

Review: What Global Reopening Future for Post-Coup Myanmar?

A new book exposes unprecedented bottom-up changes reshaping the country as the focus intensifies on attempts to accelerate global and regional reengagement.

OCT 02, 2026 - PAID



A new book exposes unprecedented bottom-up changes reshaping post-coup Myanmar as the focus intensifies on attempts to accelerate global and regional reengagement.

WonkCount: 1,283 words (~6 minutes)

To receive full *ASEAN Wonk* posts and support our work, consider a paid subscription for \$5 a month/\$50 a year through the button below. For more on pricing for institutions and groups as well as discounts, [visit this page](#).



Review: What Global Reopening Future for Post-Coup Myanmar?

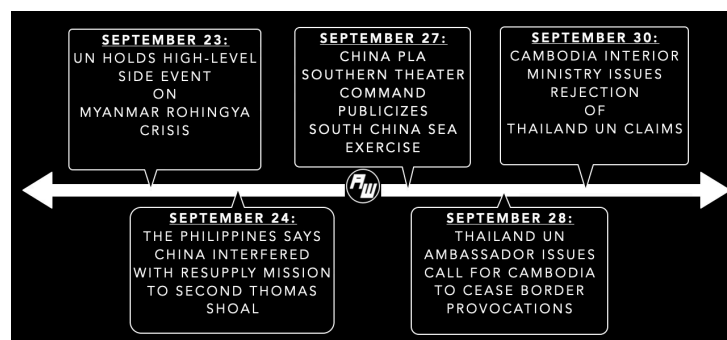


Source: Kremlin

Context

“An entire generation is growing up in exile,” a top United Nations official warned this past week during a high-level event on Myanmar on the held on the sidelines of the General Assembly ¹. The warning was an important reminder of the intersections between the country’s internal and external realities as the current government tries to intensify [engagement with a range of powers along with neighbors closer to home](#) in Southeast Asia and ASEAN ².

Select Key Southeast Asia-Related Flashpoint Dynamics



Source: Graphic by ASEAN Wonk Team

A new book *Myanmar Rises* exposes unprecedented bottom-up changes reshaping the country as the focus intensifies on attempts to accelerate global and regional reengagement ³. In doing so, it adds to a range of books that touch on the wider geopolitical and geoeconomic implications arising from the future trajectory of post-coup Myanmar, [including ones](#) written by former policymakers, diplomats,

advisors and scholars that [we have reviewed previously on ASEAN Wonk](#) ⁴. “The struggle for Myanmar’s future continues...the Spring Revolution has dramatically reoriented Myanmar’s international relations,” the book noted before going on to specify some of the key dimensions likely to shape the country’s future ⁵.

To receive full ASEAN Wonk posts and support our work, consider a paid subscription for \$5 a month/\$50 a year through the button below.

For more on pricing for institutions and groups as well as discounts, [visit this page](#).



Analysis

The book also highlights future scenario dimensions and dynamics (see originally-generated *ASEAN Wonk* table below for a summary of important contours. Paying subscribers can also read the rest of the “Analysis” section and “Implications” section looking at how these dynamics play out in the future).

Notable Additional Details, Along With Future Dynamics And Scenario Dimensions

SCENARIO DIMENSIONS	FUTURE DYNAMICS	NOTABLE ADDITIONAL DETAILS
STRUCTURAL REALITIES	INTERSECTION BETWEEN CHANGING POWER BALANCES WITHIN THE COUNTRY AND “DRAMATICALLY REORIENTED” FOREIGN RELATIONS	CONTRAST BETWEEN LEVERAGE IN CHINA’S “PRAGMATIC ENGAGEMENT” VS. “PRINCIPLED” FORMS OF ENGAGEMENT BY WEST; SHIFTING ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING “GREATLY DIMINISHED” MILITARY AND “FRACTURED” CIVILIAN POLITICS POST-AUNG SAN SUU KYI; EXPERIMENTATIONS OF NEW FORMS OF BOTTOM-UP LOCAL GOVERNANCE
JUNTA CALCULATIONS	STRATEGIES RANGING FROM “NON-ACCOMMODATION” TO “PARTIAL ACCOMMODATION” TO “FULL ACCOMMODATION”	DATAPPOINTS FOR RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE CAPACITY FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION; ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES; CONTROL OF ELECTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE CHANGES; POWER SHARING; AND CHANGES IN GOALS (APART FROM RETURN TO PRE-COUP STATUS QUO AS INITIAL OBJECTIVE)
RESISTANCE CALCULATIONS	STRATEGIES RANGING FROM “SUBMISSION” TO “PARTIAL RESISTANCE” TO ALL-OUT RESISTANCE”	DATAPPOINTS TO RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE PATTERNS OF RESISTANCE IN PERIPHERY VS. CENTER; EFFORTS AT ESTABLISHING TERRITORIAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL; SETTING UP OF PARALLEL GOVERNING STRUCTURES; AND DECENTRALIZED EFFORTS AT BOTTOM-UP POWER SHARING SHORT OF FULL FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM
BLACK SWAN EVENTS	EVENTS THAT COULD “BREAK THE STALEMATE” OF “CONTINUING ALL-OUT-WAR” SUBJECTING MYANMAR PEOPLE TO FURTHER VIOLENCE AND POVERTY	EXPECTED BLACK SWAN EVENT EXAMPLES SAID TO FIT WITHIN THE AFOREMENTIONED SCOPE INCLUDE “THE DEATH OF MIN AUNG HLAING” LEAVING A LEADERSHIP VACUUM AND SUCCESSION STRUGGLE OR A “CHINESE MILITARY INTERVENTION” THAT IS DEFINITIVE IN NATURE

Source: Table by ASEAN Wonk Team; content drawn from *Myanmar Rises*

The book’s broad scope accounts for both its value and limitations. The chief argument of *Myanmar Rises* is that the recent period of popular resistance against the coup takeover in Myanmar and resulting crisis pressures on the country have fundamentally reshaped the country’s future outlook in some important ways that are both quantitatively and qualitatively unprecedented relative to past periods since the its independence ⁶. The argument is advanced in 11 main chapters and three parts across just under 300 pages: 1) Chapters 2-7 [quantitative and qualitative shifts in popular resistance across areas such as local governance and women’s agency]; 2) Chapters 8-11 [evolutionary dynamics in crisis pressure dimensions including the economy and humanitarian assistance]; and 3) Chapter 12 [mapping future trajectories and outcomes] ⁷. The chief value of this broad scope is that it provides a rare mix of historically rooted and multifaceted contemporary analytical chapters on the country and directly addresses challenging questions such as current resistance varies from past periods and what specific dynamics are important to monitor for the future of the country’s security, economic and foreign policy outlook ⁸. On the flip side and turning to limitations, as the book itself admits and as with any scholarly account with respect to Myanmar at this stage, it is understandably difficult to apply the same level of breadth and granularity with respect to forecasting potential futures given manifold uncertainties. Nonetheless, the book does still attempt to do so with individual chapters mentioning trends and developments to watch and the concluding chapter detailing aggregate outcomes as well (see above *ASEAN Wonk* table for more specifics on some of the scenario contours detailed in the book) ⁹. “The Spring Revolution has blown up Myanmar’s otherwise long relatively static political landscape: numerous new

organizations have emerged, and the balance of power among them has shifted...it is hard to predict how the pieces fall after the war ends and normal politics returns,” the book candidly notes while observing broad changes such as the diminished power of the Myanmar military, the fracturing of the center of civilian politics and the dramatic developments in the periphery of the country relative to what has traditionally been considered to be its “core” ¹⁰.



Implications

Looking ahead, the book sees uncertainty looming for the country’s external and internal outlook. The concluding chapter of the book cautions against linear thinking by noting that there may well be the possibility of a “black swan event” of various kinds, be it a definitive Chinese military intervention or the death of Min Aung Hlaing ¹¹. In keeping with the emphasis on contingency and complexity, it notes that no less than nine hypothetical aggregate outcomes exist for the country based on the range of three strategies each adopted by the junta (non-accommodation; partial accommodation and full accommodation) and the resistance (submission; partial resistance; and all-out resistance), with these ranging from what is designated as the worst-case situation of “fully consolidated military rule” to an ideal situation where the military is under complete civilian control and the country has a genuine federal democratic system ¹². The chapter also warns against assuming that the country’s future outlook will resemble past periods, assessing that “no repeat of the liberalization of the early 2010s is expected this time” given a cited consensus among top military generals that too many concessions were deemed to be made to democratic politics previously ¹³. The chapter also suggests that beyond the more extreme scenarios of either the military or the resistance movement securing victory, the emphasis should also be on middle-of-the-road scenarios where “the frontlines are likely to remain dynamic”, with the military trying to retain the center of the country amid shifting towns and corridors as well as fragile deals struck by some of the ethnic armed organizations in some border areas but not others ¹⁴.

A more difficult question to answer is what more specific variables are likely to more decisively tilt the country towards some outcomes over others. At the aforementioned UN high-level event mentioned in the introductory paragraph of this review, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Barham Salih captured the juxtaposition of internal and external dynamics on one of many dimensions when he said in keynote remarks that “conflicts continue in Myanmar...conditions for voluntary, safe and dignified and sustainable return do not exist at the moment.” ¹⁵ Yet despite these oft-cited challenges that remain unaddressed within the country, opportunities for more engagement by the current junta-led government in power have nonetheless continued apace. While the tensions between these twin realities show few signs of being resolved anytime soon, *Myanmar Rises* is an important reminder that the Myanmar that countries are engaging today is fundamentally different across many “bottom-up” metrics that transcend narrower “top-down” worldviews.



¹ UN News, “Rohingya Refugees Deserve a Future Beyond Survival, Not Endless Displacement,” September 23, 2026.

² Ibid.

³ Cecile Medail, Samuel Hmung and Morten B. Pedersen, *Myanmar Rises: The Spring Revolution* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2026).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid, pg. 15 and pg. 17.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 1-17.

⁷ Ibid, Chapters 1-12.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid, pg. 15.

¹¹ Ibid, pg. 290.

¹² Ibid, pp. 283-290.

¹³ Ibid, pg. 289.

¹⁴ Ibid, pg. 290.

