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MYANMAR: FROM ARMY RULE TO CONSTITUTIONAL RULE?

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Abstract

The recent turn of events in Myanmar has surprised and puzzled those in the West who formerly condemned the military government, yet now seem keen to visit and be seen with Aung San Suu Kui. The article suggests that the West's analysis of the previous situation was badly flawed. On the basis of an alternative narrative of the last twenty years, the author argues that what is now happening is not an abrupt change of direction, but rather a continuation of a policy line followed by the army for many years. Their concern has always been with national security. The recent deals with the many ethnic-based insurgent groups provide a basis on which it is possible for them to change focus and promote the political and economic strength of the country. This article was written before the results of the 1 April election were known, but suggests that, whatever the outcome, many of the problems which plagued previous regimes will persist.

Notes

This article is a sequel to Robert H. Taylor, ‘Myanmar: Reconciliation or Reconsolidation? Isolation or Resolution?’, Asian Affairs Vol. XL, No. II (2009): 210–223.

Readers who wish to follow up on the details of this article might wish to refer to the works listed below as well as the burgeoning daily reporting on Myanmar.

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