Samuel G. "Sam" Baron

Contact

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Education

University of Cambridge (St John's College) — Cambridge, United Kingdom
Ph.D. in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies — 2026 - 2029

- Advisor: Dr. John Nilsson-Wright
- *Thesis*: Navigating the Nexus of Policy, Profit, and Principles: Understanding Japan's Promotion of Business and Human Rights in Southeast Asia

University of Cambridge (St John's College) — Cambridge, United Kingdom
M.Phil. in Politics and International Studies — 2020 - 2021

- Grade: *Distinction* (74)
- Advisor: Dr. Sharath Srinivasan
- *Thesis*: Selective Leverage? Assessing the Role of Human Rights Pressure in U.S. Foreign Policy towards Southeast Asia, 2012-2020

Loyola Marymount University — Los Angeles, California, USA
B.A. in Political Science and Asia-Pacific Studies — 2015 - 2019

- GPA: 3.85/4.00, *magna cum laude*

Work Experience

Office of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass | Los Angeles, California — 2024 - 2025

- Drafted policy briefings for the Mayor relating to international trade between Asia and the City of Los Angeles. Organized a trade mission to Southeast Asia.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | Tokyo, Japan — 2023

- Served as a consultant to a project funded by the Japanese MOFA, advising companies on compliance with business and human rights standards in Asia.

The Asia Group (TAG) | Washington, D.C. — 2021 - 2022

- Worked with former White House and State Department officials to advise Fortune 100 companies on geopolitical risks in emerging Southeast Asian markets.

The Yomiuri Shimbun | Los Angeles, California — 2020

- Wrote articles about U.S.-Japan relations and American politics for the Los Angeles Bureau of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, the largest Japanese language newspaper.

United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR) | Bangkok, Thailand — 2019

- Interned with the Myanmar Team of the UN Human Rights Office. Authored reports on armed conflict and business and human rights in Myanmar.

U.S. Department of State | Washington, D.C. — 2018

- Interned in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL/EAP) working on Asian foreign policy issues under Ambassador Julie Turner.

Affiliations

Yokosuka Council on Asia-Pacific Studies (YCAPS)
Policy Research Fellow (non-resident) — 2022 - Present

Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP)
Associated Research Fellow (non-resident) — 2022 - Present

Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA (SPFUSA)
Non-Resident Scholar, "US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative" — 2022 - 2024

The University of Tokyo (UTokyo)
Visiting Researcher, Research Center for Sustainable Peace (RCSP) — 2022 - 2023

Research Interests

- The international relations of East and Southeast Asia
- Political economy of human rights, development, and global trade in the Indo-Pacific
- Business and human rights and human rights due diligence in global supply chains
- Japanese foreign policy and economic engagement in Southeast Asia

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Journal Articles:

Ryuji Hattori, Sam Baron, and Ryan Hartley, **Rethinking the 'Special Relationship': Examining Japan's Response to the 2021 Myanmar Coup,** *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 25(3): pg. 326-351. Link

Book Chapters:

Sam Baron, **ASEAN and the Quad: Institutional Skepticism and Selective Engagement in the Indo-Pacific,** in *From "Ocean Froth" to "Asian NATO": The Evolution and Strategic Dynamics of the Quad*, Springer, forthcoming fall 2026.

Sam Baron and Ryan Hartley, **Inside the 'Special Relationship': Informal Actors and the Evolution of Japan-Myanmar Relations, 2011–Present,** in *Handbook of Japan-Southeast Asia Relations*, ed. Mark S. Cogan, Palgrave, forthcoming 2027.

Policy Publications (Reports, Op-Eds, Etc.)

Sam Baron, **How Forced Labour Commitments are Reshaping Market Access Across South-East Asia**, *Trade Finance Global*, April 16, 2026. Link

Sam Baron, **From Sister Cities to Strategic Partners: The L.A.–Mumbai Economic Opportunity**, *Observer Research Foundation*, April 9, 2026. Link

Sam Baron, **Bridging East and West: The Visegrad Four as a Catalyst for Japanese-European Economic Engagement in Southeast Asia**, *Poland-Japan Foundation*, March 23, 2026. Link

Markos Kounalakis and Sam Baron, **In India-US deal, there is a dangerous asymmetry. California can bridge the gap,** *The Indian Express*, February 20, 2026. Link

Sam Baron, **Trump's return heralds a new era of trade tensions for Japan,** *The Japan Times*, November 27, 2024. Link

Sam Baron, **What Could a Harris Administration Mean for Southeast Asia?** *The Diplomat*, September 19, 2024. Link

Htwe Htwe Thein and Sam Baron, **Business Not as Usual: International Business and the Myanmar Crisis,** *AsiaLink Insight*, The University of Melbourne, February 15, 2024. Link

Sam Baron, Lavanga Wijekoon, and Aki Tanaka, **The CSDDD Effect: Assessing the Impact of the EU's Impending Corporate Sustainability Mandate on Japanese Companies,** Institute for Security and Development Policy, December 5, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **Kishida's Puzzling Decision to Ax his Human Rights Adviser,** *The Japan Times*, December 1, 2023. Link

Sam Baron and Ye Khaung Oo, **Are the National Unity Government's Responsible Investment Policies Fit for Purpose?** ISEAS Yusof-Ishak Institute, September 19, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **The ASEAN-Japan Centre Can be a Model for Washington's New 'ASEAN Center',** Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, July 19, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **What the Myanmar Coup Means for Japan: Implications for Foreign Policy and International Business.** University of Tokyo Research Center for Sustainable Peace, May 17, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **Congress Can Help Kick Start Biden's Southeast Asia Policy.** *The Hill*, May 29, 2023. Link

Sam Baron and Abhinav Seetharaman, **U.S. needs its own 'ASEAN center',** *Nikkei Asia*, March 23, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **Japan Seeks an Improved Climate in Relations with ASEAN,** *The Lowy Institute*, March 21, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **New US-Japan Supply Chain Task Force Can Enhance Economic Cooperation in Southeast Asia.** Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, February 9, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **Myanmar junta can't hide behind a sham election.** *Asia Times*, February 2, 2023. Link

Sam Baron, **The Cost of Biden's APEC Absence.** *The Diplomat*, November 1, 2022. Link

Sam Baron and Kyaw Hsan Hlaing, **Japan needs to ratchet up pressure on Myanmar's junta.** *The Japan Times*, October 21, 2022. Link

Sam Baron and Julian Neuweiler, **ASEAN set to get tougher on Myanmar, and Australia should follow suit.** Australian Strategic Policy Institute, September 9, 2022. Link

Sam Baron, **Will the U.S. Look to Japan to Step Up its Economic Game in Southeast Asia?** Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, July 20, 2022. Link

Sam Baron, **Toward ending impunity in North Korea.** *9DASHLINE*, March 2021. Link

Sam Baron, **Why Bangladesh's Restriction of Internet Access to the Rohingya May Help Spread the Coronavirus.** *The National Interest*, March 31, 2020. Link

Media Commentary

Soft power, hard cash: inside Southeast Asia's billion-dollar anime obsession. *The South China Morning Post*, January 13, 2026. Link

ASEAN summit invites China, Gulf states amid tariffs threat. *Deutsche Welle (DW)*, March 9, 2025. Link

China Implements New Durian Inspection Rules to Curb Thai and Vietnamese Exports; Analysts Say Trade May Become Pressure Tool. *Voice of America*, February 21, 2025. (Chinese) Link

Anwar's Asean summit risks Trump's ire as Malaysia courts China, Gulf bloc. *The South China Morning Post*, February 20, 2025. Link

Cambodia's approval of Japanese naval visits signals policy of 'balancing interests'. *The South China Morning Post*, December 25, 2024. Link

Japan Unlikely to Impose Sanctions on Myanmar's Military Regime. *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, May 4, 2023. (Burmese) Link

Myanmar Military Leader's Family Linked to Sanctioned Drug Trafficker in Thailand. *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, January 11, 2023. (Burmese) Link

Biden skips APEC summit, but U.S. won't cede Asia-Pacific to China. *Voice of America*, November 17, 2022. (Chinese) Link

Did Myanmar release 4 foreign prisoners as 'tactic' to ease pressure from Asean? *The South China Morning Post*, November 23, 2022. Link

Analysts Weigh Strategic Objectives Behind Myanmar Junta Chief's Russia Visit. *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, July 15, 2022. (Burmese) Link

US comes a-courting in Asean as it pressures Beijing. What will it achieve? *The South China Morning Post*, December 18, 2021. Link

Ahead of Blinken's Southeast Asia visit, US steps up rivalry with China in Mekong region

with funding, Mississippi tie-up. *The South China Morning Post*, December 10, 2021. Link

Foreign Investors Exit Myanmar Amid Widespread Economic Mismanagement. *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, November 3, 2021. (Burmese) Link

Analysis: Assessing the ASEAN Special Envoy's Ceasefire Proposal for Myanmar. *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, September 6, 2021. (Burmese) Link

Fellowships Awards and Honors

Cambridge Trust International Scholarship, Cambridge Trust 03/2026

Selected for the Cambridge Trust International Scholarship, which awards outstanding applicants of any nationality full funding to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge.

Finalist, Gates Cambridge Scholarship, Gates Cambridge Trust 01/2026

Invited to interview for the Gates Cambridge Scholarship, one of the world's most prestigious scholarships seeking individuals with outstanding intellectual ability, leadership potential, and a commitment to improving the lives of others.

Motwani Jadeja Fellowship, O.P. Jindal Global University 12/2025

Selected for the inaugural cohort of the Motwani Jadeja Fellowship, an initiative of the Motwani Jadeja Institute for American Studies (MJIAS) to host both established and emerging American scholars in residence at O.P. Jindal Global University to carry out a research project on US-India relations.

Kautilya Fellows Programme, Ministry of External Affairs, India 05/2025

Selected for an emerging leaders program organized by India's Ministry of External Affairs and India Foundation. Traveled to New Delhi, India and met with leading Indian foreign and public policy leaders including Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

MOSAIC Taiwan Fellowship, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China 06/2023

Selected by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to participate in an emerging leaders program for American and Canadian nationals under the age of 35. Traveled to Taipei and met with a variety of public officials to learn about Taiwan's foreign policy and domestic politics.

Monbukagakusho (MEXT) Scholarship, Ministry of Education, Japan 04/2022

Awarded the Monbukagakusho Scholarship by Japan's Ministry of Education and placed at the University of Tokyo's Research Center for Sustainable Peace (RCSP). Conducted research on Japan's foreign relations with Myanmar under the supervision of Professors Ai Kihara-Hunt and Yasunobu Sato.

M.Phil. Scholarship Prize, St John's College, Cambridge 10/2021

Awarded an M.Phil. Scholarship Prize of £500 by St John's College for achieving Distinction on both the M.Phil. thesis and overall degree.

Finalist, Herbert Scoville Jr. Fellowship 12/2019

Selected as a Finalist for the Herbert Scoville Jr. Fellowship, an international affairs fellowship for early-career policy professionals interested in working with non-profit organizations on peace & security issues in Washington, D.C.

Finalist, James C. Gaither Junior Fellowship, Asia Program 05/2019

Selected as a Finalist for the James C. Gaither Junior Fellowship, an international affairs fellowship offered by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for graduating college seniors.

Professional Memberships

Pacific Council on International Policy, Member 03/2026

Foreign Policy for America (FP4A), Member, NextGen Initiative 07/2025

U.S.-Japan Council, Associate Leader 07/2025

Pacific Forum International, Member, Young Leaders Program 05/2020

Invited Seminars and Conferences

The National Committee on North Korea (NCNK), (Washington, DC) 06/2026
Selected to participate in the 2026 edition of NCNK's flagship "Knowing North Korea" workshop for emerging scholars and young professionals focused on North Korea and/or Northeast Asia policy.

University of California, San Diego, (San Diego, California) 04/2026
Invited to join the "UC San Diego US-India Forum" organized by UC San Diego's 21st Century India Center and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) held from April 21-22, 2026.

The Stimson Center/YCAPS, (Washington, DC) 04/2026
Co-organized a closed-door roundtable with the Stimson Center's China Program titled "Middle-Power Responses to Myanmar's Elections", attended by former ambassadors, serving embassy officials, and researchers from think tanks focused on Southeast Asia.

Rishihood University, (Sonipat, Haryana, India) 01/2026
Invited to give a public lecture titled "Inside the American Foreign Policy Ecosystem: How Ideas, Interests, and Influence Shape Global Power" as a part of Rishihood University's Public Policy program.

O.P. Jindal Global University, (Sonipat, Haryana, India) 01/2026
Invited to give a public lecture titled "Superpower California and India: Subnational Pathways for Trade, Investment, and Economic Cooperation" as a part of the Motwani Jadeja Fellowship. Lecture included a video message from Markos Kounalakis, the Second Gentleman of California.

Pacific Council on International Policy, (Los Angeles, California) 11/2025
Invited to speak on the panel "Tariffs, Trade, and the Future of U.S.-China Economic Ties" at the Pacific Council's Annual Conference at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles.

The Stimson Center, Myanmar Roundtable, (Washington, DC) 04/2025
Invited by Yun Sun of the Stimson Center's China Program to participate in a closed-door round-table to discuss the Trump administration's Myanmar policy.

YCAPS/La Trobe Asia, Maritime GENIE, (Sydney, Australia) 10/2024
Invited to participate in a workshop for early career policy professionals funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)'s Australia-ASEAN Council.

University of California, Los Angeles, (Los Angeles, California) 04/2024
Invited to participate in a two-day conference organized by the UCLA Burkle Center for International Relations and the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) with leading American experts to examine how the U.S. can cooperate with China following the 2023 APEC Summit in San Francisco.

United Nations OHCHR, Hernan Santa Cruz Dialogue, (Webinar) 10/2023
Invited to present research on business and human rights trends among Japanese companies operating in post-coup Myanmar alongside Professor Surya Deva, the former Chair of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

Osaka School of International Public Policy, (Osaka, Japan) 06/2023
Invited to participate in the closed-door *Australia-Japan-United States Indo-Pacific Roundtable*, jointly organized by the Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) and Osaka University.

The University of Tokyo, (Tokyo, Japan) 03/2023
Organized and moderated a panel with leading Myanmar experts entitled: *Two Years After the Myanmar Coup: Regional Perspectives on Human Security*, which brought together senior policy officials to discuss possible solutions to the Myanmar crisis.

Temple University, Japan Campus, ICAS, (Tokyo, Japan) 02/2023
Invited as the keynote speaker for a brown bag briefing on Japan-Myanmar relations with senior diplomats and journalists, in a conversation moderated by Robert Dujarric.

YCAPS, (Webinar) 09/2022
Moderated a conversation with David Boling, the former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan in the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) entitled *U.S.-Japan Trade Relations: From Trade Adversaries to Trade Allies*.

LANGUAGE

English (native), Japanese (intermediate)