



General José de San Martín, left, General Bernardo O'Higgins, right, crossing the Andes during the liberation of South America – Author, Julio Villa y Prades, source, bernardoohiggins.cl-chacabuco, Museo Histórico y Militar de Chile, Santiago de Chile, public domain, Wikimedia

Let us be free, the rest matters not.

— José de San Martín



José de San Martín's proclamation of the independence of Peru, Lima, 28 July 1821 – Author, Juan Lepiani, National Museum of Archaeology, Anthropology, and History of Peru, public domain, Wikimedia

El Perú es desde este momento libre e independiente por la voluntad general de los pueblos y por la justicia de su causa que Dios defiende.

¡Viva la patria! ¡Viva la libertad! ¡Viva la independencia!

— José de San Martín



Simón Bolívar, *El Libertador* – Author, Rita Matilde del la Penuela, art collection of the Central Bank of Venezuela, public domain, Wikimedia

*The United States appear to be destined by Providence to plague
America with misery in the name of liberty.*

— Simón Bolívar

Simón Bolívar, *El Libertador* – Author, Rita Matilde del la Penuela, Art collection of the Central Bank of Venezuela, public domain, Wikimedia. Called “El Libertador”, Simón Bolívar was a Venezuelan military and political leader who along with José de San Martín, Bernardo O’Higgins, and others led the struggle for South American independence from the Spanish Empire. Educated in Spain and France and influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment like the leaders of the U.S. revolution, Bolívar was motivated to overthrow Spanish colonialism. The struggle with France in the Peninsular War had destroyed the economies of Portugal and Spain, bringing political instability and weakening Spain’s military control over its colonies. Through a series of battles, including the Battle of Boyaca in 1819 after Bolívar’s great military feat of crossing the snowcapped Andes mountains, Bolívar succeeded in leading Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Panama to independence, ultimately founding Gran Colombia, the first union of independent nations in Latin America, of which he was elected president. While he was able to negotiate a series of treaties, he could not control the internal dissension and regional uprisings in the vast dominion of Gran Colombia, his dream disintegrating in 1830 when he stepped down as president, delivering his final address to the nation. For the balance of the 19th and 20th century, Latin America was ripped by civil wars and *caudillismo*, the dictatorships of charismatic military leaders, making it impossible for democracy to thrive, a process that the United States would become increasingly implicated, which the following chapter will trace.

The freedom of the New World is the hope of the Universe.

— Simón Bolívar

When I returned from my anthropology class, Gisella gave me a note from the message box.

Alicia has a fever. I'm staying with her. I'll let you know tomorrow if we can meet by the lake. Tomás.

I was at once disappointed and relieved. I was euphoric that Tomás was fascinated by me, and yet, after three years, dreams of Giovanni still haunt me at night. Was I leading Tomás on because of my loneliness? From day to day, I swing from elation to doubt. I'm tormented by Gio's absence.

Early this morning, I awakened thinking of Giovanni. I hadn't written to him all this year. Receiving no letter in three years was inexplicable. That's not like Gio. Even if he didn't want to be with me — even if he is still in love with Yvonne, Gio would've told me. I'm sure of that. Maybe he's in love with someone else. His silence doesn't make sense. I have to know. Only then can I be free. I went to my desk.

Dear Gio, it has been three years. Though I've written many times, I have never received one letter. I've mailed letters to Birdland on Broadway. Not one letter has been returned. If we're finished, why wouldn't you have the guts to tell me? Why have you failed me? I am tortured by your silence. This is not the Gio I loved.

I've met someone who inspires me. I understand your pain over losing Yvonne. I share that pain as deeply as you. But I am still hung up by our past. I am asking you to give me my freedom to love someone else.

Your friend, Celine

I dressed and went to the mail box. When I returned, I fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

Two days later, I received a note from Tomás. "Alicia's fever broke. Can you meet me at three this afternoon under the willow tree?"

At three, Tomás was waiting for me under the willow tree. It was a bright and sunny day, the sails of the boats filled by a sharp southern wind. He was wearing a burgundy sweater and jeans, revealing his sculpted legs.

He greeted me with an enigmatic smile that lit up my day.

“You were clairvoyant,” I laughed, “the other day you were talking about Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and that’s exactly what Saint-Jean talked about in class yesterday — Dulles’ and President Eisenhower’s fear of communism ruling his foreign policy.”

“While I have only praise,” Tomás said, “for President Truman’s and General Lucius Clay’s defense of Berlin during the blockade, I can’t accept the dark side of the Truman Doctrine as it has become under Eisenhower. While Eisenhower was an marvelous leader for the Allies in defeating Hitler, his inflexible opposition to Marxism in any form, even when democratically sanctioned, has driven Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to pursue alliances with dictators.”

“What dictators are you thinking of?”

“I’ll give you an example of Dulles installing a dictator. In a CIA organized coup, the U.S. overthrew Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh of Iran in 1953. You once mentioned that the overthrow of governments by military force, especially one that was elected by the people, was not what diplomat George Kennan was thinking of when he advocated the containment of Soviet power. The government has succeeded in fooling the American people. But the people of Iran know the truth.”

“Why would Dulles overthrow Prime Minister Mosaddegh?”

“Fear of communism. Mosaddegh, leader of the nationalist’s movement the National Front of Iran, was a reformer who’s brought a peaceful revolution to Iran by abolishing feudal land ownership that has kept the people in bondage for centuries. Like the Spanish Popular Front had hoped to accomplish in Spain, Mosaddegh’s land reform freed peasants from slave labor on the wealthy landowner’s estates. Nominated as Prime Minister by the Iranian Parliament by an overwhelming majority, Mosaddegh instituted unemployment compensation, constructed public baths and rural housing. Factory owners were ordered to pay benefits to injured workers. After World War Two,

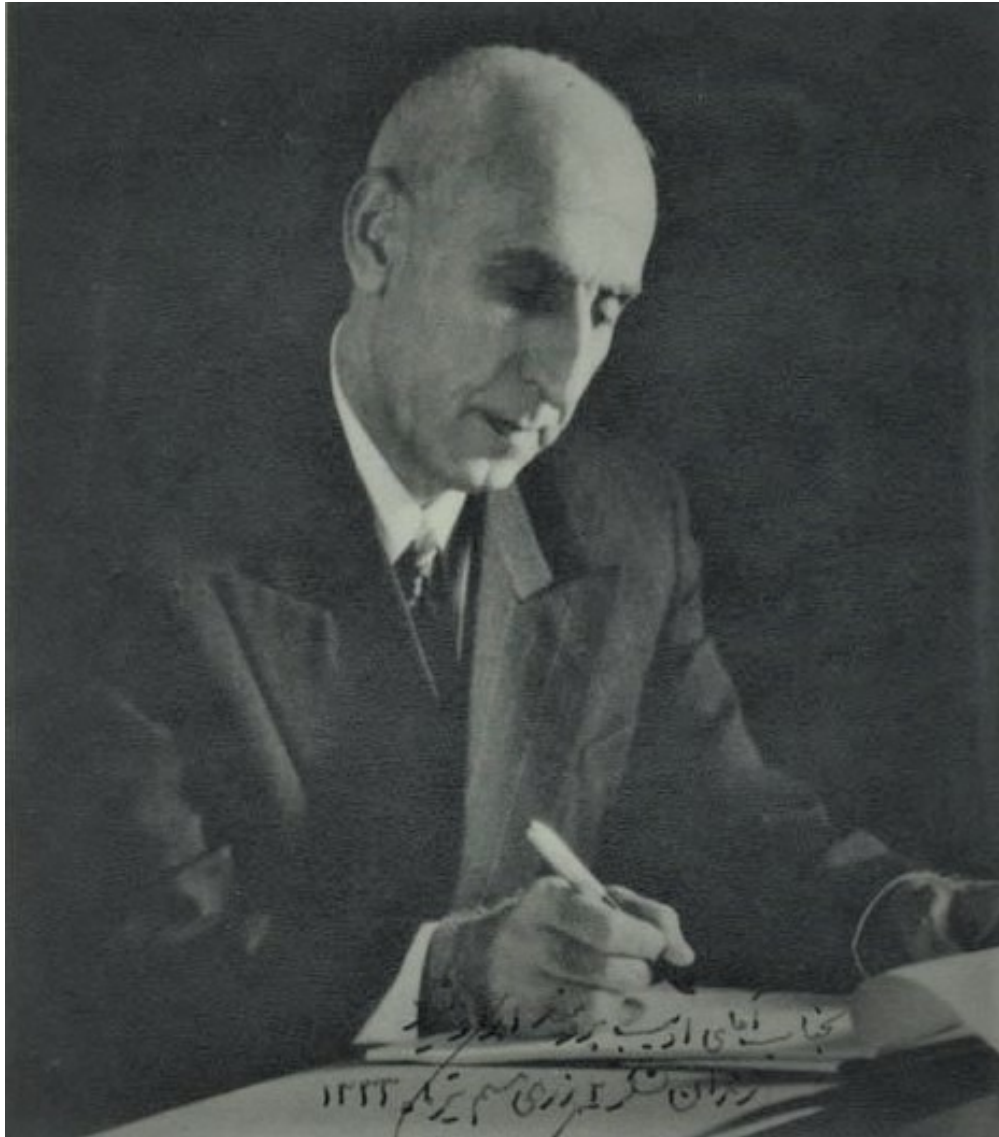
many Iranian politicians saw the Anglo Iranian Oil Company as a tool of British imperialism that was exploiting the wealth of Iran. Mosaddegh's fatal move was to attempt to negotiate with the British petroleum corporation to gain a more favorable share of the petrol income to pay for his reforms and improve the life of the poor. When the United Kingdom refused to give Iran a better deal, with the approval of the Iranian Parliament, Mosaddegh nationalized the Anglo Iranian Oil Company in 1951."

"This must have led to a violent reaction in the United Kingdom."

"When governments nationalize foreign assets, it invariably results in virulent reprisals by the Western imperial powers and oil companies, just as the U.S. reacted when Fidel Castro nationalized the American owned estates in Cuba. The British oil consortium shut down their Iranian installations, took their technicians out and levied a worldwide boycott of Iranian oil.



President Truman and Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh of Iran, 23 October 1951 – Author, U.S. Government, public domain, Wikimedia



Mohammad Mosaddegh, the leader of National Front and the democratic Prime Minister of Iran, 20 July, 1954 – Author Mosaddegh Foundation, public domain, Wikimedia

“The British Navy began stopping ships carrying Iranian oil on the grounds that they were transporting stolen property. Since the Western oil giants owned most of the tankers, the resulting blockade of Iran’s petroleum exports shut down the Abadan refinery, the largest in the world. It devastated the Iranian economy. The Anglo Iranian Oil Company and Aramco increased petroleum production in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait to compensate for the loss of Iranian oil. Deprived of their trained workers and unable to export oil, Iran’s economy was on the verge of collapse. Although he was up against the wall, Mosaddegh refused to give in to the United Kingdom. Through means of his emergency powers approved by the Parliament, he declared a land reform which established village councils to allow peasants a greater share of production, a major transformation of Iran’s ancient feudal agricultural system.”

“I can see where this is headed. How did the United Kingdom react?”

“Prime Minister Clement Attlee,” Tomás replied, “preferred to force Iran to terms by means of a strict economic boycott. This approach changed when elections brought more conservative leaders to power, Winston Churchill in the UK and Dwight Eisenhower in the U.S. Although Eisenhower was skeptical at first because a coup d’état would destabilize Iran, he was concerned that the communist Tudeh Party could take power in Iran, He finally agreed with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles who in 1953 ordered the CIA run by his brother, Allen Dulles, to make plans to overthrow Mosaddegh.”

“Did the Iranian Communist Party support Mosaddegh?”

“That was the irony,” Tomás said. “The Communist Party opposed Mosaddegh, claiming that he was just another face of the corrupt monarchy of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. British intelligence, the CIA, and the British Petroleum company bribed Iranian politicians, clergy, and military officers and brought paid agitators into Tehran in buses to stage protests to destabilize Mosaddegh, killing several hundred in the streets.



Shaban Jafari led fighting in the street of Tehran during the 1953 Iranian coup against the popular Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh - Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia. The CIA intelligence agency paid Jafari to create street disturbances to bring Shah to power.

~~TOP SECRET~~

DRAFT

CAMPAIGN TO INSTALL PRO-WESTERN GOVERNMENT IN IRAN

AUTHORITY: *Approved by* [redacted]
July 11, 53

TARGET

Prime Minister Mossadeq and his government

OBJECTIVES

Through legal, or quasi-legal, methods to effect the fall of the Mossadeq government; and

To replace it with a pro-Western government under the Shah's leadership, with Zahedi as its Prime Minister

Document of CIA directed campaign to Install Pro-Western Government in Iran, August 1953 – Author, U.S. Government, public domain, Wikimedia



Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Fatemi, right, with Mohammad Mosaddegh at the United Nations Security Council, 1952 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia.



Pro-Rezi Pahlavi demonstrators were paid by Iranian CIA agents to promote turmoil and riot in Tehran, 1953 – Unknown author, public domain, *The Guardian*, Wikimedia



Pro-Mosaddegh protests in Tehran during the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, 16 August 1953 – Author, Iranian media, *The Guardian*, public domain, Wikimedia



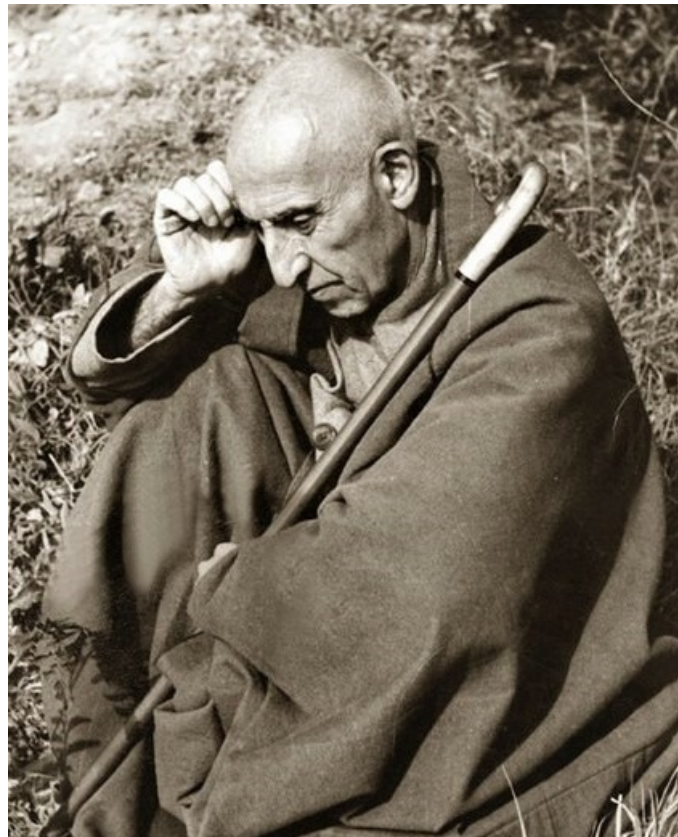
Fazlollah Zahedi, general and minister of the interior was supported by the British M16 and U.S. CIA to stage a 1953 coup to overthrow democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh – Author, Iranian media, public domain, Wikimedia



Deposed Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh in court, 8 November, 1953 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



Dr. Hossein Fatemi, Iranian Foreign Minister, during the 1953 CIA coup d'état that overthrew the constitutional government of Prime Minister Mosaddegh – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia. An Iranian scholar, journalist, leading politician, and close associate of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, Fatemi was appointed minister of foreign affairs at the age of 33, the youngest in Iranian history. After receiving a doctorate law degree in France, 1948, Fatemi returned to Iran and launched the daily *Bākhtar*, the organ of the Iranian National Front, Mosaddegh's democratic nationalist movement. Fatemi was credited in Mossadegh's memoir for proposing the nationalization of Iranian oil and gas holdings. During the 1953 CIA initiated coup d'état that overthrew the constitutional government of Mosaddegh, the office of Fatemi's newspaper was burnt down by mobs incited by an Iranian CIA agent. After the coup succeeded in overthrowing Mossadegh, Fatemi was arrested and tortured, convicted by a military court of "treason against the Shah" and on 10 November 1954, executed by firing squad.



Mohammed Mossadegh under house arrest in Ahmadabad, Iran – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia

“The military arrested Mosaddegh and he was convicted of treason by the Shah’s military court. A general was made prime minister and Pahlavi assumed dictatorial powers banning Mossaddegh’s National Front and the Tudeh Party. The CIA sent an army colonel to aid the military governor of Tehran in creating an intelligence organization that would use all possible means, including torture and execution to hunt down dissidents.”

“You’re talking about SAVAK, the Shah’s secret police. Pahlavi’s SAVAK became the terror of Iran.”

“SAVAK had virtually unlimited powers,” Tomás said. “After discovering a Tudeh communist network within the military, SAVAK executed the leaders and destroyed most of the party membership. Not only did the SAVAK agents spy upon Iranians, it also watched over Iranians abroad especially students studying in the West. In the infamous Evin Prison, SAVAK tortured thousands of political prisoners using electric shock, solitary confinement, sleep deprivation under bright lights, burning flesh with cigarettes, dripping acid in nostrils, electrical shocks with cattle prods in the rectum, extracting teeth and finger nails, the *bastinado*, the whipping and burning bare feet, terrifying women with snakes, tying weights to the testicles and staging mock executions.”



Nematollah Nassiri, commander of the Iranian Imperial Guards of the Pahlavi dynasty and director of SAVAK, 16 August 1953, Unknown author, *The Guardian*, public domain, Wikimedia. A personal friend of the Shah, Nassiri supported the 1953 coup d’état that removed Prime Minister Mosaddegh from power in 1953. During the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Nassiri, a former director of the Shah’s brutal SAVAK secret police, was tried by the Revolutionary Tribunal, charged with treason, torture, massacre of people, and sentenced to death.

“It is no wonder that there is so much hatred toward the Pahlavi regime.”

“The Iranian people had seen foreign aggression before,” Tomás replied. “Iran had endured an invasion of foreign powers during World War II.”

“An invasion?”

“Russia was being crushed by the German onslaught of Barbarossa in the summer of 1941. Stalin desperately need armaments and supplies from the West. Like World War I, the Allies needed a strong Eastern Front to keep the Germans tied up, relieving intense pressure on the United Kingdom in the west. The Brits feared that the giant Abadan Refinery owned by the British controlled Anglo-Iranian Oil Company producing eight million tons of oil would fall into German hands. Relations between Britain and Iran had been strained for ten years since Reza Shah cancelled the concession that gave the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company the exclusive right to sell Iranian oil.

“Because the Baltic shipping route was nearly impossible in the dead of winter, Stalin saw the Trans-Iranian Railway as the best all-weather route to import military armaments from the allies. With the urgent need to get armaments shipped, Britain and the Soviet Union put pressure on Iran to allow the Allies to use their territory for military and logistical shipments to the USSR through Iran to Soviet Azerbaijan. The heavy pressure from foreign governments ignited anti-British rallies in Tehran and Reza Shah refused to join the Allies against the Germans.”

“The Shah wouldn’t budge and that’s what set off the invasion?”

“Britain and the USSR didn’t attempt to negotiate the issue. They invaded in a surprise attack, leaving the unprepared Iranians no time to mount a defense. The British fleet attacked from the Persian Gulf, seizing the strategic prize of the Abadan refinery. The Indian Infantry division attacked from Iraq in Central Iran. The Soviets attacked from Soviet Azerbaijan into Iranian Azerbaijan with 1,000 tanks and motorized infantry. Then a third invasion came from the Soviet Caspian Sea Navy. Overwhelmed on all fronts, Reza Shah sent a telegram to President Roosevelt pleading with him to stop the invasion. As the U.S. was still neutral and not yet allied with Britain or the USSR, the president had no authority to stop the attack, but declared that the territorial integrity of Iran should be respected. A few days later, a fourth front opened when the Soviet Army invaded northeastern Iran from Soviet Turkmenistan.”

“While Hitler was clobbering Britain and the Soviets, the Allies were clobbering the Iranians.”



Soviet army crossing into Iran, 25 August 1941 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



Soviet tank men of the 6th Armored Division in the streets of Tabriz, 27 August 1941 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



Soviet and British soldiers rendezvous near Qazvin, Iran – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



British soldiers inspecting a tank of the Soviet occupation forces after rendezvousing in Iran, 31 August 1941 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



British Indian troops guarding the largest refinery in the world, Abadan Refinery, Iran, 4 September 1941 – Author, Capt. G. Keating, United Kingdom Army, Imperial War Museum, public domain, Wikimedia. Prime Minister Mosaddegh's nationalization of the Abadan Refinery led to Britain encouraging President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and the CIA to stage a coup d'état to replace democratically elected head of state Mosaddegh, with the autocratic Reza Pahlavi on the throne of Iran.



British supply convoy protected by Soviet BA-10 armored vehicle, September 1941 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



Formation of B-25 Mitchell bombers, 1942 – Author, Australian War Memorial, public domain, Wikimedia

“It was like Hitler’s blitzkrieg in France. Iran was hit with 200,000 mobile troops, state of the art aircraft, tanks, and artillery. The Iranian army was in total chaos with the Allies in complete control of the skies, bombing Tehran at will, the soldiers fleeing for their lives. Except for the Shah and Crown Prince, the royal family fled to Isfahan. Faced with defeat on all sides, after four days, the Shah ordered his army to cease fire and surrendered to the Allied command. During the cease fire negotiations, Britain demanded that the Shah hand over all German nationals. Fearing they would be put to death, the Shah evacuated the Germans through the Turkish border.”

“So,” I said, “it took a massive invasion to depose the Shah and put the young Crown Prince on the throne of Iran, a puppet under the control of the British oil consortium. While it helped defeat the Nazis, it also defeated the Iranian people. What trade offs there are in war! Then, twelve years after the invasion, the CIA coup d’état against Prime Minister Mosaddegh establishes Reza Pahlavi as absolute ruler of Iran. What a Byzantine history Iran has had in the 20th century.”

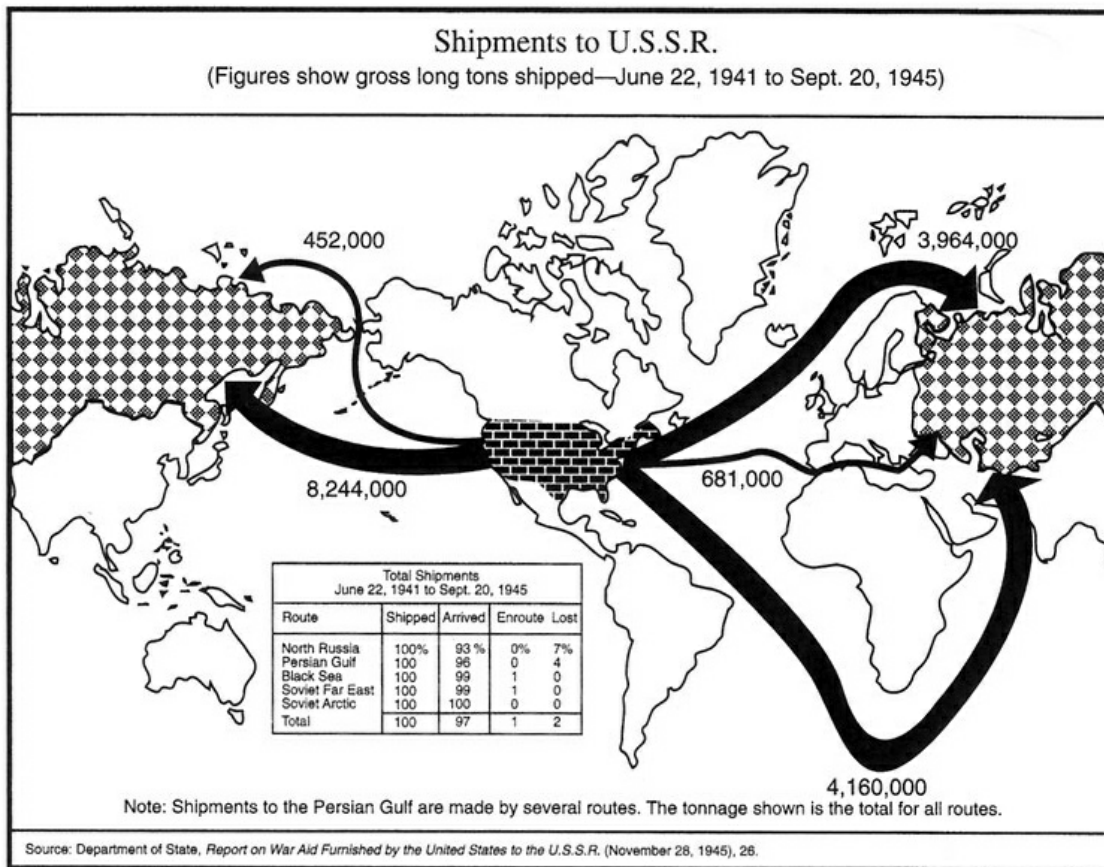
“You guessed correctly. Crown Prince Mohammad Reza Pahlavi took the oath to become the Shah of Iran. His father was arrested and sent into exile as a British prisoner in South Africa where he died heartbroken three years later. Pahlavi signed the Tripartite Treaty Alliance with Britain and the USSR, and in 1943, Iran declared war on Germany, qualified for membership in the United Nations, and during the Tehran Conference, Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin confirmed their commitment to Iranian independence.”

“At what a cost to the Iranians.”

“It was brutal because the desperate Soviets appropriated most of the harvest and thousands of foreign troops ate up what was left, leaving the Iranian people to starve with bread riots in Tehran, 400 percent inflation, and deaths from famine. Joseph Stalin took advantage of the occupation to undermine Iranian sovereignty by sending apparatchiks into Iranian Azerbaijan and Iranian Kurdistan to establish communist enclaves, including founding the communist Tudeh Party of Iran, a Soviet destabilization policy that a decade later aroused John Foster Dulles’ fear of a communist take over in Iran.”

“But the armaments got through the Persian Corridor.”

“By 1943, 30,000 American troops serviced the Persian Corridor and one-third of all Lend-Lease supplies — 17 million tons transported by train and trucks over mostly dirt roads across the deserts into Soviet-Azerbaijan. A lot of Studebaker trucks and B-25 Mitchell bombers were sent through Iran — a big help at the Battle of Stalingrad.”



Map showing U.S. Lend-Lease shipments to USSR during World War II by route – U.S. State Department, public domain, Wikimedia



An American locomotive transporting military supplies bound for the USSR through the Persian Corridor, 1943 – Author, U.S. Government, public domain, Wikimedia



U.S. planes waiting to be picked up from Abadan Field, Iran, 1942 – Author, U.S. Air Force, public domain, Wikimedia



North American B-25 Mitchell bomber production, Kansas City, 1942 – Author, Alfred T. Palmer, U.S. War Office of Information, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia



Polish Army soldiers entering Warsaw in a Willys jeep furnished by the U.S. Lend-Lease program. In the background, the Holy Cross Church destroyed by the Nazi in retribution for the Warsaw Uprising – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



Crowds greet the Soviet ambassador at a British tank factory delivering a Valentine tank – Unknown author, British Ministry of Information, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia



An Iranian assembly plant for American Curtiss P-40 fighters to be transported through the Persian Corridor for the Russian Army, March 1943 – Author, Nick Parrino, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia



American and British Army train crewmen in route on the Persian Corridor, carrying Lend-Lease supplies to the USSR, 1943 – Author, Nick Parrino, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia



After the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran elevated a more compliant Shah on the throne, American and British railroad crews transported Lend-Lease military supplies to Stalin's army, March 1943 – Author, Nick Parrino, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia



A United States Army truck convoy carrying military supplies for the USSR on the Persian Corridor, May 1943 – Author, Nick Parrino, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia. Donkeys did not always yield the right away.



Lend-Lease supply train traveling the Persian Corridor through the mountains of Iran, March 1943 – Author, Nick Parrino, Office of War Information, public domain, National Museum of the U.S. Navy, Wikimedia

“I can imagine,” I said, “how bitter were the memories of the Iranians after the misfortunes of 1941 and 1953. Then, they had to suffer the terror of Pahlavi’s SAVAK secret police. SAVAK was as twisted in the art of torture as what you’ve described in the Grand Inquisitor’s terror in Queen Isabella’s Spain. There was not much reason for the Iranians to love America. ”

“And the terror,” Tomás said, “was just as perverse as 500 years ago. The interrogators humiliated their prisoners by stripping them naked, urinating on them, and raping them. The violations of human rights were as terrible as any secret police anywhere, including the Stasi secret police in East Germany.”

“In the moment of their sadistic pleasures,” I said, “they don’t understand how counterproductive torture is in the long run. Without realizing the hatred that it would instill in the Iranians, Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers overthrew an anti-colonialist prime minister and ordained the Shah as a puppet king.”



Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi with his consort Farah Pahlavi and crown prince after the coronation, 1967 – Unknown author, Iranian Government, public domain, Wikimedia



President Eisenhower with the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi,
Tehran, Iran, 1959 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia

*To be true to one's own freedom is, in essence to honor
and respect the freedom of all others.*

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

“Out of fear, the United States put a dictator on the throne,” Tomás said, “and through the instrument of SAVAK, the dictator rules by fear. The wealthy conservatives who’ve always controlled Iran, now have Mohammed Reza Pahlavi firmly in power and a consortium of British and American oil producers control Iran’s oil. This is colonialism in the 20th century. In our time, there’s no excuse for Europe and the U.S. to continue exploiting the wealth of Asian and African colonies.

“Hasn’t the U.S. also overthrown governments in South America?”

“A good example is Guatemala,” Tomás said, “Since the 1930s, Guatemala had been ruled by the brutally repressive dictator General Jorge Ubico. In return for the backing of the U.S., Ubico granted military bases to the U.S. and gave hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile land to the United Fruit Company. Under Ubico’s rule, the government used forced indigenous labor for construction of roads and railroads, froze wages at poverty levels, and passed a law allowing property owners to execute workers for disciplinary reasons.



Jorge Ubico, President of Guatemala, 1931 – 1944 – Author, Government of Guatemala, public domain, Wikimedia. An admirer of Napoleon Bonaparte, Ubico was one of the harshest dictators of Central America, maintaining a network of spies and agents throughout Guatemala, militarizing schools and government posts, allowing the U.S. to establish military bases, granting the United Fruit Company tax exemptions and 490,000 acres of public land, and the port facilities at Puerto Barrios. The killing of María Chinchilla Recinos by Ubico’s cavalry during a peaceful demonstration of school teachers, sparked a mass national protest and general strike that forced Ubico’s resignation, 1 July, 1944.



Profesora María Chinchilla Recinos – Unknown author, Fotos antiguas de Guatemala, public domain, Wikimedia. During a peaceful demonstration at the Church of St. Frances, 25 June 1944, calling for an increase of salaries, greater democracy, and the resignation of the dictator, Guatemalan President Jorge Ubico responded by ordering the cavalry to suppress the protest, resulting in María Chinchilla’s death and sparking a popular revolt that led to Ubico’s resignation five days later. The Guatemalan teachers’ association declared 25 June to be celebrated each year as the *Día del Maestro* in memory of María Chinchilla Recinos, martyr and national heroine of Guatemala.

“In 1944, the repressive policies of Ubico resulted in middle-class intellectuals and junior army officers overthrowing Ubico. A few months after the October Revolution, Guatemala held its first democratic elections. Juan José Arévalo, a professor of philosophy, won the election in a landslide and immediately introduced reforms to increase spending on education and establish a minimum wage that ended the labor exploitation by the United Fruit Company. The democratic rule of the next ten years from the overthrow of Ubico until the counter-revolution of 1954 became known as Ten Years of Spring, the only years that Guatemala was able to have a democratic government.”

“Wasn’t it the case,” I said, “that a small percentage of the people owned nearly all of the land?”



Juan José Arévalo, the first democratically elected president of Guatemala – Author, Government of Guatemala, Ministry of Defense, Wikimedia. Arévalo, a professor of philosophy, was elected president in 1945 after a popular revolt against the U.S. supported dictator Jorge Ubico. An exponent of the philosophy of “Spiritual Socialism,” Arévalo survived 25 coup attempts of the Guatemala military and enacted major social reforms, increased the minimum wage, expanded education, and drafted a new Guatemalan constitution that granted civil rights and liberties that heretofore had never been experienced by the Guatemalan people. Under the program of *Arevalismo*, large undeveloped agricultural estates owned by foreign citizens were redistributed to peasants, mandating that landowners provide decent housing for the *campesino* workers. Arévalo’s administration constructed new schools and hospitals for the peasants, earning the reputation in the United States of being a communist, although Arevalo hadn’t allowed the legalization of the Communist Party and had exiled communists activists. Responding to the accusations of being a communist, Arévalo said in an address to the U.S. Congress said, “I fear the West has won the battle, but in its blind attacks on social welfare will lose the war to fascism.”

“Two percent of the people,” Tomás replied, “owned 70 percent of the land, much of which was not even under cultivation while 98 percent of the population were landless laborers. The next democratically elected President Jacobo Árbenz began in the early ‘50s to expropriate large tracts of un-farmed private land to distribute to the landless peasants. Like Mosaddegh in Iran, Árbenz intended to end the feudalism which had repressed the Guatemalan people for centuries since the Spanish conquest. Half a million destitute Guatemalan farmers, many of them indigenous Mayans, were able for the first time to possess their own land. Árbenz expropriated from the United Fruit Company hundreds of thousands of acres of untilled farm land reimbursing them by the tax declaration value of unused land.

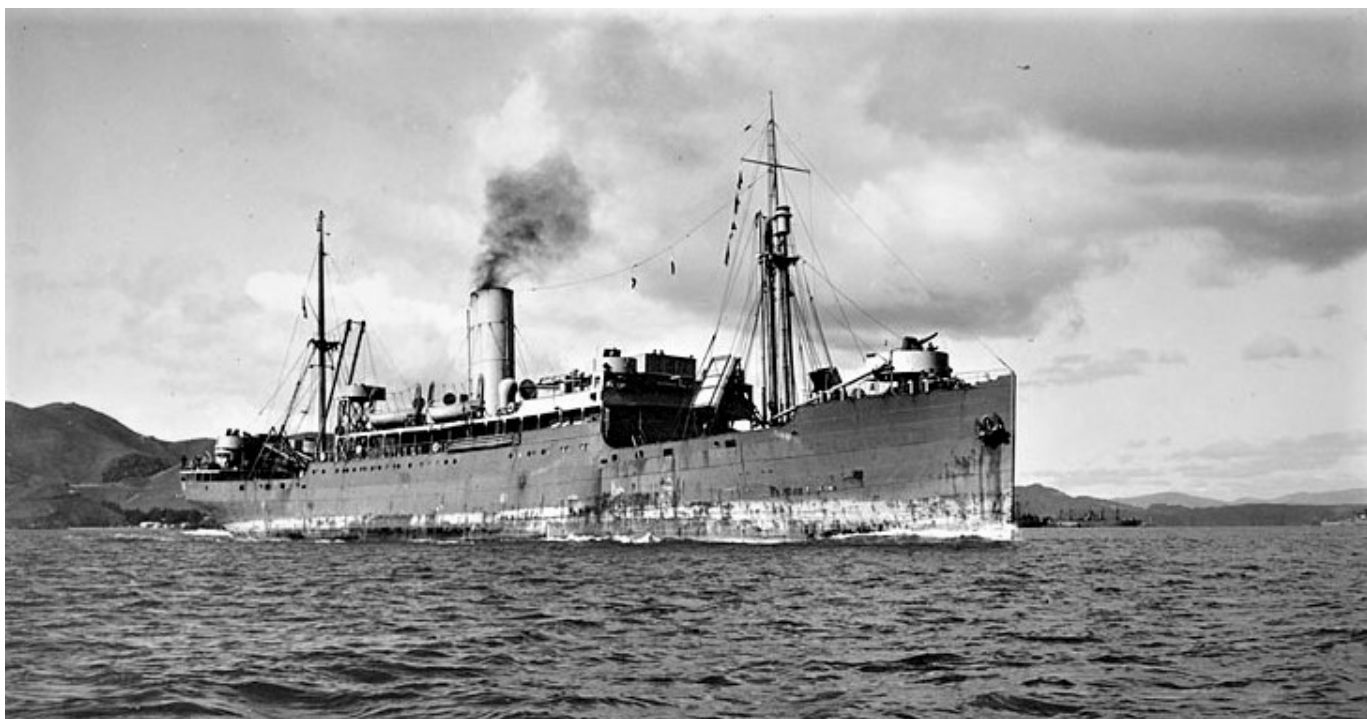


Jacobo Árbenz and his wife María Cristina Vilanova, 1944 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia. The daughter of a wealthy San Salvadoran landowner and a Guatemalan mother, a feminist influenced by the social-economic views of Marx, María Cristina Vilanova had a strong influence on the political policies of her husband, encouraging him to champion the rights of the indigenous people. Jacobo Árbenz, Guatemalan Minister of Defense and the second democratically elected President of Guatemala from 1951 to 1954, continued the social reforms of his predecessor President Arévalo, expanding the right to vote, the right of workers to organize, freedom of speech, and the right to public debate. Árbenz's policy of agrarian reform under Decree 900, passed by the Guatemalan Congress, June 17, 1952, compensated large land owners for the expropriation of uncultivated large land holdings that were redistributed to a half-million poverty stricken *campesino* workers, primarily indigenous Indians whose land had been lost during centuries of Spanish colonialism. After the land reform Decree 900 was passed, the United Fruit Company, which had 40% of its land expropriated by Árbenz's land reform, worked to convince the Truman and Eisenhower administrations that Árbenz planned to align Guatemala with the Soviet Bloc. Consequently, during the Truman administration, a covert operation, Operation FORTUNE, to overthrow Árbenz was developed by the CIA, but a whistleblower discovered the secret operation and informed the previously unaware Secretary of State Dean Acheson. The covert plan called for no direct U.S. military assistance, but rather the financing and supplying of exiled Guatemalan army officer Carlos Castillo Armas to lead the coup, which called for assassinations and arrests of scores of supporters of Árbenz, a list prepared by exiled Guatemalan military officers. Fearing that the coup would damage the image of the United States' professed policy of non-intervention — the invasion of a country that was a member of the Organization of American States — Dean Acheson convinced Truman to abandon a coup that would result in a huge setback to U.S. foreign policy.

Upon the election of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the former general was more inclined to eliminate foreign governments that he believed were influenced by communism. Fearing that the success of Arbenz's reforms would inspire similar movements in Latin America, Eisenhower authorized a new covert operation PBSUCCESS that trained and funded an invasion force led by exiled Carlos Castillo Armas. Similar to the Iranian coup against Mosaddegh, the CIA employed a sophisticated campaign of psychological warfare and violence that succeeded in overthrowing the democratically elected President Árbenz, ending the

reforms of the ten-year-long Guatemalan Spring. The military dictatorship established by U.S. puppet Carlos Castill Armas immediately initiated a program of violence against protesting workers on the plantations of the United Fruit Company. Among many conflicts of interests, Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was a member of the law firm, Sullivan and Cromwell that had represented the United Fruit Company and his brother, CIA deputy director Allen Dulles who was on the United Fruit board of directors. The State Department's director of International Security was a former CEO of the company, and CIA director and undersecretary of State Bedell Smith later became a director of the United Fruit Company, which today is Chiquita Brands International.

The overthrow of Árbenz by the United States initiated a forty-year-long cycle of military suppression and terror during which Guatemala was ruled by U.S. supported military dictators leading to the Guatemalan Civil War, 1960 – 1996, in which 200,000 were killed. During 1966-69, U.S. Green Berets providing training and support for Guatemalan counterinsurgency forces and U.S. military advisors, similar to the U.S. operatives in El Salvador, reportedly helped to form death squads and counterinsurgency operations resulting in thousands of assassinations. During the years of the Central American insurgencies against military dictators, not only were American agents present during torture sessions, the U.S. government outsourced covert operations to Israel and Argentina, the Israeli press reporting that several hundred Israeli advisors helped the U.S. to train Guatemalan counterinsurgency forces, prompting the Human Rights Watch in 1984 to criticize President Ronald Reagan for America's violation of human rights in Central America — massacres of students, intellectuals, social activists, trade unionists, and journalists, including aerial bombardment and extermination of entire villages — genocide against indigenous Mayan people.



SS *Abangarez*, a United Fruit ship, 1945 – Author, Robert G. Tippins, U.S. Navy, U.S. Naval Historical Center, public domain, Wikimedia

“Like Mosaddegh’s expropriation of oil fields,” Tomás said “had enraged the British oil companies, the expropriation of land in Guatemala enraged the United Fruit Company. The American company was a giant, owning more than 3 million acres with 70,000 cattle, 1,500 miles of railways, and a fleet of 70 ships operating on a budget greater than most Central American countries. The United Fruit Company began a public relations campaign to convince President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles that Guatemala was going Communist.



Tierra y Libertad, Reforma Agraria de Guatemala, government poster announcing President Jacobo Árbenz's agrarian program of land redistribution to the indigenous peasants, 1952 – Author, Government of Guatemala, public domain, Wikimedia

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

12 May 1975

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: CIA's Role in the Overthrow of Arbenz

In August 1953, the Operations Coordinating Board directed CIA to assume responsibility for operations against the Arbenz regime. Appropriate authorization was issued to permit close and prompt cooperation with the Departments of Defense, State and other Government agencies in order to support the Agency in this task. The plan of operations called for cutting off military aid to Guatemala, increasing aid to its neighbors, exerting diplomatic and economic pressure against Arbenz and attempts to subvert and or defect Army and political leaders, broad scale psychological warfare and paramilitary actions. During the period August through December 1953 a CIA staff was assembled and operational plans were prepared.

Following are the specific operational mechanisms utilized by the Agency in the overall missions against the Arbenz government:

a. Paramilitary Operations. Approximately 85 members of the CASTILLO Armas group received training in Nicaragua. Thirty were trained in sabotage, six as shock troop leaders and 20 others as support-type personnel. Eighty-nine tons of equipment were prepared. The support of this operation was staged inside the borders of Honduras and Nicaragua [

...] There were an estimated 260 men in Honduras and El Salvador for use as shock troops and specialists, outside of the training personnel that had been sent to Nicaragua.

b. Air Operations. The planning for providing air operational support was broken down into three phases; i.e. the initial stockpiling of equipment; the delivering of equipment to advance bases by black flight; and the aerial resupply of troops in the field. Thirty days prior to D-day, a fourth phase, fighter support, was initiated. There were approximately 80 missions flown during the 14-29 June 1954 period, by various type aircraft such as C-47's, F-47's and Cessnas which were used to discharge cargo, distribute propaganda and for strafing and bombing missions.

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Indonesian President Sukarno with U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and Richard Nixon, 1956 – Unknown author, United States Information Service, public domain, Wikimedia. Sukarno led Indonesians in resisting Dutch efforts to re-colonize Indonesia after the defeat of the Japanese occupiers in WWII, becoming the first president of Indonesia, serving from 1945 to 1967. Sukarno was able to unify a country of 600 native ethnic groups, the largest being Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Batak, Madurese, Minangkabua, and Buginese, inhabiting seventeen thousand islands, Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, and parts of Borneo and New Guinea. Sukarno was a dedicated Indonesian nationalist, but was dependent on the support of the Communist party because it supported his political programs. Fearing that the popularity of the PKI party would lead to a communist Indonesia, President Eisenhower ordered the CIA in 1957 to overthrow the Sukarno government, a coup which failed, one of the greatest failures in the history of the CIA. Determined to maintain independence from the great powers, Sukarno joined the Non-Aligned Movement, NAM, in 1961 together with Yugoslavia's President Josip Broz Tito, India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Egypt's President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Ghana's President Kwame Nkrumah, an organization dedicated to provide unity and influence for nations who remained unaligned with the Cold War adversaries of the Soviet Union and the United States. The five principles of the Non-Aligned Movement were mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggressions, non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence. With a population of 270 million, Indonesia is the world's fourth-most populous country. Metropolitan Jakarta is the second-most populous city after Tokyo with a population of 36 million.



Suharto taking the presidential oath of office, 27 March, 1968 – Author, Government of Republic of Indonesia, public domain, Wikimedia.

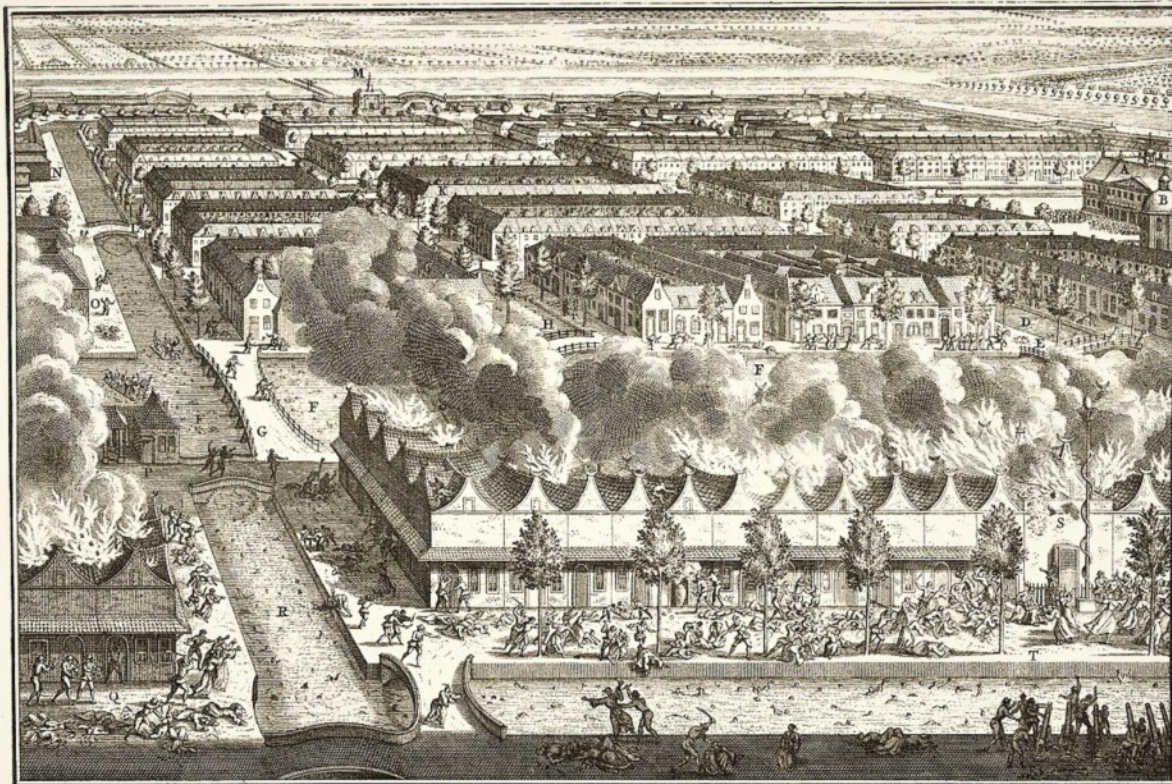


TABLEAU de la Partie de BATAVIA, où s'est fait proprement le terrible MASSACRE des CHINOIS, le 9 Octob. 1740
 AFBEELDING van dat Gedeelte van BATAVIA, alwaar eigentlijk de schrikkeijke SLAGTING der CHINEZEN gefchied is, den 9 Octob. 1740

Massacre of Chinese Indonesians, bodies thrown into rivers and canals, Batavia, Indonesia, 1740 – Etching by Jakob van der Schley after the original by Adolf van der Laan, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, public domain, Wikimedia. The slaughter of Indonesians of Chinese descent have been carried out by the government since the time of the Dutch East India Company when soldiers killed 10,000 Chinese and during the Indonesian National Revolution against Dutch rule were slaughtered again in 1946. While Suharto was in charge of the military, thousands of Chinese Indonesians were massacred in Makassar, Medan and Lombok. In 1965-1966, the army and religious groups purged the country of anyone suspected of belonging to the communist party, a repression similar to Syngman Rhee's massacre of leftists in Korea in the 50's, a web of violence which killed many Chinese who were not communists at all. The purge spread throughout Indonesia, leaving a half-million dead. To force the Chinese to assimilate, the Suharto government passed laws allowing only one Chinese publication to be controlled by the military, forbidding the display of Chinese characters, and forcing the Chinese to take-up Indonesian names, a cultural genocide that duplicated the Japanese genocide against the Koreans in the early 20th Century.



Indonesian President Suharto meeting with U.S. President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, 6 December 1975, Jakarta, Indonesia – Author, David Hume Kennerly, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, public domain, Wikimedia. In 1965, by using a similar modus operandi of Adolf Hitler, Major General Suharto accused the communists of being responsible for an attempted coup and mounted a campaign to purge Indonesia of the Communist PKI party. Suharto's forces imprisoned 1.5 million and executed over a half million in a bloodbath, eventually seizing power from President Sukarno and establishing a dictatorship that endured 31 years until he was forced to resign during a financial crisis in 1998. The German anti-corruption group Transparency International lists Suharto as the most corrupt leader in modern times, alleged to have embezzled between 20 to 35 billion dollars during his regime.

The 1975 meeting of President Ford and Henry Kissinger with Suharto was held one day before the Indonesian army equipped by U.S. supplied weaponry invaded East Timor under the pretext of anti-communism to overthrow the popular Fretilin leftist regime. CIA documents later revealed that the U.S. gave Suharto the green light to take East Timor which was on the brink of being accepted as a member of the United Nations. The brutal invasion of the Indonesian army resulted in the slaughter of over 100,000 East Timor soldiers and civilians. East Timor did not gain its independence from Indonesian rule until 2002. After the fall of the South Vietnamese government in 1975, U.S. support for the Indonesian dictator Suharto was motivated by the need for anti-communist allies in SE Asia and to open Indonesia to foreign investment.



President Dwight Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles meeting at the White House – U.S. Government, public domain, U.S. National Archives, Wikimedia

“Encouraged by the success of the Iranian coup d’état which deposed Mosaddegh, John Foster Dulles and his brother Allen Dulles directed the CIA to mount a paramilitary invasion of Guatemala which overthrew democratically elected President Árbenz and installed a military government. The new dictator, Carlos Castillo Armas, resurrected the same repressive violence against the peasantry that they’d endured during their history of dictatorships. Through the grace of the United States power, Guatemala returned to the colonial policies of the 19th century. The United Fruit Company won and the peasants lost.”

“The ownership of land in Guatemala,” I said, “was similar to Cuba before Castro’s revolution.” “It was exactly the same,” Tomás said, slapping his palm on the table. “But the image of the United States throughout the world, took a blow when the international press attacked the CIA’s coup d’état. While in the states, *TIME* magazine made John Foster Dulles Man of the Year, *Le Monde* and *The Times* in London called the American intervention, the new economic colonialism. United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld said the invasion was a violation of the human-rights rules of the UN Charter. Even the pro-U.S. press of West Germany condemned the Guatemalan coup d’etat. From a long-range point of view, Eisenhower’s backing of the

invasion was a stupid thing to do for the coup was a public relations disaster for America. It created great bitterness towards the United States and became a symbol of resistance throughout Latin America. I believe the overthrow of democratic governments, whether by the Americans or Soviets, will come back to haunt the big powers. For the overthrow of the governments of Guatemala and Iran, I'm sure that one day the United States will pay a bitter price."



U.S. President John F. Kennedy, left, U.S. Army commander Charles Murray, center, and Brazilian President Joao Goulart, right, review Brazilian troops, 3 April 1962 – Author, U.S. Army, public domain, Wikimedia

The involvement of the U.S. government in April 1964 was critical to the success of the Brazilian military coup d'état against the administration of President João Goulart. After Goulart won the presidential referendum in 1963, he sought to establish land reform and to nationalize large companies in certain sectors. After Castro's communist revolution succeeded in 1959, the Bay of Pigs invasion failed to overthrow Castro, and Soviet Russia based missiles in Cuba, the Kennedy administration attempted to persuade Goulart to remove leftists in his government and modify his reforms. When Goulart refused to endorse the U.S. anti-Castro policies in the Organization of American States' meeting in Punta del Este, Uruguay in 1962, Kennedy's administration increasingly turned against the Goulart administration. A key turning point was when Attorney General Robert Kennedy's met with Goulart in December 1962 and failed to pull Goulart toward the center or convince him to withdraw his nationalization reforms or remove anti-U.S. and leftist politicians from his cabinet. President Kennedy spoke of respecting Brazilian sovereignty publicly, but privately began to consider ways to remove the Goulart presidency.



Brazilian military leader Castelo Branco, at left with U.S. Ambassador Lincoln Gordon, at center, 1965 – Unknown author, public domain, Brazilian National Archives, Wikimedia

The U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Lincoln Gordon advised Kennedy to “strengthen the spine of the military.’ Ambassador Gordon said that the U.S. should discreetly advise the Brazilian military that in certain circumstances, the U.S. was not opposed to the removal of the Goulart administration. After John F. Kennedy was assassinated, November 22, 1963, President Johnson inherited the contingency plans of the Kennedy administration. American internal politics influenced Johnson’s support of the Brazilian coup d’état. After Panamanians protested the U.S. military base in the Canal Zone, the Republican opposition criticized Johnson for being weak in his response. When presidential candidate Barry Goldwater charged that Johnson was not a strong enough “Cold Warrior,” Johnson was convinced that to win the election, he had to be tough on Goulart’s leftist reforms. Kennedy had chosen Johnson as his running mate in the 1960 presidential campaign due to the movement to the right in the 1950s and early 1960s as Roosevelt’s New Deal progressivism was replaced by growing militarism, anti-Communism, and the entrenched power of Southern senators who headed many of the Senate committees that formed a “Southern Cage” around U.S. policy. The loss of Cuba and the Bay of Pigs failure reinforced the desire to stop all leftist and communist movements in Latin America. Fearing that an unsuccessful coup attempt would ensure Barry Goldwater’s election, the die was cast. Ambassador Gordon coordinated the coup from his office in Brasília, sending cables to Washington, saying that Brazil was becoming “The China of the 1960s,” urging the U.S. to support Army Chief of Staff Humberto Castelo Branco in overthrowing President Goulart.



RF 8A and F-8C Crusaders overfly USS *Forrestal*, in 1964, the largest aircraft carrier ever built, and the first designed for jet planes. Author, U.S. Navy, public domain, Wikimedia

In April, 1964, the aircraft carrier USS *Forrestal* arrived off Santos, Brazil, accompanied by two guided missile destroyers, four destroyers, two destroyer escorts, and fueling tankers. Assured of American support, the Brazilian 2nd Army marched toward Vale do Paraiba, between Sao Paul and Rio de Janeiro and the 1st Army, previously loyal to Goulart, surrendered. Realizing that he lacked political support in the capitol city of Brasilia, Goulart gathered his wife and children and fled to exile in Uruguay. Washington immediately recognized the new Brazilian military dictatorship, hailing the coup as a great democratic force that had saved Brazil from international communism. By coincidence, 26 March 1964, five days before the 1 April coup in Brazil, the Civil Rights Act was voted on in the U.S. Senate. In the same week that African Americans were having their citizenship rights established by the American government, the Brazilian were losing theirs.

The Brazilian military government, known as the Fifth Brazilian Republic ruled Brazil from 1 April 1964 to 15 March 1985. Supported by the Catholic Church, anti-communists in the Brazilian middle and upper classes, and supported strongly by the United States Embassy in Brasilia, the dictatorship lasted for twenty years.



João Goulart, President of Brazil, 1961. Deposed by the military dictatorship of 1964 – Source, Galeria de Presidentes, public domain, Wikimedia



Marshal Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, President and military dictator of Brazil, 1964 – 1967 – Source, Galeria de Presidentes, public domain, Wikimedia

After the overthrow of João Goulart, the military junta led by Marshal Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco adopted a constitution that suppressed freedom of speech and political opposition and formed a repressive regime that championed nationalism, rapid economic growth, and hard line anti-communism. Within a few years of U.S. financial concessions for the military regime, half of the 30 largest privately owned companies were foreign-owned. At the culmination of its popularity in the 1970s, it censored all media, tortured, exiled, and killed dissidents. The Brazilian military dictatorship became a model for other military regimes throughout Latin America, promulgating the “Doctrine of National Security” that condoned the military seizing power in a time of crisis in the interest of national security. It was only in 2014, thirty years after the military regime under General João Figueiredo collapsed in 1979 under a crumbling economy, chronic inflation, and massive anti-government demonstrations that the Brazilian military officially recognized the human rights violations – the torture and killing of political dissidents during the twenty years of dictatorship. In 2018, the U.S. government issued a memorandum, dated April 1974, by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, verifying that the Brazilian military leadership was fully aware of the killing of dissidents. While 8,000 died during the genocide against indigenous people and tens of thousands were tortured, human rights activist believed it is much higher. The Brazilian coup was the beginning of a surge of similar U.S. efforts to counter leftist reforms throughout Latin America. In 1976, the Argentine and Brazilian dictatorship signed an agreement to hunt down and eliminate dissidents who attempted to flee from one country to another to escape persecution.



Students march against the Brazilian military dictatorship, 9 September, 1966 – Source, Brazilian National Archives, public domain, Wikimedia



Brazilian M41 Walker Bulldog tanks occupy Presidente Vargas Avenue, Rio de Janeiro, during a time of popular resistance to the repressive military dictatorship, April 1968 – Author, *Correio da Manhã*, public domain, Wikimedia



Commandos de Chasse, 4th Zouave regiment in the French-Algerian War, 1960-1962 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia

French General Paul Aussaresses who developed counter-revolutionary torture techniques during the Battle of Algiers in 1954 – 1957 was appointed military attaché with the French diplomatic mission to the U.S. Interviewed in *Le Monde*, forty years later, Aussaresses said, “Concerning the use of torture, it was tolerated if not recommended. François Mitterrand, the Minister for Justice had, indeed, an emissary with Massu in Judge Jean Bérard who covered for us and who had complete knowledge of what went on in the night.” In 2001, Aussaresses declared, “My role in Algeria was a struggle against unbridled terrorism — blind attacks against the innocent. . . I am a patriot. I take full responsibility for my actions. I do not seek to justify my actions but simply try to explain that from the moment when a nation demands of its army to fight an enemy that terrorizes the population and forces it into submission, it is impossible for the army not to resort to extreme means. . . In the interest of my country I had clandestinely carried out operations unacceptable to the ordinary moral standards, had often circumvented the law: stolen, assassinated, vandalized, and terrorized. I had learned how to pick locks, kill without leaving traces, lie, be indifferent to my suffering and to that of others, had forgotten and made others forget. All for France.” – Martin Brass, “Torture to Prevent Terrorism? Interview with a French Master Torturer”, November 2001,



General Jorge Rafael Videl taking the oath of office as President of Argentina, 29 March 1976 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia

Aided by ten French-Algerian War veterans at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Aussaresses instructed the U.S. 10th Special Forces Group in counter-insurgency tactics, interrogation, and torture that during the Vietnam War led to the CIA's Phoenix Program that destroyed the Viet Cong via infiltration, interrogation, torture, and assassination. Moving to Brazil in 1973, Aussaresses instructed the Chilean officers being trained in Brazil and military officers of other South American juntas in the techniques of counter-insurrection warfare and torture, including the death flights carried out by the Argentine military dictatorship – techniques that were carried out throughout the 1970s by the military regimes in Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, and Argentina. The concentrated suppression of dissidents by South American dictators under Operation Condor continued with American support throughout the 1970s and 1980s in an effort to eliminate socialists and communists. Although guerilla operations were never strong enough to control territory or threaten national security, hundreds of thousands were imprisoned, including trade union officials, peasant leaders, social workers, university students, teachers, intellectuals, suspected guerillas, priests and nuns. Babies and children of imprisoned dissidents were taken from their mothers and given up for adoption to families faithful to the regime. An estimated 60,000 were killed clandestinely, 30,000 in Argentina alone. 30,000 simply disappeared in Argentina, the "Los Desaparecidos". Like the Nazi Gestapo strategy of "Night and Fog", people disappeared in the middle of the night, carried away to hundreds of secret concentration camps to be tortured and killed. Under the Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations, the Central Intelligence Agency supplied military and technical aid to the military juntas who abducted, tortured, and killed with impunity in Operation Condor. – Wikipedia, onlinelibrary.wiley.com.



Military dictator of Brazil, President Emilio Garrastazu Medici with President Richard Nixon, 1971. President of Brazil, 1969 – 1974 – Author Byron E. Schumaker, U.S. National Archives, public domain, Wikimedia



Peruvian dictator Francisco Morales Bermúdez, coordinating member of Operation Condor – Author, FMG, Biblioteca Militar de Lima, public domain, Wikimedia



President Salvador Allende, 28th president of Chile from 3 November 1970 until his death in the military coup d'état of 11 September 1973. Allende was the first Marxist to be elected president in a Latin America democracy, January 1972 – Unknown author, Brazilian National Archives, public domain, Wikimedia. Trained as a doctor at the University of Chile, Allende became the Minister of Health in the Reformist Popular Front government and became president of the Chilean Senate in 1966 where he introduced legislation that established the Chilean National Health Service that guaranteed universal health care. The possibility that Allende could win the 1970 presidential election was considered a catastrophe by the Nixon administration. Determined to block the growth of communism during the Cold War, President Nixon informed the CIA that Allende must be stopped, authorizing \$10 million to prevent Allende from coming to power. Even during Allende's 1964 campaign for the presidency, the CIA had spent several million to finance Allende's opponent Eduardo Frei and frighten voters away from Allende's Popular Unity coalition, which led to the successful election of Frei. When the dreaded disaster struck and Salvador Allende won the 1970 presidential election, fearing that Allende would make it a socialist nation and the U.S. would lose all investments in Chile as they had in Cuba, President Richard Nixon cut off all aid to Chile, exerted economic pressure on Chile, backed Allende's conservative opponents in the Chilean Congress, and instructed the CIA to develop plans for a coup to bring down Allende.



Chuquibambilla, the largest open pit copper mine in the world, Chile – Author, Mannheim Reinhard Jahn, Wikimedia

Aware that he had only a six year term to successfully improve the life of Chile's poorest people, if he were to have a chance of being reelected, Allende believed he had to move quickly with a program of progressive social reforms, including laws protecting the safety of workers in the factories, maternity care, and free lunches for school children in the shanty towns of Chile. Allende's program, "The Chilean Path to Socialism" included nationalization of certain large industries, the Anaconda and Kennecott copper mining companies, International Telephone and Telegraph, and the expropriation of large estates, a redistribution of land that had begun under his predecessor, Eduardo Frei. A champion of the indigenous minority, he introduced scholarships to Mapuche children to help integrate them into the education system. To improve the living conditions for women, the Women's Secretariat was established in 1971 to improve public laundry facilities, public food programs, daycare centers, increase maternity leave to 12 weeks, and improve prenatal care. To conquer the housing shortage, the construction of 120,000 residences was undertaken, thousands of volunteers were sent to the countryside to teach writing and reading and provide medical treatment to the poor, doctors encouraged to begin their practices in rural and low-income urban areas, a minimum wage established for workers, the Santiago subway extended to serve working-class neighborhoods, and university education made nearly tuition-free that resulted in a doubling of university enrollments during his first years of office.

Allende's efforts to improve the welfare of the poor led to fierce opposition from landowners and business owners, the National Party and Christian Democrats, foreign multinational corporations, the Catholic Church that was disturbed by the secularization of education, and the most powerful of all, the economic opposition of the United States, which cut off all financial credits once Chile nationalized the U.S. dominated copper industry. The increasing racial tensions between the descendants of indigenous people and the white elites who opposed Allende's reforms, headed toward a national crisis when food production declined due to the agrarian reforms and export income crashed with the international price of copper falling by a third, and nationalized copper production falling from a peak of \$66 per ton in 1970 to \$48 per ton by 1972, leading to an inflation rate of 150%. The Christian Democrats united with the National Party in the Chamber of Deputies voted in favor of a resolution to put an immediate end to Allende's breaches of the Constitution, accusing Allende of establishing a Cuban-style dictatorship. Both Allende and his congressional opponents accused each other of corrupting the Chilean Constitution, a division that became insurmountable.



Bombing of La Moneda, Chilean Presidential Palace, Coup d'etat of 11 September 1973 – Author, biblioteca del Congreso Nacional de Chile, Wikimedia

In the face of the political standoff between president and congress, Allende proposed a plebiscite in early September 1973 to resolve the constitutional crisis, but it was not to be for the Chilean military under General Augusto Pinochet, clandestinely aided by the CIA, staged a coup against Allende. As the tanks surrounded La Moneda, the Presidential Palace, Allende gave his farewell speech to Chileans on radio with gunfire and explosions echoing through the palace – “Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment when treason seeks to prevail. Keep in mind that much sooner than later, the great avenues will again be opened through which will pass free men to construct a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!” After the military had seized the presidential palace, the coup leaders announced that Allende had committed suicide, blowing his head off his head with an AK-47.

According to the Church Committee Report of 1975, chaired by Idaho Senator Frank Church that investigated illegal activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Internal Revenue Service, determined that on 15 September 1970, President Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger directed CIA Director Richard Helms to prevent Salvador Allende from taking power. Without informing the Departments of State and Defense or the U.S. ambassador to Chile, Nixon authorized \$10 million to plant propaganda in leading Chilean newspapers and to pressure Chilean military officers to oppose Allende. In addition, the Church Committee published an interim report, “Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders,” an investigation of U.S. attempts to assassinate foreign leaders: Patrice Lumumba of Zaire, Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam, Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, Gen. René Schneider of Chile, and Fidel Castro of Cuba. President Gerald Ford appealed to the Senate to not reveal the report to the public, but the Senate released the Church Committee Report, which ultimately led to the establishment of the U.S. Senate Committee on Intelligence.



National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger shaking hands with Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, 1976 – Unknown author, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, Wikimedia

An admirer of Louis XIV and Napoleon, Pinochet was one of the founders of Operation Condor in November 1975. Peter Kombluh in the *Pinochet File* writes that routine sadism was taken to extremes, the rape of women prisoners, bizarre torture, the insertion of rats into genitals and unnatural acts with dogs, prisoners soaked in vats of excrement and urine, beatings with guns and chains, prisoners laid in the parking lots with their legs run over by trucks, crushing their bones. Executed prisoners were buried in secret graves, dumped in the streets at night, or live prisoners given helicopter rides, dropped into rivers and the ocean.

A classic dictator, Pinochet enriched himself, taking bribes from foreign armament companies, stashing money under pseudonyms in multiple foreign banks. Many years later, a U.S. Senate investigative committee uncovered a network of securities and bank accounts at U.S. financial institutes used by Pinochet and associates to move millions of dollars out of Chile. After the Chilean coup, the CIA was vital to Pinochet's consolidation of power, formulating allegations of conspiracy against the Allende administration, recognizing Pinochet for preventing the conspiracy by crushing the socialist government of Allende. Clandestinely, the CIA continued to support Pinochet's regime by putting many of his henchmen on salary even when they were known to have committed savage human rights abuses, and providing aid to the secret police of Chile, the Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional, Pinochet's Gestapo directed by Colonel Manuel Contreras and Raúl Iturriaga, which under the multinational leadership of Operation Condor, not only executed tens of thousands of opponents of Pinochet, but assassinated leading opposition politicians in other South American nations, including Orlando Letelier who was assassinated in Washington, D.C. by a car bomb in 1976.



Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, 1974 – Author, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Chile, Wikimedia



U.S. President George H. W. Bush meeting former Chilean President Pinochet, 1990 – Author, Library of the National Congress of Chile, Wikimedia



Orlando Letelier in 1976 – Unknown author, Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos, Santiago, Chile, Wikimedia

Experienced in international banking, Orlando Letelier was Allende's ambassador to the United States in 1971, subsequently serving as the Chilean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense Minister. One of the first Chilean leaders to be arrested after the overthrow and death of Salvador Allende, Letelier was tortured by Manuel Contreras' DINA operatives in the Dawson Island prison in the Strait of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego. In 1974, Diego Arria, Governor of the Federal District of Venezuela, went to Chile to negotiate with Pinochet for the release of his friend Orlando Letelier. Upon being released to Venezuela, Letelier was informed that "the arm of DINA is long; General Pinochet will not and does not tolerate activities against his government." After his release, Letelier moved to Washington, D.C., becoming a senior fellow of the Institute for Policy Studies where he became the leading voice of the Chilean resistance, appealing to the U.S. Congress and European governments to oppose the Pinochet regime by preventing international loans being granted to the Chilean government. In September, 1976, while Orlando Letelier was driving to work in Washington, D.C. with Ronni Moffit, a fellow worker at the Institute for Policy Studies, a plastic bomb embedded on his car exploded as they rounded Sheridan Circle in Embassy Row, blowing Letelier's lower torso away and severing Ronni Moffit's carotid artery causing her to drown in her own blood shortly after Letelier's death. During the FBI investigation, Michael Townley, a DINA agent confessed to organizing the assassination by recruiting five anti-Castro Cuban exiles to mount the plastic bomb on Letelier's car. A CIA document dated April 28, 1978 and declassified in 2015 concluded that President Augusto Pinochet ordered the assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier – one of numerous murders carried out by Operation Condor, the coordinated program of repression by South American military dictators during the 1970s and 1980s and supported by covert American policy.



Victor Jara performing at a Vietnam War protest, Helsinki, Finland, 1969 – Hannu Lindroos-Lehtikuva, public domain, Wikimedia. Theater director, poet, singer-songwriter, and political activist, Victor Jara, began in the 1950s acting and directing theatre, plays like Sophocles' *Antigone* and Maxim Gorky's *The Lower Depths*. Influenced by singer Violeta Parra, Jara began singing with neo-folkloric musicians who established the *Nueva Cancion Chilena* movement, creating a wave of popular music during a cultural renaissance that swept over Chile during the Allende administration. Jara supported Allende's presidential campaign by playing free concerts and composing "Venceremos", "We Will Triumph", the theme song of Allende's Popular Unity movement. After General Pinochet's 11 September 1973 coup against the democratically elected Chilean government, the following day, Pinochet's soldiers arrested thousands of Chileans associated with Allende's Popular Unity party, including Jara, imprisoning them inside the Chile Stadium. Recognized by the police for his commanding support for Allende, Jara was tortured, his hands and fingers crushed, then taunted to play the guitar. It is said that with crushed fingers Jara sang "Venceremos," whereupon he was killed with a gunshot to the head and machine-gunned, his body perforated with scores of bullets. After his mutilated body was displayed outside the stadium for the terrified public to witness, Jara was thrown out into the street of a shanty town.

In 2018, eight former Chilean military officers were convicted and sentenced for Jara's murder. Musicians around the world have celebrated the work of Jara. Phil Ochs who had performed with Jara in a South American tour organized a 1974 concert, "An Evening with Salvador Allende," featuring Bob Dylan, Arlo Guthrie, and Pete Seeger. Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band performed Jara's song "Manifiesto". U2 performed concerts at the Chile Stadium, an homage to Jara and the thousands of victims who were murdered during the Pinochet dictatorship.



Archbishop of San Salvador Óscar Romero at the Vatican, 1942 - Author, Arzobispado de San Salvador. Source, santuariodelasmecedes.org, public domain, Wikimedia. The assassination in 1977 of Rutilio Grande, a personal friend of Romero, a Jesuit priest who had been working with the poor, had a profound effect on Romero, arousing him to speak out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations, and torture. In 1979, the military led Revolutionary Government Junta overthrew President General Carlos Romero in a coup. Fearing that like Nicaragua and Cuba, El Salvador would fall under a communist led government, Jimmy Carter's administration supported the military junta, which under Ronald Reagan's administration increased to one billion dollars of aid to the junta. The coup unleashed a civil war between the military Junta and the left wing opposition, wherein government death squads trained by the U.S. conducted human rights violation, including terror and murder. The UN reported the murder of more than 75,000 between 1979 and 1992 – holding the FMLN guerillas responsible for 5% of the violence and 85% by the Salvadoran armed forces and death squads.

Romero wrote an open letter to President Jimmy Carter, February 1980, to protest the U.S. military aid to the junta, but President Carter's Secretary of State Cyrus Vance continued military support for the junta. Romero spoke out against the deaths of over fifty priests that had been threatened, attacked, or murdered. In a speech at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium in 1980, Romero said, "There have been threats, arrests, tortures, murders, numbering in the hundreds and thousands . . . part of the church has been attacked and persecuted that put itself on the side of the people and went to the people's defense. Here again we find the same key to understanding the persecution of the church: the poor." – Wikipedia.

Later that year, Romero delivered a sermon calling on Salvadoran soldiers to halt the execution of the government's repression. The next day at a mass at a Catholic center for terminal cancer patients, just at the moment when he had finished speaking at the altar, a gunman burst from an automobile and shot Romero in the heart. The government and the censored press suppressed all investigation, but four years later, U.S. Ambassador Robert White testified before Congress that there was evidence to convict Major Roberto d'Aubuisson, the leader of the death squad that had planned and ordered Romero's assassination. In 1993, 12,000 documents released by the U.S. Department of State, Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency confirmed that the administrations of President Ronald Reagan and President George H. W. Bush were aware of the assassinations carried out by Roberto d'Aubuisson, but continued to support the junta with military aid. On 24 March 2010, the 30th anniversary of Oscar Romero's death, the President of Salvador Mauricio Junes offered a formal apology for Romero's assassination, affirming that Romero's death had been carried out by agents of the government.

In 1997, Pope John Paul II conferred the title of Servant of God upon Romero, opening the case for beatification. Romero was declared a martyr by Pope Francis in 2015, leading to his canonization as a saint, 14 October, 2018. One of the statues in the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, depicts Romero, along with Martin Luther King, as one of the ten martyrs of the 20th century.



Photographs of victims during the regime of President Augusto Pinochet of Chile – Author, Carlos Teixidor Cadenas, Wikimedia

Tomás ordered a double espresso. I ordered another too and couldn't resist another 'heaven's little pig.' "My sister," I said, "was a master of global politics, but how do you know so much about world affairs?"

Tomás gave me a wry smile and said, "My cousin, Pablo has a degree in history from the University of Barcelona. A survivor of polio, Pablo is younger than me, but we always considered Pablo the brainy one in the family. A brilliant writer, he had a photographic mind and knew how to use it to organize facts. While living in exile in France for a number of years, he was on the faculty of the political science at the University of Lausanne specializing in the history of American foreign policy. Before he went back to Spain last year to work in the resistance, he left his unpublished papers with me for safe keeping. I've learned a great deal from Pablo. He believes that Franco will never fall from power unless the American government abandons the foreign policies of Eisenhower and Dulles."

"The Americans have a great spirit," Tomás said. "I especially admire their writers and musicians. But I've watched the rabid anti-communism of Senator McCarthy and the hysteria fanned by demagogues like the anti-Semitic Father Coughlin who railed against the 'Judeo-Bolshevik threat'"

“Who’s Father Coughlin?”

“Father Charles Coughlin was before your time. Originally a supporter of President Roosevelt before he turned against him, Father Coughlin, ‘The Radio Priest,’ was the biggest radio star during the depression with 30 million listeners, a demagogue with an electric style of speaking.”

“How did Father Coughlin become so popular?”

“Besides his radio addresses, he established the National Union for Social Justice and a magazine promoting his views. There were a lot of angry people out of work. In times like the Great Depression, nationalism and isolationism flourish. Coughlin was a brilliant propagandist who knew how to exploit people’s fear of the “other.”

“He was gifted in conjuring up conspiracy theories. It’s said that Coughlin received as many as 80,000 letters from listeners each week. He opposed war with Germany, asking why the country should go to war for 600,000 Jews who aren’t Americans but citizens of Germany. Coughlin claimed that democracy was doomed. The choice was either fascism or communism. ‘American is at the crossroads. I take the road to fascism.’”

“Father Coughlin was anti-Semitic?”

“Coughlin subscribed to the Jewish Bolshevism conspiracy theory. Jewish bankers were behind the Russian Revolution — a common anti-Semitic attack of the nationalists. His audience was enthralled at his assaults on internationalists, capitalists, and plutocrats. Because Jews didn’t oppose communism as they do Nazism, ‘the Jews were supporters of communism.’ After Hitler’s Kristallnacht attack on Jewish synagogues and business in 1938, Coughlin claimed that the persecution of Jews was a reaction due to the persecution of Christians during the Russian Revolution. He accused the Rothschilds and the Morgans of dominating American banks, the Federal Reserve, and the Central Banks of Europe. Congress, he charged, only passed legislation to increase the wealth and property rights of the rich and sneered at the poor. He called for social justice for the working man and a minimum annual living wage, a cry that resonated with a nation out of work. The solution,” Coughlin insisted, “was a strong man who fought for the common man.

“Coughlin believed that a dictator could save America?”



Father Coughlin's *Social Justice* on sale in New York City, 1939 – Author, Dorothea Lange, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia

“He said Machiavelli was right. The masses required a superior brain and strong hand to rule them. He supported many fascist policies of Benito Mussolini, Adolf Hitler, and Emperor Hirohito of Japan. ‘Capitalism and communism were the twin faces of Satan.’”

“He conveniently ignored,” I said, “that industrial capitalists dominated the economies of Italy, Germany, and Japan. They were in bed with the state.”

“Like most demagogues, Coughlin often advocated things that were contradictory. At the same time that he attacked socialism, he was preaching it, his soaring rhetoric and bombastic cadences searing the ears of people who couldn’t put bread on the table.”

“I’m wondering what happened to him when the war came?”

“Due to Coughlin’s incessant attacks, Roosevelt had government agencies enact new regulations that forced him off the air in some markets. Finally, he was emasculated when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor and war was declared in December 1941. Isolationism vanished, leaving Coughlin

looking like a sympathizer with the enemy. The Roman Catholic bishop who had supported Coughlin's radio tirades died and the new Bishop ordered Coughlin to halt his political activities and concentrate on his service as a parish priest."

"How did you become aware of an American radio demagogue?"

"When I was reading about the inflammatory tactics of Senator McCarthy in the American press, I discovered Father Coughlin who had supported the fascists during the Spanish Civil War. Coughlin thought all Spanish Republicans were communists.

"What do you think of the new American president?"

"John F. Kennedy," Tomás replied, "won the presidential election by a hair over Nixon but I don't know how hard he'll push for civil rights. I remember that in 1954, Kennedy supported the Communist Control Act which suspended citizenship rights of members of the Communist Party. Although liberals have traditionally defended civil rights, leaders like Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey have supported a law accusing the party of being an agent of a hostile foreign power which conspires to overthrow the government of the United States. If a civil rights law is passed, it will be through the efforts of Martin Luther King. Time will tell if a charismatic President Kennedy will make any difference in American policy. Pablo said in his last letter that when he heard Kennedy had refused to put combat troops into Vietnam and is creating a Peace Corps to aid underdeveloped nations, he hoped that a change in American policy could be possible on Franco's dictatorship in Spain. While Kennedy's heart might be in the right place, through bitter experience I've learned not to expect change for my country for Franco has been in power since 1936. That is twenty-six years."

"When Kennedy," I said, "met with Khrushchev in Vienna, he told him that if the Soviets cut off access to West Berlin it would be viewed as an act of war. There'll be a return of the Berlin airlift if Khrushchev tries to take Berlin and that could lead to a nuclear war."

"At first," Tomas said, "I'd hoped Kennedy would work toward a détente with Khrushchev, to begin reducing their arsenals of nuclear weapons. Instead Kennedy has adopted the same anti-Castro policy of Eisenhower and Nixon. In 1960 Eisenhower set in motion a \$13 million CIA plan to reverse Castro's revolution against dictator Fulgencio Batista. Until Castro took control in 1959, the U.S. was so powerful in Cuba that the American ambassador was nearly as important as the Cuban president.



John F. Kennedy greets Peace Corps volunteers, 28 August 1961 – Author, Abbie Rowe, public domain, U.S. National Archives, Wikimedia

“What were the conditions under Batista?”

“During the 1940’s, while receiving military and financial support from the U.S., Batista suspended the Cuban Constitution, revoked the right to strike, and supported the interests of the landowners of the large sugar plantations. At the same time that the middle class was rising in wealth, the average Cuban family had an income of only six dollars a week, unemployment was close to 20% and many homes didn’t have running water. Aligning himself with U.S. organized crime, Batista turned Havana in to the Las Vegas of the Caribbean.”

“How did organized crime get into Cuba?”

“When Batista was in New York during the 1940s, he struck up a relationship with mobsters Lucky Luciano and Meyer Lansky and when he gained total power, gave them controlling interest in Havana racetracks and casinos. Batista offered gambling licenses to anyone who would make large investments in nightclubs and hotels in exchange for a percentage of the profits, waiving background checks to venture capitalists, which allowed the Mafioso access to owning the clubs.



Meyer Lansky with Charles "Lucky" Luciano" developed the U.S. National Crime Syndicate – Author, Al Ravenna, *New York World-Telegram & Sun* Collection, Library of Congress, public domain, Wikimedia



Fulgencio Batista presidential portrait, 1940. Dictator of Cuba Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro in 1958 – Author, Cuban government, public domain, Wikimedia

“By the 1950s, Meyer Lansky and Fulgencio Batista were in effect, business partners with Batista collecting millions from Santo Trafficante’s casinos, Sans Souci cabaret, and the casinos of the Sevilla-Biltmore, Commodoro, Deauville, and Capri hotels.”

“How did you learn about the Mafia?”

“When I heard first read about Fidel’s and Che’s revolution against Batista, I read everything I could find on the history of Cuba, from Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders in the Battle of San Juan Hill to how Americans took over Cuba after defeating Spain in the Spanish-American War. Within a short time, U.S. investments transformed the Cuban economy, the Cuba Company building hundreds of miles of railroad and becoming the largest foreign investment in Cuba. Just a few years after the war, nearly half of the country’s sugar production was controlled by the U.S., 10% of the land, and the great majority of Cuba’s mineral exports, sugar, and cigar factories belonged to Americans.”



Cuban dictator General Fulgencio Batista with U.S. Army Chief of Staff Malin Craig, Washington D.C., 1938 – Author, Harris & Ewing, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia

“The dictators were easy game for the capitalists.”

“That’s how they made their money. The income from the Lansky casinos, the Habana Riviera, the Hotel Nacional, and the swank Montmartre Club was pouring into Batista’s secret Swiss bank accounts. The Mafia opened hundreds of brothels, prostitutes walked the streets, police collected protection money, and rampant drug trafficking made cocaine as easy to procure as Cuban rum. In *The Nation*, playwright Arthur Miller described Cuba as hopeless corrupt, a province of the Mafia — a bordello for Americans and Europeans.”

“I imagine the American-Cuban relationship was similar to that of all Latin America.”



The Kennedy family in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, with JFK at top left in a white shirt, 1931 – Author, Richard Sears, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston, public domain, Wikimedia

“That’s why I liked John F. Kennedy when he first announced his candidacy. As a senator running for president in 1960, Kennedy exposed Fulgencio Batista’s regime as a police state that was destroying individual liberty, stealing millions of dollars from the people, and murdering 20,000 Cubans. Batista was destroying the freedom of Cubans at the same time that Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon were supplying the dictator with masses of weapons and allowing U.S. based multinational companies to own most of the island’s economy. U.S. investors maintained control of the great majority of public utilities, mineral wealth, railways, and sugar production.”

“It was,” I said, “an unbearable situation.”

“While Batista controlled the media, his secret police were carrying out mass torture and public executions of thousands. JFK said that of all the countries under colonial domination, none were worse than in Cuba, largely due to U.S. policies. Although Kennedy reversed course once it became clear that Castro intended a Marxist revolution, something that was not clear in 1959. But Kennedy has to contend with America’s Cold War fear of communism. While he’s a pragmatic politician who balances his idealism with political realism, he realized in the beginning the compelling motivations for Castro’s revolution — corruption and rampant colonialism. Kennedy said, “Now we shall have to pay for those sins.”



John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon in the nation's first televised presidential debate, Washington, D.C., 7 October 1960 – Author United Press International, public domain, Wikimedia

“The American pain began,” I said, “when Castro began nationalizing American assets on the island.”

“It is the same story in all the Latin American revolutions. When Castro expropriated the refineries of Esso, Standard Oil, and Anglo-Dutch Shell, the Eisenhower administration canceled the importation of Cuban’s main export, sugar and Castro responded by nationalizing the American banks and assets on the island. The U.S. Secretary of State proclaimed Castro a Bolshevik who’s creating a dictatorship to suppress civil liberties and freedom of speech. Because President Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles believed that Castro is going to foment communist revolutions throughout the western hemisphere, they approved a CIA plan to overthrow Castro. I don’t know how he found out, but Pablo tells me that CIA Director Allen Dulles and Deputy Director Richard Bissel, supervisor of the U2 spy plane flights over Russia, planned Castro’s assassination by hiring the crime bosses of the Italian-American Mafia to do the killing, some of them on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list.”

“Why,” I asked, “wouldn’t the CIA do it themselves?”

“By having the Mafia kill Castro, the CIA wouldn’t be held responsible. The media would believe that the Mafia did it on their own. It would give the CIA, plausible deniability. That’s why assassination plots are called ‘Black Operations.’”



Future military dictator of Cuba Fulgencio Batista with Meyer Lansky, a Jewish Syndicate boss and gambling operations advisor for the Italian American Mafia, Havana, Cuba, 1946 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia

“But why would the Mafia want Castro dead?”

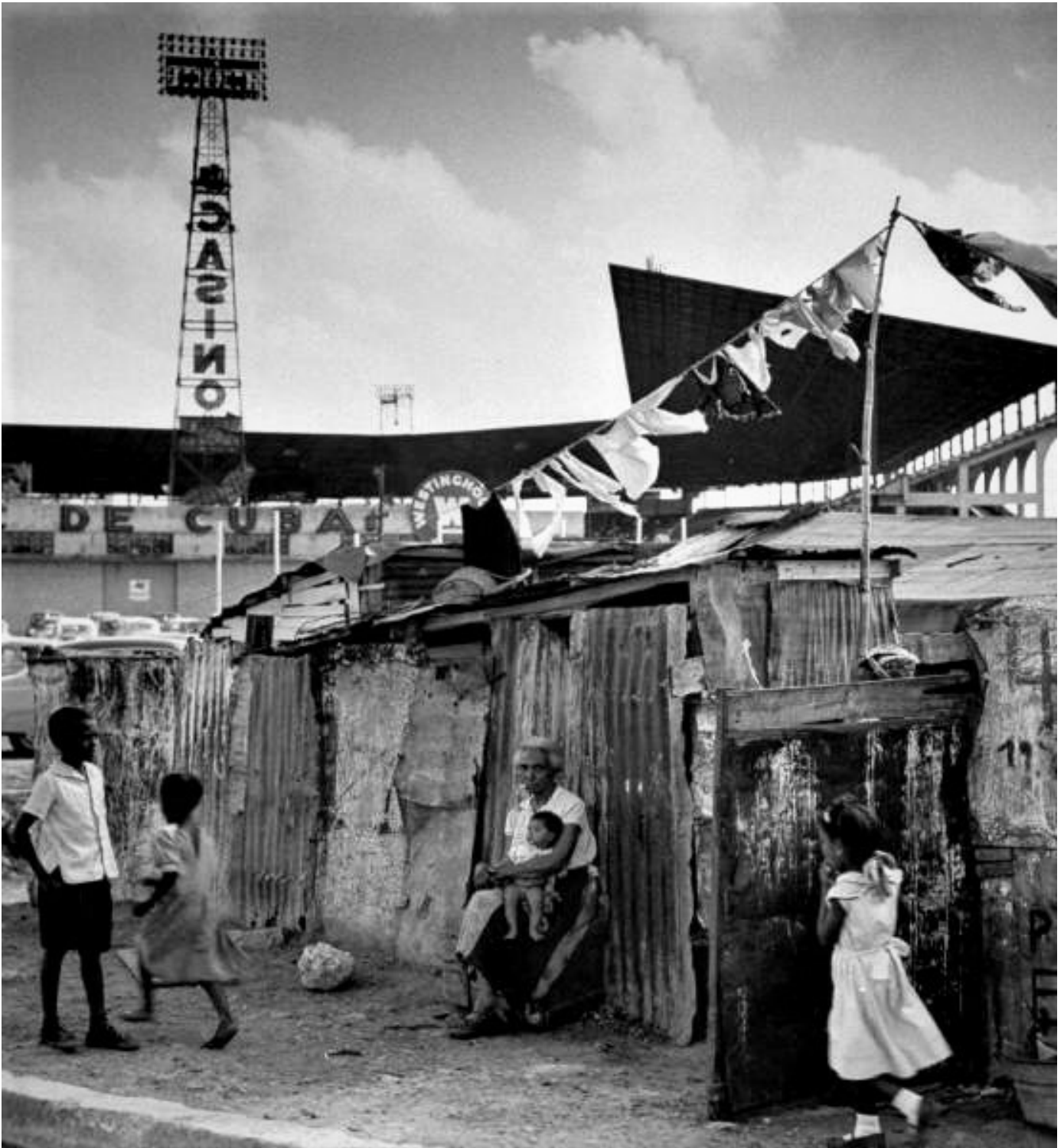
“They’re angry with Castro. He shut down all of the Mafia whore houses and casinos which brought them millions in profits. It also would give the Mafia protection from the FBI. There’s been dozens of attempts on Castro’s life. I don’t know if all of the stories are true, but there were many schemes — a former mistress was to put poison pills in his drinks, a servant stab him with a hypodermic needle disguised as a fountain pen, another to inject his cigars with a botulinum toxin.”

“And all of them failed.”

“All of them failed. Castro lives a charmed life.”

“Che Guevara is an Argentine. How did Fidel and Che meet?”

“In Mexico City. After spending several years vagabonding around South America, studying the circumstances of people’s lives, Che ended up living in Guatemala to learn more about the Guatemalan Spring and the agrarian reforms of President Jacobo Arbenz. When the CIA sent a gang of mercenaries to overthrow Arbenz in 1954, Che fled to Mexico City where he was introduced to Raúl and Fidel Castro. Deeply bitter with the U.S. for putting a fascist dictator in power, Che joined Castro’s Movement on the very first night.”



Bohio, slums in Havana Cuba outside the Havana baseball stadium, in the background, a tower sign for a gambling casino, 1954 – Unknown author, Museo de la Revolucion, La Habana, Cuba, Wikimedia



La Caballería, Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement cavalry, 1959 – Author Raúl Corrales Forno, Museo de la Revolución, Habana, Cuba, public domain,

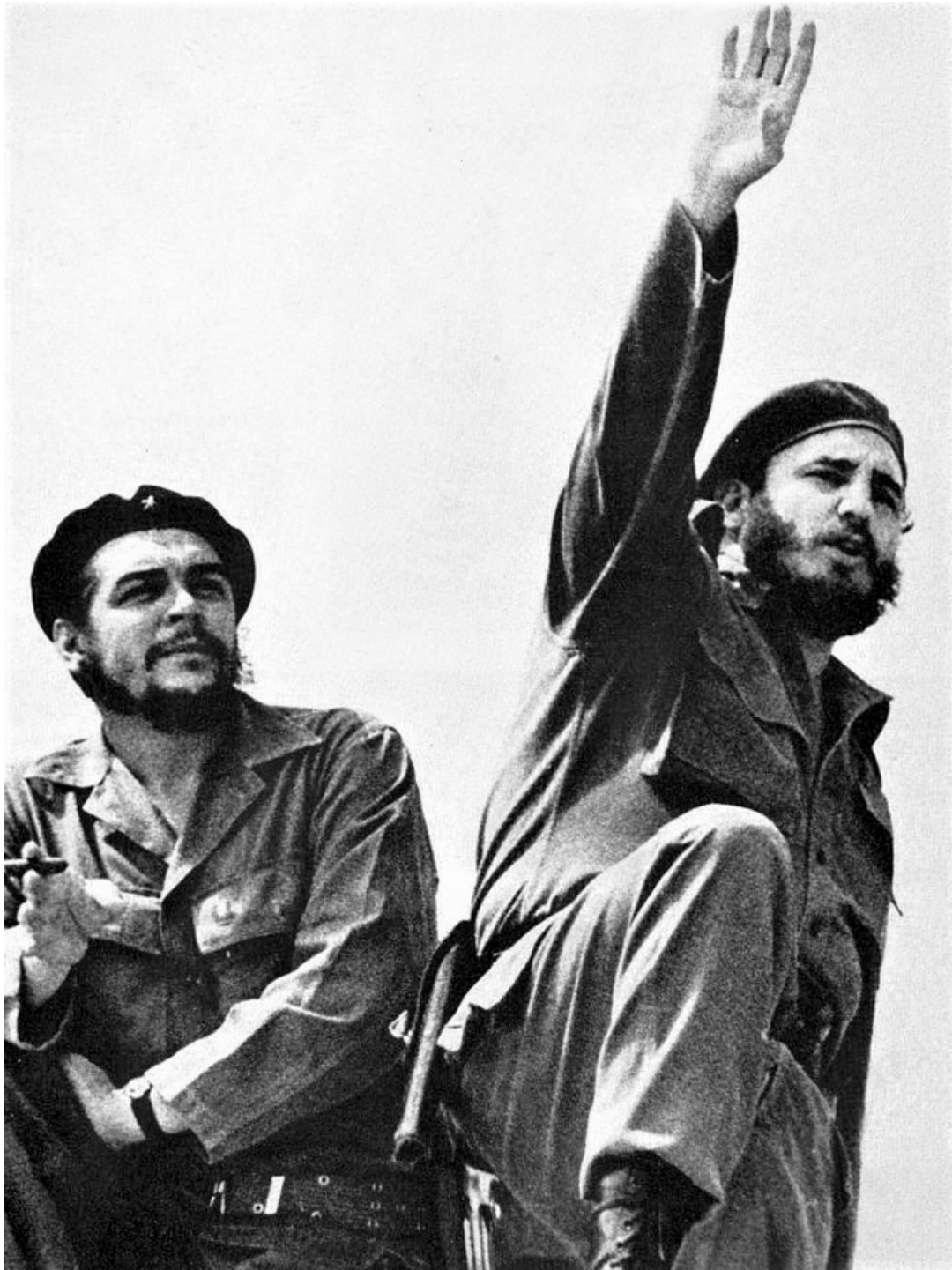
***A Revolution is not a bed of roses.
— Fidel Castro***



Fidel Castro, arriving in Washington, D.C. intending to talk with President Eisenhower, 16 February 1959 – Author, staff photographer, *U.S. News & World Report*, public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Wikimedia. After being sworn in as Prime Minister, Castro flew to Washington to improve relations with the U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower refused to meet with Castro, sending Vice President Richard Nixon instead, which did not go too well. America's strong rejection of Castro's revolution, the CIA's support of anti-Castro guerillas propelled the two countries into a downward spiral, retaliation after retaliation escalating the stark polarization.

Upon seizing power, Castro immediately introduced programs to improve the standard of living, emphasizing education and healthcare, establishing rural health centers and urban clinics for free medical aid, and providing universal vaccination of children. More classrooms were built than in the 30 previous years. Infrastructure was attacked, constructing hundreds of miles of new roads, water and sanitation projects, houses for the homeless, and day-care centers for children, making the Castro regime popular with the majority – the workers, peasants, and students, but making him the enemy of the middle class – doctors, engineers, architects, and business owners who fled to Florida, the mass exodus creating an economic and intelligence brain drain, damaging productivity and Cuba's financial reserves, driving the economy by 1962 into recession due to unprofessional economic management and a U.S. trade embargo that led to shortages and rationing of food.

The fear that the U.S. would overthrow him as it had President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, pushed Castro further into the Marxist-Leninist orbit as he called on Latin America to rise up in revolution, a provocation that led the U.S. to impel the Organization of American States to expel Cuba. In response to the American trade embargo, Cuba became increasingly totalitarian, the government arresting hundreds of counter-revolutionaries, controlling trade unions, suppressing civil liberties, free speech, and the press. As in the USSR, political opponents and 'social deviants,' prostitutes and homosexuals were persecuted, gay men forced into military units or imprisoned. Castro lost his focus on the rebuilding of Cuba by calling for global revolution, funding guerillas in national liberation struggles in Africa, Algeria, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, and Bolivia. In 1968, inspired by Mao's Great Leap Forward, Castro closed the bourgeois owned business and stores, denouncing them as capitalist counter-revolutionaries, thereby depriving the people of essential consumer goods and services, dictating by ideology rather than economic good sense, and fostering the rise of a new elite, bureaucrats who had access to a better standard of living, mirroring the rise of state apparatchiks in the Soviet Union, the embrace of totalitarianism vindicated by "the end justify the means," the modus operandi of both communism and capitalism.



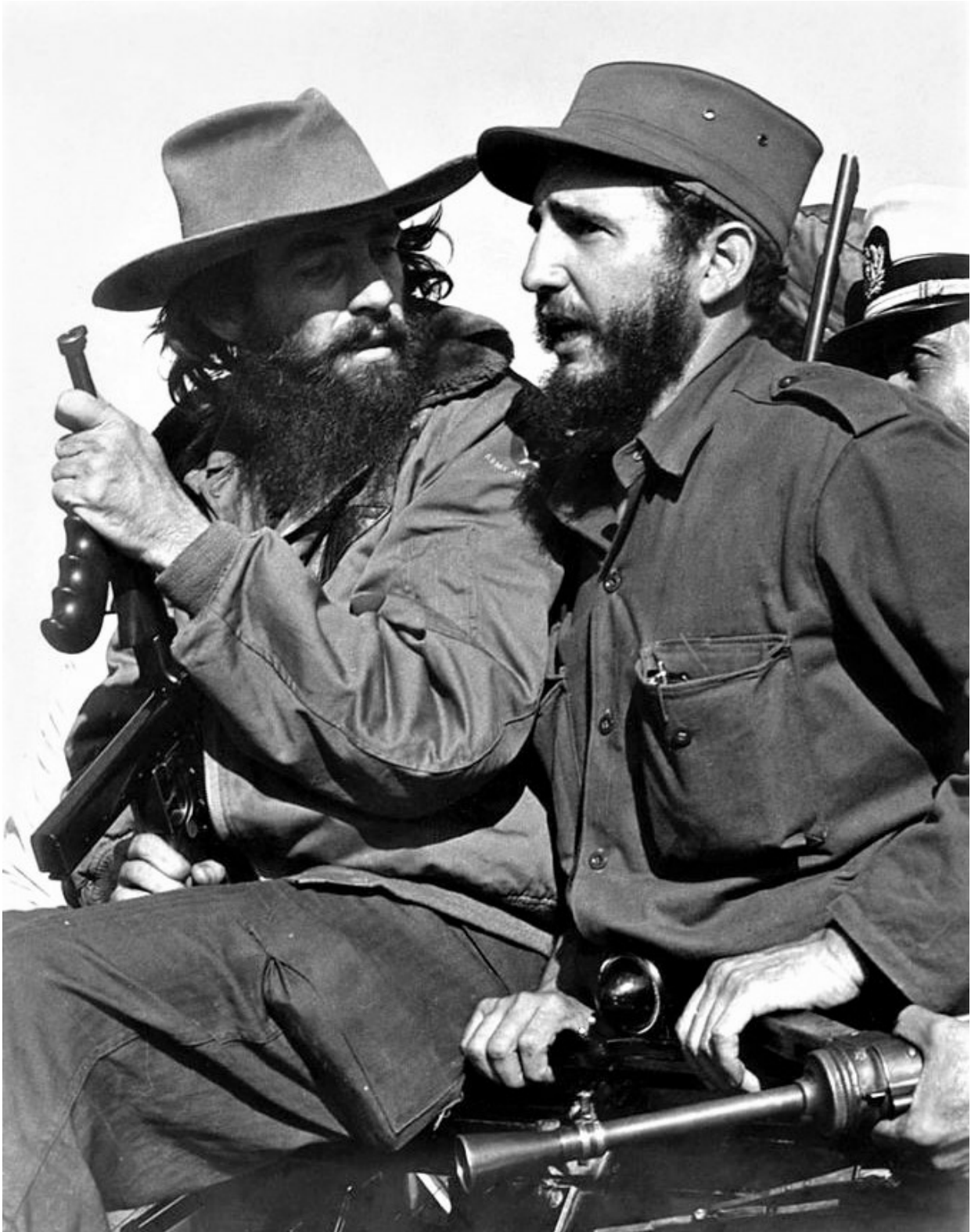
Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, 1961 – Author, Alberto Korda, Museo Che Guevara, Havana Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia. The son of a wealthy Spanish farmer, Castro studied law at the University of Havana where he came under the influence of Marxist-Leninist political philosophy and anti-imperialism ideology. With his brother Raúl Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Castro formed the 26th of July Movement, mounting a guerilla war against Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista, based in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. After the guerillas defeated Batista’s army, Castro pronounced himself prime minister and assumed absolute political and military power. When Cuba ordered the U.S. controlled oil refineries to process crude oil imported from the Soviet Union, the U.S. government pressured Esso, Standard Oil, and Anglo-Dutch Shell to refuse, triggering Castro’s expropriation of the refineries and nationalization under government control. Eisenhower’s administration stopped all importation of Cuban sugar, which threatened to demolish the Cuban economy, provoking Castro to nationalize U.S. banks, sugar mills, and large plantations, which in turn, triggered the CIA in the Eisenhower administration to conjure up plans to remove Castro from power.



Soldiers of Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista executing a rebel by firing squad, 1956 – Unknown author, public domain, Wikimedia



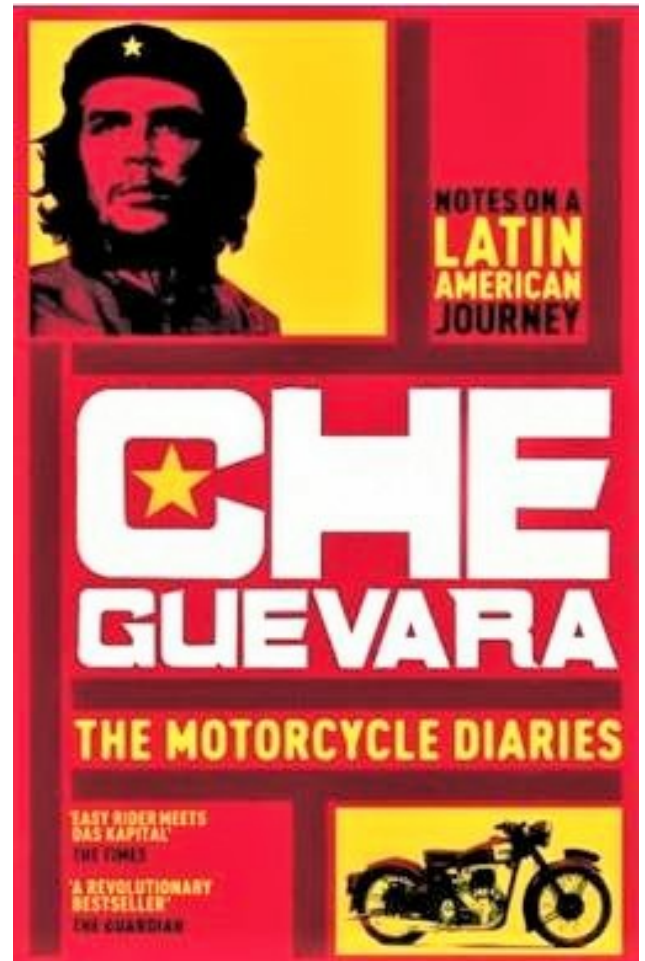
The Sierra Maestra mountain range where Castro's revolutionaries led guerilla attacks against General Fulgencio Batista's forces for two years – Author, Anagoria, Wikimedia



Fidel Castro and Cuban revolutionary Camilo Cienfuegos entering Havana, 8 January 1959 – Author, Luis Korda, public domain, Wikimedia. One of Castro's top guerilla commanders fervently venerated in Cuba, Cienfuegos was known as the "Hero of Yaguajay," for winning a key battle of the Cuban Revolution. After the U.S. conquered Cuba in the 1898 Spanish-American War, within ten years, more than half of rural properties and plantations were owned by non-Cuban Americans. To improve the condition of the rural poor, in May 1959, Castro signed into law the First Agrarian Reform placing a limit on landholding of 993 acres, and prohibiting foreigners from owning land in Cuba, dooming his relations with Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon.



Che Guevara at 22-years-old, beginning a 2,800 mile solo motorbike trip through rural Argentina, 1950 – Unknown author, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia



Cover of *The Motorcycle Diaries* – Author Ernesto Guevara, translators, Alexandra Keeble and Ann Wright, Harper Perennial edition, fair use, Wikimedia

Born 14 June 1928 in Rosario, Argentina, Che Guevara grew up in a home with thousands of books, his father often entertaining Republican veterans of the Spanish Civil War who had escaped from Spain to Argentina after Dictator Francisco Franco's forces won the Spanish Civil War. Even before he entered medical school at the University of Buenos Aires, Che was an avid reader of philosophy, mathematics, sociology, political science, and history, a tournament chess player, cyclist, rugby player, and admirer of the poetry of Pablo Neruda, John Keats, Walt Whitman, and Federico García Lorca. An inveterate reader, he devoured the works of Franz Kafka, André Gide, William Faulkner, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, and Jawaharlal Nehru. His desire to know more about the world inspired him to take off from school in 1950 on a 2,800 mile journey to explore the rural provinces of Argentina on a motorbike, and in the following year, took off again on a nine-month 5,000 mile exploration on a 500 cc Norton motorcycle traveling through most of the nations of South American, stopping in Peru to volunteer medical service at the San Pablo leper colony where he found passionate solidarity among the ostracized people. The grandeur of Machu Picchu ruins in the Andes contrasted with the demoralizing poverty of peasants working as sharecroppers for rich landlords, his journey notes informing *The Motorcycle Diaries*, which later became a *New York Times* best-seller. His journey through Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Venezuela, and Panama awakened Che to the raw reality of the United States' domination of the economies of South America and the resulting deprivation and suffering of the landless, poverty stricken people.

After receiving his medical degree in June, 1953 and galvanized by his travels among the destitute indigenous peoples of South America, Dr. Ernesto Guevara made the decision to dedicate his life to freeing the people from Yankee Imperialism. Setting out once more to travel through central and western South American, Che finally arrived in Guatemala where democratically elected President Jacobo Árbenz was ending the *latifundia* system of the Spanish Conquest that had granted to the European colonialists huge tracts of lands confiscated from the conquered indigenous people.

After having vast tracts of uncultivated land expropriated, the United Fruit Company, with financial ties to U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, Director of the CIA Allen Dulles, convinced President Eisenhower that Arbenz's reforms would inspire similar movements in Latin America and must be stopped. Believing that Arbenz was a communist, Eisenhower authorized a covert operation PBSUCCESS to train and fund an invasion force led by exiled Carlos Castillo Armas. Through a massive campaign of anti-Arbenz propaganda, bombing raids by unmarked aircraft, and the invasion of Guatemalan mercenaries, Arbenz was forced from power and a military junta declared. Che volunteered to fight for Arbenz, but the president was forced to take refuge in the Mexican embassy to avoid execution. Marked for murder, Che entered the Argentine consulate until he received safe-passage to Mexico City. After experiencing the brutal overthrow of the democratic agrarian reforms of the Guatemalan Spring, Che was convinced that the aggression of the United States could only be halted by an armed struggle against the imperialist giant. Arriving in Mexico City in 1955, Che Guevara was introduced to Raúl and Fidel and joined Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement to overthrow the American backed dictator Fulgencio Batista.



Che Guevara at age 22, 1951 – Author, Che's father, Ernesto Guevara Lynch, Che Guevara Museo, public domain, Wikimedia



Che Guevara, right, and Alberto Granado, left, on the Amazon River aboard the Mambo-Tango raft given by the lepers who they had medically treated, June 1952 – Unknown author, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia



Che Guevara, Las Villas province, Cuba, November 1958 – Author, Perfecto Romero, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia



Raul Castro, left, with second-in-command, Ernest "Che" Guevara, 1958 – Unknown author, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia



Memorial March for victims of the *La Coubre* explosion, Fidel Castro at far left, Che Guevara, 3rd from left, 5 March 1960 – Unknown author, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia. While tons of munitions were being unloaded, the French freighter *La Coubre* exploded in the harbor of Havana, killing 100. Castro accused the United States of sabotage, which the U.S. State Department denied responsibility.



Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre meeting with Che Guevara in Cuba, 1960 – Author, Alberto Korda, Museo Che Guevara, public domain, Wikimedia



Guevara in the mountains of Bolivia, shortly before his death, 1967 – Unknown author, Museo Che Guevara, Havana, Cuba, public domain, Wikimedia



The day after his execution, Guevara's corpse was displayed to the world press to prove that the Bolivian Army had killed the revolutionary, 10 October 1967 – Author, Freddy Alborta, iconic status, fair use, Wikimedia. After a company of Bolivian Special Forces were told by an informant of the location of Guevara's guerrilla camp, 1800 soldiers entered the Yuro ravine and took the wounded Guevara prisoner on 8 October 1967. The next day, Bolivian President Rene Barrientos ordered Guevara to be executed despite the CIA request to have him extradited for interrogation. Mario Terán, a young sergeant whose friend had been killed in the firefight volunteered to kill Guevara. Felix Rodrigues, a Cuban exile operating as a CIA agent, ordered Terán not to shoot Guevara in the head to avoid making it look like he was executed, but shoot him like he was killed in combat. With a M2 carbine, the Bolivian sergeant shot Guevara nine times in the arm, legs, chest, and throat.

Philip Agee, a CIA agent from 1957 to 1968 who after witnessing the brutal 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of hundreds of peaceful student demonstrators in Mexico City, resigned from the agency because his Roman Catholic social conscience had made him disillusioned with the CIA for its support for authoritarian governments in Latin America said, "Millions of people all over the world had been killed or at least had their lives destroyed by the CIA. . . I couldn't just sit by and do nothing." Agee thought that "There was no person more feared by the CIA than Che Guevara because he had the capacity and charisma necessary to direct the struggle against the political repression of the traditional hierarchies in power in Latin America." A man of many faces, medical doctor, economist, military theoretician, revolutionary, and deep thinker, Che Guevara symbolizes many things to many people — Robin Hood, Don Quixote, Bolshevik Devil, and Garibaldi, a Messiah-like character and martyr of Latin America who made war on the malignancies of inequality and poverty.

French intellectual Régis Debray who was captured in April 1967 while with Guevara in Bolivia said that despite the desperate situation in Bolivia, Guevara was resigned to die believing that his death would be a renaissance — a promise of rebirth. Photos of the dead Guevara swept around the globe, his legend blossoming in demonstrations from London to Berlin, Mexico to Santiago, Algiers to Angola, Cairo to Calcutta, Paris to Rome with American university students wearing Che Guevara T-shirts and carrying his image in protest marches, One million Cubans mourned him in Havana's Plaza de la Revolución and *Time* magazine named him one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century. Military historian Erik Durschmied observed that Guevara's promise of rebirth was achieved — "Che Guevara is not dead. He is very much alive."



Dwight Eisenhower and President John F. Kennedy at Camp David three days after the failed Bay of Pigs Invasion, 22 April, 1961 – Author – Robert L. Knudsen, public domain, U.S. National Archives, Wikimedia

“Listening to Kennedy’s rhetoric during the election,” Tomas said, “gave me hope that the United States could turn the corner on how it dealt with Latin America. I liked his inaugural address. Ask not what your country can do for you. . . ask what you can do for your country. But what if your country is oppressing other countries? In 1941, Kennedy toured Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, countries overwhelmed by poverty. Did he go into the countryside or into the slums of Bogata, Cali, and Lima? How could he miss seeing what Che Guevara saw when he toured South America on a motorcycle? Despite Kennedy’s gift for noble words and his military experience commanding torpedo boats, why wasn’t he able to recognize that the sloppily organized invasion of Cuba at Bahia de Cochinos would end in chaos — 1400 men poorly trained men against a well organized and equipped army of thousands?”

“It is strange,” I said, “With so many Cubans behind Castro’s overthrown of Batista, how could Kennedy believe the fantasy that during the Bay of Pigs invasion Cubans would rise up against Castro and Guevara? He must have been given false intelligence.”

“Manipulated intelligence,” Tomas exclaimed. “Allen Dulles and Deputy Director Richard Bissell fed Kennedy invented facts to convince him that the CIA plan could succeed in bringing Castro down.”



Bay of Pigs Invasion counter-attack by Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces supported by T-34 tanks near Playa Giron, 19 April 1961 - Author, Rumlin, Wikimedia

“What did the Pentagon think? Did the chiefs-of-staff approve such a dumb move? Someday the facts will come out. If weren’t for Kennedy’s popularity, he would be toast after a debacle like that.”

“I like,” I said, “what he’s done for the arts. Kennedy said, ‘If more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place in which to live.’”

“But the truth is,” Tomas said, “Americans don’t read poetry. The half-cocked attempt to send a small band of guerillas to overturn a revolution resulted in the worst American disaster of the year and pushed Cuba into the embrace of the Soviet Union. CIA Deputy Director Richard Bissell used the same undercover operatives that overthrew Guatemalan President Arbenz in 1954 and because of their earlier success against a practically non-existent military, Bissell fooled himself into believing the people of Cuba were going to rise up against Castro. But the people didn’t rise up. Castro and Che Guevara were heroes to the downtrodden Cuban people. Look at how they were received by the people when they entered Havana. Some journalists think that Dulles and Bissell calculated that if the invasion forces were repelled by Cuban troops, Kennedy would be under pressure to order a full-scale invasion to save the counter-revolutionaries.



Richard M. Bissell, Jr. Central Intelligence Agency Deputy Director for Plans – Author, National Reconnaissance Office, public domain, Wikimedia. Bissell directed the development of the U-2 spy plane which was responsible for collecting a majority of intelligence on the Soviet Union and the direction of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba under the John F. Kennedy Administration.

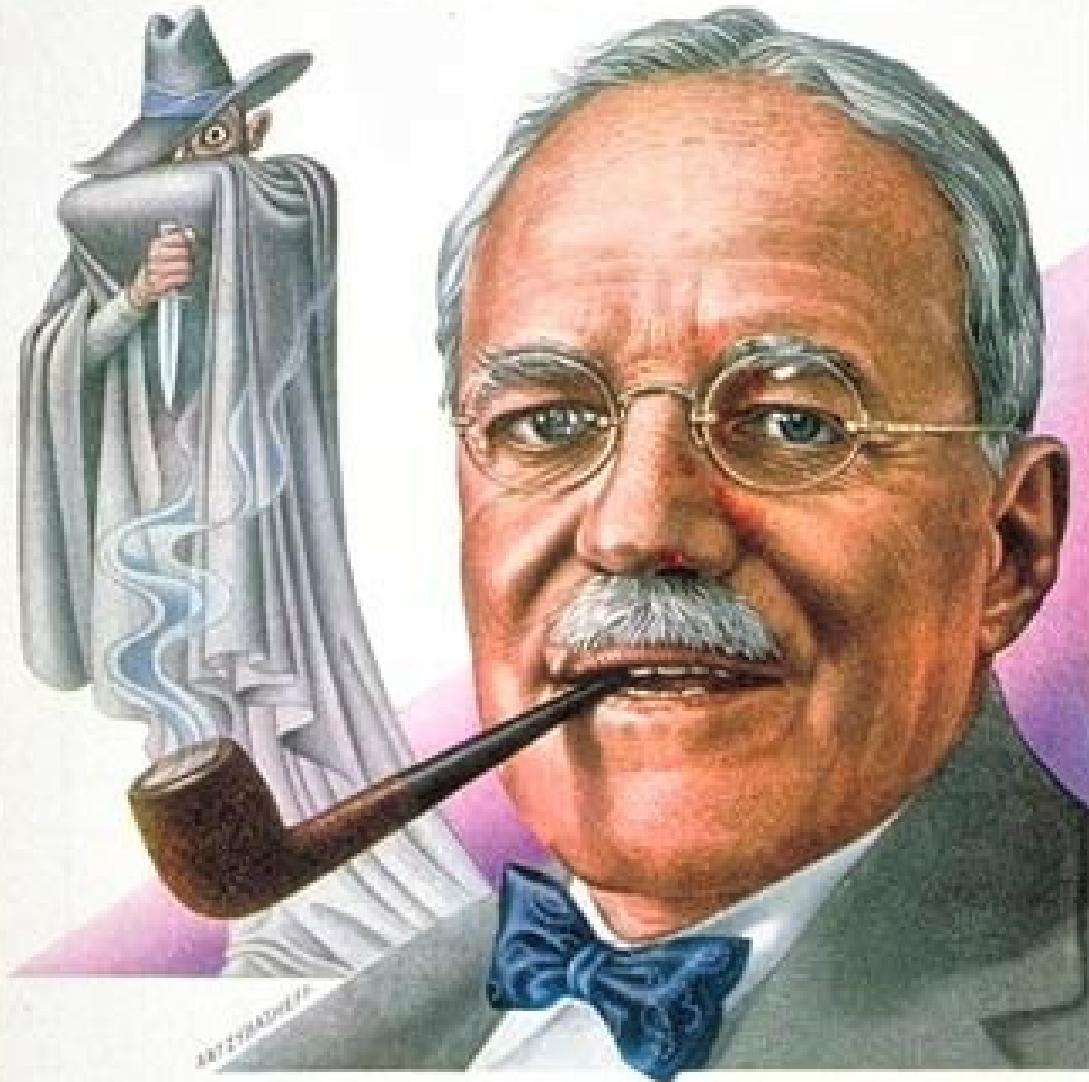
During the 1950s and 1960s, the Central Intelligence Agency prepared plans to overthrow the President of Guatemala Jacobo Arbenz, Prime Minister of the State of Vietnam Ngo Dinh Diem, and under Bissell's leadership in 1961, the overthrow of Fidel Castro. During the initial plan in 1960, Richard Bissell and Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, conferred with Mafia leaders Johnny Roselli and Sam Giancana, Santo Trafficante Jr. and Meyer Lansky, offering the Mafia gambling syndicate \$150,000 to kill Fidel Castro, relying on the Mafia to provide deniability for the U.S. government's involvement in the assassination. It was not the first CIA plot to assassinate a foreign head of state, as the *Guardian* newspaper had reported a CIA plot ordered by President Dwight Eisenhower to assassinate Patrice Lumumba, Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo.

Along with the assassination plots to eliminate Fidel Castro, Richard Bissell, drafted a secret policy in early 1960 entitled, "A Program of Covert Action Against the Castro Regime," code-named JMARC, designed to remove Castro in a way to avoid "any appearance of U.S. intervention." Bissell put together the same covert team that successfully had overthrown President Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala in 1954. Due to Castro's nationalization of U.S. oil refinery assets and land, before leaving office, Dwight Eisenhower allocated \$13 million to the CIA in March 1960 to depose Fidel Castro. Consequently, CIA Director Allen Dulles and Bissell presented the JMARC plan of the Eisenhower administration to President-elect John F. Kennedy on 18 November 1960. When Kennedy ordered the Joint Chiefs of Staff to evaluate the plan calling for 1,400 Cuban exile paramilitaries to invade Cuba, the Pentagon calculated only a 30% chance of success and recommended abandoning the plan. The CIA and Bissell didn't relent, convincing JFK's brother Robert Kennedy that even if it failed, the invasion force could join the guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains, motivating Robert to put pressure on the president's advisors Theodore Sorensen and Arthur Schlesinger who were urging JFK to abandon an impossible coup. The Cubans had been alerted by the KGB of a coming invasion while British intelligence informed the CIA that the Cuban people supported Castro and there was little indication of mass defections or insurrections – intelligence that the CIA ignored. Historians suspect that the CIA knew the undermanned project was doomed to fail, but was setting a trap for the president, calculating that when Kennedy was faced with the failed invasion, he would order a full-scale invasion of U.S. forces.

On the day of the invasion, 17 April 1961, off shore radio broadcasts called for the Cuban Army to revolt, but they remained loyal to Castro. The Cuban army was well armed with Soviet T-34 tanks, SU-100 tank destroyers, 122mm howitzers, Douglas B-26 Invader bombers, Hawker Sea Fury fighters, and Lockheed T-33 jets inherited from Batista's government. Within three days, most of the 1400 invading men were either captured or killed, forcing Bissell to tell Kennedy they were trapped on the beaches, asking the president to send in American forces to save the invasion. In an emergency meeting at the White House with President Kennedy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Chief of Naval Operations, Bissell argued that the operation could be saved if American air power was called in. The Chairman suggested that the Cuban invaders hook up with the anti-Castro guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains, but Bissell said it was impossible because their route was blocked by 20,000 Cuban troops. Meanwhile, the international community of nations had been informed of the invasion and Kennedy realized that his advisors Theodore Sorensen and Arthur Schlesinger were right. It was an international relations disaster with no other reasonable choice but to admit a big mistake and let it go.

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY'S ALLEN DULLES
In an ancient game, new techniques and a new team.

Central Intelligence Agency Director Allen Dulles on the cover of *Time* magazine, 3 August 1953 – Author Time magazine, public domain, Wikimedia

“Pablo says that Kennedy’s biggest problem, may not be Khrushchev, but the CIA.

“I see your point,” I said. “The CIA has a mind of its own. They’d had a free hand under Eisenhower, a World War II hero who’d approved the overthrow of foreign governments. Suddenly, they’d gotten a big shock in the election. John Kennedy defeated hardcore hawk Richard Nixon. Kennedy was a liberal politician who’d been only a PT boat commander. What did Kennedy know about covert action?”

“Pablo said that the European press reported that Kennedy agreed to green light the invasion only if the Cuban exiles clearly understood that he wouldn’t allow U.S. forces to come to their aid if their invasion failed. It was up to them to succeed. It must be Cubans opposing a military coup by Castro, not the U.S. When exiles agreed to the condition, Kennedy gave the final order for the attack. By letting the CIA backed Cuban exiles go forward, he could let the bellicose hawks feel taken seriously, while at the same time resist their desire for war.

“When the invasion floundered, Kennedy kept his word. He didn’t send in American forces as Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell had hoped. Within 72 hours after the landing in Bahia de Cochinos, the invading troops were surrounded and either killed, wounded or forced to surrender. I’ll give Kennedy credit though. He took full responsibility when he said, ‘There’s an old saying that victory has a hundred fathers and defeat is an orphan.’”

“Did he understand why it failed?”

“Kennedy was depressed and angered with the failure. He felt he’d allowed himself to be conned by the CIA. The agency had failed to understand the Cuban people’s enthusiasm for Fidel Castro. Or, were so determined to mount an invasion that they concealed the truth. Furthermore, the CIA had failed to grasp the strength of Cuban forces. They allowed their fear of communism to distort their intelligence. Concluding that the CIA had engaged in wishful thinking instead of diligence perception, Kennedy forced CIA Director Allen Dulles and Deputy Director Richard Bissell to resign.

“It looks like,” I said, “that everyone in the administration was so hysterical about Castro, they were in a panic to get rid of him. But no one could agree how to get rid of him.”

“McNamara favored sabotage and guerrilla warfare, or mount a fake act of sabotage at the Guantanamo Naval Base that could provide a justification for a U.S. intervention. Kennedy warned McNamara that idea could cause the Soviets to blockade West Berlin or strike the U.S. missile sites in Turkey and Italy. The president was also concerned that an invasion would be condemned from nations around the world.

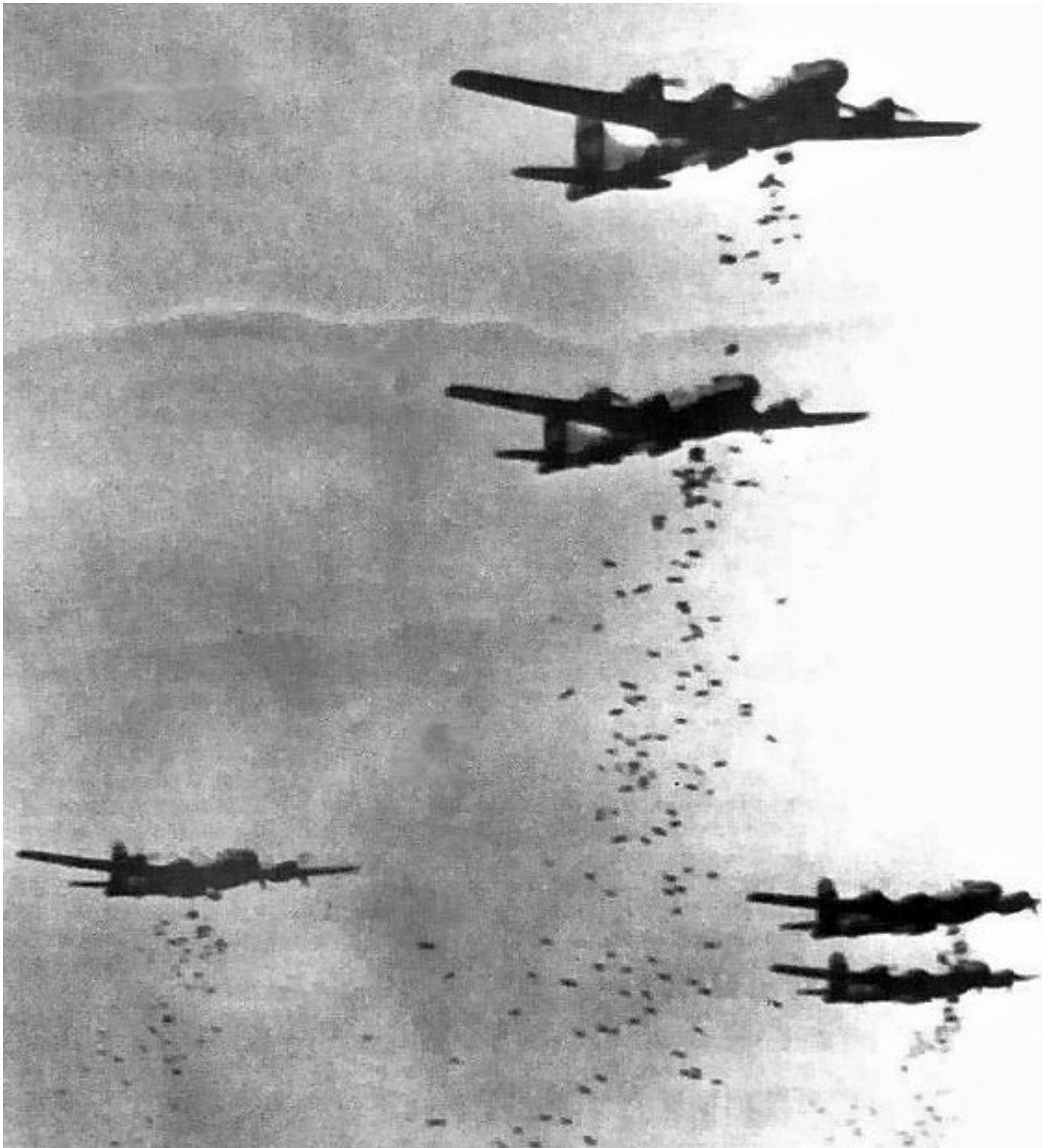
“Six months later, the U.S. discovered that the Cuban invasion had unintended consequences. A U-2 spy plane making a high-altitude sweep over Cuba photographed a Soviet SS-4 medium-range ballistic missile site being constructed. When Kennedy received confirmation of the Soviet missiles, he immediately set up the ‘Executive Committee,’ ExComm to plan a response to the threat.

“Pablo said his worst fear is that Kennedy won’t be able to dominate the military establishment and that weakness will lead to a nuclear war, a war that no one would win. While the ExComm debated what to do, bomb the missile sites, set up a naval quarantine, or invade the island, hawks in the military establishment were certain about what to do. During the 13 day stand-off, it was leaked that the Vice Chief of staff of the Air Force Curtis LeMay pressured Kennedy to bomb the Cuban missile sites.”



U.S. aerial reconnaissance photo of a ballistic missile launch site, San Cristobal, Cuba, 1 November, 1962 – Author, U.S. Department of Defense, public domain, Wikimedia

“That’s to be expected of LeMay,” I said, “He was the commander of the B-29 strategic bombing campaign in World War II that dropped incendiary bombs on the wooden houses of Tokyo, burning the city down and killing 100,000 Japanese.



B-29 heavy bombers dropping hundreds of incendiary bombs on Yokohama during a strategic bombing raid, 29 May, 1945 – Author, U.S. Government, public domain, Wikimedia

“Since it is the civilian’s government,” I said, “LeMay believes there are no innocent civilians. He once said, ‘You are fighting a people. It doesn’t bother me so much to be killing the so-called innocent bystanders.’ Killing the civilians didn’t bother LeMay — the civilians were the enemy as much as the combatants.”

“LeMay’s opinion,” Tomás said, “was supported by the commander of NATO, General Lauris Norstad and General Thomas Power, commander of the Strategic Air Command who had designed the SAC alert program that kept a number of nuclear-armed strategic bombers always in the air so as to survive a first strike. LeMay said even if the naval blockade worked and the Soviets removed their missiles, the U.S. should invade Cuba anyway.”

“How did Kennedy deal with the generals?”

“Kennedy’s gravest concern was the civilian control of the military, the same issue that President Truman confronted during the Korean War when General MacArthur wanted to hit 20 or 30 cities in China and Manchuria with nuclear warheads. Kennedy was shocked to be informed that commanders in the field had the option to launch nuclear weapons without direct permission from the commander in chief.”

“What!”

“It sounds hard to believe, but the National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy told Kennedy that a subordinate commander facing a major Russian military action could start a thermonuclear holocaust on his own initiative. Disturbed over how little control he had over the use of nuclear weapons, Kennedy is pushing the Pentagon to replace Eisenhower’s strategy of massive retaliation with a flexible response. But the military brass is resisting giving up control over making a first strike. The stalemate of the Korean War had instilled in them the desire to use atomic weapons to ensure victory as it had in World War II. Many of the generals think Kennedy is a weakling who doesn’t know how to stand up to Soviet Communism. That is the frightful situation. The invasion of Cuba has made Castro dependent on the Soviet Union for survival.” Tomás threw up his hands, “Kennedy has given an ultimatum to Khrushchev — ‘take the Soviet missiles out of Cuba or else.’ The idiocy of a poorly planned CIA coup could lead to a nuclear holocaust.”

“You’re overly pessimistic, Tomás,” I argued. “I think Kennedy and Khrushchev will come to a compromise. Don’t underrate the power of Bertrand Russell’s Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which has organized mass demonstrations to oppose the use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. When my sister and I joined the march in Paris, there were tens of thousands of us. You can’t ignore the fact that

opinions are shifting about nuclear weapons. Millions of people around the globe, including Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, have joined the Ban the Bomb movement. The campaign is making people aware of how foolishly fatal such a war would be.”



Bertrand Russell, center, and his wife Edith Russell leading an anti-nuclear march by the Committee of 100 in London, 18 February 1961 – Author, Tony French, Wikimedia

“I hope you’re right,” Tomás said. When you speak of how fatal war is, I think of Barbara Tuchman’s descriptions of the four years of slaughter during World War One in her magisterial *The Guns of August*. Have you read it?”

“Professor Loukas has spoken about it in class. I’m dying to read it.”

“*The Guns of August* could save us from nuclear devastation.”

“How is that?”

“It was reported in the underground press that as soon as Kennedy read *The Guns of August*, he directed the Secretary of the Army to send copies to every officer on every U.S. military base in the world. He’s told all of his cabinet officials and members of the National Security Council to read it. ‘The leaders of Europe bungled the tragedy of World War I,’ Kennedy said, ‘We are not going to bungle into war.’ Kennedy is a student of history, an intellectual in a country that is woefully unintellectual. But if the report is true, it gives me hope that you are right. While he will insist the missiles must go, I pray that Kennedy will have the wisdom to negotiate with Khrushchev and maintain peace. The world as we know it hangs in the balance.



The Cabinet Room, White House meeting of John F. Kennedy with the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, EXCOMM, regarding the missile crisis in Cuba – Author, U.S. Government, public domain. When Kennedy was informed of the missile site, he immediately set up an Executive Committee, ExComm of his top cabinet advisors to orchestrate the removal of the missiles in such a way as to avoid a nuclear war. The meeting included President John F. Kennedy, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell D. Taylor, Special Counsel to the President Theodore C. Sorensen, Special Assistant to the President for National Security McGeorge Bundy, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Director of the CIA John McCone, and other advisors. The nuclear-armed Cuban missiles were within easy striking distance of Washington and New York. If they were allowed to become operational, it would change the balance of power which heretofore had been dominated by the U.S. The options presented included a bombing attack on the missile sites and a full-scale invasion of Cuba.

Kennedy remembered the lesson of Barbara W. Tuchman’s *The Guns of August* on how Europe had blundered into World War I, and chose a more measured approach. The U.S. Navy would establish a quarantine of the island to prevent the delivery of additional missiles and deliver an ultimatum that the existing missiles be removed. In response to the U.S. demand for the Soviet Union to remove the missiles, two messages were received from Nikita Khrushchev saying that if the U.S. would guarantee to not invade Cuba and remove the U.S. missiles in Turkey, then the Soviet Union would take the missiles out. The second message in a radio broadcast stated if the U.S. attacked Cuba, the Soviet Union would retaliate in a massive military response, which meant nuclear weapons. Kennedy and McNamara saw it was clear that bombing Cuba would be a suicidal response that would destroy both nations and irradiate the planet. U.S. attorney General Robert Kennedy delivered a personal message to the Soviet ambassador agreeing to withdraw U.S. missiles from Turkey and tensions eased. Cautioned by the crisis, the following year, a direct hot-line communication link was installed between Washington and Moscow to defuse future confrontations and the two superpowers signed on 10 October, 1963 the Limited Test Ban Treaty, LTBT, which restricted nuclear testing. All nuclear testing would be allowed underground, but all testing in the atmosphere and underwater would be halted.



Barbara Wertheim Tuchman – Unknown author, Source, Daylife.com, fair use, Wikimedia



The Guns of August, first edition cover – Author, Barbara W. Tuchman, Current publisher, Random House LLC, available on Amazon, original cover, fair use, Wikimedia. On the bestseller list of the *New York Times* for 42 weeks, the Pulitzer Prize committee was not able to award the book for outstanding history because Joseph Pulitzer's will declared that the Pulitzer Prize for History must be given to a book on American history. Consequently, *The Guns of August* was awarded the Pulitzer for general nonfiction. U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara said that Kennedy was impressed by Tuchman's thesis on how Europe's leaders had "bungled into the debacle of World War I." During the Cuban Missile Crisis between the U.S. and the Soviet Union over their missile base in Cuba, Kennedy said, "We are not going to bungle into war," a lesson from Barbara Tuchman that recent American presidents have not mastered.



Carbonised child, Nagasaki, 10 August 1945 - Yosuke Yamahata

“Tuchman tells us,” Tomás went on, “how wars happen — rabid nationalism — blood and soil, zero sum competition between world powers. She dramatizes that truth by bring to her narrative, a facial expression, a personality trait, a quotation that brings the characters to life. Like a skilled novelist she composes scenes of discord, competition, conflict, betrayal — truths captured by little details revealing human strength and weakness. Tuchman has the talent of a screenwriter. She opens the doors to memory.”

“It’s extraordinary that a writer — a woman who’d never held office, was an influence in preventing a nuclear war. What do you think is the most important thing Tuchman has to say?”

“Tuchman essentially says, ‘War is the unfolding of miscalculations.’ The German high command thought they’d conquer France quickly, but they didn’t count on the heroic resistance of the Belgians which slowed the Teutonic war machine. The Kaiser refused to believe that England would come to the defense of Belgium even though there was a signed treaty and the promise of King George. After the defeats of the French and British at Liege, Lorraine, Ardennes, Mons, and Charleroi, the German high command didn’t count on

General Joffre's brilliant retreat, fighting violent rear-guard counterattacks against an army of one million men as his exhausted armies withdrew through Northern France with one thought in mind, 'Fight in retreat, fight in retreat.' The Germans couldn't understand how it was possible for Joffre to keep his forces organized enough to mount a counter attack on the Marne. They didn't count on the quick Russian attack which forced German troops to leave for the Eastern Front. They didn't count on the fierce determination of the French at Verdun and the Brits at the Somme. They didn't count on static trench warfare which would bleed them of men. They thought they'd overwhelm their foe with a surprise invasion, big Bertha artillery, and superior German training. They gambled, believing that they could conquer France before an unprepared United States could come to the aid of France. They ignored the vast industrial capacity of the sleeping giant. They underestimated the strangulation of the British Royal Navy's blockade on the Baltic ports. They failed to predict they'd lose the oil and resources of the Balkans. They didn't consider that if they sent all of their men to the front, how was the nation going to produce enough food? In Cuba, a half a century later we're once more on the brink of war. Barbara Tuchman said, 'Dead battles, like dead generals, hold the military in their dead grip.' Are we on the cusp of another war of miscalculation like World War One? Will the United States and Russia ignore the warnings for a war of miscalculation or will the world be destroyed?

"I remember a remark Khrushchev made a couple of years ago. He quoted a nuclear physicist who observed that the explosion of one hydrogen bomb releases a greater amount of energy than all the explosions set off in all wars in the history of mankind. Khrushchev said, 'Apparently, he is right.' It appears Khrushchev is aware of the game he is playing and Kennedy understands it too. I hope you are right. That understanding may save us from terminating civilization.

Tomás bowed his head. After a time, he looked up, a glimmer of hope in his eyes, "Maybe Pope John can make a difference. He's offered to mediate between Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev. We live in a world where we never know if there'll be a tomorrow. Will reason prevail, or will stupidity prevail?"

Tomás rested his fine boned hands on the table, his fingers interlaced. A fly that had been buzzing around our table landed on his hand, but he didn't move remaining silent for a long while. Tomás began again. "Because my family supported the Republican government in Spain, it's dangerous to go back to dance even with the fascist Franco's tolerance of flamenco. If I dance in my home town, I do it under a false identity. It grieves me to leave my native city for very long for Jerez de la Frontera is in my blood. Pablo

believes that the hostility of the U.S. against Castro's expropriation of American property and the standoff with Khrushchev is a good indication that the U.S. isn't going to oppose Franco because he's virulently anti-communist. As long as Franco rules in Spain, I must live in exile."

Tomás grew silent, eyes downcast. I didn't say anything. I could feel his despair. What can one say when a man has lost his country? After a time, he looked up at me, dazzling me with the clarity of his gaze.

"I have a class in an hour. Would you like to meet tomorrow, the same time, the same place. I love talking with you."

I shivered, his dark eyes penetrating me with his gaze — a moment before I could answer.

"Yes, under the willow tree."



An American soldier comforts an infantryman whose buddy has been killed in action, Haktong-ni, Korea, 28 August, 1950 – Author, Al Chang, U.S. Army, Wikimedia. In the background, a corpsman prepares casualty tags.

Wars can be prevented just as surely as they can be provoked,

and we who fail to prevent them must share

the guilt for the dead.

— Omar Bradley