

Terror Wave Hits ASEAN Nations

by Michael and Gail Billington

Eighteen bombs exploded almost simultaneously in eight cities across Indonesia on Christmas Eve, killing 14 and injuring more than 100. All the bombs had been delivered to Christian churches or to the homes of priests, and timed to explode during the Christmas Eve services. Islamic terrorism?

A week later, in Manila, capital of the Philippines, five bombs exploded, also timed to explode simultaneously, on a train, a bus, at the central business district, and near the American Embassy. Two days earlier, two leaders of the Islamic terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf, including Hector Janjalani, the brother of the group's leader, Kaddafy Janjalani, were arrested in Manila, with explosives and diagrams believed to be bombing targets. More Islamic terrorism?

Both Indonesia and the Philippines have suffered severe economic dislocation since the speculative financial assault on the Asian economies in 1997-98, and the austerity conditions subsequently imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in exchange for "bailout" packages (primarily bailing out foreign creditors at the expense of the domestic economies). Both nations are also faced with renewed separatist movements, threatening their territorial integrity, movements which enjoy open support from foreign-based and -financed non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other public and private institutions. Both nations are also experiencing efforts to impeach their elected Presidents—in the case of the Philippines, the impeachment has reached the stage of a trial in the nation's Senate.

In terms of population, these are the two largest nations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has recently acted in league with China, Japan, and South Korea (see "ASEAN-Plus-3 Summit Opens Door to New Leadership," *EIR*, Dec. 8, 2000) to initiate a new Asian financial and economic alliance, to defend against the unfolding collapse of the dollar-based financial system, revive the physical economies of the region, and potentially provide the seed-crystal for a new world financial system to replace the bankrupt IMF. We must ask: Who benefits from the destabilization of these nations?

The last time a President of the Philippines was overthrown, by essentially the same coalition—comprised of the financial elite, the church, and the left—which is active in the current effort to bring down President Joseph Estrada, was the successful 1986 "People's Power" coup against Ferdinand

Marcos. The ultimate result of that campaign was the takeover of the Philippines economy by the IMF, a "cure" from which the country has yet to recover. Although President Estrada has generally allowed the IMF-beholden financial elite to determine government policy, he has maintained ties to nationalist interests (denigrated as "cronies" by the Western press) who could, in the coming crisis, lead the country in the direction of an ASEAN-Plus-3 break from the IMF.

The bombings came two days after the leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Jose Maria Sison, through a cutout, announced that "more repressive acts by Estrada to keep himself in power will not only incite the people to wage larger and more intense mass actions, but will also justify the people's army to undertake punitive actions." Sison, who operates from a safe exile haven in the Netherlands, has taken credit for earlier bombings in Manila, "in solidarity" with the Abu Sayyaf terrorists, based in the Sulu Archipelago in the southern Philippines.

In April 2000, Abu Sayyaf "went international" with its kidnapping operations, seizing nearly two dozen European tourists and Asians from the Sipadan resort in Malaysia, and reportedly raking in \$20 million in ransom from Western governments and mediator Libya.

In Indonesia, the church bombings follow two years of Christian-Muslim rioting in the island provinces of the Malukus, which have left an estimated 5,000 dead. Before the destruction of the nation's economy in 1997-98, the Malukus, and the capital, Ambon, in particular, were the model of religious peace and tolerance. Now, the obvious intent of the bombers is to spread the terror throughout the country. To the great credit of the Indonesian people and institutions, there has been a united denunciation of the Christmas Eve bombings, and a nearly universal denial that they were in any way "Islamic" in nature, but, rather, they are seen as a provocation by political interests, intent on provoking religious warfare. Senior Muslim leader Kyai Haji Zainuddin, addressing the festivities on the final day of Ramadan, which followed the Christmas Eve bombings by two days, said that the Muslim community had "failed to protect our brothers," the Christians, and that the atrocity would not provoke religious war, but "bind us closer together." Indonesia's Catholic Cardinal Julius Darmaatmadja said: "Even if we know who is behind the bombings, I urge all Christians to forgive." Pope John Paul II's message condemning the bombing and calling for peace was broadcast on television nationwide.

Here again, the political setting in which the bombings took place raises the question: *Cui bono?* In the weeks preceding the bombings, London's Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the latest mutation of the British intelligence front run by Baroness Caroline Cox, escalated calls for international intervention into the Malukus to "save Christians" (with not a word about the Muslim dead), while on Dec. 23, one day before the bombings, the Bishop of Ambon

called on UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to send “international security forces” to Ambon, a blatant threat to Indonesian sovereignty. Simultaneously, the independence movement in Irian Jaya (West Papua), with well-documented support from the British Commonwealth nations of Australia and New Zealand, including, notably, through the mining interests of Rio Tinto, which works the world’s largest gold and copper deposits in Irian Jaya, has called on the UN to send “international forces” to the province, threatening another East Timor-style intervention and the further disintegration of Indonesia.

Historically, these separatist movements enjoy protected status in the former European colonial powers, notably, Britain, the Netherlands, and Portugal. In the case of Indonesia, Lord Avebury’s NGO “Tapol” (the term for “political detainee”), which was set up, ostensibly, to counter oppression under the regime of General Suharto, has continued sponsoring separatism since the democratic elections of 1999. Tapol functions as a central clearinghouse and support network for all of the Indonesian separatist movements, from Aceh in northern Sumatra, to Irian Jaya (West Papua), and East Timor. Britain and the Netherlands also provide safe haven to unrepentant participants in the failed attempt in the late 1950s, armed and supported by the Anglophile Dulles brothers in the Eisenhower Administration, to set up an Independent Republic of South Molucca.

As for Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, it is a direct spin-off of former U.S. National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski’s and Britain’s Afghansi school for terrorism, with strong links to the accused mastermind of the World Trade Center bombing, Sheikh Abdel Rahman’s Harakat al-Islamiya, and the Gamma-at-Islamiya (Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, which has enjoyed liberal protection under Britain’s “safe haven” law. Furthermore, the Indonesian separatists, the Muslim separatists in the Philippines, and Filipino Communist leader Jose Maria Sison are linked through the Unrecognized Nations and Peoples Organization, based in the former colonial power, the Netherlands.

In both countries, no one has claimed responsibility for the bombings, nor have any suspects revealed their sponsors. In the Philippines, the coordinated bombings may well have had input from individual military or other professional layers, and some leaders of the opposition to President Estrada claim that the bombings were provocations to distract from the ongoing impeachment trial, possibly carried out by military-linked interests to justify martial law or a return to military rule. But any investigation must proceed from the combination of two facts well documented in the pages of *EIR* over the years: first, the manner in which the international financial oligarchy promotes the violent destabilization of nation-states in order to assert its will; and second, the fact that international terror has historically and continuously been based in London, as a self-professed tool of British colonial and neo-colonial policy (see “Put Britain on the List of States Sponsoring Terrorism,” *EIR*, Jan. 21, 2000).

Germany Enters 2001 Without Leadership

by Rainer Apel

With the exception of its recent policy of trade of economic infrastructure for energy with Russia, the German government enters the new year without a foreign policy guided by clear principles. It has a leadership crisis which may make German citizens turn instead to the leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU).

There is a tendency to *be present* in some interesting places, such as China, Malaysia, India, and possibly Brazil and Mexico, but this never comes close to yielding any economic or political activity worth noting. With the exception of Russia, no potential for breakthroughs in economic relations can be monitored, in Germany.

For a nation without raw materials that lives on its revenues from exports, this general inaction is a disastrous, short-sighted approach to global policy. What’s more, the government is not interested in initiatives for substantial changes in monetary and world economic affairs: It believes in the International Monetary Fund and its conditionalities, in the basic values of Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan’s Wall Street bubble economy, in the alleged benefits of the free market and the New Economy, and it also holds onto the suicidal balanced-budget criteria of the European Union. Whatever the government does in labor and investment politics, is borrowed from the textbook of neo-liberalism: tax cuts, cuts in state subsidies, privatization, and deregulation.

The Socialist-Green (“red-green”) government of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, which has been in power since late October 1998, is dwelling in this environment of inaction, because it is not challenged by the opposition Christian Democrats (CDU). The CDU, the bigger of the two German conservative parties, is still caught in deep paralysis, after the loss of government in the 1998 elections, and the reshuffle of its party leadership in the wake of the “party funding” scandals which began in November 1999. The new leadership of the CDU is no longer guided by the principles of Christian values, which were already much weakened during the era of longtime party chairman (1973-98) Helmut Kohl, but were still there.

The new party leader, chairwoman Angela Merkel, believes that the transformation of the traditional industrial economy of Germany into a predominantly New Economy orienting toward the chimera of the “information society,” is possible. Friedrich Merz, the new chairman of the CDU group in the national legislature, is advertising himself as a post-1968 baby-boomer, who relaxes by listening to the