

U.S. must break off support for Museveni

by Godfrey Binaisa

Mr. Binaisa is the former President of Uganda, and is currently head of the African Civil Rights Movement. Here are excerpts of his speech at New York City's Riverside Church on April 5.

I would like to remind my friends here about the Roman Emperor Nero, who was reported to be playing the fiddle in his palace, while Rome was on fire. Your President, Bill Clinton, is also reputed to play the saxophone. That enlivens the neighborhood of the White House; but let me remind him, through you, that he is playing the saxophone while Africa is burning. He is the President of the greatest power on Earth today. He has refused, or neglected, to respond to the millions of people in Africa who are losing their lives every day.

You all know about the notorious President Idi Amin Dada of Uganda. He was made notorious, because, during his regime in Uganda, which lasted eight years, from 1971 to 1979, a quarter of a million people lost their lives. But today, under President Museveni, about 2 million people lost their lives, not only in Uganda, but in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, and now Sudan. And yet, the greatest power on Earth is doing nothing except to wine and dine and counsel and make Museveni happy.

Recently, the First Lady of this country visited Uganda. You saw the pictures of her with Museveni. I had signed a letter, as chairman of the African Civil Rights Movement, warning her ladyship to postpone her visit to Uganda, because of the horrendous situation in Uganda today. I understood that she issued a statement before she left, saying that she was only going to Uganda for humanitarian reasons. But all the same, her visit gave respectability to President Museveni, no doubt. Ugandans who saw her—some of them telephoned some of us—say they were appalled, to see that this great country, this very first country to kick off the yoke of a foreign tyrant, King George III, is still hob-nobbing with oppressors, still giving comfort to tyrants, still giving help to bullies. Because Museveni is a big bully. He is bullying the people of Uganda, the people of Rwanda, the people of Burundi, the people of Zaire, and now the people of Sudan, because he has been armed to the teeth by your people, by your government. He has been aided and abetted, he has been counselled, he has been given money.

Recently, to add insult to injury, the IMF made an announcement forgiving Uganda \$300 million of debt. It is the first country to be given that kind of write-off. But in the next



Former Ugandan President Godfrey Binaisa, who founded the African Civil Rights Movement in 1996.

breath, they ordered Museveni—not the IMF, but the powers that be—to march into Sudan. I imagine he must have told them, “If you want me to go into Sudan, I cannot do so, because the debt I have with the IMF and World Bank hangs around my neck like an albatross.” And I think they responded by saying, “Forget it, we’re going to take care of that. But you go into Sudan.”

The conspiracy to go into Sudan is a bigger conspiracy, a conspiracy of rebuilding a new British Empire in the center of Africa, a conspiracy coming on the heels of depression and lack of jobs in England; the loss of Hongkong, which is coming about in July. . . . What do they do?

Let us start with Sudan. They try to punish Sudan, because Sudan is led by fundamentalist Muslims. . . . But are these the only fundamentalists in the world? What about Pat Robertson, in this country? Is he to be exempted, because he is a Christian fundamentalist? What about Baroness Caroline Cox, deputy speaker of the House of Lords in England? . . .

Sudan has committed three mortal sins; that is why it deserves punishment. The first sin, was in 1897, when Mahdi, their leader, at the Battle of Omdurman, defeated Gordon Pasha, and killed Gordon Pasha. . . . About 1923, the British in Sudan founded a college of higher learning, which became a university later; in memory of Gordon Pasha, they named it Gordon College. The second sin the Sudanese committed, was, later on, to change that name to the University of Khartoum. . . . Lastly, on Jan. 1, 1956, the Sudanese refused to go through the procedures of gaining independence through negotiation, going to London, holding a conference, coming back to Sudan to have a ceremony of lowering the flag and giving pep talks. They had nothing to do with that. They just packed up the governor’s kit, his plumed hat with ostrich feathers and buckled shoes, packed him off to London, and said, “Please, don’t come back, because we are independent.” This is why the Sudanese are to be punished. . . .