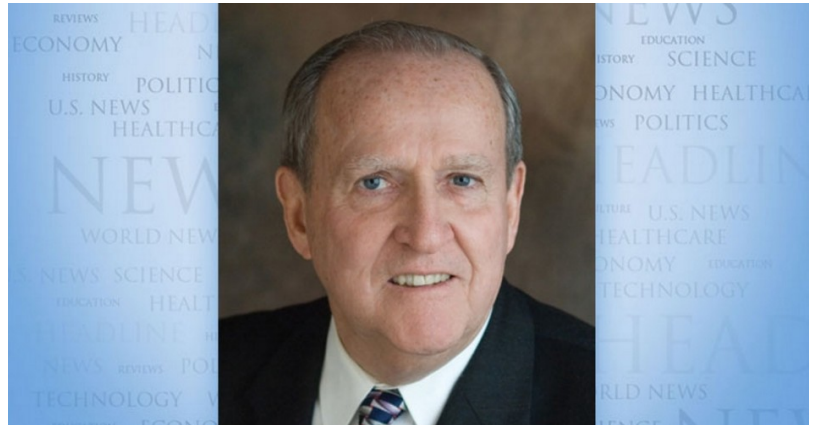




Written by [John F. McManus](#) on December 26, 2017

Rohingya Persecution

A classic example of man's inhumanity to fellow man has been noted by the mass media over recent months. It involves the persecution of the [Rohingya](#) minority in Myanmar (formerly Burma). The international group [Doctors Without Borders](#) estimates that, during August 2017 alone, 6,700 of the Rohingya people were killed, 730 of them children, during raids into their villages and homes by Myanmar army and police units. The number of casualties in this obvious example of ethnic cleansing will surely rise as more information is gathered.



Myanmar's population of 54 million is overwhelmingly Buddhist. The Rohingya minority of fewer than two million is mostly Muslim. Those 2 million and their ancestors have resided for more than five centuries in Myanmar's western Rakhine state. Religious differences have existed for centuries. But the smaller Rohingya population has been denied voting rights and full citizenship. In addition, they have long suffered from travel restrictions while being deprived of education, even forced to sign documents limiting their families to a maximum of two children. Able-bodied males are regularly subjected to forced labor for military and government projects. And good farmland has been taken from the Rohingyas and given to Buddhists who have moved into the area with government help.

Estimates place the number of Rohingyas who have fled their homes in recent months at 645,000. Practically all have gone to neighboring Bangladesh where they are gathered in hastily built and hardly livable tent camps. Myanmar authorities claim the raids their military and police have conducted are responses to recent attacks on government installations by Rohingyas. But the nation's army units have been accused of a variety of human rights abuses including arson, gang rapes, and indiscriminate killings of adults and children.

The de facto leader of Myanmar's government is world famous Aung San Suu Kyi who has consistently claimed that controlling the military is not within her official power. She rose to political power in recent years while becoming a leader protesting a previous government regime. As a recent Nobel Prize recipient, she has found herself widely criticized for inaction during the current crisis, and has seen her "Freedom of Oxford" award taken away. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has accused the Myanmar military of "ethnic cleansing," a charge that raised many eyebrows all over the globe. Let's hope that [Tillerson](#) won't be sending U.S. troops into this mess.

Rohingyas are not only adherents of a minority religion, they have their own language and culture. And they have never indicated a willingness to assimilate. Their very presence within the borders of Myanmar, even after five centuries of living side-by-side with a majority population practicing a different religion, language and culture, has long been a potentially explosive situation. In a high percentage of the countries of the world, people get along relatively well, and new arrivals tend to assimilate. Sadly, many itinerant Muslims refuse to adopt the mores of the country they have recently



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entered.

The influx of huge numbers of [illegal Latin American immigrants](#) into our country poses problems like those currently occurring in Myanmar. If the millions of recent entrants to the U.S. refuse to adopt the English language and culture that are identifiably American, their presence could explode into the kind of violence currently experienced in Myanmar.

Dealing with our own immigration problem, a situation dumped into the lap of the Trump administration, won't be easy. But it must be addressed. If it isn't handled capably and humanely, we may suffer some of the hideous problems currently experienced by the Rohingya people. What we don't want is American forces sent to this faraway land to perform again as the world's policemen. The principle that should guide our leaders is simple: Creating a military arm should have as its sole goal the protection of the lives and property of our own people — period.

John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.



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