

Is Myanmar En Route to a Democratic Future?

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Democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi became the de facto head of the Myanmar government in April after a landslide election victory over a party backed by the military that had run the country for 50 years. Today Myanmar is a much freer country than it was when she was released in 2010 from years of house arrest. But her new government faces daunting challenges and its success is by no means assured. One of her challenges is working with the military that still has an outsized political role. Another is hammering out a peace deal with two-dozen armed ethnic groups that have fought the central government since the 1950s. A third is achieving harmony between the country's majority Buddhists and minority Muslims after an outbreak of violence several years ago.

Murray Hiebert serves as senior adviser and deputy director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining CSIS, he was senior director for Southeast Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, where he worked to promote trade and investment opportunities between the United States and Asia. Earlier Mr. Hiebert was a journalist in the *Wall Street Journal's* China bureau, where he covered trade issues. Prior to his posting to Beijing, he worked for the *Wall Street Journal Asia* and the *Far Eastern Economic Review* in Washington, reporting on U.S.-Asia relations. From 1995 to 1999, he was based in Kuala Lumpur for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*. In the early 1990s, he was based in Hanoi for the *Review*, reporting on Vietnam's economic reforms. He joined the *Review's* Bangkok bureau in 1986, covering political and economic developments in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Mr. Hiebert is the author of two books on Vietnam, *Chasing the Tigers* (Kodansha, 1996) and *Vietnam Notebook* (Review Publishing, 1993).

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