

'Four Powers' Policy Needed for Myanmar

by Mike Billington

The frenetic Anglo-American sponsorship and support for the September demonstrations in Myanmar have been matched by their equally frenetic effort to coerce Myanmar's neighbors into backing Western demands for intervention into Myanmar's sovereign affairs. China, India, and Russia—the three great powers of Eurasia—and Myanmar's Southeast Asian neighbor Thailand, have refused to accept the fraudulent argument presented by London and Washington that the situation in Myanmar is a “threat to international peace and security”—the threshold required by the United Nations Charter for Security Council intervention into a sovereign state. The Western press and political leaders are screaming for regime change, but their professed concern for “human rights” is recognized internationally as a cover for their imperial designs, already demonstrated in Iraq and Afghanistan, and perhaps soon in Iran and Syria.

A look at the map (**Figure 1**) will reveal the underlying purpose in Western efforts to destabilize Myanmar—it is the strategic hub between China, India, and Southeast Asia, and thus serves as a target of convenience in keeping the Eurasian world divided. It is therefore not surprising to see that the Anglo-American coverage of the recent crisis is almost entirely focussed on blaming China, India, and Thailand for their “failure” to confront the military government in Yangon: *Washington Post* editorial page editor Fred Hiatt even suggested that China be told to choose between holding the Olympics in 2008 and its support for Myanmar!

However, the Bush Administration's capacity to take direct action in East Asia, with the existing disaster in Southwest Asia still unfolding, is close to zero. Wiser minds in Washington, including within the State Department, may in fact recognize the urgency of U.S. cooperation with the Asian powers to engage Myanmar positively, as the Asians are already doing, through regional development projects, and cooperation in drug-enforcement and counter-terror operations. One model is the Six-Party Talks on the Korea crisis, which have succeeded, through State Department collaboration with China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea, in engaging North Korea positively, despite howls of opposition from the neo-conservatives associated with Vice President Dick Cheney.

The activation of a portion of Myanmar's Buddhist monks in the September protests, follows a pattern seen before in Southeast Asia. In Vietnam, in 1963, U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, working largely behind President Kennedy's

back, sponsored a radical Buddhist faction's public revolt, run directly out of the U.S. Embassy, to facilitate a military coup against President Ngo Dinh Diem, thus facilitating a full-scale U.S. war in Vietnam. In Thailand, in 1992, an ascetic Buddhist sect under the direction of former Gen. Chamlong Srimuang led demonstrations, with extensive support from Washington, in a violent confrontation with troops and police, bringing about the downfall of the government of Suchinda Kraprayoon.

While the crackdown on monks in Myanmar will have some impact domestically, the military actions were far below the level of violence during the 1988 popular uprising, in which an estimated 3,000 were killed. The government reports that ten were killed in the September crackdown, with about 2,000 arrests, many of whom have already been released.

Who Is Aung San Suu Kyi?

It is quite possible that one result of the events of the past weeks will be the waning of the influence of Aung San Suu Kyi, the nominal head of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD). Suu Kyi is the daughter of Aung San, the Burmese leader who negotiated the independence of Burma from the British after World War II, and was killed in 1947 by a factional opponent—with British backing. Suu Kyi was subsequently educated by British diplomatic and intelligence “Asia hands” in India and London. She married Michael Aris, a Briton, and an expert on the Himalayan culture of Tibet and Bhutan; Aris was trained by the dean of British intelligence operations against China in the Himalaya region, Hugh Richardson. Richardson profiled and manipulated the tantric Buddhist cult of the Dalai Lama in Tibet against China, demanding that Tibet be left in its “pristine” state of backwardness. Aris and Suu Kyi edited a book on Tibet in Richardson's honor in 1979.

Suu Kyi visited her dying mother in Burma in 1988, only to be swept up in the mass demonstrations which broke out against the military government of Gen. Ne Win, who had led Burma's military government through his often bizarre “Burmese Way to Socialism” from 1962 to 1988. Although Suu Kyi had not previously been involved in political activity, she was rapidly adopted as the spokesperson for the movement, joined by her husband and the British intelligence operations behind him.

The military forces that crushed the uprising also deposed Ne Win. The new junta quickly undertook the first serious operations to pacify the multiple ethnic armies (see below), and set elections for 1990 to select delegates to a constitutional convention. This election, which was won by Suu Kyi's NLD, is repeatedly mis-reported in the West as a governmental election, as if the NLD had been elected to rule—a falsehood easily refuted by reading even the Western press coverage from before the election. Demands for the government to be handed over to the NLD were rejected, and Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest. She was then granted a Nobel Peace Prize,

FIGURE 1



With peace on the borders for the first time since British colonization, Myanmar's road and rail connections to India, China, and Thailand are finally being constructed. India is creating new inland waterway connections, while investing in oil, gas, and hydroelectric power, and constructing a port on the Bay of Bengal. China and Thailand are building a series of dams on the Salween River along the eastern border. In the north, the old "Burma Road" from India to China, is being restored and upgraded. China is planning a crude oil terminal on the Bay of Bengal and a 2,380 km pipeline to Yunnan.

and the glorification of Suu Kyi by the Anglo-American oligarchy went into high gear. The United States and Britain proceeded to define all relations with Myanmar through the interests of this one woman—a convenient cover for their actual geopolitical intentions.

The constitutional convention was not held until 1995. Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house arrest, and the NLD was invited to attend. Within a few weeks of the opening

of the convention, however, Suu Kyi insisted that the NLD drop out, arguing that any constitution which failed to exclude the military from government was unacceptable.

However, Mrs. Suu Kyi Aris's dogmatic insistence that the opposition must follow the demands of the British and the "Project Democracy" networks in the U.S.A.—in particular, by supporting the imposition of sanctions against their country by the United States and Europe—has become increasingly unpopular among the opposition within Myanmar, and even among the dissident movement living abroad. It is recognized by many, perhaps most, that the sanctions have failed, that Suu Kyi is seen as an asset of London and Washington, and that Myanmar's Asian neighbors, China, India, Russia, Thailand, and others, are engaged in a significant opening up of Myanmar to trade, investment, and major regional transportation projects, which are beginning to lift the extremely poor country out of its isolation and poverty.

In October 2003, Matthew Daley, then the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, told Congress that the sanctions primarily disrupted the garment workers in Yangon, leaving as many as 100,000 young women jobless. Many of these women, Daley said, "have entered the flourishing illegal sex and entertainment industries," either in Myanmar or in neighboring countries.

It is of note that the September demonstrations were not sparked by a lack of democracy, but by the government's lifting of subsidies on fuel. While regrettable, a similar crisis is facing every nation on Earth, as the mounting inflation in fuel (and food!) forces governments to choose between lifting their subsidies, or incurring massive new debts, further undermining their economic sovereignty. In fact, the International Monetary Fund had explicitly advised the Myanmar government to lift the subsidies, as "prudent" economic policy—a fact left out of nearly all Western coverage of the crisis, to date.

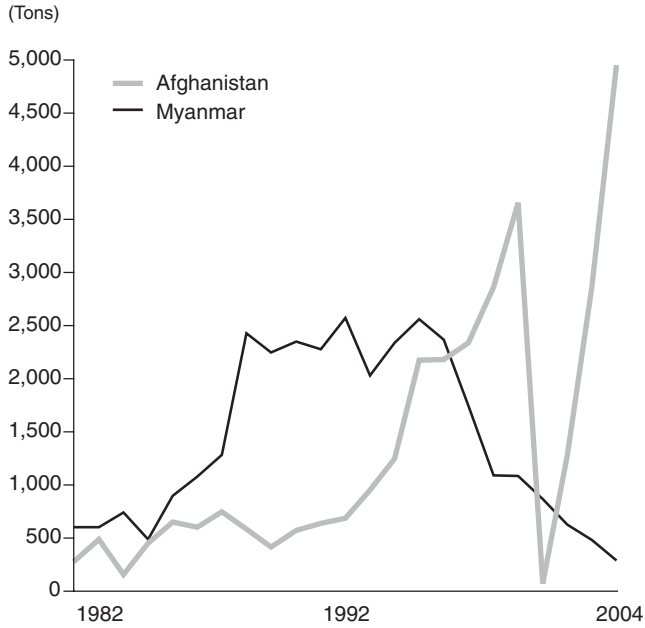
The Military's Role

The military government is recognized by all honest observers for having united Myanmar for the first time since its British colonization in the 19th Century. The British-orchestrated constitution which was forced upon the nation in exchange for independence in 1948, included the right of each ethnic entity to declare independence from the central government in Yangon—an intentional prescription for disunity and continual conflict. As independence negotiations were proceeding in London under Aung San, the British Conservative Party's wartime governor of Burma, Reginald Dorman-Smith, set up an organization called "Friends of the Burma Hill People," to foster such perpetual conflict—and assure the continued "free trade" in opium, through those regions which were not under the control of the central government.

There are several modern-day "Reginald Dorman-Smiths," who have obstructed every effort by the Myanmar government to defeat or pacify the ethnic druglords. These include especially George Shultz and George Soros, who are,

FIGURE 2

Opium Production, Myanmar and Afghanistan



not coincidentally, two of the leading promoters of drug legalization internationally, including even the heroin extracted from opium. Shultz, who personally put together the original George W. Bush Administration from his neo-conservative network, was a leading light in the International Republican Institute (IRI), a U.S. government-funded institution which conducts political subversion against Myanmar (among other nations) under the guise of promoting “democracy.” (Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, a personal controller of Suu Kyi, heads the “Democratic” partner-in-subversion of the IRI, the National Democratic Institute.)

As to mega-speculator George Soros, who finances Burmanet, the Burma Project, and numerous other organizations promoting subversion in Myanmar, he is the primary financial sponsor of every state referendum in the United States to legalize drugs. Soros’s Open Society Institute went so far as to successfully pressure the Global Fund, a UN agency, to cut funding for a \$98 million project in Myanmar to combat AIDS, TB, and malaria, an act which was exposed and condemned by the International Crisis Group.

The fact that this Wall Street “drug lobby” is leading the campaign to overthrow the Myanmar regime is not accidental: That regime, working with Thailand and Laos, has nearly wiped out “Golden Triangle” drug production. Western anti-drug forces have loudly protested the failure of the U.S. and Europe to recognize the monumental success of Myanmar’s drug suppression, and to help them in completing this urgent task. A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration report in 1996

praised Myanmar’s pacification of ethnic drug armies and the dramatic increase in drug seizures within Myanmar. In 1999, the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) held its International Heroin Conference in Yangon, despite strenuous opposition from Washington and London, whose representatives boycotted the meeting. Interpol’s Secretary General Raymond Kendall, in his address to that conference, said: “It is high time the international community became acquainted with the excellent work that is being carried out in Myanmar against the illicit production and trafficking of heroin.”

This year, Antonio Maria Costa, the UN anti-drug chief, acknowledged this historic achievement by the junta, while noting that Afghanistan has more than made up for the opium supplies eliminated in Myanmar. The UN reports that Myanmar has cut opium production by more than 90%, while Afghanistan, under U.S. and NATO occupation, now produces 92% of the world’s opium, poisoning and killing the youth many nations (Figure 2).

Negotiations

UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari visited Myanmar after the suppression of the demonstrations, meeting with the head of the government, Gen. Than Shwe, and twice with Aung San Suu Kyi. He apparently delivered a message from the government to Suu Kyi, that it would open discussions with the opposition if she were to drop her support for sanctions, and stop calling for confrontation rather than dialogue with the military government. Gambari, reporting back to the UN on Oct. 5, denounced the use of force and mass arrests to quell the demonstrations, but spoke of the offer of negotiations as an “historic opportunity,” and thanked the Myanmar government for its cooperation during his mission.

Suu Kyi responded to the offer of talks by agreeing to consider them in a positive light, while an NLD spokesman said that they now recognize that the military must have a role in any future government. The great concern in Myanmar is that, if Suu Kyi again plays the British hard line, that any future resurgence of Buddhist activism could lead to a split in the military and civil war. This would benefit no one but the British.

Washington could contribute to this “historic opportunity,” rather than sabotage it, by working with the three great Eurasian powers, China, India, and Russia, in their ongoing development of road and rail networks connecting China, India, and Southeast Asia through Myanmar; their development of Myanmar’s oil and hydropower resources, and their nuclear energy capacity (Russia has already offered to build a nuclear plant and educate nuclear scientists and engineers from Myanmar); and in providing aid to Myanmar’s anti-drug and health-care capacities. This would represent the “four-power alliance” which Lyndon LaRouche has called for more generally. And as Pope Paul VI emphasized in the encyclical “*Populorum Progressio*” in 1967, “Development is the new name for peace.”

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