Abstract

Promotion of democracy, a traditional tool of American foreign policy, was used also during Barack Obama´s presidency through open dialogues and mutual cooperation also with non-democratic nations. The United States during Obama´s administration renewed and connected diplomatic relations with countries that were overlooked by previous American administrations. This thesis is focusing on the foreign policy concept during Obama´s second term, namely Pivot to Asia. Support of universal values and democracy was one of the central pillars of this policy. The main goal of this thesis is to argue if concentrated American presence and activity in 2011-2016 in Southeast Asia either supported democratic growth or led to democratic backsliding in the region. Specifically, Myanmar had gone through major political transformation since 2011. Ruling junta implemented reforms that opened up space for democratic opposition in the country and reduced sanctions and the policy of isolation from many Western states. Changes within Myanmar government in 2011-2016, American policy towards Myanmar, and normalization of American-Myanmar relations are three examples used in this case study that provides concrete approaches of American administration within Pivot to Asia.