

R2PCS Listserv

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Responsibility to Protect Engaging Civil Society

Web: www.responsibilitytoprotect.org

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I. R2P Applied in Burma/Myanmar

1. UN SECURITY COUNCIL STATEMENT ON MYANMAR

Reuters

11 October 2007

Following is the full text of a U.N. Security Council presidential statement on Myanmar, approved by the council's 15 members on Thursday.

The Security Council welcomes the recent mission by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser to Myanmar Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, reaffirms its strong and unwavering support for the

Secretary-General's good offices mission as mandated by General Assembly Resolution 61/232, and expresses its appreciation for the personal engagement of the Secretary-General.

The Security Council strongly deplores the use of violence against peaceful demonstrations in Myanmar and welcomes Human Rights Council Resolution S-5/1 of 2 October 2007.

The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the early release of all political prisoners and remaining detainees. It also calls on the Government of Myanmar and all other parties concerned to work together towards a de-escalation of the situation and a peaceful solution.

() The Security Council also calls on the Government of Myanmar to take all necessary measures to address the political, economic, humanitarian, and human rights issues that are the concern of its people and emphasizes that the future of Myanmar lies in the hands of all of its people.

The Security Council welcomes the Government of Myanmar's public commitment to work with the United Nations and the appointment of a liaison officer with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Security Council stresses the importance that such commitments are followed by action. It acknowledges that the Government of Myanmar had invited Mr. Gambari to Myanmar. It underscores its support for his return as early as possible, in order to facilitate concrete actions and tangible results. The Security Council urges the Government of Myanmar and all parties concerned to cooperate fully with Mr. Gambari.

The Security Council welcomes the important role played by the ASEAN countries in urging restraint, calling for a peaceful transition to democracy, and supporting the good offices mission.

It notes that the good offices mission is a process, and encourages the sustained support and engagement of the international community in helping Myanmar.

The Security Council remains seized of the matter.

Full text available at:

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/homepageCrisis/idUKN11204549.CH.242020071011>

2. WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT BURMA

Erik Martinez Kuhonta

Embassy: Canadas Foreign Policy Newsweekly

03 October 2007

As the world watches in disbelief, it appears that the Myanmar junta has yet again crushed a peaceful push for democracy. Like the 1988 crackdown on demonstrators, in which over 3,000 people were massacred, the military has shown no qualms in shooting down protestors.

() Almost 20 years have passed since the 1988 pro-democracy movement, in which Aung San

Suu Kyi inspired the Burmese people to believe that the era of military dictatorship might come to an end. Yet, little seems to have changed in the relationship between the military junta and civil society.

() Yet, despite the lack of change at the domestic level, there have been important developments at the global level. It is here that some hope of political reform remains. First, the role of technology has been crucial in transmitting to the world the brutality of the regime. With journalists banned from entering Myanmar, dissidents have used digital cameras and internet websites such as YouTube to keep the crisis on the global headlines. Protesters have thus been able to keep the world aware of the repression in real time, despite the junta's attempts to draw a veil over the country.

Second, Myanmar can no longer assume that its closest ally and trading partner, China, will simply do its bidding. Unlike the Burmese junta, China does crave some degree of international legitimacy. With the Beijing Olympics less than a year away, China does not want to be tainted by the heavy-handedness of its southern ally.

() Third, following the post-Cold War crises of collapsing states, the international community has articulated new norms for dealing with countries where despotism reigns. In 2001, a high-powered International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty published a report entitled **The Responsibility to Protect**. This report, sponsored by the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa, called for a reconceptualization of sovereignty in terms of "sovereignty as responsibility."

The significance of sovereignty as responsibility is threefold. First, it places the burden on states to ensure the protection of their citizens. Second, it implies that elites are responsible internally to their citizens and externally to the international community. And third, it means that state elites will be held responsible for their actions. The commission underscored above all that intervention should not be based on the right to intervene but on the **responsibility to protect**. Responsibility for protection thus allows the international community to bridge sovereignty and intervention, such that the failure to act responsibly provides the basis for intervention.

How far one can take this reconceptualization of sovereignty, however, is up for grabs. Will the international community take this idea of sovereignty as responsibility into practice by intervening in Myanmar? It is unlikely that the United Nations would allow for intervention that actually crosses Myanmar's borders. A more moderate form of intervention, however, is the imposition of sanctions.

() Given these relatively more favorable international conditions for some form of intervention, it is surprising that the Canadian government has not been at the forefront of calls for political reform. There are at least two things Canada can do. First, it can review the current sanctions it has imposed on Myanmar. The Canadian government has imposed limits on exports to Myanmar, but it does not go as far as the United States does by banning all new investment and imports. Second, Prime Minister Stephen Harper should make clear to China that it is in its interests to restrain the junta. Even more than sanctions, it is really pressure on China that can make a difference at this point.

Within Myanmar the situation now looks as bleak as 1988. But outside Myanmar there have been changes in technology, geopolitics, and international norms that provide some basis for hoping that the situation this time around will not be a repeat of 1988.

Full text available at:

http://www.embassymag.ca/html/index.php?display=story&full_path=/2007/october/3/burma/

3. BURMESE NATIONALS IN DHAKA PROTEST KILLING IN BURMA

United News of Bangladesh

02 October 2007

Dozens of Burmese nationals staying in Bangladesh staged demonstration outside Myanmar Embassy here today (Tuesday), protesting the `brutal killing' and arrest of monks, nuns and democracy-loving Burmese people in Burma.

Witnesses said the protestors carried placards and banners, shouted slogans against the military junta amidst tight police security.

Scores of police were posted at the Embassy to maintain order during the hour-long protest that started at about 11am. No untoward incident happened.

() The demonstrators urged Burmese soldiers not to point their arms at the innocent Burmese people and stand beside the peaceful protesters, upholding the real **responsibility to protect** people and the nation.

Their demands include resignation of all Burmese Ambassadors to Bangladesh, Japan, the USA, China, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Singapore, Korea and other countries, sending troops back to barracks, releasing political prisoners, formation of an interim government, compensation by the Burmese military junta for the killing of monks and general people.

Rakhaing Women Council president Mra Raza Linn said now there is no rule of law in Burma under the military junta. `We want restoration of democracy and human rights,' she said, strongly condemning the killing of monks and general people during the peaceful march in her country.

Full text unavailable

II. R2P in the News

1. UNDERSTANDING OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY APPRECIATED [CRITIQUE OF R2P BY SRI LANKAN MINISTER]

The Daily News (Sri Lanka)

06 October 2007

GENEVA: Sri Lanka appreciates the understanding of the international community during the

current session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, Professor G. L. Peiris, Minister of Export Development and International Trade, said in his keynote address at the University Centre for International Humanitarian Law in the University of Geneva.

() The understanding of the international community, Prof. Peiris said, derived in large measure from their realisation that the Government of Sri Lanka, in a difficult situation, was continuing to act in a spirit of fidelity to humanitarian values which underpinned its cultural heritage, while always paying attention - as indeed it must - to the crucial need to ensure the security and well-being of the public.

() The Minister, declaring that the consistent position of Sri Lanka was by no means isolationist, set out in detail the sustained engagement of the Government of Sri Lanka with the international community through a wide range of mechanisms.

() Minister Peiris said: While the international community continues to have a vital role to play as friends and partners to whose counsel and support the Government attaches the highest value, unduly interventionist or aggressive attitudes lacking in sensitivity are counterproductive.

As an example of such unhelpful postures, the Minister referred to the right to protect (**R2P**) doctrine, in the form in which it was expounded by Mr. Gareth Evans, former Foreign Minister of Australia and Chairman of the Crisis Group, in the Eighth Neelan Tiruchelvam Memorial Lecture delivered in Colombo in July this year.

Starting with the innocuous premise that each individual State has the **responsibility to protect** its population, a role is then ascribed to the international community to help States to exercise that responsibility. Gareth Evans goes on to state: of course there will be situations when prevention fails, and reaction becomes necessary....coercive military action is not excluded as a last resort. Although Evans insists that the right to protect doctrine is not about responding to conflict and human rights abuses a generally, the inherent danger of the doctrine he propounds, Prof. Peiris pointed out, consists of the arbitrary power which the intervening States, in the name of the international community, purport to exercise in keeping with criteria which are, in reality, subjective and entirely dependent on their own unqualified discretion, in the absence of any defined or accepted norms.

This is the thick end of the wedge: the consequences of so vague a theory are necessarily open-ended and unpredictable, and involve jeopardy to basic attributes of national sovereignty.

Prof. Peiris said that the United Nations 60th Anniversary World Summit, held in September 2005, in no way supported, even by implication, such a sweeping doctrine, since the Summit Document takes for granted the overriding authority of the Security Council within the established framework of public international law.

To abandon that anchor in pursuit of a shadowy and romantic doctrine is to invite dangers far greater in quality and in degree than the benefit which it could possibly entail, he said.

Full text available at:

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2007/10/06/pol10.asp>

2. UN ASSEMBLY WRAPS UP ANNUAL HIGH-LEVEL DEBATE WITH CALLS FOR ACTION

UN Press Release

03 October 2007

The United Nations General Assembly today wrapped up its wide-ranging high-level debate characterized by calls for action to address climate change and other pressing international concerns, the 192-member body's president said.

Addressing the closing of the session, which began on 25 September and saw the participation of scores of national leaders, Srgjan Kerim thanked delegates for their insightful contributions during the debate.

() Other issues which received close attention during the debate included the global anti-poverty targets collectively known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the need for progress on financing for development ahead of the Doha Conference in 2008; and a road desire to achieve consensus on a comprehensive convention against terrorism.

Participants also touched on the importance to adherence to international law, human security and the **responsibility to protect**, and discussed regional hotspots such as the Middle East, Iraq, Afghanistan, Darfur and Myanmar.

here is overall agreement that we could make faster progress on all these issues if our multilateral institutions better reflected contemporary realities, underlining the need for better progress on United Nations reform, he said, citing a need to make the Secretariat more effective and to reform the Security Council.

() In a statement released by his spokesman today, the President said the General Assembly is the only forum where these priority issues can be tackled comprehensively and notes that the presence of over 90 world leaders in the debate underscored the importance Member States placed on this unique forum for multilateralism.

In total, 189 Member States addressed the high-level debate, along with two observers: the Holy See and Palestine. A total of 67 heads of State, 25 heads of government, four vice-presidents, 13 deputy ministers, 66 foreign ministers, two other ministers, four deputy ministers and eight chairs of delegation spoke.

Full text available at:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24178&Cr=general&Cr1=debate>

3. SECRETARY-GENERAL EXPRESSES DETERMINATION TO ENSURE WE MAKE PROGRESS ON PRESSING ISSUES OF OUR TIME, STEP BY STEP, IN MESSAGE FOR UNITED NATIONS DAY, 24 OCTOBER

UN Press Release
03 October 2007

Following is the text of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's message for United Nations Day, 24 October:

The world is changing in the United Nations favour -- as more people and Governments understand that multilateralism is the only path in our interdependent and globalizing world. Global problems demand global solutions -- and going it alone is not a viable option. Whether we are speaking of peace and security, development or human rights, demands on our Organization are growing every day.

I am determined to ensure that we make progress on the pressing issues of our time, step by step, building on achievements along the way, working with Member States and civil society. That means strengthening the United Nations ability to play its role to the fullest extent in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. And it means invigorating our efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation.

At the same time, we must redouble our efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in Africa. I will seek to mobilize political will and hold leaders to their commitments on aid, trade and debt relief.

() If security and development are two pillars of the United Nations work, human rights is the third. I will work with Member States and civil society to translate the concept of the **responsibility to protect**

from word to deed, so as to ensure timely action when populations face genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity.

Finally, we must transform the United Nations itself. We must adapt to meet new needs and ensure the highest standards of ethics, integrity and accountability, so as to demonstrate that we are fully answerable to all Member States and to people around the world.

We will be judged in the future on the actions we take today -- on results. On this United Nations Day, let us rededicate ourselves to achieving them.

Full text available at:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sgsm11203.doc.htm>

III. **Commentary on Darfur**

1. MIA FARROW FRONT AND CENTRE IN DARFUR DOCUMENTARY BY CANADIAN JOURNALIST

The Canadian Press

08 October 2007

When most of the world looked away during the massacre of almost a million people in Rwanda in 1994, the United Nations vowed "never again."

() A new documentary by longtime CBC producer Neil Docherty, "Darfur: On Our Watch," is a disturbing look not just at the tragedy of Darfur but the utter failure of the UN, once again, to do anything meaningful to stop genocide. This time it's in an arid region of western Sudan, tense with tribal rivalries.

"The United Nations has been reduced to pandering and begging for the UN peacekeeping force because there is no precedent for the UN to enter a country without the consent of the government," Farrow, a tireless Darfur activist, says during the gripping documentary airing Thursday on CBC-TV.

() In a telephone interview from her Manhattan home, Farrow lauded Canada for pushing the United Nations, in the wake of Rwanda, to accept a "**responsibility to protect**" citizens from genocide and ethnic cleansing at the hands of their own governments - a provision that was meant to pave the way for UN military intervention to stop such carnage.

But it's largely lip service, she added.

"It's fine, the **responsibility to protect** - it was sponsored by Canada and they are fine, fine words. But there's no provision in there to act on it; we're not seeing that. I, for one, would like to see something wedged into **responsibility to protect** that would provide for meaningful protection to vulnerable populations that are in the midst of atrocities of the kind we're seeing in Darfur."

() Docherty's documentary, Farrow says, is powerful in its indictment of the United Nations and its inaction on Darfur.

"He's rightly focused on the failure of the United Nations and the member states to fulfil its obligations, its **responsibility to protect**," she said.

() "It's a call to conscience for all of us within the international so-called community."

And it's a call that is finally being heard, she notes.

"People generally are more aware. The civic response to the Darfur tragedy and suffering, I think, has been greater than any since apartheid, so in that sense it's encouraging," Farrow says.

Retired Canadian general Romeo Dallaire is seen in the documentary, heartened that there is so much public awareness about the situation in Darfur.

"The debate that goes on now for Darfur is significant," says Dallaire, who tried frantically to

stop the genocide in Rwanda when he headed up the UN peacekeeping force there in 1994. "There was nothing of that in Rwanda, absolutely nothing." ()

Full text available at:

<http://canadianpress.google.com/article/ALegM5gWTMxlfSZYWGObzfvFdwaS9EzYNw>

2. WCC COMMITTEE ADVOCATES FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Linda Bloom

UMNS

03 October 2007

The location of the recent World Council of Churches executive committee meeting was just as significant as the business conducted there, according to a United Methodist participant.

Meeting Sept. 25-28 in Etchmiadzin, Armenia, the committee experienced the religious influence of the host Armenian Apostolic Church, a WCC member, and the still-significant impact of a genocide that occurred nearly a century ago.

() Armenia's experiences were remembered as the executive committee took action to advocate for vulnerable people. "Meeting in the country of Armenia, where genocide nearly a century ago still casts a deep shadow, we reiterate the international **responsibility to protect** people at risk in the Darfur region of Sudan and in neighboring Chad," the WCC executive committee said in a "Minute on Darfur," which it approved.

Member churches are encouraged to advocate for the protection of people in Darfur with their governments and ask them to pay special attention to the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1706 on Darfur, the first time the Security Council has referred to the **responsibility to protect** in a specific country crisis.

Ecumenical delegations should make fact-finding and solidarity visits to the region including Darfur, as well as offer prayer and provide humanitarian aid, according to the executive committee.

Pickens said sending a WCC fact-finding delegation to Sudan "has been the subject of a lot of discussion," but that churches in the region had not deemed the time to be right in the past. He expects the WCC Central Committee will receive a report on a possible delegation visit when it meets next February. ()

Full text available at:

<http://www.wfn.org/2007/10/msg00036.html>

IV. Upcoming Events

1. THE DREAM FOR DARFUR OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY

Chad to China

(...) In less than a year, China will host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, one of the worlds most powerful symbols of peace. Meanwhile, it is failing to help end the genocide in Darfur, one of the worlds worst humanitarian crises. China has tremendous influence over Sudan. It can do much more to end the suffering. To remind China of its responsibilities, Dream for Darfur launched its own Olympic torch relay in Chad. The torch will tour the world, including the U.S., until it reaches China in December. The message is simple. China please: Bring the Olympic dream to Darfur.

For US locations and dates:

<http://www.savedarfur.org/page/content/torchrun>

For international locations and dates:

<http://www.dreamfordarfur.org/NewsEvents/CalendarofEvents/tabid/172/Default.aspx>