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AN UNCLEAR ROADMAP: BURMA'S FRAGILE POLITICAL REFORMS AND GROWING ETHNIC STRIFE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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AN UNCLEAR ROADMAP: BURMA'S FRAGILE POLITICAL REFORMS AND GROWING ETHNIC STRIFE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2 o'clock p.m., in room 2172 Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Steve Chabot (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. CHABOT. Good afternoon.

Welcome, everyone, my colleagues, and our distinguished witnesses to this Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific hearing.

The ranking member, Mr. Faleomavaega, is not able to be here today because he is accompanying the body of a soldier who was killed in Afghanistan back to American Samoa, Mr. Faleomavaega's district.

Our thoughts and prayers are certainly with the family of First Lieutenant Jason Asotama Togi. Mr. Bera will be sitting in and replacing Mr. Faleomavaega this afternoon. He and I will be making opening statements, and other members will be recognized for 1 minute to make a statement if they wish to do so.

We find ourselves today in an extraordinarily unusual time in history, one in which political changes are taking shape in nearly every corner of the world. As we look across the Indian Ocean, the beacon of hope and change in Asia, it seems 2 years ago, was the relatively unknown isolated country we call Burma. Today, nearly everyone knows about this nation in some way, and has heard of democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi who sacrificed years of her life to improve her country's plight. In 2011, she testified via video before this subcommittee expressing her resounding hope of change for her people. Two years later, her wish has not yet become reality.

The Burma we see today is at first glance much different than the one we knew only a few years ago. Businesses around the globe have rushed in, seeking a stake in Burma's economy and its untouched natural resources. Sanctions were lifted. Investors and tourists are moving across its borders. Some have called Burma the last Wild West of Asia, named as one of the top travel destinations of the year due to its white beaches, serene Buddhist architecture,

and pristine beauty. Unfortunately, I'm not so sure how long that title will last.

Countries around the world felt that they could now cross one more dictatorship off their list. And while Burma's sudden and unexpected democratic changes, which opened it to the world, was indeed incredible, we are realizing that all this hype may have been premature. Those rose-colored glasses made the situation look better than it truly was underneath.

The new model for reforms in Burma is "two steps forward, one step back." At least that's what the Obama administration is using—which is in considerable contrast to its overly optimistic depiction of reforms only a year ago. After 2 years of symbolic visits, appointments, grand gestures and ceremonial photo-ops, the tone is finally mellowing as the international community realizes Burma's future is filled with challenges. The situation there is extremely fragile and all of the reforms to date could be reversed, unfortunately, with very little effort.

A few days ago, Aung San Suu Kyi warned the U.S. that, "Now it is more important than ever to look at the situation in Burma very objectively and not to be over optimistic and recognize that Burma is not yet a democracy until its constitution is changed." She also made it clear that legal challenges are essential to end the ethnic conflicts, including attacks led by Burmese Government forces against the Kachin community. The world needs to take note.

The escalation of human rights abuses committed by the Burmese military, and the civil unrest between Burma's Buddhist majority and Muslim minorities, is threatening the progression of future political reforms in Burma. The effects of the surging anti-Muslim movement and ensuing violence has already been staggering. Over 250,000 people have been displaced, over 10,000 homes destroyed and nearly 300 people killed. Evidence shows the Burmese military perpetrated some of these attacks directly. In other situations the military and police just stood by and watched the violence unfold without taking appropriate action. A humanitarian crisis is unfolding before our very eyes.

What's more, nearly 200 political prisoners remain behind bars, but this does not include the nearly 1,000 Rohingya and 200 Kachin prisoners of conscience who have been arrested and detained over the past year for their religion or ethnicity. This is unacceptable. These are actions repressive regimes take and use to intimidate their own people.

How has the Obama administration reacted to the blatant human rights violations and unfulfilled promises? They have offered more rewards, deals, and concessions.

Let's take a quick look: The administration lifted investment sanctions; lifted import bans; allowed Burma's military to observe Cobra Gold—the largest military exercise in the world; lifted visa bans on top Burmese politicians; hosted President Thein Sein at the White House in May; signed a trade and investment framework agreement; began the process of admitting Burma into the Generalized System of Preferences program; and most recently, initiated military-to-military engagement with Burma.

This last action, in particular, comes far too soon in light of the military's strong influence in Burma and its perpetration of human rights abuses against ethnic minorities. Without established benchmarks, this step, in my view, is hasty and poses a risk of failure for the United States' entire engagement strategy with respect to Burma.

It's clear that the U.S. is committed to helping Burma succeed, but why is the only thing this administration is doing is giving and then giving more?

The engagement process needs to slow down until it becomes apparent that the Burmese regime intends to truly reform. I believe the administration needs to reassess its strategy and take a step back because Burma has not yet demonstrated that it is truly committed to reforming. Without a clear roadmap, it's unclear whether future reforms in Burma will be consistent with goals established under U.S. laws.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses today about their assessment of the political environment in Burma, the growing human rights abuses among ethnic groups and the U.S. engagement strategy with Burma.

Now I'd like to turn to the ranking member here this afternoon, Mr. Bera, for an opening statement.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Chairman Chabot, and thank you for holding this important hearing to discuss Burma's ongoing reform efforts.

It's an incredibly important discussion for us to have, particularly with—particularly with how young the democracy is. While we know real progress has been made, we also can't ignore that there's still much to be done.

I continue to be particularly troubled by ongoing reports of ethnic violence, remaining political prisoners, suppression, mass arrests and raids on homes and monasteries.

But after almost five decades of brutal military repression, hope and optimism remain alive in Burma. But the truth is for this hope and optimism to continue there are major challenges that Burma will need to overcome.

I believe that the United States can aid in solving these challenges but as the world's greatest democracy we have to do more than just aid.

We must also send a clear-cut message of what our values are and that the United States and its hope for success will not tolerate human rights abuses and oppression.

As Burma transitions from instability to a country of democratic rule, this institution, Congress, and the administration must continually consider and review our actions.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of each of the witnesses. I look forward to learning more about the status of where Burma is and hearing your thoughts and ideas about the policies that Congress and the administration should be thinking about and adopting in our hopes of creating a lasting and stable democracy in Burma.

And again, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank you for calling this important hearing and, again, I look forward to the testimony of the witnesses.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Andrews, as president and CEO of United to End Genocide, he also serves as senior advisor to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs.

A former congressman from Maine, Tom most recently served as national director of Win Without War, a coalition of 40 national organizations promoting a national security strategy that calls for prudent use of military engagement. He's worked to promote democracy throughout the world, is an advocate of human rights in Burma, and has worked closely with the national coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

In the early 90s, he served as general secretary of the Nobel Peace Laureate campaign for Aung San Suu Kyi. Tom was elected to the Maine House of Representatives in 1982, the Maine Senate in 1984, and the United States House of Representatives in 1990. We welcome you here, Tom.

Our second witness will be Jennifer Quigley. Ms. Quigley is the executive director for the U.S. Campaign for Burma, where she works to ensure international policy makers support the movement for freedom and democracy in Burma, provide support for human rights and humanitarian needs and seek to bring an end to crimes against humanity and impunity in Burma.

She has worked on the movement for freedom and justice in Burma in different capacities for 10 years now. Prior to joining the U.S. Campaign for Burma, she worked for the Women's League of Burma and its member organizations on international advocacy and capacity building. We welcome you here this afternoon.

Next, Dr. Wakar Uddin is the director general of the Arakan Rohingya Union, chairman of the Burmese Rohingya Association of North America and a professor at Penn State University.

He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Nevada and a Ph.D. from the University of Georgia. We welcome you here, Dr. Uddin.

Finally, Ralph Cwerman, is president and chief executive officer, co-founder and board member of the Humpty Dumpty Institute, HDI, a private non-governmental organization dedicated to enhancing ties between the U.S. Congress and the United Nations. Under Mr. Cwerman's leadership, the institute has brought hundreds of Members of Congress and their senior staff to U.N. headquarters, including myself, for private briefings. Previously, Mr. Cwerman served as senior vice president of MUUS Asset Management Company, LLC, and senior vice president of the United Nations Association of the United States. Prior to that, Mr. Cwerman served as director of research and speechwriter to Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu at Israel's permanent mission to the United Nations.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Middle East studies from Tel Aviv University and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University.

We want to thank the entire panel here this afternoon. I will remind you of our 5-minute rule. On the light system, the yellow light will let you know you have 1 minute to wrap up, and when the red light comes on, please wrap up your testimony. Each of you

has 5 minutes. Congressman Andrews, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE TOM ANDREWS, PRESIDENT, UNITED TO END GENOCIDE

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you so very much for holding this hearing. Thank you for your very comprehensive statement, Mr. Bera. Thank you for yours. Indeed, a humanitarian crisis is underway for millions and millions of people in Burma.

And you covered much of the fundamentals. I'd just like to talk about my own personal experience travelling in Burma earlier this summer, Mr. Chairman.

I went to Rakhine State in the west of Burma. I went to central and northern area of Mandalay. I visited Meiktila and I also visited many neighborhoods in the capital city of Rangoon.

Throughout my travels I heard stories of violence, of systematic discrimination, of isolation and the blanket oppression where every aspect of life of so many of these people is tightly controlled by the military.

People describe their life in terms of violence. Their right to move from one village to another, even from one street to another, the right to earn a living, the right to get married, the right to have more than two children, even the right to live with one's own family is dependent upon the permission of authorities and most often only after the payment of bribes.

Large numbers of people are forced to live in these conditions, Mr. Chairman, not because of anything they have done but because of who they are and the god that they pray to.

I found hate speech, a key precursor of genocide, is disturbingly prevalent in Burma. Fueling it is the systematic, well-organized and well-funded campaign of hatred and bigotry known as 969.

It is ominously reminiscent of the hateful propaganda directed at the Tutsi population and their sympathizers in the lead-up and during the Rwanda genocide, and I describe this activity in my written testimony, Mr. Chairman, and there's a photograph I brought of one of these rallies to you.

But let me just quote one of the most prominent leaders of this 969 movement. When he was asked about Muslims he said this, and I'm quoting, "Muslims are like African carp. They breed quickly, they are very violent and they eat their own." That is a Buddhist monk who is a leader of the 969 movement.

Mr. Chairman, the authorities in Burma do not want you to hear what I'm telling you this afternoon. After being blocked by security agents at a roadside checkpoint when I attempted to visit some of the neighborhoods and IDP camps I was finally able to get in, and here's what I wrote to some friends and colleagues from inside Burma.

> "I'm travelling to parts of Burma that the government does not want me to see. I now realize why. Yesterday I saw burnt buildings and destroyed mosques, met with those who had literally had to run for their lives after watching their homes and everything that they had worked for destroyed.

"They now live in abject poverty in makeshift camps, wanting desperately to return and rebuild their village but being utterly terrified to do so.

"Many told me yes, they are scared of the mobs and the escalating anti-Muslim fearmongering and poison that fuels that violence but they fear the Burma security forces and police even more. I've been running into plenty of these security forces. They have stopped, harassed and followed me.

"Many intelligence agents have interrupted meetings with courageous people who are willing to tell me their story. Three of these agents followed me yesterday to a meeting of an extraordinary Buddhist monk who had saved hundreds of Muslims from a mob by providing them shelter in his monastery. The agent sat in the back of the monastery hall taking notes of our conversation.

"Later I was stopped and surrounded by several security forces shortly after passing their compound. They let me pass only after I showed them the photos in my camera and trashed those that they did not want to leave the country.

"Yesterday at what I thought was a secret meeting at the home of a family of a village wracked by violence a neighbor came by to warn us that military intelligence agents were waiting across the street. I had four agents following me for the reminder of the day."

These are some of the obstacles, Mr. Chairman, to learning and documenting the truth.

This is the untold story of Burma, one that is not part of the sunny narratives that are so commonplace and it is one that desperately needs to be told.

I want to congratulate you for giving us this opportunity to air the truth that is—that is happening as we speak inside of Burma and I provide in some detail my findings in my—in my written testimony.

But by no means is this simply restricted to my own experience. The United Nations special rapporteur, Tomas Quintana, described in some detail his experience. He said, and I'm quoting, "The severe restrictions on freedom of movement in Muslim IDP camps at Muslim villages remain in place."

He cited the impunity of security forces and the lack of any form of justice for the—for the Rohingya. I am desperately—I am deeply concerned as you are, Mr. Chairman, of the signals that we are sending as a nation.

By the lifting of restrictions, of lifting the very sources of pressure that provided for the progress that we have seen in Burma, I believe this is a very dangerous course and should be reexamined and thoughtfully reviewed by this committee and by all.

I am particularly concerned about the military-to-military relationships and the signals that this is—that it's sending to the Burmese military who are responsible for egregious human rights violations that continue even as we speak.

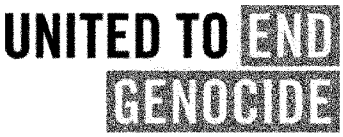
It is very important, Mr. Chairman, that the American public and that this Congress see the complete story of Burma and that the policies that are in place right now be reexamined so that we are sending the right signals to the regime, the right signals to the

military, and the right signals to those people in Burma who are living, as you described, this human—this humanitarian crisis day in and day out.

Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Andrews follows:]

Save Darfur Coalition and Genocide Intervention Network are now



Testimony of the Hon. Thomas H. Andrews
President and CEO of United to End Genocide
US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
"An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife"
September 19, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding this important public hearing. Despite the well publicized reforms in Burma that led to the election of Aung San Suu Kyi to Parliament, there is a disturbing reality there that has remained largely obscured from public view. It is imperative that Congress and the American people are aware of this side of the Burma story and that current U.S. policy toward Burma be closely examined in light of it. This hearing is an important and timely step in this direction.

Earlier this summer I travelled to Burma to get a first-hand look at conditions there. I discovered that there are many thousands of people there who are facing hatred, discrimination and violence not because of anything that they have done but because of who they are and the God they pray to.

United Nations officials and independent human rights groups have documented direct state complicity in ethnic cleansing and severe human rights abuses, the blocking of humanitarian aid and incitement of anti-Muslim violence.

I travelled to Rakhine State in the west of Burma where I visited eight IDP camps and spoke with dozens of desperate internally displaced people. I travelled to the central and northern area of Mandalay and the city of Meiktila where I visited neighborhoods and met with many people and families who live in fear and desperation. And, I met with many in the capital city of Rangoon, where fear and intimidation is on the rise in Muslim communities.

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www.endgenocide.org

Throughout my travels I heard stories of systematic discrimination, isolation and blanket oppression where every aspect of life of members of the Muslim minority is controlled. People described living in constant fear of violence within their communities and intimidation by authorities. The right to move from one village – or even one street – to another, the right to earn a living, to get married, to have more than two children and even the right to live with one's own family was often dependent on the permission of authorities and most often only after the payment of bribes.

I found that hate speech – a precursor of genocide – is prevalent in Burma. Fueling it is a systematic, well organized and well funded campaign of hatred and bigotry known as "969". It follows a well established pattern:

1) Campaign organizers arrive in a village, distributing DVDs, pamphlets and stickers that warn Buddhists that their religion and their country were in peril as Muslims seek to eliminate both and establish a Muslim caliphate;
2) Villages are invited to a special community event to hear a message from venerable Buddhist monks about how they can protect their families, nation and religion;
3) Radical nationalist monks arrive at the designated time and deliver fiery hate-filled speeches warning that Muslims are plotting to destroy Buddhism and take control of the nation. Villages are encouraged to support the movement by signing petitions, and displaying "969" stickers on their homes and businesses. They are encouraged to only patronize those who displayed the stickers and boycott any Muslim owned or operated business.

The hateful rhetoric of these radical Rakhine monks and the "969" campaign is ominously reminiscent of the hateful propaganda directed at the Tutsi population and their sympathizers in the lead up and during the Rwandan genocide. Demanding the expulsion of all Rohingya from Burma, these monks urge the local population to sever all relations with not only the Rohingya, but also with what are described as their "sympathizers". Labeled as national traitors, those Buddhists who associate with Rohingya Muslims also face intimidation and the threat of violence.

Mr. Chairman, I discovered a highly flammable toxic mix of conditions in Burma that can explode into massive violence and genocide unless action is taken to stop it.

The Rohingyas are one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. They were effectively stripped of their citizenship in 1982 through the discriminatory Citizenship Law. There has been little political will to repeal the law as widespread prejudice against Rohingya prevails. The government has long restricted their rights to freedom of movement, education and employment.

Government restrictions on humanitarian access to the Rohingya community have left tens of thousands in dire need of food, adequate shelter, and medical care.

The authorities in Burma do not want you to hear what I am telling you this afternoon. After being blocked by security forces at roadside checkpoints from visiting IDP camps, I told officials that I was a former Member of Congress who was in communication with many former colleagues who were eager to learn about conditions in Burma. This is what I wrote to friends and colleagues from inside Burma soon after I found my way to Muslim minority communities and IDP camps:

I am travelling to parts of Burma that the government does not want me to see. I now realize why. Yesterday I saw burnt out buildings and destroyed Mosques, met with those who had to literally run for their lives after watching their homes and everything that they had worked for destroyed. They now live in abject poverty in makeshift camps wanting desperately to return and rebuild their village but also utterly terrified. Many told me that yes, they are scared of the mobs and the escalating anti-Muslim fear mongering and poison that fuels the violence. But, they fear Myanmar security forces and police even more.

I have been running into plenty of these security forces. They have stopped, harassed and followed me. Military intelligence agents have interrupted meetings with courageous people willing to tell me their story. Three of these agents followed me yesterday to a meeting of an extraordinary Buddhist monk who saved hundreds of Muslims from a mob by providing them shelter in his monastery. The agents sat in the back of the monastery hall taking notes.

Even more than the anger I have felt over what I have observed, I have been deeply moved by the courage of the people here – starting with those who have been willing to translate, drive and guide me. They feel so strongly about the need to get this story out that they have been willing to put themselves and their families at great risk - as are the people who are willing to meet with me despite the intimidating stares of government agents.

There have been several difficult moments. My guide got a call from his wife as we talked to residents of a camp for Internally Displaced Muslims a living hell that they aptly describe as a prison. She was alarmed, telling him that the police had just left their house, a warrant had been issued for his arrest and a search for him was underway. With apologies he immediately went into hiding. Later I was stopped and surrounded by several security forces shortly after passing their compound. They let me pass only after I showed them the photos in my camera and trashed those that they did not want to leave the country. Yesterday, at what I thought was a secret meeting at the home of a family in a village wracked by violence, a neighbor came by to warn us that military intelligence agents were waiting across the street. I had four agents following me for the remainder of the day.

These are only some of the obstacles to learning and documenting the truth here. This is the untold story of Burma – one that is not part of the sunny narratives that dominate much of the media and official briefings. It is one that desperately needs to be told.

Nor am I alone in my experience. The United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Tomas Quintana, traveled to Burma a few weeks ago and was confronted by an angry crowd that prevented him from visiting IDP camps in the town of Meikthila. As Quintana said:

"The fear that I felt during this incident, being left totally unprotected by the nearby police, gave me an insight into the fear residents would have felt when being chased down by violent mobs during the violence last March, as police allegedly stood by as angry mobs beat, stabbed and burned to death some 43 people."

I was told that the population of the provincial capital Sitwe was once fairly evenly divided between Rohingya Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists. Now, all Rohingya have been moved out of the city to camps with the exception of one ward, Aung Mingalar. Over 5,000 Muslims have been living there since violence broke out in June of 2012. Last month, hundreds of Muslims were moved from the Aung Mingalar quarter to the IDP camps. While the government claimed the relocation was voluntary, my guide and translator reported that those displaced were very unhappy about leaving, worrying that they will lose their support system including access to food. His home and family have been moved to Aung Mingalar but he remains confined in an IDP camp in Sittwe and is prohibited from leaving, even to visit his family.

I attempted to visit Aung Mingalar but was turned away by guards who control the movement of anyone wanting to enter or leave. Quintana was able to get in. He observed:

"The severe restrictions on freedom of movement in Muslim IDP camps and villages remain in place. I visited Aung Mingalar, the only remaining Muslim ward in Sittwe, where a large number of people are living in a confined space, with the periphery marked out with barbed wire and guarded by armed police…The police and army have now taken charge of security in Rakhine State. Although there are legitimate security concerns which the police and army are addressing, I have received many serious allegations of the disproportionate use of force in dealing with large crowds of Muslim protestors. The latest incident saw live ammunition used to disperse a crowd of Muslims in Sittwe, with two killed and several injured. Security forces need to stop the use of excessive force."

In short, what I observed, and what others like Quintana continue to observe, is a dangerous mix of isolation, intolerance and impunity.

The United Nations' Special Rapporteur also cited the impunity of security forces and the lack of justice for the Rohingya:

"Sittwe and in particular Buthidaung prison are filled with hundreds of Muslims men and women detained in connection with the violence of June and October 2012. Many of these have been arbitrarily detained and tried in flawed trials. I met the State Chief Justice and urged for the respect of due process of law. The use of torture and ill treatment, including some cases of death, during the first three months of the June outbreak, needs to be properly investigated and those responsible held to account."

In November 2012, United to End Genocide sounded the alarm on "ominous warning signs of genocide" calling on the Obama administration to take strong and immediate steps to stop the systematic violence and attacks against the Rohingya Muslim ethnic population of Rakhine State in western Burma.

President Thein Sein had earlier proposed what amounts to the ethnic cleansing of the entire area where Rohingya citizens have been settled for generations. He went so far as to request assistance from United Nations to remove all Rohingya people from Burma or be sent to camps within the country [Democratic Voice of Burma]. While he has since modified how he speaks about the Rohingya, the actions of the Burmese military speak volumes about the failure of his government to provide the protection – and recognize the fundamental rights – of this besieged ethnic minority.

The dire conditions faced by the Rohingya people have pushed thousands to flee on overloaded boats. It is believed that more than 35,000 Rohingya have fled Burma by sea and Refugees International estimates 785 Rohingya have drowned since October 2012. More will likely try as the rainy season ends in October. Matt Smith of Fortify Rights International says, "We're likely to see tens of thousands of more asylum seekers take to the sea in coming months."

Burma has a long and disturbing record in dealing with other minority ethnic and religious groups as well. In the past year alone, the Burmese army has bombed civilian areas in Kachin State and continued to block international aid from reaching thousands. In March, the UN Human Rights Council cited concerns about abuses in Kachin State citing and "arbitrary detention, forced displacement, land confiscations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as well as violations of humanitarian law."

Even as government official laud the push for a national peace conference with various ethnic groups, violence and abuses have increased in Kachin State over the last two weeks. Trusted sources recently told me of killings of civilians there by Burmese military forces, forced labor on the front lines of the Burmese army (forced portering of munitions and rations in northern Shan State), soldiers entering villages and destroying property, and the gang rape of Kachin women.

The Burmese government also continues to block humanitarian aid to those in need. On September 7th – just two weeks ago – the UN reported its first aid delivery in two years to the key town of Laiza in Kachin state. While an improvement from nothing, the aid was limited in scope and failed to reach many other areas in desperate need.

Mr. Chairman, your willingness to look behind the good-news narrative of Burma is extraordinarily important for several reasons. The most important was described to me by a political operative who works with political party officials, MPs and others engaged in government and politics in Burma. After describing what I had seen, he explained that the issue of the Rohingya and Muslim minorities was a "political landmine" in Burma. Prejudice against the Muslim minority, particularly the Rohingya Muslim minority is so pervasive, he explained, that politicians are very eager to avoid the subject altogether – and certainly not defend minorities under attack. Defending the Muslim minority, I was told, would invite attack and ridicule by political opponents who would only be too eager to defend Burma and Buddhism from radical Muslims.

This frankly means that the only source of genuine pressure on the military dominated government of Burma – particularly when it comes to the plight of the Muslim minority community – is from the outside. And, the single most important source of that pressure is the United States. Everyone I spoke with strongly agreed with this observation.

As I testified last year before this committee:

"Our recognition of progress in Burma must be prudent and clear-eyed because the fact of the matter is, a great deal has not changed in Burma. The United States has played a key leadership role in generating and sustaining the international pressure that has been instrumental in making the changes that we are witnessing in Burma possible. To abandon this leverage prematurely would be to jeopardize the movement forward that we have seen and condemn those who continue to suffer in Burma more of the same."

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I am afraid that more of the same is the rule for significant numbers of citizens of Burma who continue to be brutalized at the hands of the military and military dominated regime.

The Administration's "calibrated engagement strategy" must be re-examined in light of these conditions. This re-examination should include the pace at which sanctions have been lifted without substantial progress by the Burmese government. It was good that President Obama acted with an Executive Order to maintain sanctions on the trade of gems, one of the most notorious sectors in terms of links to human rights abuses. It was unfortunate, however, that the sanctions up for annual renewal under the Burma Freedom and Democracy Act were allowed to

lapse. The sad reality is that there are no conditions for the re-imposition of sanctions should there be no significant improvements.

These steps to relax pressure on the regime are sending a dangerous message. The U.S. is sending yet another dangerous message as the Pentagon's increases engagement with the military of Burma without any requirements for reform or benchmarks to measure that reform. Abuses – tied both directly and indirectly to the military – continue apace without any demands for accountability or change.

The first step in lending legitimacy to the Burmese military took place last year when military officers from Burma were allowed to observe the joint U.S.-Thai military exercises known as Cobra-Gold. Over the last two months, U.S. defense legal experts have traveled twice to Burma to meet with Burmese military officers. And last month the first bilateral meeting of Defense Ministers in over 20 years took place when U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel met his counterpart from Burma on the sidelines of the ASEAN Defense Ministers meeting in Brunei.

While the Obama administration argues that these initial steps will help encourage reform, it is dangerous to provide ever increasing legitimacy to a military responsible for countless human rights abuses before there is accountability and change. Where there is progress there should be reward. But where there is back-sliding there must be consequences. Further relations between our militaries must be based on standards of conduct. Business as usual should not be allowed to continue if these standards are not met.

Given the ongoing killing of civilians, restriction of humanitarian aid and gross violations in Kachin State, the severe plight for Rohingyas in Rakhine State, broader anti-Muslim violence, widespread displacement caused by pandemic land grabbing, reversible reforms, dominance of the military over civilian authorities and remaining political prisoners; the U.S. government should insist that the Burmese government make substantial progress in key areas including:

- Ending gross violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, including an end to attacks on civilians in all regions, and the provision of meaningful access for international human rights monitors;

- Keeping its pledge to allow the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an office in Burma and fully investigate conditions there;

- Entering into meaningful collective nationwide negotiations that lead to a political settlement with ethnic minority groups; these should include negotiations over the grievances of ethnic nationalities including demands for constitutional decentralization/

federalism, power-sharing, a fair federal fiscal system and the rights of individual minorities including religious, cultural, and linguistic rights;

- Implementing constitutional changes that enable a civilian government to hold the military accountable, including reform of the judicial system to ensure independence and enabling the provision of legal mechanisms to hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable;

- Drawing upon public participation and civil society input, establishing institutional reforms that will effectively hold perpetrators of human rights violations accountable for their crimes according to all relevant international legal standards;

- Allowing humanitarian access to people in areas of conflict; including unhindered access for humanitarian agencies;

- The unconditional release of all remaining political prisoners and the repeal of laws that prohibit basic freedom including freedoms of assembly, speech and press;

- Establishing the rule of law, including the creation of an independent judiciary with the proper training to fairly and transparently adjudicate cases;

- Ensuring the transparency of all revenues from taxation and the natural resources sector; and

- Fully implementing ILO Commission of Inquiry directives to end forced labor.

If Burma fails to meet these criteria, U.S. government should:

- Renew the lapsed sanctions provided for under the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act to send a strong signal to the Burmese government and add pressure on the Burmese Army to cease hostilities in ethnic areas;

- Re-impose the ban on investment, retroactive to July 2012, when the restriction were lifted;

- Restore the export restrictions on financial services, reverting the conditions of the general license issued on April 17, 2012, which makes exceptions for not-for-profit activities in basic needs, democracy building, and good governance, education activities, sporting activities, non-commercial development projects directly benefiting the Burmese people and religious activities.

In addition, the US should support the establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry to investigate the recent violence in Arakan state and central Burma as well as abuses in other parts of the country including Kachin and Shan states.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I understand the desire to declare Burma a success story. I've been working on Burma for decades and want nothing more than to see true democratic transformation and an end to human right abuses. But, success isn't marked by removing sanctions – it's marked by lasting change for the people of Burma who have endured endless suffering under a brutal military regime. We must choose our next steps wisely. Let us reward genuine progress, but let us not condemn the people of Burma – particularly those living in ethnic minority states – to the consequences of a long oppressive military regime that is suddenly freed of accountability and consequences for its behavior.

Again, thank you for holding this extremely important hearing. I am hopeful that it will be an important step toward a re-examination and re-setting of U.S. – Burma policy.

I am more than happy to answer any questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much, Mr. Andrews.

Ms. Quigley, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MS. JENNIFER QUIGLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, U.S. CAMPAIGN FOR BURMA

Ms. QUIGLEY. Thank you, Chairman, Ranking Member and members of the subcommittee. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

It's been 2 years since Burma shifted from outright military rule to a nominally civilian government. During the first year, President Thein Sein surprised the international community with his willingness to engage and implement a series of reforms, culminating with Aung San Suu Kyi's by-election victory in April 2012.

Many governments, including the Obama administration, responded quickly, rushing to lift sanctions. The human rights community and Burma's ethnic minorities were sceptical that the Burmese Government was interested in genuine reform.

Rather, that they would do the minimal necessary to secure the removal of sanctions. We cautioned governments not to lift sanctions too soon, considering the constitutional barriers to democratic rule, national reconciliation, independence of the judiciary and civilian control over the military.

Once governments began to lift or suspend their sanctions the pace of reform slowed dramatically. Primary focus was placed on securing economic benefits from foreign investment and trade.

In rural and ethnic minority areas land confiscation became pandemic. Farmers and entire communities are being forced off of their land by government officials, the military or their business cronies in anticipation of lucrative foreign investment partnerships.

The Burmese Parliament passed laws that legalized land confiscation, taking away people's ability to legally fight for their land.

The Burmese authorities' desire to benefit from foreign investment has led to the breakdown of cease fires with ethnic minorities. The Burmese military broke the cease fire with the Shan State Army North in March 2013, attacking them, using villagers as forced labor and displacing thousands, all in an effort to clear out an area that the Burmese Government had signed a deal with a foreign company to build a hydro power dam.

The Burmese Army continues to break cease fires, calling into question the sincerity of the Burmese Government's commitment to national reconciliation.

Shortly following the euphoria of Aung San Suu Kyi officially becoming a member of Parliament, the human rights situation turned from bad to worse.

Violence broke out between Rakhine Buddhists and Burmese security forces on one side and Rohingya Muslims on the other. In the course of a few days, the violence displaced 100,000 people, the vast majority of whom are Rohingya Muslims who remain still today in squalid internally displaced person camps.

Burmese authorities destroyed mosques, conducted mass arrests of Rohingya Muslims and blocked humanitarian aid to displaced.

The violence against the Rohingya continue to be fueled by hate speech throughout Burma including by government officials.

Alarmingly, many people throughout Burma including prominent members of Burma's democracy movement participated in the hate speech against the Rohingya and supported military authority in Rakhine State.

On July 11th, 2012, President Thein Sein told the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees that the only solution for the anti-Muslim conflict is to deport Rohingya to other countries and confine them to refugee camps, reminiscent of Hitler's message in the 1930s.

Later that same day, President Obama issued waivers lifting the financial and investment sanctions on Burma. The Obama administration's waiver sent a strong message—meeting human rights conditions and addressing concerns of ethnic minorities are no longer a requirement for receiving U.S. investment and relaxing sanctions.

In September and early October 2012, the U.S. lifted restrictions on international and financial institutions' assistance to Burma and invited the Burmese military to observe the prestigious Cobra Gold joint military exercises.

Seemingly emboldened by the international community's prioritization of Aung San Suu Kyi over anti-Muslim policies and human rights abuses, the Burmese Government ramped up restrictions on the Rohingya.

In late October 2012, Burmese security forces carried out an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Rohingya Muslims, resulting in countless deaths, hundreds of women raped, the displacement of an additional 40,000 people and destroyed villages.

The following month, President Obama waived the majority of the Burmese import ban and became the first President to visit Burma. With nearly all sanctions lifted and repercussions from the international community nil, the Burmese authorities ramped up their crackdown on activists and ethnic and religious minorities.

Less than 2 weeks after President Obama visited Burma, police cracked down on nearly 100 protestors using white phosphorous, a chemical agent, to burn them. In December 2012 and January 2013, the Burmese military escalated its attacks against the Kachin, for the first time launching air strikes and shelling.

Shortly after that, the Paris Club of Creditors announced its attention to clear nearly $6 billion of Burmese debt.

In addition to the lack of a robust response from the international community to allegations of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, the Burmese Government's decades long promotion of Buddhist nationalism, anti-Muslim propaganda, divide and rule strategy and system of impunity created an environment that fostered anti-Muslim violence.

Between February and August of this year, anti-Muslim violence spread throughout Burma with violence occurring in 23 townships across the country.

The participation and complacency of security forces during the attacks, coupled with a lack of justice and accountability for any authority figures involved in the attacks, strongly indicates the need for an international independent investigation into crimes against humanity and a system of impunity to determine who is re-

sponsible, the culpability of the government and access to judicial remedy.

Without international action, anti-Muslim violence and discrimination will likely continue unabated. The United States must change the way it approaches Burma policy.

During President Obama's trip to Burma last year, President Thein Sein made several promises of reform to address human rights issues. Nearly all of those promises remain unfulfilled.

Clearly, the current approach is not working. U.S. Government policy should incorporate and reflect the needs of the most persecuted populations.

The Burmese Government demonstrated that they relent to international demands before you relax sanctions, not after. It would be a mistake to continue to offer carrots without first demanding concrete reforms in advance.

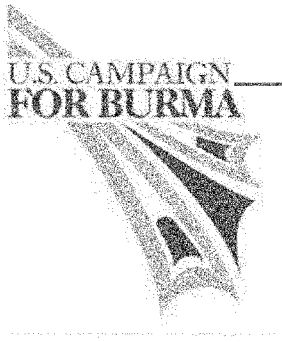
Military-to-military relations should not proceed until the Burmese military demonstrates a genuine interest in reform by stopping all attacks throughout the country in both cease fire and non-cease fire areas.

Training junior officers and soldiers on human rights does not address the main problem, that soldiers are committing human rights abuses on the orders of their military and political leaders.

The Burmese military wants a relationship with the U.S. military. Ethnic minority communities want the U.S. to use this interest as leverage to attain concrete genuine reform before allowing a relationship to move forward.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Quigley follows:]



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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Hearing: "An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife"
Thursday, September 19, 2013

Testimony of Jennifer Quigley
Executive Director, U.S. Campaign for Burma

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Subcommittee,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the current state of political reforms and human rights concerns in Burma. Between July 2011 and April 2012, Burma's President Thein Sein surprised the international community when he began a dialogue with Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Burma's democracy movement, and agreed to ease some of the restrictions on political parties, paving the way for Aung San Suu Kyi's by-election victory in April 2012. Thein Sein released several hundred political prisoners and began ceasefire negotiations with ethnic minority groups. Many governments, including the Obama Administration, responded quickly to what it perceived to be an astonishing pace of reforms in the country, rushing to lift sanctions in an attempt to encourage more reforms and profit from Burma's untapped economic potential and resources.

The human rights community and Burma's ethnic minorities were skeptical of the motives of the Burmese Government and cautioned governments not to lift sanctions too soon. After all, the Burmese Government had not released all political prisoners, the political prisoners who had been released, were released conditionally, under threat they could be re-imprisoned to serve the remainder of their long prison sentences and the repressive laws used to imprison democracy and human rights activists remained. The military showed no signs of reform, in June 2011, shortly after the old military regime transformed itself into a nominally civilian government; they attacked the Kachin Independence Army ending their 17 year ceasefire. The attacks against the Kachin continued despite calls for a ceasefire by President Thein Sein. Constitutional barriers to democratic rule, national reconciliation, independence of the judiciary, and civilian control over the military are firmly in place.

Once governments began to suspend or lift their economic sanctions in April 2012, the pace of reforms slowed dramatically. With the exception of token political prisoner releases that immediately proceed or follow President Thein Sein's travel abroad or visits from Heads of State to Burma, to garner international good will, little political reform has taken place. Primary focus was placed on securing economic benefits from foreign investment and trade. In Rangoon and Mandalay, Burma's largest cities, there was optimism around the economic benefits of foreign investment and trade but in rural and ethnic minority areas, land confiscation has become pandemic. Farmers and entire communities are being forced off their land by government officials, the military, or their business cronies in anticipation of lucrative foreign investment partnerships in extractive sectors, plantation agriculture, special economic zones, and industrial parks. The Burmese Parliament has passed two laws that legalize land confiscation, the Farmland Law and the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Law taking away people's ability to legally fight for their land rights.

The Burmese authorities desire to benefit from more foreign investment has led to the breakdown of ceasefires with ethnic minorities. The Burmese military broke the ceasefire with the Shan State Army – North in March 2013, attacking them, forcing civilians to flee, using villagers as forced labor, as human shields and land mine sweepers, all in an effort to clear out an area that the Burmese government had signed a deal with a foreign company to build a hydropower dam. The Burmese Army continues to break ceasefires, calling into question the sincerity of the Burmese Government's commitment to national reconciliation.

Shortly following the euphoria of Aung San Suu Kyi officially becoming a Member of Parliament and the proclamations to lift sanctions, Burma's human rights situation turned from bad to worse. In June 2012, on the western coast of Burma, in Arakan/Rakhine State, violence broke out between the Rakhine Buddhists and Burmese security forces on one side and Rohingya Muslim on the other. In the course of a few days, the violence displaced 100,000 people, the vast majority of whom were Rohingya Muslims who remain still today in squalid internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Government authorities and Rakhine worked together to physically destroy the buildings in the emptied Muslim communities in Sittwe, ensuring that IDPs could not return. Meanwhile, the army dug pits and dumped the bodies of Rohingya people in mass graves outside IDP camps near Sittwe and throughout the state. Burmese authorities destroyed mosques, conducted mass arrests of Rohingya Muslims and blocked humanitarian aid to displaced Rohingya Muslims. The violence against Rohingya continued to be fueled by hate speech throughout Burma, including by government officials. Alarmingly, many people throughout Burma, including prominent members of Burma's democracy movement, participated in promulgating hate speech against the Rohingya and demonstrated support for military authority in Arakan/Rakhine State. On July 11, 2012, President Thein Sein told UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Antonio Guterres that the "only solution" for the anti-Muslim conflict is to deport Rohingya to other countries or to confine them to UNHCR refugee camps. "We will send them away if any third country would accept them," he said. Such language is directly reminiscent of the Nazi's 1930's recommendation that the "solution" for Germany's Jewish "problem" was for other nations to take the Jews off Germany's hands. The UNHCR promptly rejected Thein Sein's proposal, saying that Rohingya could not be refugees in their own nation. Later that same day, President Obama issued waivers lifting the financial and investment sanctions on Burma.

The Obama Administration's waivers sent a strong message; meeting human rights conditions and addressing concerns of ethnic minorities are no longer a requirement for receiving US investment and relaxing sanctions. In September and early October 2012, the US lifted restrictions on international financial institutions assistance to Burma and invited the Burmese military to observe the prestigious Cobra Gold joint military exercises in February 2013. Seemingly emboldened by the international community's prioritization of Aung San Suu Kyi and the partial release political prisoners over anti-Muslim policies and human rights abuses against ethnic minorities, the Burmese government ramped up restrictions on the Rohingya. In late October 2012, Burmese security forces and Rakhine Buddhists carried out an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Rohingya Muslims resulting in countless deaths, hundreds of women raped, the displacement of an additional 40,000 people and destroyed villages. The following month, President Obama waived the majority of the Burmese import ban and became the first US President to visit Burma.

With nearly all sanctions lifted and little to no repercussions from the international community to the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya, the Burmese authorities ramped up their crackdown on activists and ethnic and religious minorities. Less than two weeks after President Obama visited Burma, during the night, police attacked nearly 100 land rights protestors, farmers and their supporters including Buddhist monks, who had their land confiscated and farms destroyed by a joint government – foreign investment copper mine, burning them with white phosphorous, a chemical agent. In December 2012 and January 2013, the Burmese military escalated its attacks against the Kachin, launching air strikes and shelling in Kachin State. On January 25, the Paris Club of creditor nations announced its intention to clear nearly $6 billion of Burmese debt, constituting 60% of Burma's total debt.

In addition to the lack of a robust response from the international community to allegations of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity against religious and ethnic minorities, the Burmese government's decades-long promotion of Buddhist Nationalism, anti-Muslim propaganda, divide and rule strategy, and system of impunity created an environment that fostered anti-Muslim violence. Between February and August 2013, anti-Muslim violence that had previously been isolated to Arakan/Rakhine state spread throughout Burma, with violence occurring in 23 townships across the country. In one particularly vicious incident, in Meiktila Township in central Burma, Physicians for Human Rights documented the massacre of 32 students by Buddhists and local authorities after hunting them down during the night. An MP, the police commissioner, security forces, and hundreds of Buddhists watched on as a group of men calculatingly murdered the students one-by-one. The pits where the students' bodies were burned had been pre-dug, indicating the planned nature of the attack. Contrary to some assertions that the violence was spontaneous, patterns have emerged to suggest there is organization behind the attacks. The participation and complacency of security forces during the attacks, coupled with a lack of justice and accountability for any authority figures involved in the attacks, strongly indicates a need for an international independent investigation into crimes against humanity and the system of impunity to determine who is responsible, the culpability of government, and access to judicial remedy. Without international action, anti-Muslim violence and discrimination will likely continue unabated.

In total, more than 250,000 people have been displaced and more than 10,000 homes destroyed in the last two years. We are concerned the majority, if not all, of those displaced, particularly the Rohingya, will never be allowed to return home but will be forced to live in ghetto like conditions in IDP camps. We have received reports that Kachin IDPs in Government controlled areas have been approached to sign documents agreeing not to return to their land. Both the Rohingya and Kachin IDPs originate from areas that can provide lucrative foreign investment opportunities, adding another level of concern to how the international community must avoid exacerbating the existing human rights crises. Continued neglect of the human rights and ethnic conflict will prove detrimental to any chance for national reconciliation and genuine democracy in Burma.

The United States must change the way it approaches Burma policy. US government policies should incorporate and reflect the needs of the most persecuted populations in Burma. The Burmese government has demonstrated that they relent to international demands before we relax sanctions not after. It would be a mistake to continue to offer 'carrots' without first demanding concrete reforms in advance. Military to military relations should not proceed until the Burmese military demonstrates a genuine interest in reform by stopping all attacks throughout the country in both ceasefire and non-ceasefire areas. Training junior officers and soldiers on human rights does not address the main problem, that soldiers are committing human rights abuses on the orders of their military and political leaders. The Burmese military wants a relationship with the US military and the legitimacy and prestige the relationship conveys, ethnic minority communities want the US to use this interest as leverage to attain concrete genuine reform.

This applies to trade benefits as well. The US should not grant Burma, Beneficiary Developing Country status under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) until the Burmese Government makes concrete progress in addressing child labor, including child soldiers, forced labor, inadequate labor laws and protections, and land confiscation and rights. We should not allow thousands of products from Burma to be imported to the United States duty free if they were produced on confiscated land, or connected to human rights abuses, forced labor, labor violations or child labor.

Ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, torture, sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, and forced displacement are taking place in Burma. Domestic attempts at investigation, including the Rakhine Commission Report, have no call for justice or accountability, nor has the Burmese government provided adequate attempts at stopping violence or holding leaders accountable. It is time for the international community to establish an international independent investigation into ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Without international pressure, human rights abuses will continue unabated.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Dr. Uddin, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF WAKAR UDDIN, PH.D., DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE ARAKAN ROHINGYA UNION

Mr. UDDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity——

Mr. CHABOT. Hit the mike here. Thank you.

Mr. UDDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to testify before the Foreign Affairs Asia Subcommittee. I would like to start with the the post-election political situation in Burma the past 2 years.

The political climate in Burma has not fundamentally improved for over the past 2 years, despite great expectations by the people of Burma and the international community for a genuine change.

The junta's strategy of maintaining the status quo was effectively implemented through the national election in 2010. The impact of this false democratic process has disproportionately impacted the ethnic minorities including Rohingya, Kachin, and Myanmar Muslims over the Burmans and Bamma.

The military juntas in position of its apartheid policies for Rohingya such as travel restrictions, marriage restrictions, land confiscation, deprivation of education, deprivation of freedom to worship, closure of places of worship is still continuing.

In fact, there has been further tightening of these recently in Arakan/Rakhine state. Currently, there are some elements within the Burmese Government colluding with the Rakhine/Arakan state officials to make IDP—the internally displaced people—camps permanent or semi-permanent.

The media is still not free for all people. Certain groups of people enjoy these rights more than others who has connection to the Burmese Government. Rakhine National

Democratic Party—RNDP—in collusion with some segment of the Burmese Government as well as the Ministry of Immigration, has recently introduced legislation in the Parliament to launch a reinvestigation into Rohingya MPs and their ancestral backgrounds.

These Rohingya MPs have been elected legally in the election in 2010. About U.S. administration's easing sanctions, I think the administration has moved very quickly to ease the sanction and relax the sanction.

We believe that this is very shortsighted. The relaxation of the sanctions should have been more gradual, firmly incremental with benchmarks. The Burmese Government should meet each expectation by the international community before the second bar may be lifted.

About military-to-military relations—the relationship with Burma, I am not a military strategist who can provide a detailed analysis of proposed military-to-military relations between Burma and the United States.

However, as a concerned citizen knowledgeable enough about the Burmese military establishment, I strongly urge our Government to avoid military relations with a government that is guilty of the worst crimes of our time.

Establishing this relationship is way far too premature, we believe. About the growing conflict between the majority Buddhist and the minorities, the conflict between Buddhist and Muslim populations are overwhelmingly one sided.

Although this is termed as conflict, it is truly not a conflict. It is an attack on the minority by the majority. It is one sided.

It's backed by the Burmese forces, as we have seen that on videos and on the Internet, on other news media coverage. Denial of basic rights, systematic discrimination against Rohingya by the Burmese Government created the fertile ground for nationalist Rakhine leadership and radical Buddhist monks to instigate fresh violence against Rohingya that has now spilled over to mainland Burma.

About the implication of this conflict, the Burmanization policy, which is the purity—the ideology of purity of race and religion in Burma that has been there, the central part of this problem—situation in Burma, the violence against Rohingya and Burmese Muslims is part of a pattern of ultra nationalism led by the 969 movement and spearheaded by this monk.

Monk Wirathu has—is spearheading that and Time Magazine has extensive coverage. So has other major newspapers of the world. This cannot be allowed. This Myanmar Government cannot remain silent on this.

Myanmar Government must take—investigate this and stop this—the terror network—969 terror network—which is clearly committing all this violence and instigating violence through hate speech.

Recently, the Burmese Government in coordination with the Rakhine State officials reportedly designated Rohingya prisoners as nonpolitical prisoners. In recent days, hundreds of Rohingya prisoners from eight, 11, 12 to 60, 65 quickly sentencing them to life imprisonment or long terms—20, 30 years in jail for committing violence or instigating violence.

In fact, these people are the victims of violence who has lost their homes, their business, some losing family members. Achieving national reconciliation with the ethnic group is not as complex as Myanmar Government has portrayed. It is simple.

It is achievable. It is within the reach. Myanmar Government is very powerful. It has strong influence on Rakhine ethnic groups and Myanmar Government key a central role—a powerful role—can play a powerful role to mediate the reconciliation if it comes to the middle and play a central role as a true and sincere conciliator.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Uddin follows:]

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U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Hearing: "An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife."

Thursday, September 19, 2013

Submitted by
Dr. Wakar Uddin
Director General
Arakan Rohingya Union

The post-election political situation in Burma

The political climate in Burma has not fundamentally improved over the past two years, despite great expectations by the people of Burma and the international community for a genuine change, after half a century of dictatorial rule. The national election in October 2010 was largely manipulated by the military establishment and was deemed neither free nor fair by both the international community and people of Burma. The most significant example of this is the continuing grip on power that the ruling junta maintains. The junta's strategy of maintaining the "status quo" was effectively implemented through the national election in 2010. An overwhelming number of military hardliners in the junta simply shed their uniforms to continue their grip on power as civilians without changing their philosophy of governance. In fact, the "transition to democracy" has been used as a vehicle to drive the hardliners' agenda in central, state, and local government. The parliament has a significant number of members from the military establishment, and while it discusses national issues, and these debates are not genuinely reflects democracy.

The current Burmese government's path to democratic reform is reminiscent of the Revolutionary Council of the former military regime's "Burmese way to socialism" in the 1960s. Then, the junta used the "Burmese way" as a tool for ruling the country with a dictatorship philosophy. Today, the military-dominated government is again manipulating the "transition to democracy" to fulfill its agenda that is rife with strategies for deprivation of ethnic minority rights. In its socialist ideology in the past, the regime's military apparatus used "guns and forces" to deprive ethnic minorities of their rights. Similarly, today the military-dominated government uses the so-called "people's desire" to abuse ethnic minorities through humiliation and terror. The hardliners in the government use radical monks as tools to mobilize the Buddhist Burmese population in support of Burmese Buddhist nationalism through the preaching of hate and bigotry against ethnic and religious minorities. The best example of this is the apartheid-style campaign known as "969" led by the monk Ashin Wirathu, the self-ascribed "The Burmese Bin Laden" who international media and analysts have called "The Face of Buddhist Terror". It is shocking that Ashin Wirathu has touted to the international media "I am proud to be the Burmese Bin Laden", while the Burmese Government remains silent. Furthermore, there is no Buddhist

voice of conscience except probably that of U Gambira, leader of the Saffron Revolution, who is condemning ethnic cleansing against Rohingya. Although the primary targets of the "969" network are the Rohingya and Burmese Muslims, it may not take much longer for the Buddhist nationalist movement to turn their fire and machetes against the Christian Kachin and other ethnic and religious minorities.

The impact of the false democratic process has disproportionately impacted the ethnic minorities including Rohingya, Kachin, and Myanmar Muslims over the Burmans (known as *Bamma* in Burmese language), the ruling class/ethnicity of the military. The overwhelming majority of political prisoners who were released, including Noble Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, were Burman. Today there are over a thousand Rohingya prisoners of conscience languishing in various prisons throughout Rakhine/Arakan state. Recently, the Burmese government in coordination with Rakhine State and local officials reportedly designated the Rohingya prisoners as non-political prisoners. Although the overwhelming majority of Rohingya prisoners have been arrested arbitrarily without charges, recently many have been falsely charged with inciting violence or participating in violence against Buddhist Rakhine. But the vast majority of these Rohingya prisoners were in fact the *victims* of violence by Rakhine mobs backed by Burmese forces, particularly the Rakhine police and Nasaka force (now reconstituted as the Lon Htein force). Many of the Rohingya prisoners have lost their homes, property, businesses, and in some cases, family members. The reason for suddenly bringing charges against the Rohingya prisoners is to exclude them from inclusion in the "political prisoner" category because the Burmese government has reportedly been working on releasing political prisoners due to mounting international pressure. In recent days, hundreds of Rohingya prisoners (ages 12 to 60+), have been sentenced to life imprisonment or extended terms such as 20, 17, 10, and 7 years.

The military junta's imposition of its apartheid policies for Rohingya such as travel restrictions, marriage restrictions, land confiscation, deprivation of education, deprivation of freedom to worship, closure of places of worship, confiscation of national registration cards and/or evidence of ancestral residency, and non-issuance of birth certificates, have not changed during the past two years. In fact, there has been further tightening of these impositions on the Rohingya in recent months in Rakhine/Arakan state. The Burmese government has made clear its intentions to rid Burma of Rohingya Muslims not only through policy but also through public statements. President U Thein Sein reportedly told UNHCR that all illegal Rohingya should be sent away to a third country or kept in camps because they are a national security threat. Currently, there are some elements within the Burmese Government colluding with Rakhine/Arakan state officials to make the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps permanent. A segregation policy in Rakhine/Arakan state is reportedly being developed, though segregation is already being imposed by means of Muslim ghettos and IDP camps. Currently, there are nearly 140,000 Rohingya in IDP camps in Rakhine/Arakan state and some thousands in central Burma. The long and deep-rooted ethnic cleansing policy based on hate and bigotry against Rohingya by Burmese government officials has even spilled over to Burmese communities and diplomatic missions overseas. The description of Rohingya by a diplomat in the Burmese mission in Hong Kong as "ugly as ogres" is not very diplomatic. Such expressions go a step beyond the commonly used derogatory term "Kala" (used to describe people with physical features similar to those of Indian descent) that is used against Rohingya by the general Burmese society. The government currently uses "Bengali" for Rohingya, which is also a derogatory term.

Among the ethnic minorities, Kachin nationals have also suffered among the worst human rights violations over the past two years. During one brutal offensive, the Burmese Army reportedly killed hundreds of innocent Kachin civilians during Christmas and New Year

celebrations in 2012. The ongoing peace dialogue with the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) is not genuine; it is another insincere overture to the Kachin people and the international community by the Burmese government in an effort to secure the lifting of the remaining US sanctions while the Burmese military continues its attacks.

The Burmese government has effectively lured the international community into its business/investment schemes with the opportunity to profit from its unexplored natural resources in the country. It has shown the international community some cosmetic changes such as relatively more freedom of the press. However, the media is still not free for most people. Certain groups of people enjoy these rights more than others due to their connections or influence over the local or central government. For example, journals owned by cronies or people whose interests are somehow not contrary to the political interests of the government are allowed to write or produce most anything they wish. Some media operations such as Eleven Media, the Voice, and others have taken advantage of the freedom of press and have promoted hate propaganda against minorities such as the Rohingya and Burmese Muslims. For example, Eleven Media is responsible for publishing false news against Rohingya. Their journalists cooperated with Burmese police forces that shot Rohingya and Myanmar Muslims. Although Rohingya MPs are elected lawfully from the Rohingya community, the Rakhine National Democratic Party (RNDP), in collusion with the Burmese government and the Ministry of Immigration, has introduced legislation in the parliament to launch a re-investigation into the Rohingya MPs' ancestral background. Rohingya political parties are at risk as the RNDP leaders and Immigration Minister are jointly working on an amendment to the political parties registration law to block Rohingya from forming political parties and electing MPs in future.

Obama Administration easing sanctions and overall engagement with Burmese Government

The Obama Administration has moved too quickly in easing the sanctions on Burma. We believe that moving too quickly to ease sanctions is shortsighted. The relaxation of the sanctions should have been more gradual and firmly incremental with benchmarks. The Burmese government should meet each expectation by the international community before the second bar may be lifted. Despite the US Administration's apparent engagement with the Burmese government in good faith, the Burmese government has failed to deliver on promises that it has given to the United States and the international community. Most of the reforms by the Burmese government have been superficial and partial, benefiting mainly the ruling Burman class in central Burma. Very little to none of the ethnic minority issues have been concretely addressed by the Burmese government despite its rhetoric geared toward ensuring the international community that the government is serious about solving ethnic minority issues.

The Burmese government is maneuvering in the international arena to have it both ways: maintaining the traditional strong ties with the Eastern bloc, particularly China, and also attempting to improve relations with the West in order to have sanctions lifted, particularly those implemented by the United States and Europeans. The ruling hardliners in the government remain as deceptive as they were during the reign of the military junta by showing off their "openness" and "market-oriented emerging economy". For example, the Burmese government has failed to find a solution to the Kachin crisis despite assurances given to the international community. Meanwhile, the number of internally and externally displaced Kachin persons has reportedly increased dramatically during the past two years to over 100,000.

The plight of the Rohingya people dates back to 1962; however, they experienced the worst violence and bloodbath in Rakhine/Arakan state in 2012 and 2013. The violence and massacre of Burmese Muslims in central Burma in 2013 follow the anti-Muslim attacks in central Burma in 2001, 2003, and 2006, but this year's attacks were far more dramatic. Another piece of evidence for the Burmese government's dishonesty about reforms is its move to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and then disqualify her from running in the national election. President U Thein Sein's letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, addressing the citizenship issue of the Rohingya before the visit of President Obama to Rangoon is another example of the government's attempt to buy time and silence the international community. But this resulted in the government's ongoing hostile verification program that has motivated massive arrests and torture of Rohingya people who refuse to write "Bengali" in the verification form.

The government's failure to properly address escalating human rights abuses in Rakhine/Arakan State and Kachin State is at least in part the result of the untimely and rapid relaxing of sanctions by the Obama Administration. The superficial changes in Burma primarily affecting only the ruling Burman class were a clever way of luring the Obama Administration to lift all the sanctions. Each time a sanction is lifted without verifying genuine change in Burma, or requiring the Burmese government to meet a pre-condition, the leverage that the US government has maintained for so long is wasted.

United State's military-to-military relations with Burma

I am not a military strategist who can provide a detailed analysis of proposed military-to-military relations between Burma and the United States. However, as a concerned citizen knowledgeable about the Burmese military establishment, I urge the US government to avoid military relations with governments guilty of some of the worst crimes of our time. Establishing military-to-military relations between the United States military and Burmese armed forces would be premature. This should not be on the table at this stage of Burma's development. The rapid move by the Obama Administration in relaxing sanctions is a perfect example of a counter-productive strategy that prioritized rushing to reward the Burmese government without actually holding the government accountable for its actions. The military institution in Burma has abused civilians for the past half a century through brutal crackdowns on democracy activists, democratically elected officials, and vulnerable ethnic minorities. Further, empowering the military despite its long and ongoing record of human rights abuses by allowing it to build relations with Western military institutions is an outright insult to the democratic values of respect for human rights and human dignity in Burma. The Burmese government has not proven that it has made tangible progress in showing respect for ethnic minorities and human dignity, and these should be very basic preconditions before military-to-military relations are allowed.

It is understandable that some officials maintain that we should be realistic about our expectations for the democratic reform process in Burma; however, what has been achieved in Burma is too little over a two and a half year time span and the government has failed to deliver on most of its rights-based promises while capacitating more offensive attacks against ethnic minorities despite purported "ceasefire agreements" and while escalating crackdowns on religious and ethnic minorities and activists across the country. The United States' military cooperation with the Burmese forces will not significantly help counter Burma's relations with China; it is rather another distraction from establishing basic rights for ethnic minorities, human rights for all citizens, and addressing lawlessness and impunity, violence against minorities, and

massive arrests in minority areas. Again, the abuses against the Rohingya and Kachin are good examples of human rights violations by the military and government forces in regions that it says it governs lawfully.

In Kachin State, the Burmese military has reneged on its agreement with the Kachin concerning a peaceful settlement of the war. In Rohingya areas in Rakhine/Arakan State, the Burmese government could have prevented the violence against Rohingya through its security apparatus with massive military force as it did during the handling of the uprising of monks in central Burma. The Burmese government did not have the willpower to protect the Rohingya from violence by Rakhine mobs backed by Burmese/Rakhine police forces. The US State Department's 2013 report on human trafficking shows that the Burmese military is keeping Rohingya women as sex slaves on bases in Arakan State. Given ongoing violations and systemic impunity, military-to-military relations should not yet be part of the policy equation. Military-to-military relations should be paused until the Burmese government gives basic rights to ethnic minorities *in both legislation and practice*. The rhetoric of peace and stability coming out of President's Thein Sein's office in Nay Pyi Taw is not actual government policy or practice.

The growing conflicts between the Majority and the Minorities

Conflicts between Buddhist and Muslim populations are overwhelmingly one-sided attacks on the small Muslim minority by the Buddhist majority that have been backed by Burmese security forces. The root of this problem is the systematic ethnic cleansing policies adopted by the first military junta in 1962. Then the Revolutionary Council of the military regime along with the Rakhine leadership had largely disregarded the fact that the Rohingya are an indigenous population of Rohang region of Rakhine/Arakan State, with their history pre-dating Burmese rule of the region. The ultra-nationalist vision of the Rakhine leadership centered on making the State emblematic of a single race and religion – a vision that the Burmese government has also long perpetuated.

The government has historically devised strategies to conduct systematic ethnic cleansing in Rohingya areas. Operation Nagamin (Dragon King) in the late 1970s and Operation Galong (a mythological bird symbolic of Burmese nationalism) were some of the government programs that aimed to drive Rohingya people off of their land by accusing them of being illegal Bengali migrants. These operations resulted in many deaths and widespread destruction of Rohingya property and forced many Rohingya into Bangladesh, where they were confined to camps or even pushed into areas with no infrastructure at all by the unwelcoming Bangladesh government. The Burmese government cleverly used this logic of "Bengali" or "Kala" by conflating the Rohingya with immigrants from the Indian subcontinent to Burma during the British colonial rule. The five-decade-long denial of basic rights and systematic discrimination against Rohingya by the Burmese government created fertile ground for nationalist Rakhine leadership and radical Buddhist monks to instigate fresh violence against Rohingya that has spilled into Burmese Muslim areas across Burma.

The Implications of the conflict on ending inter-ethnic conflict and national reconciliation

The violence against Rohingya and Burmese Muslims is part of a pattern of ultra-Buddhist nationalism led by the 969 movement spearheaded by the radical Burmese monk Wirathu and his supporters. The ideology of hate and bigotry of the 969 extremist movement

aims to "purify" Burmese society. The movement has gained popularity across the country; however, it is unlikely that the great majority of its supporters actually know the real agenda of the movement. The average Burmese citizen is naturally not an initiator of any kind of violence at individual level, but as evidenced in Arakan State, Meiktila, Okkan, Lashio, and Sagaing Division, normal people can be mobilized by radical religious leaders who are revered highly by the average Buddhist Burman.

Goals of the 969 movement include not only violence but apartheid and segregation, an imposition of a ban on inter-faith marriages, boycotting Muslim owned business, reducing the Muslim population, and the eventual elimination of Muslims from Burma. The Burmese government has largely ignored the hate speech and instigation of violence by the 969 movement that has resulted in killings of Rohingya and Burmese Muslims and has instead bolstered the movement by praising its leader Wirathu.

The inter-ethnic conflicts in several ethnic regions in Burma have been a serious issue for Burma since independence in 1948, and there was never a meaningful peace between the government and many of the ethnic groups despite sporadic ceasefire agreements or peace talks. The "Burmanization" policy of the Burmese government has been the primary cause for warfare in ethnic areas for the past several decades. The "Burmanization" is primarily a government's ideology of "purity" of race, language, and religion of people of Burma by imposing that of the Burman's (Bamma's) on ethnic minorities that do not have much in common with the ruling class, Burman (Bamma), in these attributes. True peace and stability in ethnic minority areas are unattainable unless the Burmese government recognizes equal social and political justices for all the ethnic groups.

Achieving national reconciliation with the ethnic groups is not as complex as the Burmese government has painted it to be. In the past, military hardliners envisioned national reconciliation to be powerful enough to pose some sort of threat to the military's power. This is particularly true for Rakhine/Arakan State where unity between ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya has been deemed a threat to military rule; therefore, the government capacitated nationalist Rakhine leaders to mobilize the ethnic Rakhine population against the Rohingya. Actually today, ethnic reconciliation in Burma is within the reach and the Burmese government holds the key to this. Reconciliation between ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya can be achieved within a short period of time as the government has tremendous influence on nationalist Rakhine leadership. The Burmese Government must abandon its hostile policies against the Rohingya and position itself in the middle with neutrality. The government could choose to be the facilitator for dialogue between ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya for peace, stability, and communal harmony in Rakhine/Arakan State. But the Burmese government appears to have delegated this to minor parties on the ground while staying in the background and continuing to perpetuate anti-Muslim policies and even call for the deportation of the Rohingya, even while knowing that most Rakhine refuse even to talk to Rohingya. The Rakhine who are willing to talk with Rohingya are subject to harsh intimidation and threats from their own community. Dialogue with the potential to bring true and lasting peace, stability, and communal harmony in Burma must be tripartite (i.e. Rakhine, Rohingya, and Burmese government) facilitated by international mediators.

Recommendation to the Government of the United States for its response to the escalating human right abuses

1) Sustain the momentum and step up the efforts by the State Department in developing comprehensive strategies to find a solution for Rohingya, Kachin, and other ethnic groups.
2) Stop relaxing or lifting sanctions until the Burmese government meets preconditions, and reverse the previous relaxing of sanctions as the government has refused to halt violence against minorities
3) At the United Nations, the U.S. should continue to press the European Union to include language in the UN General Assembly Burma resolution this fall that includes calls for the establishment of international independent investigation into allegations of ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and anti-Muslim violence and discrimination and the system of impunity for these serious crimes.
4) The Administration should maintain Burma's "country of particular concern" or CPC designation for 2013 because there continue to be egregious and serious religious freedom restrictions that coincide with sectarian and societal violence targeting Muslims and ethnic minority Christians and military campaigns in ethnic minority areas.
5) Abolish or amend the military's 1982 citizenship law to be compatible with international norms and human rights standard.
6) Demonstration by the Burmese Government that rights for Rohingya, Kachin, and other ethnic minorities have been fully given before considering any military-to-military relations.
7) Mediating a national political dialogue between the government of Burma and ethnic nationality groups, including Rohingya, with the primary goal of building a successful federal system in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Burma.
8) Burmese Government provides international relief groups and media unfettered access to all violence-affected areas in Rakhine/Arakan and Kachin states.
9) Establishing independent inquiries into the status of the Rohingya, to evaluate their historical claims to citizenship and assess the root causes of ethnic and sectarian violence in Rakhine (Arakan) State.
10) Burmese Government takes concrete actions against radical elements, including the monks preaching hate.
11) Burmese Government outlaws the radical Buddhist 969 network and its activities and hold those individuals accountable who incite violence, either in speeches or online, against Muslims or other ethnic groups.
12) Creating programs to counter anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim sentiment in the Burmese population, specifically focusing on undermining fears of "religious extremism" and "exaggerated Muslim birthrates", which drive popular support for a Rohingya and Muslim exclusion campaign.
13) Placing those who instigate, carry out, or publicly support anti-Rohingya and anti-Muslim violence and discrimination on the U.S. Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) list, including Buddhist monks, organizers of the "969" anti-Muslim exclusion campaign, and government or other officials.
14) President Thein Sein officially retracts his statement to UN officials that the Rohingya people are national security threat, and they should be transferred to a third country or kept in camps.
15) Expedited return of the displaced persons from IDP camps to their respective homes and properties with full protection provided to them by the Burmese Government.

16) Burmese forces immediately cease night-time raids of Rohingya households, the massive arrests of Rohingya men, and sentencing them to life or long jail terms.
17) President Thein Sein nulls and voids the unjust and unlawful sentencing of Rohingya to life or long jail terms.
18) Burmese Government re-classify the Rohingya prisoners (over a thousand) scattered in jails throughout Rakhine/Arakan state as political prisoners.
19) Burmese Government returns all the residency and nationality documents confiscated from Rohingya by the Burmese authorities overtime since 1962.
20) Burmese Government removes arbitrary regional regulations on Rohingya restricting travels locally or nationally, requiring permission to marry, deprivation of education and freedom of worship, confiscation of lands, rejection in employment in government, and others.
21) Burmese Government officially renounces the two-child policy adopted for Rohingya only.
22) Burmese Government allows international monitors, specially US and UN, for the 2015 national election.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Doctor.

Mr. Cwerman, you're recognized. Before you start, could I ask Dr. Uddin, what's the edition or what is the date on the Time Magazine that you referred to in case other people might like to know?

Mr. UDDIN. This is July 1st, 2013. It is a non-U.S. edition. It's an edition for Europe, Middle East, Asia and Africa.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Very good. It's July 1st of this year?

Mr. UDDIN. July 1st of 2013.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. In case the staff want, to get it or any of the folks in the audience today. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cwerman, you're recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MR. RALPH L. CWERMAN, PRESIDENT, THE HUMPTY DUMPTY INSTITUTE

Mr. CWERMAN. Chairman Chabot, Representative Bera, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for——

Mr. CHABOT. If you could hit the mike there just——

Mr. CWERMAN. Is that better?

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Mr. CWERMAN. Thank you very much for the opportunity to give testimony here today. As you mentioned, we do have a lot of interaction with Capitol Hill in our program with the U.N.

But as the president and chief executive officer of the Humpty Dumpty Institute, we also do a lot of international development work around the world.

Mr. CHABOT. For those in the audience, the title is unusual. Would you explain where the title comes from? We won't take this out of your time.

Mr. CWERMAN. Sure. We were in the—I was with some colleagues in the back of a truck in Rwanda a few weeks after the genocide there and these were people who wanted to try to change things.

And we were in the back thinking about how we could create an effective small organization that would do good work around the world and we all came up with the tag line of putting the pieces back together because things were so broken. And it is also a very memorable name. Lots of people forget—don't forget it.

When there are 10,000 NGOs that are affiliated with the U.N. you have to try to find a way to keep people remembering what you're doing.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. CWERMAN. As I mentioned, we have this program with the U.N. and Members of Congress but we also do a lot of development work around the world.

We build schools, provide medicine, construct health clinics, feed children, clear land mines and UXO. We dig wells, we put up latrines, we plant gardens, we grow fruit orchards and we organize local business opportunities for indigenous populations.

I'm here today because we do some work in Burma and I want to come to you with my perspective from boots on the ground, from the actual development work that we're doing there, from our unique partners with whom we work and with whom we've engaged and from the many, many people that I have talked to and run across during my travels throughout the entire country.

My general impression is that most of the Burmese who I have talked to are absolutely extraordinarily thrilled by the speed and substance with which change and reform continues to take place in Burma.

The Humpty Dumpty Institute was the first American NGO to begin a land mine program and a mine risk education program in Burma that was funded by the State Department.

It is a huge problem in Burma. And also through this program we developed a very close and official relationship with one of the most important Buddhist organizations in the country.

The name of that organization is the Sitagu Association under its very, very influential leader, the Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw. He has and his organization has provided humanitarian support to millions of people throughout Burma.

They have a network of clinics and hospitals all over the country. He's raised hundreds of millions of dollars for disaster relief in Burma and his national food deliveries are very well known.

The Sitagu Sayadaw's interfaith work is also very well known around the country and the region. For our program, we worked and partnered with the—this organization and we chose to work in Kachin.

That, of course, is the province very troubled, bordering China with a Christian majority.

It is the only state where there is current fighting taking place, resulting in the displacement of large numbers of people and the landmine problem there is huge and unchecked and actually very little is still known about it.

Very little if any international support is reaching this area and our organization chose to start working there because the need there was the greatest.

On my last trip to Burma, I spent an evening with Monsignor Francis Tang, the Roman Catholic bishop of Kachin, Sitagu Sayadaw and a few other people.

We had a very, very interesting conversation about Burma and its future and this conversation continues to be a deep source of optimism for me.

We were 15 kilometers away from the border of China. We could hear mortars falling as we were speaking. Despite these very, very dire circumstances, these religious leaders that I was meeting with are very enthusiastic and very excited about the future.

They work with one another. They talk to each other constantly and believe that Burma is heading in the right direction. There are very, very serious bumps and bruises that are very painful along this path of reform.

But the incredible progress made over the past 2 years has opened the doors to freedom and democracy for the people of Burma.

It has infused the population with hope and optimism for a better life for themselves and for their children. This process, in my view, is irreversible and these religious leaders have come to rely on this country, the United States and you, to be strong partners and leaders to help guide their country along the path to democracy and rule of law.

In terms of the sectarian violence between the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority, the situation, as we have all heard, remains tense and serious. The vast majority of the victims here are Muslim.

The displacement of these people and the violence directed toward them must be stopped. The perpetrators of this violence must be brought to justice and at the end of the day religious tolerance and the pursuit of interfaith cooperation must be a priority in Burma.

There are Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons, Muslims and Hindus. Freedom of worship is guaranteed by law and in practice.

In major cities, pagodas, churches, mosques, Hindu temples are often side by side. And for any of you who have been there, there is an actually wonderful synagogue that is functioning in Yangon.

Many of Burma's religious leaders believe that the Buddhist-Muslim violence has been stirred up by a handful of Burma's 500,000 monks and that the overwhelming majority of monks support interfaith cooperation and want to see an end to this violence.

U.S. assistant—USAID has a very robust program in Burma and is making a lot of headway. In the interests of time, I just want to end by saying that freedom—that religious tolerance, again, that there are many opportunities for efforts led by the State Department's Office of Religious Freedom to bring the different religious communities of Burma together in common cause to advance the nation's march to full freedom and democracy and the rule of law.

Buddhist, Christian and Muslim communities should all benefit from working together to solve problems through stronger collaboration and cooperation.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cwerman follows:]

Congressional Testimony
"An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife"
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
September 19, 2013
Oral Statement by Ralph L. Cwerman, President, The Humpty Dumpty Institute

Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Faleomavaega, Representative Bera, and Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am very grateful for your continued interest in how U.S. policies and assistance can help the government and people of Burma build a peaceful, strong and stable democracy in which freedom and prosperity is available to all.

I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Humpty Dumpty Institute, a private non-profit organization engaged in humanitarian activities around the world. We implement large-scale agricultural development programs, organize school-feeding programs, deliver health-care to women and children in very remote areas of the world through mobile medical clinics, and provide opportunities for the most vulnerable people – single women who head households, ethnic minorities, and the disabled – to pull themselves up from despair through unique livelihood assistance programs. Our signature program around the world, however, remains our landmine and UXO clearance programs, as well as our Mine Victim Assistance and Mine Risk Education programs. We build schools, provide medicine, construct clinics, feed children, clear landmines and UXO, dig wells, put up latrines, plant gardens, grow fruit orchards and organize local businesses. As the tagline of the Humpty Dumpty Institute indicates, we work hard to "put the pieces back together".

Today, I am delighted to add my views on Burma to those of the expert witnesses who are present here. My perspective on Burma comes from "boots on the ground"—from the actual development work in which we have engaged, from our partners who are helping us with these projects, and from the many people across the country with whom I have talked and who are extraordinarily thrilled by the speed and substance with which change and reform continues to take place in Burma.

The Humpty Dumpty Institute was the first American NGO to begin a Mine Victims Assistance and a Mine Risk Education Program in Burma that was funded by the State Department. And through this program, we also became the first American NGO to develop an official and close partnership with one of the most important humanitarian Buddhist organizations in Burma, the Sitagu Association. Under its influential leader, the Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw, this Buddhist

organization has provided humanitarian support to millions of people throughout Burma. The Association's network of 20 eye clinics around the country, its disaster relief work, and its national food deliveries serves all Burmese, regardless of ethnic group or religion. And the Sitagu Sayadaw's interfaith work is very well known around the country and region.

The Humpty Dumpty Institute, with the support of the Sitagu Association, selected Kachin State in Burma's far north to set up its landmine programs. Bordering China, and with a Christian majority, Kachin State is one of Burma's most troubled provinces and today remains the only State where fighting is currently taking place, as is the displacement of large numbers of people. The landmine problem in Kachin is considered to be one of the fastest spreading problems in the country. And there is little or no assistance available for the people of Kachin. Very little, if any, international support is reaching this area. Our organization chose this place to begin our work because this is where the need was greatest. And no other international landmine organization was working in that area.

On my last trip to Burma, Monsignor Francis, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kachin, Sitagu Sayadaw and I spent the better part of an evening talking about Burma and its future. This conversation continues to be a deep source of optimism for me. We were 15 kilometers away from the frontline of fighting between Government and Kachin Forces. You could hear the mortar shells. But despite these rather dire circumstances, both religious leaders are enthusiastic about the future and strongly believe that Burma is heading in the right direction. There may be serious and painful bumps and bruises along the way, but the incredible progress made over the past two years has opened the doors to freedom and democracy for the people of Burma. It has infused the population with hope and optimism for a better life for them and their children. This process is irreversible and these religious leaders, both of whom met with President Obama during his visit to Yangon earlier this year, have come to rely on the United States as a strong partner and leader to help guide their country along the path to democracy and rule of law.

In terms of the secretarian violence between the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority, the situation remains serious and tense. Approximately 250 people have died since June 2012 and more than 200,000 people are still displaced by last year's violence. The vast majority of these victims are Muslim. The displacement of these people and the violence directed towards them must stop. And the perpetrators of this violence must be brought to justice. At the end of the day, religious tolerance and the pursuit of interfaith cooperation must be a priority in Burma.

Buddhism is, of course, the religion of the majority of the people of Burma. But there are Roman Catholics, Baptists, Mormons, Muslims and Hindus as well. Freedom of worship is guaranteed by law and in practice. In major cities, pagodas, churches, mosques and Hindu temples are often side by side, affirming that religious tolerance has a strong foundation in Burma. There is even a long established functioning synagogue in Yangon. Many of Burma's religious leaders believe that the Buddhist-Muslim violence has been stirred up by only a handful of Burma 's 500,000 monks and that the overwhelming majority of monks support interfaith cooperation. In addition, there are three very recent events that give cause for hope.

1. Recent news reports from Burma indicate that religious leaders from the Buddhist and Muslim communities have signed a "peace" agreement.

2. Senior leaders from both communities are also engaged in a series of on-going meetings since May to promote interfaith cooperation.

3. A government-appointed body that oversees Burma's Buddhist monks has issued a directive intended to end a monk-led movement accused directing the violence against minority Muslims.

US assistance to Burma has begun. USAID has opened an office in Yangon and is evaluating different sectors of the Burmese economy. The organization has a plan and it seems to be working. USDA has announced that it is working with the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society to expand collaboration in the following priority areas -- democracy, human rights, and rule of law; transparent governance; peace and reconciliation; health; economic opportunity and food security. USAID has spent nearly $200 million so far, but much more is needed and is well worth the investment. At the same time, other departments within the executive branch must also join the effort. I make three personal recommendations here:

1. **Landmines:** The relevant Congressional Committees might want to consider some additional funding for the State Department's Weapons Removal and Abatement office. Burma faces one of the most severe landmine problems in the world today. Altogether, ten of Burma's 14 states suffer from some degree of mine contamination, primarily from antipersonnel mines. The most recent figures available (2008) suggest that mine accident rates in Burma are in fact amongst the highest in the world, only surpassed by Afghanistan and Colombia. It has been reported that millions of people live in 34 mine-contaminated townships and more than 10,000 survivors are in need of immediate rehabilitative care. There are huge challenges here. Unfortunately, a particularly

difficult period of violence in Kachin State a few months ago led to a suspension of U.S. funded assistance for this State. With a more stable environment taking hold, I hope this assistance can be restarted soon.

2. **Agriculture:** The US Department of Agriculture should place Burma on the eligibility list for both "Food For Progress" and "Food for Education" programs as soon as possible. Both programs could do very well in Burma and there is a strong propensity among local civil society organizations to initiate large scale agricultural development immediately.

3. **Religious Tolerance:** And finally, there are many interesting opportunities for efforts, led by the State Department's Office of Religious Freedom, to bring the different religious communities of Burma together in common cause to advance the nation's march to full freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Buddhist, Christian and Muslim communities could all benefit by working together to solve problems through stronger collaboration and cooperation.

For its part, the Humpty Dumpty Institute will continue to assist Burma through a series of development and assistance programs. Our Institute recently organized a shipment of vital medicines, valued at a quarter million dollars, to the Kachin State Hospital and other clinics. We are also continuing our relationship with the Sitagu Association and planning a major medical assistance program in which American physicians will work with hand-in-hand with Burmese doctors to carry out special eye-care surgeries throughout the country to all segments the population. We also hope to restart our mine victims' assistance project in Kachin State.

In conclusion, a successful transition to democracy and freedom in Burma will be a very long and hard journey. And the Burmese nation faces massive and critical challenges in the years ahead. The democratic government in Burma is just two years old. And the political and economic reforms that have already taken place have been quite extraordinary. Still, Burma has much to learn and do in order to overcome the challenges ahead. It is a very poor country. There are very few job opportunities. It has little experience with democratic practice, norms or values. Burma today is at a critical stage in its history. It is making relentless efforts to achieve social and economic progress. At this juncture, when it comes to U.S. support and assistance for Burma, the prescription is "full speed ahead". Strategically, Burma can become a significant ally to the United States in a volatile region of the world. Burma needs the understanding and cooperation of the United States and the international community now more than ever. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. We'll go ahead and start questions. At this time, I'll recognize myself for 5 minutes.

First of all, I want to thank all the witnesses for their testimony this afternoon. I thought all of them were really excellent. As I expressed in my opening statement, it's my belief that U.S. military engagement with Burma, at this time, is premature.

There's no doubt that the Burmese military wants the U.S. to engage because it will bring them the legitimacy and prestige that most other countries have. I think most of you today, according to your testimony, shared that concern. Unfortunately, the administration seems to really have turned a blind eye to congressional concerns and has continually refused our invitations to testify before the subcommittee about its plans.

Congressman Andrews, let me start with you first. You stated in your testimony that "further relations between our militaries must be based on standards of conduct." I agree, and I believe benchmarks need to be established. Ms. Quigley, I know you mentioned benchmarks should be used as conditions before the U.S. continues engagement with the Burmese military. Could you describe what benchmarks you think should be established before the U.S. proceeds militarily with the Burmese?

Mr. ANDREWS. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Let me just say, first of all, the impunity has to stop. Those who have committed these gross human rights violations, and they're very well documented, need to be held to account. There has to be an international investigation of these atrocities.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights—the President of Burma promised our President that he would allow an office to be opened and permanently operating to investigate these atrocities. That still has not happened.

So first of all, impunities. Secondly, civilians need to be in control of the military in Burma. That's not the way it is today.

Aung San Suu Kyi, as you know, 2 years ago ran the table in the elections and her reward was to get 5 percent of the seats in the Parliament. The military, on the other hand, are guaranteed 25 percent of the seats in Parliament, an effective veto over whatever happens there.

So civilian control needs to occur. The air strikes on civilian populations has to stop and those responsible for ordering those strikes need to be held accountable.

I talked with someone 2 days ago who just returned from Kachin State and he says attacks on civilians, sexual violence, destruction of property by soldiers continues to go on to this very day.

He said he had evidence. He saw it just the other day—use of child soldiers. Burma has pledged not to use child soldiers but they continue to recruit children as young as 12 years old into the military.

This is not rocket science. There are fundamental codes of conduct that need to be established and it seems to me that if we're going to be engaging in military-to-military relations we should first establish these benchmarks based upon these factors.

Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, that just last month was the first bilateral meeting of defense ministers in over 20 years when U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel met with his counterpart

in Burma on the sidelines of the ASEAN defense ministers meeting.

These send dangerous signals. To have these atrocities going on, to have the military directly implicated in these atrocities and for us to be engaging in further and further military-to-military engagement without benchmarks I think is dangerous.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Thank you very much.

Ms. Quigley, let me go to you next, if I can. The U.S. Ambassador to Burma said that during his last visit to Kachin State, people were approaching him, begging the U.S. to talk to the military, to work with them and thanking the U.S. for sending the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies teams to Burma.

Now, you stated in your testimony that ethnic minority groups want the U.S. to use the military's interest in engagement as leverage to attain concrete genuine reform. At the same time, my understanding is that civil society and ethnic groups believe this type of engagement has come too soon. Would you explain why we're hearing these two competing messages and which one should guide U.S. policy?

Ms. QUIGLEY. Yes. We've been well aware that the administration has wanted to pursue military-to-military engagement for several months. This actually became a big focus of mine when I did my trip to Burma earlier this year.

I also was in Kachin State. I was in Rangoon and I was on the Thai-Burma border and we made sure to ask everyone we met with what it was that they wanted, being well aware that some of them had already been approached by the U.S. Government.

When the U.S. Government approached whether that be Ambassador Mitchell or somebody on a State Department delegation, the question that the communities are asked are would you like our military to train your military on human rights—you know, international humanitarian law and international human rights and people are, like, yeah, that'd be great, and there's no follow-up questions.

Mr. CHABOT. Yes.

Ms. QUIGLEY. When I ask, do you want the Burmese military to have done something first?, their response is, oh, of course. They just assumed that the U.S. would place a precondition on military-to-military engagement.

We then got into conversations and it's an ongoing one now that we've had for several months is well, what do you want those preconditions to be. They've laid out across multi-ethnic groups, not just Kachin but Kachin, Karen, Shan, sort of you name it—the idea is they have to demonstrate they have an interest in reform by stopping the attacks.

The Burmese military has done nothing so far to show that they are actually interested in reform. They feel as if that should be the most immediate of precursors to future engagement.

They also want—and this one is a bit bigger—they want troop withdrawal. That is the biggest. It's why refugees don't want to return home.

It's why IDPs won't return home. The Burmese Army is there, they don't want to be where the Burmese Army is. And so they feel

as if the U.S. Government has that opportunity to use this leverage. In fact, they want this relationship to be used to get that.

Then, of course, they have—that's just for human rights training. If you get onto the idea of any other: Attending Cobra Gold next year, other joint military trainings, they have a whole slew of preconditions that they want and we're working with them right now to present that to Congress and to present that to the administration.

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. Thank you very much. My time has expired.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Bera, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERA. Great. Thank you, Chairman Chabot.

Congressman Andrews and Mr. Cwerman, both of you in your opening comments referenced Rwanda and also referenced genocide.

Can you expand on that in terms of what you're seeing when you're in Burma and, you know, what that context is? And then also what we can do to certainly help avoid that because none of us wants to see another Rwanda take place.

Mr. ANDREWS. Thank you, Mr. Bera. It's an excellent question.

I was in Congress when the genocide of Rwanda was going on, and when I visited Rwanda I literally sat down as I was at one of the memorial centers where 250,000 people are buried and asked myself, my God, where was I when all this was going on—where was I when the true warning signs and signals of a genocide were in place?

It's very clear to me as president of United to End Genocide that the building blocks of genocide are being—are in place in Burma right now and the hate speech, the fear and intimidation, the isolation, the severe restrictions on people, the violence against people, the sending off of people to camps where they're totally isolated and totally controlled, all of this is a precursor to genocide and the building blocks of hate.

And, you know, someone has described this as inter-ethnic violence. You know, I believe that it's much more than that.

When you have the complicity documented by the United Nations, for example, and the special rapporteur—complicity of the state and the military in these acts then there's a very, very serious problem that needs to be addressed and no country in the world is better positioned to influence the situation than the United States.

Everyone that I talk to when I mentioned this said unequivocally of all the nations in the world the United States is in the strongest position.

Mr. CWERMAN. Thank you. I—as the son of two Holocaust survivors and someone who has had extensive experience visiting different sites where genocide has occurred, I don't think that such a foundation is laid in Burma.

I have not seen it. I have talked to many, many political leaders. I have talked to many religious leaders. Yes, there are human rights abuses.

Yes, there is injustice going on. But you have to remember that this is—this process of democratic reform is only 2 years old and there are going to be, as I mentioned, lots of problems and lots of

challenges that both the government will—that the government will have to face over the course of the next many, many years.

And yes, there is—of course, our role as the United States to help guide them, help influence them onto all of the issues that and positions that have been talked about here. But I want to emphasize that this is not some national movement.

There are many, many people who are Buddhist who are opposed to the violence. There are people who are opposed to many of the human rights abuses that—in other areas. But at the same time, the leaders of these communities are talking to one another.

There have been a number of meetings since May between Muslim leaders and Buddhist leaders to bring an end to the violence and, certainly, there is a very close relationship between the leaders of Kachin and many prominent Buddhist leaders as well.

Mr. BERA. Would you say that most of the violence is confined to the Buddhist community and the Muslim community or are you seeing it across all the ethnic minorities?

Mr. CWERMAN. No, there's conflict going on in Kachin along the Chinese border where government forces are fighting with the Kachin independent army and they—there is, I think though, much more to it than that.

There are strategic areas. But they have come in with a much heavier engagement—the use of airplanes, for example. But at the end of the day, there is a lot of interaction between Kachin and the rest of Burma.

Leaders are talking and there is, I believe, a reason to be hopeful and a reason to be optimistic.

Mr. BERA. Because I'm going to run out of time I would just—the second part of the question is what should the United States Government do to address this and, you know, help—give Burma the best possibility and——

Mr. CWERMAN. Yes. Well, I believe somewhat differently than the rest of the panel. I believe that the relationship should be deepened.

I think more investment in the country is necessary and that all sorts of entanglements and more relationship should be built on every level in development, in, of course, democracy reform because if we don't do it there's no one else who's going to do it and it's our role and obligation to do so.

Mr. BERA. Great. Thank you.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Holding, is recognized for 5 minutes, unless he'd like to defer to the gentleman——

Mr. HOLDING. I'm going to——

Mr. CHABOT. Okay. We'll recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Rohrabacher.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Well, thank you very much.

And Mr. Chairman, I'd like to express my appreciation to you for holding this hearing.

Burma has for many years been very symbolic of the issues of freedom that are challenging civilization throughout the world.

And shortly after I was elected to Congress the first time I ended up going into the jungles in Burma and meeting with the students who had just been involved with a revolt against the military junta

that were—and they were being—chasing them through the jungles and mortaring their villages.

These were unarmed groups of young people who were college students, basically. And since that time, they finally found refuge in the areas of the Karen and the Karenis and the border tribal peoples.

And since then all these years, all these 25 years, there's been this ongoing murder of innocent people by the Government of Burma that made it a pariah of the nations of the world, of course, probably except of the Chinese who were using the Burmese junta as their puppets.

They were indeed doing the bidding of the Chinese and have got to such a point that it was too much for even the Burmese military, and that's why I think they've started in the right direction.

Although what we're hearing about today should be a warning to all of us who felt that things were beginning to go in the right direction—that they are not necessarily going to go in the right direction unless we continue to be engaged in a very positive way and forceful way.

U.S. military engagement, Mr. Chairman—as you have stated, U.S. military engagement with the Burmese Government at this time because of what we've heard at this hearing today is clearly premature unless we are to be taken—unless it is to be taken as excusing the type of abuses that we have heard spoken about and detailed today.

There should be no—especially there should be no military cooperation with the regime until the major atrocities being committed against the Muslim population ceases.

Otherwise, it will be seen by the people who are committing the atrocities as a green light to go and murder innocent people and it will be seen by people throughout the world as hypocrisy on the part of the United States because of our ready willingness to condemn Muslims anytime they are committing such acts of violence and atrocities against other peoples.

There has been ethnic cleansing over these years that I have been in Congress that's very easy to identify. Where did the word ethnic cleansing come from? It came from Christian Serbs exterminating communities of Muslims in the Balkans, intentionally doing that.

We now have a Buddhist ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Burma, just as we have seen Hindu ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the Kashmir.

None of this excuses any Muslim for killing any unarmed person anywhere in the world. But if we're going to reach out to the Islamic community on this planet and tell them that they are not meeting the standards of civilization by backing the radicals among their own religious faith who are committing horrible acts of terrorism against unarmed people throughout the world, we've got to make sure that when Muslims are the victims we stand up for them as well, and nowhere is that clearer than here in Burma. And let us note now about others, yes, the Muslims are being attacked.

But from my sources of information the attacks, especially air attacks on the Karenis and the Karens and the other ethnic groups along the border, continues.

And if they—if it is indeed then there's been reform and they're heading toward more freedom in Burma, well, then those air attacks should have ceased a long time ago. Any air attack on a portion of Burma by the Burmese military is an admission that the repression of peoples in Burma continues.

We must be strong about it. I hope this hearing delivers that message, Mr. Chairman, to the Burmese military that we don't expect a big announcement and then we're going to walk away and let them have their way.

No, they made a big announcement that they're changing direction. We must see a continued movement in the right direction and not continued atrocities and human rights abuses.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much. We don't necessarily need a response. I don't think there was a question in there.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Holding.

Mr. HOLDING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Picking up on the role of the Burmese military, I mean, obviously it's ingrained into the rule of the country of Burma.

We know that any future constitutional reform or elections are going to have to have the Burmese military on board, and the Burmese military is reported as one of the top militaries in the world in terms of size.

But, you know, as far as to their exact budget and the spending on the Burmese military we don't know that. Now, while this lack of transparency is a big concern given Burma's neighbors, I think before the United States needs to—before we move any closer to military-to-military cooperation we need to ensure that the Burmese military does not have excessive ties with China and North Korea or those ties are severed.

So which one of you on the panel could elaborate for us exactly what are the ties that the Burmese military has with the Chinese or North Korea?

Ms. QUIGLEY. We won't be able to undo the extensive ties between the Chinese and the Burmese military. They are linked both militarily through—they have been the largest weapons supplier, the largest arms dealer for the Burmese military for decades.

They are also economic partners. The Burmese military owns very large economic holdings in Burma and that's predominantly who the Chinese do their business with, particularly in the extractives and the energy sector.

And so untangling the military, political and economic relationship between the Burmese and Chinese is, I think, an unattainable goal.

I think it's one that the U.S. is trying to slowly pull the Burmese away from the Chinese and I think that's one of the primary reasons of our engagement policy.

I think that the U.S. feels as if there is a greater potential to remove them from a relationship with North Korea, which includes a transfer of weapons and technology—missile technology.

And then there is concern potentially about a nuclear relationship. The Burmese Government did just sign the additional protocol and will be allowing IAEA into the country.

And so there is some promise, I would say, on trying to at least ascertain the nuclear relationship between Burma and North Korea, and several shipments have been stopped. Weapons shipments have been stopped from North Korea to Burma.

I think that that actually was the focus of Secretary Hagel's interaction with the Burmese defense minister was to try and more successfully pull them away from the North Koreans.

Mr. HOLDING. So how—what are the ways or what ways are we using and what ways would you suggest for driving a wedge between the relationship between Burma and China?

Ms. QUIGLEY. Well, to be honest, I think that the first thing that the U.S., I think, is trying to achieve is to separate the Burmese military from economic activity.

And so if you separate the Burmese military from economic activity you separate an economic relationship that they have with the Chinese. And so——

Mr. HOLDING. So how do you do that?

Ms. QUIGLEY. Well, at the moment the U.S. has said that if you want to invest with—if the Burmese military and their economic holdings want to invest with the Americans, which they do, that they have to divest.

The Burmese military has to go from being an economic power inside Burma to being a professional military in Burma.

And so we're holding out sort of like I guess you'd consider it like we're dangling the carrot—that if they divest that they would have more of a relation—that the Burmese military would benefit more from a relationship with the United States. And so they're——

Mr. HOLDING. On a military level if they divested their economic holdings and so forth that——

Ms. QUIGLEY. Yeah. One of the administration's criteria for the Burmese military to, say, be taken off our sanctions list is to divest their economic holdings and so that would be one way in which they would be able to pull them away from the Chinese because the military would then no——

Mr. HOLDING. Is there anything that we're not doing that you would suggest would be a way to drive a wedge?

Ms. QUIGLEY. I think we should be more engaged when it comes to the ethnic negotiations that are taking place. The Chinese have a predominant role.

So most of the fighting that's taking place is happening on the China border with the Shan, the Palaung and the Kachin, and the U.S. has resolutely stayed out of those negotiations whereas the Chinese have played a very active role.

And I've—we have suggested that these communities have actually asked the U.S. to actively participate in the negotiation process to—so that therefore the Chinese don't have as much control as what happens in those regions in the country.

Right now, that's primarily a relationship between the Burmese military, the Chinese and those ethnic groups. And so those ethnic groups have actually asked that the U.S. Government become a more active player in those negotiation processes as a counterbalance to sort of neutralize the role that the Chinese have in that region of the country.

Mr. HOLDING. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you for your remarks. The gentleman's time has expired. Let me make a remark—a chairman's prerogative here.

I think sometimes there's a tendency in this country—I may be seeing this under this administration. I don't want to be too harsh with them because you see it occasionally, I think, throughout history—where it's natural for an administration to do this. I think they look for foreign policy successes wherever they can find them and I think initially, with respect to Burma, it looked like this was going to be a tremendous success story. If it happens under your watch you get some credit for it, so I think there was perhaps a rush to put a happy face on Burma and be very optimistic about the outcome, do a lot of positive things, give them everything, and hope that everything would go well.

Unfortunately, we've seen that there are still tremendous challenges in Burma in addressing human rights abuses. The military is still literally killing people, and so I think it's appropriate for us to reconsider our policy there and to move forward in a more cautious manner, making sure that our actions and our outreach will actually have a positive effect and not just reward bad behavior.

I don't think, Dr. Uddin, we actually directed any questions to you, so I would give you this opportunity, if you would like, to perhaps comment on anything that you heard here this afternoon.

Mr. UDDIN. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity again to make a statement.

I want to emphasize on ethnic minority issues where I'm—I've been working as an ARU director general the rights of the ethnic minorities, particularly the Rohingya issue.

Currently, Ambassador Derek Mitchell has been working very diligently on this Rohingya issue, trying to work—find out the solution for these Rohingya people.

So I think we should continue that path through State Department's effort working on this. But, you know, the biggest problem we are having right now with the Rohingya issue is what Myanmar Government—Burmese Government says from Naypyidaw is not consistent what's happening on the ground.

The more conciliatory talk, sometimes very negotiable talks coming out of Naypyidaw. Each time that happens you see more violent—more violence on the ground in Arakan State.

There seems to be a disconnect between what's happening on the ground and what's coming out of Naypyidaw. So in terms of the community led by the United States, the most powerful country in the world, you need to take a look at that.

Where is the missing gap? What's happening? Is that signal coming from the Napyidaw to the forces on the ground to continue to commit this horrendous violence against Rohingya or they are a breakdown of law and order?

So I think that's one thing—that's something that I want to ask our Government to pursue that the security of the Rohingya people are addressed by the Myanmar Government because this took place—Rakhine State is the place which the Myanmar Government governs.

So there has to be law and order. It cannot be a lawless state in Burma where the Myanmar Government is governing that region.

Thank you very much.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank all the panel members this afternoon for their excellent testimony and responses to the questions.

I think you do a very, very good job in a particularly important country in the world right now that really does need a lot of focus.

I would ask unanimous consent that members have 5 days to supplement their comments or submit questions. If there's no further business to come before the subcommittee, we're adjourned.

Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:10 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Material Submitted for the Hearing Record

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific
Steve Chabot (R-OH), Chairman

September 12, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held by the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at www.foreignaffairs.house.gov):

DATE: Thursday, September 19, 2013

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

SUBJECT: An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife

WITNESSES:

The Honorable Tom Andrews
President
United to End Genocide

Ms. Jennifer Quigley
Executive Director
U.S. Campaign for Burma

Wakar Uddin, Ph.D.
Director General
The Arakan Rohingya Union

Mr. Ralph L. Cwerman
President
The Humpty Dumpty Institute

*NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON *Asia & the Pacific* HEARING

Day *Thursday* **Date** *9/19/2013* **Room** *2172*

Starting Time *2:00 pm* **Ending Time** *3:10 pm*

Recesses [ ] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Steve Chabot (R-OH)

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

An Unclear Roadmap: Burma's Fragile Political Reforms and Growing Ethnic Strife

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Mo Brooks (R-AL), Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Rep. George Holding (R-NC), Rep. Ami Bera (D-CA)

NON-SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: *(Mark with an * if they are not members of full committee.)*

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *3:10 pm*

Subcommittee Staff Director

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE STEVE CHABOT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Permanent Observer Mission
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
to the United Nations

Mission Permanente d'Observation
de l'Organisation de la Coopération islamique
auprés des Nations Unies

بعثة المراقبة الدائمة لمنظمة التعاون الإسلامي لدى الأمم المتحدة

HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

AMBASSADOR UFUK GOKCEN
PERMANENT OBSERVER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

The Rohingya Muslim minority of Myanmar make up nearly 90% of the population in northern Rakhine State where a significant amount of the violence in Burma is concentrated; however, violence is now affecting the daily lives of Muslims both inside and outside of Rakhine State.

Rohingya Muslims have been routinely subjected to discrimination and violence by security forces and non-Muslim inhabitants in Rakhine State due to their background and culture. Hundreds of Rohingya have been killed and thousands have been displaced to other parts of Myanmar and surrounding countries. The new democratic civilian government, which was formed in 2010 after decades of harsh military rule, has made a few minor attempts at resolving this persistent issue, but serious measures have yet to be taken. The persecution of the Rohingya people is not a new phenomenon; the historical tension between the Rohingya Muslims and the Rakhine Buddhists finally came to a violent head in June 2012. The violence that began in June 2012 was just the latest resurgence of violence in a history of oppression that dates back to 1784.

The main issue now is that the ongoing violence is continuing to grow at an disturbing pace; most alarmingly, it is spilling over into other states in Myanmar and those Rohingya who managed to reach neighboring countries are now being subjected to poor treatment, inadequate resources and causing tension within localities ill equipped to deal with the incoming flux of Rohingya refugees.

Proceeding from recommendations of the first meeting of the OIC Contact Group on the Rohingya Muslim Minority last September 2012 on the sidelines of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the OIC General Secretariat and its Member States have been and continue to be closely following the current situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

The OIC General Secretariat has and continues to remain seized with this issue and worked to bring it in the agenda of the concerned international interlocutors including the United Nations, UN Human Rights Council, Association of South East Asian Nations, European Union and even bilaterally with the Myanmar Government for a peaceful and lasting resolution of this issue.

The OIC General Secretariat also exerted efforts to raise awareness worldwide to the ongoing plight of the Rohingya Muslims.

Just last month, during August, the Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dato 'Sri Anifah Aman, addressed the ASEAN Summit by making a strong statement which called upon the Myanmar Government to take immediate actions to address the increasing violence in the country. Those actions should be concrete and definitive that includes the prosecution of the perpetrators in a fair and transparent manner. The Minister also stated that the government of Myanmar should extend its fullest cooperation and access to the OIC.

In a move to support the Rohingya minority that resides in Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, extended a formal granting by the government of residency status to Rohingya refugees in the Kingdom.

While these two examples are of support to the Rohingya, concrete changes must take place in Myanmar to ensure that the ethnic Rohingya are able to live peacefully in Rakhine State. These changes include providing a possible path to citizenship for the Rohingya, acknowledging that the Rohingya population is ethnic to Rakhine State, ensure that adequate humanitarian assistance is allowed to reach those Rohingya who need it unimpeded, and to provide support and assistance to those who have been forcibly removed from their townships and have had to watch their homes burned to the ground by extremist elements. The Government of Myanmar also needs to take steps to mitigate the effects of extremist hate speech towards the Rohingya.

Due to the escalation of violence early in the year, the OIC Contact Group on the Rohingya Muslim Minority met a second time in April (2013) to discuss possible remedies and adopted a final communiqué which prescribed significant recommendations, including a mandate for the OIC Group in New York to actively engage parties related to the conflict, including the Myanmar Government. To this end, the Contact Group called for the OIC Member States to take appropriate action for the adoption of a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council, a letter from the OIC Secretary General on behalf of 57 Heads of OIC Member States, and for the OIC General Secretariat to intensify efforts to open an OIC Humanitarian office for all those affected in Rakhine State and to arrange a series of interfaith dialogue meetings between Muslim and Buddhist religious leaders.

At the Human Rights Council, the OIC Group in Geneva was able to pass a Presidential Statement with regards to the Rohingya after facing significant resistance from Myanmar and other countries, while is was welcomed, the document did not reflect a concrete plan of action, which is sorely needed to address the issue. The OIC Group in New York has met with several UN Member States and key figures throughout the spring and summer and is planning on continuing to pressure Myanmar to address the complex issues of the Rohingya this fall during the United Nations General Assembly, culminating in a resolution with an appropriate plan of action that takes into account all the issues of the Rohingya including citizenship and humanitarian assistance.

Despite the condemnation of Myanmar by the U.N. and the OIC, many foreign actors remain hesitant to criticize the burgeoning democracy that is still taking root in Myanmar. Many

leaders are concerned that an over-zealous reproach of the government may result in a backlash that compromises the fragile democracy within the country. To this end, carrying out the instructions of the Contact Group has not been easy. The OIC despite its best, well-intentioned efforts continues to face resistance to all its offers of assistance.

Within Myanmar, it is because of extremist Buddhist elements who have been able to paint a negative picture of OIC. While there are many extremist movements, the most vocal and anti-Muslim is the 969 Movement.

Much of the ongoing violence is now being attributed to the 969 movement, a nation-wide campaign led by extremist Buddhist monks that claim to act in the interest of preserving Buddhist social and economic interest. Despite the innocent claims of monks affiliated with the 969 movement, recent reports by several major media outlets including TIME Magazine, The Diplomat, Huffington Post, The NY Times, and The Guardian fault the movement and its outspoken leadership for inciting much of the interfaith violence that has occurred in the last year. The 969 movement openly encourages Buddhists in Myanmar not to do business with, sell property to, marry, or hire Muslims. In sermons, the Buddhists monks who preach the 969 movement frequently accuse Muslims of being rapists and terrorists and even go as far as to call them the "the enemy." In May, leaders of the 969 movement drafted a 15 page law that would restrict marriages between Buddhist women and Muslim men, claiming that the law would be paramount in "protecting the freedom of Buddhist women."

The unofficial leader of the 969 movement is a monk by the name of U Wirathu. In June, Wirathu was featured on the cover of TIME Magazine with the superimposed caption, "The Buddhist Face of Terror." Even as a part of the rarely prosecuted Buddhist-majority, Wirathu was jailed for eight years during the military junta for inciting hatred. Wirathu claims that he is proud to have standing as a radical Buddhist stating that, "If we are weak, our land will become Muslim." The most unsettling reality of the 969 movement is not simply that it exists, but that it is widely supported throughout Myanmar. The 969 movement is an embodiment of the ignorance and stubborn lack of accountability that continues to hinder religious equality in Myanmar.

This disturbing trend made itself readily apparent through the experiences of members of an OIC observer mission to Myanmar conducted in 2012. The hatred by local residents of Rakhine towards the UN and NGO's was based on nothing more than influential individuals telling them to act in this manner. More often than not, this centered on the misguided notion that humanitarian efforts were favoring the Rohingya, which caused further animosity among the Buddhist majority population. Moreover, due to the increasing levels of violence and outright threats, humanitarian aid workers now rarely reaches the areas which are most in need of it. While some army and law enforcement officials have taken steps to protect and provide for the Rohingya while respecting the rights of Rakhine locals, this is normally on a individual basis and the barbarous intimidation that they must contend with often results in transfers of position or simply keeping silent due to the possibility of retribution.

Many politicians in Myanmar, including President Thein Sein and Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi avoid the subject matter due to its tremendous potential effect on elections. After every

attack or occurrence of discrimination the government pledges to investigate the incident, yet the majority of the time it fails to prosecute any individuals. As for the individuals who are in conflict areas, the government must ensure that they can have access to humanitarian aid. NGOs and foreign aid services need to be permitted unobstructed entry into problem areas, so that they can tend to as many individuals as possible. Finally, the 1982 Citizenship Law must be modified to guarantee that no individuals will be denied citizenship rights due to their ethnic, religious, or racial background. Discriminatory laws need to be abolished immediately to allow Rohingya Muslims to enjoy the same freedoms as the other ethnic and religious groups in the country.

With estimates from as recently as 2012 placing the number of IDPs in Myanmar at more than 450,000 people, the need for strong international involvement and facilitation is greater than ever. Limited involvement from outside powers will not be enough for handling such large numbers. Foreign nations must make it clear that the persistence of this discrimination and violence will harm both political and economic relations. Only when the international community gets more involved in the issue facing Rohingya Muslims, will substantial and effective changes take place.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon recently gave a speech featuring his stance on the conflict in Myanmar stating,

> "...I remain concerned about the plight of the Rohingya population and their disturbing humanitarian situation. The actions that resulted in many deaths and widespread destruction are deplorable and unacceptable....commitments must be translated into concrete action...There is a dangerous polarization taking place within Myanmar. If it is not addressed urgently and firmly, underlying tensions could provoke more upheaval, undermining the reform process and triggering negative regional repercussions."

The Secretary General's statement reflects the urgency surrounding the humanitarian conflict in Myanmar. After more than 200 years of persecution of the Rohingya people, the threat of delay is more severe than ever. The longer violence is allowed to continue, the more entrenched the people of Myanmar will become in conflict and the more elusive a solution for peace will become.

The Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are considered by many organizations, including the U.N., to be one of the most persecuted groups on the planet. Their lives are plagued with uncertainty and fear due to the current discriminatory troubles that they face every day. The acceptance and tolerance of this violence by the government of Myanmar will further worsen this situation. Now is the time to pressure the Myanmar government and require it to take measures to ensure that Rohingya Muslims are no longer victims of discrimination and communal violence. Ensuring the Rohingya people have the protection of the state through citizenship is a major asset to ending violence. Still, citizenship does not ensure equality; it is necessary that increased interfaith dialogue and initiatives to cultivate awareness and understanding among the many ethnic and religious factions within Myanmar accompany the pathway to citizenship. Failure to accomplish this task will only lead to greater destruction and death, which could greatly destabilize the emerging democratic government of Myanmar.

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