World Socialist Web Site and Socialist Equality Party public meetings

The truth about East Timor: Why Australia's intervention should be opposed

21 June 2006

The WSWS and Socialist Equality Party unequivocally oppose the Howard government's military intervention into East Timor and demand the immediate withdrawal of all Australian troops and police from the tiny island state.

The deployment has nothing to do with restoring peace and stability. Like the recent intervention into the Solomon Islands, it is an act of neo-colonial aggression to further Australian economic and strategic interests in the region. The Howard government wants to force regime change in East Timor, replacing the government of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri with an administration more amenable to Australia's requirements.

One of the key factors is control of oil and gas resources. As far as Howard and Downer are concerned, Alkatiri's cardinal sins are that he refused to immediately buckle to Canberra's demands over the huge oil and gas deposits in the Timor Sea, and that he has been seeking economic and political support from Australia's rivals in Europe and Asia, especially from Portugal, the former colonial power.

The Australian media and the entire political establishment, including Labor, the Greens, Democrats and the various middle class protest groups, have all fallen in behind this criminal act.

The SEP public meetings will discuss the real driving forces behind the eruption of militarism and neo-colonialism, not only in the Balkans and the Middle East, but in the Pacific region as well, and the dangers it poses for ordinary working people everywhere, including Australia. It will review the political dead-end of the perspective of "independence" for East Timor, and advance an alternative socialist perspective.

We invite all readers of the WSWS to attend the meetings and participate in this vital discussion.

Tuesday July 11, 7 p.m.
Carslaw Lecture Theatre 173
Ground floor, Carslaw Building
University of Sydney (Adjacent to City Rd, Eastern Ave entrance to the university)

Tuesday July 18, 7 p.m.
YWCA, First floor
489 Elizabeth St
Melbourne (near Victoria Market)

Tickets: $4 & $2 concession

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