

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 14, 2005

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice  
U.S. Secretary of State  
Harry S. Truman  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madame Secretary:

We urge you to oppose plans to allow International Military Education and Training (IMET) with Indonesian officers to proceed. For years, Congress has restricted foreign military financing for Indonesia and rightfully so given the horrendous human rights record of the Indonesian military (TNI).

While we are aware that in 2004 Congress narrowed the basis for its ban on IMET to a single condition requiring the State Department to certify that the Indonesian government and military were cooperating in an FBI investigation of an August 31, 2002 assault on a group of U.S. citizens in Timika, West Papua, we believe there are equally serious reasons why the U.S. should renew bans on IMET and foreign military financing (FMF) for Indonesia.

In response to President Bush's State of the Union address in which he talked about "our generational commitment to the advance of freedom" and in which he said "America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world" and that "our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens, and reflect their own cultures," we want to bring to your attention the plight of West Papua New Guinea and assert that TNI remains the central threat to democracy in Indonesia.

The U.S. State Department has publicly acknowledged the brutal TNI record. As noted in the latest State Department Annual Human Rights Report on Indonesia:

"Security force members murdered, tortured, raped, beat and arbitrarily detained civilians and members of separatist movements especially in Aceh and Papua. Retired and active duty military officers known to have committed serious human rights violations occupied or were promoted to senior positions in the government and in the TNI."

Defense Minister Sudarsono has further noted, "The military retains the real levers of power. From the political point of view the military remains the fulcrum in Indonesia." This is the case now and has been the case since Indonesia seized control of West Papua New Guinea.

In 1962, the United States mediated an agreement between Indonesia and the Netherlands in which the Dutch were to leave West Papua, transfer sovereignty to the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) for a period of six years, after which time a national election was to be held to determine West Papua's political status.

However, after this agreement was reached, Indonesia violated the terms of transfer and took over the administration of West Papua from the UNTEA. In 1969, Indonesia orchestrated an election that many regarded as a brutal military operation. Known as the "Act of Choice," 1,022 elders under heavy military surveillance were selected to vote for 809,327 Papuans on the territory's political status.

Despite the opposition of fifteen countries and the cries of help from the Papuans themselves, the United Nations (UN) sanctioned Indonesia's act and, on September 10, 1969, West Papua became a province of Indonesian rule. Since, the Papuans have suffered blatant human rights abuses, including extrajudicial executions, imprisonment, torture and, according to Afrim Djonbalic's 1998 statement to the UN, "environmental degradation, natural resource exploitation, and commercial dominance of immigrant communities."

The Lowenstein Human Rights Clinic at Yale University recently found, in the available evidence, "a strong indication that the Indonesian government has committed genocide against the Papuans." West Papua New Guineans differ racially from the majority of Indonesians. West Papuans are Melanesian and believed to be of African descent. In 1990, Nelson Mandela reminded the United Nations that when "it first discussed the South African question in 1946, it was discussing the issue of racism." We also believe the question of West Papua is an issue of racism.

Furthermore, we believe this is an issue of commercial exploitation. West Papua New Guinea is renowned for its mineral wealth including vast reserves of gold, copper, nickel, oil and gas. In 1995, for example, the Grasberg ore-mountain in West Papua was estimated to be worth more than \$54 billion. Yet little or no compensation has been made to local communities and new provisions in the law fall well short of West Papuan demands for independence.

In a statement dated February 24, 2004 (attached), Archbishop Bishop Desmond Tutu called on the UN to act on West Papua and 174 parliamentarians and 80 nongovernmental agencies from around the world have also written asking that a review be initiated. In the interim, Indonesian military operations in the highlands of West Papua have been ongoing since August 2004 and there are indications that this operation is spreading to other regions of West Papua and intensifying.

Given these circumstances, we are reminded of Nelson Mandela's statement before the UN Special Committee against Apartheid in which he said:

"It will forever remain an indelible blight on human history that the apartheid crime ever occurred. Future generations will surely ask -- what error was made that this system established itself in the wake of the adoption of a Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

It will forever remain an accusation and a challenge to all men and women of conscience that it took as long as it has before all of us stood up to say enough is enough."

On the question of West Papua, we feel similarly and we write to say, "Enough is enough." The question of West Papua is not an internal problem. As early as 1961, Robert Johnson of the National Security Council Staff wrote a letter to Mr. Bundy, the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, noting that the United States "must conclude that it is in our interests that a solution be devised which will lead to accession of West New Guinea to Indonesia."

In other words, it was our national policy to sacrifice the lives and future of some 800,000 West Papua New Guineans to the Indonesian military in exchange, supposedly, for Sukarno and Sukarto to become our friends, and yet they organized the most repressive military regimes ever known in the history of Indonesia. Almost three decades later, we continue to exacerbate the problem by making plans to certify full IMET for Indonesia as our brothers and sisters in West Papua New Guinea live a struggle of our making.

President Bush has publicly stated, "We are all part of a great venture -- To extend the promise of freedom in our country, to renew the values that sustain our liberty, and to spread the peace that freedom brings." In our opinion, the President's mantra must and should include West Papua and we are hopeful that this means the Administration will support West Papua's right to self-determination through a referendum or plebiscite sanctioned by the UN, as was done for East Timor, and that you will oppose efforts to develop closer ties with the Indonesian military.

Sincerely,

Arnald M. Payne

Barbara Lee

Bobby L. Rush

Qui Falcone

John Longmire.

Corrine Brown

Maxine Waters

Ernest Young

Tom

James E. Gibson

Ernie

Carolyn C. Kirkpatrick

Sam H. Thompson

Lawrence Bishop Jr.

Major L. Owens

Alice L. Hastings

Richard S. Crut

Wm. H. Ross

Barbara Lee

Eddie Bernice Johnson

Samuel Phelps

Julia Carson

Danny K. Davis

Alphonse P. Ellis

Albert R. Goff

Cyril McKim

Harold

Julius

Arthur Davis

Wm. Langley

Alma E. Watson

Shelby J. Fox

Charles B. Rangel

Al Green

Steve Groer

Hendrick B. Muth