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Junta's obstinance worsens disaster

I was part of our nation's effort to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Aceh when the earthquake and tsunami devastated Banda Aceh killing 150,000 people, and I see the same human suffering now taking place in Burma.

The big difference was that the government of Indonesia put the people first, not preservation of the power of its military leaders. Aceh immediately received aid from about every country in the world, including letting the U.S. Army do a whirlwind cleanup and restoration of power and water supplies.

The reputation the U.S. military gained from this humanitarian effort still lingers to this day in Aceh, where it was said, "the Americans left as fast as they came in." The good will and the many lives saved by our nation's troops in Aceh could be replicated in Burma, if only its leaders would think more about saving lives than preservation of its dictatorship.

In situations like this, massive dysentery and cholera breakout within a few weeks and more deaths will occur if aid doesn't arrive soon. The clock is ticking on how quickly Burma will let the rest of the world help it get out of the natural disaster. Otherwise I see a man-made disaster in the making led by the monks and freedom-fighters who just a few months ago were put down in a rebellion against the military junta.

Clearly, Burma has shown the world its true colors and the brutality of its dictatorship and doesn't deserve a seat at the table of civilized nations.

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