

**Copies of Indymedia reports:**

**USAF Hercules crew lodge at Limerick hotel  
by Shannon Watch *Wednesday, Jan 4 2006, 3:33pm***

clare / anti-war / news report

**Emergency Landing at Shannon Airport.  
(See copy attached)**

On way to UK, held by Airport police.

Ed was detained and forcibly removed from the duty free area this morning while waiting to board a flight to the UK to visit his children and grandchildren. He was brought to the Airport Police Inspectors office, his mobile phone and camera confiscated, but then the Gardai refused to arrest him. He has been released. Just two days after appearing at the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, at which there was testimony of repeated harrassment of peace activists by the authorities, Ed Horgan was arrested this morning by Airport Police while waiting to board a flight to the UK, where he intends to spend Christmas with his children and grandchildren.

Ed Horgan made sure to be at the airport early this morning to catch his flight, and of course, it was no surprise for him to see US military flights at the airport. By text he informed this reporter that there was a World Airways jet N801DE at Gate 42 (the US military gate) and an ATA jet N552TZ beside it. Both airliners are chartered to carry troops for the Pentagon.

Of course, only two days earlier, Ed was part of a four person presentation to the Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs, which received detailed evidence of US military use of Shannon Airport, including troops, cargo flights, and CIA aircraft. The committee was also told that peace activists were subjected to systematic harassment at the airport while doing perfectly legal things such as taking notes or photographs or aircraft. Specifically mentioned were instances where activists were taking photos in public places, and were detained and had cameras taken and in some cases the film removed and destroyed. Senators and TDs replied that the activists should not have to put up with such behaviour.

This morning, Ed took some photos from the public car park before checking in, having a cup of tea, and then going to the departures lounge, with his passport and boarding card at the ready.

While in the boarding area, he was approached by Airport Police Inspector John Martin, who had him forcibly removed from the area. Ed protested loudly that this was an unlawful arrest. his camera and mobile phone were taken.

Ed was taken to Inspector Martin's office and told he was being held under the Air Transport and Navigation Act.

Two members of the Garda Siochana were also present and Ed demanded that they ring the station sergeant at Shannon Garda Station.

At one stage Ed's phone rang, and it turned out to be Senator David Norris on the line. The Gardai refused to arrest Ed, as requested by the airport police, and he was subsequently released and his phone and camera given back to him. In his last phone call, he said he said that he thinks he will still make his flight.

End of Endymedia report Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005.

I wish to bring to your attention also the following report published on Indymedia on Jan 4<sup>th</sup> 2006, as a further indication of the activities that are going on in connection with the US use of Shannon airport, and over which neither your department nor the Irish Government are exercising any controls to ensure that these particular aircraft are not being used for purposes which may be in breach of the UN Convention against Torture.

**USAF Hercules crew lodge at Limerick hotel  
by Shannon Watch *Wednesday, Jan 4 2006, 3:33pm***

clare / anti-war / news report

**Emergency Landing at Shannon Airport.**

When a Hercules C 130 aeroplane bearing the markings of the US Air Force undertook an emergency landing at Shannon Airport on Friday 30 December, the crew of the aircraft, assisted by the American embassy, were accommodated as civilians at the South Court Hotel in Limerick.

When a Hercules C 130 aeroplane bearing the markings of the US Air Force undertook an emergency landing at Shannon Airport on Friday 30 December, the crew of the aircraft, assisted by the American embassy, were accommodated as civilians at the South Court Hotel in Limerick.

No precautions were taken to provide for the crew's security on arrival at the hotel, and security measures later implemented by the Garda Síochána were inadequate to protect the crew, other guests and staff at the hotel.

This is despite the fact that the Hague Convention obliges Ireland to provide secure accommodation, that is to intern all foreign belligerent soldiers who arrive on its neutral territory during time of war.

The fact that this warplane was reported to have made an emergency landing, does not alter the obligations on the Irish government to intern both the crew and the aircraft.

Ireland is obliged to allow such aircraft in distress to make an emergency landing, but is equally obliged to refuse the aircraft and its crew permission to take off again.

Two local peace activists, former Irish Army commandant Edward Horgan and photographer Conor Cregan, were at the airport on Friday afternoon, conducting routine surveillance of aircraft thought to be involved in the transport of troops or cargo to Iraq, and checking if any CIA aircraft involved in the rendition of prisoners for torture were at the airport.

An ATA chartered aircraft carrying US troops to or from Iraq had earlier been parked at Gate 42. The activists then noticed a fire engine on the runway. The Hercules aircraft, reportedly troubled by a fuel leak from one of its starboard engines, landed soon afterwards.

Several figures in sand camouflage uniforms appeared on the runway beneath the plane, talking to ground crew dressed in fluorescent yellow.

Concerned that this aircraft might be carrying prisoners abducted by American military or intelligence agents to an internment camp at Guantánamo Bay or elsewhere, Cregan and Horgan took photographs from the viewing station in the

airport and from the roadway beside it.

A white bus marked "Lynch Hotels" picked up the crew from the airport, and later passed the peace activists as they made their way to Limerick. Out of curiosity, the activists followed the crew of the Hercules warplane to the South Court Hotel in Raheen, Limerick, and spoke to the crew members in the hotel lobby.

They counted twelve men and one woman, mostly middle-aged, probably members of the National Guard, or reserve soldiers.

The crew were now dressed in civilian clothing, but all were carrying bags made of military camouflage material, and no other security measures were manifest at this point.

The crew stood tense and alert as the peace activists advised them of their status as forces of a belligerent nation landing in a neutral country. Under the Hague Convention, Horgan advised them, Ireland was obliged to intern them for the course of the war.

One of them explained that they were only at Shannon because of an emergency, and that the US embassy had advised them that they were entitled to land under such circumstances. Horgan agreed, but pointed out that the Irish government was still obliged to intern them under the Hague Convention.

They were then asked if they had any prisoners on board.

The commanding officer appeared genuinely appalled at the thought.

After a brief, mutually polite exchange, Horgan withdrew, satisfied that this particular aircraft was probably not carrying suspected terrorists or "illegal combatants" from its wars in Afghanistan or Iraq.

The American officer asked whether Horgan thought there was any threat to the safety of his crew. Horgan suggested that the regular transit of troops and cargo through Shannon presented a threat of a terrorist attack at the airport.

On arrival at the hotel on Friday evening, an indymedia correspondent found a white car bearing the markings of the Garda Síochána parked in the car park, facing the main entrance. Two gardaí sat in the front of the car, but made no move to perform any security check.

The correspondent walked into the lobby of the hotel, deserted but for the receptionist, and asked whether there was a public bar in the hotel. The receptionist gladly pointed the way to the bar at the end of the corridor.

On strolling into the bar, the correspondent found the crew of the Hercules sitting at the bar, enjoying pints of stout.

Two of them engaged in amicable protests against Horgan's suggestion that they should be interned under the Hague Convention. They railed against the suggestion that the regular passage of troops and cargo through Shannon was in breach of Irish law, and protested their involvement in humanitarian missions to demonstrate their innocence.

Others were more apprehensive. One stood listening in stony silence. Another asked how Horgan had found them. Yet another sat on a stool and watched from behind the pillar in the centre of his table.

Finally, the crew's commanding officer asked that they be left in peace to enjoy their pints.

The activists' information is that the Hercules was on a return flight from the field of operations in the Middle East, probably as part of the support logistics for the United States' war in Iraq.

The concerned peace activists point out that, as the plane found itself in an emergency situation, it was entitled to land, but was not entitled to take off again.

Article 11 of the Hague Convention states as follows: “A neutral Power which receives on its territory troops belonging to the belligerent armies shall intern them, as far as possible, at a distance from the theatre of war.”

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/lawofwar/hague05.htm>

None of the other US military aircraft, civilian aircraft chartered to carry troops, or aircraft involved in abductions by the CIA, are entitled to land at Shannon. By permitting them to land, Ireland is in breach of several different conventions of international law.

In addition, some news from Shannon:

The following motion was passed at Shannon Town Council on Tuesday, 3 January 2006:

“Shannon Town Council supports the calls from across the political spectrum, and from members of the public, for the investigation of the possible use of Irish airports by the United States administration for the purposes of transporting prisoners for rendition for torture through Irish airports.”

End of Indymedia report 4<sup>th</sup> Jan 2006.