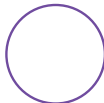




**Wilson
Center**



Executive Summary (Continued)

If the United States successfully provides expanded support for Myanmar, it can 1) hasten a resistance victory, 2) reduce the risk of post-war instability, 3) counter undue Chinese influence in Myanmar, 4) ensure a more stable ASEAN and Southeast Asia, and 5) assist in the establishment of a democratic government in a region facing rising authoritarianism.

Policy Implications

- The United States should increase the pace of implementation of the [BURMA Act](#) and ensure it is adequately funded.
- The United States should legally, politically, and diplomatically align, define, and formalize its relationships with key resistance actors and increase the tempo of public and private engagements with them.
- The United States should work to persuade US allies and partners, as well as important regional actors like China, that the military junta in Naypyidaw is the primary source of instability in Myanmar and that the pro-democracy resistance represents the best option for long-term stability.
- As the United States [continues to affirm support for](#) ASEAN's [Five-Point Consensus](#), US engagements with ASEAN should focus on persuading member states to increase engagements with the pro-democracy resistance and hold the junta accountable.
- The United States should increase the tempo of targeted sanctions on Myanmar military and associated entities to ramp up economic pressure on the junta, particularly targeting entities supplying heavy artillery and aircraft supplies.
- The United States should increase the provision of cross-border humanitarian aid by working with and routing through resistance actors.

[National Unity Government \(NUG\)](#); providing [humanitarian aid](#); implementing increasingly strong [targeted sanctions](#) intended to restrict the military junta's revenue and vital military

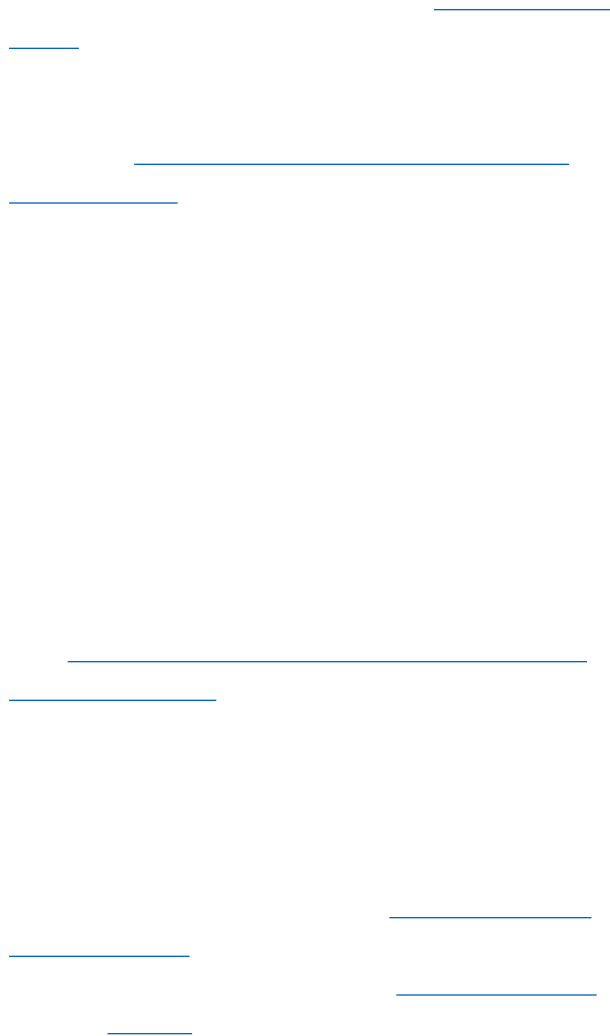
8) funding for or expanded access to satellite internet providers with service over Myanmar, and 9) drone jamming technology.

Two, the Act calls for support for “the administrative operations and programs of entities in Burma, including the political entities and affiliates of Ethnic Armed Organizations and pro-democracy movement organizations, that support efforts to establish an inclusive and representative democracy in Burma.” This type of support should include technical assistance and capacity building training for [local administrative units set up in newly liberated areas](#).

Three, it provides for “technical support and non-lethal assistance for Myanmar’s Ethnic Armed Organizations, People’s Defense Forces, and prodemocracy movement organizations to strengthen communications and command and control, and coordination of international relief and other operations between and among such entities.” Beyond efforts focused on humanitarian aid, technical support for resistance efforts to develop a stronger command-and-control system linking the Central Command and Coordination Committee, the Joint Command and Coordination, the disparate [People’s Defense Forces](#), the NUG Ministry of Defense, and other units would greatly improve resistance strategic and operational performance. On a tactical level, radios, civilian drones, and satellite phones as well as capacity building and training in technical expertise on drone use and repair, weapons maintenance, and logistics could further enhance resistance coordination and supply efforts.

Four, the BURMA Act highlights the need for “programs and activities relating to former members of the Burmese military that have condemned the February 1, 2021 coup d’etat

than political efforts. Expanded US support,



Domestic Product is 10 percent lower than in 2019, alongside 29 percent inflation. Per the [United Nations in November 2023](#), Myanmar has 2.16 million internally displaced persons, a number that will likely increase as fighting continues.

Myanmar's needs are in the billions of dollars, so the United States should also coordinate with allies and partners, such as Japan and the European Union, to facilitate increased aid contributions. Aid provision is by necessity cross border and will require close cooperation with and the permission of Bangladesh, India, and Thailand. Myanmar's bordering states have maintained a generally pro-engagement policy with the junta, so US diplomacy to ensure humanitarian aid reaches pro-democracy actors will be crucial.

Beyond humanitarian aid, providing direct funding for key resistance actors would go a long way towards assisting the coalition in restoring civilian governance and ensuring that everyday services may restart in a timely fashion. There are several policy options to do so. The United States could release \$1 billion in [frozen funds held at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York](#) to the National Unity Government to assist with establishing governance in captured territory and to provide assistance to displaced persons. The United States could also attempt to persuade US allies and partners, particularly Singapore, to release [\\$5.5 billion in frozen funds from the Central Bank of Myanmar to the NUG](#).

US Diplomatic Policy Options

Neither of these funding options is likely possible without upgrading US relations with the resistance, notably through formal diplomatic recognition. The United States could consider formally recognizing the National

Unity Government of Myanmar as the legitimate interim government of Myanmar. However, US policymakers need to carefully consider this option before implementation due to potential repercussions, such as the junta's likely closure of the US embassy in Yangon, as well as the role of recognition as diplomatic leverage with the NUG.

Regardless of recognition in the near-term, the White House, Department of Defense, and Department of State should legally, politically, and diplomatically align, define, and formalize relationships with key resistance actors. Commensurately, the United States should also increase the tempo of public and private engagements with resistance actors, especially as Washington is their strongest and most important ally. Importantly, this should include actors from across the resistance coalition, notably the NUG, the [National Unity Government](#), the [Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw](#), the Civil Disobedience Movement, and the ethnic armed organizations formally and informally aligned with the pro-democracy movement. Although US policymakers have been wary of interactions with some EAOs in the past due to concerns about illicit activities, the BURMA Act's provisions

Regarding the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United States [continues to support](#) ASEAN's [Five-Point Consensus](#). However, as the Five-Point Consensus has thus far failed to resolve the crisis and the junta stands intransigent, the United States should call for a more forward-leaning interpretation of the agreement. US engagements with ASEAN should therefore focus on persuading member states committed to returning democracy to Myanmar that the junta is non-compliant. Key partners on Myanmar are Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, as they are the most sympathetic to the resistance movement, as well as Thailand given its close relationship with Naypyidaw. The United States has [already successfully worked with Singapore](#) to deny the Myanmar military access to key bank accounts. During engagements with ASEAN partners, Washington should argue that punishing the junta for non-compliance should be on the

