

Viewing cable 08BEIJING1860, PRC REPORTS BURMA WILL ACCEPT RELIEF TEAMS FROM

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NSC FOR WILDER, PACOM FOR ADM KEATING AND FPA, OSD FOR SHINN/SEDNEY

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SUBJECT: PRC REPORTS BURMA WILL ACCEPT RELIEF TEAMS FROM FOUR NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES; CHINA STILL OPPOSED TO UNSC ACTION ON BURMA

REF: EMBASSY-DEPT/NSC EMAILS 5/7-8/08

Classified By: Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) Summary: Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei told the Ambassador May 14 that Burma is inviting rescue teams from Bangladesh, China, India and Thailand to assist with relief efforts following Cyclone Nargis. Stressing the "positive change" in the attitude of the Burmese Government toward accepting assistance, AFM He noted that representatives of the EU and UAE and Thai PM Samak Sundaravej will also discuss disaster relief with Burmese authorities in Rangoon. AFM He said that the situation in Burma does not warrant consideration by the UN Security Council. The Ambassador countered that UN Security Council action is needed, because the Burmese Government is not doing enough to provide assistance, thereby needlessly endangering the lives of its citizens. End Summary.

[2](#). (C) Chinese Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei called the Ambassador May 14 to discuss international relief efforts in

Burma. The Ambassador expressed his thanks for Chinese assistance in arranging Burmese permission for PACOM Commander Keating, Under Secretary Fore, and ASEAN Ambassador Marciel to accompany the first American relief flight and expressed concern and sympathy for the victims of the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan Province.

Bangladesh, China, India, Thailand rescue teams

13. (C) Noting that the Chinese Government has been in close contact with Burmese authorities since the beginning of the crisis and that President Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao discussed international relief efforts in Burma by telephone May 13, AFM He reported that "positive changes" have occurred in Burma's attitude towards accepting international assistance. Specifically, AFM He said, Burma is inviting rescue teams from Bangladesh, China, India and Thailand to assist in relief efforts. (AFM He noted that China can only spare one relief team for Burma given the rescue needs following the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan Province.) AFM He said the Burmese Government's acceptance of the rescue teams is "a positive development" and demonstrates its "increasing flexibility."

14. (C) AFM He said that at the request of EU Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Louis Michel, the EU will be sending representatives to Burma to discuss possible relief assistance. AFM He noted that the UAE will also be sending envoys to Burma. In addition, AFM He reported, Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej May 14 will discuss relief efforts with Burmese authorities in Rangoon. All of these are positive developments, AFM He stressed.

China sends three planeloads of supplies to Burma

15. (C) AFM He said that China has already sent three planeloads of relief materials to Burma and, in each case, Burmese authorities handled distribution logistics. The Chinese believe the distribution of relief assistance is "going well" in light of the Burmese Government's "limited distribution assets."

China still opposed to discussion in UNSC

16. (C) AFM He stated that "there is still movement" to consider the disaster relief situation in the UN Security Council. "We agree," He said, "that the disaster relief issue is a matter for the UN but not the Security Council" because the situation in Burma is not a political or security matter, but rather a humanitarian assistance issue. Though welcoming the positive developments in the provision of disaster assistance, the Ambassador countered that UN Security Council action is needed, because the Burmese Government is not doing enough to provide relief assistance, thereby needlessly endangering the lives of its citizens.
RANDT

<http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/05/08BEIJING1860.html>