

The UK's supposed complicity in the mass killings in Indonesia in 1965

Derek Tonkin

UK Foreign Office Desk Officer for Indonesia 1963-66

Abstract

1. The International People's Tribunal 1965 aimed to ensure recognition of the crimes against humanity said to have been committed by the State of Indonesia in the wake of the attempted coup of 1 October 1965. But the Tribunal also sought to highlight the supposed complicity of the UK, among other countries, in the persecution and murder of supporters and wholly innocent rank and file members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). While the massacre is historically unchallengeable and is backed by uncontested and voluminous factual evidence, no credible case was presented at the Tribunal to support the allegation of British 'complicity' in the massacre.

Keywords: confrontation, PKI, coup, propaganda, massacre, Borneo, Untung

Background

2. On 10 March 1965 John Cambridge, Head of Chancery at the British Embassy in Jakarta, whose time generally coincided with mine as Desk Officer for Indonesia in the South East Asia Department of the Foreign Office from 1963 to 1966, concluded a letter to me about the supposed arming of workers and peasants by the Indonesian Army (Tentara Nasional Indonesia or TNI), to counter similar more serious plans by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) to create a 'Fifth Force' using weapons to be supplied by China, with the prescient comment: 'It is enough to say that virtually all the factions in Indonesia are now conscious that the night of the long knives may not be too far off and they are preparing for it as best they can.'¹

3. It was indeed clear to all of us concerned with Indonesia at the time that a show-down between the Army and the PKI was looming and very probably inevitable, as the health of President Sukarno deteriorated and PKI political influence grew. When as expected the crisis broke, the actual nature of the *dénouement* took almost everyone by surprise, and especially the six generals of the General Staff who were murdered in the early hours of 1 October 1965 by assassination squads sent out by the ostensible leader of the coup, Lt-Col Untung, a battalion commander of the President's Tjakrabirawa Guard.

The origins of allegations against the UK

4. Despite initial suspicions that the CIA or the British might have had a hand in the attempted putsch, it was soon generally accepted that this was an all-Indonesian affair, in which members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) were almost certainly implicated, to a greater or lesser extent, though possibly not the PKI itself as a political organisation. Indeed, responsibility might have rested eternally with the Indonesians alone, had not allegations been made many years later that the US, UK and Australia in particular had

actively and wittingly supported the Army in suppressing the PKI and thus bore responsibility for complicity in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of overwhelmingly innocent people who had in no way been involved in, or had any foreknowledge of the attempted coup.

5. Leading this conspiracy campaign was the Australian journalist John Pilger who in a UK ITV television programme *The New Rulers of the World* broadcast on 18 July 2001 lambasted the US and the UK for an alleged agreement between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Harold Macmillan when they met in April 1962 to ‘liquidate’ President Sukarno; UK Ambassador Andrew Gilchrist in Jakarta for supposedly recommending ‘a little shooting’²; and the Royal Navy for allegedly escorting troops from Surabaya to Java in October 1965 in order to massacre innocent civilians.³

6. These unsupported allegations against the UK I contested in a privately circulated memorandum at the time⁴: Pilger confused a CIA covering memorandum with an intercepted Indonesian diplomatic report; quoted Gilchrist quite out of context; and failed to mention that the Indonesian troopship might well have been on its way to confront Commonwealth forces in Borneo. These allegations have however been followed by further charges advanced by others, most recently by the Prosecution at the 2015 International People’s Tribunal on Indonesia in 1965.⁵

The absence of relevant evidence to support IPT allegations

7. I have examined the IPT 1965 papers and video reports available online, but have found no convincing documentary evidence to support the IPT Final Report contention that, after the failed coup:

...in extending their propaganda operations to legitimize the false propaganda of the Indonesian army after 30 September (and in the UK’s willingness not to take military advantage of the situation), both [the UK and Australian] governments evidently hoped that this would assist the army to eliminate the PKI as well as remove Sukarno. They continued with this policy even after it had become abundantly clear that killings were taking place on a mass and indiscriminate basis.

8. I do not believe that the UK sought at any stage to legitimize the false propaganda of the Indonesian Army (TNI). Documents which have been released to the UK National Archives in the series FO 1101/1 to 32 make it clear that the operations of the Political Warfare Coordinator in Singapore, Counsellor Norman Reddaway, a career diplomat who reported to the ambassador-ranking Political Adviser to the Commander-in-Chief Far East, Alec Adams, were based on authentic and credible materials. Assurances were sought and given to media contacts in the Western and regional press and radio in Jakarta, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong that materials supplied had a basis of hard fact. If they were rumours or fabrications, they were presented as such, and no more. ‘The Associated Press correspondent is still happy to handle these stories on the firm understanding that they are authentic and not fabrications’ wrote Leslie Smith, Regional Information Officer in Hong

Kong, to Reddaway on 17 November 1965. 'I can assure you that anything I send you will be authentic', replied Reddaway three days later. ⁶

9. It would clearly have been counterproductive to have sought to recycle Indonesian propaganda through respected international press agencies like Reuters, Associated Press and United Press International and through leading correspondents like Fred Emery of *The Times*, Creighton Burns of *The Melbourne Age*, Ian Colvin of *The Daily Telegraph*, Gavin Young of *The Observer* and Roland Challis, South East Asia Correspondent of the BBC. They would have bristled at the thought that British officials regarded them as supine links in a media conveyor-belt promoting British policies. This could have damaged their professional reputations. There would have been political repercussions in London.

10. The Final Report states on Pages 65 and 66 that the UK saw the failed putsch 'as an opportunity to be exploited, using this propaganda apparatus, in the hope of ridding Indonesia of communist influence and weakening the political strength of President Sukarno.' This is true enough, but was not the main objective of British policy at the time. This was rather to secure an end to *konfrontasi* which was tying down so many British troops, delaying an essential Defence Review which, when eventually completed, was to lead to the closure of the Singapore military base in 1971, and frustrating the UK's desire to secure a stable independence for Sarawak and Borneo which threatened to fall under Indonesian influence, if not hegemony, as well as a prosperous and non-communist future for Indonesia.

11. The Final Report continues that over the next few months, 'information culled largely from the Indonesian military press by the UK embassy in Jakarta was sent to Singapore where it was conveyed in briefings to selected foreign media....' The sources of information available to British officials in Singapore were far wider than this. These sources included the whole range of information and intelligence available: SIGINT (signals intelligence), HUMINT (Secret intelligence from MI6, CIA and other intelligence services), news agencies (Antara, United Press International, Associated Press, Reuters), Indonesian newspapers and journals and Indonesian radio, UK and shared Western diplomatic reporting, and reports from resident and visiting technical experts, businessmen and travellers. A revealing memorandum dated 30 October 1965 from Reddaway to Brian Tovey (later Sir Brian Tovey, Director of GCHQ at Cheltenham), then on posting to Singapore, highlighted the contribution which SIGINT could make, though Reddaway confirmed that: 'Clearly, security collateral is all-important, and you would wish to be consulted in all cases about the use of items of intelligence'. ⁷

12. It is I think clear to most people that a sophisticated information and propaganda operation conducted by senior officials based in London, Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur would not have been mainly concerned with recycling information culled from the Indonesian military press. Such material accounted for only a small proportion of the raw materials examined in Singapore, and was of value only when such material was stripped of propaganda, fabrication and disinformation and the materials checked against other sources of information such as SIGINT and HUMINT.

13. When the Indonesians started their campaign of military and political *konfrontasi* against Malaysia in September 1963, Malaysia and other Commonwealth forces defending the Borneo territories resisted as best they could on all fronts - military, political, propaganda and 'psywar'. An endeavour by Malaysia in September 1964 to secure UN Security Council support after Indonesian parachutists landed at Labis in Johore north of Singapore, following an Indonesian sea-borne landing at Pontian in Johore the previous month, resulted on 17 September 1964 in a Soviet veto of a moderate and conciliatory Norwegian draft Resolution. This not surprisingly convinced Malaysia and her friends and allies that any attempt to resolve *konfrontasi* through UN intervention or mediation was certain to be blocked by the Soviet Union, even though *konfrontasi* represented a flagrant breach of the peace, an act of aggression meriting action under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

The limitations of 'psywar' activity

14. It is important not to exaggerate the likely impact of the UK's 'psywar' operations. As Ambassador Gilchrist put it in his Telegram № 2074 of 7 October 1965, responding to typically 'gung-ho' proposals for action⁸ from Sir John Grandy, Commander-in-Chief Far East based in Singapore:

The first sentence of your third paragraph is all very well; but our abilities to exacerbate internal strife are limited. If the death of his little daughter (plus the evidence, that the Army are now alleged to have, that Sukarno had foreknowledge of the murder plans) does not drive Nasution into action against the PKI, irrespective of Sukarno's wishes, then psywar activity by us is hardly likely to do the trick.'⁹

15. As regards this 'psywar' activity, I have gone through the online archive of *The Straits Times* in Singapore from 1 October 1965 to 30 April 1966, but have found it difficult to identify any dubious materials which might have been provided unattributably as a result of the UK's information activities. I found an article entitled 'Jakarta Red Terror' datelined Jakarta 12 November 1965 which reported comments on Jakarta radio by Jakarta garrison commander Maj-Gen Umar Wirahadikusuma alleging that the PKI had set up combat groups on the outskirts of Jakarta as well as illegal groups to carry out killing, kidnapping and arson now that martial law in Jakarta had ended. In his memoirs, Roland Challis, the BBC's South East Asia correspondent in Singapore at the time, noted that this story related to reported PKI preparations made before the events of 1 October. He did not imply that the story was fabricated. It reportedly came from the diaries of PKI members seized when captured. However, I still need to be persuaded though that these diaries really existed.

16. I have also scoured the online archive of *The Times* from 1 October 1965 to 30 April 1966, but have found only one possibly questionable article published on 29 October 1965 and headlined 'Communists start terror campaign in Java' about the reported massacre of 178 civilians. The source of the report by *The Times* own correspondent in Kuala Lumpur is attributed to *Antara*, the official Indonesian news agency, but some of the detail (for example, about the poisoning of 62 persons) might be suspect. However, the actual number of victims is consistent with other independent reports (Crouch 2007, 150+) of communist atrocities at the time. Six months later, *The Times* Special Correspondent, who I believe was the highly

respected Fred Emery, reported in the second of a series of four in-depth articles, after an eight-week assignment to Indonesia, on the reign of terror instituted in one area of Central Java where some 800 local officials, politicians and religious leaders were murdered by local communists in the three weeks after the attempted putsch. By the end of October, the Army had arrived to restore order and the tables were turned: some 3,000 communists and their families met a grisly death.¹⁰

What happened at Lubang Buaya on 1 October 1965

17. The press bureaus of the Associated Press, United Press International and Reuter in Jakarta were given as the primary sources of information for the heavy coverage in *The Straits Times* on all aspects of the Untung Affair during the weeks immediately following the abortive coup. The lurid details of what had allegedly happened to the six generals and the unfortunate lieutenant were first published in Jakarta media on 5 October 1965 after an autopsy on the corpses, and widely circulated internationally. This was several days before Reddaway arrived in Singapore to take charge of the British information and ‘psywar’ operations. It needed no boost by the British or anyone else to ensure international publicity for these reports, which in news value nonetheless had a relatively short life-span and were not all that prominently reported internationally. Thus *The Times* of 5 October 1965 reported the news in terms that the murdered generals had been ‘savagely beaten before being thrown into a common grave’ which is probably closer to the truth than President Sukarno’s reported remark (Hughes 1967, 53) that they had been executed ‘in an orderly and graceful manner’ by persons who ‘apologised first’ before killing them. Don Ruth, the *Associated Press* staff writer in Jakarta, reported on 17 October 1965 that the generals had been ‘beaten, tortured and mutilated’, but gave no details.

18. Subsequently, references were made in the international press to ‘mutilated corpses’ when ‘battered corpses’ might have been more accurate if you are persuaded, as I am, by autopsies on the seven victims discovered by Ben Anderson, a leading US scholar on Indonesia, in 1987.¹¹ There is no evidence that the autopsies were sanitised, to please Sukarno, but it is not known why he did not seek to publish the copy which he said he had been given at the time. The murdered generals may not after all have been subjected to mutilation at the hands of sex-crazed women from the Gerwani communist women’s’ association, they were only, it seems more likely, beaten up, battered with rifle butts, bayoneted, repeatedly shot and dumped dead or dying in a disused well at Lubang Buaya, a suburb of Jakarta and home to the Halim Air Base, and then covered over with dirt and debris. The Final Report states that: ‘The official version of what happened to the prisoners at Lubang Buaya was totally false.’ However, I believe it to be generally true, but there must be considerable doubt about the veracity of several details; and reports of what actually happened were embellished as the days went by.

19. Not for a moment do I believe that my former colleagues stationed in Singapore propagated the more absurd elements of this story. I have found no evidence that any use was made by the British of the less than credible details in the Indonesian Army version of their deaths. More generally, the IPT papers do not provide examples of false Army propaganda

allegedly disseminated by the British. The reality I suspect, based on my own recent analysis of available materials and past recollection, is that, while some reports were indeed little more than propaganda, most reports in *Antara*, in the Army-controlled press and on Jakarta radio of nefarious PKI activities in the early 1960s and of atrocities during October 1965 most probably had a basis of truth, but many details may well have been both fabricated and exaggerated.

IPT concerns about ‘false’ propaganda

20. What was lacking in the overall presentation by the Indonesian Army of events at the time was the absence of any reporting about the far greater number of murders of PKI cadres and tens and thousands of other people only vaguely or not at all associated with the PKI, although during November and December 1965 Sukarno made several appeals for an end to the violence.

21. There are no fewer than twelve references to ‘false’ propaganda in the Final Report, which makes me uncomfortable. The statement in the Final Report that ‘many of the stories focused on alleged communist atrocities, retailing the Indonesian army’s version of event at Lubang Buaya.....’ is not supported in the memoirs of BBC Southeast Asia correspondent at the time, Roland Challis. He recalls that in a letter to Gilchrist, Reddaway highlighted several incidents, ‘which stand out in my [Reddaway’s] mind’, but they did not include the escalating Army propaganda about what happened at Lubang Buaya. Challis mentions (Challis 2001, 103) in this connection only ‘a flattering version of the night of the long knives (starring Mrs Nasution)’, mostly written up by the UK Information Officer Stanley Budd in Kuala Lumpur and published in late March 1966, and so days after the banning of the PKI on 12 March 1966 and several weeks after the orgy of killings had come to an end. However the comment (Challis 2001, 100) that ‘in the notes he gave me Reddaway said his main source of information was a series of top secret telegrams - about four a week by diplomatic wire service - from Andrew Gilchrist in Jakarta, dealing with the dishonesty and shortcomings of President Sukarno’, would seem to be a misunderstanding as the character weaknesses and devious behaviour of the President were the constant tittle-tattle of the cocktail round in Jakarta and merited only a low security classification, if and when reported.

22. The stories which Reddaway highlighted and which would seem to have had a basis of historical truth are nonetheless more critically interpreted by some writers. Nathaniel Mehr, for example, sees Reddaway only as providing ‘a list of deceptions and fabrications’ and concludes that: ‘The British Foreign Office was actively involved in a deliberate campaign of misinformation, aimed at manipulating Indonesian and international public opinion.....’ (Mehr 2009, 110). This interpretation in my view has no merit whatsoever and is not supported by documentary evidence.

Foreign Office guidance telegrams and other documents

23. The IPT 1965 papers draw attention to two Foreign Office documents, one a Guidance Telegram sent to certain posts overseas on 18 [not 16] January 1966¹² and the

other a letter [not a telegram] dated 23 February 1966 from Ambassador Gilchrist to Assistant Under-Secretary of State Arthur de la Mare who had succeeded Ted Peck in this position in late December 1965.¹³ The presentation of these documents seems designed to show that the Foreign Office knew perfectly well early in the New Year of 1966 from their own sources that an appalling massacre had taken place in Indonesia (which was true enough) and accordingly had no excuse for continuing their propaganda campaign in support of the Army against the PKI (an allegation which is not supported by policy papers such as the memorandum “Getting at Nasution” signed by Reddaway on 24 December 1965).¹⁴

24. The two documents only confirm what was already public knowledge. The letter of 23 February 1966 was, according to notations on the actual file in UK National Archives, only received in London on 28 February, or less than two weeks before Sukarno transferred responsibility for security, and thus effective power, to Suharto on 11 March 1966. Suharto declared the PKI an illegal organisation the following day.

25. I should add that I drafted or saw in draft most ‘Guidance Telegrams’ which were issued at the time about the situation in Indonesia. These were generally of low security classification and were designed to update selected posts about what was happening and what line they should take in talking with local authorities and press correspondents. Posts would frequently show a copy of such telegrams to reliable contacts. Guidance № 26 of 18 January 1966, for example, instructed posts that the material in the telegram ‘is primarily for your own information, but you may draw upon it in discussions with reliable contacts, stressing that the situation is still very confused, that recent killings have increased tensions considerably and that the eventual outcome is impossible to predict.’

26. The same was the case in London. On one occasion I was asked by the Foreign Office News Department as the desk officer for Indonesia to talk unattributably to London-based correspondents attending the daily News Department press briefing. The press wanted reliable background, not Indonesian Army propaganda. I do not recall that I dissimulated in any way about the extent of the killings. There was no reason or instruction for me to do so. But I had no details and no reliable figures. I might add that our Embassy in Jakarta had reported that Colonel Stamboul at Armed Forces HQ had briefed the three British Military Attachés on 11 January 1966 about the killings and told them that the Army ‘had no idea of the number of people that had perished and that he himself would put the figure at half a million.’¹⁵ The Colonel did not seek to dissimulate about the huge number of victims involved.

The irrelevance of certain IPT documentation about the massacres

27. The Final Report states that:

the diplomatic and propaganda apparatuses of the US, Britain and Australia propagated this [TNI’s] version of events with the purpose of manipulating international opinion in favour of the Indonesian army (and against President

Sukarno), in the full knowledge that the army was preparing to, and later had already begun to, carry out or encourage such killings on a massive scale.

28. I have already shown that the two classified UK documents are inconsequential, as they post-date by days and even weeks detailed revelations in both the US and UK press about the massacres which had taken place. I discuss these revelations in detail below. No one in any case could possibly have guessed let alone known just after the attempted coup on 1 October 1965 that the TNI would later that month embark on an unprecedented killing spree. It is not credible to suggest that anyone outside the TNI's inner circle could have had 'the full knowledge that the army was preparing.....to carry out or encourage such killings on a massive scale'.

29. The extent of the massacre, though slow to emerge, was eventually acknowledged by Sukarno himself on 15 January 1966 when he told an 'open' Cabinet meeting at Bogor that a nine-man Commission had reported that 78,000 persons had been killed - by a slip of the tongue, he gave the figure as 87,000, which was reported in *The Times* of 17 January 1966 and stuck for years. As one Commission Member later commented in private (Hughes 1967, 194), a total of 78,000 was about one tenth of the probable number, explaining that 'we gave him the figures we thought he wanted to know'. The Final Report claims incorrectly on Page 37 that this figure was released by the President in November 1965. The Commission was not appointed until late December.

30. Far more significant however than the Sukarno's 15 January 1966 announcement and the two Foreign Office documents is the fact that leading press media in the US and UK had already started to reveal details of the killings. *TIME* Magazine in its issue of 17 December 1965 in an article headlined 'Indonesia: Silent Settlement' was probably first off the mark internationally when it reported:

According to accounts brought out of Indonesia by Western diplomats and independent travelers, Communists, Red sympathizers and their families are being massacred by the thousands. Backlands army units are reported to have executed thousands of Communists after interrogation in remote jails.....The killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a serious sanitation problem in East Java and Northern Sumatra where the humid air bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travelers from these areas tell of small rivers and streams that have been literally clogged with bodies. River transportation has at places been impeded.

31. *The Times* diplomatic correspondent on 31 December 1965 revealed 'the full and grim scale of the suppression of the Communist party now coming to light from returning travellers. Much the most conservative estimate which has so far reached me of the number of communists killed since the abortive coup on October 1 is 10,000'.

32. In *The Sunday Times* of 2 January 1966 this figure had risen to 100,000. The newspaper's well-respected diplomatic correspondent, Nicholas Carroll, quoted 'well-authenticated reports' from Jakarta that deaths in the 'wholesale slaughter of Communists' had been put conservatively at 100,000 by Western diplomats. The report added: 'European engineers, businessmen and other foreign travellers returning from up-country speak of rivers

filled with floating decapitated corpses.....The murders have mostly been the work of Muslims who suffered grievously at the hands of the Communists before the abortive coup d'état last October'.

33. *The Times* diplomatic correspondent in a further report on 8 January 1966 headlined his article 'Mass killings of Indonesian communists continue', spoke of 'the continued and widespread suppression of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) by nationalists, in particular by the Muslim youth organizations', and noted that: 'Estimates of the number of those killed now vary from anything between 10,000 and 300,000 but a figure of between 25,000 and 150,000 is now widely accepted among expert observers of the Indonesian scene.'

34. The Western diplomats quoted by *TIME* and *The Sunday Times* and the expert observers quoted by *The Times* would have included the British Embassy in Jakarta and sources in the UK Foreign Office. Even so, the decision was taken, as much in London as in Singapore, not to promote publicity about the killings. As Reddaway put it in a letter dated 8 February 1966 to Gilchrist:

I have been much tempted to use the account of Javanese butchery, which would find a ready market in the press. J.M.I.D. [the Joint Malaysia/Indonesia Department of the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office] are not in favour, and on balance I agree with them. The press will ferret out quite a bit for itself, but on the whole I would say that the chances of getting a new management in Indonesia would be reduced rather than enhanced by advertising the bloodbath. ¹⁶

35. In a letter dated 24 March 1966 to Harry Stanley, the Head of the Joint Malaysia/Indonesia Department in Whitehall, Reddaway confirmed that 'we have deliberately withheld information about the massacres because we thought it would harm the generals who were likely to be more favourable to us than Suk/Sub.....'. ¹⁷ In the circumstances of 1965-1966, this might have seemed a not unreasonable position to take, not least as British Members of Parliament who kept a close watch on Indonesian affairs, including Dame Joan Vickers (Conservative), Tam Dalyell (Labour) and Colin Jackson (Labour), not once raised either in the House of Commons or outside concerns about the slaughter taking place, though there was at the time a vociferous parliamentary lobby against the carnage of war in Vietnam. Nor did the killings find any mention in the Annual Reports of Amnesty International for 1965/66 or 1966/67, nor were they raised with the UN Human Rights Commission, which at the time was only an advisory body and not interventionist until 1967. Indeed, the first parliamentary reference to the massacres was on 27 February 1967 when the Labour politician Eric Heffer intervened in a debate on the Defence Review to remind the House of Commons that "half a million people were killed". An isolated letter to *The Times* printed on 16 April 1966 from one Patrick Roberts of Brighton alone drew attention to the slaughter and enquired 'whether the churches have made any pronouncement on the mass killings'. Seemingly not.

36. In his letter of 24 March 1966, Reddaway also noted: 'The essential point, however, is that in dealing with press men we do our damndest to distinguish honestly between what we

consider fact and what we pass on as rumour'. Reddaway was commenting on representations made to the Foreign Office on 18 March 1966 by the US Embassy in London that US correspondents in Singapore had complained to their Embassy there that British officials were putting out 'spectacular' stories which the correspondents thought were false or misleading. This story was also reported by Dr Simpson (Simpson 2008, 202) in terms that 'foreign reporters' had made these complaints about 'fabrications' which were 'so outrageous, however, that correspondents thought they had no choice but to report them, prompting the US embassy [in Singapore] to ask "if tacit complicity in this UK psywar is in our interests".' Reddaway explained to Stanley in JMID that the whole affair related to a single person, Pat Killen of UPI, who in a moment of pique at missing out on several stories, because he had wrongly based himself in Kuala Lumpur, had poured out his resentment to the Consul-General, Dick Donald. Reddaway had however spent two hours with Killen's boss, Earl Richert, who 'went off beaming'.

37. After this contretemps, Killen was in touch with Reddaway or his office almost every day, and when he left on posting the following month rang Reddaway personally to thank him for his 'outstanding help and cooperation'. Donald himself later had no problems about sending US correspondents for briefing by the British team as the Americans had no similar service on offer. US archives only contain the first distorted and misleading part of the story. British archives record the 'happy ending'. Dr Simpson might wish to review his account, in the knowledge that the Foreign Office were inadvertently given a copy of a US telegram from Singapore marked 'Please read and destroy'; nothing actually appears to have been said when the telegram was handed over in the Foreign Office along with other documents.

The UK primarily concerned with achieving an end to *konfrontasi*

38. Reddaway commented in his letter dated 14 February 1966 to Gilchrist that, while he agreed that the Generals started off the massacres, 'latterly they have been as anxious as Sukarno to impose some moderation'. As Harold Crouch put it, after crushing the PKI leadership 'the army had no interest in an ongoing slaughter that strengthened the political position of organized Islam' (Crouch 2007, 153). The assertion in the IPT report that the UK and Australia 'continued with this policy [of legitimizing false propaganda] even after it had become abundantly clear that killings were taking place on a mass and indiscriminate basis' is not in my view a justified criticism.

39. The Top Secret exchanges on file in UK National Archives between the UK Jakarta embassy and Reddaway show that the publicity themes in operational use from late 1965 concentrated on 'economic difficulties - vanished creditworthiness, difficulty in obtaining aid, inflation, food shortages, no cloth for Lebaran [the Eid Festival] and so forth'¹⁸. This emphasis is no better illustrated than in the Editorial in *The Straits Times* of 11 January 1966 headlined 'Problems for Jakarta'¹⁹, every word of which could have been penned by Reddaway himself, and probably was. It concluded:

The years of muddle, inefficiency and corruption are presenting their bill at last, an indebtedness multiplied by defence spending and confrontation and which can be met only by heroic remedies (mostly hard work) and rational policies, domestic and international. Indonesia first needs to rid itself of the nightmarish belief that it is fighting imperialist conspiracy, and can survive only through confrontation. It could then begin, with some hope of success, to solve desperate problems that are of its own making.

40. This is vintage Reddaway. The language contrasts with the pedestrian prose of earlier commentaries in *The Straits Times*. The Editorial makes no reference to the PKI. It is primarily targeted at General Suharto and the Army, telling them in as blunt terms as possible that it was time to bring *konfrontasi* to an end. That this message was making an impact on the Generals is highlighted in an editorial in *The Indonesian Herald* of 3 February 1966 entitled 'Why Necolim Psywar?' and which commented:

'The problem was considered so serious that it was taken up at a recent session of nation's armed forces chiefs chaired by General Nasution himself.The fact that Necolim powers and their henchmen are intensifying their psywar activities against Indonesia must not come as a surprise to us.They are trying to subdue our revolution at a time when they think we are most beset with problems at home.' ²⁰

41. UK information activities, in the rapidly changing situation between the murder of the generals on 1 October 1965 and the effective transfer of power to Suharto on 11 March 1966, relied increasingly less on propaganda and 'psywar' activity and more and more on straight information and publicity work in a situation where people both inside and outside Indonesia were starved of news and objective opinion. The UK was never in the market of peddling gossip and fabrication. No better illustration of British objectives is to be found than in the already mentioned memorandum 'Getting at Nasution' prepared by Reddaway on 24 December 1965 which discussed operational themes for undermining Nasution and inducing the Army to negotiate an end to confrontation. ²¹ No mention is made of the PKI, while 'better informal links with the generals' through private citizens whom Nasution had trusted in pre-confrontation days are recommended as positive measures.

42. Despite the impact he was making, Reddaway even so felt he was receiving little overall support from London. To some extent this was due to the mild disdain at the time among the traditional British diplomatic establishment for 'information' work which was perceived as only a little better than 'commercial' work. Reddaway spoke of the 'appeasement lobby' in the Foreign Office and asked in a letter dated 8 February 1966 to Gilchrist: 'What on earth am I supposed to be doing here? We shall soon be in a position where the only acceptable thing is to do nothing.' As early as 25 November 1965, Harry Stanley, Head of the Joint Malaysia/Indonesia Department, had submitted to Ted Peck, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, a brief for forthcoming Four-Power Talks in which it was stated that British policy to date, including UK propaganda and information activities:

may have contributed marginally towards keeping the Generals going against the PKI and causing friction with China. It has therefore been consistent, as far as it goes, with our long-term objective. But by itself it has not significantly helped us over confrontation.²²

43. Reddaway himself ruefully admitted in a Secret and Personal letter to Gilchrist dated 18 July 1966: 'The political side in London has been hostile most of the time, and at best neutral' to his activities.²³

44. As regards the effectiveness of the 'black propaganda' to which the Final Report makes reference, no one was more scathing than Reddaway himself. In an interview on BBC Radio 4 on 3 August 1998 he commented:

We made a complete nonsense of what you might call the influencing of opinion because we let all the professionals in - the black propagandists and the secret service. They devised dreadful things out of Phoenix Park in Singapore - floating bottles down the river in Sarawak with messages saying how awful Sukarno was..... Then there was another idea of having a shipload of anti-Sukarno intellectuals broadcasting from a steamer. Oh yes, and landing a rubber boat on the south side of Java when the moon was dark so that people would conclude the Chinese were influencing Sukarno.

45. Files in UK National Archives show that materials passed to the 'black' Radio Malaysia transmitter included such items as tapes of a subversive song and an interview with students in March 1966 at the height of the political crisis which led to Sukarno's surrender of power. However, in the absence of recordings or transcripts it is impossible to say what items might have been provided by the UK and what came from Malaysian sources. Dr Simpson and other writers make mention of other 'black transmitters', but I know of none, and would add that it was not the British who set up the 'Radio Free Indonesia' transmitter, but the Malaysians who alone had the sovereign right to do so.

46. Reddaway was Regional Information Officer based in Beirut 1961-65 prior to his posting to Singapore and used his contacts in the Middle East successfully to provide unattributable, but fact-based materials and comment. The Middle East activity was not in any case 'black'.

British undertakings not to escalate armed action

47. There is further the issue of the British undertaking not to escalate armed action in Borneo. This was first given by the British through the US Military Attaché in Jakarta, Colonel Ethel, only days after the abortive coup (and not directly by US Ambassador Marshall Green to General Nasution as Dr Simpson stated at 20.27 minutes into his testimony). This was well before the massacres had started. The message, taken down verbally by an aide of General Nasution 'on a piece of paper', simply stated that 'we have good reason to believe that none of our allies intend to initiate any offensive action against

Indonesia' ²⁴. The aide subsequently told Colonel Ethel that Nasution was very satisfied with the message and 'hoped the British would lay off'.

48. This message was however not given to encourage the Army to start slaughtering the PKI and anyone associated with them, however remotely, though the US, UK and Australia were all in favour of the Army clobbering the PKI and eliminating them as an effective political organisation. The British did however expect a reciprocal commitment from the Indonesian side to lower the tempo of their confrontation. That is why, at specific British request, the words 'to initiate' were included in the message. It should be noted in this context that the British undertaking was not to exercise restraint, in the event of Indonesian provocation, but not to initiate any new and escalating offensive action (such as bombing Indonesian military positions in Kalimantan or commando raids on islands off Sumatra or on the mainland itself). This the Indonesians had thought possible when the UK, Australia and New Zealand sent reinforcements to Singapore following the air-drop at Labis in September 1964, but had in fact been ruled out before the events of 1 October 1965 by Whitehall as a provocative escalation of activity bound to unite the Indonesian people. As we shall see in the next paragraphs, during the 10 weeks which followed the attempted coup, the Indonesians continued to intrude into Sarawak, and the British responded, at times robustly - too much so for the Indonesians and Americans.

49. From the outset, the Commander-in-Chief Far East (CINCFE) Sir John Grandy had made it clear in an 'Exclusive' signal sent on 12 October 1965 to the Chief of Defence Staff in London, Sir Richard Hull, that:

.....I am strongly opposed to any suggestions going from us to the Indonesians that they can withdraw troops from Borneo. I would always be happy to see reductions of Indonesian strength in Borneo, and if this led to the gradual fizzle out of confrontation as envisaged this would be fine. But any hints from us to instigate it could well be construed as meaning that we are prepared to discontinue operations now under way in Borneo to inkle out and break the Indonesian leadership and their support of CCO [the Clandestine Communist Organisation among Chinese in Sarawak] activities which we know come from across the border. I have no intention at all of discontinuing these operations which are extremely important. ²⁵

Indonesian rhetoric was sustained at a high level in the wake of the events of 1 October 1965. More important than the rhetoric, military infiltration continued throughout October and November 1965, and into December. On 14 and 15 October 1965, *The Straits Times* reported fresh clashes in Sarawak in the Third Division following a lull of two years. On 16 October the daily reported a clash in the Second Division. On 18 October 1965 there were further clashes on the border. This infiltration continued into November and early December. From Jakarta, Gilchrist observed in a Saving Telegram (sent by diplomatic bag and dated 13 November 1965) that 'the fact is that we have yet to see any overt sign of a reduction in confrontation.' ²⁶

50. To counter this activity, deep penetration into Indonesian territory under Operation 'Claret' continued well into 1966. One such operation took place on 21 November 1965

which led to a fire-fight, as a result of which L.Cpl Rambahadur Limbu later received Britain's highest award for gallantry, the Victoria Cross, the only one awarded throughout the three year Borneo campaign. Two Military Crosses were also awarded to Captain Christopher 'Kit' Maunsell and Lt Ranjit Rai. The November clashes followed what *The Straits Times* of 23 November 1965 described as morale boosting visits to the Borneo border by the Navy Chief of Staff, Vice Admiral Eddy Martadinata, and the Marine Corps Commander, Maj-Hen Hartono, who reportedly spent a week touring front-line positions, as *The Straits Times* reported, 'to urge the Indonesians to step up attacks'.

51. Victoria Crosses are not won in times of cease-fire and disengagement. This background of a modest, though brief escalation of activity by Indonesia in October and November 1965 also needs to be considered against reports from Jakarta of a similar perceived British escalation of activity. In Telegram № 2489 from Jakarta on 10 November 1965, Ambassador Gilchrist reported concerns expressed to the US Ambassador Green by Under-Secretary Helmi in the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the Generals 'wanted on no account to put more people in [to Kalimantan]; he used phrases about lessening our activity, decreasing patrols, not maintaining a provocative activity. 'If we have to move eight battalions to Kalimantan, we might as well give up our struggle against PKI'.'

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52. On the same day, in Telegram № 2494, Gilchrist reported that, from what the C-in-C in Sumatra General Mokoginta had told his Counsellor James Murray, 'the Indonesians are still quite genuinely afraid of some aggressive intentions on our part' and that according to Mokoginta's First Deputy Chief of Staff, Colonel Soesatjo, 'the command had received strict instructions from Djakarta during the weekend that not more than half of their available forces were to be used for dealing for dealing with the remnants of the 30 September movement and the PKI: the rest were to be held in reserve against possible action by the British.' Gilchrist continued: 'I may add that I sense from Marshall Green and his Military Attaché a feeling on their part that there is still something a little "aggressive" about our military posture on the Borneo frontier.'²⁸

53. My reading of the papers in UK National Archives is that, from the period 1 October to 31 December 1965, there was no measurable reduction in the numbers of Indonesian fighters on the Borneo border, whose strength remained at some 16,000 -17,000. This accords with US estimates in Intelligence Memorandum OCI No. 2942/65 of 18 November 1965 which put the Indonesian strength at 'approximately 17,000'. The Foreign Office noted in Telegram № 8775 of 6 November 1965 to Washington²⁹ that the Generals 'have been reassured that we neither intend to interfere in Indonesian internal affairs nor to initiate offensive action, but they have not significantly reduced their military deployment against Malaysia and Singapore, and may still feel it would be unsafe to do so'.

54. By January 1966, the full horror of the killings had become internationally known. The struggle to eliminate the PKI as an effective political party had already been accomplished in a particularly gruesome way, though with an estimated membership of some three million, it was clear that the majority of the rank and file of mostly innocent peasants and workers had survived, although the national and local leadership had been wiped out.

While Indonesian rhetoric on *konfrontasi* remained at a high volume, on the ground activity began to recede as Suharto sought to control and integrate the motley collection in Kalimantan of ‘volunteers’, fighters from other agencies, and regular Air Force, Navy, Army and Police personnel. As Harold Crouch has noted, of some 546 Indonesian prisoners returned to Indonesia when *konfrontasi* ended in August 1966, only 21 actually claimed to have come from the Army itself, though probably most of the 189 ‘volunteers’ also did (Crouch 2007, 74). I have seen no evidence that any Commonwealth forces taken prisoner by the Indonesians - and there were a few - returned alive.

55. It is clear that the UK did not reduce its vigilance, nor its deep penetration practices during the six months 1 October 1965 to 31 March 1966 and that any suggestion that the UK was working hand-in-glove with the Indonesian Army to enable battalions to leave Kalimantan to kill civilians in Java, Sumatra and elsewhere has no basis in historical fact, despite the assurances passed in early October to the Indonesians about not initiating aggressive action. It is in any case doubtful that Indonesian troops from Borneo were actually needed in either Java or Sumatra to suppress the PKI. Troops used to lead the attack on the PKI were mostly elite units, notably the RPKAD (Parachute Regiment). The level of PKI penetration into most Army battalions made these unreliable and so they were kept out of the fray. An Australian report, recorded in FO Telegram № 8677 of 2 November 1965 to Washington, noted that the ‘State Department also doubt whether Generals would wish to transfer troops from Kalimantan for use against the PKI, because the allegiance of these troops was uncertain.’³⁰ This could both reflect the extent of PKI penetration of Army units in Kalimantan and the degree of troop allegiance to the Sukarno-Subandrio axis. Some troops also came from supposed volunteer sources; some, like the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO), were mostly of Chinese origin from Sarawak; yet others were thought to be connected with Subandrio’s own ‘Central Intelligence Board’ or Badan Pusat Intelijen (BPI).

Expert opinion presented to the IPT

56. In his testimony to the Tribunal and in response to questions from the Judges, recorded on video³¹, Dr Bradley Simpson, a leading US academic authority on this period of Indonesian history, presented persuasive testimony on US complicity, but was less than convincing on British responsibility. While he was able to quote effectively from declassified US official documents, he may well have been short of similar relevant materials from British archives. He made a number of statements which I would like to examine more closely:

- i. The US and UK Governments repeatedly sought, so Dr Simpson said, to induce the PKI to make a premature move which would result in their destruction. John Roosa has recorded that this notion of a premature abortive coup was widely floated both within Indonesia and internationally (Roosa 2006, 190-191) and gave several examples. ‘Apparently, the idea was considered so clever that it became the banter of the cocktail circuit.’ The PKI themselves would have been fully aware of the dangers

- of precipitate action when so many people were talking openly about this, more out of wishful thinking than realistic policy.
- ii. Assistant Under-Secretary of State Ted Peck is reported by Dr Simpson to have suggested to a meeting of regional UK Ambassadors in March 1965 that ‘there might be much to be said for encouraging a premature PKI coup during Sukarno’s lifetime, provided of course the coup failed’. I have checked FO archives: Peck did not attend a meeting of ‘northern tier’ UK heads of mission from SE Asian countries held in Bangkok 31 March - 2 April 1965; nor did Gilchrist. A shorter variant of Peck’s remarks, to the effect that ‘there might be much to be said for encouraging a premature PKI coup during Sukarno’s lifetime’ is quoted by others (Roosa 2006, 190; Easter 2012, 160), but attributed to a bilateral UK-US meeting in late November 1964 in Washington.
 - iii. The words said to have been spoken by Peck in Bangkok or Washington are taken from a first draft background brief which I prepared for Peck on 20 November 1964 for use at the bilateral talks in Washington later in the month. This draft included the sentence: ‘There might therefore be much to be said for encouraging a premature coup during Sukarno’s lifetime’. Before submitting this draft for Peck’s approval, I softened the wording in my own handwriting on 27 November 1964 to read: ‘There might however be much to be said for encouraging the PKI to overplay their hand’. This was the version which Peck took to Washington.³² It is quite remarkable that a discarded phrase from my first draft was reconstructed from beneath an overlay of inked revision and has survived in many accounts as what Peck actually used at a meeting overseas.
 - iv. I repeated the jejune comment: ‘A premature coup may be the most helpful solution for the West - provided the coup failed’ when making a handwritten, final comment on file DH 1015/112 on 30 December 1964 (my birthday!) on a New Zealand Legation report dated 1 December 1964 by their highly respected Minister in Jakarta, Reuel Lochore.³³ He was of the view that ‘an attempt by the PKI to seize power, which seems to be regarded with apprehension abroad, would seem to us to be in important respects beneficial to both Indonesia and ourselves’. Lochore’s reasoning was that the Army ‘will combine all their forces to meet any challenge of the PKI and will not have too much difficulty in defeating it, even in Java’.³⁴ John Roosa attributed my comment on the file jacket containing the New Zealand report to Malcolm Templeton, the New Zealand High Commissioner in London (Roosa 2006, 190). So too did Dr Simpson in his book (Simpson 2008, 144). Templeton’s only role however had been to pass a copy of Lochore’s report to Ted Peck. It is unlikely that he would have expressed any insight into Indonesian affairs from London, and even less likely that he would have sneaked into my office one day to write a comment on one of my files.
 - v. Weapons and ammunition were being provided, according to Dr Simpson, ‘through British channels that had already been established in Northern Sumatra’. I was unaware of any such arms provision and doubt that it occurred. There was also, Dr Simpson said, continuing British ‘support for regional separatist movements in Sulawesi, Northern Sumatra and Kalimantan’. I was equally unaware of any such activity in the 1960s, whatever may have happened before, but will gladly look at any

evidence to the contrary. At the time, I had access to SIGINT and Secret intelligence reports. More generally, Dr Simpson's belief that the UK provided 'covert assistance' to the Army while the killings were taking place is puzzling. The UK had little contact, other than hostile, with the Indonesian military at the time.

- vi. Dr Simpson said that a British naval vessel flying a Panamanian flag had allegedly escorted a vessel from Medan down to Java carrying troops *en route* to massacre communists. Her Majesty's Ships fly the White Ensign by law and by custom, not the flags of other countries. It was an Indonesian-crewed cargo vessel which was flying a Panamanian flag, with troops on board reported to be part of the IVth KOSTRAD [Strategic Reserve Command] Infantry Brigade allocated 'to be air-dropped into Malaysia and Singapore' according to the sole source which was a 1980 Indonesian press report. Two British naval vessels were involved on this occasion, and they gave the cargo ship the closest possible escort, for very obvious reasons after the landings in August (by sea) and September 1964 (by air) on the Malaysian mainland. (This allegation was also made by John Pilger; see my detailed refutation of the story in the document referred to at Endnote 2). Dr Simpson would also assure us that, while the British were supposedly escorting Indonesian troops allocated to KOSTRAD from Medan to Jakarta to start mass killings in Java, British assurances not to attack Indonesia made it possible for General Suharto to authorise General Kemal Idris, Chief of Staff of KOSTRAD, to despatch Indonesian KOSTRAD troops from Jakarta to Medan for the same purpose in Sumatra. There is seemingly no record that the two troop-ships actually passed each other in the Straits of Mallaca while on the way to their allocated killing grounds.
- vii. Dr Simpson mistakenly quotes Ambassador Gilchrist as calling for 'early and careful propaganda and psywar activities to exacerbate internal strife and ensure the destruction and putting to flight of the PKI by the Indonesian Army.' These sentiments are not those of Gilchrist. The pertinent phrases (underlined below) have been taken from the signal from CINCFE to CDS dated 5 October 1965 referenced at Endnote 8 and reassembled into a single, manipulated sentence. In this signal Sir John Grandy said: '3. I strongly advise that we should take much more aggressive line to try and ensure continuing civil war in Indonesia, our aim being the destruction and putting to flight of the PKI by the Indonesian Army.4. I believe we have everything to gain from early and carefully planned propaganda and psywar activity to exacerbate internal strife.' Gilchrist sought to calm Grandy down in his telegram referenced at Endnote 9: While sympathizing very much with Grandy's point of view, Gilchrist suggested that 'it may be better at this stage to concentrate our immediate efforts not on rush action but on quietly preparing the launching pad for effective action.'
- viii. Dr Simpson stated: 'As a historian I have concluded that the greatest fear of the US and Western Governments was that the Army might refrain from mass violence against the Party's unarmed members and supporters'. In his book (Simpson 2008, 178) Dr Simpson expressed this thought in the following terms: 'Because no Western intelligence agencies were arguing that PKI involvement in the 30 September Movement extended to the rank and file, one can only conclude that the greatest fear of the US and other Governments was that the army might *refrain* from mass violence

against the party's unarmed members and supporters, who by all accounts were unaware of and uninvolved in the movement.' The notion that the 'greatest fear' of certain governments at the time that a massacre of innocents might not take place is an interpretation of events which I believe few would share.

- ix. The Information Research Department (IRD) was not set up in February 1965, as Dr Simpson stated. It was established in 1948 to replace the Psychological Warfare Executive (PSE) itself derived from the wartime Special Operations Executive (SOE).
- x. Ambassador Gilchrist, in expressing his horror at the massacres in a handwritten letter dated 9 February 1966³⁵ to Norman Reddaway in Singapore, is reported by Dr Simpson as writing 'They were Communists, weren't they?', implying that Gilchrist thought that they were. The letter actually reads: 'What have we to hope from the generals? 400,000 murdered, far more than total casualties in Vietnam, and nobody cares. "They were Communists." Were they? And are Communists not human beings?' The words in sub-quotation marks are not Gilchrist's, but those of Reddaway in Singapore, to whom Gilchrist was responding. Gilchrist's *cri de coeur*: 'What have we to hope from the generals' reflects his scepticism at the time that a diarchy between the Army and the Sukarno-Subandrio axis would necessarily be any better in securing an end to *konfrontasi* than Sukarno's NASAKOM (Nationalism, Socialism, Communism) ideological triarchy which included the PKI.
- xi. Dr Simpson also quoted from Ted Peck's letter of 5 October 1965³⁶. Dr Simpson's quotation is a paraphrase and not a quotation. The version according to Dr Simpson is: 'He said, and I quote: 'It has always been my opinion that a little shooting was necessary to resolve this situation. It is a pity that they have shot the wrong people first'. ' What Gilchrist actually wrote was: 'I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change in Indonesia; but it makes me sad to think that they have begun with the wrong people.' It is worth reading Gilchrist's letter in full.³⁷ It concluded: 'I think I used the words cruel and ruthless in drawing a pen-picture of Aidit [the PKI leader] for you, the day after I first met him, and you can see I was not far wrong.' In my view the words 'a little shooting' are not a recommendation to initiate mass murder, as John Pilger sought to persuade us in 2001.
- xii. From 39.07 minutes into his evidence, Dr Simpson stated that: 'In early December [1965] US, British and other Western officials met at Quadripartite Talks in London where they began to plan on the possible resumption of Western assistance to Indonesia.....At the Quadripartite Talks in London in December of 1965 US Secretary of State Dean Rusk stated to his colleagues that, quote: "The US and the other Western countries need to begin letting the Army know what the [...indistinct] expects in return for assistance".' These talks in London were purely exploratory.³⁸ There was no serious 'planning' of any kind. But more particularly, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk did not attend these talks. The US delegation was led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Samuel D. Berger. During December 1965 Dean Rusk held talks in Europe only in Paris and Madrid. He did not meet his 'colleagues' [the Foreign Ministers of the UK, Australia and New Zealand] at the Quadripartite Talks in London 1-2 December 1965 which were held at official, not ministerial level. I

have no idea where the ‘quotation’ attributed to Dean Rusk came from; it was not his style to tell other Western countries what they should be doing.

Conclusions

57. I make no apology for British actions in 1965-66 because I have no reason to believe that they influenced the scale of killings in Indonesia in any measureable way, if indeed at all, although such alleged complicity in mass murder is regrettably prejudged in the IPT’s statement of its intentions. The Foundation IPT 1965 declared as its first and main objective:

To ensure national and international recognition of the genocide and crimes against humanity committed in and after the ‘events of 1965’ by the State of Indonesia, as well as the complicity of certain Western countries in the military campaign against alleged supporters of the 30 September Movement.

58. While there is no doubt about the massacres which took place in the wake of the abortive coup, it is regrettable that that IPT 1965 should at the outset of their consideration have passed judgement on the alleged ‘complicity’ of the UK in crimes against humanity. They do not appear to have examined the truth of the allegations in any depth, but sought only to promote the propagation of these allegations internationally as though they were already generally received wisdom. This is despite the fact that respected writers on British policy towards Indonesia in the 1960s like David Easter and Christopher Tuck had already examined the issues closely, but had acknowledged that they could only speculate on the extent to which British propaganda and military activities might have impacted on events inside Indonesia. Studies by these two scholars, as well as books by Matthew Jones, Paul Lashmar/James Oliver and Roland Challis represent a quintet of essential reading on the British role during *konfrontasi*, but are not included in the IPT report’s select bibliography.

59. The evidence I have presented above, if shown to the IPT Judges, would I believe have convinced them that the two main arguments by the Prosecution seeking to establish British ‘complicity’, namely:

- i. The British undertaking ‘not to initiate any offensive action’ which supposedly enabled the Indonesian Army to withdraw troops from Kalimantan and to reallocate reserves in Java and Sumatra to slaughter innocent civilians; and
- ii. The charge that ‘information culled largely from the Indonesian military press by the UK embassy in Jakarta was sent to Singapore where it was conveyed in briefings to selected foreign media’.

had no serious basis in historical fact and should be dismissed.

60. More generally, while the aim of UK, Australian, New Zealand and Malaysian policy at the time was to seek an end to confrontation by any means possible, the UK could not

possibly have imagined such a catastrophic outcome or would today accept that that they knowingly connived in any way at the mass slaughter which ensued.

61. A spokesman for Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade told the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) on 20 July 2016 that 'Australia rejects any suggestion that it was complicit in any way in those events of 50 years ago.' The position of Australia on this issue is very similar to that of the UK, as both countries were engaged in combatting Indonesian infiltration into Borneo at Malaysian request. The United States, on the other hand, heavily involved in Vietnam at the time, was not a party to *konfrontasi* and maintained a quiet, even covert working relationship with the Indonesian military not enjoyed in any way by the UK. I leave it to others to make the US and Australian cases, if they so choose.

62. Unlike the unchallengeable, evidence-based reality of the massacres, the presentation by IPT 1965 of the UK's supposed complicity is opinion-based and poorly researched. In my view this side-issue should not have been included in IPT 1965 at all, let alone in the very same sentence setting out the IPT's otherwise laudable objective to ensure national and international recognition of the Indonesian State's crimes against humanity. Only the Queen of Hearts in 'Alice in Wonderland' would have applauded the IPT for their 'verdict before evidence' approach on the matter of UK 'complicity'. It surely came as no surprise to them that the UK Government declined to send a representative to observe what was in no sense an independent, impartial tribunal objectively examining the UK's role.

Notes on contributor

Derek Tonkin retired in 1989 after a 37 year career in the British Diplomatic Service, during which time he specialised in the affairs of Eastern Europe and South East Asia. His final post was as Ambassador to Thailand. His particular interest in Indonesia relates to the three years he spent as Indonesia desk officer in the Foreign Office 1963-66. He lives at Worplesdon in Surrey, UK. Correspondence to: d.tonkin@btinternet.com .

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- ¹ FO 371/181455 Cambridge to Tonkin 10 March 1965
 - ² FO 371/180318 Gilchrist to Peck 5 October 1965
 - ³ These allegations may also be found in John Pilger's book *The New Rulers of the World*. London: Verso 2002.
 - ⁴ <http://web.archive.org/web/20160817064844/http://www.networkmyanmar.org/images/stories/PDF20/British-Policy-Indonesia-1963-66.pdf>
 - ⁵ Final Report of the IPT 1965 – IPT Foundation, The Hague-Jakarta, 20 July 2016
 - ⁶ FO 1101/7 Smith to Reddaway 17 December 1965 and Reddaway to Smith 20 December 1965
 - ⁷ FO 1101/5 Minute Reddaway to Tovey 30 October 1965
 - ⁸ CINC FE signal 050805Z of 5 October 1965 to CDS Ministry of Defence
 - ⁹ FO 371/181455 Telegram Jakarta to Foreign Office № 2074 of 7 October 1965
 - ¹⁰ 'Reign of Terror in Java' – *The Times*, 13 April 1966, the second of four substantive articles on the 'New Rule in Indonesia'.
 - ¹¹ http://cip.cornell.edu/DPubS?service=Repository&version=1.0&verb=Disseminate&view=body&content-type=pdf_1&handle=seap.indo/1107009317#
 - ¹² FO 371/186027 FO/CRO Guidance Telegram № 26 of 18 January 1966
 - ¹³ FO 371/186028 Gilchrist to de la Mare 23 February 1966
 - ¹⁴ FO 371/1105 "Getting at Nasution" – Memorandum by Reddaway 24 December 1965
 - ¹⁵ FO 371/167546 Murray to de la Mare 15 January 1966
 - ¹⁶ FO 1101/5 Reddaway to Gilchrist 8 February 1966
 - ¹⁷ FO 1101/5 Reddaway to Stanley 24 March 1966
 - ¹⁸ FO 1101/5 Reddaway to Murray 14 February 1966
 - ¹⁹ <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19660111-1.2.74.1.aspx>
 - ²⁰ http://web.archive.org/save/_embed/http://www.networkmyanmar.net/images/stories/PDF22/Herald.pdf
 - ²¹ See Note 14 above
 - ²² FO 371/181457 Brief for US-UK-AUS-NZ Talks 25 November 1965
 - ²³ Churchill Archives Centre, Gilchrist Papers, GILC 962/13Kiii
 - ²⁴ Telegram dated 10 October 1965 from US Embassy Jakarta to the State Department : Note 4
 - ²⁵ FO 371/181455 Signal CINC FE to CDS 12 October 1965
 - ²⁶ FO 371/ Saving Telegram № 86 to Foreign Office 11 November 1965
 - ²⁷ FO 371/181456 Jakarta Telegram № 2489 to Foreign Office 10 November 1965
 - ²⁸ FO 371/181456 Jakarta Telegram № 2494 to Foreign Office 10 November 1965
 - ²⁹ FO 371 181457 FO Telegram № 8775 to Washington 6 November 1965
 - ³⁰ FO 371/181456 FO Telegram № 8677 to Washington 2 November 1965
 - ³¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0oLuAxDntl> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPdqbpFYUOI>
 - ³² FO 371/175250 Minute and Draft Memorandum Tonkin 27 November 1964
 - ³³ New Zealand's diplomatic representation at the time was that of a Legation in the charge of a Minister
 - ³⁴ FO 371/175251 Minute Tonkin 30 December 1964 commenting on New Zealand report 1 December 1964
 - ³⁵ FO 1101/5 Gilchrist to Reddaway 9 February 1966
 - ³⁶ FO 371/180318 Gilchrist to Peck 5 October 1965
 - ³⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20161009054937/http://www.networkmyanmar.org/images/stories/PDF22/AG05101965.jpg>
 - ³⁸ FO 371/181458 Minute Peck to Secretary of State 3 December 1965