

Cold killing

The deliberate slaying of the Balibo Five shows up Australia's paralysed diplomacy in the face of Indonesia's military.

JUSTICE CLINTON FERNANDES

THERE IS NO statute of limitations on murder. Nor, it appears, on those trying to cover it up. Last week, a coronial inquest finally did what the leading lights of Australian diplomacy could not do: establish the truth of the murders of five journalists at Balibo in East Timor, 32 years ago.

The coroner found that Brian Peters, Greg Shackleton, Gary Cunningham, Tony Stewart and Malcolm Rennie clearly identified themselves as Australians and as journalists. They were unarmed and dressed in civilian clothes. They had their hands raised in the universally recognised gesture of surrender. They were shot and/or stabbed to death in a deliberate act. The Indonesian military tactical commander gave the order to kill as part of a plan that

emanated from the highest levels. Their corpses were dressed in uniforms, guns placed beside them, and photographs taken in an attempt to portray them as legitimate targets.

Australian diplomats, academics and media commentators who make up the Jakarta Lobby claimed they were pursuing a pragmatic, hard-headed and tough-minded strategy of better relations with the Indonesian military. But they were thoroughly compromised by Indonesia's strategists, who made a mockery of their supposed expertise in foreign policy. Indonesian brutalities could not be concealed from the Australian public, nor could a good relationship with Indonesia be conducted in the face of sustained public condemnation. Indeed, the only people the Jakarta Lobby was

tough-minded towards were the families of the victims, not their Indonesian counterparts.

As the Australian public learns more about Indonesia, they will discover that military personnel who committed atrocities in East Timor were promoted and posted to West Papua. They will learn the black West Papuans are subjected to a racist, oppressive military presence that would be condemned were a European power to act similarly. Our diplomats will try to be tough-minded about this – towards concerned Australians, not their Indonesian counterparts. The latter know the unspoken truth about Australia's diplomats: they are not the lions of Gallipoli but the lambs of Canberra.

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LATE TO REST The 1976 memorial service for the Balibo Five, held in Jakarta

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Congratulations to **Charles Lambert**, Grafton, NSW for his winning caption:

"WARNING! What you're not about to see could be disturbing if viewed."

THE GHOST OF HAROLD HOLT

There's a bizarre twist to last week's cover story about the 1967 disappearance of Prime Minister Harold Holt.

In 1983, the British journalist Anthony Grey published his controversial book *The Prime Minister was a Spy*, detailing Holt's alleged journey from "compromised law student" to Chinese agent. Then, without explanation, the 70,000 copies were pulped by the publisher. Grey insists Australian security "influences" prompted the pulping, because "there was a certain nervousness" about its revelations. "It was common knowledge," Grey suggests, within the KGB, the CIA, MI5 and ASIO, that "Mr. Holt was spying."

After 25 year's silence, the old journalist agreed to be interviewed by me in London – for a small fee. Over the next few weeks our interview was postponed and cancelled several times. When he finally turned up, Grey was shaking, breathless and perspiring profusely. Hyperventilating.

To calm him, we strolled around an old Georgian square in Knightsbridge.



That's when Grey revealed that, over recent months, he had suffered chronic depression, bordering on suicide. Ironically, that's what many now suspect led Holt to go swimming in the treacherous waters off Cheviot

Beach that sad Sunday, 40 years ago.

At the time, Grey was Reuters' Peking correspondent – under "house arrest" a celebrated political prisoner of Mao's notorious Red Guard. Over a period of two years, Grey was confined, beaten up and psychologically tortured. His cat was even strung from the ceiling of his room and left to die. Throughout this terrible ordeal, Grey had kept a secret diary. Recently, for the first time in over 40 years, Grey decided to read and publish these memoirs. It will be Grey's first book since *The Prime Minister Was a Spy*. The excruciatingly painful flashbacks, he told me, had sparked his recent thoughts of suicide.

Anthony Grey is clearly a broken man. Like Holt's saga, Grey's life is also troubled by inscrutable Chinese, subs and suicide. **Ray Martin is co-host of Nine's Sunday program**