

U.S. Rejects British Genocide vs. Myanmar

by Mike Billington

After a week of wild lies from Western governments and press claiming that the Myanmar military regime was refusing emergency aid for the millions of victims of the May 3 Cyclone Nargis, and escalating calls for a military invasion for “humanitarian reasons,” the head of the U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. Timothy Keating, flew into Yangon on May 12 with a delivery of food and other supplies. Keating met with the head of the Myanmar Navy, turned over the entire shipment to the Myanmar military for distribution, and assured them that the hysteria, the lies, and the threats against Myanmar were not U.S. policy.

The Admiral told NPR News May 14 that the U.S. aid was unconditional, to be distributed by the sovereign government of Myanmar, and categorically rejected the calls for an invasion. Asked by NPR if such an invasion were a “remote possibility,” Keating replied. “It is not. That’s why I and my State Department colleagues went to Burma. The spigots are opening. We have absolutely no intention of forcefully providing relief supplies.” Asked if Myanmar were not refusing aid, as reported in news media accounts across the West, he countered that other nations, the United Nations, and many NGOs (Non-Government Organizations), were delivering extensive aid, and that with the United States now contributing, “it’s having an effect.” Keating said that the Myanmar government had agreed to the U.S. aid “in an interesting way—we flew in a couple of C-130s today, and by approving our flight plans, they are giving permission. We have 170,000 pounds in so far, and another five flights tomorrow, and perhaps some helicopters as well.”

This is an extraordinary shift in U.S. policy. The stated policy of the Bush Administration was that the U.S. and Europe would deny any assistance to the victims of the cyclone in Myanmar, unless U.S. military teams were allowed free access to assess the scope of the crisis, followed by U.S. and other Western teams who would administer the distribution of aid. This is in keeping with Henry Kissinger’s National Security Memorandum 200, signed into policy by President Gerald Ford in 1974, asserting that food should be used as a weapon to reduce population growth, and denied to nations which refuse to accept neocolonial demands on their sovereign rights. While Myanmar opened its doors to its friendly neighbors, it rejected absolutely any conditions on Western aid.

In an equally extraordinary shift, the U.S. C-130 Hercules which carried Keating and the U.S. supplies into Yangon, was

shown prominently in eight photos in the official government newspaper, *The New Light*, clearly showing the “U.S. Air Force” insignia, sitting on the Yangon airport tarmac. This meeting is by far the highest level contact between the U.S. and Myanmar in many years.

Why Myanmar Was Targetted

Myanmar has been treated as an “outpost of tyranny” (to use Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s term), and subjected to threats and sanctions continuously for the past 20 years. The publicly stated excuse for this subversion is the so-called “human rights” abuses against British asset Aung San Suu Kyi and her opposition party within Myanmar. Suu Kyi was trained at Cambridge and married Michael Aris, one of the leading British intelligence officials responsible for the Himalayas and the Subcontinent. She has functioned as a British asset since her return to Myanmar in 1988, preventing every effort at cooperation between opposition leaders and the government, even by those in her own party who wanted to work with the government and Myanmar’s neighbors, on the development of their country. The government refers to Suu Kyi as an “axe handle” for the British axe, which threatens the survival of the nation.

But the real purpose of the sanctions and the demonization of Myanmar by the British Empire and its foolish supporters in the U.S.A., is that Myanmar is the strategic hub, connecting China, India, and the Southeast Asian nations. The British granted independence to Myanmar (known as Burma, while under British colonial domination) in 1948, at about the same time they were forced to grant India its independence, but left the nation with an impossible constitution, granting the right to secession to all the ethnic groups along the border, and then sponsoring insurgencies by several of them, mostly financed by the opium trade, also sponsored by the British and their Hong Kong banks.

The military government which took power in 1988 moved successfully in the 1990s to make peace with all the ethnic insurgent armies, and nearly eliminated the opium production in the process. This revived the possibility for the first time, since the British colonization in the 19th Century, for Myanmar’s cooperation with its neighbors, opening up road and rail connections facilitating regional trade and development. This development was the enemy in the eyes of British geopolitics—alliances among sovereign nations which could threaten the power of the British banking cartels and the Anglo-American control of trade through sea power.

But the attempted Anglo-American isolation of Myanmar through sanctions and threats has been a failure, since all—repeat, *all*—of Myanmar’s Asian neighbors have rejected the geopolitical isolation of the country. Despite the extreme difficulties imposed by the sanctions, including the total cutoff of assistance from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, great infrastructure projects are well underway, linking Myanmar by road and rail to India, China, and Thailand, de-



DoD/Sgt. Andres Alcaraz, USMC

While the corrupt Western news media has been replete with stories about Myanmar's rejection of aid from the West, this photo of a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft delivering supplies at Yangon International Airport shows them to be outright lies. The Myanmar government has, however, absolutely rejected any British-style conditions on the aid.

veloping ports, airports, dams, oil pipelines, and other infrastructure projects. The "Southern branch" of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, connecting China with Europe and Africa through Southeast Asia, India, and Southwest Asia, is now a near-term possibility.

The Blair Doctrine

The shift in U.S. policy indicated by Admiral Keating's visit was presaged by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' firm rejection of proposals by U.S. aid officials that the United States begin food distributions within Myanmar without government approval. This variation on neoconservative "preemptive invasion" was first suggested by French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who argued that the "responsibility to protect" clause, adopted at the 2005 UN World Summit, allowed for "coercive humanitarian aid" to be delivered to the cyclone victims, based on the lie that the Myanmar government was refusing to allow delivery of emergency supplies.

Kouchner was evoking what has become known as the "Blair Doctrine," after the open call by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to do away with the notion of sovereign nation-states, which had been established by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, in favor of preemptive wars in disregard of sovereignty. Blair, in the Fabian imperial tradition of Lord Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells, presented his doctrine in a speech in Sedgfield, England on March 5, 2004, specifically defending the British and American preemptive war on Iraq, but extending it to a new global imperial order:

"So, for me, before Sept. 11, I was already reaching for a

different philosophy in international relations from a traditional one that has held sway since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648; namely, that a country's internal affairs are for it, and you don't interfere unless it threatens you, or breaches a treaty, or triggers an obligation of alliance....

"It may well be that under international law as presently constituted, a regime can systematically brutalize and oppress its people and there is nothing anyone can do, when dialogue, diplomacy, and even sanctions fail.... This may be the law, but should it be?... [W]e surely have a responsibility to act when a nation's people are subjected to a regime such as Saddam's. Otherwise, we are powerless to fight the aggression and injustice which over time puts at risk our security and way of life.

"Which brings us to how you make the rules and how you decide what is right or wrong in enforcing them. The UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights is a fine document. But it is strange [that] the United Nations is so reluctant to enforce them. But our worry is that if the UN—because of a political disagreement in its Councils—is paralyzed, then a threat we believe is real will go unchallenged. Britain's role is try to find a way through this: to construct a consensus behind a broad agenda of justice and security and *means of enforcing it*" (emphasis added).

Calls for Invasion

Joining the chorus of support for the Blair Doctrine, demanding an invasion of Myanmar, were, among others:

- British Fabian Simon Jenkins, who called for a full-scale invasion in the London *Guardian* on May 15, complains that people were dying as "our macho invaders sit on their hands.... Where are the buccaneers of Bosnia, the crusaders of Kosovo, the bravehearts who rescued Sierra Leone from its rebels, the Afghans from the Taliban and the Iraqis from Saddam Hussein?" To explain away the successful visit of Admiral Keating, Jenkins simply lies that "he was sent packing" by the junta leaders.

- EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana told an emergency meeting of EU ministers in Brussels that, "The United Nations charter opens some avenues if things cannot be resolved in order to get the humanitarian aid to arrive," threatening to use UN forces to do "whatever is necessary to help the people who are suffering."

- Gareth Evans, the former Australian foreign minister,

who now heads the International Crisis Group, fully backed French Foreign Minister Kouchner's criminal threat, bragging that he had been one of the authors of the "responsibility to protect" clause. Evans, also writing in the *Guardian*, said that, although the clause was intended to stop genocide by criminal regimes, the Myanmar regime was "denying relief to hundreds of thousands of people at real and immediate threat of death," justifying an invasion.

- Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution, a leading foreign policy advisor to Barack Obama, wrote that the UN must "demand that the Burmese government accept the offers of international relief supplies and personnel, without interference, and allow the UN to take charge of the humanitarian mission," or face coercive action.

- *Time* magazine of May 10 published an article titled: "Is it Time to Invade Burma?" answering in the affirmative. "If we let them get away with murder," writes author Romesh Ratnesar, "we may set a very dangerous precedent."

- Jan Egeland, former UN emergency relief coordinator, accused Myanmar's government of "murder."

- Shawn Crispin, a journalist for various Dow Jones publications in Asia, and a graduate of Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), where neocon war-monger Paul Wolfowitz once lectured on his views for imposing "democracy" through military means, sounded very much like Wolfowitz before the Iraq invasion, in an article for *Asia Times*. Crispin argued that the Myanmar population would "warmly welcome a U.S.-led humanitarian intervention," and that the military would "defect en masse rather than confront U.S. troops." Bush could "burnish his foreign policy legacy," Crispin proposed, by using such a preemptive war "for the good" against Myanmar.

The Reality

None of those arguing for war could have been unaware of the reality on the ground, despite massive lying in all the Western news media, but rather chose to ignore the extensive evidence provided by competent sources who were, in fact, actively engaged in the humanitarian effort within Myanmar. For example, the Red Cross has been publicly reporting on the extensive aid reaching the victims of the cyclone, despite horrendous logistical problems due to the collapse of the feeble infrastructure that existed before the storm. Red Cross spokesman Joe Lowry told Bloomberg on May 10, one week after the cyclone, that 11 planeloads of Red Cross supplies were in the country, or on the way, in addition to the aid from Myanmar's neighbors. He said that the Myanmar Red Cross had mobilized "thousands of volunteers" to help in the distribution. "I don't want to say that we haven't had difficulties," he said, "but we don't do our negotiations in public. I think we've been helped by being a neutral organization with no agenda except providing aid."

World Vision Australia head Tim Costello, who was in Yangon within a few days of the storm, told Australia's ABC

News that, "The impression that no aid is getting through is wrong. We are actually getting aid to some of the most far-flung areas."

The World Health Organization (WHO) told the *New York Times* May 14 that its medical supplies were arriving in the country normally, without being diverted or siphoned off, and that deliveries were reaching the hardest hit locations. There were no reports of outbreaks of malaria or dengue fever as of yet, although this remains a great danger.

Refugees International head Joel Charney told NPR News on May 6, three days after the cyclone: "There are ten UN agencies working in Myanmar, and 48 relief and humanitarian groups already in place. Outsiders underestimate the number of agencies there, and the scope of their programs. There is international work going on now in almost all of the country."

In other words, the world can survive without the Anglo-Americans running things. On the other hand, the U.S. helicopters and other military capacities would obviously be of great assistance—and now that the saner elements in Washington have rejected the British-colonial "regime change" rhetoric, perhaps they can begin to be of help.