



GAM SHOW

On May 19th, the Indonesian government declared martial law in Aceh, the resource-rich province in North Sumatra, and since then has been busy doing what it does best: bombing, massacring, beating, torturing and raping terrified civilians.

Despite the fact that the majority of Acehnese want independence the Jakarta government has just announced that supporters and members of the Aceh independence movement (GAM) will be charged with treason. On Wednesday June 21st, members of GAM were gunned down. There is a news blackout and Human Rights activists are in grave danger.

The Indonesian government has been at war in Aceh for 27 years with more than 5,000 civilian deaths since the conflict began.

The imposition of martial law followed the cessation of hostilities agreement on December 9th 2002 - the only real glimpse of peace the traumatised Acehnese nation has had.

And guess who's providing the sophisticated weaponry the US-trained local military (TNI) are deploying against defenceless villagers? Yep, those heroes of the war against terror, Tony and George.

Scorpion tanks, Hawk aircraft (both British made), OV-10 Bronco counter-insurgency planes and F-16 fighter planes (from the US) are among the 'sophisticated' weaponry being used to 'shock and awe' (not to mention totally destroy) them pesky peasants right now.

All this despite the fact that the duplicitous Blair government came to power in 1997 pledging 'not to permit sale of arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression.'

With Robin Cook at the Foreign office, the fledgling Labour government sold 16 hawk jets to Indonesia in 1997 claiming the deal had been agreed by the previous Tory government and couldn't be blocked for 'legal reasons'.

They didn't seem to feel the need to make any excuses however in 2002 when they announced a 20-fold increase in arms sales to Indonesia since 2000 - from £2m to nearly £41m! And last week, while the Indonesian government was deploying Scorpion tanks and Hawk jets against the civilian population in Aceh, the British government

announced that it intended to increase arms sales to Indonesia yet further.

Goodies being packaged up for export include components for military training aircraft, rocket launchers, tanks and armoured personnel carriers. It seems British arms exporters are expanding outward from their 'traditional' market in the Middle East and establishing a nice little niche for themselves in Asia.

Last year the Foreign Office declared there was "no evidence" that any British military equipment had ever been used for counter-insurgency or repression in Indonesia. Yeah right! Here's a few well-documented instances: 1975 - Indonesia used UK armoured vehicles in invasion of East Timor; 1998 - Scorpions used on the streets of Jakarta to put down civilian unrest; 1999 - Hawk aircraft used over Dili, capital of East Timor... the list goes on.

Last week Foreign Officer minister Mike O'Brien responded to the international outcry over the current use of British weaponry in Aceh by promising "an investigation". Nothing for the brutal TNI to fear there then, because the British government doesn't want to do anything that would upset its lucrative arms trade with Indonesia.

OILY WARNING SYSTEMS

But of course the war against Aceh - like the alarmingly similar war Indonesia waged against East Timor - is not just about independence.

Nor is the predatory interest of the US and UK limited to selling military hardware. Aceh, like East Timor, is extremely rich in resources (as is the whole area) and Exxon-Mobil control most of their oil and gas fields.

Incredibly, Exxon-Mobil provides the TNI with "economic and material support" in exchange for their forceful protection of its vast plant and refinery in Aceh. If Aceh got independence the Acehnese would also get control of the oil and gas fields ... you get the picture. The GAM and Washington-based International Labour Rights Fund accuse Exxon of complicity in TNI murder, kidnapping and rape of Acehnese civilians.

Comparisons with East Timor are inevitable. East Timor finally became an independent country on May 20th 2002 - but not until a third of the entire population had

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For going home

At least nine Bushmen have been served with court orders for 'illegally' entering the Central Kalahari Game Reserve in Botswana, their ancestral land for the past twenty thousand years. Their whole village was forcibly evicted from their land in February 2002. They were banned from hunting and gathering and their water pump destroyed. If found guilty of returning home they could face jail. <http://www.survival-international.org/tc%20bushmen.htm>

lost their lives in the struggle against the Indonesian occupation which started in 1975.

Jakarta's violent oppression of East Timor was encouraged and backed by consecutive US administrations, with Clinton in 1998 describing the murderous President Suharto as "our kind of guy." It was felt that American oil company interests were better catered for by the U.S. backed Indonesian government than an independent East Timor.

As in Aceh, US and UK military hardware was used to oppress the East Timorese population for the best part of 26 years. Even after the 1999 UN-run referendum returned an overwhelming vote in favour of independence, the TNI went on revenge rampages slaughtering civilians and destroying buildings. Another example of the flagrant disregard of the UN by the US and the UK.

Tapol - the Indonesian Human Rights Campaign - together with the Campaign against the Arms Trade and 90 other Human rights organisations around the world are calling for an international arms embargo on Indonesia and an immediate end to military operations in Aceh. 020 8771 2904 www.tapol.gn.apc.org

• One of the world's biggest arms fairs sponsored by the UK government is taking place in London from the 9-12th September. Countries from around the world, including ones on Amnesty International's human rights abusers list, will be there to see if they can get their hands on some weapons of mass destruction. Also shopping at the arms fair will be some of the poorest countries from Asia and Africa, spending money on war instead of education, development and medicine. Disarm DSEI is co-ordinating a week long festival of action, protest and resistance. To find out how you can get involved 0781 7652029 www.dsei.org

I SPY HORSEPLAY!

500 demonstrators arrived at NSA Menwith Hill last Friday for an Independence from America party against US military presence in the UK at the Gatecrasher's Ball. Menwith Hill, America's leading spy base outside the US, played a crucial role in both Gulf wars. It's also central to plans for the "Star Wars" National Missile Defence programme.

Dressed in costumes, ball gowns, masks and top hat and tails, demonstrators took part in a public reading of a new Declaration of Independence from America. Mark Thomas, looking rather fetching in frock and feather boa, introduced the line up of speakers, musicians and poets and gave a rousing speech himself. He told SchNEWS it was like a Reclaim the Streets party in the countryside.

Everything was going swimmingly until the police added some special party-pooing touches of their own. Organisers from the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases with full police liaison had planned a walk around the base, stopping at various points to give information about activities at Menwith Hill. The police, in their wisdom, had decided to head up the walk with horses that were inadequately trained and kept rearing up, backing into protestors, and generally causing havoc. One of the protestors said "On the day the police unilaterally changed all

the carefully negotiated agreements. The police were responsible for any conflict that happened and it was quite unnecessary that so many police and police horses were drafted in. There could have been serious injuries because of the incompetent policing." After first refusing to withdraw the horses, the police eventually replaced them with others, but the guided tour had to be cut short.

- There are weekly witness and protests outside the main entrance to Menwith Hill every Tuesday evening (7-9 pm). Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases, 8 Park Row, Otley, West Yorkshire, LS21 1HQ 01943 46640 <http://www.caab.org.uk>

- During independence demos at the US military base in RAF Welford, Berkshire one man climbed a radio mast and hung a 50 foot long 'Independence Now' banner. Peter Burt, from Berkshire Citizens Inspection Agency remained up the mast for three hours until a Ministry of Defence Police climbing team arrived. He decided to come down and was released without charge. Peter said: "Independence Day is a wonderful occasion to highlight the extent to which the US government's foreign policy is based around the use of military force. Welford is just one of around 750 US military bases worldwide which the US armed forces use to enforce their 'global reach'."

SchNEWS IN BRIEF

• **Africa** – grassroots struggles for social justice and development' public meeting this Saturday (12) at the Unity Centre, 2-4 Ravenstone St., Balham, London SW12 9SS 4-8pm. Have you ever heard people talking about the anti-globalisation and anti-war movements? Do you think that has got anything to do with Africa and Africans? More details 07890 738997 e-mail nkexplo@yahoo.co.uk ** **Brighton Peace Festival** on Hove Lawns this Sunday (13) 12-6pm – it's free and SchNEWS will be there with our new book! ** Brightons premier pirate station **Radio 4A** is back on your airwaves this weekend 101.4 FM Details of streams at radio4a.org.uk ** There's a London **Anarchist Youth Network Conference** on 25th to 27th July near central London More <http://anarchistyouth.net> ** Demonstrate at the **Fairford air tattoo** next Saturday (19) The air show is where western military powers get the chance to flaunt their power, and arms companies advertise their wares. This year the B52 bombers, that were used for the 'Shock & Awe' bombing of Iraq, will be returning to Fairford, this time to 'entertain' the British people, along with the notorious B2 Stealth Bomber and many others. <http://www.fairfordpeacewatch.com> ** Anyone who thinks Britain is a reluctant partner to the United States in bombing, stealing and lying their way around the world to keep up corporate profits should get hold of Mark

Curtis's **Web of Deceit** (Vintage £7.99). The book shows in great detail how Blair's war-mongering and disregard for international law is nothing new - there are chapters on Britain's wars in Malaya, Kenya, Iraq and loads more places where the British state has been up to its tricks. Well worth getting hold of - the author's got a website at www.markcurtis.info. ** There's a benefit for the **Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh** on 20 July at the Wheatsheaf, 207-209 Balgreen Road, Gorgie, Edinburgh. There's workshops from 2-6pm on zine making, stenciling, releasing and distributing your own records as well as a tape swap box - make amix tape, and swap it for someone else's. Bands from 7pm Admission £5 xlordsummerislex@deathwishinc.net ** **Queer Mutiny II** is a free DIY non-corporate alternative to Pride in the Park in London 26th July. Meet 11:30am Parliament Square to join the Pride march, then go to Hyde Park for DJs, politics and pirate-themed fun www.queeruption.com ** There's a **Radical Bookfair and Film Festival** at the Bradford 1in12 Club, Albion Street, from the 1-3 August. Entertainments include books, films (naturally), snail racing, and a hardcore punk all-dayer on Sunday. 01274 734160 www.repressed.org.uk ** "Can we stop the next war?" - general discussion of the anti-war movement and what to do next. Brighthelm Centre, Brighton, Tuesday 15th 7pm FREE

How was it for you, Darling?

Traffic levels in Britain have increased by 80% over the last 20 years. But that's obviously not enough for Neo-Labour whose latest U-turn - this time on their promise to get people out of their cars and onto public transport - was revealed on Wednesday. Construction companies such as Balfour Beatty (now facing prosecution over the Hatfield rail crash) will be fainting with excitement over Alistair Darling's announcement that £7 billion is to be spent on concreting over the countryside in a major road-

building scheme. More on this in next week's SchNEWS.

- Last Saturday, activists from London Rising Tide staged a protest at the British Museum, which is currently hosting a BP-sponsored exhibition. Posing as BP representatives they handed out spoof reports and leaflets and displayed a "BP Sponsors Climate Chaos" banner to raise public awareness of BP's planned Baku-Ceyhan pipeline and other global activities. London Rising Tide 020 7377 9088 www.risingtide.org.uk

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Inside Schnews

A 50 year old nurse who admitted attacking a US military plane with a hatchet walked free from court last Thursday after a stunning victory. Mary Kelly argued that she had attacked the plane at Shannon Airport in County Clare but had done so lawfully to prevent greater crimes from being committed against the Iraqi people. After five hours the jury failed to reach a verdict although they did find her guilty of the much less serious charge of trespass. The Director of Public Prosecutions must now decide whether to seek a retrial. www.indymedia.org

- Sylvia Boyes has been jailed for 3 months after being charged with criminal damage to Menwith Hill after an anti-war trident ploughshares action in February. Send letters of support to Sylvia Boyes, HMP Low Newton, Brasside, Durham DH1 5SD

- If you are writing to any of the prisoners detained after the Greece EU Summit protests (see SchNEWS 413) you must also put their names in Greek letters. The Greek translation of Simon Chapman, whose 30th birthday is on the 24th July, is Οάέήή Οάάάήή.

- Benefit gigs until all the Greek prisoners are set free will take place at the Eton Mission Social Club in London every Friday, 91 Eastway Hackney Wick (next to the church, Wick Rd end). This week cafe, projections and Serum Sound System, 8pm - 6am. More details: 0208 986 7966.

Activists at the Arundel protest camp at Tortington Common have scored a massive victory. Government support for the proposed Arundel by-pass has been axed, as have equally destructive road schemes in Worthing and Chichester. Direct Action works!

...and finally, curtains?

For the past nine years SchNEWS has been very fortunate to get free office space from the band The Levellers - and a big thank you to them. But that's about to change. We need to find about £300 a month by next month or find somewhere else to live.

Despite a readership of over 60,000 SchNEWS still relies mainly on goodwill, thin air, lots of biscuits and one or two people's deep pockets. So can you help out? Anyone got £3,600 stuck behind the sofa to cover us for a year? Are there enough people out there up for making a regular standing order (check our website for details of this). We need to know very soon so we can decide, literally, our next move. Remember SchNEWS is run on a shoestring by volunteers and our computers would get wet if we had to write it from under a cardboard box.

- Don't forget the SchNEWS comedy book launch night coming up on the 23rd July with Mark Thomas and Rob Newman. It's at the Old Market, Upper Market St., Hove and tickets are £10 from their box office 01273 736222. Peace de Resistance is available from the office for a tenner.

- If you're going to any events and want to hand out SchNEWS, give us a shout and we'll bung some in the post. If you can help distribute our new book 'Peace de Resistance' also get in touch.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all benefactors wishing to keep us in the style the readers are accustomed to; after our book launch we'll be floating SchNEWS. So, in shorts invest in yer planets future. Honest.