

AUSTRALIAN DISASTER PRETEXT FOR CIA PSYWAR DRESS REHEARSAL

Dec. 31 (IPS)--A dress rehearsal of CIA psychological warfare techniques is being carried out in the devastated Australian city of Darwin under the cover of relief operations. Ninety per cent of Darwin, a mining town of 45,000 located in Australia's government-owned Northern Territory, was razed by a cyclone Christmas Day. More than 75 per cent of the city's population is currently being evacuated from the area.

The so-called relief operations are being carried out by the Natural Disasters Organization established just nine weeks ago. The NDO is headed by Major General Alan Stratton, whose last assignment was the deputy directorship of the Joint Intelligence Organization, the CIA's Australian branch.

The NDO was activated immediately following the cyclone. At the same time rumors were circulated both locally and in the international press about the "imminent outbreak of disease," specifically cholera and typhoid. The London Daily Telegraph went so far as to report that typhoid had already broken out. Meanwhile, the number of people to be evacuated jumped from the original estimate of 10,000 to 35,000.

In the midst of this atmosphere of deliberately intensified terror and uncertainty, Major General Stretton stepped forward as the Big Brother in a mini-version of Orwell's "1984." In a radio broadcast Stretton told the frightened Darwin population, "Trust me, trust me, stay with me, do not listen to rumors about disease and the crisis will be over in a few days." Stretton also deployed extra police forces with orders to "shoot dead" all looters on sight.

Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, who rushed back to Australia upon news of the Darwin disaster, emphasized how "fortunate" it was that Stretton and the NDO were there to take care of everything. Whitlam, also head of the Australian Labor Party's parliamentary wing, was responsible for the NDO's creation as well as a series of social-fascist policy moves.

To aid in the evacuation, American, British, and New Zealand troops joined the Australian armed forces. Women and children were the first to be moved out, with men staying behind to "help rebuild the city." Government experts are openly speculating about reconstructing Darwin, "but possibly not on the same site." An obvious option is to rebuild in the form of barracks more immediately useful for future redevelopment projects in the important mining district.