

July 28, 2008

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous gifts. Please save your receipts for your records as your donation is tax-deductible. USC will soon receive full 501c3 status. I will inform when it does.

On April 18, 2008 I wrote on the USC webpage about how humanitarian programs could improve the relationship between the U.S. and Myanmar. One month later after cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar, the world could see how if relations had existed between the U.S. and Myanmar how many more lives could have been saved. Relations with China, India, Thailand, Russia proved valuable to Myanmar as logistics could be arranged to bring relief supplies into the country. Trust, experience, and understanding were necessary to execute the missions. The U.S. had none of these elements.

Nevertheless, an important figure emerged from the U.S. - Admiral Timothy Keating, the commander of U.S. Pacific Command – spoke cordially with Myanmar officials and brought in three shipments of C-130 military cargo plane loads of supplies into Yangon. Admiral Keating spoke soldier to soldier and there was understanding. He engaged the Myanmar generals and spoke from the heart of the United States' desire to help the Myanmar people. "It is the soldier, not the poet, who gives us freedom of speech," I have heard it said. And it is also the soldier who bravely goes to the front to engage and announce as friend or foe. Admiral Keating went in peace and was able to accomplish the work for peace. Let us all be grateful to the United States for its leadership. As Americans we can help the needy in Myanmar.

Save the Children, US CARE, Mercy Corps, Doctors without Borders are engaged in doing relief work in Myanmar. Because of Nargis they have recently received millions from the Gates Foundation, Fry Foundation, etc. These are the mega NGO's that are prepared for the work of disaster relief. However, the relief work will be just a salve to soothe Myanmar's problems. Humanitarian work, although it is apolitical, does not need to be uneducational. Myanmar can learn how to be a member of the international community and be cooperative if the great nations engage and teach her. US Collection is the emissary to engagement through humanitarian activities.

I believe that we must move in a new way forward on the Burma-problem. US Collection hopes there will be an American initiative to engage the government of Myanmar. I myself would like to see engagement in the areas of scientific exchange, government leader education, cultural and artistic exchange. Further, the meeting of high level officials between the U.S. and Myanmar would be useful. And the gradual and targeted removal of broad-based sanctions would be useful for a reform movement. This is just a general roadmap. Myanmar is moving forward; we must catch up.

I will be going to Myanmar on behalf of US Collection to help the needy. I will pray for the souls that perished in the storm. We must console ourselves with the thought that they are in a better place now in death. In life, USC was there before the cyclone. Aid was needed before the cyclone. There is a class of Untouchables in Burma that was invisible and uncared for long before the cyclone. US Collection reached out to these Untouchables with love and care. USC is not a mega NGO, but it is doing its humble part to help. Your gift to USC will help save lives.

In September, US Collection will have several events to brief the public on the current situation in Myanmar. There will be a presentation by US Collection at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to show the current situation in Myanmar. Please visit the webpage for dates and locations of events.

Sincerely,

Thet Win  
Founder  
US Collection