

# International Intelligence

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## *Austerity ravages health care in Ibero-America*

Health care facilities are being destroyed by neo-liberal austerity and privatization in Ibero-America, forcing workers in several countries to go on strike, allowing epidemics to spread, and leaving pensioners to die.

- Honduras: 8,000 health and hospital workers went out on an indefinite strike on May 10, demanding higher wages. The strike will affect the functioning of 24 hospitals and 500 clinics around the country. Honduras has also been hit recently by a cholera epidemic. The majority of strikers are paramedics, lab technicians, and nurses who want a commitment from the government to grant a wage increase to compensate for higher inflation in 1998 and 1999.

- Argentina: On May 5, private clinics which provide care to retirees whose medical insurance comes from the government's PAMI agency, began a 48-hour strike because PAMI owes them \$150 million. The strike will affect 3 million pensioners.

- Colombia: The government is forcing more than 3,000 public hospitals and clinics to become "social entities of the state," prior to undergoing "restructuring" (i.e., cut-backs). Hospitals must sign an agreement with the Health Ministry committing themselves to restructuring, even if this means layoffs.

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## *East Timor principals sign UN-backed accord*

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas and Portugal's Jaime Gama signed an accord on autonomy, security arrangements, and voting procedures for the upcoming Aug. 8 vote on the future status of East Timor, in the presence of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in New York, on May 5. Hours earlier, Annan had persuaded Alatas to accept a memorandum on UN security requirements for the balloting procedure in East Timor, under which, Alatas told the press, "we will endeavor to disarm all the factions." Indonesia had resisted pressures in this direction, in

part because it rejected Portuguese calls for deployment of foreign troops, reduction of Indonesian troops, and, as Alatas indicates, pressures to disarm militias that failed to adequately address violence by (Portuguese-backed) pro-independence elements, including the recent mass murder of 11 pro-integrationists.

Alatas commented: "There are two sides in the East Timor conflict, let's face it. . . . And they are fighting with one another as they have done for the past 23 years. So if you want to disarm them, disarm both."

The security requirements will not be made public, according to UN sources. Reportedly, the Indonesian army and security forces will be responsible for restoring calm. The accord does clear the way for deployment of a UN policing action in East Timor in advance of the vote. Indonesia has asked for participation from the United States, Britain, Australia, Germany (as head of European Union), Japan, and the Philippines.

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## *NGOs fighting over U.S. policy toward Sudan*

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Sudan have split, with some who want a peace agreement between Khartoum and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, and others who back the SPLA as Contra-style "freedom fighters." On the one side, Care USA, Oxfam America, and Save the Children USA issued a statement on April 27 demanding, "U.S. Must Adopt a 'Peace First' Policy Toward Sudan." The statement applauds a recent exchange of letters between Sudan Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman and Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering, and calls for the United States to work for a comprehensive cease-fire on both sides; a referendum for self-determination for the south; the establishment of a peace timetable; the re-establishment of diplomatic contact with Khartoum officials; and, engagement "in a range of actions to help persuade the SPLA and its regional allies to accept a comprehensive cease-fire and increase their commitment to a peace process."

In a forum of NGOs in early May, an all-out fight broke out between the group that wrote that statement and Roger Winter, Executive Director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees. Winter, along with Human Rights Watch, called for the U.S. Agency for International Development to fund those relief agencies operating outside the UN Operation Lifeline. This means funding such gun-running operations as the Norwegian Peoples Aid. Winter also called for the United States to give the SPLA anti-aircraft missiles like those given to the Afghan mujahideen. However, no one agreed to this.

The other NGOs were arguing for a peace policy that would allow them to fight the health breakdown in southern Sudan, where strange fevers, cholera, and meningitis, not to mention simple starvation, are rampant.

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## *Khmer butchers held in own torture camp*

The chief executioner of the Khmer Rouge, Kang Kek Ieu, a.k.a. "Duch," who was director of the KR's main interrogation center at Tuol Sleng, and "The Butcher," Ta Mok, the last KR Defense Minister and a former powerful regional commander, are under arrest and are being held in the Military Court's detention center at Tuol Sleng. Cambodia has no law covering genocide, so both men have been charged with violating an old law that made membership in the Khmer Rouge illegal. "Duch," who claims now to be a born-again Christian, was found working for international aid agencies on the Thai border (including UN aid agencies). He has also been charged with torture and murder, according to the *Straits Times* of May 14.

When the KR turned Tuol Sleng from a high school into a torture center, Duch's staff methodically mounted pictures of every one of his victims on the walls, to confirm each and every one of the more than 14,000 killed. It is unknown if these photos remain there. Reportedly, however, the souls of those victims still haunt the premises.

Among the items found in a search of

## Briefly

**VIETNAM** celebrated the 45th anniversary of the fall of Dien Bien Phu on May 7. On that date in 1954, after 55 days of fighting, the People's Army of Vietnam captured 16,200 French troops at the historic battle, shattering French hopes of retaining their colonial empire in Indochina.

**IRAQ** released figures showing growing casualties from continual bombing raids being conducted by American and British warplanes, with 21 dead and at least 15 wounded during May 8-12 alone. Since Dec. 17, 1998, U.S. and British warplanes have carried out 4,862 raids against southern Iraq and 1,243 raids against northern Iraq.

**AUSTRALIA** may heavily fine Wackenhut's privatized prison subsidiary, Australasian Correctional Management, after its Villawood Detention Center in Sydney, which houses illegal immigrants, suffered its fourth breakout in two years. Inmates have complained about the conditions, especially overcrowding, with one report that 20 men are sleeping in the same room.

**UNICEF** executive director Carol Bellamy condemned the practice of "buying slaves out of bondage," in a May 13 commentary in the *International Herald Tribune*. Bellamy was referring to the practice of Christian Solidarity International's Baroness Caroline Cox. "Freeing slaves with cash payments will do little to end slavery in Sudan," she writes, and UNICEF "believes that the practice has added a clear profit motive to the host of other factors that have allowed slave-taking to flourish." CSI redeems "slaves" at \$50 a head, a king's ransom in a country where some people subsist on \$1 a day.

**ALFRED HEINEKEN**, the Anglo-Dutch beer magnate, has been linked by Italian intelligence agencies to Serbian war criminal Arkan, *EIR* has been told. Arkan's financial manager, Giovanni Di Stefano, is Heineken's sole distributor in Yugoslavia.

Mok's residence in Anlong Veng were 61 sandstone carvings from the famous Cambodian temples, weighing 40 tons. The KR was heavily involved in "steal on order" looting of Cambodia's cultural heritage, in collusion with Bangkok antique dealers, on behalf of clients.

### ***Sachs maniac proposes drug legalization***

In a press conference in Bogotá, Colombia on May 6, Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs answered a question about the role of the drug trade in Colombia's economy with the following comment: "It is ironic that the Colombian government, like the Bolivian and Peruvian governments, has spent vast amounts of money trying to combat the most competitive economic activity those countries have, which is cocaine and poppy production. I have told the Bolivian government this many times, so that they would present the problem to the U.S. government. Unfortunately, the position the U.S. government holds is different, and those governments are under tremendous pressure from the U.S. government, and that is a political reality one must accept.

"I think that drugs should not be fought with repression, but with education and prevention, and that it is absolutely useless to fight market forces. That is why I say that it is ironic to spend so much money against the most competitive industry the region has. Imagine how the Gross Domestic Product of Colombia would improve if drug production were included."

### ***Malaysia's Abdullah: End Iraqi sanctions, bombing***

At a welcoming dinner for Iraqi Vice President Taha Yaseen Ramadhan, Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi stated: "A new consensus has to be reached, one based on legality, propriety and decency in the conduct of international relations. To begin with, all economic sanctions must be lifted. Similarly, unilat-

eral air strikes must stop." Ramadhan, along with a 20-person delegation, arrived in Kuala Lumpur on May 10. Ramadhan is the most senior Iraqi leader to visit Malaysia since the establishment of diplomatic relations 35 years ago.

Abdullah further told his guests that these steps should be taken "simultaneously with the establishment of a new regime for monitoring," adding that Malaysia rejects the continued arbitrary imposition of the "no-fly zones" over Iraq. He said all members of the UN Security Council should begin to resolve the situation. Malaysia is currently a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

### ***Italy's new President is a 'Britannia Boy'***

On May 13, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi was elected President of the Republic of Italy, in what has been fairly described as a "coup" against Italy's current government and institutions. Ciampi, Italy's "super-minister for the economy" and the chairman of the International Monetary Fund interim committee, is the leading City of London mouthpiece in Italy. Since the decimation of Italy's political and economic sovereignty took place through Transparency International's "Clean Hands" anti-corruption trials over 1992-94, Ciampi has led the effort to purge Italy of any political or economic figure who opposes the liberalization and privatization of the country's economy.

Until one day before the electors voted, another candidate was favored by Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema. However, on May 12, pro-British elements of D'Alema's party and opposition leaders suddenly announced they would vote for Ciampi. The direction of Ciampi's technocracy was determined in 1992, when neo-liberal Italian businessmen and political figures met with their British colleagues on the royal yacht *Britannia*, anchored off Italy's coast. At that meeting, they plotted to take down Italy's crucial state sector industries and privatize them, a plan which included "watergating" all of Italy's leading politicians.