignty also serves as a sense of authority, from which legitimacy can be derived. Finally, legitimacy does not necessarily rest on domestic consent for China, but rather on the "[m]obilization of external recognition by the international community, 'alliance partners,' neighboring states in the region, [and a] rejection of international criticism" (Holbig 2011, 171).

Because China places emphasis on such conditions of legitimacy, rather than domestic legitimacy in its international relations, it has had no issue in interacting with Myanmar. Furthermore, its interaction has assisted Myanmar in gaining international legitimacy, when other states did not want to accept Myanmar in international institutions, placed sanctions on it, refused to interact with it, and condemned it. As China had no problem with Myanmar in terms of legitimacy, it chose to pursue its strategic interests in Myanmar.

Democratization has brought about an increase in competition for diplomatic and especially economic competition in Myanmar. China has not blocked the process of democratization; on the contrary, throughout the process it encouraged other nations to support the roadmap (Haacke 2010). China would only undermine a democratic process in another nation, if it perceives this as a threat to its own political system (as the case of Hong Kong suggests) or if it sees its strategic interests at stake (Chen and Kinzelback 2015). However, “Myanmar is too small and too poor to have a negative effect on Beijing’s geostrategic interest or regime survival” (Börzel 2015, 4). Furthermore, China has especially had to deal with political pressure from the US for protecting Myanmar from international condemnation (especially after the UNSC veto in 2007) (Haacke 2010).

For Myanmar, democratization has indeed brought about an ability to become more independent in its foreign policy. Being a client state, or dependent on another state goes strictly against their objectives of non-alignment and independence, hence it is embracing whatever political, economic, or military partnerships are within arm’s reach. This may have caused a temporary cool down in diplomatic relations between China and Myanmar. The first example of this was the suspension of the Myitsone dam. Then the number of high level visits between the two nations decreased and a change in the language during diplomatic exchanges became tenser, while at the same time high-level diplomatic exchanges with the US increased. Myanmar seemed to have gained more leverage in its relations with China due to an increased political and economic engagement from the US, enabling Myanmar to step out of China’s economic and political shadow.

Myanmar also chose to renegotiate several Chinese projects, cutting out a much larger share of the profits for itself. China apparently did not expect these developments, especially the suspension of the dam project. However, it is finding ways to deal with the new developments, so as to ensure its future in Myanmar. The appointment of the “media-savvy” ambassador Yang is a strong example of this. Myanmar’s strong nationalism and an ever-present anti-China sentiment could become problematic for China, if Myanmar is given the option of choosing other economic and diplomatic partners. Under Yang’s ambassadorship, Beijing has begun to offer lectures on Burmese culture and religion, to better bridge divides between the two peoples. Furthermore, China has begun to engage in party-to-party ties, with players such as the NLD. If democratization does continue, and the NLD becomes more prominent in Myanmar’s government, China will have established a relationship with the opposition as well. China has also reacted to the economic setbacks by increasing CSR projects to an unprecedented level.

Overall, the democratization process has not led to a decrease in relations when looking at the paukphaw. Clearly, Myanmar (especially the Tatmadaw) has found a reliable political partner in China, which they are unlikely to abandon. However, there are signs that

the pauphaw may grow further apart in the future. But this depends on Myanmar's political future and the progress of its democratization.

9. Conclusion

Evidence shows that there has been a clear increase in US-Myanmar relations. Although Washington was largely unimpressed with Myanmar's initial democratization efforts such as announcing the roadmap, the referendum on the constitution, and the first general elections under the new constitution. Under the Obama presidency, Myanmar found a more pragmatic administration, more willing to engage with Myanmar. However, Obama's initial rapprochement with Myanmar is most likely attributable to a desire to realize the geostrategic goal of a US Pivot to Asia. To balance out an overpowering China, the US deemed it necessary to increase its relations with Southeast Asia. Realizing this goal meant engaging with Myanmar, a historically contentious issue between ASEAN and the US. Normalizing relations with Myanmar would give the US more leverage within ASEAN, and this in turn could balance out China's growing role in the Southeast Asian association.

The pivot clearly preceded any serious democratic developments, such as elections or a liberalization of the autocratic regime. However, democratization itself also had a role to play in the increase of relations. Although engagement with Myanmar began in 2009, the number and ranks of US visits only increased as democratization increased. Clinton only visited after Aung San Suu Kyi and political prisoners were released, both issues the US had pressed Myanmar on. The highpoint of diplomatic ties, Obama's first visit to Myanmar in November 2012, only came after the by-elections that saw Aung San Suu Kyi win a seat in parliament.

It seems that both geostrategic interests and democratization were necessary for the US to begin normalizing relations with Myanmar. As Myanmar is currently not a full democracy, but rather a hybrid-regime, the US may not have increased relations without its interest to pivot towards Asia. However, the extent of engagement would most likely not have occurred without Myanmar showing clear progress of democratization, as continued US engagement throughout the last few years has always hinged on Myanmar's democratic progress. It is difficult to fully disentangle these two variables, as there seems to be much overlap between Washington's geostrategic interests and democratization. While geostrategic interest may have caused the initial rapprochement, democratization itself has also caused an increase in US-Myanmar relations.

Sino-Myanmar relations have not outright decreased due to Myanmar's democratization. There was however a temporary cool down in the relationship. Because the geostrategic interests of the US, and Myanmar's increase in domestic legitimacy in the eyes of the US due to its democratization efforts, Myanmar gained more leverage with China.

When diplomatic and economic relations with the US increased, Myanmar saw an opportunity to decrease its reliance (particularly economically) on China. An increase in domestic legitimacy and thereby an increase in US relations, gave Myanmar tools to realize its foreign policy of independence and non-alignment.

China has clearly been concerned about an increase in US (and Western nations) relations with Myanmar. The US Pivot to Asia, or pivot against China, has made China weary of losing out on strategic partnerships, such as the one with Myanmar, it has been fostering for years. Recognizing Myanmar's frustration of relying on China, and an increased anti-China sentiment, China has been proactive in improving its relationship with Myanmar by engaging in public diplomacy and CSR efforts. Although democratization has allowed Myanmar to increase foreign relations with other nations (at China's expense), China is unlikely to thwart the democratization process in Myanmar, as this poses no serious threat to China's regime or its strategic interest in the country. Surely the *paukphaw* will be linked for years; China is a major economic partner, which through its heavy involvement in development projects and exploitation rights has secured an economic future in Myanmar.

The upcoming elections will have an impact on Myanmar's foreign relations and how well it can realize its policy of independence and non-alignment. At the level where Myanmar finds itself today, a hybrid-democracy, Myanmar has gained some domestic legitimacy, making other countries more willing to engage with it. The West has begun to re-enter Myanmar on an economic level; in the late 1980s and early 1990s some nations such as France and the United Kingdom dwarfed official Chinese FDI (see table 4). Due to Myanmar's wealth in natural resources, Western countries will most likely re-enter the market, if the situation remains unchanged. Even Asian nations have increased their FDI since Myanmar has gained some domestic legitimacy.

If Myanmar were to proceed with its democratization process, and take steps to move towards a Western style democracy, it would most likely see a surge in political and economic ties with Western nations. Washington would then suspend the rest of the sanctions and trade restrictions that it still holds over Myanmar. Even militarily, more arms suppliers could open up. This scenario could jeopardize China's dominant role in the country.

However, if there were a regression in the democratization, this would decrease Myanmar's domestic legitimacy, causing a decrease in relations with Western democracies. A flare up of conflict and instability might affect the relations with some Asian nations such as Japan and South Korea, who in the clout of instability may be hesitant to invest in Myanmar. Despite the reaction of other nations, it is clear that China sees a legitimate partner in Myanmar and as in the past, has not wavered in its diplomatic, economic, and military support. A regression in democratization would most likely even increase China's engagement with Myanmar. Considering this, Myanmar may not want to reverse the

democratic progress that it has made, as benefits have been substantial. While the political and economic changes have been moderate, the increase in legitimacy in the eyes of the West have allowed Myanmar to better achieve its foreign policy objectives of non-alignment and independence.

Works Cited

- Al Jazeera. 2015. "Desperate Journeys: The Rohingya People." May 13.
<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2015/05/desperate-journeys-rohingya-people-150511142746643.html> (accessed May 19, 2015).
- BBC News. 2007. "Burma March Largest in 20 Years." September 23. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7009323.stm> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- BBC News. 2008a. "World Wrestles with Burma Aid Issue." May 9. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7392662.stm> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- BBC News. 2008b. "Burma 'Approves New Constitution'." May 15. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7402105.stm> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- BBC News. 2010a. "China Urges Support for Burma's General Election." September 7.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11210611> (accessed June 1, 2015).
- BBC News. 2010b. "Western States Dismiss Burma's Election." November 8.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-11707294> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- BBC News. 2012. "Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi Wins By-Elections: NLD Party." April 1.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-17577620> (accessed May 8, 2015).
- BBC News. 2014. "Myanmar to Release 3,000 Prisoners to Aid Stability." October 7.
<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-29517697> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- Becker, Christian. 2015. "China, Myanmar und der Kokang-Konflikt: Geostrategisches Kalkül schlägt die nationale Karte." *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP)* 48: 1-5
- Bloomberg. 2010. "China Urges End to Myanmar Sanctions After Suu Kyi Election." April 6.
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-04-06/china-urges-end-to-myanmar-sanctions-after-suu-kyi-election> (accessed June 1, 2015).
- Börzel, Tanja A. 2015. "The Noble West and the Dirty Rest? Western Democracy Promoters and Illiberal Regional Powers." *Democratization*. Forthcoming Issue.
- Bräutigam, Deborah. 2011. "Policy Arena Aid 'With Chinese Characteristics': Chinese Foreign Aid and Development Fiance Meet the OECD-DAC Aid Regime." *Journal of International Development* 23(5):1-13.
- Brooten, Lisa. 2013. "The Problem with Human Rights Discourse and Freedom Indices: The Case of Burma/Myanmar Media." *International Journal of Communication* 7: 681-700.
- Bünthe, Marco. 2014. "Burma's Transition to Quasi-Military Rule: From Rulers to Guardians?" *Armed Forces & Society* 40(4): 742-764.
- Carbone, Giovanni. 2009. "The Consequences of Democratization." *Journal of Democracy* 20(2): 123-137.
- Cassani, Andrea. 2014. "Hybrid What? Partial Consensus and Persistent Divergences in the Analysis of Hybrid Regimes." *International Political Science Review* 35(5): 542-558.
- Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). 2015. *Political Parties and Leaders - Myanmar. The World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2118.html> (accessed May 18, 2015).

- Chen, Dingding and Katrin Kinzelbach. 2015. "Democracy Promotion and China: Blocker or Bystander?" *Democratization* forthcoming issue: 1-19.
- Chong, Alan. 2008. "Asian Contributions on Democratic Dignity and Responsibility: Rizal, Sukarno and Lee on Guided Democracy." *East Asia* 25:243-265.
- Clapp, Priscilla. 2010. "Prospects for Rapprochement Between the United States and Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 32(3): 409-426.
- Clapp, Priscilla. 2014. "The Influence of Domestic Issues on Myanmar's Foreign Policy: A Historical Perspective." *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Special Report* 45: 5-22.
- Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(4): 823-830.
- Cook, Alistair D. B. 2012. "Myanmar's China Policy: Agendas, Strategies and Challenges." *China Report* 48(3): 269-281.
- Croissant, Aurel and Jil Kamerling. 2013. "Why Do Military Regimes Institutionalize? Constitution-making and Elections as Political Survival Strategy in Myanmar." *Asian Journal of Political Science* 21(2): 105-125.
- Dalpino, Catharin. 2014. "Second Chance: Prospects for US-Myanmar Relations." *National Bureau of Asian Research* 45: 23-36.
- Denmark, Abraham M. 2014. "Myanmar and Asia's New Great Game." *National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Special Report* 45: 75-85.
- Deutsche Welle (DW). 2015. "Student Rally Crackdown Exposes Myanmar's Struggle with Democratic Transition." March 11. <http://www.dw.de/student-rally-crackdown-exposes-myanmars-struggle-with-democratic-transition/a-18307982> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- Donilon, Thomas. 2012. "President Obama's Asia Policy and Upcoming Trip to the Region." *Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*. Transcript by Federal News Service: Washington, D.C.
- Embassy of the United States. 2015. *Embassy of the United States in Rangoon – Burma: Reporting Requirements*. <http://burma.usembassy.gov/reporting-requirements.html> (accessed May 26, 2015).
- European Commission. 2015. *European Union, Trade in Goods with Myanmar*. http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/september/tradoc_113423.pdf (accessed May 27, 2015).
- Fan Hongwei. 2014. "China Adapts to New Myanmar Realities." *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies* 12: 1-10.
- Federation of American Scientists. 1999. "US-China: Aftermath of Embassy Bombing – Cox Report Findings – Quotes by East Asia." <http://fas.org/news/china/1999/www9m26.htm> (accessed May 29, 2015).
- Fierlbeck, Katherine. 2008. *Globalizing Democracy: Power, Legitimacy and the Interpretation of Democratic Ideas*, 2nd ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Financial Times. 2015. "Chinese Arms Sales Surge 143% in 5 Years." March 16.
<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/52eb31a4-cb99-11e4-aeb5-00144feab7de.html#axzz3bpXOpcSL>
 (accessed June 1, 2015).
- ForeignAssistance.Gov. 2015. "U.S. Agency for International Development – Burma."
http://www.foreignassistance.gov/web/Agency_USAID.aspx?budTab=tab_Bud_Impl
 (accessed May 25, 2015).
- Haacke, Jürgen. 2006. *Myanmar's Foreign Policy: Domestic Influences and International Implications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Haacke, Jürgen. 2010. "China's Role in the Pursuit of Security by Myanmar's State Peace and Development Council: Boon and Bane?" *The Pacific Review* 23(1): 113-137.
- Haacke, Jürgen. 2011. "The Nature and Management of Myanmar's Alignment with China: The SLORC/SPDC Years." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30(2): 105-140.
- Haacke, Jürgen. 2012. "Myanmar: Now a Site for Sino-US Geopolitical Competition?" *London School of Economics and Political Science – IDEAS Special Reports*. London: London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Hak Yin Li and Yongnian Zheng. 2009. "Re-Interpreting China's Non-Intervention Policy Towards Myanmar: Leverage, Interest and Intervention." *Journal of Contemporary China* 18(61): 617-637.
- Henry, Nicholas. 2015. "Trade Union Internationalism and Political Change in Myanmar." *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27(1): 69-84.
- Holbig, Heike. 2011. "International Dimensions of Legitimacy: Reflections on Western Theories and the Chinese Experience." *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 16: 161-181.
- Huffington Post. 2012. "Myanmar Elections: Aung San Suu Kyi, Opposition Leader, Wins Parliament Seat." April 1. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/04/01/myanmar-elections-aung-san-suu-kyi-parliament_n_1394633.html (accessed May 25, 2015).
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2008. "US: Burma Gem Ban Strengthened." July 30.
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2008/07/28/us-burma-gem-ban-strengthened> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2012. "Burma: By-Elections a Step, but Not Real Reform."
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/30/burma-elections-step-not-real-reform> (accessed May 27, 2015).
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2015. "Myanmar Reneges on Effort to Free Political Prisoners."
 January 29. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/29/myanmar-reneges-effort-free-political-prisoners> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- International Media Support. 2012. "Analysis of the Guarantees of Freedom of Expression in the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar." August 2012.
<http://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ims-constitutional-assessment-myanmar-2012.pdf> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- International Monetary Fund (IMF). 1999. "Myanmar: Recent Economic Developments." *IMF Staff Country Report* No. 99/134. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/1999/cr99134.pdf>
 (accessed May 30, 2015).

- Irrawaddy. 2011. "Wunna Maung Lwin: Military Commander to Foreign Minister." July 13. http://www2.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21687 (accessed May 21, 2015).
- Jones, Lee. 2014. "Explaining Myanmar's Regime Transition: The Periphery is Central." *Democratization* 21(5): 780-802.
- Khiem, Pham Gia. 2010. "ASEAN Welcomes Myanmar's General Elections." November 9. http://www.vietnamembassy-brunei.org/vnemb.vn/tin_hddn/ns101110094106 (accessed May 18, 2015).
- Kudo, Toshihiro. 2008. "Myanmar's Economic Relations with China: Who Benefits and Who Pays?" In *Dictatorship, Disorder and Decline in Myanmar*, eds. Monique Skidmore and Trevor Wilson. Canberra: The Australian National University Press, 87-109.
- Kudo, Toshihiro and Fumiharu Mieno. 2009. "Trade, Foreign Investment and Myanmar's Economic Development in the Transition to an Open Economy." In *The Economic Transition in Myanmar After 1988: Market Economy Versus State Control*, eds. Koichi Fujita, Fumiharu Mieno, and Ikuko Okamoto. Singapore: National University of Singapore, 103-127.
- Kurlantzik, Joshua. 2015. "The Pivot in Southeast Asia – Balancing Interests and Values." *Council of Foreign Relations* (Working Paper).
- Kyaw Yin Hlaing. 2012. "Understanding Recent Political Changes in Myanmar." *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 34(2): 197-216.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51-65.
- Maung Aung Myoe. 2011. *In the Name of Pauk-Phaw: Myanmar's China Policy since 1948*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Merkel, Wolfgang. 2004. "Embedded and Defective Democracies." *Democratization* 11(5): 33-58.
- Miller, Meredith. 2014. "Myanmar's Emerging Role in the Regional Economy." *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Special Report* 45: 87-101.
- MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Myanmar. 2015. "Emergence of Foreign Policy." Republic of the Union of Myanmar. http://www.mofa.gov.mm/?page_id=32 (accessed May 22, 2015).
- Morlino, Leonardo. 2004. "What is a 'Good' Democracy?" *Democratization* 11(5): 10-32.
- Mukherjee, Kunal. 2010. "Is There a Distinct Style of Asian Democracy?" *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 45(6): 684-694.
- Nixon, Hamish, Cindy Joelene, Kyi Pyar Chit Saw, Thet Aung Lynn, and Matthew Arnold. 2013. *State and Region Governments in Myanmar*. Myanmar Development Resource Institute – Center for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD) and The Asia Foundation.
- Pedersen, Morten B. 2014. "Myanmar Foreign Policy in a Time of Transition." *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) Special Report* 45: 53-73.
- Přibáň, Jiří. 2012. "Varieties of Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8: 105-121.

- Renwick, Neil. 2014. "China's Role in Burma's Development." *Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Bulletin* 45(4): 70-84.
- Reuters. 2011. "Factbox – Myanmar's New Political Structure." January 31. <http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/01/31/idINIndia-54526820110131?pageNumber=1> (accessed May 8, 2015).
- Reuters. 2014. "Myanmar to Invite Western Observers for General Elections." March 24. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/24/us-myanmar-election-iduskbn0mk0c120150324> (accessed May 8, 2015).
- Rieffel, Lex and James W. Fox. 2013. "The Dilemma of Foreign Aid to Myanmar/Burma." *Brookings Institute and Nathan Associates Inc. Special Report* March 2013: 1-57.
- Riley, Mark S. and Ravi A. Balaram. 2013. "The United States International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program with Burma/Myanmar: A Review of the 1980-1988 Programming and Prospects for the Future." *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 40(3): 109-132.
- Risse, Thomas and Nelli Babayan. 2015. "Democracy Promotion and the Challenges of Illiberal Regional Powers: Introduction to the Special Issue." *Democratization*. Forthcoming Issue.
- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Philippe C. Schmitter. 2004. "Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation: Measuring the Components of Democratization." *Democratization* 11(5): 59-90.
- Schoff, James L. 2014. "A US-Japan Foreign Policy Alliance for Myanmar." *Asia-Pacific Review* 21(2): 33-60.
- South China Morning Post. 2014. "China to Sign Trade Deals Worth US\$8 Billion with Myanmar." November 14. <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1639883/china-sign-trade-deals-worth-us8-billion-myanmar> (accessed June 3, 2015).
- Steinberg, David I. 2006. "Burma-Myanmar: The U.S.-Burmese Relationship and Its Vicissitudes." In *Short of the Goal: U.S. Policy and Poorly Performing States*, eds. Nancy Birdsall, Milan Vaishnav, and Robert L. Ayres. Washington DC: Center for Global Development, 209-244.
- Steinberg, David I. 2010. "The United States and Myanmar: A 'Boutique Issue'?" *International Affairs* 86(1): 175-194.
- Storey, Ian. 2006. "China's 'Malacca Dilemma'." *China Brief* 6(8).
- Storey, Ian. 2007. "China, Burma, and the 'Saffron Revolution'." *China Brief* 7(19).
- Sun, Yun. 2012. "China and the Changing Myanmar." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 31(4): 51-77.
- Sun, Yun. 2014. "Myanmar's ASEAN Chairmanship: An Early Assessment." *Stimson Issue Brief* 4(September): 1-16.
- Taylor, Robert H. 2009. *The State in Myanmar*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Taylor, Robert H. 2012. "Myanmar: From Army Rule to Constitutional Rule?" *Asian Affairs* 43(2): 221-236.
- Taylor, Robert H. 2013. "Myanmar's 'Pivot' Toward the Shibboleth of 'Democracy'." *Asian Affairs* 44(3): 392-400.

- The Economist. 2011. "Myanmar's Surprising Government: Dammed if They Don't?" October 4. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/10/myanmars-surprising-government> (accessed June 2, 2015).
- The Economist. 2014. "What's Gone Wrong with Democracy?" March 1. <http://www.economist.com/news/essays/21596796-democracy-was-most-successful-political-idea-20th-century-why-has-it-run-trouble-and-what-can-be-do> (accessed May 1, 2015).
- The Economist. 2015. "Myanmar and China: The Han that Rocked the Cradle." March 14. <http://www.economist.com/news/asia/21646248-kokang-conflict-causes-problems-china-too-han-rock-cradle> (accessed June 3, 2015).
- The Guardian. 2008a. "US Embassy Cables: Revealed – What China Really Thinks About Burma." January 11. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/us-embassy-cables-documents/136980> (accessed May 31, 2015).
- The Guardian. 2008b. "Laura Bush Urges Burma to Accept US Aid." May 5. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/may/05/burma.usa> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- The Guardian. 2013. "Thein Sein Becomes First Burmese President to Visit US Since 1966." May 20. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/20/the-in-sein-burma-vis-it-us-obama> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- The Irrawaddy. 2014. "US May Consider Future Arms Sales to Burma: Report." February 24. <http://www.irrawaddy.org/burma/us-may-consider-future-arms-sales-burma-report.html> (accessed May 26, 2015).
- The Jakarta Post. 2010. "Indonesia 'Welcomes' Myanmar Election Results." November 16. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/11/16/indonesia-%E2%80%98welcomes%E2%80%99-myanmar-election-results.html> (accessed May 18, 2015).
- The New York Times. 2014. "Obama Prods Myanmar Back Toward Democracy." November 13. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/14/world/asia/obama-will-try-to-push-myanmar-back-on-the-path-toward-democracy.html?_r=0 (accessed May 25, 2015).
- The New York Times. 2015. "US: Myanmar Should Share Responsibility for Rohingya Crisis." May 22. <http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/05/22/world/asia/ap-as-rohingya-boat-people.html> (accessed May 25, 2015).
- United States Trade Representative (USTR). 2014. *Resource Center – Burma*. Executive Office of the President. <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/southeast-asia-pacific/Burma> (accessed May 26, 2015).
- USAID. 2015. "Burma – Complex Emergency: Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2015." March 30. http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/burma_ce_fs02_03-30-2015.pdf (accessed May 25, 2015).
- Van Dijk, Teun A. 1997. "What is Discourse Analysis?" In *Political Linguistics*, eds. Jan Blommart and Chris Bulcaen. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Co., 11-52.
- Wei Ling. 2013. "Rebalancing or De-Balancing: U.S. Pivot and East Asian Order." *American Foreign Policy Interests: The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy* 35(3): 148-154.

- Wejnert, Barbara. 2014. *Diffusion of Democracy: The Past and Future of Global Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wirajuda, Muhammad Hadianto. 2014. "The Impact of Democratisation on Indonesia's Foreign Policy: Regional Cooperation, Promotion of Political Values, and Conflict Management." Ph.D. diss.. London School of Economics.
- Xinhua. 2010. "China Welcomes Myanmar's Smooth General Election." November 9. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-11/09/c_13598575.htm (accessed June 1, 2015).
- Xinhua. 2013. "Myanmar's NLD Party Delegation Leaves for China." May 8. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-05/08/c_132368364.htm (accessed June 1, 2015).
- Yilmaz, Hakan. 2002. "External-Internal Linkages in Democratization: Developing an Open Model of Democratic Change." *Democratization* 9(2): 67-84.