

Australia Dossier by Allen Douglas and Michael J. Sharp

What's behind the BRA?

Only Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and her mining friends, know for sure.

Throughout the last week of February, the Australian news media howled that the government of Papua New Guinea had hired Sandlines International, a London-based mercenary organization, to assassinate the leadership of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). Sandlines is affiliated with Executive Outcomes, the notorious "private sector" arm of the British Special Air Services (SAS).

Some 10,000 souls out of Papua New Guinea's population of 4 million, have been killed in a BRA insurgency which has been raging in the island-province of Bougainville, off the eastern tip of Papua, since 1989. Papua New Guinea's prime minister, Sir Julius Chan, answered the press hysteria, as reported by the Asia Pacific Network on Feb. 24, that Sandlines/Executive Outcomes was not hired to assassinate anyone, but to train the nation's defense forces: "Yes, there is training going on at the moment, training for our under-equipped, under-trained, and under-resourced Security Forces. I'm sick and tired of our boys coming back in body bags."

Chan also made it clear, that Papua New Guinea had not wanted to hire mercenaries, but was, in effect, forced to, after its allies denied it assistance. As Chris Wariambu, minister counselor at the nation's Washington embassy told *EIR* on Feb. 26, "Papua New Guinea has military alliances with Australia, the United States, and New Zealand with respect to training and equipment. The government has been trying to bring normalcy to Bougainville, and has sought assistance from these countries, but to no avail." The U.S. State Department's Papua New Guinea desk officer promised to return

a call to *EIR* on the matter, but did not.

Prime Minister Chan further charged that Australia had previously agreed to this training program. Only when whipped by the news media, did Australian Prime Minister John Howard deliver a formal *démarche* against Papua New Guinea, which was then echoed by the United States and the European Union, he said. Chan also questioned the purpose of the media onslaught: "Is there some political agenda that is behind their motives, to possibly destabilize the government and disrupt the June elections?"

There is, in fact, a plot to destabilize the country, which hosts some of the richest gold and copper deposits in the world. The Panguna copper mine on Bougainville, for instance, was, until the fighting shut it down in 1989, the world's largest open-cut copper mine, which provided 40% of Papua New Guinea's government revenue.

As the British Crown-centered world financial oligarchy has moved to grab whatever physical assets—food, petroleum, raw materials, and so on—it can, in the face of the looming world financial disintegration, it has orchestrated a two-pronged destabilization against Papua New Guinea: On the one side, by the terrorist BRA; and, on the other side, by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, whose rabid demands for budget-cutting and austerity create conditions for the terrorists to flourish.

Before the recent media-orchestrated uproar, the Chan government had quietly offered to buy the Panguna mine from its owners, Conzinc Rio Tinto of Australia (CRA)—of whose parent company, Rio Tinto Zinc, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen of Papua,

as well as of Australia, owns a substantial share. CRA's founding chairman, Sir Maurice Mawby, was for years the "Chairman of the Benefactors' Committee" (that is, the chief fundraiser) for the Prince Philip-founded Australian Conservation Foundation, the "mother" of radical environmentalism in Australia, whose networks provide political support for the BRA.

Asked who finances the BRA, an Australian police source with extensive counter-terror experience replied: "Look at the mining companies. You will definitely find big Australian money backing them." Another BRA cheerleader is the British intelligence front, Amnesty International.

When Prime Minister Chan's government came to power in 1994, it announced a cease-fire, and, in May 1995, granted all rebels an amnesty. But, the insurgency flared up in early 1996, immediately after Papua New Guinea expelled a World Bank team, which had been demanding radical "structural adjustments." Chan charged at the time that the World Bank had "destroyed many countries."

Not long after the World Bank was kicked out, a dynamite bomb was thrown into Chan's first floor office. That same day, July 31, Chan attacked Australia's lack of action against Sydney-based members of the BRA, as "condoning treasonous acts" against Papua New Guinea. But finally, under continual pressure, the country did sign an IMF "structural adjustment program," which mandates the forced sell-off ("privatization") of much of the nation's assets, including its precious raw materials holdings.

Under one pretext or another, the British are determined to steal Papua's vast riches, whether through "privatization," through an "independent" BRA-run Bougainville, or through Executive Outcomes' taking its payment "in kind," as is its usual practice.