Polluting the Waters
A Brief History of Anti-Communist Propaganda during the Indonesian Massacres

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The anti-PKI massacres in Indonesia rank as one of the worst mass murders of the twentieth century, along with the Soviet purges of the 1930s, the Nazi mass murders during the Second World War, and the Maoist bloodbath of the early 1950s . . . the Indonesian coup is certainly one of the most significant events of the twentieth century.¹

In response to an alleged Communist coup in Indonesia on 1 October 1965, ambassadors Sir Keith Shann (Australia), Sir Andrew Gilchrist (United Kingdom), and Marshall Green (United States) initiated anti-Communist propaganda campaigns. In conjunction with the Indonesian army, these campaigns helped to underpin the rationale for widespread, army-coordinated anti-Communist repression throughout Indonesia. Through a careful re-examination of Australian archival materials regarding Indonesia between October 1965 and February 1966, this article provides a detailed, transnational chronology of propaganda efforts during the period of the massacres, highlighting the direct and indirect connections between them and the killings.

Key words: Indonesian Massacres, Cold War, propaganda, information warfare, Australia, Great Britain, United States

The premise of this article is an exploration of anti-Communist propaganda in Indonesia from October 1965 to February 1966 and its relationship with the Indonesian massacres. The events of 1 October 1965 and the massacres that followed are a well-established source of specialist interest to scholars of Indonesia and of the Cold War in Southeast Asia.² The initial academic analysis, as highlighted by scholars such as Benedict Anderson, focused on questions regarding individual and organizational involvement in the September 30th Movement. Later, through scholars like Harold Crouch, there was a shift toward analyzing its possible strategic intentions.³

There are key arguments in this article that should be briefly outlined. First, in relation to the events of 1 October 1965, the Indonesian army constructed key propaganda themes of Communist treachery, brutality, and conspiracy in order to create a pretext for a massive anti-Communist purge. Second, these propaganda themes were not only compatible with the attitudes of the Australian, British, and American ambassadors—each contributed personally to their own anti-Communist propaganda campaigns. Third, with knowledge of the mass killings, the Western ambassadors provided diplomatic and political support to the Indonesian army during the massacres.

The relationship between the deliberate uses of propaganda for various ends, as highlighted by pioneering early twentieth-century propagandists such as Edward
Bernays, encompasses a range of concepts familiar to scholars. Yet information methods of deliberate deception and manipulations are fluid and adaptable—they can serve every master and purpose. Therefore, the relationship between propaganda and mass killings, particularly issues such as propaganda as political incitement, are increasingly important areas of scholarly analysis. In this sense, the Indonesian Massacres provide a crucial case study of this phenomenon within the contexts of Cold War history and genocide studies.

To more fully appreciate the connections between the anti-Communist propaganda and the Indonesian Massacres, the reader will be first introduced to a brief history of Anglo-American information warfare, in which Australia was an active participant by the 1960s. Second, the reader will be introduced to a brief history of the uneasy Cold War relationship between Indonesia and the West.

Origins of a Cold War Propaganda Machine

In autumn 1947, Sir Christopher Mayhew, Parliamentary under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, approached UK secretary of state Ernest Bevin about developing an anti-Communist propaganda operation. Mayhew later approached British Labour prime minister Clement Attlee, convincing him that an “aggressive, organized response to the flood of communist propaganda” was required domestically and internationally. Mayhew later issued the instructions that began the process of setting up the Information Research Department (IRD) within the UK Foreign Office (FO). A small team was tasked with collecting and preparing propaganda “material under the direction of a specialist in ideological warfare”; it was supervised by a group “such as the Russia Committee—and also by one of the Ministers.” It was hoped that IRD materials would be used overseas by heads of British missions and “as briefs for Ministers’ speeches” and that they would be provided “informally to the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress” and to “foreign journalists, politicians, trade unionists, who were up against Communist opposition.”

The main elements of the IRD approach were black and gray propaganda techniques; the production of non-attributable briefing digests and major briefing papers about Communism; the dissemination of information to selected governments and individuals; the development of materials for radio, film, newspapers, magazines, and, later, television; and the safeguarding of the anonymity of IRD materials and propaganda methods. All materials were distributed on ministerial instructions for strictly non-attributable use only, which was designed to protect the existence of an officially inspired anti-Communist propaganda campaign and to ensure it did not become known to the public. It was also believed that the information would have a greater impact if it were not seen to emanate from official sources. This arrangement, according to which those who received IRD materials were aware of their origin but were expected not to divulge their source, generated some confusion in the uninitiated but was understood and respected by recipients. Remarkably, a minimal number of breaches of trust occurred during the department’s lifetime.

This practice offered the IRD the possibility to establish connections with a wide range of individuals and institutions, for example the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC) and the British Labour Party. Labour Party secretary Denis Healey, part of its right-wing faction, was in favor of close Cold War liaison with the United States. He
was an admirer of American Cold War thinking highlighted by groups such as the RAND Corporation. As secretary for defense under the Wilson Labour government in the 1960s, Healey injected the technocratic thinking of men such as Robert McNamara into British defense planning. Healey was a strong supporter of anti-Communist information warfare and had personal links to the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) funded front for anti-Communist intellectuals. He was also a driving force in the establishment of the highly influential International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). The historians of the FO note that it was Healey who arranged for a “very limited circulation” of IRD materials within the Labour Party.\(^\text{10}\) It was Healey who sent IRD propaganda specialist Norman Reddaway to Singapore in 1965 instructing him to do “anything he could think of to get rid of Sukarno.”\(^\text{11}\)

From the late 1940s, the US intelligence community recognized the value of coordinating with British anti-Communist information campaigns not only in Europe but also throughout the world. Not only were the methods used by the British and Americans similar in style and technique, they each shared a desire to counter the negative images of them perpetuated by Soviet propaganda.\(^\text{12}\) The United States appreciated the use of information techniques to manipulate public opinion and to create expert networks beyond official circles. The scale of American information warfare programs is demonstrated by the CCF, Radio Free Europe, and Voice of America. The post–World War II American “Campaign of Truth” was designed not just to counter Soviet propaganda but to promote the political and cultural values of the United States in Europe, South America, and Asia. Three basic strategic considerations guided US propaganda efforts: the need to condemn Communism, promote American values, and actively undermine potential Cold War neutralism, or nonalignment. The fear of neutralism among the intelligentsia of Europe, particularly in France, was in fact one of the CIA’s original motivations in funding the CCF.\(^\text{13}\) Such an attitude in itself goes a long way in later explaining American hostility toward Indonesia under the flamboyant leadership of Sukarno.

Although they drew on information strategies and tactics pioneered by the British, it was American money that enabled the “Campaign of Truth” to touch almost every significant area of intellectual and cultural endeavor in the Western world. But the private and philanthropic resources of the United States added a distinctive American dimension to these activities. Through the influence of the CIA, organizations such as the Ford Foundation made substantial donations to the CCF.\(^\text{14}\) From 1950, the Anglo-American propaganda machine oversaw a massive operation designed not only to attack communism but to deliberately manipulate information in the advancement of strategic goals. While the major focus was Western Europe, the targets could be flexible—ultimately, any location threatened by left-wing or anti-Western tendencies. Close cooperation between the British and US diplomatic and intelligence services regularly occurred in Western Europe, occasionally in South America, but often in other locations such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The language that condemned Communist tyranny in the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe would later be applied with little nuance or qualification to designated targets worldwide; this included Sukarno’s Indonesia well before 1965.

**The Problem with Sukarno**

The end of Dutch colonialism in 1949 did not guarantee economic freedom or Indonesian national unity. First, the newly independent country accepted the debts of the former colonial state, the Netherlands East Indies, as part of the preconditions for independence.
After years of struggle against the Dutch, the post-1949 Indonesian economy remained dominated by foreign concerns, particularly Dutch. From the American perspective, Indonesia was easily the most strategically important nation in Southeast Asia. Its location, size, abundant raw materials, and political and economic development were considered vital in the anti-Communist Cold War context and it was thought necessary that it should develop in a framework acceptable to Washington and its close allies. President Sukarno’s advocacy for Cold War neutralism, desire for a more independent economic path, and toleration of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI)—the Indonesian Communist Party—did nothing to satisfy the anti-Communist and economic criteria determining the strategic concerns of Washington, Canberra, and London.

In February 1957, Sukarno adopted “guided democracy.” This was his attempt to cement his presidential authority with Javanese customs of consensus in a more limited parliamentary process. He argued that Western-style parliamentary democracy was not suitable for Indonesia. Guided democracy was designed to balance the domestic political factions—the Communists, religious groups, and Indonesian army. He proposed that guided democracy and the policy of nasakom—the combination of nationalism, religion, and Communism—would create more stable governance. One of the factors providing non-Communist domestic support for these changes was the possibility of Communist success through elections. The adoption of guided democracy meant that the 1959 national elections were abandoned. The PKI then aimed to come to power through state institutions rather than through elections. In the late 1950s, Western fears about Sukarno and Indonesia centered on the possibility that the Communists might win constitutional power.

There was domestic dissatisfaction with guided democracy. Indonesian vice president Mohammad Hatta rejected the concept and resigned in December 1956, alarming many ethnically non-Javanese. That month, army colonels in North Sumatra, Central Sumatra, and South Sumatra mutinied against Jakarta. In March 1957, another military mutiny occurred in North Sulawesi. The dissident groups demanded the removal of the PKI from government, a fairer distribution of national revenues, and the return of Hatta. This laid the groundwork for a short-lived civil war from February 1958, when anti-Sukarno hardliners from Central Sumatra and North Sulawesi declared the Permesta Movement. By the end of 1958, the rebellion was defeated, even though the rebels had received substantial support from the CIA. During this period, there were other important developments. In December 1957, Sukarno nationalized 246 Dutch companies, expelled Dutch citizens, and confiscated Dutch estates. This was justified on the basis of continued Dutch refusal to negotiate over the future sovereignty of West New Guinea (WNG). From August 1960, Sukarno continued to press territorial claims over WNG, eventually breaking off diplomatic relations with Holland. In April 1961, the Dutch announced their intention to create an independent West Papua, and in December, Sukarno announced a policy of military confrontation against them. Although the limited military campaigns were unsuccessful, Sukarno’s belligerence convinced the Kennedy administration to remove US support for Holland. Under the terms of the New York Agreement, WNG was effectively handed to Indonesia by 1963.

From the late 1950s, Sukarno’s attitude toward the Cold War hardened. Despite foreign-aid relationships with the Americans and Soviets, he condemned what he saw as reinvented Western exploitation. He labeled this phenomenon nekolim—neocolonial imperialism. In the Non-Aligned Movement—formed by five developing European,
African, and Asian states in 1961—Sukarno argued for closer ties between what he termed “new, emerging forces” to combat neocolonialism. The “new, emerging forces” were nations that had all won their independence after long periods of foreign domination. To growing Western alarm, Sukarno had explored a neutralist Cold War stance from the mid-1950s. Despite rhetorical belligerence, his suspicions about the Western powers, particularly the Americans and the British, were not paranoia. He certainly knew that the United States had supported the Permesta Rebellion in an effort to undermine him.18 From 1963, he opposed British plans for the Federation of Malaysia, which he labeled a neocolonial enterprise. With dissidents in British Borneo opposed to their inclusion, and with the Malaysian Federation being proclaimed later in 1963, Sukarno adopted a policy of military confrontation, known as konfrontasi, against the British. British and Australian troops later became engaged in sporadic warfare in Borneo against Indonesian forces in defense of Malaysia. In 1964, British businesses in Indonesia were nationalized and strong anti-British sentiment culminated in the burning of the British embassy. A growing anti-Americanism became evident when various US concerns were similarly attacked. In response, the United States closed its Indonesian aid program, leaving Jakarta largely dependent on the Soviets and Chinese for foreign-aid money. By the end of 1964, the Indonesian economy was suffering badly from debt and the political tensions between the PKI and the army were increasing. In Washington, London, and Canberra, the fear that the Communists would win power or that Sukarno would orientate Indonesia into a new diplomatic relationship with China was palpable. Sukarno now balanced the Indonesian army and the PKI under his own presidential authority. In light of the tightrope that Sukarno and Indonesia were about to walk, he christened 1965 the “Year of Living Dangerously.”

**Living Dangerously**

On 1 October 1965, six Indonesian generals and one lieutenant were killed by a group known as the September 30th Movement. Three of the generals died during abduction attempts while the others were killed later. One of the main targets, General Abdul Haris Nasution, escaped from his would-be abductors, but his young daughter was killed during the altercation. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Untung Syamsuri, soldiers from the presidential guard and troops from the Brawidjaja and Diponegoro divisions of the Indonesian army defected to the Movement. Using the captured national radio station, it broadcast a brief message stating that it was protecting President Sukarno by thwarting a planned coup by right-wing Indonesian generals supported by the CIA. On October 1–2, soldiers supporting the Movement also took control of the cities of Yogyakarta and Solo, in Central Java. In response, Major General Suharto, the commander of Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat (KOSTRAD)—an elite army reserve command based in Jakarta—reestablished army control over the national radio station and Merdeka Square, where the rebels had been entrenched. Harold Crouch highlights that elite infantry and paratrooper divisions were routinely assigned to KOSTRAD as required.19 As noted by various scholars, the military actions of the Movement were poorly planned and badly coordinated. Once in control of the situation in Jakarta, Suharto and the Indonesian army turned their attention to Halim Air Force Base, where the leaders of the Movement, along with Dipa Nusantara Aidit (chairman of the PKI) and Vice Air Marshal Ahmad Dhani were present. The visit of President Sukarno to the base added significant political complications and confusion over earlier events. On October 1, Suharto advised Sukarno to vacate the base
because of a looming army assault. Sukarno then took up residence at the Bogor Palace. On October 2, the army took control of the base, but both Aidit and Dhani had fled.

On October 3, the bodies of the kidnapped generals were found in a well near the base. In the following weeks and months, the Indonesian army, with the assistance of various civilian and politically aligned anti-Communist militias, conducted a staggering massacre of hundreds of thousands of people on the basis that they were either PKI members or suspected sympathizers.

**Propaganda**

On October 2, the Indonesian army began to construct its anti-PKI information campaign through the Action Front for the Crushing of the September 30th Movement (KAP-Gestapu). It held its first press conference on October 4 and, as with the relationship with civilian militias who assisted the army in the anti-Communist killings, they worked closely with the army. They would grow rapidly in the days after October 1 as many anti-Communist groups joined its ranks to engage in violent protests. The KAP-Gestapu movement was overseen by a specialist political affairs officer, Brigadier General Sucipto. Army information activities throughout the post–October 1 period were enhanced by Indonesian army control over the local news media. The Australian ambassador, Keith Shann, informed the Australian Department of External Affairs (DEA) that the army had closed down the communist press while ensuring the continued publication of military newspapers such as *Angkatan Bersendjada*, *Berita Yudha* and the English language *Jakarta Daily Mail*. It took control over Radio Indonesia and the Antara news agency, which was the main supplier of news carried by Indonesian radio stations and newspapers.

In combination with army control over the Indonesian media, the foreign media were mostly impeded by army or logistical restrictions during the period, but this also depended on the determination of journalists to leave Jakarta. One early Indonesian news report curiously beyond army control was the October 2 announcement from the PKI itself. The PKI newspaper came out in support of the September 30th Movement by protecting the Indonesian Revolution and Sukarno, but it advised its membership not to involve itself in an “internal army affair.”

After October 1, there were civilian anti-PKI demonstrations in Jakarta under heavy Indonesian army and KAP-Gestapu influence. This exploited a bitter, pre-existing left/right divide within Indonesia and capitalized on real and imagined linkages between the PKI, the September 30th Movement, and the murdered generals. On October 5, the annual Army Forces Day parade did not proceed; rather, it became a funeral procession for the generals. Along with this public display of sorrow and anger, the army released a “130-page book that chronicled the events of October 1 and accused the PKI of being the mastermind.” October 5 came two days after the exhumation of the generals and one day after the KAP-Gestapu’s first press conference, which marked the beginning of the army’s anti-PKI propaganda onslaught.

With the October 5 release of the book *Pusat Penerangan Angkatan Darat, Fakta-fakta Persoalan Sekitar Gerakan 30 September* [Army Information Centre, facts and issues September 30th Movement], a detailed narrative of clear PKI treachery, brutality, and conspiracy was being carefully established by the army. Many of the key elements
of army propaganda, such as PKI treachery, brutality, conspiracy, and possible Chinese intervention, also featured in Western propaganda activities. The speed with which slanted news from Indonesia traversed the global news network was notable. On October 5, Associated Press (AP) wire stories about imminent civil war in Indonesia were already being reported in the United States.26 Rolland Challis (a former Southeast Asian BBC news correspondent) points out that throughout this early period, the themes of civil war, Communist-versus-army fighting, and army mopping-up operations were consistently used by the foreign media to describe what was occurring in Indonesia.27

The use of black propaganda stories about the alleged post–September 30 intentions of the PKI and the use of a false torture and mutilation story involving the murdered generals became central to army propaganda. Saskia Wieringa illustrates that the highly sexualized propaganda story about the active participation of the Gerwani women’s organization in the deaths of the generals helped to associate Communism with a lascivious female sexuality.28 Robert Cribb notes that Indonesian military propagandists had reshaped the name of the coup movement to construct the acronym GESTAPU, with its connotations of the ruthless evil of the Gestapo. They concocted a story that the kidnapped generals had been tortured and sexually mutilated by communist women before being executed and they portrayed the killings of October 1 as only a prelude to a planned nation-wide purge of anti-communists by PKI members and supporters. In lurid accounts, PKI members were alleged to have dug countless holes ready to receive the bodies of their enemies and to have been trained in the techniques of torture, mutilation and murder.29

The factual case for a PKI-organized coup in 1965, though, was never compelling, and the line taken by the Indonesian army differed from that of the international diplomatic community. The army narrative of the PKI having masterminded an attempted Communist coup was presented to the Indonesian public as fact rather than conjecture. Not only the party as a whole, but also its political allies and affiliated organizations were portrayed as being guilty both of the crimes of the September 30 Movement and of conspiracy to commit crimes on a far greater scale. At the same time, President Sukarno was portrayed as culpable for having tolerated the PKI within Guided Democracy . . . In this context, the army began a purge of the PKI from Indonesian society.30

Karim Najjarine highlights that “international diplomatic opinion generally agreed that despite the participation in the coup of PKI elements, they were not the primary instigators of the coup. This [conclusion] was the [initial] consensus amongst the Western and Soviet Bloc countries.”31 Dutch diplomatic assessments passed to the DEA were unclear on what role had been played by the PKI, but noted that the Indonesian army was “ensuring that they [the PKI] received most of the blame.”32 The British, Americans, and Australians had little evidentiary justification to blame the PKI during the period following October 1. In December 1965, the highest echelons of Australian intelligence believed that only circumstantial evidence implicated the PKI central committee with having planned the September 30th Movement.33 Even two years later, Ken Wells, head of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service’s (ASIS) Jakarta station during 1965–1969, indicated ongoing uncertainties about its exact role.34
The rapid presentation of clear-cut PKI guilt after October 1 was not confined to the Indonesian army. Their account of a treacherous Communist putsch was also quickly supported by Shann, British ambassador Andrew Gilchrist, and US ambassador Marshall Green. On October 5, Gilchrist informed the FO, “[I have] never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective [political] change.” His main concern appears to have been that the army was only going after the “small fries” and not aggressively targeting the PKI leadership. Reddaway, who would later oversee UK propaganda efforts from Singapore, advised the FO on October 5, “We should not miss the present opportunity to use the situation to our advantage . . . I recommend that we should have no hesitation in doing what we can surreptitiously to blacken the PKI in the eyes of the army and the people of Indonesia.” The FO believed that anti-Chinese propaganda would be useful and sought further advice from Reddaway. On the same day, Green advised Washington that although responsibility for the events of October 1 remained “obscure,” the United States could help “shape developments to our advantage” by attacking the PKI and Sukarno by spreading “the story of the PKI’s guilt, treachery and brutality.”

On October 6, the PKI politburo issued an official denial of responsibility for the September 30th Movement, stating that it was “an internal problem of the army and the Indonesian Communist Party does not involve itself in it.” The British noted at the time that the army was “building up as much support as [it] can both within the army and outside by propaganda and demonstration.” In the post–October 1 period, the serious threat of army retribution against the PKI appears to have been a highly encouraging possibility for Shann, Gilchrist, and Green, even without actual knowledge of the party’s guilt. While the army was still formulating its military response, there were Western fears that such actions against the PKI might not materialize or would not be forceful enough if they did. On October 7, the Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, Major General Kosasih, met with the Acting Secretary of the DEA, Sir Laurence MacIntyre. MacIntyre informed the general that any reading of Australian newspapers indicated that it was the desire of the “Australian people as a whole” for the army to “put the PKI in its place” and “damage its image without delay.” The UK Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations hoped that the army would have the “courage” to act against the PKI by “if necessary disobeying Sukarno who is exerting every charm to try and preserve national unity.” The following day, Shann informed the DEA that “if ever there was a time for the army to act to smash the PKI as an effective political force, it is now. But will it happen?” Western fears of inaction began to dissipate from October 8, after the CIA reported to the White House that the top army generals had met together and had agreed to “implement plans to crush the PKI.”

The events of October 1 also served to heighten well-established DEA interest in the news reports of various foreign correspondents, the editorial line of major Australian newspapers, and Radio Australia. Interference in the affairs of Radio Australia was already commonplace by the 1960s, and the war in Vietnam and events in Indonesia provided continued opportunities. Former Australian diplomat Kim Jones confirms that Radio Australia programs dealing with news commentary about foreign affairs were often edited by the DEA itself. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) would provide draft transcripts of news commentary to be broadcast on Radio Australia to the DEA; these would be edited then returned to the ABC, where efforts would be made to have the various commentators adhere to the agreed text. This process was
part of a long-standing arrangement between the DEA and the ABC dating back to the 1950s. There is also archival evidence that the idea of Radio Australia news commentary segments originated with the DEA seeing them as a way of combating Communist propaganda and promoting Australia in Southeast Asia.47

Radio Australia occupied an ambiguous position within the structure of the ABC and was treated differently. Douglas Wilkie, a former reporter, stated that his disagreements with the DEA “always ended in a compromise in their favour or in [his] surrender.”48 Najjarine and Drew Cottle highlight that several of its reporters resigned or were dismissed by the ABC in the period 1960–1965 because of direct DEA pressure. Its potential as an overseas information service into Asia was well understood by the DEA, given its immense popularity in Indonesia. The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, believed that it “was paid for out of public funds solely for the purpose of advancing Australian foreign policy. It is an overseas propaganda service. The only questions that arise are those of related method.”49 In 1965, the DEA briefly sought to place it under its direct control. This attempt “was spurred by events in Indonesia and the realisation of the Australian and western governments that [Radio Australia]’s high signal strength and massive listening audience in the archipelago . . . was a resource that should be exploited wisely and cooperatively.”50 It was therefore the conduit for anti-PKI and anti-Sukarno Australian information efforts. Shann advised, on October 10, that “through Radio Australia’s massive listening audience in Indonesia, nothing should be done to engender sympathy for [Sukarno].”51 Even without official departmental control, the DEA was a domineering influence over its foreign broadcasts. The information, analysis, and guidance provided by Shann from Jakarta aimed not only to influence the media presentation of Indonesian events in Australia but, more crucially, the content of Radio Australia broadcasts into Indonesia itself.

Shann’s information campaign was assisted by the careful coordination of key themes by the DEA. This required careful liaison with the small Australian news community and Radio Australia through the office of the Public Information Officer (PIO). This position was created in 1964 due to the influence of Shann and another senior Australian diplomat, Sir Keith Waller. Their influence also extended to the appointment of Richard Woolcott as the first PIO.52 This role saw Woolcott liaising with the major Australian newspapers and other news media in regard to Australian foreign policy reportage. While an information branch and public relations officer had existed from the 1950s, the PIO was to be far more proactive and to seek closer dialogue with the Australian media. The PIO would provide personal editorial guidance and on- and off-the-record briefings to favored editors and journalists. After taking up his appointment, Woolcott informed his DEA colleagues about his main tasks: “[The] Secretary [of the DEA] has asked me to devote considerable time to developing further contacts with the representatives of the press and other news media and to keep myself fully briefed on the main aspects of our external relations and policies and our attitude to current international issues.”53 The major Australian media organizations of the period were accepting of ongoing government contact, and this dynamic was well established by the 1960s. When the new position was established, Sir Arthur Tange (DEA secretary, 1953–1964) personally wrote to the editors of all the major Australian newspapers “dealing with foreign affairs,” informing them that Woolcott would be visiting “State capitals for talks on this subject.”54 Woolcott explained that the small size of the news media in Australia and its geographical concentration within the major Australian cities meant it was
possible for one person with DEA support to have individual relationships with nearly all the major journalists, editors, and media organizations central to the presentation of Australian foreign policy news.\textsuperscript{55}

The DEA had borrowed heavily from UK information warfare methods and techniques throughout the 1950s. Woolcott was well informed about these methods and practices. After visiting the FO in 1964, Woolcott advised the DEA secretary about the FO’s news department and its cultivation of close relationships with the news media, particularly with the BBC. He noted that in the afternoons,

a series of separate briefings are conducted [by the FO] for different English and overseas newspapers and agencies. Mostly this deals with material which is for background but not for attribution. There is also a meeting of the “3 O’clock Group”\textsuperscript{56} at 3pm every afternoon in which selected and trusted diplomatic correspondents are given “off the record” briefing as background against which to frame their own reports.

Woolcott developed a considerable reputation among Australian news media for his charm and ability to liaise with editors and journalists. He was also suited to the role in terms of disposition. In May 1964, he wrote that the attempt to influence public opinion in broad support of a government’s foreign policy is now generally accepted as a function of diplomacy. This function has become increasingly important due to the development of rapid communications, the growing use of propaganda by some nations . . . In the UK, US and many European countries the press is used in a variety of ways in the exposition and testing of policies. Conditions in Australia are obviously different but I consider that in time we should look towards not only promoting an accurate and sympathetic press, but to ways in which we might make more effective use of the press in seeking support for our national policies.\textsuperscript{57}

The DEA effort to guide Radio Australia was therefore in the capable hands of Shann in Jakarta and Woolcott in Canberra—the roving DEA information specialist.

During a meeting on October 7, the Indonesian Ambassador (Kosasih) had complained to the Acting Secretary of the DEA (MacIntyre) about negative Australian press coverage about Sukarno. Woolcott investigated this complaint, singling out reports in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} (by Frank Palmos, stationed in Jakarta) and the \textit{Daily Telegraph} (by Gary Barker in Singapore). He informed MacIntyre that these articles were based on “firm reports to this effect [about Sukarno’s complicity in the coup]” and “quoted official British sources which suggests that the British may have been using the press to discredit Sukarno.” Woolcott advised the editors to be “guarded” on such points due to a lack of evidence (as of October 5), but he nonetheless emphasized that it was “unlikely” that Sukarno’s power “could ever be restored, even if his health lasted.”\textsuperscript{58} Woolcott was working on influencing editorial content on Indonesia from early October, and he was generally “pleased” by his efforts. He informed the DEA secretary that the department was “now in a position to influence directly the content of leaders in all major metropolitan newspapers.”\textsuperscript{59} On October 12, Woolcott outlined the guidance being provided to Radio Australia:

Radio Australia should, by careful selection of its news items, not do anything which would be helpful to the PKI and should highlight reports tending to discredit

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the PKI and show its involvement in the losing cause of the 30th September movement. [He noted that] the most recent briefing given to Radio Australia, yesterday afternoon, was to the effect that what seemed to be emerging was a struggle between the army and the PKI with the former holding the initiative and the later [sic] somewhat discredited because of its involvement in the 30th September Movement. Whether or not Sukarno had acquiesced in the Untung coup, his political power and prestige had been undermined to a degree which made it unlikely that it could be restored to its former level even if his health lasted.\(^60\)

A radio liaison officer from the DEA also routinely worked in close contact with Radio Australia. By March 1966, the officer suggested to Woolcott that the effectiveness of his role would be enhanced by knowing in “advance” what stories were being considered by Radio Australia. This suggestion was based on the fact that DEA editing of scripted news commentaries had caused some “resentment in the past.”\(^61\)

The key structures and methods of British propaganda were similar to the Australians’, differing only in potential scale and global reach. Like Shann, Gilchrist was quick to adopt information tactics blaming the PKI and undermining Sukarno. In early October, he advocated for the use of specialist propaganda to attack the PKI. On October 13, he advised the FO that the propaganda should explore “PKI brutality in murdering Generals and [General] Nasution’s daughter . . . PKI subverting Indonesia as agents of foreign [Chinese] communists . . . But treatment will need to be subtle, e.g. (a) all activities should be strictly unattributable, (b) British participation or co-operation should be carefully concealed.”\(^62\) British propaganda efforts worked alongside direct overtures to the Indonesian army. The next day, the British informed General Nasution’s aide that the United Kingdom “would not escalate to the [Indonesian policy of] Confrontation [against Malaysia] while the [Indonesian] army was dealing with the communists . . . [and] did not intend to start any offensive military action [against the Indonesians].”\(^63\)

From October 15, and before the army-coordinated massacres of civilians were fully underway, the IRD, headed by Reddaway, was at work in Singapore. Reddaway had been due to go there in November 1965 but was sent early to take advantage of the situation.\(^64\) According to Reddaway, he was sent because

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\text{Sukarno’s Confrontation of Malaysia and Singapore was costing us [the United Kingdom] about 250 Million Pounds a year in the early 1960s. Under [Defence] Ministerial Patronage [from Healey] and Ambassadorial pleas [Gilchrist], I was sent to Singapore in late October 1965 to “do anything I could think of to get rid of Sukarno.”} \quad \text{65}
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Reddaway crafted propaganda for international newspapers and radio using information from British intelligence, Gilchrist, and Indonesian army sources. David Easter writes that the

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\text{British and Americans recycled reports from Radio Jakarta or the army newspapers by broadcasting them back to Indonesia. For example, on 5 November the Jakarta Daily Mail claimed that on the day of the coup 100 women from Gerwani had tortured one of the Generals by using razor blades and knives to slash his genitals before he was shot. In December an Information Research Department official noted that this atrocity story would be included in the Southeast Asia Monitoring Unit’s propaganda output.} \quad \text{66}
\]
The British effort to implicate Sukarno in the coup and push the sexualized Gerwani torture story is significant because it supported false Indonesian army reports while providing further sources of information for the Indonesian army propaganda campaign. According to Challis, information from British diplomatic sources was reported back into Southeast Asia by the BBC overseas network throughout the massacre period. An example of the closeness between British officials and the foreign correspondents is seen in an October 7 dispatch from the Secretary of State for Commonwealth relations that was put “together with the assistance of the Reuters Correspondent and his tape recorder.”

The methodology used to spread this propaganda centered on the relationship between Reddaway and Gilchrist. Reddaway highlighted that Gilchrist would regularly send to Singapore early morning cipher telegrams about the duplicity of Sukarno and Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister.

These would be offered exclusive to the BBC man in Singapore [by the IRD] and form the core of his midday report to Bush House [the headquarters of the BBC]. Their content would come pouring back into the region in the Overseas’ Service’s evening bulletin and be relayed to Radio Australia and [Siaran] Malaysia. Sukarno threw all the Western correspondents out of Indonesia. He hadn’t a clue. The final blow came when the story of his duplicity over Aidit came out as a traveler’s tale from the AP man in Hong Kong—straight into the worldwide plumbing of the news machine.

The placement of such a story with the AP in Hong Kong was a typical IRD method. First, the story was created by the IRD itself. Once published by AP, the independent “traveler’s tale” could be flagged by the IRD and forwarded to the BBC, the British government, and the FO. The IRD, FO and British government could all make good use of an independent story while the BBC network could report a “traveler’s tale” critical of Sukarno and the PKI. Reddaway also personally devised an Indonesian-language radio program called “Voices from the Well”—a direct reference to the location where the murdered generals were found. Challis highlights that this was presented as an independent broadcast from within Indonesia, relayed via Singapore. The program incorporated IRD and Indonesian army propaganda that emphasized clear PKI and Chinese guilt over the events of October 1 and was broadcast from next door to Suharto’s Jakarta home. In his late retirement years, Reddaway considered the role of the IRD in Indonesia to have been a significant professional and diplomatic achievement.

The US response in Indonesia after 1 October 1965 was overseen by Ambassador Green and used well-established propaganda methods. From 23 February 1965, the United States aimed to “develop black and grey propaganda themes for use within Indonesia and via appropriate media assets outside Indonesia [to] portray the PKI as increasingly ambitious, dangerous etc.” Ralph McGehee, a former CIA agent, notes that US propaganda efforts contributed to Indonesian army anxieties by spreading rumors throughout 1965 that mainland China was smuggling arms to the PKI for an imminent revolt. Such a story appeared in a Malaysian newspaper, citing Bangkok sources which relied in turn on Hong Kong sources. Such untraceability is a telltale mark of the Mighty [CIA] Wurlitzer. Less subtle propaganda claimed that the PKI was a tool of the Red Chinese and planned to infiltrate and divide the armed forces. . . . Far more inflammatory news reporting prior to October 1965.
claimed the PKI had a secret list of civilian and military leaders marked for beheading. The US strategy of creating a clear or implied sense of direct Chinese Communist threat in Indonesia was embraced by Green. He stated that the United States had a “bonanza chance to nail Chicsom [Chinese Communists] on disastrous events in Indonesia” and recommended “covert propaganda” as one of the “best means of spreading idea [sic] of Chicom complicity.” Such key propaganda themes augmented similar efforts being undertaken by the Indonesian army.

During October and into November, a variety of news reports often incorporated details into their stories that were strikingly similar to some or all of the key Australian, British, and American propaganda themes, along with statements and announcements from either Sukarno or the Indonesian army. These media reports corresponded with the intensity and growing scope of the army’s anti-PKI campaign. McGehee notes that on October 23, *Suara Islam* reported that millions of copies of the text of a proclamation of the counterrevolutionary Gestapu . . . have been recovered . . . The text . . . was obviously printed in the CPR [Chinese People’s Republic]. Steel helmets and a large quantity of military equipment have also been found . . . There is incontrovertible evidence of the CPR’s involvement . . . The arms sent by the CPR were shipped under cover of “diplomatic immunity.” . . . other important documents offer irrefutable evidence of the involvement of the CPR Embassy and the CPR ambassador. This was used to show evidence of PKI guilt and clandestine Chinese involvement in the coup. Suharto told a military audience on October 30 that the discovery of the secret documents proved that the PKI was behind Gestapu and he insisted that the “Communists be completely uprooted.” On November 2, the *Indonesian Armed Forces Bulletin* asserted that the PKI had a dedicated plan for revolution and published its alleged directives for the period following October 1. By November 7, such slanted analysis emphasizing direct Chinese involvement in the plotting and the clear treachery of the PKI as fact found itself into newspaper editorials as far away as Palm Beach in the US.

The information war being conducted against the PKI and Sukarno worked alongside a brutal military response. From mid-October, the Indonesian army, with the assistance of criminal gangs and various paramilitary political and religious militias, began to round up and kill PKI members, suspected members, and sympathizers in a wave of well-coordinated mass killings that moved across Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and into Bali, and, by December, to Timor, Flores, and Lombok. Australian journalist Phillip Koch—a foreign correspondent for the ABC—noted that anyone that was deemed PKI was being slaughtered. And this was a tragedy in itself. A lot of the peasants signed up as PKI members in the belief that this would help them. It would help them get a better life. Now at that level they had no idea of the doctrine of communism or who Stalin was or anything like that. You’re dealing with peasants who are just struggling to feed their families. But they were signed up as PKI and they died for it. They were slaughtered.

With knives, machetes, bayonets, and guns, up to 800,000 people were massacred while as many as one million were imprisoned. In contrast to widespread cultural stereotypes
used in certain Western media reports that implied that the killings resulted from a haphazard and uncontrollable Malay bloodlust, the massacres were largely well coordinated by the army, mass executions were most often secretive, and Indonesian Special Forces were instrumental in helping organize and facilitate the killings as they moved throughout the country.80

In November and December, when the mass, army-coordinated killings were arguably at their peak, Shann, Gilchrist, and Green continued with their anti-PKI and anti-Sukarno campaign. In November, there were discussions between Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and New Zealand concerning media reporting on the situation in Indonesia. Further discussions on December 1–2 concerned their Indonesian information efforts. The instructions provided to the Australian delegates in November illustrate key propaganda priorities:

Agenda Item V—Other ways in which the situation might be influenced or exploited to Western advantages.

The meeting might consider radio broadcasts to Indonesia and examine the sort of treatment which should be given to news items and commentaries in order particularly to avoid the possibility of compromising the Generals by associating them with [Sukarno’s policy of] nekolim.81

The DEA brief for Shann and the other Australian delegates advised,

i) Radio Australia should not give the impression that the army alone was acting against the PKI. Civilian organisations should be mentioned as often as possible.

ii) News items critical, by implication or otherwise, about Subandrio [the Indonesian foreign minister] should be used.

iii) Reports on Singapore should always give the impression that the whole purpose of the [UK] naval base was defensive.

iv) Reports should suggest that over the years some Indonesians at least (by implication Indonesian army figures or prominent civilians supporting the army) had tried to make progress toward economic development.

v) Reports should never imply that the army or its supporters were in any way pro-western or right wing.82

Documentary evidence highlights the boomerang effect of well-coordinated propaganda once it is in the veins of the system. The advice being provided as a briefing to the Australian delegates did not originate from Canberra but from Shann in Jakarta. Based on advice passed to him by an Indonesian colonel (from the military information section), Shann informed the DEA on November 5 that Radio Australia should adhere to the following formula:

1. Do not suggest that the army is alone in acting against the PKI. Apart from the other armed forces, mention as often as possible other youth groups and organisations both Muslim and Christian.

2. Try to spike Subandrio’s [the Indonesian foreign minister’s] guns at every turn, especially on the Singapore issue...
3. Do not suggest that [British defense arrangements] in Singapore are directed against China. Just say it is entirely defensive (It was suggested to me that we might even hint that it might defend Singapore against Kuala Lumpur!)

4. Suggest that over the years that some people have tried to develop the place, and have had limited success. (I boggled a bit at this one suggesting that hotels and national monuments were hardly development and that comment of this kind would tend to bolster up exactly the people we didn’t like. I can however, see the point of the suggestion even if it lacks all logic).

5. Never suggest that the army or anyone else is pro-Western or Rightist. Later on the atmosphere may change. For the moment we must live with the need to not make a sudden switch. This makes sense of an Indonesian kind.

Shann continued his advice by noting that “I can live with most of this, even if we have to be a bit dishonest for a while.”

Diplomacy and Massacres
From October 1, the information activities of Shann, Gilchrist, and Green were undertaken with privileged knowledge of the army-coordinated massacres. On November 9, clear information about the killings was passed to the Australian embassy, outlining the use of knives, machetes, mutilation, stabbings, burning, bayoneting, shooting, and the common-place occurrence of beheading. However, it would be impossible to sustain any credible argument that the Australian embassy was ignorant of atrocities prior to this date. On November 12, amplifying assurances made by the British on October 14, Shann informed the Indonesian army that it “would be safe in using their forces for whatever purpose they saw fit.” Australian military formations including its Special Air Service were in Borneo fighting with the British against Indonesian army incursions. Such assurances gave the Indonesian army greater strategic and logistical freedom, letting them concentrate on anti-PKI operations. Challis notes a 1980 Indonesian news report stating that Indonesian troops on Konfrotasi duty—that is, engaged in military operations opposing the Malaysian Federation—were transported through the Malacca Straits by a British ship flying a Panamanian flag. With widespread massacres beginning during mid- to late October and intensifying into November and December, Shann’s assurances to the Indonesian army on November 12 were given with the understanding of for what purpose army forces might be used. During this period, the scale and responsibility for the massacres received reasonable media reportage. However, the general media treatment of the events were prone to racist stereotypes such as Malay irrationality, cruelty, and running amok; there were also other types of factual distortion. There were US media reports even in December that bluntly emphasized a reality known to Shann, Gilchrist, and Green. TIME Magazine reported on December 17 that 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 rural jails. Moslem’s, whose political influence had waned as the communists gained favour with Sukarno, had begun a “holy war” in East Java against Indonesian reds even before the abortive September coup. . . . The
killings have been on such a scale that the disposal of the corpses has created a seri-
ous sanitation problem in East Java and northern Sumatra, where the humid air
bears the reek of decaying flesh. Travelers from those areas tell of small rivers and
streams that have been literally clogged with bodies; river transportation has at
places been impeded.88

On December 19, Shann informed Canberra that in “many cases the massacre of entire
families because one member spoke to the communists, has occurred. Some of the
methods adopted are unspeakable . . . [It has been] a bloodbath of savage intensity,
remarkably unpublicised and locally regarded with a ghoulish cynicism.”89 On 20 Janu-
ary 1966, Melbourne’s The Age published an eyewitness account by Robert Macklin
about the massacres, its potential scale, and clear army responsibility for the campaign
terror.90 In the Australian context, Richard Tanter notes that despite being a world
scoop, the article appeared deep in the newspaper, next to reports about livestock sales.
During his time in Indonesia, Macklin had met with Shann prior to leaving Jakarta for
East Java and Bali. On his return from Indonesia, he was debriefed by ASIS after a
request from Keith Sinclair (the newspaper’s editor). Sinclair was known to have had
very close relations with both the Australian conservative government and Australian
intelligence.91

As the key player in the Australian propaganda campaign and as Ambassador to
Indonesia, Shann, as already noted, did not work in any ignorance over the killings. In
February 1966, he emphasized to the DEA the direct role of the army:

[In] all of these places the army was taking the lead, with apparent widespread pop-
ular support, in the methodical slaughter of PKI prisoners. The pattern was one of
nightly mass executions, by beheading, of PKI people, ranging from groups of two
or three to as many as forty or fifty.

Arriving in Flores, for example, the embassy officer happened across the spectacle
of two severed heads on public display in the main park.

Everywhere he went the story was the same. It was necessary, people said, to exter-
minate the PKI thoroughly; thoroughly meaning wives and children as well, as
some sort of guarantee against future reprisals.

As of last week the prisons in the area still contained adequate numbers of PKI de-
tainees, including women, for the grisly process to continue for weeks if not months
to come.92

Incorporating the key Indonesian army propaganda stories and developing much
of its own material with an eye to influencing Indonesian and world opinion, the British
propaganda effort against the PKI and Sukarno was particularly relentless.93 Gilchrist
was a central cog in all of these efforts to link the PKI and Sukarno with the September
30th Movement, but, like Shann, he found aspects of his own knowledge about the kill-
have we to hope from the [Indonesian] generals? 400,000 people murdered, far more
than total casualties in Vietnam nobody cares. They were communists. Were they? And
are Communists not human beings?”94

On 23 February 1966, Gilchrist informed the FO that even an estimate of 400,000
killed could be incorrect:
[The Swedish] Ambassador and I had discussed the killings before he left [on his fact-finding tour of Indonesia] and he had found my suggested figure of 400,000 quite incredible. His enquiries have led him to reconsider it a very serious underestimate. A bank manager in Surabaya with twenty employees said that four had been removed one night and beheaded . . . A third of a spinning factory’s technicians, being members of a Communist union, had been killed . . . The killings in Bali had been particularly monstrous. In certain areas, it was felt that not enough people had been killed.95

Despite expressing concerns over nature and scale, this did not extend to condemnation of the killings, any efforts to mitigate the scale of the terror, or examining the relationship between their propaganda and the massacres.

In the case of Green and the CIA, there appears to be discomfort on their parts either about the killings, the propaganda campaign, or other clandestine US activities. American intelligence activies were active from October96 and, as noted by McGehee, they made use of anti-Communist watch lists. In December 1965, the US embassy compiled lists of names of various Indonesians and provided these to the Indonesian army. Robert J. Martens, the former US political officer at the US embassy, said in an interview with Kathy Kadane that the Indonesian army “probably killed a lot of people and I probably have a lot of blood on my hands, but that’s not all bad. There’s a time when you have to strike hard at a decisive moment.”97 Martens later claimed that all the names he had supplied to the army were compiled from publicly available sources. He also retracted any inference that the US embassy and Green had officially approved of his actions in compiling and handing out the lists. Green and Hugh Tovar (head of the CIA station in Jakarta) dismissed Kadane’s story, while the New York Times questioned Kadane’s reporting. Yet, in Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, volume 26, Indonesia, Malaysia-Singapore, Philippines (2000), even the official historians of the US State department concluded that such lists were indeed provided to the Indonesian army.98 The consequences of handing such materials to the Indonesian army in 1965 cannot be ignored. Ken Wells (head of ASIS’s Jakarta station, 1965–1969) commented that “there were lists going around, I don’t know who compiled them, but the theory was they’re the people who were going to be extirpated next.”99

Among various US diplomats and others, there was indifference to the fate of suspected Communists. Howard Federspiel, formerly of the US State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research, was quoted by Kadane as having said that “no one cared [about the massacres], as long as they were Communists . . . No one was getting very worked up about it.”100

The Americans also supplied modern communication equipment and other military items that assisted the army in coordinating and conducting the killings.101 Gittings writes that it has been well established that in November 1965 the [Indonesian] generals asked for weapons and communications gear to arm the Muslim and nationalist gangs who were hampered by primitive equipment. The US quickly promised such covert aid, labelled as “medicines.” It was described by their ambassador in Jakarta [Marshall Green] as “exemplify[ing the] kind of covert low visibility commo[dit]y assistance we might be [in the] best position to provide that would have maximum immediate utility [for Indonesian] armed forces.”102
On December 2, Green personally authorized a covert 50 million-rupiah payment to help fund the KAP-Gestapu movement, a group important in the anti-Communist repression. This was all in addition to advocating for and overseeing a black propaganda campaign against the PKI.

Shann, Gilchrist, and Green adopted nearly identical anti-PKI lines in their information activities, which were beneficial to the Indonesian army propagandists. Their information operations, including the clandestine activities that can so far be confirmed, were undertaken in an explosive environment of potential violence and continued with detailed knowledge of the massacres as they were occurring. The ambassadors’ highly complementary anti-PKI and anti-Sukarno line, and their sensitivity toward the objectives of the Indonesian army, diplomatic assurances, and other forms of clandestine support, were undertaken before and during the massacres. Simpson concluded that the British and Americans did everything they could to encourage the destruction of the PKI and to support the Indonesian army. As shown by the actions of Shann, they were not alone.

Propaganda Aftermath
The destruction of the PKI was greeted with enthusiasm by major newspapers and commentators in the United States and, with few exceptions, was treated quite passively in the Australian press. The media treatment of the massacres provided some good detail but also used racist stereotypes and other factual distortions. That the army was responsible received reasonable media reportage but elicited little outrage. American journalists such as James Reston called the destruction of the PKI and the rise of Suharto a “gleam of light in Asia,” while the New York Times praised the US government for not publicly “taking credit” for the demise of Sukarno. Noam Chomsky notes that it “was greeted with undisguised euphoria here [in the United States], across the political spectrum, and very much in public. It has to be read to be believed.”

When the Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, visited the United States during 1966, he was asked about Indonesia. He stated that “with 500,000 to a million communist sympathizers knocked off . . . I think it is safe to assume a reorientation [in Indonesia] has taken place.” Such was the strategic importance of Indonesia in the Cold War that the massacres secured the region for anti-Communism. McGeorge Bundy, National Security advisor to US presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, thought the United States had erred by not pulling out of Vietnam in 1966 after the slaughter in Indonesia. Simpson highlights that British and particularly American joy over the outcome in Indonesia reveals an ugly logic: “Since no Western intelligence agencies argued that PKI involvement in [the September 30th Movement] extended to the rank and file, one can only conclude that their greatest fear was that the army might refrain from mass violence against the party’s unarmed members and supporters.”

In March 1966, after having worked through the army-led massacres he had described as “unspeakable” in December 1965, Shann informed Canberra,

I suspect on Indonesian standards that matters might not turn out too badly, even if on our own, there will, of course, be many disappointments and frustrations unless the army is either so [corrupt] or so suicidal as not to see that what they now face is a matter of life and death—and they currently have substantial popular support—we can hope with some confidence for the end of the Dwikora Cabinet, the liquidation, perhaps brutally, of Subandrio, and many of our current extant
thugs, and some sort of new framework of government. I have not the slightest doubt that the Indonesians will mess things up somehow. Neither do I imagine that the newly found strength of the students—in this case fairly generally reflecting the intelligent minority of a placid and uncomprehending mass of people, will be satisfied for long with what will turn out to be the relatively incompetent handling of the real matters of government, but my guess is that things will be better.\textsuperscript{109}

Despite such observations and post-event explanations from the diplomats and the spies, the 800,000 victims of the Indonesian Massacres are either of secondary importance or effectively irrelevant.\textsuperscript{110} Instead of their own historical voice, they have become footnotes in the bigger anti-Communist story of the Cold War.

\textbf{Conclusions}

The blackening of the PKI by Shann, Gilchrist, and Green was undertaken not only to contribute to the demise of Sukarno and Indonesian communism but also as a means to promote the Indonesian army as a government in waiting. The justification for their actions was that the Australians, British, and Americans seized a necessary opportunity to help destroy the PKI and Sukarno after 30 September 1965. The greatest weakness of such a justification is that the so-called reorientation of Indonesia back toward the West is of greater strategic and political significance than the criminal massacres that made this political outcome certain. The idea that 800,000 peasants and alleged sympathizers without any knowledge of, let alone connections to, the events of 1 October 1965 could be tortured, killed, imprisoned, and consigned to the dustbin of Cold War history is an untenable ethical and historical proposition. Divorced from the anti-Communist ideological edifices, the historical record shows that, supported by their respective governments, Shann, Gilchrist, and Green had intimate and even complicit connections to one of the most significant mass atrocities of the twentieth century.

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\textbf{Notes}

2. The ongoing interest in 1 October 1965 is evident in the work of scholars such as Harold Crouch, Benedict Anderson, George and Audrey Kahin, John Roosa, Bradley Simpson and the National Security Archive at George Washington University. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman have examined US media reactions to the massacres and the rise of the Suharto regime. Robert Cribb and Kate McGregor have focused on the specific nature of the mass killings that took place, but have also examined aspects of the coup and historical representations under Suharto. This list is, of course, not exhaustive.
5. See Bernays, \textit{Biography of an Idea}. Bernays was apparently shocked to learn that Joseph Goebbels made good use of his book \textit{Crystallizing Public Opinion} in Nazi Germany.
7. Mayhew’s original intention of fighting what he called “Communist imperialism” appears quite different from what the IRD eventually became by the 1960s. In the United Kingdom, the IRD continued to be shrouded in official secrecy from its beginnings and into the 1970s, yet the secrecy of its domestic activities appears problematic. The Soviets must have been aware of the existence of the IRD from its beginning as Guy Burgess (a Soviet spy) had worked for the IRD as a young UK diplomat. According to his obituary, Mayhew had caught Burgess “red handed going through his desk, [and] Mayhew sacked him; but it was only many years later that the scale of his treachery came to light.” Michael Adams, “Obituary: Lord Mayhew,” *Independent*, 9 January 1997, www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-lord-mayhew-1282313.html (accessed 14 Jul 2014).
8. Record of Meeting, 18 November 1947, To Discuss a Possible Propaganda Counter-Offensive against Communism on the Lines Set Forth in Mr. Mayhew’s Paper of the 17th October 1947, 4/1/1, Sir Christopher Mayhew Papers, Liddell Hart Military Archives, Kings College, London.
9. Record of Meeting, 18 November 1947. It must be noted that this assessment of the IRD distribution method by the FO historians fails to mention other reasons why so few breaches of trust occurred. For example, cooperation from the BBC began almost from the very beginning of the IRD’s existence. Sir Ian Jacob (then chairman of the BBC) sat on the “Russia Committee.” This was one of the groups involved in various discussions and arrangements for constructing the IRD in the first place.
15. Robert Cribb, interview by the author, Australian National University, 2011. I thank Professor Cribb for comments on various drafts of my work related to the massacres.
24. Ibid., 63, 277. The army made this publication a monthly series and issued at least two more books, on 5 November and 5 December 1965.

29. Cribb, *The Case of Indonesia*.

30. Ibid. John Roosa makes a very good case in *Pretext for Mass Murder* that PKI chairman Aidit was involved in the events of October 1, but that this involvement was secretive and did not extend to the wider PKI central committee.


33. “Note Indonesia, PKI Responsibility for the Attempted Coup,” 9 December 1965, part 7, A1838/3034/2/1/8, NAA.


41. Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to British High Commissioner Canberra, 7 October 1965, “Disturbance in Indonesia,” Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1, 3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.

42. “Record of Conversation between Indonesian Ambassador and the Acting Secretary,” 7 October 1965, Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1, 3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.

43. Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations to British High Commissioner Canberra, 7 October 1965, “Disturbance in Indonesia,” Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1, 3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.


46. Kim Jones, interview by the author, Australian National University, 17 February 2013.


50. Najjarine and Cottle, “The Department of External Affairs.”


52. Richard Woolcott, interview by the author, Canberra, Australia, 8 February 2013.

53. Richard Woolcott, “Public Information Section—Staffing and Location,” 24 February 1964, part 1,558/1/1, A138, NAA.

54. Ibid.

55. Woolcott, interview.
56. Richard Woolcott, “To the Secretary (James Plimsoll) through Mr. Hay, Visit to News Department of the Foreign Office—Implications for Public Information Section,” part 1, 558/1/1, A138, NAA.

57. Richard Woolcott, “To the Secretary ‘Conclusion,’” Work of the Public Information Section—Possible Improvements, part 1, 558/1/1, A138, NAA.

58. Sir Laurence Macintyre, “Record of Conversation between Indonesian Ambassador and the Acting Secretary,” 7 October 1965, in Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1,3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.

59. Richard Woolcott, “To the Acting Secretary (MacIntyre) Indonesia Situation,” Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1, 3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.


64. Simpson, Economists with Guns, 179. British intelligence and information efforts in Southeast Asia emanated from Phoenix Park in Singapore: MI6 regional headquarters.


68. “British High Commissioner Canberra Telegraph 2611 Confidential ‘Coup,’” 7 October 1965, Indonesia—Political—Coup d’État of October 1965, part 1,3034/2/1/8, A1838, NAA.


70. Hilton and Le Clezio, Shadow Play.


73. Simpson, Economists with Guns, 180.

74. Ibid.


76. McGehee, “The Indonesian Massacres and the CIA.”

77. Ibid.


“Quadripartite Discussions on Indonesia.”

Keith Shann, “1340 Secret Radio Australia,” 5 November 1965, Radio Australia—Posts—Relations with Indonesia, part 3, 570/7/9, A1838, NAA.

“Record of a conversation with Marietta Smith,” 9 November 1965, part 5, A1838/3034/2/1/8, NAA.

Keith Shann, “Telegram 1383 Shann to DEA,” 12 November 1965, 6364/1A1965/10, NAA.

Roland Challis, Shadow of a Revolution, 107, 113.


Keith Shann, “Telegram 1503 Jakarta to DEA,” 19 December 1965, A6364/1A1965/10, NAA.


Ibid., 12.

Hindsight, “Accomplices in Atrocity.”


Simpson, Economists with Guns, 185–94.


Hilton and Le Clezio, Shadow Play.

Kadane, “Ex-Agents.”

Kahin and Kahin, Subversion as Foreign Policy, 229–30.


Noam Chomsky, interview with the author, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 14 October 2010. I thank Professor Noam Chomsky (MIT) for this interview.


Chomsky, Rogue States, 166.


Keith Shann, “Inward Cablegram from Australian Embassy—Jakarta 304—Secret,” 17 March 1965, in Radio Australia—Posts—Relations with Indonesia, part 3, 570/7/9, A1838, NAA.

Estimates of the scale of the massacres vary in magnitude, but numbers ranging from half a million to one million killed are widely accepted. The estimate of 800,000 is used by Simpson in Economists with Guns. For an examination of this issue, see Robert Cribb, “How Many Deaths? Problems in the Statistics of Massacre in Indonesia (1965–1966) and East Timor (1975–1980),” in Violence in Indonesia, ed. Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimböfer (Hamburg: Abera-Verlag, 2001), 82–98.

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