

Indonesia: Aceh, London's next domino?

As one Asia leader put it: "If Indonesia breaks up, we are going to have instability in the whole region." Michael O. Billington reports.

The London-centered drive to destroy national sovereignty has escalated its assault on the nation of Indonesia. After the successful splitting off of East Timor, the British-American-Commonwealth (BAC) financial oligarchy has turned its guns on the Northern Sumatra district of Aceh. Similar subversive efforts are under way in other parts of Indonesia, as well. The neo-colonialist combination of political demands, threats of economic sanctions, and slanders from controlled "human rights" groups and the Western press are now taking aim at Aceh as the next easy target, while also escalating attacks on the institution of the Indonesian military. As in the East Timor case, the new colonial balkanization policy is using the discontent fomented by the devastating economic crisis imposed on Indonesia by the global speculators and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to encourage self-destructive separatist movements, serving no one's interests other than those of the oligarchs of the BAC financial institutions themselves.

There are signs of resistance, both within Indonesia and in the neighboring nations of Southeast Asia, but the crisis could rapidly explode, as it did in East Timor, without urgent countermeasures to identify the source of the subversion.

On Nov. 8, a mass rally of several hundred thousand people was held in the capital city of Banda Aceh, calling for a referendum like that which had been held in East Timor. The global human rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs), centered on London's Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, Tapol, associated with leading terrorist controller Lord Avebury, and Human Rights Watch Asia, financed by mega-speculator George Soros, whose role in bringing down the Asian economies is notorious, are providing full support for the organizers of the Aceh demonstrations, composed primarily of Islamic student organizations. These groups are also trying to link up the Aceh networks with those in East Timor and other potential separatist movements across Indonesia, such as in Irian Jaya. Tapol, which means political prisoner in *bahasa Indonesia*, advertises itself as "campaigning to expose human rights violations" in East Timor, West Papua (a.k.a. Irian Jaya), and Aceh.

A terrorist movement

There is also a terrorist movement in Aceh, called the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, GAM), which celebrated the 23rd anniversary of its founding on Dec. 4. The Free Aceh Movement is entirely a creation of the Anglo-

American intelligence apparatus which tried to dismember Indonesia in 1957-58. While that effort failed, the Free Aceh Movement emerged as a terrorist drug-running network, engaged in occasional drug-linked rebellions (see accompanying article).

However, the Free Aceh Movement today appears to be factionalized, and the relationship between Free Aceh and the pro-referendum NGO networks is not clear. Newly elected Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid has been talking with various leaders in Aceh, and even with the Free Aceh Movement, attempting to work out a peaceful agreement based on increased autonomy for Aceh, while remaining within the Indonesian nation. Wahid has declared his support for some sort of referendum, but has subsequently modified that call by asserting that only autonomy, and not independence, is on the table. Nonetheless, some leaders of the referendum rallies have insisted that it will be "independence or nothing."

The separatist Free Aceh Movement has enjoyed little popular support over the years. The large turnout for the recent referendum rallies can be explained largely by two real grievances of the Aceh population. First, the destruction of Indonesia's national economy has aggravated regional sentiments that Aceh has not benefitted fairly from its abundant oil wealth, which is said to contribute 20% of total government revenues, while Aceh receives back only 1% for the province's development. While the government in Jakarta must weigh the needs of the nation as a whole, and resource-poor provinces in particular, the new Wahid government is nonetheless working on new autonomy proposals which will allow Aceh (and other provinces) to retain 75% of the proceeds from oil and other raw materials wealth.

The second, more serious grievance, concerns the several measures used by factions of the Indonesian military over the past decade in counterinsurgency and anti-drug campaigns in Aceh. General Wiranto, the former Army chief and current coordinating minister for national security, and President Wahid, have both acknowledged that illegal measures were employed, and a government team assigned to investigate the repression is preparing a report which is expected to accuse military leaders, including generals, of responsibility for criminal acts. While such revelations, and trials of the accused, may be necessary, the danger lies in the effort by the international enemies of Indonesia's sovereignty to attempt

FIGURE 1

Indonesia



to dismantle the military itself—a process seen clearly in the aftermath of the East Timor fiasco. In the circumstances of a new colonial assault on the nation’s sovereignty, the institution of the military is the final line of defense of the nation-state, and the primary target for destruction by the would-be colonial lords (see *The Plot to Annihilate the Armed Forces and the Nations of Ibero-America* [Washington, D.C.: EIR News Service, 1994]).

In a recent interview, Indonesian Attorney General Marzuki Darusman suggested that consideration should be given to convening a “truth and reconciliation commission,” similar to that in South Africa, in which government officials, including military and special forces, received immunity from prosecution in exchange for full disclosure of abuses perpetrated. In this way, Darusman said, Indonesia could move on with the urgent need to rebuild the economy, without tying up the institutions of government in lengthy and emotionally wrought legal procedures. For Aceh, plans are under way to convene a special proceeding, combining military and civilians—i.e., both sides in the conflict—to investigate five specific cases of abuse since 1996.

ASEAN defends Indonesia

While the danger is great, there is increasing resistance to the attack on Indonesia. Just as the continental European nations, faced with economic breakdown and mounting popular anger, have recently turned against the British “Third Way” globalization policies in defense of their national industries and workforces, and just as Europe and the Third World nations rejected the BAC attack on sovereignty at the Seattle World Trade Organization conference, so also, political leaders within Indonesia and across Asia are coming to the defense of Indonesian sovereignty in regard to Aceh. At the Nov. 27 meeting of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus three (China, Japan, and South Korea), the leading subject was regional security, with a special focus on combatting separatism, including a resolution supporting Indonesia’s territorial integrity.

Singapore President Goh Chok Tong told reporters, “Indonesia’s a huge anchor. If it begins to break up, we are going to have general instability in the whole region for many years to come.”

The majority of the people of Aceh, according to most

observers, want economic and social justice, but are fundamentally *Indonesian* in their nature and outlook, and have not purchased the fool's gold of independence. The problem lies primarily outside of Aceh, and outside of Indonesia, in the policy planning centers of the BAC nations. Even UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has now adopted British Prime Minister Tony Blair's "end of sovereignty" campaign. President Clinton told President Wahid, during the newly elected President's first visit to the United States in November, that the United States supports Indonesia's territorial integrity. It would be a more believable pledge, if President Clinton would fire Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, whose pretensions as "super-cop" for the BAC oligarchy are a threat to peace and sovereignty in every corner of the globe.

Michael Billington is serving his eighth year of a 77-year sentence in Virginia state prison. Ostensibly convicted on charges of "securities fraud," he in fact was railroaded into prison because of his association with Lyndon LaRouche.

'Free Aceh' is another British narco-terrorist outfit

by Michael O. Billington

London's role as the controller of nearly every major terrorist capability in the world, long documented by *EIR*,¹ has recently emerged as a subject of official protests against London, by nations in Africa, Asia, and even Europe—including, especially, Russia. The story behind the Free Aceh Movement, the separatist movement in the Indonesian province of Aceh in Northern Sumatra, intersects all the normal channels—from the 1950s Anglo-American attempted dismemberment of Indonesia, to the British-owned "Islamic" terror apparatus, to the London-based world narcotics and gun-running networks.

British indirect control

The Dutch East India Company took over the East Indies islands during the 17th century, but the northern part of Sumatra, Aceh, remained generally independent. When the British established Penang and Singapore as trading ports in the 19th century, Aceh's various regional leaders established trading ties for the British East India Company, providing about half of the world's pepper. The British took over direct rule of the East Indies between 1811 and 1816, but found it more

1. "England's Lizard Queen Is the Mother of International Terrorism," *EIR*, Nov. 28, 1997.

convenient to allow the Dutch to regain control under broad, British direction of all the colonial empires (Dutch, French, and Portuguese) in Asia thereafter. The 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty of London made Sumatra part of the Dutch East Indies, except for an independent Aceh, which remained under British "free trade" domination. In the 1871 Treaty of Sumatra, however, London granted the Dutch a green light to take control of Aceh. This led to 40 years of colonial warfare before Acehnese resistance was crushed by the Dutch. The leader of the popular resistance to the Dutch takeover, Tungku Chik diTiro, is claimed as a relative by the current leader of the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, or GAM), Hasan diTiro.

But the 1871 treaty still assured the British unfettered trading rights in Sumatra, and the existing British relations with Aceh's regional leaders were maintained.

Like the rest of Indonesia, the Acehnese generally welcomed the Japanese in 1942 as liberators from the Dutch. After the war, the Acehnese were enthusiastic participants in the nationalist resistance to the Dutch recolonization—in fact, the Dutch did not even try to reoccupy Aceh itself. Aceh became a major source of funds for the nationalists through smuggling with the British in Penang and Singapore—a typical British "merchant" lever in working both sides of the colonial war in Indonesia. In fact, the British promoted the Islamic-educated elite in Aceh, who differed somewhat from the Dutch-educated intelligentsia around national leaders Sukarno and Hatta.

In the early 1950s, many among the Aceh Islamic elite joined with the Indonesian-wide Darul Islam movement, centered in Java, in a revolt aimed at establishing Indonesia as an Islamic Republic. Darul Islam never called for independence for any part of Indonesia, but for a united, Islamic nation. Several years of conflict in Aceh concluded in agreements with Jakarta establishing a degree of autonomy for Aceh over religion, customary law, and education. This autonomy relationship functioned peacefully until the mid-1970s. Meanwhile, many of Aceh's regional leaders joined enthusiastically in the national butchery of the Indonesian Communist Party members and supporters following the U.S.- and British-orchestrated overthrow of Sukarno, and the establishment of the New Order under General Suharto in 1965 and 1966.

Free Aceh

Hasan diTiro, a graduate of Columbia University in New York, with a law degree from Plano University in Texas, was working at the Indonesian mission to the UN in New York in 1953, when the Darul Islam revolt broke out. He quit his position and appointed himself the Darul Islam ambassador to the UN. With the settlement of the Darul Islam revolt, diTiro stayed in the United States and started a business.

DiTiro began collaborating with U.S. intelligence on a plot to balkanize Indonesia. It was a plan that went back to British Adm. Louis Mountbatten, head of the Southeast Asia Command during World War II, and his political adviser, Sir