

110TH CONGRESS
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S. RES. 554

Expressing the Sense of the Senate on humanitarian assistance to Burma
after Cyclone Nargis.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 7, 2008

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. McCONNELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. WEBB, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. HAGEL, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. CLINTON, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. McCAIN, and Mr. COLEMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing the Sense of the Senate on humanitarian
assistance to Burma after Cyclone Nargis.

Whereas, on May 3, 2008, Cyclone Nargis devastated Burma, leaving an estimated 22,500 people dead, 41,000 missing, and 1,000,000 homeless;

Whereas, on May 5, 2008, the United States embassy in Burma issued a disaster declaration authorizing \$250,000 in immediate humanitarian assistance to the people of Burma;

Whereas, on May 5, 2008, First Lady Laura Bush stated that the United States will “work with the U.N. and other international nongovernmental organizations to

provide water, sanitation, food, and shelter. More assistance will be forthcoming”;

Whereas, on May 5, 2008, Department of State Deputy Spokesman Tom Casey stated that the United States has “a disaster assistance response team that is standing by and ready to go in to Burma to help try to assess need there”;

Whereas, on May 6, 2008, President George W. Bush said, “The United States has made an initial aid contribution, but we want to do a lot more. We’re prepared to move U.S. Navy assets to help find those who’ve lost their lives, to help find the missing, to help stabilize the situation. But in order to do so, the military junta must allow our disaster assessment teams into the country.”;

Whereas, on May 6, 2008, President Bush pledged \$3,000,000 in emergency assistance to victims of Cyclone Nargis, and stated that allowing the disaster assistance response team to enter the country would facilitate additional support;

Whereas the European Union has pledged to deliver \$3,000,000 in initial emergency disaster assistance to Burma;

Whereas according to the United Nations Country Team in Burma, the average household in Burma is forced to spend almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of its budget on food and 1 in 3 children under the age of 5 is suffering from malnutrition;

Whereas the prevalence of tuberculosis in Burma is among the highest in the world, with nearly 97,000 new cases detected annually, malaria is the leading cause of mortality in Burma, with 70 percent of the population living in areas at risk, at least 37,000 died of HIV/AIDS in

Burma in 2005 and over 600,000 are currently infected, and the World Health Organization has ranked the health sector of Burma as 190th out of 191 countries;

Whereas the failure of Burma's ruling State Peace and Development Council to meet the most basic humanitarian needs of the people of Burma has caused enormous suffering inside Burma and driven hundreds of thousands of Burmese citizens to seek refuge in neighboring countries, creating a threat to regional peace and stability; and

Whereas, in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, the State Peace and Development Council continues to restrict the access and freedom of movement of international nongovernmental organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance throughout Burma: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the Sense of the Senate—

2 (1) to express deep sympathy to and strong
3 support for the people of Burma, who have endured
4 tremendous hardships over many years and face es-
5 pecially dire humanitarian conditions in the after-
6 math of Cyclone Nargis;

7 (2) to support the decision of President Bush to
8 provide immediate emergency humanitarian assist-
9 ance to Burma through nongovernmental organiza-
10 tions that are not affiliated with the Burmese re-
11 gime or its officials and can effectively provide such
12 assistance directly to the people of Burma;

13 (3) to stand ready to appropriate additional
14 funds, beyond existing emergency international dis-

1 aster assistance resources, if necessary to help ad-
2 dress dire humanitarian conditions throughout
3 Burma in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis and be-
4 yond;

5 (4) to call upon the State Peace and Develop-
6 ment Council to immediately lift restrictions on de-
7 livery of humanitarian assistance and allow free and
8 unfettered access to the United States Government's
9 disaster assistance response team and any organiza-
10 tions that legitimately provide humanitarian assist-
11 ance; and

12 (5) that the United States Agency for Inter-
13 national Development should conduct a comprehen-
14 sive evaluation of which organizations are capable of
15 providing humanitarian assistance directly to the
16 people throughout Burma without interference by
17 the State Peace and Development Council.

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