



UBC CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS
The University of British Columbia

Monday, January 4, 2016

12:15 – 2:00 pm

Conference Room 120, C.K. Choi Building

The University of British Columbia, 1855 West Mall, Vancouver

The University of British Columbia's Centre for Southeast Asia Research (CSEAR) at the Institute of Asian Research (IAR) and Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions at the Department of Political Science present

Richard A. Nuccio, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

Democracy at Last in Myanmar?: the November elections and the aftermath

Myanmar's historic 2015 elections have fulfilled a promise made to the population of Myanmar 25 years ago to end decades of military rule through a peaceful, democratic transition. The results, predicted by very few inside or outside of Myanmar, produced a landslide victory for Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, not only in the central Bamar ethnic areas, but also in nearly all ethnic states. The NLD will control two of the three highest executive branch offices, president and first vice president; have supermajorities in both houses of the legislature; and name the chief minister or highest executive official in at least ten of the 14 states and regions as well as the speakers of state and region parliaments. Ironically the military, not other civilian parties, now constitutes the main check on the NLD's power, an outcome feared by the military and which they sought to mitigate by a 2008 constitution that reserves three key ministries to the military and provides numerous mechanisms by which the military could attempt to suspend civilian authority. The transition initiated in 2011 has been an elite dominated, top down process dominated by the military and its party instrument, the USDP. Will the NLD need to break with this elite process to try to address the enormous expectations created by its landslide victory? Will it become the most successful democratic transition in Southeast Asia or resort to the authoritarian temptations prevailing in most of its neighbors?

Richard A. Nuccio

is senior resident country director and chief of party for the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Elections and Political Processes program in Burma. Previously, he was NDI's senior resident country director in South Sudan (2011–2012). Prior to joining NDI, Nuccio was director of *Civitas* International Programs at the Center for Civic Education, Los Angeles. During the 1990s Dr. Nuccio served in a number of senior foreign policy positions in the U.S. Government: special advisor to the President and to the Secretary of State for Cuba and senior policy adviser to two Assistant Secretaries of State for Inter-American Affairs. In the Congress Dr. Nuccio was a staff consultant with the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (1991-1993) and senior foreign policy adviser to Senator Robert G. Torricelli (D-NJ) (1996).



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