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With the assistance of the 2022 IRIS Fieldwork Award, I was able to spend nearly two months at the UK National Archives in Kew, London. The timeliness of this travel allowed me to be one of the first scholars to access documents recently declassified by the UK Foreign Office. These documents will be critical to the production of two journal articles in 2023 in addition to helping the completion of my dissertation research.

The focus of my trip was to examine documents from the Information Research Department (IRD), the Cold War era covert propaganda apparatus of the UK Foreign Office. IRD documents related to the 1960s political transition in Indonesia have remained classified for over 60 years, far bypassing the standard 20 year holding period for Foreign Office related files. During my time in Kew, I was able to uncover an expansive and collaborative covert operation spanning three continents during the early 1960s which not only sought to discredit the

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Sukarno administration in Jakarta and tear apart the social unity of the Indonesian people to create an atmosphere ripe for a coup, but also actively participated in the propaganda campaign which enabled Suharto and his military allies to liquidate opposition in 1965-66 while seizing dictatorial power – a process which resulted in the murder of upwards of a million nominally leftist Indonesians and the imprisonment of several million more.

While my research focused on events in Indonesia, the discovery of additional documents, some recently declassified and others simply brushed over inadequately by scholars, has led me down exciting new scholarly paths which have provided remarkable insight into previously unknown Western Bloc covert operations and propaganda campaigns throughout the 1950s and 1960s in the Arab world and West Africa. These discoveries will result in a minimum of one high-quality journal article in addition to the planned article on the aforementioned Indonesian case study.

The publications and material for my dissertation which have come from my research in Kew will undoubtedly play a major role in my future career development, acting as part of a springboard into a career in academia. I am eternally grateful for IRIS for providing the necessary funding to make this research happen.

Sincerely,



Christopher Hulshof
The University of Wisconsin-Madison