

Panel Abstract: Myanmar's relations with both the United States and China have been changing in a dramatic way in recent years. This panel will explore these changing relationships, attempting to understand and explain what has happened, and making some projections about the future course of these complex relationships.

In 2012 the United States sent its first ambassador to Burma/Myanmar since 1990, indicative of positive changes toward normalizing the bilateral relationship. The panel will examine the dynamics of American policy toward Burma/Myanmar, the American imposition of sanctions, and the Obama "pivot" toward Asia that modified the American approach to Burma/Myanmar, and the response from Naypyidaw. The change in Chinese relations with Myanmar was dramatically evident in the Burmese decision in 2011 to suspend construction of the Chinese-funded Myitsone Dam. China has responded to swift changes in Myanmar with adjustment in its foreign policy, image building manoeuvres, and notable economic concessions in the renegotiated contracts of the major construction projects. Questions remain if the closer ties between the United States and Myanmar present an obstacle for China in its attempts to further its interests in Myanmar and if Myanmar can become a test ground for coexistence of strategic goals between China and the United States in Southeast Asia.

Panel Participants

Chair and Commentator: David I. Steinberg is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Asian Studies at Georgetown University, and was for ten years director of Asia Studies there.

Paper 1: From Deep Freeze to Thaw: United States Relations with Burma/Myanmar since 8/8/88 – **Kenton Clymer**, Distinguished Research Professor in the Department of History, Northern Illinois University, USA

Paper 2: The Foreign Policy Adjustment of China toward Myanmar since 2011 - **Bai Xuefeng**, Visiting Scholar at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and the Department of History at Northern Illinois University, USA; Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at Xiamen University.