WE DON'T WANT YOU

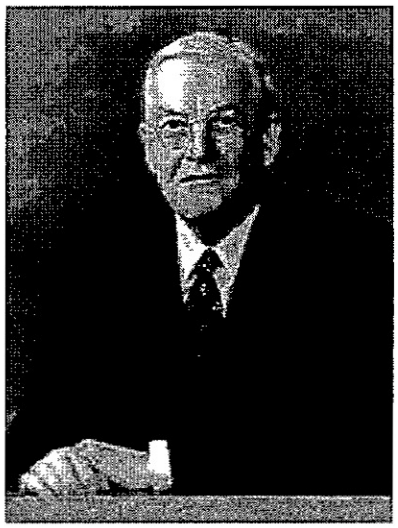
The Central Intelligence Agency was established as an independent, civilian organization reporting directly to the President by the National Security Act of 1947. Originally tasked with the collection of intelligence, its mandate soon expanded to include active covert operations against foreign enemies. (Hitchcock, p. 150)

In June 1948, in a document which created the Office of Policy Coordination, the National Security Council granted the agency the authority to engage in "propaganda, economic warfare, preventive direct action including sabotage and demolition, and subversion against hostile states, including assistance to underground resistance movements and support of anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world. The only requirement was deniability." Covert operations were to be designed so that U.S. involvement would not be evident and the government could plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them. (Hitchcock, pp.150-151)

A year later, President Harry Truman signed a law which exempted the agency from disclosing the names and salaries of its employees – essentially a free pass for it to spend government money off the books. In addition, funds appropriated to the agency need not be accounted for other than by the submission of a certificate or voucher by its Director. (Hitchcock, pp. 151-152)

As Dwight Eisenhower prepared to assume the presidency following his election in November 1952, "the main fact of international political life was the spread of communism. The Soviet Union had imposed its rule on much of Eastern Europe, successfully tested an atom bomb, and blockaded West Berlin almost into starvation for sixteen months. A communist army had seized power in China, and another had tried to do so in Greece . . . Thousands of Americans had been killed fighting communist forces in Korea." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 117)

It was not surprising then that Eisenhower would choose for his Secretary of State a man known in Establishment circles as a "zealous and aggressive" anti-communist: John Foster Dulles. His travels as a distinguished international corporate lawyer and his deep Christian faith had convinced him that "the evil methods and designs of Soviet Communism" were a threat to all humanity and brooked no compromise. (Hitchcock, p. 88; Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 114-115)



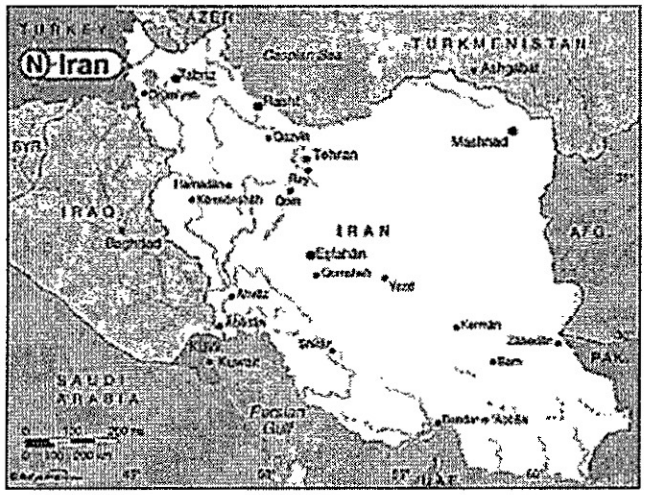
Foster Dulles was not without flaws. Historian Townsend Hoopes called him "an intellectual loner . . . who relied almost exclusively, in large matters and small, on his own counsel." Stephen Kinzer said, "He shaped important policies without consulting anyone inside or outside the State Department." He was stiff, confrontational, and always certain that his course of action, once determined, was the right one. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 116)

During the 1952 presidential campaign, Foster Dulles accused the Truman administration of weakness in the face of Communist advances. "He promised that a Republican White House would 'roll back' Communism by securing the 'liberation' of nations that had fallen victim to its 'despotism and godless terrorism.'" (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 117)

The CIA, now boasting 2800 full-time employees in 47 overseas stations and commanding a budget of $80 million a year, was ready and willing to lead the charge. (Hitchcock, p. 151)

OPERATION AJAX

On May 26, 1908, self-taught geologist and petroleum engineer George Reynolds was awakened from his tent near an outpost in Western Iran by a rumbling noise and wild shouting. He bolted up, ran across a stony plain, and saw one of his derricks spurting oil from the greatest field ever found. Within months, the newly-formed Anglo-Persian Oil Company assumed the concession which had been granted to Scottish millionaire William D'Arcy in 1901 to prospect for oil in most of the country and for which he had paid the Shah a paltry 20,000 pounds plus sixteen percent of his profits. In 1913 the British government bought fifty-one percent of the company, thereby inextricably linking the two. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 48-49)



Within a few years, on the desert island of Abadan at the northern tip of the Persian Gulf, arose the world's largest oil refinery; adjacent to it sprawled a bustling city of 100,000 residents, most of them Iranian laborers. (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 50)

Discontent with the company, now Anglo-Iranian, grew steadily during World War II as the amount of oil it extracted swelled to 16.5 million tons in 1945. The following year the laborers at Abadan went on strike. "Bloody rioting left dozens dead and more than one hundred injured." (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 52)

The rioting at Abadan awakened the slumbering Iranian parliament, the Majlis. In 1947 it passed a law forbidding any further concessions to foreign companies and directing the government to renegotiate its contract with Anglo-Iranian. The author was a fervent nationalist named Mohammad Mossadegh. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 35, 52)

Born in 1882, Mossadegh came from a family that had produced governors, cabinet ministers, and ambassadors. He served briefly in the first Majlis before disillusionment with Iranian liberalism drove him first to France and later to Neuchatel, Switzerland, where he became the first of his country to earn a doctorate of law from a European university. Returning to Iran, he joined the faculty of the Tehran School of Law and Political Science. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 53-55)

Reelected to the Majlis in 1924, Mossadegh repeatedly spurned Reza Shah's invitations to join his administration as chief justice, foreign minister, even prime minister, preferring to remain an independent champion of Iranian democracy and independence. In 1928, he and others of his ilk were maneuvered out of office by a ruler now determined to suppress all opposition. (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 60)

The British Army occupied Iran in 1941 and soon wearied of Reza Shah's despotism and presumed collaboration with German nationals. It forced him to abdicate in favor of his son, Mohammad Reza Shah, who was more compliant and, at least initially, less repressive. With the advent of free elections in 1943, Mohammad Mossadegh emerged from obscurity and regained his parliamentary seat with more votes than any other candidate. His 1947 legislation was only his opening salvo against Anglo-Iranian. In 1949 ten members of the Majlis submitted a bill that would revoke its concession. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 45, 61, 68)

The company's answer was a proposal known as the Supplemental Agreement, which guaranteed Iran $4 million annually in oil royalties. The Majlis had no appetite for it and countered with a demand for a fifty-fifty split of the oil profits. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 69-71)

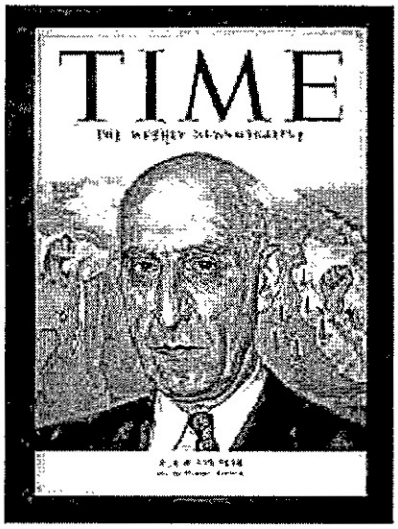
Anglo-Iranian refused to compromise. In January 1951, a huge crowd rallied to launch a mass movement calling for the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian. On March 8th, one day after the assassination of Prime Minister Ali Razmara, Mohammad Shah's ally in support of the Supplemental Agreement, the Majlis's Oil Committee voted unanimously for nationalization. One week later, all ninety deputies followed suit. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 77-79)

"Mossadegh was now a hero of epic proportions, unable even to step into the street without being mobbed by admirers." When the Majlis convened on April 28th to vote on Razmara's successor, an aging British favorite named Sayyed Zia, Mossadegh stunned the assemblage by announcing he would accept the position of Prime Minister. "The unthinkable had happened . . . the symbol of Iranian nationalism had arrived at the pinnacle of power." (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 80-82)

The British were outraged at this shocking turn of events and embarked on a campaign to impugn and undermine Mossadegh. "They considered bribing him, assassinating him, and launching a military invasion of Iran," the last of which they would have carried out had not Secretary of State Dean Acheson and President Truman sternly vetoed it. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 119)

They sabotaged their own installation at Abadan to prove oil could not be pumped without their cooperation. They blockaded Iranian ports so no tankers could enter or leave. They introduced a resolution to the United Nations Security Council ordering Mossadegh not to expel their oil company from Iran, a dubious tactic since it induced Mossadegh to journey to the U.S. and make a direct appeal to the delegates on behalf of his country; he convinced the Council to table the resolution. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 119; *Shah*, pp. 117, 127)

Suddenly a defining figure on the world stage, Mossadegh was named Man of the Year by *Time Magazine*. It called him an "obstinate opportunist" but also "the Iranian George Washington" and "the most renowned man his ancient race has produced for centuries." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 120)



All their schemes having been thwarted, British leaders -- namely, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Foreign Minister Anthony Eden -- directed their agents in Tehran, which included a variety of military officers, journalists, and religious functionaries whom they had suborned over the years, to organize a coup to overthrow Mossadegh. It could hardly be kept a secret. Mossadegh got wind of the plan, and on October 16, 1952, shut down the British embassy and expelled all its personnel. (Kinzer *Overthrow*, p. 119)

British prospects to effectuate change seemed to have reached a dead end until propitious news arrived from across the Atlantic. On January 20, 1953, Dwight Eisenhower replaced Harry Truman in the White House and appointed as Secretary of State the staunch anti-communist John Foster Dulles.

The British dispatched their former Chief of Station in Tehran, Christopher "Monty" Woodhouse, to make their case to Foster Dulles. Aware that the nationalization of Anglo-Iranian would carry little weight with the Americans, Woodhouse chose to emphasize the Communist threat to Iran. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 121)

"Mossadegh was a populist, a nationalist, and an anti-imperialist, but he was certainly no communist." He allowed the Communist Party, known as Tudeh, to function freely in Iran, but "in fact he abhorred Communist doctrine and rigorously excluded Communists from his government." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 121; Hitchcock, p. 156)

Nevertheless, at a meeting of the National Security Council on March 4th, Foster Dulles obligingly delivered Woodhouse's ominous message to President Eisenhower. Mossadegh himself may not be a communist, but "if he were assassinated or removed from office, a political vacuum might occur in Iran and the communists might easily take over." If that happened, "not only would the free world be deprived of . . . Iranian oil production and reserves, but . . . other areas of the Middle East would fall into Communist hands." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 122)

Rumors of ongoing public and political unrest in Tehran finally convinced Eisenhower that "Iran was collapsing and that the collapse could not be prevented as long as Mossadegh was in power . . . Those around him took his change in tone as a sign that he would not resist the idea of a coup." (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 160)

"The State Department did not have the capacity to overthrow governments. For that Foster Dulles would have to enlist the CIA." Since it was currently headed by his brother Allen, its growing expertise in covert operations could be seamlessly melded with the Department's diplomatic resources. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 121-123)

Unlike his lugubrious brother, Allen Dulles was outgoing and gregarious, a tweed-wearing, pipe-smoking, backslapping Ivy Leaguer who charmed everyone he met – a great asset in a man whose career depended upon people telling him their secrets. On June 14, he went to the White House and secured Eisenhower's formal approval for what would be known as "Operation Ajax." He had already mailed the CIA station in Tehran $1 million for use "in any way that would bring about the fall of Mossadegh." (Hitchcock, p. 149; Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 161)

Two well-traveled intelligence officers, Donald Wilbur of the CIA and Norman Darbyshire of the British Secret Intelligence Service, were recruited to draw a blueprint for the coup. They selected a retired general, Fazlollah Zahedi, as their titular leader, and handed him $135,000 to "win additional friends and influence key people." An equal amount was allocated to bribe journalists, preachers, and other opinion makers to "create and enhance . . . distrust and fear of Mossadegh and his government." Tens of thousands of posters and handbills describing Mossadegh as a tool of the communists and a threat to religious leaders and the army were printed by the CIA and flown to Tehran. Eleven thousand dollars per week was budgeted to purchase votes in the Majlis. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 123; Hitchcock, p. 158))

To orchestrate the coup, Allen Dulles picked the CIA's top Middle East expert, thirty-seven-year-old Kermit Roosevelt, grandson of the former president and a veteran of the Office of Secret Services since its inception in World War II. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 4, 148)

Roosevelt slipped across the border into Iran on July 19th and immediately went to work fanning the flames of anti-Mossadegh protest. Buoyed by CIA bounty, Mossadegh's opponents in Parliament were on the verge of ousting him by approving a no-confidence resolution but he was able to retain his position by winning a national referendum that would allow him to dissolve the legislative body. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 125)

Roosevelt was discouraged but undaunted. "He would arrange for Mohammad Reza Shah to sign royal decrees, or *firmans*, dismissing Mossadegh from office and appointing Zahedi as the new prime minister." If Mossadegh rejected the *firmans*, Roosevelt would instruct the soldiers who delivered them to arrest him. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 125)

Even though the Shah despised Mossadegh, who had relegated him to a figurehead, he was terrified of losing his throne by acceding to the plot. (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 6)

Roosevelt tried several ruses to win over the Shah. After gifting her a wad of cash and a mink stole, he arranged to fly the Shah's strong-willed sister, Princes Ashraf, from her chateau on the French Rivera to Tehran; it was a fruitless mission. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 125)

"Next Roosevelt turned to General Norman H. Schwarzkopf, who had spent most of the 1940's in Iran leading an elite military regiment and to whom the Shah felt deeply indebted." Entering the palace, Schwarzkopf was escorted to the center of a large ballroom where the Shah, fearing to be overheard by hidden microphones, whispered that he would not sign the *firmans*. He said that the army would likely not obey any order of his and that he could not be party to any failed scheme. (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 8)

Roosevelt was not ready to concede defeat. After several midnight meetings in the back seat of a car parked in the palace compound, he prevailed upon the Shah to sign the *firmans*, which he did with the proviso that he could immediately depart for his hunting lodge on the Caspian Sea. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 9-11)

Late on the night of August 15, 1953, the man chosen by Roosevelt to deliver the fateful decree, Colonel Nematollah Nasiri, commander of the Imperial Guard, drove to the home of Mossadegh's Chief of Staff, Tacqi Riahi, only to find it deserted. Riahi had learned of the coup, and when Nasiri proceeded to Mossadegh's residence, a company of loyalist soldiers was waiting there to arrest him. At 6:00 AM the next morning Mossadegh announced over Radio Tehran that he had foiled an attempt to depose him "organized by the Shah and foreign elements." (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 14-15)

Kermit Roosevelt was not to be denied. Ignoring a cable from Washington ordering him to leave the country, he summoned two of his most reliable operatives, Ali Jalili and Farouk Keyvani, handed them a briefcase filled with $50,000, and threatened to kill them if they refused his demand: create chaos throughout the city. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 126-127)

"A plague of violence descended on Tehran. Gangs of thugs roamed wildly through the streets, breaking shop windows, firing guns into mosques, beating passersby, and shouting 'Long Live Mossadegh and Communism!' Others claiming allegiance to the Shah attacked them. Leaders of both factions were working for Roosevelt." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 127)

The Shah appealed on the radio to respect Zahedi as the legally appointed premier. (Hitchcock, p. 159)

Roosevelt chose August 19th as the climactic day. "Groups of rioters attacked eight government buildings . . . the foreign ministry, the army general staff headquarters, and the central police station." According to one CIA staffer, "The mob that came into North Tehran and was decisive in the overthrow was a mercenary mob . . . paid with American dollars." Soldiers and midlevel officers, including Colonel Nasiri, joined the uprising, and brought along with them weapons, tanks, and artillery. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 178-180)

Roosevelt arranged for a tank to pick up General Zahedi at the apartment where he had been sequestered. It drove him through the tumultuous crowd to Radio Tehran, where he stepped to the microphone and proclaimed himself "The lawful prime minister by the Shah's order." The Shah received the news while dining at the Rome hotel where he had fled four days earlier. "Can it be true?" he blurted. He jumped to his feet and exclaimed: "I knew it! They love me!" (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 183-184)

Fighting raged at Mossadegh's house for two hours. Resistance ceased when a column of tanks appeared and unleashed a barrage of shells. Mossadegh fled over a back wall with his comrades, but realizing he could not evade capture for long voluntarily surrendered the next day. He was tried for "inciting the people to armed insurrection," convicted, and sentenced to three years in prison followed by house arrest for life. "My only crime," Mossadegh told his judges, "is that I nationalized the Iranian oil industry and removed from this land the network of colonialism and economic influence of the greatest empire on earth." (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 185, 189, 193)

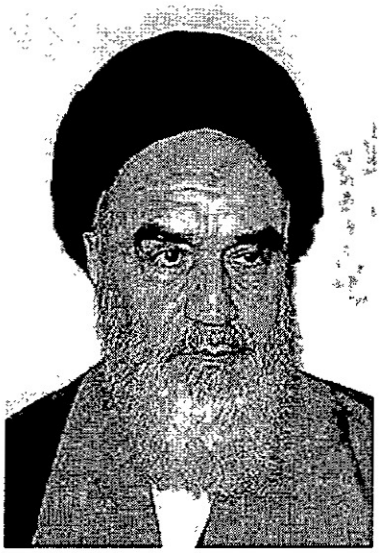
The suddenly confident Shah landed in Tehran on the morning of August 22nd. Hundreds of admirers were there to greet him, including Prime Minister Zahedi, who fell to his knees and kissed the monarch's proffered hand. Kermit Roosevelt joined the Shah at the royal palace to toast their triumph. The Shah raised his glass and said, "I owe my throne to God, my people, my army -- and to you." Then Zahedi entered the room and expressed his own gratitude. "We were all smiles, now," wrote Roosevelt afterward. "Warmth and friendship filled the room." Six hours later he left Iran forever. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 190-192)

If President Eisenhower disingenuously asserted to the press that "Iran threw off a threat of Communist domination and came strongly to our side," in his diary he was more candid. "The things we did were covert," he wrote. "If knowledge of them became public, we would not only be embarrassed in that region, but our chances of doing anything of like nature in the future would almost totally disappear." (Hitchcock, p. 160)

Having done the dirty work of deposing Mossadegh, U.S. officials expected to share the spoils. An international consortium was formed, under which Anglo-Iranian (renamed British Petroleum) sold forty percent of its shares to five American companies and twenty percent to Dutch and French enterprises for $1 billion. (Kinzer, *Shah*, pp. 195-196)

The Shah's thirty-seven-year rule had a dual nature. On one hand, he oversaw the investment of billions of dollars in industry, education, health, and the military, which transformed the country into a global power and produced an unprecedented rise in national and per capita income.

In his later years, however, he grew increasingly isolated, dictatorial, and intolerant of dissent. He repressed oppositional newspapers, political parties, trade unions, and civic groups. Dissatisfied Iranians turned to religious schools, mosques, and the fundamentalists who controlled them as their only avenue for change. They rallied around the radical Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, whose revolutionary movement became so widespread that in 1979 the Shah was forced to flee his homeland. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 201-202)

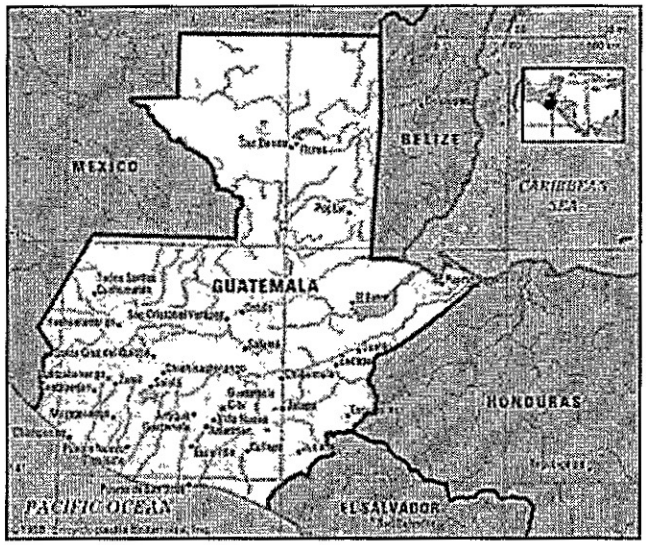


Bitterly anti-Western, Khomeini sanctioned the occupation of the U.S. Embassy and the taking of their diplomats as hostages. Once entrenched, his regime broadened its reach by financing and arming Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups and by encouraging Muslim fanatics like the Taliban in Afghanistan to seize power where conditions were favorable. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 203)

Historian Mark Gasiorowski writes: "In retrospect, the United States sponsored coup d'etat in Iran of August 19, 1953, has emerged as a critical event in postwar world history . . . Had the coup not occurred, Iran's future would undoubtedly have been vastly different . . . U.S. complicity [in the coup and the subsequent consolidation of the Shah's dictatorship] figured prominently in the terrorist attacks on American citizens and installations that occurred in the 1970's and in the anti-American character of the 1978-79 revolution . . . and the embassy hostage crisis." (Kinzer, *Shah*, p. 213)

OPERATION SUCCESS

Since gaining independence in 1821, "the Central American country of Guatemala had been ruled by a procession of personalistic right-wing rulers who governed on behalf of a tiny European-oriented aristocracy." This "tradition of despotism reached a savage climax from 1931 to 1944 under the megalomaniac General Jorge Ubico," who "routinely used his army to intimidate the poor, massacre rebellious Indians, kill labor leaders and intellectuals, and enrich his friends." (Schlesinger, p. 28)



The United Fruit Company, already the largest landowner, employer, and exporter in the country, accumulated even more property and control under the patronage of Ubico. It signed a ninety-nine-year lease on a vast plantation on the Pacific coast at Tiquisate. Ubico exempted the company from all internal taxation, endorsed its fifty-cent-per-day wage rate, and allowed it to take over the country's only Atlantic port at Puerto Barrios and virtually every mile of railroad. (Schlesinger, p. 70)

Growing discontent with the regime propelled thousands of demonstrators into the streets during the summer of 1944, forcing Ubico to relinquish power. In a lightning uprising later known as the "October Revolution," two commanders, Francisco Arana and Jacobo Arbenz, seized major military installations, forced Ubico's successor to resign, and promulgated free elections. (Schlesinger, pp. 28-31)

In December 1945, the revolutionaries' candidate for president, a visionary schoolteacher named Juan Jose Arevalo, was swept into office with a resounding eighty-five percent of the vote. During his six-year term the National Assembly enacted a Social Security Law which required employers to provide safe working conditions and basic health care; a Labor Code which allowed urban workers to organize unions; and land reform legislation which granted peasants the right to rent unused plantation acreage. (Schlesinger, pp. 37-41)

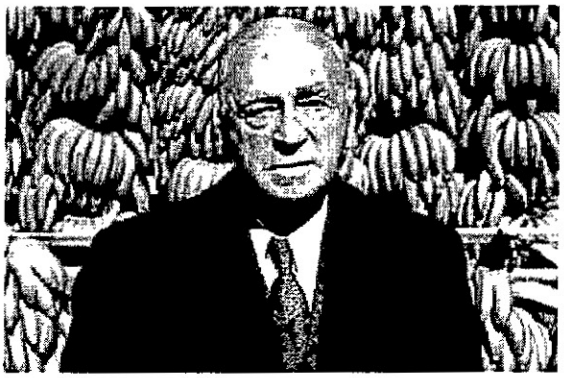
Arevalo's liberal supporters nominated Arbenz, now Defense Minister, to succeed him. Arbenz had distinguished himself at Guatemala's military academy for his brilliant scholastic record and his prowess in boxing and polo. He was strikingly handsome, which somewhat compensated for his lack of personal magnetism and monotonal manner of speech. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 132)

1950

Arbenz was elected president on November 30, ~~1953,~~ by a two-to-one margin, and immediately went to work on the goal he had proclaimed in his inaugural address: "to convert Guatemala from a country bound by a predominantly feudal economy into a modern capitalist state." Among the projects he proposed were a publicly owned port on the Atlantic coast, a highway to the Atlantic as an alternative to United Fruit's railroad monopoly, and a hydroelectric plant to compete with the one administered by the U.S. But the initiative he was most proud of was the passage of a genuine agrarian reform law on June 27, 1952. (Schlesinger, pp. 52-54)

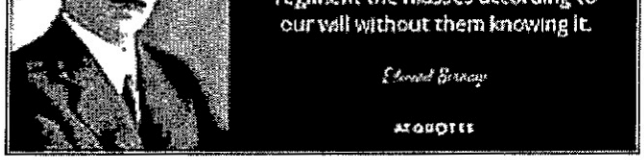
"Under the provisions of Decree 900, the government could appropriate and redistribute all uncultivated land on estates larger than 672 acres, compensating the owners according to the land's declared tax value." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 133)

"Early in 1953 the Guatemalan government seized 234,000 uncultivated acres of United Fruit's 295,000-acre plantation at Tiquisate. It offered $1.185 million, the value the company had declared for tax purposes." Of course, the company blanched when its own number was thrown in its face, declaring that it "bears not the slightest resemblance to just evaluation." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 133; Schlesinger, p.76)



The largest shareholder and de facto chief executive of United Fruit Company was Sam Zemurray, whose meteoric rise in the industry had earned him the title "Banana Man." Landing in Mobile, Alabama in 1892 as a penniless Jewish immigrant from Moldavia, he amassed $100,000 in six years by salvaging and selling overripe bananas he saw being dumped into the sea. He borrowed half a million dollars, bought fifteen thousand acres of land in Honduras, and quickly became a major player in the banana trade. (Kinzer, p. 72)

Zemurray had long feared a reformist movement in Guatemala. In the late 1940's he had hired renowned public relations expert Edward Bernays to both polish United Fruit's image and blacken that of the Guatemala government and its leaders. In the spring of 1951, a series of articles appeared in the New York *Times* "portraying Guatemala as falling victim to 'reds.'" Then Bernays sponsored a number of press junkets to the country that produced glowing profiles of United Fruit and terrifying ones about an imminent Soviet takeover. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 134)



"The Guatemalan Communist Party was actually a modest affair. At its peak it had only a few hundred active members, no mass base, and no support in the foreign ministry or army . . . The Soviet Union had no military, economic, or even diplomatic relations with Guatemala, and no delegation from the country had ever visited Moscow. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 135-136)

Even if such facts had been presented to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, they would have had no impact. "He was convinced to the point of theological certainty that the Soviets were behind every threat to American power in the world," including the tiny country of Guatemala. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 136)

"The principal evidence offered by the Americans to justify fears of subversion in Guatemala was the land reform program, particularly as it affected United Fruit. One journalist warned that Communists would use the program as a steppingstone to take over the country . . . The American public, heavily conditioned by Bernays's press campaign, had also identified the enemy: Communism." (Schlesinger, pp. 107-108)

The truth was very different. "Arbenz's reforms were not directed from Moscow or part of some plot to create a Marxist utopia . . . in Central America." His goal was "to bring modernity and development to his country by stimulating family farming and rolling back the predatory economic practices of large companies and their allies." (Hitchcock, pp. 162-163)

As with Ajax, President Eisenhower found all options for moderation foreclosed when confronted by the formidable double team of John Foster and Allen Dulles. Once again, the operation fell under the purview of the latter's CIA. In early August 1953, the 10/2 Subcommittee of the National Security Council officially approved a plot codenamed "Success" to take down Arbenz. (Schlesinger, p. 108)

Kermit Roosevelt having declined, Allen Dulles summoned former college football star Colonel Albert Haney from his post in South Korea and gave him a budget of $4.5 million to conduct the operation. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 137-138)

Haney established a clandestine headquarters at a military airfield in Opa-Locka, Florida. He planted hidden communication centers inside and outside the borders of Guatemala to jam government airwaves

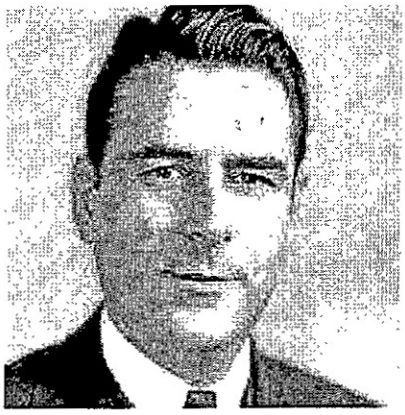
and to broadcast propaganda to the public. With a nod of consent from dictator Anastasio Somoza, he set up camps in Nicaragua to train an invading army of three hundred exiles and mercenaries in sabotage, demolition, and weapons deployment. He stationed a Liberation Air Force composed of thirty U.S. planes and pilots at remote air strips there and in Honduras to support them. (Schlesinger, pp. 110-111, 114)

To play the role of rebel leader, the CIA plotters settled on Carlos Castillo Armas, a former army officer whose dramatic escape from prison in 1950 after an abortive uprising had earned him a "vaguely heroic reputation." He was picked because he was malleable and, in the words of two observers, "a stupid man . . . who didn't know what he was doing." Flown from his hideout in Honduras to Opa-Locka in October, Castillo Armas accepted without conditions or objections the CIA's offer to head up its "National Liberation Movement," which included a payment of $3 million and funding for ten paramilitary squads. (Schlesinger, pp. 122-123, 126)

State Department officials needed their own saboteur in Guatemala City. The resident ambassador, Rudolph Schoenfeld was too passive and collegial to suit Foster Dulles's purpose. On the recommendation of CIA Chief of Operations Frank Wisner, they snagged John Peurifoy, a brash, flamboyant staunch anti-Communist who had bolstered his credentials battling leftist guerillas in Greece. Peurifoy "spoke no Spanish and knew nothing about Guatemala" except for its exposure to the "Red Menace." But he knew how to manipulate the press to scare a small country. (Schlesinger, pp. 131-133)

Six weeks after his arrival in Guatemala, on the evening of December 16, 1953, Peurifoy had his first and only face-to-face meeting with Arbenz at the latter's official residence. As Arbenz was describing United Fruit's abusive history and failure to pay a reasonable amount of taxes, Peurifoy interrupted him to state:

"As long as the Communists exercised the influence which they presently do with the Government, I do not see any real hope of bringing about better relations." (Schlesinger, pp. 136-137)



Peurifoy concluded his memorandum to Foster Dulles on the meeting with the words: "Normal approaches will probably not work in Guatemala." He was even more harsh when a few days later he cabled: "There appears to be no alternative to our taking steps which would tend to make more difficult the continuation of [the Arbenz] regime in Guatemala." (Schlesinger, p. 139)

In March 1954, at the Tenth Conference of the Organization of American States in Caracas, Venezuela, Foster Dulled laid the groundwork for the impending "liberation." He introduced a resolution declaring that the "domination or control of the political institutions of any American state by the international communist movement . . . would constitute a threat" to the entire hemisphere and require "appropriate action." (Schlesinger, pp. 142-144)

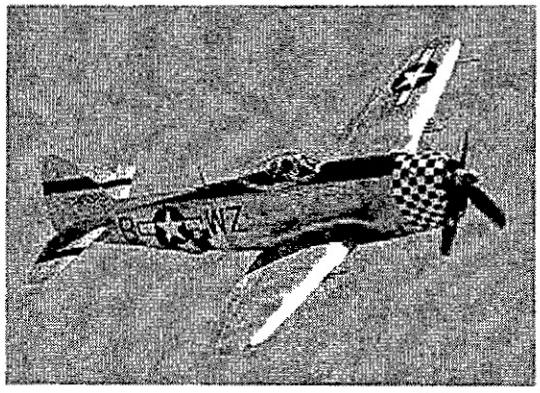
Then Arbenz lit his own smoking gun. Prevented from purchasing arms from Denmark, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, and Switzerland by a U.S.-imposed embargo and increasingly aware of the looming invasion, he turned to Czechoslovakia, a Communist country, as a last resort. On May 15, 1954, the freighter *Alfhem* docked at Puerto Barrios. Over the next several days, one hundred boxcars carrying $1 million worth of rifles, ammunition, mines, and artillery pieces left the port for Guatemala City. (Schlesinger, pp. 148-150)

Although most of the equipment was obsolete or inoperative, the State Department and the White House flaunted the incident as evidence of Communist subversion. At a press conference on May 19th, President Eisenhower maintained that the weapons might lead to the establishment of a "Communist dictatorship . . . on this continent to the detriment of all American nations." (Schlesinger, p. 152)

Meanwhile, the CIA's "Voice of Liberation" radio station was engaged in a classic disinformation campaign to spread fear and panic inside Guatemala.

American reporters lapped up the propaganda and dutifully submitted accounts of mass arrests and tortures allegedly perpetrated by the Arbenz regime. On June 15 Foster Dulles told a group of them that Guatemalans were living under a "Communist-type reign of terror," but "the great majority . . . have both the desire and the capability of cleaning their own house." (Schlesinger, pp. 11, 166)

Soon after dawn on June 18th, Castillo Armas led his band of rebels across the Honduran border six miles into Guatemalan territory. Other than hijacking a train, ripping up some tracks, and dynamiting a bridge, the contingent did not venture beyond its perimeter position. Castillo Armas was content to wait for orders from the Americans who had recruited him and trained and paid his men. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 141; Schlesinger, p. 22)



In Guatemala City, a C-47 transport plane swooped over the National Palace and dropped thousands of leaflets demanding that President Arbenz resign immediately. Later that afternoon two P-47's -- planes never seen in any Latin American air force -- buzzed low over the main military barracks and the police station, fired several machine-gun rounds, dropped a fragmentation bomb, and then swung out over the Pacific. The air raids continued for several days, hitting fuel tanks and military outposts across the country to demonstrate that war was underway. (Schlesinger, pp. 7-8, 14; Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 142)

On the evening of June 19th, President Arbenz addressed his countrymen by radio. He declared that "the arch-traitor Castillo Armas" was leading a "United Fruit expeditionary force" against his government. "Our crime is having enacted an agrarian reform which affected the interests of United Fruit . . . It is completely untrue that communists are taking over the government . . . We have imposed no terror. It is, on the contrary, the Guatemalan friends of Mr. Foster Dulles who wish to spread terror among our people, attacking women and children by surprise with impunity from private airplanes." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 142-143)

When two of the CIA's planes went down, Al Haney cabled Allen Dulles that Operation Success was seriously endangered and would fail without more air support. Rebuffed by Assistant Secretary of State Henry Holland, Dulles went directly to President Eisenhower and, emphasizing the urgency of the situation, persuaded him to deploy two more planes. (Schlesinger, p. 177)

Haney's planes proved to be sufficient to turn the tide. On June 23rd, they unleashed a seventy-two-hour barrage over the countryside, bombing the barracks at Zacapa twice and strafing nearby Chiquimula, thus enabling Castillo Armas to occupy the town and proclaim it the capital of his "provisional government." (Schlesinger, p. 182)

As conditions grew more desperate, Arbenz's military commanders, who were intimidated by U.S. support of the rebellion and its possible intervention, prepared to abandon him. When Arbenz ordered Army Chief of Staff Colonel Carlos Enrique Diaz to open the army's cache of weapons to civilians who might rally behind him, Diaz saw an opportunity to further his own ambitions and refused. (Schlesinger, p. 190)

On Sunday, June 27th, Peurifoy met with Diaz and four of his comrades at the Colonel's home and agreed on behalf of the United States to recognize their junta and arrange for a ceasefire once he was assured that Diaz had control of the government and would remove and outlaw all Communists. (Schlesinger, pp. 194-196)

At four o'clock that afternoon Diaz and two officers called on Arbenz and told him they were deposing him. Addressing his people that evening for the last time, Arbenz said: "A government different from mine, but always inspired by our October Revolution, is preferable to twenty years of fascist bloody tyranny under the rule of bands that Castillo Armas has brought into the country." Then he left the studio and walked to the Mexican embassy, where he was granted political asylum. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 145)

As far as the CIA was concerned, however, the mission was not yet accomplished.

When its two principal operatives, John Doherty and Enno Hobbing, saw Colonel Diaz take the microphone from Arbenz and proclaim that "the struggle against the mercenary invaders of Guatemala will not abate," they concluded he was unreliable and would have to go. They would replace him with an officer they knew and trusted, Colonel Elfegio Monzon. (Schlesinger, p. 206)

Confronted by Doherty and Hobbing, Diaz insisted that Peurifoy had approved his assumption of leadership. Hobbing replied, "Colonel, you're just not convenient for the requirements of American foreign policy . . . Our ambassador represents diplomacy. I represent reality. And the reality is that we don't want you." Diaz asked for a meeting with Peurifoy but succeeded only in arousing his anger by refusing to round up and execute presumed communists and stating he was going to release all political prisoners. (Schlesinger, pp. 206-209)

An outraged Peurifoy stormed back to the embassy and cabled Haney to stage a demonstration. On the afternoon of June 28th, a CIA-piloted P-47 flew over Guatemala City and dropped two bombs on the parade ground of the main military base and several more on the government radio station. Diaz tendered his resignation and was replaced by Colonel Monzon. (Schlesinger, pp. 209-21)

The U.S. didn't really want Monzon either. Under pressure from Peurifoy, he agreed to share power with Castillo Armas and three others in a five-man ruling junta. But on July 8th, after receiving $100,000 each,

Monzon's two allies abruptly resigned, leaving Castillo Armas in control; one week later the United States formally recognized the Castillo Armas government. (Schlesinger, pp. 215-216)

On October 10, 1954, Castillo Armas was confirmed as president of Guatemala with 99.6% of the vote. He immediately ordered the return of all expropriated land to United Fruit, outlawed labor unions, banned all political parties, and arrested thousands of suspected leftists. (Schlesinger, pp. 218-221)

Eighty million dollars from the United States during Castillo Armas's presidency did little for the nation's poor, and his reversal of Arbenz's land reform left less than one percent of those who had been awarded plots still occupying them. His successor, Miguel Ydigoras Fuentes was no better. His decision to allow CIA agents to establish a training base for the invasion of Cuba in 1960 led to the formation of the first Communist-related guerilla groups. (Schlesinger, pp. 236-240)

The rulers who followed heavily militarized the country. Civil society was submerged beneath an ongoing, deadly war between the government's armed forces, the national police force, and right-wing paramilitary groups on one side and leftist guerillas on the other. "Normal political life in the country ceased. Death squads roamed with impunity, chasing down and murdering politicians, union organizers, student activists, and peasant leaders . . . In the countryside, soldiers rampaged through villages, massacring Mayan Indians by the hundreds." From 1966 to 1980, Amnesty International concluded that more than 30,000 were abducted, tortured, and assassinated. By 1996 that number had risen to 200,000. (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, p. 205; Schlesinger, p. 247)

During this period "the United States provided Guatemala with hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid. Americans trained and armed the Guatemalan army and police, sent Green Beret teams to accompany soldiers on anti-guerilla missions, and dispatched planes from the Panama Canal Zone to drop napalm on suspected guerilla hideouts. In 1968, guerillas responded by killing two American military advisers and the United States ambassador to Guatemala, John Gordon Mein." (Kinzer, *Overthrow*, pp. 205-206)

"The overthrow of Arbenz inadvertently encouraged communism: outraged by what had happened in Guatemala, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and their supporters resolved to liberate Cuba from Washington's influence and turn it into a Marxist-Leninist state. When, after they seized power in 1959, the CIA tried" to foment a counterrevolution and organize an invasion, it failed miserably. (Gaddis, p. 166)

The violent coup of 1954 interrupted the evolution of social growth and political maturation in Guatemala. A series of corrupt regimes led by wealthy elites and military strongmen uninterested in national development and improving the lives of their people took control of the country. A cycle of violence ensued and persisted, leaving thousands dead and millions undernourished, impoverished, and illiterate. (Schlesinger, p. 254)

REFERENCES

Carroll, James. *House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

Gaddis, John Lewis. *The Cold War: A New History*. New York: The Penguin Press, 2005.

Hitchcock, William I. *The Age of Eisenhower: America and the World in the 1950's*. New York: Simon & Schuster: 2018.

Schlesinger, Stephen, and Stephen Kinzer. *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1982.

Swanson, Michael. *The War State: The Cold War Origins of the Military-Industrial Complex and the Power Elite, 1945-1963*. North Charleston, South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013.

Kinzer, Stephen. *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006.

POSTED BY MARC SCHEWEL AT 12:11 PM

NO COMMENTS:

Post a Comment

Newer Post Home Older Post

THE OTHER 9/11

Since1833, fifteen years after winning independence from Spain, Chile had been governed as a constitutional democracy. Power had shifted between left and right-wing factions, corruption at times had run rampant, and the landed aristocracy had dominated politics and policy. But for 140 years the presidency had transitioned peacefully from one administration to another.

That era would come to an end on Tuesday, September 11, 1973, with a violent coup that was aided and abetted by the U.S. government.

The election of 1958 marked a watershed in the career of one of the country's most controversial and remarkable leaders: Salvador Allende Gossens. (Winn, III)

Born in 1908, Allende came from an upper middle-class family with a long tradition of involvement in progressive and liberal causes. He graduated from medical school in 1931, and in later years would attribute his nascent political activism to his exposure to the poverty, disease, and malnutrition of the Chilean underclass while a student. In 1933 he co-founded the Socialist Party of Chile. Appointed Minister of Health, Housing, and Security by Aguirre Cerda in 1939, he sponsored legislation providing for workers' compensation, maternity care, and free lunches for schoolchildren. (Winn, III)

For the next thirty years Allende served in the Chilean Congress, rising to president of the Senate in 1966. One of his principal achievements was the development of the first universal health care plan in the Americas. He first ran for the Chilean presidency in 1952 as the Communist supported candidate of the Popular Action Front or FRAP but received only five percent of the vote. (Winn, III)

Renominated in 1958 , Allende campaigned on a platform calling for agrarian reform, nationalization of all foreign-owned mines, redistribution of wealth, and a foreign policy free from U.S. influence. Despite losing to the Independent Rightist Jorge Alessandri by less than three percentage points, he emerged as a credible spokesperson for a democratic-socialist agenda. Similarly, the strong showing of the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, who garnered twenty percent of the vote, signified his party's dominance of the Chilean middle-class center. (Winn, III)

Ideologically, Allende can best be described as a libertarian socialist committed to the betterment of his people. He frowned upon communist dogma that prescribed a single party "dictatorship of the proletariat" and sanctioned a revolutionary approach to political change. His ambition, as expressed to journalist Peter Winn, was for Chile to be the first

country in history to establish a socialist state "without violence . . . because there are millions of people in the world who want socialism but without having to pay the terrible price of civil war." (Kinzer, p. 175; Winn, I)

Fearful of an uprising like the one that swept Fidel Castro to power half a decade earlier, the U.S. invested heavily in Chile's 1964 election. Once again Allende was pitted against Frei, who now had the endorsement of the Independent Rightists to bolster his chances. Dubbed the "Chilean Kennedy" for his good looks and media presence, Frei was the beneficiary of CIA largesse; the agency spent $3 million to assure his victory over Allende. It flooded the airwaves and streets with broadcasts and placards predicting that if Allende was elected, Chile would become Communist, children would be sent to Cuba, and his opponents would disappear. Frei won by a three-to-two margin. (Winn, III)

The money continued to flow during Frei's administration, funding candidates for Congress favorable to him, subsidizing anti-Communist groups, and endowing right-wing news organizations. "Between 1962 and 1970, this country of only ten million people received over $1.2 billion in economic grants and loans -- an astronomical amount for that era." (Kinzer, p. 175; Kornbluh, p. 5)

By 1970, the left wing of the Christian Democrat Party had abandoned Frei due to his slow pace of reform. It allied itself with Allende's reconstituted FRAP, now known as Popular Unity. To oppose Allende, the loyalist Christian Democrats nominated Radomiro Tomic,

whose leftist sentiments ensured that the Right would put up its own candidate, the seventy-five-year-old former president, Jorge Alessandri.

Allende was not a charismatic figure nor a compelling speaker, but he had a reputation as the mind and heart of the people, projected an appealing dignity, and labored tirelessly to mobilize grassroots support. (Winn, IV)

The CIA spent $425,000 on anti-Allende propaganda, while International Telephone and Telegraph, which controlled Chile's burgeoning communications system, donated $350,000 to Alessandri's campaign and prevailed upon other American companies to match it. They could not stem the tide. When the result was tabulated on September 4, Allende had a plurality of 36.3% followed by Alessandri at 35% and Tomic at 27.8%. (Davis, p. 5; Kinzer, p. 178)

With no candidate having achieved a majority, the Chilean Congress was scheduled to convene seven weeks after the election and certify the winner, traditionally the person with the most votes. Powerful forces were intent on preventing that. (Davis, p. 5)

On September 6, U.S. Ambassador Edward Korry sounded the alarm in a cable to President Richard Nixon: "Chile voted calmly to have a Marxist-Leninist State, the first nation in the world to make this choice freely and knowingly . . . There is a graveyard smell to Chile, the fumes of democracy in decomposition. They stank in my nostrils in Czechoslovakia in 1948, and they are no less sickening today." (Reeves, *Nixon*, pp. 248-249)

Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger were furious upon hearing the news. According to CIA historian Thomas Powers, as Ambassador Korry was entering the

Oval Office, he heard the president mutter, "That son of a bitch." Korry looked startled. "Not you, Mr. Ambassador," said Nixon. "It's that bastard Allende. We're going to smash him." (Davis, p. 6)

Kissinger harbored a visceral hatred of Allende. In a briefing to a gathering of newspaper editors, he said, "There's a good chance he will establish over a period of years some sort of Communist government . . . that would present massive problems for the democratic and pro-U.S. forces in the whole Western Hemisphere." (Davis, p. 7)

Realizing his prize asset, the Chilean telephone system, was on the verge of nationalization, IT&T CEO Harold Geneen conveyed a message to Kissinger that he was willing to contribute $1 million to an anti-Allende initiative. (Kinzer, p. 172)

On September 15, the president summoned CIA director Richard Helms to his office, and with Kissinger and John Mitchell present, instructed him to "leave no stone unturned . . . to block Allende's confirmation." Helms left the meeting with a page of scribbled notes: "One in ten chance, perhaps, but save Chile . . . not concerned risks involved; no involvement of embassy; $10,000,000 available, more if necessary; full-time job--best men we have . . . make economy scream; 48 hours for plan of action." (Kinzer, p. 173; Reeves, *Nixon*, p. 250)

Helms's anti-Allende operation would have two tracks. Track I's goal was to reverse by legal means Chile's ban on the president succeeding himself and engineer the reelection of Frei. It failed because Frei was averse to undermining the constitution, bribing congressmen, and conspiring with Alessandri or Tomic. (Kinzer, p. 179)

More ambitious was Track II. CIA agents in Santiago were directed to "contact the military and let them know the U.S. government wants a military solution" to the Allende problem. (Kinzer, p. 179)

A number of diplomats and CIA officials learned of the project and expressed doubts. A National Security Study Memorandum concluded that "the U.S. has no vital national interests within Chile." A CIA officer wrote that Allende was not likely to take orders from Moscow or Havana and that plotting against him would be "repeating errors we made in 1959 and 1960 when we drove Fidel Castro into the Soviet camp." (Kinzer, p. 180)

Henry Kissinger dismissed such qualms with one of his most quoted maxims: "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its people." (Kinzer, p. 180)

At the behest of the CIA, the U.S. military attache in Santiago, Colonel Paul Wimert, Jr., identified two disgruntled Chilean generals, Roberto Viaux, retired, and Camilo Valenzuela, commander of a key district in the capital. A successful coup, however, had to overcome an insurmountable roadblock: Army Commander-in-Chief Rene Schneider, who had no tolerance for military interference in politics. (Kinzer, p. 182)

Although not in partnership, Viaux and Valenzuela began scheming to remove Schneider. "Between October 5 and October 20, the CIA had twenty-six contacts or meetings with

members of the two cabals. Allegedly, Wimert and the CIA offered $100,000 for a successful kidnapping of General Schneider." (Davis, p. 9)

On October 18, Wimert delivered six tear gas grenades to comrades of Valenzuela, followed early on the morning of the 22nd by three submachine guns and ammunition. (Davis, pp. 9-10)

Six hours later, while Schneider was en route to his office, a jeep struck his chauffeur-driven car. Five men surrounded him and opened fire, using weapons of their own rather than those supplied by the CIA.

As the assailants, it was later determined, were associated with Viaux, not Valenzuela, the CIA attempted to deny responsibility for the shooting despite having advised Viaux "to join forces with other coup planners." Meetings with, and instructions from, President Nixon and NSA Kissinger indicate that the CIA was assured that its effort in support of this assassination had the full backing of the White House. (Davis, p. 10; Kinzer, p. 184, Kornbluh, pp. 32-33)

Schneider's assassination failed to arouse the citizenry to call for a military strong man to take over and restore order. As prescribed by law, "The Chilean Congress met on October 24 and, by a vote of 153 to 24, certified Allende's election. He was inaugurated on November 4." (Kinzer, p. 184)

Richard Nixon resolved to continue if not intensify, the effort to discredit and ultimately depose Allende. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird spoke for the administration when he declared, "We have to do everything we can to hurt [Allende] and bring him down." Their new strategy, developed in conjunction with the CIA, was to inflict Chile with severe economic distress, foment social chaos, and create the justification for military intervention. (Kinzer, p. 185; Kornbluh, p. 79)

The United States flexed its muscles to erect an "invisible blockade" against a country which was deeply dependent on it for its financial, industrial, and commercial well-being.

The Export-Import Bank and the Agency for International Development announced that they would no longer approve "any new commitments of U.S. bilateral assistance to Chile." The Inter-American Development Bank reduced Chile's credit rating from B to D; other banks followed suit. The World Bank was informed that the U.S. would oppose all lending to Chile. (Kinzer, p. 185; Kornbluh, p. 83)

During Allende's three-year presidency from 1970 to 1973, the U.S. government spent $6 million on covert operations in Chile. More than $3.5 million was funneled to opposition parties. Subsidization of the anti-Allende newspaper *El Mercurio* totaled $1.7 million. More than $1.5 million was dispatched to business, labor, civic, and militant right-wing groups to instigate protests, demonstrations, and violence. (Davis, p. 308; Kinzer p. 186; Kornbluh, p. 94)

Undaunted, Allende moved forward with his socialist agenda. Among the reforms he enacted were social security for all workers; land redistribution; improved housing, sanitation, and health care; free meals for schoolchildren; and a higher minimum wage. He also pursued an aggressive nationalization policy.

On July 11, 1971, the Chilean Congress ratified a constitutional amendment authorizing the government to nationalize two American-owned copper mining companies, Kennecott and Anaconda, which operated, respectively, the largest underground and open-pit copper mines in the world. (Kinzer, p. 187)

On March 21, 1972, Washington columnist Jack Anderson disclosed IT&T Chairman Geneen's furtive collaboration with the CIA, reporting "that IT&T dealt regularly with the Central Intelligence Agency and, at one point considered triggering a military coup to head off Allende's election." (Kornbluh, p. 97)

The Allende government announced that IT&T's majority holdings in the Compania de Telefonos de Chile would be expropriated through a vote of the Chilean Congress. (Kornbluh, p. 98)

Allende's democratic march to socialism was moving too slowly for some, too fast for others. Many union members were eager to nationalize their factories, and in fact during the next two years, more than five hundred enterprises would be taken over by their workers. The movement ran the risk of alienating a business oriented middle class. (Winn, VI)

Chilean truckers were fiercely independent entrepreneurs who disdained nationalization. Their fears erupted in October 1972 in a provincial strike which spread rapidly across the country and engulfed other sectors of the economy. Within days shopkeepers, taxi drivers, artisans, small business and industry guilds, and professionals declared their solidarity with the truckers. (Davis, p. 109)

After weeks of fruitless negotiations, Allende agreed to bring military officers into his cabinet. Among them was Carlos Prats Gonzalez, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, who was named Minister of the Interior. The strikers went back to work on November 5 after Prats promised that trucking would not be nationalized and that he would introduce legislation protecting small businessmen and artisans. (Davis, pp. 111-115)

In the wake of the settlement, Allende traveled to the U.S. seeking an audience with President Nixon, Secretary of State William Rogers, or Henry Kissinger. Rebuffed by all, on December 4 he rose before the General Assembly of the United Nations and delivered one of most memorable speeches ever heard in the great hall. He accused IT&T and Kennecott of having "buried their fangs" in his country. He asserted as a principle of international law that "a country's natural resources -- particularly when they are its very life blood -- belong to it." (Davis, pp. 124-125)

"We are the victims of a new form of imperialism," he went on. "External pressure . . . has tried to cut us off from the world, to strangle our economy . . . We find ourselves opposed by forces that operate in the shadows, without a flag, with powerful weapons, from

positions of great influence . . . We are potentially rich countries, yet we live in poverty. We go here and there, begging for credit and aid, yet we are great exporters of capital." (Davis, p. 124; Kinzer, p. 189)

The CIA, which had been sowing seeds of disorder since Allende's election, recognized where lay its best hope for a successful overthrow. In a postmortem on the election, Station Chief Ray Warren stated that his agents "should attempt [to] induce as much of the military as possible, if not all, to take over and displace the Allende govt." (Kinzer, p. 190; Kornbluh, p. 106)

On the morning of June 29, 1973, three combat groups of tanks and armored cars accompanied by one hundred soldiers attacked the Ministry of Defense and freed an imprisoned officer. They surrounded the Moneda Palace but could not subdue the palace guard. General Prats, still loyal to Allende, rallied troops to his cause, marched into the square brandishing a submachine gun, and quelled the insurrection mostly by the force of his personality. (Davis, pp. 171-172)

The mini uprising had two consequences. Faced with a revolt, Allende panicked. He went on the air and called on factory workers to mobilize, to pour into the streets, "to take over the industries" -- an illegitimate and unnecessary challenge to his military leaders' "monopoly of force" and responsibility for order. In doing so, he impaired, if not severed, his relationship with them. They in turn were not blind to the reluctance of the workers to rush to the center of the city, weapons in hand, to defend their president and the revolution. (Davis, pp. 171, 174)

Things began to fall apart. On July 25, the truckers announced another stoppage, claiming the authorities had reneged on their promises of October 1972. Bus drivers, taxi drivers, and employees of the Santiago water works walked off the job. Basic foodstuffs had to be rationed; coffee, tea, and sugar were scarce; produce and grain rotted in warehouses. Anti-government gangs in countryside dynamited roads, bridges, and tunnels. (Davis, p. 182; Kinzer, pp. 191-192)

In his adversity Allende turned again to his military leadership in the hope that they could restore confidence, normality, and some measure of tranquility. He appointed Prats minister of defense, naval commander-in-chief Cornejo Montero minister of finance, and air force head Danyau Ruiz minister of public works and transport. (Davis, p. 187)

Prats's tenure was short-lived. *El Mercurio* published articles portraying him as treasonably pro-Communist. On August 21, several hundred army wives gathered outside his home to protest his allegiance to Allende. The next day his generals repudiated him 12 to 6. That night he wrote: "Only one road remains to me, to resign . . . I do not wish to be either the motive or the pretext for the holocaust." Thus was removed "the main factor mitigating against a coup," reported the Defense Intelligence Agency. (Davis, p. 198; Kornbluh, p. 111)

Acting on Prats's recommendation, Allende appointed his deputy general Augusto Pinochet to succeed him as army commander-in-chief. Pinochet told Prats he accepted with the words: "Mr. President, please know that I am ready to give my life in defense of the Constitutional Government of which you are the embodiment." (Davis, p. 227; Kinzer, p. 191)

On September 6, Allende, in a speech to the Chilean national women's secretariat, disclosed that there was enough flour in stock for only three or four days. He laid the blame on difficulties in agricultural production, clogged ports, railway congestion, and the truckers' strike. (Davis, p. 214)

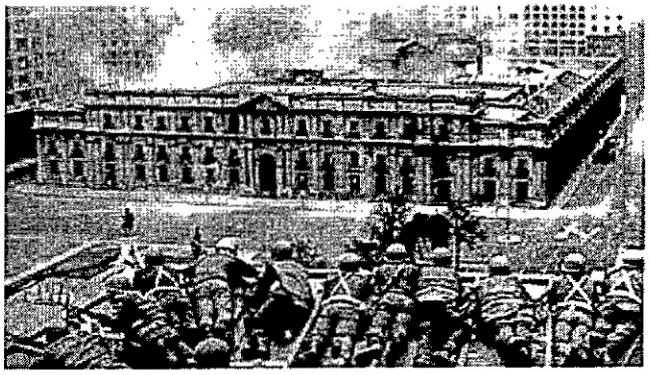
This announcement convinced the military -- specifically, Colonel Gustavo Leigh of the Air Force, senior navy commander Jose Merino, and Carabineros (National Police) Generals Cesar Mendoza and Arturo Yovane -- that they could wait no longer. They would act, but only with the assurance that Pinochet was with them. (Davis, pp. 214-216)

On September 9, Merino sent two emissaries to Pinochet's house in Santiago with a message that the navy had set the 11th as the date to act, alone if need be. General Leigh arrived and signed his name and the word "Agreed" on the back of the note. Pinochet then signed and offered his seal. Thus was the decision made final that the military services would overthrow the president of Chile. (Davis, p. 222)

Early on the morning of Tuesday, September 11, "soldiers, sailors, and marines across the country were called to duty and began securing radio stations, town halls, police stations, and other centers of power." By 7:00 AM they had occupied Valparasio. (Davis, p. 236; Kinzer, p. 193)

At 7:30 Allende arrived at the Moneda Palace determined to defend it with the help of the carabineros on duty -- about three hundred. (Davis, pp. 240-243)

At 8:30 the opposition Radio Agricultura broadcast the Junta's first pronouncement of military rule, Edict No. 1, signed by Pinochet, Mendoza, Leigh, and Merino. They cited Chile's grave social and moral situation and the government's inability to prevent chaos. They demanded the president's resignation and proclaimed their resolve to liberate the country from its Marxist yoke and restore order and constitutional rule. (Davis, pp. 249-250)



At 9:30 the president addressed the people of Chile for the last time. "I will not resign," he said. "I will not do it. I am ready to resist by all means, even at the cost of my own life . . . I gave my word that I would respect the Constitution and the law, and I have done so. In this final moment before my voice is silenced, I want you to learn this lesson: foreign capital and imperialism, united with reaction, created the climate for the armed forces' break with

their tradition . . . Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers! These are my last words, and I am sure that my sacrifice will not be in vain."(Davis, pp. 253-254)

Shortly before noon an aerial bombardment commenced, setting fires in the Moneda and filling the north side of the building with smoke, flames, and gases. (Davis, p. 265)

At 1:30 PM rebel infantry entered the ground floor and overwhelmed Allende's bodyguards. Presented with an ultimatum and without recourse, he agreed to surrender. His entourage, about thirty persons including his mistress, several cabinet members, his cousin Isabel, his press secretary, two Radical Party leaders, and about half a dozen physicians, began to descend from the second floor where they had taken refuge. (Davis, pp. 247-248)

One of the doctors, Patricia Guijon, gave this account of Allende's last moments: "The president was last in line. Passing the Independence Salon, he slipped out of the procession and -- without being observed -- entered it. He sat down on a sofa, took off his gas mask, his helmet, and his glasses. As he had threatened to do, he placed the muzzle of Fidel's gift automatic under his chin. The rifle was set on 'automatic,' and there were two shots left. He pressed the trigger. The two bullets blew out his cranial chamber. There was not much blood; only brain matter propelled in all directions." (Davis, p. 269)

Allende was buried the next day in a family vault in the Santa Ines Cemetery close to his house in Vina del Mar. (Davis, p. 274)

The Junta -- Pinochet, Merino, Leigh, and Mendoza -- formally constituted itself at 4:00 o'clock on the afternoon of the coup. At 7:10, at the military school, it held its first session and later that evening the four men took their oaths of office. Fifteen months later, in December 1974, they named Pinochet Supreme Head of the Nation by joint decree. (Davis, p. 275)

Thus ended one-hundred-fifty years of democratic constitutional government in Chile.

Investigations by the Church Committee of the U.S. Senate and the United States Intelligence Community absolved the U.S. of direct involvement in the Chilean Coup of September 11, 1973, with qualifications. The latter's 2000 report stated that "although the CIA did not instigate the coup that brought down Allende, it was aware of plotting by the military, had ongoing intelligence collection relationships with some plotters, and -- because it did not discourage the takeover and had tried to organize a similar operation in 1970 -- appeared to condone it." (Wikipedia, Allende)

"Moreover, the CIA and other sectors of the U.S. government were active in operations designed to create a 'coup climate' in which the overthrow of Chilean democracy could and would take place." (Kornbluh, p. 114)

After a review of recorded telephone conversations between President Nixon and Henry Kissinger, historian Robert Dallek concluded that both engaged the CIA to destabilize the Allende government. (Wikipedia, Allende)

Pinochet's investiture inaugurated a seventeen-year reign of terror. "One of his first acts was to order a nationwide series of raids on leftists and other supporters of the deposed regime." Thirty thousand persons were arrested and tortured; twenty-three hundred disappeared; thirteen hundred were exiled. He abolished the country's largest labor federation; banned political parties that had backed Allende; declared Congress on "indefinite recess"; removed all mayors and city councilors from office; and decreed a new legal code that forbade the appeal of decisions by military courts. (Kinzer, p. 211)

"Almost overnight Washington reopened the spigot of bilateral and multilateral economic and military assistance to Santiago." Within two months the Department of Agriculture issued Chile $48 million in commodity credits for the purchase of wheat and corn to alleviate food shortages. During the next three years these credits were supplemented by $132 million in Food for Peace grants. The same period saw the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank authorize $300 million in loans, a thirty-fold increase from the Allende years. This largesse freed up foreign exchange for the acquisition of armaments, and by 1977 Chile had established itself as the fifth largest customer in the world of U.S. military hardware. (Kornbluh, pp. 212-214)

Pinochet's criminal web extended far beyond his country's borders. In October 1975, the head of Chile's secret police, Colonel Manuel Contreras, invited his counterparts from Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia to Santiago for the initial meeting of what would become the "most sinister state-sponsored terrorist network in the Western Hemisphere": Operation Condor. Its agenda: the tracking, surveillance, kidnapping, torture, and

interrogation of regional militant guerillas, civilian political figures, and exile leaders living in Europe and the United States. (Kornbluh, pp. 331-332)

The Chilean secret police's most notorious crimes were the assassinations of former commander in chief Carlos Prats (and his wife) in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on September 30, 1974, and of Orlando Letelier, former ambassador to the U.S. and minister in Allende's cabinet in Washington DC on September 21, 1976. (Letelier's American colleague, Ronni Karpen Moffitt was also slain.) All four were victims of car bombs planted by Michael Townley, an American expatriate who had been recruited by Colonel Contreras. Until the Al Qaeda attacks of September 11, 2001, the Letelier-Moffitt murders "constituted the most brazen act of international terrorism ever committed on American soil." (Kornbluh, pp. 334-335, 349, 352)

Pinochet amassed $28,003,541.51 during his years in power through corruption, extortion, and outright theft. He left office peacefully in 1988 after losing the popular vote in a plebiscite by a 56 to 44 margin. He was later prosecuted for embezzlement, tax fraud, and kickbacks on arms deals. At his death in 2006, about three hundred criminal charges were pending against him for human rights violations committed during his presidency. (Wikipedia, Allende)

The U.S. did indeed smash the democratic socialist Salvador Allende. It waged economic warfare against him; funded opposition parties, publications, and propaganda; and shared intelligence with potential rebels. But the people of Chile had to suffer the consequences: seventeen years of ruthless oppression and dictatorial rule.

The coups in Iran, Guatemala, and Chile were not rogue operations. They were "ordered by the president" and endorsed and carried out by cabinet secretaries, national security advisers, and CIA directors. On the other hand, they demonstrated the willingness, if not the desire, of the president to delegate enormous power and resources to a largely unaccountable and opaque agency to conduct a range of subversive and violent operations. (Kinzer, p. 95; Hitchcock, p. 149)

If the president and his surrogates initially regarded their covert plots as great victories in the war against communism, the judgment of history has rendered a different verdict. (Kinzer, p. 216)

"In all three countries, they led to repression and reduced freedom . . . They intensified the Cold War by further polarizing the two opposing sides and thwarting opportunities for rapprochement. They undermined Americans' trust in the CIA . . . Around the world, they led millions to conclude that the United States was a hypocritical nation" willing to act brutally to overthrow legitimate governments which sought to free themselves from the shackles of political and economic dependency. (Kinzer, p. 216)

REFERENCES

Davis, Nathaniel. *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Doubek, James. *The U.S. Set the Stage for a Coup in Chile*. National Public Radio, September 10, 2023.

Fox, Senan. *Remembering Salvador Allende*. National Public Radio, August 21, 2013.

Karnow, Stanley. *Vietnam: A History*. New York: The Viking Press, 1983.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006.

Kornbluh, Peter. *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability.* New York: The New Press, 2013.

Reeves, Richard. *President Nixon: Alone in the White House*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Reeves, Richard. *President Kennedy: Profile of Power*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Weiner, Tim. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

Winn, Peter. "Salvador Allende: His Political Life . . . and Afterlife." *Socialism and Democracy*, November 2005.