

The Empire's new clothes

"N.A.T.O. was set up to act against the Eastern Bloc, with the fall of communism it seemed it had no purpose but N.A.T.O. now has a new mission, to act for Western values and to protect human rights and to act against ethnic cleansing and anti-democratic practise"

- Adam Bolton, Sky News political editor live from the N.A.T.O. 50 th anniversary celebration.

During the 78 day bombing of Yugoslavia, N.A.T.O. and it's unofficial spokespeople in the media made a great fuss about only aiming at 'military targets', and thus not harming civilians, now lets for the sake of argument accept their distinction between legitimate target - a conscript and illegitimate target - a civilian, and consider just how often our everyday life takes us into military targets.

In June I had to pay a visit to Roscommon, which is the opposite end of Ireland from where I live. Walking down to the bus stop I pass a railway station - a military target and a University - a military target (footnote 1). Then the bus gets out on to the motorway - a military target. Nothing of note on the journey (at least as far as I know) until I reach Athlone which, with it's army barracks, regional hospital, government bunker, railway station and communications tower not to mention it's bridges over the Shannon could be said to be one big military target. Of course had I gone into Dublin to get the train to Roscommon I would have passed even more military targets.

Now that's in the Republic of Ireland, probably the least militarised society in the world, my childhood memory of England seems to recollect a vast array of military bases, i.e. army barracks and such like, not just infrastructure which can be put to a military use, while Germany even has roads specially adapted for use by tanks and Northern Ireland is awash with military installations, some located in places where civilian death would be unavoidable if they were bombed, for example a surveillance post on top of a apartment block. Yugoslavia, given the recent years of violence in the area, should have more than it's fair share of military bases.

N.A.T.O. spindoctor Jamie O'Shea claims that:

"Never before in human history have so many people made such an enormous effort to minimise the risk of harm to civilians. NATO pilots do take every precaution to avoid inflicting damage on civilians." (1)

I presume he is not counting the many occasions in history when many people spent their time doing something other than aerial bombardment, I think he would find that the most effective way to "minimise the risk of harm to civilians" and the easiest "precaution to avoid inflicting damage on civilians" is not making war.

"I cannot emphasise too strongly that the United States and our European allies have no quarrel with the Serbian people" so said Bill Clinton on the 25th of March 1999. (2)

If you drop Rockeye cluster bombs, each containing 247 bomblets, each of which explode into 2,000 lethal sharp fragments which hurl outward, shredding all human flesh within an acre of the initial detonation, or depleted uranium shells which have been the cause of an increase in stillbirths, birth defects and leukaemia in Southern Iraq (home of the Shia minority subsequent bombing raids have been "defending") since the Gulf War and is believed to be responsible for Gulf war syndrome, or BL755 cluster bombs which explode in the air to distribute 47 little landmines, many of which will maim and kill after the war has ended, on people you have "no quarrel with", people that you are making "an enormous effort to minimise harm to" - a greater effort to do that than ever "before in human history" or on people you are aiming to "protect" such as the nearly one hundred Albanian refugees who on May 14th NATO dropped cluster bombs on , one can only wonder what it is you do when you're not making heroic historical efforts "to avoid inflicting damage" on people you "have no quarrel with" or on people you're trying to "protect".

They were, of course, using precision weapons, the sort of precision weapons that when aimed at Afganistan hit Pakistan or when aimed at Iraq hit Iran. I cannot think of a more precise method than driving your bomb to it's intended target, or a more effective means "to minimise the risk of harm to civilians" than informing the emergency services as to where your bomb is and when it will detonate, yet the people who do that not only kill, maim and injure civilians but they are denounced by the very same people who either ordered or supported the bombing of Yugoslavia.

According to a U.N. agency statement outlying the likely impact of N.A.T.O.'s targeting of such "military installations" as fuel dumps, oil refineries, and fertiliser and chemical factories: "Many of the compounds released in these chemical accidents can cause cancer, miscarriages and birth defects, others are associated with fatal nerve and liver diseases." (3) Describing the same, Prof. Andrew Dobson of Keele University, wrote "Poisonous dioxins have been released into the atmosphere and oil slicks up to 12 miles long have been seen in the Danube." (4)- a river that ten million people get their drinking water from. So the ultimate casualty figure of the N.A.T.O. bombing offensive may be much greater than the 14 hundred odd claimed by the Serb Government and regarded as accurate by journalists on the ground in Yugoslavia.

Among that statistic was Milena Malobabic, she "was not a soldier. She did not work for the Yugoslav government. If the soiled blue notebook we found outside the destroyed sanatorium where she was a patient is an indication, the 19 year old woman suffered from a broken heart as well as tuberculosis."
(Lara Marlowe Irish Times June 1st 1999)

She was one of at least 19 killed in a bombing of a sanatorium and an old people's home. Other people the United States and it's European allies had "no quarrel with" included the family of Voja Milic who "was walking home himself when the NATO missile exploded , killing his wife, Aleksandar (37), his daughter-in-law Vesna (35) , and Mr Milic's grandchildren, Vladimir (11), and Miliana (15). Three cousins aged between 18 and 21 were also killed"
(Lara Marlowe Irish Times April 29th 1999)

Of the 12 children and 9 adults sheltering in Mr. Milic's basement only one survived, one neighbour described the scene "Bits of them were all over the road , we found a child's head in the garden and child limbs in the mud."

Another beneficiary of Western benevolence was a 26 year old oil refinery worker who was "crossing the old Petrovaradin Bridge on his bicycle when it was bombed just before 5 a.m. . For a month, the young man's family and friends searched for him. No one was sure whether he had been on the bridge when it was destroyed. Then his body - without legs - was discovered 10 km downstream."

(Lara Marlowe Irish Times June 22nd 1999).

Of course, as the British left-liberal daily the Guardian headlined on March 27th, "The Serbs Don't Appreciate How Carefully The Force Against Them Is Being Deployed."

Terribly ungrateful aren't they.

"They will never find the body of nine-year-old Mandahie Mucoli, whose remains are probably to twisted and burned to be distinguished from the 23 other Kosovar children who died with her. . . . Mandahie and the other children, together with mothers, aunts, and grandparents, 52 people in all, were herded into one room of a farmhouse in the tiny village of Poklek by Serbian police one fine spring day on April 18th. Then, through an open window, someone threw a grenade."
(Irish Times June 18th 1999)

"The room at the top of the house where the rapes took place is easy to find. Inside, sprayed in Serbian on a wall in giant green fluorescent letters is 'I fucked Leonora'. I leave the last name blank, though it was included."
(Irish Times June 17th 1999)

It is this sort of atrocity which has been held up by N.A.T.O.'s cheerleaders as justification for the preceding atrocities. This has been central absurdity of the propaganda bombardment of our consciousness, the use of the atrocity of war to justify the atrocity of war. Apparently the existence of one massacre turns another massacre into a moral act, into the highest expression of human goodwill. The message is if you don't like war join the army.

Of course American soldiers, members of that noble herrenvolk, would not behave in a fashion similar to that of the 'evil Serbs', would they? Perhaps someone should direct that question to General Wesley Clarke commander of 'Operation Allied Force', as the pounding of Yugoslavia was called, he, after all, unlike draft dodging and dope smoking Clinton, served in Vietnam. (see footnote 2) So he might know something of the following activities of the U.S. Army there, as described by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Seymour M. Hersh:

"Some GIs, however, didn't hesitate to use their bayonets. Nineteen year-old Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tuyet watched a baby trying to open her slain mother's blouse to nurse. A soldier shot the infant while it was struggling with the blouse, and then slashed at it with his bayonet. Tuyet also said she saw another baby hacked to death by soldiers wielding bayonets. Le Tong, a twenty-eight-year-old rice farmer, reported seeing one woman raped after GIs killed her children. Nguyen Khoa, a thirty-seven-year-old peasant, told of a thirteen-year-old girl who was raped before being killed. GIs then attacked Khoa's wife, tearing off her clothes. Before they could rape her, however, Khoa said, their six year old son, riddled with bullets, fell and saturated her with blood. The GIs left her alone." (5)

"Most families were being shot inside their homes, or just outside the doorways. Those who had tried to flee were cramed by GIs into the many bunkers built through out the hamlet for protection - once the bunkers became filled, hand grenades were lobbed in." (6)

The slang terms used by American soldiers in Vietnam are informative - "Double Veteran" being a person who kills a woman after raping her, "The Bell Telephone Hour" meaning to torture someone by using the electricity generated by a field telephone.

The manner in which the Serbian Government has fought it's counter insurgency war in Kosovo, is the same as that of any government fighting any counter insurgency or colonial war. Brutality may march under flags but it doesn't have a flag.

I'm not pointing this out as an example of hypocrisy it goes deeper than that, the point is that every heartfelt plea in support of N.A.T.O. ,on behalf of the suffering people of Kosovo, such as "I assert that the war objectives of NATO (read: 'the war of N.A.T.O.')', i.e. , to return the refugees to Kosovo, are morally correct and should be supported by humanitarians." (David Begg chief executive of the charity 'Concern Worldwide' Irish Times April 27th 1999) has the effect of legitimising the violence of the N.A.T.O. states, who Mr Begg goes on to describe as those who seek to uphold human rights, this increases the ability of the N.A.T.O. states to inflict the sort of violence described above, on a world wide scale. As some British Politician (whose name escapes me) once said "You must remember in Northern Ireland we are fighting both a shooting war and a propaganda war."

They need to justify their wars as well as to fight them.

Keep in mind the protests on London streets provoked by the British invasion of Egypt in 1956, the worldwide movement against the war in Vietnam, the revolts which hastened the end of the First World War, the peace movement of the 1980's . Ideas are crucial to maintaining rule, and the idea of 'humanitarian intervention', 'moral crusades' and so forth are central components of fighting contemporary wars, acting as they do to defuse public criticism.

Opinion must be moulded to accept mass murder, a monumental waste of tax payers money (which may seem relatively superficial but consider what else the expenditure, estimated at in the least 1.7 billion euros for the first 3 weeks of the bombing alone, might be spent on) , and the possibility that some of "our boys" might come home in plastic bags.

They must win the propaganda war at home as well as the shooting war abroad.

'Humanitarian Intervention' has made Imperialist war respectable. The Partyline on Kosovo, that 'Yes war is terrible, but necessary' is far more believable than the smart bombs that are only smarter than the people who believe in them. It is all the more effective when joined with a chorus of 'yes war is terrible, yes N.A.T.O., nuclear weapons, military-industrial complex - all very suspect but it is the Lesser Evil against the Greater Evil' from the B52 liberals. In actual fact this choir not only supports but actively contributes to the 'greater evil', which is the N.A.T.O. states, a greater evil merely in that their capacity for violence and their actual violence is that much greater than the Serbian Government's. What they are doing is simply using the violence of one government of war lords to justify the violence of another government of war lords. In doing so they legitimise both today's and tomorrow's wars.

The bombing began on March 24th, to, we are told, stop ethnic cleansing, and it was, we are told, an action forced on N.A.T.O. by the refusal of the Serbian government to sign up to the Rambouillet agreement.

In the words of a C.N.N. anchorman "The N.A.T.O. bombing was intended to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe." , yet as the air offensive began, Jonathan Eyal, director of studies at the Royal United Services Institute in London, was able to write: "The West is justifying the operation as necessary to avoid a humanitarian disaster. In fact the biggest humanitarian disaster will unfold when the air attacks begin." (7) , in both cases the catastrophe and disaster referred to is the Yugoslav government's oppression of the Kosovar Albanian population.

You could believe that it was all about stopping ethnic cleansing in which case you will remember the 78 day bombing of Croatia after the Croat government forced 200,000 Serbs to leave the Krajina region at gunpoint, killing those too old or weak to go. Don't worry if you don't remember because this was a 'humanitarian intervention' that never happened. In fact that Croat government was/is backed by the U.S. and the E.U. , at least to a degree.

Prior to the onset of the bombing U.N. observers in Kosovo claimed that there was almost as many K.L.A. attacks on the Serb minority as Government attacks on the Albanian populace. Of course, now that K-FOR have taken over in Kosovo, the ethnic cleansing has been brought to an end, hasn't it? Not according to the (U.S. based) Human Rights Watch. They report not only continuing K.L.A. attacks on Serb civilians, but the indifference of K-FOR officers to these attacks.

85 year old Trifun Stamenkovic, told the story of the death of his wife (77 year old Marica Stamenkovic) to Human Rights Watch: "I couldn't find my wife. When I came inside [my house] I saw the broken windows and everything broken. I was in the doorway and I went back outside and saw a German patrol, two jeeps. I told them my wife was missing, that she wasn't in the house. When I entered the house with them I saw only my wife's knees. Her knees were bloody. I didn't see the rest of her body; the Germans took me outside; they didn't let me into see her." (8)

They didn't let him in because of the appalling wounds inflicted on his wife, 160,000 Serbs and Roma have fled such K.L.A. terror since the N.A.T.O. takeover. That's out of a total Serb Kosovar population of 200,000.

Many of those becoming refugees for the second time as people from Krajina were re-housed in Kosovo.

The sticking point at Rambouillet was not between the Kosovars and the Serbs, for the agreement gave Kosovo less autonomy than it had in the pre-1989 federal Yugoslavia, and it was with reluctance and after much pressure that the Albanian nationalists signed up to it, but between the Serbian government and N.A.T.O., for under the terms of Rambouillet ,as well as Kosovo being put under N.A.T.O. occupation, "NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including associated airspace and territorial waters." (Appendix B/Chapter 7,8b) (9)

The Serbian government held out against this, in favour of a U.N. presence limited to Kosovo.

Later, in the negotiations which led to the end of N.A.T.O.'s 78 day bombing campaign and the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo, the sticking point between the Serbian Government and N.A.T.O. was whether or not the peacekeeping force would be under the auspices of N.A.T.O. or under the control of the U.N., the Serb Government was prepared to accept a U.N. force including N.A.T.O. states not involved in the bombing, but the war was prolonged until they accepted a "peace keeping force" dominated by the states involved in the war. A "peace keeping force" comprising of the war's victors, what once upon a time would have been called occupation troops, but now in true Ministry of Truth fashion is called a "peace keeping force". The Rambouillet clause allowing for N.A.T.O. troops to tramp their way through Yugoslavia was dropped from the agenda.

Clearly then the intent of the war was to have an outcome in Kosovo which, as the Washington Post described it, was to have "NATO at its core, a NATO General in command, and not an Official of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe or anybody else." (10) . There was much talk of not letting Kosovo become another Bosnia, but in a way it has, just as Bosnia was first destroyed by the power struggles of the local rulers so to has Kosovo (with some help from N.A.T.O.) and just as Bosnia has become a territory run, lock, stock and barrel by the U.N. so too is this the fate of Kosovo only this time with N.A.T.O. in the throne. As this happened at the same time as Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic joined N.A.T.O. it takes no great leap of the imagination to see it as part and parcel of the same expansion into the vacuum left by the collapse of the "Soviet" empire. This can be seen as a continuing encirclement of Russia, in view of what was expressed by U.S. State Department in 1997:

" The [NATO] alliance must be prepared for other contingencies, including the possibility that Russia could abandon democracy and return to the threatening behaviour of the Soviet period." (11) .
(see footnote 3)

According to 'U.S. News and World Report' advocates within the American establishment for N.A.T.O. expansion include "Atlanticists who regard NATO as indispensable to U.S. leadership in Europe and hawks still wary of Russia."(12)

If N.A.T.O.'s eastward drive, the attack on Yugoslavia included, was calculated to cause an increase in hostility between Russia and the West it could hardly have done a better job, when Jeremy Paxman, presenter of B.B.C. 'Newsnight' challenged former Soviet president Gorbachev as to why he found the enlargement of N.A.T.O. a concern, he replied "Mr. Paxman, if you really don't understand why Russia is worried about the expansion of NATO, why on earth are you working for the BBC ...?"(13)

It can also be seen in as part a means of maintaining U.S. influence in Europe by shoring up an alliance which has, in the words of 'U.S. News and World Report', "a lopsided power structure dominated by the United States, which made a huge and disproportionate contribution both economically and militarily." (14) and assuring that the control of Eastern Europe is in the hands of the American dominated N.A.T.O. by getting in there first, before and rather than, any military structure the E.U. may develop independantly of the U.S. . The development of such a structure is already underway, Pierre Moscovici, French Minister for European Affairs says "we do not want the Americans to be the masters of our destiny in Europe. That's our attitude: friends and allies - but not masters. We want first of all to set up a European defence and security identity in the framework of NATO and then we also want to set up an integrated and autonomous chain of command, specific to the Europeans, with closely co-ordinated policies for armament, defence budgets and intelligence gathering"(15)
(see footnote 4)

The E.U. leaders plan to develop a 50 to 60 thousand strong rapid reaction force by the year 2003 which within 60 days can be mobilised for action anywhere N.A.T.O. (i.e. the U.S.) doesn't want to involve itself.

As the Financial Times put it "The outcome [of the war with Yugoslavia] will determine whether NATO, which now has "Partnerships for Peace" with 25 other non-allies stretching east beyond the Caucasus and the Capisan, will become - as it hopes - the predominant force for crisis

mangement throughout Europe." (16) or as U.S. Senator Joe Biden, a member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee said, somewhat more pessimistically : " If we do not achieve our goals in Kosovo, NATO is finished as an alliance." (17). This was the "test" of N.A.T.O.'s "credibility" referred to by other politicians such as Madeleine Albright and relates to the "new strategic concept" for N.A.T.O. which sees the alliance as having a "global role" in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and North Africa acting against "terrorists" and "drug traffickers" (see footnote 5), as the Czech President Vaclav Havel wrote:

"NATO role in Kosovo highlights it's position in the new world order." (18)

Milosevic once "a man we can do business with" (19), in the words of Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. envoy to the Bosnian peace talks in 1995, became, after the Serbian government refusal to go long with N.A.T.O. , the "new Hitler".

Disobedience by a minor state, if it went unpunished, would be as much of a message to minor rulers of the world as the bombing undoubtedly was.

Or it could have been all about "human rights" and the toleration of ethnic cleansing of Serbs just an aberation, but if it is humanitarianism which determines the West's policy on Yugoslavia, why only on Yugoslavia, what is so unique about there? Why does the supposed sympathy for oppressed minorities not reach just a little further south east to Turkey, if the plight of Kosovars can give birth to "ethical foreign policy" why does the plight of the Kurds not do likewise? Not only is the Turkish state a member of N.A.T.O., but it is on it's way to becoming a member of the E.U.

"We want Turkey to come to Europe and will do all we can to allow this to happen"(20) says Joschka Fischer, German Foreign Minister and Green bomber (see footnote 6), no bombs rained down on Ankara in response to the Turkish state's treatment of it's Kurdish minority, in it's long war against Kurdish nationalist revolt. Revolt which it has done a great deal to bring on itself with such discrimination enshrined in law as the outlawing of Kurdish language, culture and any expression of separatism.

The Turkish government, under it's "state of emergency" rule in it's predominatly Kurdish south eastern provinces, has according to it's own figures destroyed, and expelled the populations of , 905 villages and 32,923 hamlets over the course of the six years from 1992 to 1998. This deliberate destruction of villages and the burning of crops has, along with other aspects of the war, produced a flood of refugee's estimated to number around 400,000 by the government and estimated at around 3 million by the Kurdish opposition.

Amnesty International in it's book "Turkey: No security without human rights" relates that:

"in the spring of 1991 the organisation [i.e. Amnesty International] began to receive a large number of reports of "death squad" style killings of Kurdish villagers in the Midyat area of the Sirnak province. The perpetrators were able to pass through military check-points and were sometimes moved around using military vehicles or helicopters." (21)

"Security operations in the villages are usually caried out by gendarmes, members of Special Operations teams, and village guards or all three acting together. The inhabitants of a village are assembled and those selected for interrogation are taken away to a police station, gendarmerie post or other place of detention, or are interrogated in the village itself. Unprotected by the most basic safeguards they are often brutally tortured and killed." (22)

None of this is unique to the Turkish state, it's all part of the basic pattern of a counter insurgency conflict.

The supply of helicopters to the Turkish state, such as the U.S. made Sikorsky and Super Cobra has allowed it to conduct these military operations in remote and mountainous areas. Other helicopters have been supplied by France, Germany, Italy and Russia. Other military equipment supplied by outside powers include the British made Land Rover, a variant of which is the famous four wheel drive yuppie mobile, with other armoured cars coming from Germany, Russia and the U.S. and some parts for the local production of military vehicles coming from France.

Turkey is one of the biggest customers for American arms manufacturers with 7.8 billion dollars worth of American arms purchased in the ten years from 1988 with the value of American arms sales peaking in 1999 at 2.3 billion dollars - 60% of the Turkish state's yearly arms procurement budget. The Turkish military are to have a 150 billion dollar budget for the purchase of arms over the next 25 to 30 years.

For the future, according to the news agency Reuters: "Potential contracts include a 5 billion deal for the production of 145 attack helicopters; a 7 billion deal for the co-production of 1,000 main battle tanks; a 500 million scheme for the direct purchase of 20 heavy lift helicopters; a 2 billion scheme for the purchase of four airborne early warning aircraft; a 2.4 billion scheme for the co-production of eight frigates; and a 900 million scheme for the co-production of 32 additional F-16 fighter jets. The figures were outlined in a US official document."(23)

Clearly then if the American government wanted to 'diminish' or 'degrade' the capacity of the Turkish government to wage a war which has since the early 80's claimed over 30,000 lives it would not have to destroy any weaponry but merely stop supplying it.

If any E.U. state wanted to protect the 'human rights' of refugees from Turkey (Kurdish or otherwise) it could start by not to handing them back to Turkish police torturers and follow that by refusing to arm their persecuters.

So Western expansion into Eastern Europe, the N.A.T.O. part of which being a political-military reflection of the growing Western economic interests in the area and a preparation for a possible 'new Cold War', encounters opposition from a too independant Yugoslav government, a crime for which that government's subjects pay for in deaths, injuries and bereavement. A strong response is required in part in order to maintain a mechanism of U.S. influence in Europe, i.e. N.A.T.O. - the world's first defensive alliance which aims to defend against a state which no longer exists and in order that the minor states of this world get a lesson as to what happens when you don't do what your told. This is the opening shots in what it's masters hope to be a new role for NA.T.O. , a role of taking actual military action in Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

Turkey on the other hand is one of Uncle Sam's sentries over the Middle East oil fields.

Consequently it's N.A.T.O. to the rescue in the first case not the second. Morality doesn't come into it.

Which brings us to Iraq, that other recent target of Western benevolence, bombed repeatedly in 1999 as part of the enforcement of the 'no fly

zones' - areas in the north and south of Iraqi airspace denied to the Iraqi airforce by patrolling U.S. and British jets, which were established in the wake of anti-government rebellions in the Kurdish north and Shia south following the 1991 Gulf War, their intent being, we are told, to protect the civilian populations of those areas from being bombed by the Iraqi air force. Presumably they do not require protection from being bombed by the British or American ones. Perhaps those powers neglected to sell Hussein those magical weapons which don't kill people.

Much attention was given at this time to the Iraqi government's 1988 'Anfal' operation against Kurdish rebellion which claimed an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 lives and as part of which the Kurdish city of Halabja was bombarded with a mixture of mustard and nerve gas, the first a chemical weapon of First World War vintage while the later included chemicals similar to the Zyklon B used in the Holocaust. This particular bombing took 5,000 lives and left 10,000 injured (see footnote 7) while all animal and plant life in Halabja and its environs was destroyed, and it was not the only chemical attack of 'Operation Anfal'.

The chemicals used to produce these gases were supplied by the American, German, French and British governments, while the Platus aircraft used to deliver them to their targets were from Switzerland. The sale of such chemicals continued after their use became public knowledge and a few months after the gassing of Halabja, in October of 1988 to be precise, the British government gave the Iraqi government an extra 340 million sterling of export credit insurance, this being a scheme which allows governments to buy products from British companies on credit and if they default have their bill paid by the British government - over 50% of the purchases under this programme are of a military nature. At the same time as the British government was underwriting Iraqi military development a U.S. Senate Commission found that the end result of Iraqi government's policy towards the Kurds will be "the destruction of the Kurdish identity, Kurdish culture and a way of life that has endured for centuries" (24) and while British government ministers were calling the Iraqi actions "barbaric"(25). Then just over a year after the gassing of Halabja and Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Turkey all participated in the 'First Baghdad International Exhibition for Military Production' - an arms fair.

It was in March/April 1991, after renewed Kurdish rebellion and renewed bombing by the Iraqi state, that the 'no fly zones' were set up joined initially by a 'safe haven' policed by American, British, French and Turkish troops. While the 'no fly zone' enforced by planes from N.A.T.O. airbases in Turkey prevents Iraqi air attacks on the people of the area, the Turkish air force has simultaneously carried out bombing raids on the area, expressly aimed at Kurds, and using, Kurdish nationalists claim, napalm - the flammable gel which sticks to human skin and which was made famous by American forces in Vietnam. They have also endured the Turkish military's incursions into the 'safe havens', incursions which are aimed at Kurdish guerillas, these aerial raids and mini-invasions (see footnote 8) have been assisted by satellite reconnaissance photos given to the Turkish state through N.A.T.O. and as we have seen the Turkish state's campaign against the Kurds in its own territory intensified at the same time as south of the border the Kurd were being "protected" by those that persecute them in Turkey.

The other 'peace enforcements' aimed at Iraq in the past decade clearly expose the fallacy of thinking of the U.N. as some sort of 'good guy' alternative to N.A.T.O. In fact the Gulf War itself, which is still causing death and injury due to its environmental impact and its destruction of infrastructure, was clearly authorized by the U.N under following United Nations Security Council Resolution: "Noting that, despite all efforts by the United Nations, Iraq refuses to comply with its obligation to implement Resoulution 660 (1990) [i.e.the one demanding its withdrawal from Kuwait]in flagrant contempt of the Council,

Mindful of its duties and responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance and preservation of international peace and security,

Determined to secure full compliance with its decisions, Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

- 1) Demands that Iraq comply fully with Resolution 660 (1990) [i.e. withdraws from Kuwait] and all subsequent relevant Resolutions and decides, while maintaining all its decisions, to allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of good will, to do so;
- 2) Authorises member states co-operating with the Government of Kuwait, unless Iraq on or before 15 January, 1991 fully implements, as set forth in Paragraph 1 above, the foregoing Resolutions, to use all necessary means to uphold and implement Security Council Resolution 660 (1990) [i.e. the resolution demanding an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait] and all subsequent relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area;
- 3) Requests all states to provide appropriate support for the actions undertaken in pursuance of Paragraph 2 of this Resolution;" (26)

Since then there has been the U.N. imposed trade sanctions and the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq or UNSCOM, the first aimed at forcing the Iraqi government to disarm itself of its 'weapons of mass destruction' and the second being a team of inspectors mandated by the U.N. to go any where in Iraq to seek out and destroy both 'weapons of mass destruction' and the technology used to produce them. UNSCOM was, in the words of its former employee Mr Scott Ritter, "overwhelmed by the C.I.A." (27) and he also claimed it shared information with Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service.
(See footnote 9) .

One advisor of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan was quoted in the 'Washington Post' as saying "The Secretary General has become aware of the fact that UNSCOM directly facilitated the creation of an intelligence collection system for the United States in violation of its mandate." (28)

Through UNSCOM a coalition of the American, Australian, Canadian, Israeli and British intelligence services not only spied on Iraq, collecting information which would be later used to target bombs, but also recruited Iraqi agents into a scheme to destabilise and overthrow the Iraqi government. According to B.B.C. T.V. Documentary series 'Panorama' "What UNSCOM's secret team now offered M.I.6, C.I.A. and Israeli military intelligence was the Holy Grail of intelligence - the ability to place spies directly on target."

UNSCOM was tasked by the U.N. Security Council to remove the Iraqi 'weapons of mass destruction', not only do each of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (Britain, China, France, the United States and Russia) have its own 'weapons of mass destruction', enough to quite possibly cause the complete extinction of human life (see footnote 10) but as we have seen at least three of them (Britain, France, the United States) aided the Iraqi chemical weapons programme when it suited them to do so. The banning of UNSCOM from carrying out its inspections, an order issued by the Iraqi government on the pretext that UNSCOM was spying for the West, led to American and British retaliation in the form of 'Operation Desert Fox' a series of air raids in December 1998.

These air raids hit at least a dozen schools or hospitals and deprived 300,000 people in Baghdad of water supplies, according to a report by

U.N. agencies. Thus contributing to the dire situation faced by the Iraqi people, a people who have no control over the actions of the ruling Baath party but who suffer the ruin caused by the U.S. and British bombing in '91 and by the U.N imposed sanctions. The sanctions, which deprive people of food and medicine as well as severely hampering any attempt at rebuilding the country, have, according to figures produced by the Iraqi government and verified by U.N. agencies, killed 1.4 million people between 1991 and 1998, and are continuing to kill at a rate of 7,000 people a month, and 4,000 of the monthly death toll are children under the age of five. The sanctions effects were described by Mr Dennis Halliday, a former Under Secretary General of the United Nations and former Humanitarian Co-Ordinator for the United Nations in Iraq, with 30 years of service in that organisation, at a public meeting in the British 'House of Commons' in January 1999. He said : "When you enter Iraq for the first time - as I did in 1997 - you are struck by the effects of the 1991 bombing. They targeted the civilians of Iraq. You still see incredible damage in the water system, health, education - 8,000 schools need repair - they have 40% of the electrical power they had in the 1980's. The damage came on top of a very hard war with Iran [during which Iraq was supported by the very states which would go to war with it in the 90's] - whatever the rights and wrongs of that war, that increased the effects on the Iraqi people. There was a tripple whammy - the Iran-Iraq war, the Kuwait war, and sanctions, which are killing thousands of civilians. Well over one million Iraqi civilians, including at least 500,000 children, have died since 1990. Genocide is the right word for such a sanctions regime. We need to make sure this doesn't happen any where else in the years ahead. Basic medicines, preventive care, which were well established 20 years ago, are no more. Children are dying of preventable ailments like diarrhoea. Doctors cannot provide drugs. This is in a country which had a standard of living like Europe in the 1980's. Once the child mortality rate was 41 in 1000. Now we have chronic malnutrition with long-term effects on the mental and physical development of children.

Iraq enjoyed family values of a very high order - caring and commitment. Sanctions have torn this apart. There are one million widows from the Iran-Iraq war. Poor families are putting their children on the streets to beg, which in Iraq is sign of extreme need. Three and four year olds are begging at traffic lights. Often I drove home through sewage. There is a new phenomenon in Baghdad - street crime, violent crime. In this level of desperation the standards of Islam no longer work. Young girls are being put into prostitution. For decades professional women in Iraq played a prominent role. Now women can't afford to work; their buying power has disappeared. A month's salary will buy two chickens. Only some basic foodstuffs supplied through the Oil for Food programme keeps people alive. [this programme, which was introduced in 1996 and was directed by Mr Halliday, allows for the sale of some oil by Iraq provided that 40% of the profits goes to reparations to the Kuwait royalty and the rest on food relief]

"As a result of the use of 300 tons of depleted uranium by the coalition forces in 1991, the incidence of malformed children is growing at an appalling rate. It looks as if the war has been used for experimental purposes, that this has been a deliberate endeavour."

"Sanctions are an act of warfare." (29)

This is all justified by refering to the suffering of Iraq's Kurdish minority at the hands of the Iraqi government, but it is not the children of the rich and powerful of Iraq, those responsible for the war on the Kurds, the invasion of Kuwait, or any attempt to develop and stockpile 'weapons of mass destruction' that are suffering, but rather it is all the ordinary working people of Iraq, irrespective of nationality or religion, who are being victimised at the hands of the United Nations. The predominatly Kurdish areas of Iraq are under the same U.N. sanctions regime as the Arab areas.

During the Gulf War

I experienced the spectacle of people on the platforms of peace rallies calling for the imposition of sanctions just as during the bombing of Yugoslavia there were calls for U.N. action rather than N.A.T.O. action.

Or just as in the debate around the Partnership for Peace, an extension of N.A.T.O., the U.N has been held up as a 'universal' alternative to N.A.T.O. .

Effective power within the United Nations is held by the Security Council's five permanent members - Britain, France, Russia, the U.S.A. and China, each of which hold a veto over U.N. action while controlling most of the world's arms trade and most of the world's 'weapons of mass destruction' and all of which are among the most bloody and aggressive states of the 20th Century. Which is why they are the U.N. Security Council, because they are among the most powerful and therefore the best armed and most war-like states.

Calling for U.N. action rather than N.A.T.O. action on Kosovo, is then, essentially saying 'O.K. blast a small country into ruin but get the permission of the Russian and Chinese governments first'. Just as long as the governments steeped in the blood of Iraq and of Chechnya, of Tiananmen and of Central America agree, then logically these peace campigners will agree also, for that is what calling for U.N. action amounts to.

Even if the U.N. was reformed so that power lies in the hands of the 'General Assembly'

- which represents most of the governments of the world, it would mean nothing more than control of this organisation being in the hands of a larger collection of P.R. men for exploitation and murder, or politicians as they call themselves, if it would mean even that.

That brings us to the latest 'humanitarian intervention' by the 'international community' - the U.N. involvement in East Timor. To give a deeper perspective than just the tale of white skinned saviours arriving on an exotic island as presented by the mass media, I'm going to go back to the begining. The begining of both the military regime which invaded East Timor and the begining of the genocide of the East Timorese itself , paying particular attention to the role of the much vaunted 'international community' in each.

"With it's 100 million people and it's 300 mile arc of islands containing the region's richest natural resources, Indonesia is the greatest prize in South East Asia." (30)

that's how in 1967 Richard Nixon described the world's fourth most populated country. As well as natural resources, Indonesia also contains a massive market for Northern goods, as a Coca-Cola director once put it : "When I think of Indonesia - a country on the equator with 180 million people, and a Muslim ban on alcohol - I feel I know what heaven looks like." (31)

It also functions as a source of cheap labour for the Nike corporation among others. (Nike sub-contractors pay workers there 20 cents an hour.)

British companies with interests in Indonesia include Rio Tinto Zinc, British Petroleum, British Gas, Britoil, Rolls-Royce and British Aerospace.

"excellant trade and investment opportunities" (32) is how the U.S. Department of Commerce has described the country while the Confederation of British Industry (C.B.I.) speaks of " enormous potential for the foreign investor." (33)

Now to fully exploit this treasure a certain condition must be met, the existance of a government willing to facilitate the use of the natural resources by Northern corporations and to open Indonesian markets to Northern goods and furthermore a government willing to see to it that its subjects are sufficently cowed to accept poor wages, bad working conditions and the looting of their country. However in the 1950's and early 1960's Imperialism, or if you prefer, the 'international community', had a certain problem with Indonesia, firstly it had a nationalist and neutralist government headed by President Sukarno which imposed legal restrictions on foreign investment and nationalised some foreign owned businesses and secondly this government tolerated a great deal of grassroots political organising with 15 million people in mass organisations and 3 million in one of the world's largest communist parties (P.K.I.) .

As well as it's economic importance Indonesia is also of strategic importance as it's situated amongst some of the world's biggest shipping lanes - 40% of world trade passes through Indonesian waters among that 95% of oil destined for Japan as do American nuclear submarines moving from the Indian ocean to the Pacific.

In 1958 the C.I.A. organised a rebel army in Sumatra, the largest of Indonesia's islands. This was based on a landlord opposition alienated by the Government's land reform programme. The C.I.A. provided training in U.S. bases in the Philipines, bolstered the rebels with Philippine mercenaries, gave them military equipment and provided air support in the form of B-26 bombers.

The B-26's managed to stop most shipping to and from Indonesia. The full extent of U.S. involvement was only revealed when one of the B-26's was shot down resulting in the capture of it's American ex-U.S.A.F. pilot along with various incriminating documents which exposed the role of the C.I.A. . The rebellion was put down.

The C.I.A. had become involved in this episode of Indonesian history through

Lt. Col. Alex Kawilarang , who had been Indonesian military attache in Washington before defecting. Over the following years the American establishment would build up more contacts within Indonesia's politically powerful military which was to gradually increase it's power during the early years of the 1960's.

In the fall of 1965 the Army generals seized power, proclaimed the dawn of the New Order and launched a campaign of mass murder directed toward the P.K.I. and other mass organisations. Thus was born the dictatorship of General Suharto, in a wave of repression which claimed a quarter of a million lives according to the C.I.A. , half a million according to the Indonesian Army and many more than a million according to Amnesty International.

The following year the 'New Yok Times' enthusiastically described the U.S. role in this slaughter "Washington is being careful not to claim any credit for this change in the sixth most populous and one of the richest nations in the world, but this does not mean that Washington had nothing to do with it. There was a great deal more contact between the anti-Communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realised. General Suharto's forces, at times severely short of food and munitions, have been getting aid from here through various third countries, and it is doubtful if the coup would have ever been attempted without the American show of strength in Vietnam or been sustained without the clandestine aid it has received indirectly from here." (34)

This report had the headline "A Gleam of Light in Asia"(35), others in the U.S. press agreed and joined in the celebrations - 'Time' magazine headlined "The West's best news for years in Asia" (36), the even more enthusiastic 'U.S. News and World Report' read "HOPE . . . WHERE ONCE THERE WAS NONE".(37)

Uncle Sam's lieutenant also lent a helping hand; " a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change "(38) according to then British Ambassador to Indonesia , Sir Andrew Gilchrist, and in line with this British covert operations aided the Generals.

Less than a decade after their subjugation of Indonesia the Generals then targeted East Timor , a small outpost of the Portugese Empire on the verge of independance - as Portugal itself was in the midst of revolution at the time.

On December the 9th 1975 the invasion of East Timor began in earnest. (Special Forces units of the Indonesian Army had been preparing the ground work for the invasion in the preceeding months.) The then U.S. President Ford was just flying out of Indonesia when the killing began. All East Timorese were targets with approx. 200,000 - one third of the population, dying as a result of the genocidal occupation, 60,000 were to die in the first 14 months. (This was admitted to by the deputy governor of East Timor)

"The soldiers who landed started killing everyone they could find. There were many dead bodies in the street - all we could see were the soldiers killing, killing, killing." (39) relates the former Bishop of Dili, (East Timor's capital), Costa Lopez.

The problem for the Generals was that they faced a ready made nationalist guerrilla army and despite superiority in men and material Indonesia was facing military setbacks. But as the brutal occupation continued U.S. military aid increased by leaps and bounds; in 1977 new U.S. administration of President Carter ordered a 28% increase in military aid, in 1978 the value of U.S. military aid quadrupled to 130 million dollars. Just like Robin Cook Carter was a man who claimed that 'human rights' were the cornerstone of his foreign policy. This aid was to prove crucial in maintaining the General's rule over what they call Indonesia's 27th Province. As was the supply of arms from other Western powers.

The East Timorese refused to just lie down and die, so the Indonesian military were facing into a protracted counter insurgency campaign, a form of warfare in which one of the most usefull weapons are what are known as 'ground attack' aircraft, helicopters or planes whose function it is to fly low, manoeuvre around mountains, and bomb or shoot people on the ground.. Fortunately for them, the 'international community' was ready to lend a helping hand, firstly the French State who sold Alouette 'ground attack' helicopters and then British Aerospace who, with the full co-operation of, first the Old Labour government, then the Tories and now New Labour, have supplied Hawk 'ground attack' planes to Indonesia for 21 years, right up to September 1999. These aircraft can be seen flying the Indonesian colours at 'airshows' in Britain. A word about arms sales, keep in mind that these arms are often purchased with loans from the government of the sales company to the purchasing government, or are secured with 'export credit insurance' which basically means that if the purchasing government doesn't pay in full the government of the arms company will, also in continental Europe it's typical for an arms company to be State owned. Every arms export must be licenced by the State, so all in all this is not just business but the active support of the governments of Britain, France, Sweden, Holland, Germany and Canada for genocide. (see footnote 11)

It is not just aircraft, a whole range of murder devices, in fact just about everything one of the world's largest armies could want, as well as training, has been supplied to the Indonesian military by Western Governments and corporations. Principally by the U.S. in the 70's and Britain in the 80's, the American aid was of paramount importance during the years 1977 to 1979 which saw the offensives that really established Indonesian control over the territory.

C. Philip Liechty, who at the time was a C.I.A. officer in Indonesia, relates:

"What I saw was that my own government was very much involved in what was going on in East Timor and that what was going on was not good. You can be 100% certain that Suharto was explicitly given the green light to do what he did"

"We were learning about it from hard firm reports from people on the scene in East Timor. Reports of people being herded into school buildings by Indonesian soldiers with the buildings set on fire and anyone trying to get out being shot but most of the people being burnt alive. People being herded into fields and machine gunned, people being hunted down in the mountains, so any one who was out there was in what amounted to a 'free fire zone'."

"We were providing most of the weaponry, helicopters, logistical support, food, uniforms, ammunition, all the expendables that the Indonesians needed to conduct this war."

"You name it; they got it. And they got it direct. The normal course would have been for the stuff to be distributed through the Indonesian supply system in Java. But most of the equipment was now going straight into Timor. Without continued heavy U.S. logistical military support the Indonesians might not have been able to pull it off. [Instead] they were able to stay there at no real cost to them ; it didn't put any pressure on their economy and on their military forces because American taxpayers were footing the bill for the killing of all those people . ." (40)

You could wonder, given it's current intervention, exactly where the fuck was the U.N. in 1975. Well the United Nations General Assembly did pass a resolution condemning the invasion, Japan voted against it (the biggest investors in Indonesia are Japanese companies and most of the bilateral aid to Indonesia also comes from Japan), while the United States, Britain, France, Germany and Australia abstained.

The then United States Ambassador to the U.N., Daniel Patrick Moynihan, later wrote "The United States wished for things to turn out as they did [in East Timor], and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures that it undertook. This task was given to me and I carried it forward with no inconsiderable success.". He went on to compare the actions of the Indonesian military to those of the Nazis, writing that the initial 60,000 dead was "10 per cent of the population, almost the proportion of the casualties experienced by the Soviet Union during the Second World War." (41)

In 1989, the Australian Government, the only government in the world to recognise the Indonesian government as the rightful rulers of East Timor, made the Timor Gap Treaty with Indonesia, dividing the sea around Timor, with it's deposits of oil and gas, up between them.

By the mid 1990's the Indonesian Government faced growing dissent, intensified class struggle saw tens of thousands of workers on strike and the formation of independant trade unions, while there were rallies by those opposition parties tolerated by the regime, anti-government riots in 1996 and the continuing separatist movements in East Timor and West Papua as well as from 1989 onwards a new intensity to the separatist guerrilla struggle in the northern province of Aceh. Describing the pre-1997 situation Dita Sari, a trade union activist now quite famous around the world, said: "I should not be amazed but I am always amazed at the way people give their heart and soul, and their courage in facing up to the military. Every day now there is a strike, or a stopwork, or a continuing action against the regime. Maybe things look normal to businessmen and tourists and journalists, who see us as teeming and passive millions and don't see the truth about us. This is our invisible revolution." (42)

So, in the middle of 1997, when the Far Eastern economic melt down hit Indonesia, the weakest link in the chain of 'tiger economies', it came at an inauspicious time for the ruling class. The economic crisis saw six million people become unemployed in it's first six months, more than half the country's population below the poverty line and the average annual per-capita income go from 800 dollars a year to 300.

Of course these conditions were not experienced by Indonesia's rulers.

Suharto has used his position as top dog in the state's hierarchy to accumulate vast wealth for himself and his family. In 1997 U.S. magazine 'Forbes' estimates that he himself possesses a fortune worth 16 billion dollars and the total estimated wealth of his family is 46 billion dollars. By the time of the May 1998 riots and his subsequent resignation, Suharto's clan had joint ventures with 66 Northern corporations, including Switzerland's Nestle, British Petroleum and Lloyds of London along with General Electric and Du Pont from the U.S.A. . Suharto's youngest son Hutomo Mandala Putra is the former owner of Lamborghini which he sold to Volkswagen for 60 million dollars and he holds a major share in 127 Indonesian companies. Suharto's middle daughter, Siti Hediati Prabowo, was a partner with Naomi Campbell, Claudia Schieffer and Elle Macpherson in their celebrity themed 'Fashion Cafe' in Jakarta, as well as this she owns a significant part of 70 Indonesian businesses. Her husband General Prabowo was removed from office following Suharto's downfall, as he had earned popular hatred as an instigator of repression. General Prabowo was a major backer of the U.S.-Indonesian Society, a Washington lobby group also backed by various corporations including missile manufacturers Raytheon to whom the Indonesian state hierarchy are good customers and who, when they set up shop in Derry were greeted with praise and applause from Noble peace prize winners David Trimble and John Hume.

The rest of the Suharto brood are likewise up to their eyeballs in both blood and profit. All together the family owns 3.6 million hectares of land in Indonesia, including 40% of East Timor along with plush residential properties in the United States, Britain and New Zealand.

Unsurprisingly then an end to corruption along with the removal of Suharto was among the key demands of the student protest movement in the spring and early summer of 1998, another demand was for an end to I.M.F. economic reforms, and it was those economic reforms which were the proverbial straw that broke the camels back and led to the uprising which deposed Suharto. The I.M.F or International Monetary Federation, a section of the World Bank, offered the Indonesian government a 43 billion dollar bail out loan following the onset of the economic crash, this came with certain 'structural adjustment' conditions principally the ending of subsidies on fuel, cooking oil, electricity and food and cutbacks in social spending. The resulting price rises, petrol for instance rose by 71%, sparked the protests, looting and street fighting which sent Suharto into retirement as demonstrating students were joined by the urban poor and working class population.

The significance of this is twofold, firstly it shows the support which Suharto got, right up to his dethronement, from the 'international community', a support which was not even concealed - the Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, commented on Indonesia's change of President, by saying he " will co-operate fully with Mr Habibies's administration as we have in the past co-operated with the former President Suharto's

administration ".

He went on to welcome "the fact that the changes are within the framework of the constitution." (43) (i.e. welcoming the fact that Suharto's designated successor and long time crone Habibie had been appointed President - that there has been a cabinet reshuffle and not a revolution). Secondly it shows the disarray (from the perspective of its rulers) into which Indonesia had fallen by the time the United Nations were invited into East Timor by the Indonesian government headed by Habibie.

The former showing that despite their supposed outrage over the recent massacres in East Timor there has been absolutely zero real opposition from Western governments to the Indonesian state. The latter giving some of the background to the Indonesian governments decision to disengage from East Timor. A decision which was reported by the 'Irish Times' with a headline which ran "Domestic instability may be motivating Jakarta's possible 'release' of East Timor", the article itself read "Observers, believe however, that Indonesia was compelled to make its dramatic move this week [i.e. the announcement of its intent to hold a referendum on East Timor's future] because of domestic instability, which has overtaxed the military, and by the new atmosphere of democracy in Jakarta which supported the view that the 23 year old occupation had been a military, political, economic and moral disaster for Indonesia." (44)

To break that down, 'domestic instability' i.e. the resistance by the people of Indonesia, 'disaster for Indonesia' i.e. successful resistance by the East Timorese and then the overtaxed military, an important consideration given the fact that the regime faces independence movements in the Acheh and West Papua areas, which are considerably more rich in resources than East Timor. East Timor then was a liability for the Indonesian state.

The U.N. brokered accord between the Indonesian and Portuguese governments (the latter is recognised by the U.N. as the legitimate ruler of East Timor) reached on the 5th of May 1999 and subsequently approved by the U.N. Security Council, provided for an August referendum on the government proposal of a measure of local self rule for East Timor and that if that option was rejected at the polls independence would be granted, this ballot to be carried out by a U.N. mission

(UNAMET) and security for the ballot to be provided by the Indonesian police. That's right, security courtesy of the Indonesian police, the people of East Timor to be made 'secure' by the same forces which have spent the last 23 years killing them.

The terror and intimidation carried out principally by government sponsored militias acting with the co-operation of the army and police prior to the vote was not predictable, it didn't need to be predicted, it had already begun, for example in the month prior to the signing of the agreement dozens of refugees were hacked to death by militiamen in a church in Liquica. That a pro-independence verdict would be met with violence was predictable, in the same month as the signing of the accord an army document was leaked which stated: "massacres should be carried out from village to village ..if the pro-independence supporters win." (45)

Later leaked documents outline government plans for a 'scorched earth' wave of destruction should the vote go in favour of independence.

Before the signing of the accord East Timorese leader Jose Ramos Horta warned "If the UN simply relies on the will of the Indonesian side and pushes ahead with the vote, bloodshed is almost certain because the Indonesian army will be there, the paramilitary will be there, and their interest is to disrupt the vote, to intimidate the people." (46)

Prior to the vote taking place U.N. personnel on the ground in East Timor warned of the strong possibility of violence and had documented the collusion between militias, army and police and warned that an international peace keeping force was necessary, their warnings were ignored.

The people who run the U.N. are well informed they knew that the militias were set up by the government, and that they worked with government forces and they also knew of the level of State violence in the area over the preceding 23 years, consequently we can only conclude from the fact that they left the state forces in charge of security in the run up to the vote that the decisions of this organisation take no account of plight of the East Timorese and consequently we have to conclude that the U.N. 'INTERFET' forces currently in East Timor are not there for reasons of humanity.

State sponsored violence increased in the days just before and just after the ballot - more or less in full view of the world's media and singled out for attack were the local people working for UNAMET.. Despite this on the 3rd of September U.N. General Secretary Kofi Annan said: "Even on 30 August people were saying that we could not have elections because there would be violence. It took place very well. I'm in contact with the Indonesian Government, and they have said that they will do what they can. Until now they have done their best." (47)

The next day, the result of the vote was made known and so began a terror campaign which was to make half of the population refugees, kill many and leave the country a smoldering ruin. Over two weeks later at the invitation of the Indonesian government the 8,000 strong Australian led U.N. intervention force arrives.

If we say that this intervention was motivated by humanitarian concern we must conclude that either there was some sudden 'road to Damascus' style conversion in the corporate boardrooms and ministerial offices of this world or that the preceding 40 years of history in Indonesia never happened. While it seems the situation for the East Timorese has improved greatly since the entry of the U.N. force and it seems probable that it will remain better than under Indonesian rule, we can not ignore the fact that without the support for the Indonesian state from same powers which are now intervening the oppression of the East Timorese would have been ended years ago, perhaps without that support it would not have even begun. So if their situation improves as a result of West's action it is a happy co-incidence but not the goal of those actions.

The Australian soldiers excavating mass graves are seeing what their tax money was spent on - 1 billion Australian dollars were given to the Suharto regime as part of the Australian Government's contribution to the I.M.F. loan in 1997.

The E.U. and U.S. ban on arms sales to Indonesia count for little when we consider that the weapons of E.U. companies produced outside the E.U. on licence can continue to be exported to Indonesia, the U.S. ban counts for even less as the U.S. government has often banned arms sales and military aid to various countries and then sent the arms via a third state, typically Israel. After media attention was turned on East Timor in 1991, with the televising of footage of the army shooting at peaceful protestors, American military training programmes for Indonesian military and police were ended only to resume secretly, as was later revealed. In any case the E.U. arms export ban was lifted in the first weeks of the new year.

West Papua, the western half of the large island of New Guinea just north of Australia, continues to be, as East Timor once was, a 'disputed'

province of Indonesia, 'disputed' in that it's inhabitants 'dispute' the right of the Indonesian government to rule them and 'dispute' the right of Multi-Nationals to loot their resources. Similarly to East Timor, the years of Indonesian occupation in West Papua have been years of brutal repression with estimates of the death toll reaching as high as 300,000 - one third of the total population. Again like in East Timor 'counter insurgency' in West Papua has been assisted by the arms of the West, the bloodshed in West Papua reached it's highpoint in the late 70's and we have already examined the role of U.S. military aid in this period, again helicopters and 'ground attack' aircraft were to be of great importance, probably even more so in this large, heavily forested and mountainous area than in the far smaller East Timor. As with East Timor for most of it's history under Jakarta's jackboot, atrocity in West Papua has been greeted with silence by the world's media. However, when we come to the role of the United Nations there the similarity ends, for West Papua underwent U.N. intervention long before East Timor, in West Papua this came in the early 1960's at the birth of Indonesian rule in the territory.

Until 1962 West Papua, was a colony of the Netherlands known as West New Guinea and it has been such since the previous century, though there was little attempt to exploit it's massive resources and it had been originally taken over merely to protect the left flank of the 'Dutch East Indies' (the territory which was to become Indonesia). However by 1962, there had been geological exploration (see footnote 12) revealing a horde of mineral resources including copper, nickel, gold, cobalt and chromite as well as oil deposits.

All this alongside the potential for forestry, fisheries and cash crop plantations made West Papua an attractive potential source of profit.

The Indonesian government laid claim to it, and this was a claim resisted by the Dutch government in favour of an independent West Papua, a dispute which is unsurprising when one considers the fact that Dutch firms in Indonesia had been put under state control. The de-colonisation process was already underway in the territory and as part of this a rubber stamp elected assembly had been established. Following the landing of Indonesian special forces units, the New York Agreement was signed between the two governments and ratified by the United Nations General Assembly. Under the terms of this agreement, there was first a Dutch withdrawal on the 1st of October 1962, followed by a period of U.N. administration until May 1st 1963, followed by Indonesian rule for a period of six years during which they had to be a 'Act of Free Choice' - in which the Papuan electorate would decide their fate.

The Dutch agreed to this, because of, at least in part, American pressure. Doubtless the U.S. government was anxious to keep it's friends in the Indonesian military happy - General Suharto was the commander of Indonesian forces in West New Guinea at the time. Under U.N. command was a force from the Pakistan army, 59 U.S. military observers, the locally recruited Papua police and, nominally at least, several thousand from the Indonesian armed forces. The Papuan 'Regional Council' elected by universal suffrage as part of the Dutch de-colonialisation process clearly rejected the U.N. mandated Indonesian occupation but was ignored. Even before the U.N. period of administration ended the Indonesian army was repressing pro-independence supporters and by the mid-1960's both the military massacres and the armed resistance by West Papuans had begun.

The U.N. supervised 'Act of Free Choice', which took place in 1969, consisted of the rounding up of 1,025 West Papuans who were given the choice of death or voting for continued inclusion in Indonesia. A flavour of the attitude of the Indonesian army at the time is given by a Major Soewondo who told West Papuan village representatives that: "I am drawing the line frankly and clearly. I say I will protect and guarantee the safety of everyone who is for Indonesia. I will shoot dead anyone who is against us - and all his followers." (48)

Suharto, by this time President, said that those opposed to "West Irian's" (West Papua) incorporation into Indonesia would be treated as traitors.

The 'Sydney Morning Herald' recently brought to public attention the active role played by the Australian government in the Indonesian take over - "Previously secret documents show Australia played a leading behind-the-scenes role to ensure [West Papua] Irian Jaya became a part of Indonesia in another U.N. - supervised vote - the so-called 'Act of Free Choice' in 1969.

"Top-secret government files, released under the 30-year rule of the Government's Archives Act, showed Australia colluded with Holland, the United States and United Nations officials to rubber-stamp the Indonesian take-over of the Melanesian province."

"The documents show Australian military officers collected evidence of Indonesian atrocities, including military offensives, rapes, beatings, lootings and torching of villages but the Federal Government kept the information secret"

"One secret US government document given to Australia before the self-determination process began in July, 1969, shows UN officials indicating almost all West Papuans supported independence"

"Australia, at the request of Indonesia, also arrested and prevented two pro-independence West Papuan leaders from travelling to the UN, just weeks before the UN-supervised vote on self-determination. The men, Willem Zonggonao, 26, and Clemens Runawery, 27, were detained when they crossed the border into Australian administered New Guinea, carrying testimonies from many West Papuan leaders calling for independence and for the U.N. to abandon the Act of Free Choice."

"The documents also show Australia maintained a secret military and intelligence relationship with Indonesia, aimed at eliminating armed pro-independence dissent. "

" . . . the files showed Australia played a leading role in a campaign to ensure the Act of Free Choice was accepted without debate at the UN General Assembly in November 1969." (49)

Western corporations, and Western governments do not and have not maintained a relationship of close co-operation with the Indonesian state in spite of it's massacres within Indonesia proper in the 1960's, and it's torture, imprisonment and murder there since and it's genocidal rule in West Papua and East Timor, but rather because of it's oppression. This oppression has made Indonesia into 'an investors paradise', the truth of this is demonstrated by the economic aid which came flooding into the country after the coup in '65/'66, an aid which aims to improve the situation for foreign investors, for example, building a road from a port to a mine. It is also shown by events in West Papua. Established in the years 1967 to 1973 the copper, gold and silver mine in Ertsberg Mountain, which is jointly owned by American corporation Freeport Sulphur and British corporation Rio Tinto Zinc, constitutes the richest copper deposit in the world, produces one fifth of Indonesia's G.N.P. and is the largest single contributor to the states tax revenue. Part of this mine is built upon the hunting ground of the Amungme people, whose resistance culminated in several acts of sabotage in the summer of 1977, principally the destruction of a pipe line which brings copper and other minerals to a sea port. The reaction of the Indonesia authorities to this was to repeat their favourite tactic of air attack on a defenceless people. This time using OV - 10 Bronco aircraft supplied via Israel as a gift from the U.S.A. . A measure of the closeness of the relationship between Government

repression and corporate profit is shown by the fact that earlier that year Amnesty International reported that steel containers on the mine site were used to incarcerate political prisoners. General Suharto even used the opening ceremony of this mine to rename 'West Irian' (West Papua) 'Irian Jaya' - a demonstration of the relationship between mineral resources and military occupation.

Without the repression of the Amungme and of West Papuans in general, would Freeport/Rio Tinto Zinc have had the favourable access to West Papua's mineral resources that they have? Without the destruction of trade unions would Nike sub-contractors be able to get away with paying 20 cents an hour?

The carefully planned and executed 100 day genocide of Rwanda's Tutsi minority, who in 1994 were massacred along with many of the Hutu majority suspected of sympathy towards them by the Hutu government's Interahamwe militia is typically held up as an example of the sort of 'tribal savagery' which could be halted if only the 'noble West' took up the 'white man's burden' and fought 'a war of peace' or a 'humanitarian intervention' as they are now known. According to David Begg, chief executive of the charity 'Concern Worldwide' his "abiding memory of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is of a Belgian soldier armed with an automatic rifle standing by while a young Tutsi woman was dragged past him by the head of her hair on her way to be killed. I have never been able to get that picture out of my mind. It epitomised the international communities failure to act to prevent the deaths of 800,000 people. Later, the Canadian general in charge of UN forces said if he had been given even one brigade of 5,000 men, he could have saved many lives." (50)

Or as John O'Shea head of the development group GOAL put it:

"For some years now I have been campaigning for the establishment of a force which would be ready at a moment's notice to move into potential flashpoints to protect civilian populations from potential oppressors. How many lives might have been spared in Rwanda if such a force had existed? Or Bosnia, or Kosovo?" (51)

If intervention by the West is a solution one would wonder why Rwanda has any problems in the first place given as it has enjoyed the benefits of both German and Belgian civilisation. The 1994 genocide had its origin in a brutal system of 'racial' hierarchy established by German and Belgian imperialism while those who carried out the genocide itself were allied to French imperialism.

In pre-colonial Rwanda the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was one of class, a Tutsi was someone who owned a significant amount of cattle - the main source of wealth in this pastoral economy. The Hutu's laboured for their Tutsi masters as a form of rent paid for the hire of cattle. Much as in Feudal Europe the peasantry paid in labour or in agricultural produce in return for the use of the land. These class distinctions also had 'racial' connotations, the majority of Tutsis being of a different ethnic origin than Hutus. Just as in Feudal England the peasantry were of Anglo-Saxon origin and the aristocracy of Norman-French origin. Despite this there was both upward and downward mobility - a Hutu could become a Tutsi and vice versa.

Then came the first intervention by the 'noble West' in the form of German colonialism, underpinned by a racist ideology which saw not only the 'white' Germans as superior to the Africans but also the supposedly lighter skinned Tutsi as superior and closer to the Aryan than the 'sub-human' Hutus.

The Tutsis became a collaborationist elite and extended their domination northward, in conjunction with German imperialism, massacring those Hutus who dared resist. Following its defeat in the 1914 - 1918 war German imperialism gave way to the Belgian variety. The new Belgian master's rule was mandated by the League of Nations the forerunner to today's U.N. and represented an addition to their already vast African colony the neighbouring Congo. In the Congo under the guise of 'humanitarianism' they had managed to, over the course of the forty years from 1880 to 1920, slaughter half the population - about ten million persons (see footnote 13) while forcing many of the rest to labour at gunpoint and exporting large quantities of rubber. Under the rule of that 'small nation', which had featured in the 'humanitarian appeal' which helped recruit thousands of British, Commonwealth and Empire cannon fodder into the slaughter of the First World War, modern Rwanda was shaped. The power of the Tutsi minority was consolidated, a Tutsi puppet king ruled and between 1926 and 1933 an Apartheid style system of mandatory I.D. cards indicating the 'racial' status of the bearer (i.e. whether they were Hutu or Tutsi) was introduced. On the one hand the Hutu population was consigned to the status of a slave labourer while the other hand made sure that they would be at that level for life as would their children and their children's children. The chasm between Tutsi and Hutu was made almost impassable, by emphasising the 'racial' overtones to what was a class distinction. The memory of Tutsi oppression in the colonial period was to become a major motivation to the rank and file Hutu's who carried out the vicious oppression of Tutsis in the post-colonial period.

Also introduced under colonial rule was the same system of mono-culture or cash crops introduced throughout the colonial world, by which the colony's economy was devoted to the production of one or two raw unprocessed commodities for the Imperialist market. In this case coffee.

Independence came in 1959, with the transfer of power from the Tutsis to a Hutu elite and the slaughter of many Tutsis and sending into exile of many more in an orgy of Hutu vengeance.

Over the course of the 60's, 70's and 80's the Tutsi minority were subject to discrimination punctuated by occasional massacre. Shorn of their political and economic power their role became akin to that of the Jew in Nazi ideology - a scapegoat on which to blame all social ills, a useful tool to deflect anger away from the ruling class and its government.

In 1989 the price of coffee - source of over 75% of Rwanda's export earnings collapsed, which intensified poverty and to which the Rwandan military regime reacted in the traditional manner - by scapegoating the Tutsi minority.

Into this explosive situation came the Rwandan Patriotic Front an army of Tutsi exiles who invaded from neighbouring Uganda in October 1990.

While the state media carried on a propaganda campaign against the Tutsis referring to them as cockroaches and individual massacres were carried out by Government forces and allied militias the R.P.F. offensive continued.

Despite French military aid R.P.F. victories led to a peace accord in October 1993, the terms of which planned for a powersharing government and the incorporation of the R.P.F. into the Rwandan armed forces.

Then on April 6th 1994 two missiles shot down the jet of President Habyarimana - the military despot who had ruled Rwanda since 1973 and who had signed the peace accords. Habyarimana died in his jet, which had been a gift from the French government. Controversy surrounds who killed him and why, Fergal Keane a B.B.C. journalist who reported on the genocide writes that "The most likely explanation - one disputed by Hutu extremists and their French supporters - is that soldiers of the presidential guard based next to the airport fired the missiles. There is

another theory that members of the French military or security sources, or mercenaries in the pay of France, shot down the aircraft. Although no firm evidence has been produced, there are senior figures in the Belgian security services who think that the French may have wanted rid of Habyarimana, believing he was about to hand the country over to the RPF." (52) The peace accords were seen as a threat to their privilege and rule by those who had wormed their way into power under Habyarimana and it was these who were to begin the genocide following the President's assassination and it was through an alliance with these that Rwanda was incorporated into the French zone of influence in Africa, Fergal Keane writes "the French maintained a military mission and a sizeable detachment of intelligence officers in Rwanda. With their contacts inside the army and at every level of government and the state media. Paris could not have been ignorant of the genocidal intentions of many of the senior officers and officials." (53)

With the dictator dead the 100 day killing spree begins and it claimed between 800,000 and one million lives, hundreds of thousands of people burnt, shot or beaten to death. But what is suffering and death for hundreds of thousands is a tidy profit for a few - the British arms company Mil-Tec, for instance, who in seven arms shipments to the Hutu establishment between the 17th of April '94 and the 13 of July '94 grossed 5.5 million dollars. (although the methods of the massacres themselves were fairly primitive it was necessary that the R.P.F. be held off while the killings were carried out in the rear)

Now while Rwanda was not some sort of sun drenched romantic utopia prior to colonialism and while it is true to say that the working class and peasantry of Africa have as many foes in Africa as in Paris, London and Washington, when faced with the history of the last one hundred years of colonialism and neo-colonialism any attempt to argue that what Rwanda (or any other part of Africa) needs is more 'Western intervention' is clearly falling into a hole midway between ridiculousness and perversity. In actual fact there was a Western 'humanitarian intervention' in Rwanda in '94, in fact there were three of them.

The first was a U.N. mission to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement, as the genocide began the United Nations Security Council reduced this force by 90% leaving only 250 troops under strict orders not to interfere, this reduction was achieved largely through American pressure conducted by the then U.S. ambassador to the U.N. - Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State during the 'humanitarian' bombing of Yugoslavia, Uncle Sam's functionaries were also busy haggling with the U.N. over the rental price to be paid for their vehicles in Rwanda.

The second was the 25,000 French marines who created a 'safe haven' in the south west of the country, French intervention had also prevented the R.P.F. from taking the capital Kigali in February 1993. This was a 'safe haven' for the Hutu elite and their followers, who then escaped over the border and into Zaire (Congo) where they administered refugee camps supported by the U.N., this being the third and final 'humanitarian intervention'. Author of an award winning book on the Rwandan genocide, Philip Gourevitch, describes the role of the U.N. "Rwanda had presented the world with the most unambiguous case of genocide since Hitler's war against the Jews, and the world sent blankets, beans and bandages to camps controlled by the killers, apparently hoping that everybody would behave nicely in the future."(54)

Journalist Vincent Browne relates that "Francois Mitterrand's France armed, trained and directed the Rwandan army and the militia that carried out the genocide of 1994."

"the French intervened at a point when almost the entire Tutsi population of Rwanda had been murdered. They protected from an invading army of Tutsis (largely from Uganda) those Hutu leaders who had orchestrated the genocide."(55)

If not humanitarianism what then is it which motivates our ruler's wars.

To understand why the West undertakes military intervention we must look at the relationship between the Western ruling class and the undeveloped world. As this relationship was forged during the colonial period we'll start with its origins in colonialism.

250 years ago the thriving Indian textile industry was centred in Dacca, in present day Bangladesh, a city which in 1757 was described by Clive of the British East India company as: "extensive, populous and rich as the city of London" (56)

In the first two decades of the 19th century the import of Indian cloth to Britain was prohibited and the sale of Indian cloth within India was heavily taxed. The result being that by the middle of the 19th Century a quarter of all British textile exports were going to India and India became an importer of textiles rather than an exporter. Dacca suffered because of this, as was described at a House of Lords inquiry in 1840 - "The population of Dacca has fallen from 150,000 to 30,000 or 40,000 and the jungle and malaria are fast encroaching upon the town . . . Dacca, which used to be the Manchester of India, has fallen off from a flourishing town to a very poor and small one." (57)

A similar policy was pursued in Egypt and is here outlined by the British governor of Egypt from 1883 to 1907, Lord Cromer: "The policy of the government may be summed up thus: (1) export of cotton to Europe...; (2) imports of textile products manufactured abroad...; nothing else enters the government's intentions, nor will it protect the Egyptian cotton industry, because of the dangers and evils that arise from such measures .."

Years later Cromer admitted that the result of his policy was, as follows:

"The difference is apparent to any man whose recollections go back some ten or fifteen years. Some quarters [of Cairo] that formerly used to be veritable centres of varied industries - spinning, weaving, ribbonmaking, dyeing, tentmaking, embroidery, shoemaking, jewellery making, spice grinding, copper work, the manufacture of bottles out of animal skins, saddlery, sieve making, locksmithing in wood or metal, etc.. - have shrunk considerably or vanished. Now there are coffee houses and European novelty shops where once there were prosperous workshops." (58)

This was not just confined to India and Egypt, but was, under colonialism, the worldwide birth of the system known as the 'international division of labour' whereby by the colonial world functions both as a source of raw material for the manufacturers of the Imperialist state and as a market for their finished goods, this was achieved not through any natural process or accident of history but through the deliberate de-industrialisation of the colonies (where necessary) and their organisation into a subordinate role as producers of raw material and as markets for Western goods.

This system continues to prevail today, for example, Chile is the world's largest copper producer, with large copper deposits, Japan is the third largest refiner of copper, but there are no copper mines in Japan, there are however factories which produce electrical goods and copper used as it is for wiring is an important component of all electrical goods, Japan then is an important market for copper producers but a heavy import tax on refined copper makes it unprofitable to import that to Japan, so Chilean exports to Japan are of unrefined copper ore which is refined in Japan, used to manufacture T.V.'s, radios, etc.. which are then sold in Chile and worldwide. An important part of the 'international division of labour' is the cash crop or mono-culture system whereby an economy is dedicated to the production of one or two commodities for the world market.

This leads to what is known as the 'unequal exchange' where by an economy devoted to the production of one or two crops for sale to one or two monopoly corporations has to accept the buyers price as the buyer can go buy elsewhere but the seller must sell to a limited number of customers, furthermore whereas the economy of say the Philipines or Cuba (pre-1960) may be dependant on the sale of sugar on the American market the American economy is certainly not dependant on sugar, making the economies of these countries heavily dependant on the actions of a foreign government.

Not only has this dependance produced disastrous results for the people of these regions, as we shall see in a moment, but it also produces a continous downward spiral in world market prices of cash crops. When the U.S. and E.C. in the early 1980's began to subsidise their internal sugar production and by 1984 American sugar imports had halved a situation was created in the main sugar producing area of the Philipines where within a year a quarter of a million farm workers were made redundant and two thirds of the children were malnourished. Likewise in Cuba the economy faced ruin after the U.S. Government imposed a trade embargo in retaliation of the Cuban Government's nationalisation of U.S. owned land and sugar processing plants, depriving Cuba of it's market for it's crop of sugar but not producing ruin as the Soviet Union agreed to buy Cuban sugar at above the world market price.

Monopolies on the production and sale of industrial and technological goods held by Northern corporations mean that they can fix their prices as high as possible, as they have a worldwide market but their customers only have a limited number of sources of these essential goods. For example, local production of AIDS medicines in Thailand had reduced the price for the consumer by two thirds, this is allowed under World Trade Organisation rules only in emergency situations and only 20 years after the patenting, the American government acting for American pharmaceutical companies pressurised the Thai government into ending this local production by imposing import taxes on Thai goods coming into the American market.

This, the 'international division of labour' and the 'unequal exchange' is the key part of imperialism and is basically what under-development is.

Furthermore much of the natural resources of the South are owned by Northern corporations as we have seen with the Freeport/Rio Tinto Zinc mine in West Papua, or the sugar plantations and their processing plants in pre-1960 Cuba and where industrialisation does occur it is typically a case of production being transfered to the South by Northern corporations in search of lower labour costs and lax enviromental protection.

So how does Western military intervention fit into this, well, General Smedley D. Butler of the U.S. Marine Corp describes his carrer thus:

"I spent 33 years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force - the marine corps. And during that time I spent most of my time being a high class muscle man for big business, Wall Street and for the big bankers. In short I was a racketeer for capitalism.

I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914 . . . I helped make Haiti and Cuba decent places for the National City Bank boys .

I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers . . .

I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests . . .

I helped make Honduras 'right' for American Fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went it's way unmolested. During those years I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honours, medals, promotion. Looking back on it, I feel I might have given Al Capone a few hints, the best he could do was operate his racket in three city districts we. .operated on three continents" (59)

An apt example of what General Butler is talking about took place in Guatemala in 1954. At the time one and a half million acres of agricultural land in the country was controlled by the United Fruit Company of Boston as was the railways, the port and the telecommunications system. In democratic elections in 1951 the government of Colonel Arbenz came to power, one of the policies they enacted was land reform- the compulsory purchase by the government of fallow land held by major landlords, who were to be compensated with the value of their properties that they had declared for tax purposes, and the distribution of that land to the small holders and the landless. This was in a rural society where 2% of the population owned 70% of the land. One of these major landowners was the United Fruit Company. Other policies of the Arbenz government which badly affected United Fruit was the State development of a new port and new legislation establishing the legal right to strike, collective bargaining and making a legal minimum wage. The United Fruit Company had a direct line to the U.S. Government in the form of State Department head John Foster Dulles whose law firm had major contracts with United Fruit and whose brother Allen was head of the C.I.A. and held shares in United Fruit. Nor was that the only link, Robert Cutler head of the staff of the National Security Council had been a director of United Fruit and Spruille Braden Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs later became a director of United Fruit. The C.I.A. armed, trained, funded and provided spy reports to a Honduras based rebel force of the indigenous Landlord opposition. This 'guerilla' army was equiped with a radio station and an air force by the C.I.A. whose support cost \$20 million in the first six months of 1954 alone. Air support was crucial in the winning of victory by the rebel forces of Colonel Armas which, helped by the key political support of the Catholic Church, took Guatemala City in June 1954. A land reform free dictatorship was then established and one of it's first acts was to imprison 9,000 people, many of whom were jailed for years. Howard Hunt, the then C.I.A. Chief of Station in neighbouring Mexico described the C.I.A.'s offensive against the Arbenz government as a "terror campaign" (speaking in T.V. documentary series 'Cold War').

All this is now admitted to by the Establishment press, according to a C.I.A. chronology published in 'USA Today' on the C.I.A.'s 50th anniversary : "CIA and State Department jointly stage a coup in Guatemala , overthrowing President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, a leftist reformer who tried to expropriate the U.S.-based United Fruit Company." (60)

A State Department official said at the time that : "Guatemala has become an increasing threat to the stability of Honduras and

El Salvador. Its agrarian reform is a powerful propaganda weapon; its broad social program of aiding the workers and peasants in a victorious struggle against the upper classes and large foreign enterprises has a strong appeal to the populations of Central American neighbours where similar conditions prevail." (61)

The previous year a joint British and American operation led to a successful coup d'etat against the government of Iran, about which 'U.S.A. Today' says: "CIA backed coup overthrows Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, who had threatened to nationalise Western oil interests in Iran." (62)

Commenting on this event at the time the 'New York Times' editorialised: "Underdeveloped countries with rich resources now have an object lesson in the heavy cost that must be paid by one of their number which goes berserk with fanatical nationalism. It is perhaps too much to hope that Iran's experience will prevent the rise of Mossadeghs in other countries, but that experience may at least strengthen the hands of more reasonable and more far-seeing leaders, who will have a clear-eyed understanding of our overriding priorities." (63)

Back in Guatemala and by the late 60's the military regime established there by the U.S. was facing a guerrilla insurgency, its response was summed up by the then Guatemalan President, Colonel Enrique Peralta Azurdia when he said: "If I have to turn this country into a graveyard in order to pacify it, I will do so." (64)

Thus began a 30 year civil war which was to leave over 200,000 dead, most of them victims of government forces, paid for, trained, armed and advised by the U.S.A. .

The death toll reached its highpoint in the early 1980's when approximately 70,000 people, mostly Mayan peasants, were murdered by the forces of the State. U.S. aid to the Guatemalan government peaked at this time at 50 million dollars in 1983. One of the architects of the slaughter, General Hector Gramajo, was rewarded with a fellowship to Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, during his time there he said in an interview with 'Harvard International Review' that: "We have created a more humanitarian, less costly strategy, to be more compatible with the democratic system. We instituted civil affairs [in 1982] which provides development for 70 percent of the population, while we kill 30 percent. Before the strategy was to kill 100 percent." (65)

The slaughter has continued, albeit on a much reduced scale, in its 1992 report on the country Amnesty International found that: "Hundreds of people were alleged to have been extrajudicially executed by the security forces and their civilian agents. Scores of others 'disappeared'. The victims included indigenous people, human rights activists, trade unionists, street children and a police officer investigating human rights abuses. Members of popular movements, journalists and others were increasingly subjected to death threats and harassment: several were abducted and tortured by unidentified armed men believed to belong to the security forces. Police officers were reported to have tortured or ill-treated criminal suspects and street children." (66)

The first ever trial of Guatemalan military personnel for carrying out such actions took place in November 1999 when 25 British trained soldiers were each given 5 year suspended sentences for carrying out a massacre of 11 Mayan peasants, including two children, in 1995. They were given the option of having their sentences reduced by paying 50 U.S. cents for each day.

To see how Western 'humanitarian' intervention fits into this system consider the case of Somalia, a country whose famine and civil war briefly occupied our screens in 1992, its turn at playing the role of that regular feature the 'third world disaster story'.

In an article in 'Hot Press' arguing in favour of U.N. intervention, and published prior to the arrival in Somalia of an almost 40,000 strong U.S. dominated U.N. force, future Irish government minister Micheal D. Higgins wrote "The tyrannical 21 year rule of Mohamed Siad Barre in Somalia from 1969 to 1991 was assisted by the U.S.S.R. for one decade and the by the U.S. for another. Both were permanent members of the Security Council." (67)

The U.N. force was allegedly arriving to bring food to the needy and bring order to a country racked by civil war with fifteen different sides.

579 million dollars worth of arms given to Siad Barre by the U.S. in the ten years from '79 to '89 was the fuel for the civil war, as Barre used some of those arms in a ultimately too successful divide and rule strategy - arming different factions against each other.

The roots of the famine are to be found outside of Somalia in the form of foreign Imperialism. Under British rule Somalia's subsistence pastoral economy was transformed into a commercialised system which produced livestock for export - something which a large part of the Somalian economy remains devoted to, this has produced over-grazing and as a consequence desertification. A desertification which amplified the effects of drought and thereby led to famine. The Superpower backed war between Somalia and Ethiopia also helped the famine on its way.

Years after the U.N. 'rescue' of Somalia reports began to surface, backed up by photographic and video evidence, and the words of soldiers who were there, to the effect that U.N. soldiers murdered at random, tortured - for instance there is one photo showing Belgian soldiers holding a small boy over an open fire, and gang raped. However only atrocities carried out by the rank and file got widespread media attention. According to U.N. estimates 6,000 people were left dead by the U.N. invasion, C.I.A. estimates come up with the higher figure of between 7,000 and 10,000. That includes many killed during an aerial bombardment of a march protesting against the U.N. occupation.

Another 'odd' feature of this 'humanitarian intervention' is that for two months in the year prior to it American food aid was withheld from Somalia, while the alleged inability of aid agencies to feed people because of looting was held up as the justification for the intervention. In fact the U.S. Government, following Siad Barre's overthrow in January 1991, actively discouraged humanitarian aid to Somalia.

The key to understanding intervention in Somalia lies in what that land sits upon and where it sits next to. Military bases in Somalia had been granted to the U.S. by Barre in 1991 and we have already seen how the U.S. and U.S.S.R. backed rival client governments in the region, so why should we assume that their motivation in 1992 was any different from their motivation in previous years, and that motivation was the strategic position of Somalia. Strategic, situated as it is on the Horn of Africa, right next to one of the world's biggest shipping lanes - the Red Sea which leads to the Suez canal and only a short distance from the oil rich Middle East. Added to Somalia's strategic importance was, after the late 80's, an economic importance because of the large oil deposits which had been discovered and by 1991 four American oil corporations, Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips held the rights, granted to them by Barre, to mine for oil under almost two-thirds of Somalian land. All this coupled with the fact that rival local warlords were backed by France, the U.S. and Italy (the former colonial ruler of parts of Somalia) and that there have been allegations of Islamic fundamentalist involvement would suggest that the goal of the U.S. presence was to secure this area for the U.S. corporations; whose interests were doubtlessly also adversely affected by the civil war situation which would have hindered any attempts to exploit the oil reserves. The intervention did not bring peace to Somalia - the local conflict persisted for at least another six years.

So a call for United Nations 'humanitarian intervention', 'peace enforcement' and 'crisis management' amounts to a call for torture, rape and murder because we have gone down that road already we can see that is where it leads.

Western military intervention is an element of Imperialism, it aims to protect and expand the direct ownership of natural resources by Western companies, to maintain sources of cheap labour and assure that the orientation of underdeveloped economies remains toward the export of cash crops and raw materials and the import of the products of the industries owned by Multi-national corporations. In other words its result is to copperfasten 'under-development', thus we can say that its effects reach further than the mangled corpses and grief stricken survivors of the

battlefield. We have already seen how a cash crop economy led to poverty in the Philippines and famine in Somalia.

Furthermore Western military intervention, as we have seen in Guatemala, Indonesia and Rwanda, acts in concert with, and in defence of, the landlord elite which owns the vast bulk of agricultural land and produces the cash crops. Thus it acts in defence of a pattern of land ownership, which, to use the example of contemporary Brazil, has 3% of the population owning almost two thirds of the farm land, while at the other end of the scale one third of the country's farms have together only 1.5% of the farmland and there are 4.8 million landless rural families. While according to the estimates of the Brazilian health ministry hundreds of thousands of Brazilian children die of hunger each year, and the U.N. calculates that more than 40% of the population does not get enough food, over 40% of the agricultural land goes unused. This is in no way unique to Brazil.

A commercialised agricultural production for export on big ranches leaves the actual food producers in a situation where they are the ones most likely to starve.

We have already seen how military intervention in West Papua (the aid to Indonesia) acted to assure that Western corporations could control and exploit mineral resources not only without any benefit going to the local people but actually to their detriment.

You could say, quite rightly, as minority control of industries and resources and commodity production for profits which go to the benefit of that minority is as total in the "First World" as it is in the "Third World" (if not more so), then how does this account for the vast disparity in the living standards of the working class of, say, Latin America and Western Europe. It doesn't, but it is the foundation

For the answer to that question we'll have to go back to the international division of labour and unequal exchange, but first back in history.

Veteran Scottish Marxist Harry McShane relates about life in Glasgow in his youth :

"Old people had a lot of trouble before the first world war. Old-age pensions started in 1908 and even then only amounted to five bob at seventy. Most people didn't reach that age - they were lucky if they got to fifty." (68)

"In those days the unemployed could literally starve to death." (69)

A cleric, the Rev. A. Mearns wrote about the living conditions of London's poor in 1883:

"You have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from the accumulations of sewage and refuse scattered in all directions; courts, many of them which the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air. You have to ascend rotten stair cases. You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then you may gain admittance to the dark and filthy passages in which thousands of beings, who belong as much as you to the race for which Christ died, herd together. Eight feet square that is the about the average size of very many of these rooms. Walls and ceilings are black with the accretions of filth which have gathered upon them in the boards overhead; it is running down the walls; it is everywhere. A window is half stuffed with rags or covered by boards to keep out the wind and rain. As to furniture - you may perchance discover a broken chair , the tottering relics of an old bedstead or the mere fragments of a table; but more commonly you will find rude substitutes for these things in the shape of rough boards resting upon bricks, an old hamper or bow turned upside down, or more frequently still, nothing but rubbish and rags." (70)

It was against such a backdrop that the labour movement emerged and it was against such conditions that it fought.

This threat was met primarily by reform, as well as repression, especially in Germany, Italy and the U.S ., and it is to those struggles that we owe our current standard of living, social welfare system, shorter working week, state health care, etc.. . Not, as is sometimes suggested, to the election of Labour or Social Democrat or Socialist governments as this process was well underway long before that happened.

A number of factors conspire together to give the ruling class in under-developed countries less incentive for reform. The flow of capital northward, because of the 'unequal exchange', lack of industrialisation, the debt crisis, the removal of profits by foreign owned businesses, and investments abroad in more profitable areas by the native elite makes for less capital in these regions, as a consequence not only does a smaller cake make for a smaller slice for the productive class but it also makes for less chance of reforms such as higher wages and social spending as in this situation to do so would eat directly into the profits of the business class and alter the fundamental pattern of inequality, whereas when there is expanding capital as in Western Europe during the highpoint of the reforms introduced there, i.e. after 1945, this means that higher wages and more social spending can be granted without eating into the bosses profits but rather as the 'cake' gets bigger so to does a smaller percentage of it pay for more.

In this circumstance it is possible for a ruling class to get a larger and larger slice of the 'cake' while still granting reforms.

The peripheral nature of under-developed economies makes reforming or revolutionary movements there less of a threat than in the territory of the Imperialist states themselves, or to put it another way a revolution in Germany is a major blow, a revolution in Ghana because of it's unimportance to the world economy is not nearly so dangerous. This being an incentive for reform in Germany but not in Ghana, when combined with the fact that the Ghanan ruling elite can call upon the capacity for violence of the United States and other Western powers to back them up.

Economies geared, as underdeveloped ones are, toward production for export have no need to maintain an internal market, their workers lack of purchasing power, i.e. poverty, will not affect these economies, conversly 'the consumer society' was facilitated by the reforms won in Western Europe by the Labour movement and is an important market for corporations.

A fairly new phenomenon, the transfer of production by Northern corporations to low wage/high repression areas, coupled with their 500 year old flagrant looting of (neo-)colonial lands gives Western governments an interest in establishing and maintaining regimes in those areas which rule primarily through the gun, something which those regimes couldn't do without external support, and that external support, the arms supply, is itself a profitable business and thus another motive for repression rather than reform.

Western military intervention, then, has it's victims not only in the ruins of Belgrade or Baghdad, not only in the killing fields of the oppressive regimes it backs up but also in the 'accidental deaths' of people working beside vats of toxic chemicals in northern Mexico, in the children dying of preventable diseases and in the children dying of malnourishment. Militarism acting in isolation is not responsible for all this, it is but an aspect

of global capitalism, but it has the function of maintaining the conditions which spawn the above. It also has its detrimental effects in the north, in communities devastated first by unemployment as production is moved southward and then by its offspring crime and drug addiction, and in the effects of the decision to devote State spending to arms and armies rather than on health care, housing, public transport, and other areas of public good rather than private profit. The British government seems to be able to find money for Trident but not for train safety. In a society which has as its paramount priority private profit it would be surprising if this was not so.

Clearly the only Western values valued by the 'West' are the dollar and the Deutschmark, even if they are stained with blood.

Footnotes:

(1) If I were in the U.K. where Universities such as Queen's in Belfast have links to the arms industry or in the U.S. where they have 'Officer Training Corps' on campus.

(2) The British General Sir Mike Jackson, N.A.T.O. commander of its K-FOR troops in Kosovo has also had an illustrious career in humanitarianism as he was adjutant to the commander of 1st Parachute Regiment in Derry when they murdered 14 civil rights marchers.

(3) Speaking at a meeting at the 1998 Labour Conference in Blackpool Michael Clarke, Professor of Defence Studies at Kings College, London, claimed that: "The Central European states did not believe that the objectives of N.A.T.O. had been transformed. They said frankly that they were simply switching sides in the old East-West divide." (71)

Speaking at the same meeting was Micheal McGwire, a former N.A.T.O. war planner, who said that: "In America there were two trends supporting enlargement [of N.A.T.O.]. One was Wilsonian liberalism; the other was right-wing and moderate Republicans, motivated by rivalry towards and enmity to Russia. The thrust of N.A.T.O. activity leaned towards the latter." (72)

(4) Paddy Ashdown, the then leader of Britain's Liberal Democrats spoke of the need to reform the E.U. so that it ceases to be "a political heavyweight but a military lightweight." (73) Speaking of the militarisation of the E.U. the then British Defence Secretary George Robertson said "We are now seeing the European nations taking a much firmer grip on their future." (74)

(5) Presumably not the K.L.A. once described by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright as "no more than terrorists" (75) while the U.S. Special Envoy to the region said of them that "I know a terrorist when I see one and these men are terrorists" (76) and presumably not those "drug traffickers" who supply U.S. Presidential hopeful George Bush or those friendly with the C.I.A..

(6) If anymore evidence was needed as to the utter futility of voting it was presented by the actions of various Western governments in the last year. First we have a German coalition involving the German Green party, the largest of its kind, an inspiration to Green parties everywhere and the first Green party to go into government and what is this party doing, this party which made its name, at least in part, by its opposition to N.A.T.O. and war in general. Then we have Mr Javier Solana a member of the Spanish Socialist party and Secretary General of N.A.T.O., head of the Western European Union (the current military arm of the E.U.) and the first director of the E.U.'s 'Common Foreign and Security Policy', under which the bombing of Kosovo was endorsed, the militarisation of the E.U. is being developed and the neutrality of E.U. member states eroded, and how do the media describe this man "A life long pacifist he campaigned against N.A.T.O. membership, which Spain joined in 1981." (77)

Then we have Robin Cook, British Foreign Minister and one time opponent of the arms trade, who wrote in the 1970's that "The current sale of Hawk aircraft to Indonesia is particularly disturbing as the purchasing regime is not only repressive but is actually at war." (78), facilitating the supply of Hawk ground attack aircraft to Indonesia even as he condemns its action in East Timor. Of the 15 European Union governments who through the 'Common Foreign and Security' policy supported the attack on Yugoslavia 11 were formed by parties of the left. While here in Ireland we have had a straight forward commitment not to join N.A.T.O.'s Partnership for "Peace" made when in opposition by the now ruling Fianna Fail party, a commitment which didn't stop them from joining.

(7) This was not the first time chemical weapons had been used on the Kurdish people of this area, the British Royal Air Force did the same thing in the 1920's to force Kurds under the rule of an Arab puppet monarchy British Imperialism had established in Iraq.

(8) Mini-invasion in the sense that the Turkish state is not attempting to take over any part of Iraq, these are actually quite large operations for example one in March 1995 involved 35,000 troops, one in May 1997 involved 50,000 troops.

(9) Ironically enough Israel, which bombed what it said were Iraqi nuclear weapons research plants in the 80's, not only regularly flouts U.N. resolutions but has its own 'weapons of mass destruction' including nuclear ones, which it threatened to use on the Soviet Union, in fact it has a grand total of 200 nuclear missiles whereas the Iraqi state is alleged to have a research programme aimed at developing them.

(10) Although U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright seems unaware of this stating that "we're not the ones that continue to have weapons of mass destruction" (79)

(11) In the case of Sweden and Holland support to the extent that they were breaking their own laws which forbid arms sales to warzones. Something which would suggest that demanding legislation to restrict the arms trade is somewhat what futile, nor is the arms trade 'out of control' it perfectly serves the interests of the people who control it.

(12) Including some carried out by a team of specialists brought to the country by the U.S. Armed Forces during the Second World War - a fact which speaks volumes.

(13) This occupation was cloaked beneath humanitarianism - in September 1876 King Leopold the Second of Belgium addressing a conference of explorers and geographers he had organised, spoke of his plans for Africa:

"To open to civilisation the only part of our globe where it has yet to penetrate, to pierce the darkness which envelops whole populations, it is, I dare say, a crusade worthy of this age of progress" (80)

He went on to form the 'International African Association' to further his imperial plans which were preceding independently of the Belgian state.

By 1884 this had been renamed the 'International Association of the Congo' its purpose was, according to the 22nd of October 1884 issue of the 'Daily Telegraph' :

"to carry into the interior of Africa new ideas of law, order, humanity, and protection of the natives" (81)

King Leopold described his association as akin to the "Society of the Red Cross" and the 'Leeds Mercury' described him as a "noble minded Sovereign who had the wisdom and courage to begin the enterprise of the Congo which would be the bright centre to the new Federation of Freedom and Peace". (82)

Well here it is at last, and only two months past the deadline, plans for future issues include material on G.M. foods, political prisoners, collusion between the State and "terrorist" groups and also some stuff on the education system. There will also be zine reviews in future issues and hopefully a better layout and less typos/spelling errors and hopefully next time my mouse won't breakdown. Articles and trades are more than welcome but write first. A full list of references is available on request.

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Thanks to people in the following organisations for their helpful information:

West Papua Action, 5 Coote Street, Portlaoise, Co.Laois.

Peace and Neutrality Alliance, 113 Springhill Avenue, Blackrock, Co.Dublin.

Kurdistan Solidarity Ireland, 10 Upper Camden Street, Dublin 2.

Latin America Solidarity Centre, 5 Merrion Row, Dublin 2.

To the Free Earth web site: <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/freearth.html>

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