

YUMI WANTAIM 2001: a weekend talking about West Papua

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"SOME HISTORICAL POINTS ABOUT WEST PAPUA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE"

This morning I would like to talk about an historical point in West Papua's story that we are not familiar with. It has to do with a bit of evidence that Bishop Desmond Tutu revealed two years ago during his Peace and Reconciliation investigation, concerning the death of United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld.

For nineteen years, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Joseph Luns, had the task of keeping Netherlands New Guinea out of Indonesian hands. Ultimately, this long-serving foreign minister disappointed the Dutch. When the archives in Holland last year revealed that Luns had colluded with his Indonesian counterpart, Adam Malik, the Dutch press simply announced "Netherlands lied to Papuans".

I have interviewed Adam Malik (Indonesian Foreign Minister), Joseph Luns (Dutch Foreign Minister) Garfield Barwick (Australian Foreign Minister) and Dean Rusk (American Foreign Minister) on the issue of

West New Guinea. Luns clearly foresaw that West Papua would vote for independence in 1969 at the Act of Free Choice, unless Indonesia controlled the voting. So he did a deal with Adam Malik. People say that turning a blind eye on fraudulent procedure is reprehensible, but Luns was only doing what he knew the United Nations would do - for it was UN intervention in the Dutch-Indonesian dispute over sovereignty of West New Guinea that put the Indonesian army in West Papua on 1 May 1963 to arrange the farce that took place in 1969. From my recent experience there, I can vouch that the Army still rules today.

Real politik, CIA-style, forced the exit of the Dutch colonial administration from Netherlands New Guinea. In Holland, and in nearby Australia, many believed that the actions of the Dutch colonial administration averted a Cold War clash between the USA and the USSR. That was one of the main reasons why people agreed to this reprehensible agreement. Only a handful of Dutch politicians, and the top executives of Standard Oil, really understood that Holland's exit would deny Holland first access to the territory's wealth of natural resources. Only a few key people knew the gold and the oil were there. When I interviewed Joseph Luns in Brussels in 1982 - when he was Secretary-General of NATO - he told me he had tried to get the American mining companies into Netherlands New Guinea in the 1950s and early 60s. They didn't want to come, because the political situation wasn't suitable for them. He told me the oil was the purest and the lightest ever found in the world; that the largest single well in Southeast Asia was discovered in West Papua in May 1973. No sulphur. Extremely rich. Gold production was started in 1972-73 by an American company called Freeport. It is the world's largest goldmine. Luns said that the American companies had conversations with the Netherlands government, but were prevented by the American government from pursuing them further because the Dutch would be soon out of their colony. Basically it was an attitude of "Kick out the Dutch colonials, get the company in".

Luns job, "the Indonesian affair" he called it, was shared from 1952 to 1956; and after 1956, he said, "I alone was responsible". He continued for another fifteen years, and in dealing with the United Nations, met Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. Hammarskjöld was a prominent politician in Sweden, but had never joined a political party. In the United Nations, his very independent approach was in conflict with the Cold War stereo-typing that was going on at the time. Hammarskjöld promoted UN principles of self-determination and independence, particularly for the colonised peoples in Africa and Southeast Asia. In December 1957, he was elected to a second five-year term, and began formulating his own solution to the West New Guinea sovereignty dispute. Indonesia said West Papua was part of the Netherlands East Indies, and should be part of Indonesia. The Netherlands tried to influence from a racial basis : Papuans are black-skinned, explained the Dutch, and so are racially distinct from the Indonesians. But the UN at this time was a forum for newly-independent countries and the anti-colonial sentiments worked against Holland so much that West Papuan self-determination under Indonesia became a side issue. The silent battle, however, was between the Dutch government and US companies who secretly poured millions of

dollars into the Indonesian army in 1958, 1959, and the early sixties. The silent battle was more about the desire to control the potential bonanza in minerals and oil, and it worked against the Dutch staying in New Guinea to finalise the self-determination process.

The UN Secretary-General was planning to assist newly independent countries with a scheme he called OPEX (Operational and Executive) whereby the UN Economic and Social Council would provide expertise and technical aid to emerging states like Togo, Cameroon and Somalia. Dag Hammarskjöld outlined this plan at the Economic Club in New York in March 1960. In 1961, after attending to some trouble in Congo's Katanga province, he planned to settle the long-standing dispute between the Dutch and the Indonesians using the OPEX arrangement. OPEX would have been catastrophic for people like Standard Oil. The Congo was ablaze after the assassination of the prominent left-wing leader Patrice Lumumba. In 1970, a US Senate investigation found that CIA Director, Alan Dulles, had personally sent an assassin to kill Lumumba. Why? Part of the answer lies in Katanga, a mineral-rich break-away province. Katanga supplied eighty per cent of the country's exports - but was run by multinational mining corporations after Belgium's decolonisation project degenerated into civil war.

Hammarskjöld's approach to the sovereignty of West New Guinea was revolutionary. It did not favour the Dutch, nor did it favour the Indonesian plan. The UN Secretary-General was promoting self-determination and independence for the Papuan people. UN officers were to be appointed for five years to participate in a new, independent Papuan government, and would be answerable only to Papuans - not even to the UN. These officers would assist in the administrative machinery - which is often the undoing of newly independent states. With this level of assistance, and with Papua's rich natural resources, the viability of the Papuan economy was beyond doubt.

However OPEX meant that US mining and oil interests, that had been waiting for a political environment that would suit them, would not necessarily have first access to these resources. Dag Hammarskjöld's solution to the New Guinea dispute would have nullified years of covert planning by Standard Oil, whose top Wall Street lawyer was Alan Dulles - also the Director of CIA.

The fact that Alan Dulles was the Director of CIA and also Standard Oil's lawyer became even more significant after the Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Bishop Desmond Tutu, on 19 August 1998, announced that documents had been found implicating the CIA in the death of Dag Hammarskjöld. He was killed in a mysterious plane crash ten minutes after midnight on 18 September 1961 at Ndola, a remote high altitude airport in northern Rhodesia. The role of the CIA communications plane, which was waiting on the tarmac, has never really been explained, but two UN

officers who were there, Conor Cruise O'Brien and George Ivan-Smith, told me Hammarskjöld was assassinated.

In New York, ten days after the death of Dag Hammarskjöld, the Dutch Foreign Minister, Joseph Luns, presented his solution to the dispute between Holland and Indonesia, over West New Guinea. It was branded as the Luns Plan. This proposal was intended to intermesh with the UN Secretary's plan, but he already knew that, without Hammarskjöld, the Luns Plan (as it became known, as though it embodied the aspirations of the former colonial power) would be rejected by the United Nations. He proceeded anyway. The first, and crucial step in Hammarskjöld's OPEX and Luns' plan was to give sovereignty of the disputed territory to the Papuans. The Indonesians and the Netherlands would have had to step back and hand the administration to an international executive authority that would help prepare an independent West Papua. The Luns plan (based on Hammarskjöld's formula) would have changed history.

Luns criticised the role of the UN in West New Guinea under the new Secretary-General, U Thant, who was from the British colony of Burma. Hammarskjöld would have changed things, but U Thant went along with the flow of Standard Oil's concern. Luns' said "the real victims of the whole dispute have been the inhabitants. It really is a shameful thing that an organisation like the United Nations has violated its own principles".

The lies and deceit about West Papua continue, even under the new government of Megawati Sukarnoputri. During the Pacific Island Forum this year, Jambil, an Indonesian foreign affairs diplomat who was part of the Indonesian delegation, said in a press statement, that human rights abuses in West Papua were a thing of the past. But at the same time, in Wasior, in the neck of the bird in West Papua, events were happening in direct contradiction to what this press statement was claiming. The Indonesian police and army - BRIMOB and TNI - were burning houses and killing people. Ninety-four houses were burned down. Ten thousand people sought refuge in the mountains nearby. Two Europeans reported Papuans in Ransiki were being stopped in the street, belted up if they didn't have their ID papers, two were slashed in the back with knives. Things like this were going on at the same time as the Indonesian delegate in Nauru was saying that human rights violations were a thing of the past.

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