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*From Success to Failure:
How the CIA Failed to Alter the Iranian Plan in Subsequent Interventions*

“The lack of objectivity, as far as foreign nations are concerned, is notorious. From one day to another, another nation is made out to be utterly depraved and fiendish, while one's own nation stands for everything that is good and noble. Every action of the enemy is judged by one standard - every action of oneself by another. Even good deeds by the enemy are considered a sign of particular devilishness, meant to deceive us and the world, while our bad deeds are necessary and justified by our noble goals which they serve.”

-Erich Fromm

Terror in Tehran

The date was August 23, 1953, and Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi had returned from his exile in Italy to reclaim the Peacock Throne of Iran. Only a few days earlier, anarchy and chaos erupted on the streets of Tehran as anti-Mossadegh protestors set the city ablaze. Pro-Shah sympathizers seized Radio Tehran, and began broadcasting to the Iranian populace that General Fazlollah Zahedi was the rightful prime minister of Iran. This sent shockwaves throughout the Islamic world, as a blossoming democracy plunged into despotism. The events that occurred that day would have profound consequences that would change the course of American-Islamic relations for decades. Until recently, only a select few individuals actually understood the underpinnings of the events that occurred in Tehran that day. ¹

The 1953 coup d'état in Iran was a test-case for an American foreign policy of regime change that became prevalent throughout the Cold War. American foreign policy during the Cold War was geared towards the establishment of anti-Communist states, and the United States was willing to push its own legally-acceptable boundaries to ensure

¹ Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 127.

this. Never before had the United States' intelligence agencies had a direct hand in a regime change on foreign soil. The successes of the CIA would later be reenacted in other countries, while some failures would be analyzed and altered. Also, the political and economic makeup of Iran was ideal for American interests. A centralization of nationalistic power within the executive branch caused great fear within the American government. This fear, coupled with a decline in American economic influence within the country, made Iran and other countries the main focus for American intervention. Furthermore, the actions of the United States in Iran would be subsequently implemented in other regime changes abroad, (i.e. Guatemala under Arbenz, Cuba under Castro). The CIA's use of the 'Iranian Plan,' or the strategy applied in Operation AJAX, would eventually succeed in Guatemala. However, the Agency's inability to adapt the Iranian Plan would prove costly in Cuba. The reasons for the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion are extremely complex. However, its roots are embedded in the CIA's stubbornness to change its ways.

Secret America

In order to fully understand the events that occurred in Iran, it is necessary to first discuss the development of American clandestine activities. During the Second World War in 1942, President Roosevelt signed an Executive military order into effect that created the Office of Strategic Services. This was one of the first times in the history of the United States that the American government gained its intelligence from an organization that was not connected to the executive branch. The OSS served as a predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency, which was established in 1947 by the

National Security Act. The original mandate stated that the CIA was to carry out “functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security,” and also included “sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition and evacuation measures...subversion [and] assistance to underground resistance movements, guerrillas and refugee liberation movements, and support of indigenous anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the world.”² The intent of NSC 10/2 was to extend extraordinary powers to the CIA, as it could act independently of the government sector to infiltrate ‘hostile’ areas of the world. At that time, the government’s idea of ‘hostile’ would have been directly related to countries with communist elements.

Further developments within the United States government were also critical to American perceptions of the outside world. In the aftermath of the Second World War, two great superpowers arose, with competing political and economic ideologies. The United States thrived within a democratic and capitalistic society. In contrast, the Soviet Union built a global power upon strict communist policies. Each power was highly critical of the opposing power, which directly affected policy-making decisions. The American perception was formulated by both the general public and the government, and was primarily based upon the experiences and actions of George Kennan, who served as a deputy chief of the U.S. mission to Moscow. Kennan made several arguments that became the foundation of American Cold War policy. He states in his infamous “X” article, “In these circumstances it is clear that the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant

² National Security Council Report: NSC 10/2, “National Security Council Directive on Office of Special Projects,” quoted in Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2003), 84.

containment of Russian expansive tendencies.”³ Also, the majority of the American populace believed that the Communist Soviet Union was non-religious, or atheist. This religious approach exemplifies the importance of non-political aspects to Cold War policies. Kennan’s analysis of Soviet policy directly resulted in the establishment of ‘containment’ as the leading U.S. foreign policy of the Cold War.

Likewise, the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Nikolai Novikov, perceived similar threats within the United States. Novikov assessed that the political elite in the United States believed that it had “the right to lead the world” in the aftermath of the Second World War. He argued that the United States’ goal in the post-war period was to establish political and economic hegemony throughout the world. The creation of a peacetime army exhibited the expansionist and imperialistic aspirations of the United States.⁴ These competing perspectives of the Soviet Union and United States were the critical components of Cold War policy-making.

With a newly established policy of containment abroad, the CIA was not reluctant to exhibit its power shortly after its creation. During the 1948 Italian elections, the CIA played a pivotal role in the eventual outcome. It was the goal of the United States to “undertake further measures designed to prevent the Communists from winning participation in the government.”⁵ This analysis, written about a month before the general elections, initiated a program in which the CIA allocated funds in excess of \$1

³ X, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 2 (1947): 567.

⁴ Nikolai Novikov, Telegram to the Kremlin, September, 27, 1946.

⁵ National Security Council report: NSC 1/3, in *Foreign Relations of the United States 1948, Western Europe, Vol. III, 777* (Digital Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Madison).

million to the Christian Democratic Party and other ‘center-parties.’ This economic assistance would be prevalent in general Italian elections for the next few decades.⁶

The actions of the United States government and the CIA in Italy served as a mere foundation for the scale of operations that would ensue in Iran. Despite attempts by the Truman administration to limit Communist influence abroad, the new Republican White House under Eisenhower felt that the United States needed to enhance its efforts worldwide. Eisenhower’s Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, argued that the United States would secure the “liberation” of nations that had fallen victim to its “despotism and godless terrorism.”⁷ By this time, Iran had already garnered the attention of the United States government. As NSC 136/1 states, “the major United States policy objective with respect to Iran is to prevent the country from coming under communist control.” Furthermore, the American government understood the strategic importance of maintaining access to Iranian oil, as a communist Iran could “seriously threaten the loss of other Middle Eastern oil.”⁸ Although the United States did not have a significantly large stake in the Iranian economy, it understood the possible consequences that could come as a result of losing Iran’s oil industries. The efficacy of the United States to handle this problem would have far-reaching effects on its relations with the Middle East.

A Cry for Help

⁶ *CIA: The Pike Report*, (Nottingham, England: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1977), 204-5, previously presented to the Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. House of Representatives (The Pike Committee) during closed hearings held in 1975.

⁷ “Dulles Positions in 1952 Campaign,” *New York Times*, July, 10, 1952. quoted in Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America’s Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 117.

⁸ National Security Council report: NSC 136/1, “A Report to the National Security Council by the Executive Secretary on United States Policy Regarding the Present Situation in Iran,” *Top Secret Report*, November 20, 1952.

It wasn't until Mossadegh shut down the British embassy on October 16, 1952, that the United States had a legitimate reason to become involved in coup planning. The newly-elected Eisenhower administration instilled hope within the ranks of the British government, as British officials presented Kermit Roosevelt, chief of CIA operations in the Middle East, with a proposal. Roosevelt, the grandson of former President Theodore Roosevelt, considered the proposal "a plan of battle."

What they had in mind was nothing less than the overthrow of Mossadegh. Furthermore, they saw no point in wasting time by delay. They wanted to start immediately. I had to explain that the project would require considerable clearance from my government and that I was not entirely sure what the results would be. As I told my British colleagues, we had, I felt sure, no chance to win approval from the outgoing administration of Truman and Acheson. The new Republicans, however, might be quite different.⁹

Despite initial pushes by the British government for U.S. support, several American officials were quite hesitant at first to show interest in the situation in Iran. However, in March 1953, the U.S. station in Tehran received a telegram from an Iranian general who had requested Ambassador Henderson's "views as to whether or not the US Government was interested in covertly supporting an Iranian military effort to oust Premier Mossadeq." The response was cautiously crafted to show American interest, without committing the United States to action. After careful consideration, General Walter Bedell Smith, Under Secretary of State, determined that it would be critical to

⁹ Kermit Roosevelt, *Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 107-8.

American policy in Iran to “no longer approve of the Mossadeq government” and move to institute a replacement government with “no National Frontists.”¹⁰

Only a month earlier, the United States worked in strict cooperation with the British government to adopt a comprehensive proposal to preserve Western influence in the Iranian oil industry. On February 20, 1953, a joint U.S.-U.K. proposal was released to Mossadegh which provided for, “(a) determination through the International Court of Justice of compensation due the AIOC ‘for loss of its enterprise in Iran’ and of the validity of Iranian claims against the AIOC; (b) the establishment of a marketing organization of an international character to purchase Iranian oil; and (c) the purchase by the United States Government, immediately following agreement upon methods for determining compensation of \$135,000,000 worth of oil and oil products.” The State Department also came up with three alternative solutions, a lump-sum settlement, a moratorium, and the purchase of U.K. equity in AIOC by the United States.¹¹ Each of these proposals were subsequently rejected by Mossadegh, due to the lack of the United States government (most notably President Eisenhower) to explore other avenues. Through several cables, Eisenhower continually rejected Mossadegh’s inquiries into American economic aid, as he solely pushed for Iranian oil reform.

Donald Wilber, Kermit Roosevelt, and the Situation in Iran

Due to the aforementioned factors, the United States government began to delve into the internal affairs of Iran. CIA Director Allen Dulles placed the coup planning in the

¹⁰ Donald Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953* (CIA Clandestine Service History, 1954), 2, released April 16, 2000 by the New York Times. The name of the Iranian general who initially contacted the Tehran Station has been redacted in the document’s released form.

¹¹ United States Department of State, *Proposed Course of Action with Respect to Iran* (Top Secret Draft Memorandum, August 10, 1953), 5-6.

hands of Dr. Donald Wilber, who was a veteran of both the OSS and CIA, and an expert on Middle Eastern architectural history. Wilber believed that the operational plan had to include certain basic assumptions within a particular framework, and these assumptions were:

that Zahedi alone of potential candidates had the vigor and courage to make him worthy of support; that the Shah must be brought into the operation; that the Shah would act only with great reluctance but that he could be forced to do so; that if the issue was clear-cut the armed forces would follow the Shah rather than Mossadeq; that the operation, if possible, be made to appear legal or quasi-legal instead of an outright coup; that public opinion must be fanned to fever pitch against Mossadeq in the period just preceding the execution of the overthrow operation...¹²

On June 1, 1953, the preliminary plan for Operation TAJAX was cabled from Nicosia to CIA Headquarters in the United States. Several of these proposed policies were implemented upon agreement by Tehran, Nicosia (the base of the Policy Planning Staff), Britain, and the United States. In addition, the CIA and MI6 would allocate funds to sway influential individuals to ensure their support. Within the cable, Wilber still argues that the major issue is to maintain an independent Iran and keep it from the Soviet orbit.¹³ The fear of communist infiltration was undoubtedly a driving force behind Wilber's analysis. However, CIA Director Dulles maintained that Mossadeq had "never disclosed the intention of creating a Communist state."¹⁴ This discrepancy, among others, exemplifies the disconnect between certain sectors of the operation.

¹² Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, 8-9.

¹³ CIA, "Initial Operation Plan for TPAJAX as Cabled from Nicosia to Headquarters on 1 June 1953," in Donald Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953* (CIA Clandestine Service History, 1954). <http://www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/iran-cia-appendix-a.pdf>

¹⁴ Allen Dulles, *The Craft of Intelligence* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), 224.

The differences between certain CIA and MI6 officials did not delay the implementation of Operation TAJAX. After several meetings between Roosevelt, Wilber, and British officials, the plan was revised to satisfy both parties. According to Wilber's account, "it was clear that the SIS had no major comments of their own on the draft plan."¹⁵ This lack of British insight and placation to the United States allowed American officials to dictate their own terms for the coup. The final approval for the operation came at a June 25 State Department meeting, and the subsequent plan came in four main components.¹⁶ The United States would continue its propaganda campaign, establish opposition to the National Front in the Majlis, consult the Shah to gain his approval, and attain the support of active-duty military officers. In order to accomplish this goal, the CIA enlisted the help of the Rashidian brothers that had been previously employed by the MI6.

Since the American government had been organizing a propaganda campaign since the late 1940s, it was essential to maintain its continuance. The program, codenamed BEDAMN, was instituted in 1948 to "counter Soviet and Tudeh influence in Iran." It was spearheaded by two Iranians, codenamed Nerren and Cilley, who were funded roughly \$1 million per year. The primary goal of the propaganda sector of BEDAMN was to release anti-communist articles and cartoons into Iranian newspapers, books, and leaflets. It also promoted direct attacks on Soviet allies and Tudeh party

¹⁵ Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, 14.

¹⁶ Mark J. Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup D'Etat in Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 3 (Aug., 1987): 272. <http://www.jstor.org/>. The events and plans outlined in this section are the result of an interview conducted by Gasiorowski and the CIA's American Iran specialist in an August 1984 interview.

affiliates.¹⁷ As for the success of AJAX, the campaign needed to be revised to maximize efficiency. The capabilities of the propaganda and political action sectors of BEDAMN were to “be turned immediately against Mosaddeq.”¹⁸

The American government extended its financial capabilities to the Majlis in order to garner their support. On May 20, 1953, the Tehran Station authorized an allotment of one million rials a week to purchase the support of certain members of the Majlis.¹⁹ The plan was successful, as continual disputes hampered any dialogue between the two competing factions. Pro- and anti-Mossadegh quarreled over issues ranging from control of the army to the election of a new speaker. Mossadegh accomplished a huge feat when Abdullah Moazami was selected to replace Abol-Ghasem Kashani as speaker. As a result, protests and attacks intensified, forcing the resignation of several pro-Mossadegh officials. These changes paralyzed the Majlis, which caused Mossadegh to seek new elections.²⁰ This caused great concern in the United States, which viewed Mossadegh’s actions as a movement to solidify executive power.

The reluctance of the Shah to support an overthrow was increasingly evident to the United States in the early stages of the coup planning. His disinclination to support the CIA’s plan was undoubtedly the most practical stance. If the coup was to fail, the blame would be placed upon the Shah as a dissident. However, in the United States the CIA implemented an approach of “plausible deniability,” which gave President Eisenhower the chance to deny American involvement if its covert operations went

¹⁷ Gasiorowski, “Coup D’Etat,” 268. The information relating to BEDAMN is the result of several interviews conducted by Middle Eastern historian Mark J. Gasiorowski. Gasiorowski interviewed seven former CIA officers that were stationed in Iran during this time.

¹⁸ Gasiorowski, “Coup D’Etat,” 272.

¹⁹ Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadegh of Iran*, 19. At this time, 90 rials were the equivalent of 1 U.S. dollar.

²⁰ British Foreign Office, *Dr. Musaddiq’s Move to Dissolve the Majlis*, July 21, 1953, FO/371/104569.

wrong.²¹ Also, the Shah had been instilled with fear ever since Mossadegh had learned that foreign officials had infiltrated and bribed the Majlis to “support a no-confidence motion against him.”²² It took several efforts by Roosevelt to finally garner the trust of the Shah to issue the *firman*s. Roosevelt and his fellow conspirators finally had the ability to go forward with their plan

Out with the Old and in with the New

On the afternoon of August 14, Roosevelt provided the *firman* dismissing Mossadegh as prime minister to Colonel Nematollah Nassiri. Nassiri was a loyal sympathizer of the Shah, and a staunch supporter of a possible regime change. He subsequently led a squad of pro-Shah soldiers to Mossadegh’s house to present the order. Upon his arrival, a group of soldiers surrounded him and took him prisoner. The prime minister had caught wind of his proposed dismissal just in time.

A radio broadcast the next morning glorified Mossadegh’s efforts to combat an attempted coup by the Shah and other ‘foreign elements.’ The Shah’s fear of retaliation caused him to flee the country to Baghdad with Empress Soraya. From there, they traveled aboard a commercial flight to Rome. The Shah’s fears only fueled Roosevelt’s ambitions to carry out what he had started. He had an extremely loyal network of agents in Iran that had accumulated great wealth at the expense of the CIA. Roosevelt summoned his top two Iranian operatives to regroup and come up with a contingency plan.²³ These agents had extremely close ties with a majority of Tehran’s street gangs. It

²¹ CIA, “Zendeabad, Shah!” The Central Intelligence Agency and the Fall of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, August 1953,” *Top Secret Draft History*, June 1998.

²² Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 125.

²³ Roosevelt, *Countercoup*, 178.

was Roosevelt's intention to instigate riots with these gangs to create chaos throughout the city. However, the agents declined this proposal as the "risk of arrest" loomed over their heads. Roosevelt countered their doubts with two brash propositions:

He responded in the best tradition of secret agents. First he offered the two agents \$50,000 to continue working with him. They remained unmoved. Then he added the second part of his deal: if the men refused, he would kill them. That changed their minds. They left the embassy compound with a briefcase full of cash and a renewed willingness to help.²⁴

Roosevelt's boldness to essentially blackmail his top two operatives exemplified the importance of this mission. That week, it finally paid off. Several gangs organized demonstrations all over Tehran, turning the city into a miniature war zone. Since Mossadegh was such a staunch supporter of democratic principles, he ordered his loyal supporters to not partake in the rioting. Police units were dispatched to quell the rebellion and reestablish order. However, several of these individuals were on the CIA's payroll and subsequently joined the rioters.

The stage was set for a climatic finish, and it came on August 19. Thousands took to the streets demanding the resignation of Mossadegh. They set fire to the offices of a progovernment newspaper, and ransacked "the foreign ministry, the central police station, and the headquarters of the army's general staff."²⁵ During the ensuing chaos, Roosevelt emerged with General Zahedi to a crowd of jubilant supporters. Zahedi declared that he was the new and rightful prime minister of the Shah's Iran.

Mossadegh's fate was much less fortunate. The opposing factions fought violently for control of Mossadegh's house. Finally, the Shah's forces broke through the line and resistance from inside ceased. As the Shah recounted, "By nightfall Mossadegh, still

²⁴ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 127.

²⁵ Ibid.

dressed in his pajamas, fled over the garden wall of his house into the neighboring garden and took refuge in a cellar belonging to the director of postal services.”²⁶ The former prime minister finally surrendered and was sentenced to three years of solitary confinement. Upon his dismissal from prison, Mossadegh was placed under house arrest for the remainder of his life. At his trial, Mossadegh claimed, “My only crime is that I nationalized the Iranian oil industry and removed from this land the network of colonialism and the political and economic influence of the greatest empire on earth.”²⁷ One of Iran’s most renowned and influential leaders was sentenced to a life-time of imprisonment.

The Shah prevailed and regained the Peacock Throne. Zahedi quickly took all the necessary steps to consolidate his power. He purged the government of any individuals suspected of pro-Mossadegh ties. Also, the new prime minister surrounded himself with several of his close friends in his cabinet. Since the new regime had solidified control, Roosevelt was no longer needed. Before his departure, Roosevelt met with the Shah and Zahedi at the monarch’s palace. There, the Shah toasted Roosevelt, “I owe my throne to God, my people, my army—and to you!”²⁸ The CIA had successfully orchestrated the overthrow of a popular prime minister, plunging a young democracy into two decades of tyrannical rule.

Goodbye Democracy

²⁶ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, *Answer to History* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1980), 90.

²⁷ Mohammad Musaddiq, *Musaddiq’s Memoirs: Dr. Mohammad Musaddiq, Champion of the Popular Movement of Iran and Former Prime Minister* (London: Jebhe, 1988), 74.

²⁸ Roosevelt, *Countercoup*, 199.

The Shah's regime can generally be characterized by brutality and oppression. During Mossadegh's reign as prime minister, the Shah's power was greatly weakened, making him a mere figurehead. The Shah argued that prior to the coup he "had been no more than a hereditary sovereign, but now I had truly been elected by the people."²⁹ This observation seems to lack validity in several ways. American and British support was undoubtedly central to the overthrow of Mossadegh. If the Shah had truly been chosen by the general public, foreign support should have been much more peripheral. Also, it is difficult to gauge his popularity against one of Iran's most well-known and admired individuals. Mossadegh embodied all of the attributes needed to be a successful, democratic leader. He opposed colonial hegemony of Iran, and sought numerous measures to ensure this policy. Furthermore, Mossadegh represented freedom. "In his time there was freedom of speech, there were free elections, people could do what they wanted. He reminds us that there was a time in Iran when we had democracy."³⁰ In contrast, the Shah heavily relied upon foreign influence and despotism to establish order. Mohammad Reza Shah opened the Iranian oil industry to an international consortium of foreign oil companies. He used a certain *quid pro quo*, opening Iran's oil industry to American companies while receiving huge economic aid from America's government. Additionally, the SAVAK was established in 1957 to put an end to dissidence.

This organization brutally repressed all political opponents and dissidence movements in Iran for nearly two decades. The Shah wanted to establish an "effective

²⁹ Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, 91.

³⁰ Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men*, 217. Interview between Kinzer and an unnamed Iranian businessman, discussing the legacy of Mossadegh in modern-day Iran.

internal security service” to aid in solidifying his regime.³¹ The United States had a direct hand in supplying funds and weapons, as well as training SAVAK agents. Also, the CIA was instrumental in the creation of this new intelligence agency.

A more important covert U.S. effort to strengthen Iran’s post-coup government began in September 1953, when a U.S. Army colonel working for the CIA was sent to Iran under cover as a military attaché to organize and train a new intelligence unit. This unit was established under the auspices of the Tehran military governorship, which was placed under the command of Gen. Taimur Bakhtiār in December 1953. The U.S. Army colonel worked closely with Bakhtiār and his assistants, advising them on domestic security matters and training them in basic intelligence “tradecraft.”...This unit was the first modern, effective intelligence agency to operate in Iran.³²

By 1955, the Army colonel was replaced by a full-time staff of five career CIA officials, including specialists in covert operations, intelligence analysis, and counterintelligence. These officials were essential to the development of the Iranian intelligence sector, basically training the first generation of SAVAK agents. In 1956, the agency was finally recognized and given the name *Sazeman-e Ettela'at va Amniyat-e Keshvar*, or SAVAK. The CIA officials were subsequently replaced by Mossad agents in the early 1960s.³³

Several of the top ranking officials in SAVAK were close associates of the Shah. Mohammad Reza Shah implemented a government based on cronyism, repressing several critical democratic principles. The aforementioned freedoms that Mossadegh embodied were suppressed. The Shah granted SAVAK an unlimited power to carry out arrests of

³¹ Nikki R. Keddie and Richard Yann, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 144.

³² *Neither East nor West: Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States*, ed. Mark Gasiorowski and Nikki R. Keddie (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 150.

³³ *Ibid*, 154-5. Mossad is the national intelligence agency of Israel.

any individuals that opposed the monarch's regime, (i.e. Tudeh or National Front members, radical fundamentalists, anti-monarchists, etc.). Also, the agency used a range of torture techniques, ranging from bastinado and extensive solitary confinement, to electric shock by cattle prods and the electric chair. Furthermore, prisoners were also raped, urinated on, and forced to stand naked. In the most serious cases, SAVAK agents would execute their captured dissidents.³⁴ It is difficult to estimate how many executions and killings were carried out by SAVAK agents; however, numbers generally range in the thousands. This brutality and oppression greatly angered the Iranian populace; making it Iran's "most hated and feared institution."³⁵

Decades of dissension between the Iranian political elite and the greater populace culminated in the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini put an end to the despotic monarchy that had plagued Iranian society for two and half decades. However, the newly formed theocratic republic continued several of the preceding practices of the Shah's regime. The disbanded SAVAK was merely transformed into a larger intelligence agency, *Sazman-e Ettela'at va Amniat-e Melli-e Iran*, or SAVAMA. This newly created institution has been criticized as being even more brutal than its predecessor.

Also, the strong relationship that had existed between the United States and Iran had rapidly deteriorated. Many individuals within Khomeini's government resented the United States for its direct hand in the 1953 coup d'etat. They also feared that perhaps the United States and CIA were plotting another overthrow, this time of the new

³⁴ Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 106.

³⁵ "SAVAK: Like the CIA," *Time*, February 19, 1979, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,912364,00.html>.

revolutionary government. The admission of Mohammad Reza Shah into an American health clinic only intensified the strained relations.

These moves by the United States angered a group of fundamentalist Iranian students to the brink. On November 4, 1979, they stormed the American embassy and held fifty-three Americans hostage for four hundred and four days. Although Khomeini did not orchestrate the embassy takeover, he fully supported it. His rhetoric towards the United States exemplified his disgust for the American government, referring to the US as the “Great Satan.” At one point during the year-plus takeover, one of the captures told a hostage “You have no right to complain, because you took our whole country hostage in 1953.”³⁶ This anti-American ardor still emanates in the present-day, as American-Iranian relations are still strained.

The events that occurred in Iran are only a microcosm of American clandestine activities abroad. The measures that were implemented in Operation AJAX would be put into use in several other areas of the world. It is practically implausible to comprehend how easily the CIA and the US government could overthrow a foreign government. The American political elite had tasted victory, and were eager to duplicate it elsewhere.

Implementation of the Iranian Plan Elsewhere

The success of the CIA in Iran was not merely a coincidence. The agency had an unfathomable array of resources, ranging from extensive funds to cutting-edge

³⁶ Stephen Kinzer, “Stephen Kinzer on US-Iranian Relations, the 1953 CIA Coup in Iran and the Roots of Middle East Terror,” Interview by Amy Goodman. *Democracy Now* (March 3, 2008): http://www.democracynow.org/2008/3/3/stephen_kinzer_on_the_us_iranian. This excerpt comes from an exchange between Bruce Laingen, a former hostage at the embassy, and one of his captures. Laingen relayed this exchange to Kinzer at a later date.

technologies. What it lacked in age (as it was a relatively new institution), it made up for in experience. Operation AJAX became a precedent of how to orchestrate an overthrow of a foreign government. The CIA and the United States searched globally for countries that embodied a similar political and economic structure as Iran. Left-leaning governments within countries that had long-lasting economic ties to the United States became the primary focus. The American perception of 'left-leaning' encompassed a wide spectrum. In the case of Guatemala, Jacobo Arbenz ran on a platform of reform. In contrast, Fidel Castro assumed executive power in Cuba as a self-proclaimed Marxist socialist. Whatever was the case, the United States saw opportunity in these countries.

The Eisenhower administration understood the importance of its clandestine activities. Former CIA Director Richard Helms argued that during the Cold War "covert action had become a favored instrument. Diplomacy had its uses," he continued, "but in those years the impatient Eisenhower administration had convinced itself that even the most effective diplomacy took too much time and the result was often uncertain."³⁷ This trend that was initiated by Eisenhower resonated through subsequent presidencies.

American covert and overt operations abroad increased drastically during the Cold War. The containment policy, coupled with the domino theory, directly affected American foreign policy in the Cold War period. It should not be surprising that the two countries of focus where the United States attempted overthrows were located in the western hemisphere. Under the Eisenhower administration, the Good Neighbor Policy that had been enacted by Franklin Roosevelt's administration had been disbanded.

Fearing a growth in American covert operations abroad, Kermit Roosevelt delivered a

³⁷ Richard Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder: A Life in the Central Intelligence Agency* (New York: Random House, 2003), 107.

significant caveat to a group of high-level officials, chaired by John Foster Dulles. Roosevelt advised the meeting that “If we [CIA] are ever going to try something like this again, we must be absolutely sure that [the] people and army want what we want. If not, you had better give the job to the Marines!”³⁸ This notion was disregarded by Foster Dulles. It was Eisenhower’s goal to solidify American political and economic hegemony in the Americas at any cost. By accomplishing this goal, the United States would be able prevent Soviet influence in the western hemisphere.

As it will be further analyzed, the American government had a direct hand in the successful regime change in Guatemala, while utterly failing in Cuba. In each case, the United States attempted to convert its success in the planning of Operation AJAX to these countries, while implementing new policies to change its failures. The CIA would employ propaganda campaigns, create opposition to the party in power, attempt to find a suitable replacement for the deposed leader, and explore new avenues as well, (i.e. use of paramilitary units and death threats). The United States government allocated a significant increase in funds to the CIA in order to execute these directives. The CIA used roughly \$1 million in the planning for Operation AJAX, a small fraction of the \$20 million that was set aside for Operation PBSUCCESS in Guatemala. This increase was necessary as coup preparations became increasingly more complex. Every last dollar of the \$20 million allotted to Operation PBSUCCESS would be needed.

Communism, Bananas, and the United States

Guatemala had long been plagued by colonialist rule. Spanish domination of the region began in 1527, when a convoy of conquistadors led by Pedro de Alvarado took

³⁸ Roosevelt, *Countercoup*, 210. Quoted in Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 117.

control of the Guatemalan highlands. Almost three centuries of imperialist rule ensued, until the captaincy-general of Guatemala proclaimed its independence on September 15, 1821.³⁹ Political turmoil dominated the region for the next century, led by a series of dictatorships that were friendly to American influence. Massive protests and strikes by the Guatemalan population forced the dictator Jorge Ubico Castañeda out of office. A subsequent coup d'état on October 20, 1944 ousted Ubico's replacement Juan Federico Ponce Vaides. The military junta that took power declared that Guatemala would have its first free election. Juan José Arévalo Bermejo became the first democratically elected president to complete a full term. He issued several referendums to reform Guatemala's socio-economic and political structures. Most of these reforms were not put into effect during Arévalo's presidency. However, he set the groundwork for his successor, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán.

Arbenz was one of several individuals that partook in the 1944 coup d'état that established the then-present day democratic rule. He was a beloved figure to the majority of the Guatemalan public, as he represented freedom from the imperialistic-minded United States. Arbenz's mindset mirrored that of Arévalo's, as he believed reform would modernize Guatemala's social, political, and economic sectors. His only failure was his inability to tackle America's influence within his country.

The United States had significantly strong economic ties to Guatemala as early as the turn of the twentieth century. The United Fruit Company had played a considerable role in supporting and solidifying Manuel Estrada Cabrera's rise to power in 1898. Also known by its acronym UFCO, the company thrived in Guatemala's string of dictatorships

³⁹ Oakah L. Jones, *Guatemala in the Spanish Colonial Period* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 24-48.

that eventually lost power in the 1944 military coup. The shift in power led to a strain in U.S.-Guatemalan relations, as more socialist-minded individuals began to gain access to the government sector. United Fruit's control of the small elite in Guatemala began to diminish as the company's profits began to fall. CIA Director Allen Dulles's primary concern was that Guatemala could become a "Soviet beachhead in the western hemisphere."⁴⁰ The possibility that a pro-Soviet satellite could exist in the Americas sent fear throughout the Eisenhower administration.

The United States government had taken notice of Guatemala's increasingly socialist state even prior to its intervention in Iran. Several prominent members of the Eisenhower administration had extremely close ties to United Fruit. Some of the most notable figures were: Allen and John Foster Dulles, John Moors Cabot, Thomas Dudley Cabot, and Robert Cutler. Allen Dulles was the CIA Director under Eisenhower's administration, while his brother John Foster, was Eisenhower's Secretary of State. The two brothers had previously done legal work for the company and each held a considerable amount of its stock. The Cabot brothers held high-ranking positions in the State Department, and each had a significant block of UFCO's stock. Thomas Dudley Cabot was even the former president of United Fruit. Cutler, head of the National Security Council, was UFCO's former chairman of the board.⁴¹ When Arbenz attempted to break up the American controlled oligarchies, these individuals took notice. Each of them would play an important role in the planning of Operation PBSUCCESS.

Jacobo Arbenz: Guatemala's Savior

⁴⁰ Nicholas Cullather, *Secret History: The CIA's Classified Account of its Operations in Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency's Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1996), 17.

⁴¹ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 130.

The greatest problem the United States faced was the ascent was Arbenz to the presidency. American officials were able to compensate for their losses under the reforms that were carried out under Arévalo's government. However, Arbenz posed an entirely different problem for the United States, and gained criticism as early as his inaugural speech. In this address, he focused on his hopes for his country's future:

Our government proposes to begin the march toward the economic development of Guatemala, and proposes three fundamental objectives: to convert our country from a dependent nation with a semi-colonial economy to an economically independent country; to convert Guatemala from a backward country with a predominantly feudal economy into a modern capitalistic state; and to make this transformation in a way that will raise the standard of living of the great mass of our people to the highest level...

Our economic policy must necessarily be based on strengthening private initiative and developing Guatemalan capital, in whose hands rests the fundamental economic activity of the country...Foreign capital will always be welcome as long as it adjusts to local conditions, remains always subordinate to Guatemalan laws, cooperates with the economic development of the country, and strictly abstains from intervening in the nation's social and political life...⁴²

These aspirations seem to encompass the main principles of Keynesian economics. John Maynard Keynes was a British economist that wrote extensively on fiscal policy, overturning all of the neoclassical economic models. Keynes argued that in order to prompt economic growth, a society must provide more purchasing power to the lower and middle classes. At the time Arbenz assumed the presidency, the small elite consisted of roughly 2% of the population, and it controlled 70% of the nation's lands. It was Arbenz's goal to redistribute land in order to stimulate productivity from these lands.

⁴² Excerpts of Jacobo Arbenz's inaugural speech documented in the Guatemalan Newspaper *El Imparcial*, March 16, 1951, quoted in Stephen Kinzer and Stephen Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit: The Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 52.

The economic program was implemented to transform and improve Guatemala's brutal plantation economy.⁴³ United Fruit's utilization of this land was extremely insufficient, and the profitability associated with it did not reach its potential.

Arbenz's reform programs gained global attention when the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development approved of them. As Arbenz took office, a 300-page analysis of Guatemalan conditions and options was released by Eugene R. Black, the then-president of the World Bank. The commission "recognized the obvious inequalities of Guatemalan life and the urgent need for change," and continued to warn foreign companies against "any direct or indirect political activity against the government."⁴⁴ The American government disregarded these outside factors, and maintained its policy of unilateral activity in Guatemala.

America's political outlook towards Guatemala took precedent over its economic interests. American politicians and CIA officials viewed Arbenz's modernization program as a step towards communism. There was fear that his popularity could spread to other areas in the region, bringing his policies with him. This would subsequently hinder American political and economic hegemony over its southern neighbors.

The United States believed it was politically justified to directly intervene in Guatemalan affairs. The government "viewed events there [Guatemala] in the context of the growing global Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union and feared that Guatemala could become a client state from which Soviets could project power and influence

⁴³ Greg Grandin, *Latin America, the United States, and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006), 42.

⁴⁴ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Mission to Guatemala* (Washington: IBRD, 1951), 283.

throughout the Western Hemisphere.”⁴⁵ Just as the case was with Iran, the United States saw that the political benefits of a successful overthrow far outweighed the economic benefits. Even several high-ranking officials at United Fruit understood that the “Communist threat overshadowed the expropriation controversy.”⁴⁶ The constant threat of Soviet influence materializing in foreign countries sprung the American government into action.

The CIA’s plan to covertly overthrow Arbenz’s government followed a similar plan to Operation AJAX. An extensive propaganda campaign was established to create opposition towards Arbenz’s government. The CIA also experimented with the training of paramilitary units and issuing death threats to several prominent pro-Arbenz figures. This atmosphere made for a more ambitious approach by the Agency to topple a foreign government.⁴⁷ The planning for Operation PBSUCCESS was far more extensive and time consuming than that of Operation AJAX.

The CIA trained operatives, destabilized the Guatemalan economy, and implemented diplomatic isolation in Guatemala. The aforementioned propaganda campaign was aimed towards degrading the government. The CIA “organized phantom groups to...spread rumors that the government was going to ban Holy Week, exile the archbishop, confiscate bank accounts, expropriate all private property, and force children into reeducation centers.”⁴⁸ These tactics were eerily similar to the propaganda campaign

⁴⁵ Gerald K. Haines, *CIA and Guatemala Assassination Proposals, 1952-1954* (Washington: CIA History Staff Analysis, 1995), 1 (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

⁴⁶ Richard H. Immerman, “Guatemala as Cold War History,” *Political Science Quarterly* 95, no. 4 (Winter 1980-1981): 637-8.

⁴⁷ Nicholas Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS: The United States and Guatemala, 1952-1954* (Washington: CIA History Staff, 1994), 1.

⁴⁸ Grandin, *Latin America*, 43.

in Iran, in that both had the primary goal of creating a chaotic and supportive environment for regime change.

Another important tool that the CIA utilized in planning and executing Operation PBSUCCESS was the use of death threats. The extensiveness of these death threats have manifested in recent times after the release of several CIA documents. These documents list proposed leftist rebels within the Arbenz government that were to be disposed of during the campaign.⁴⁹ The names on the list were generated by the CIA, and were later revised by Carlos Castillo Armas. Castillo Armas was the CIA's choice to replace Arbenz after the military coup. This document exemplifies the extent that the United States government was willing to go in order to successfully overthrow Arbenz.

In addition to these new psych-war techniques, the American government provided Castillo Armas with endless resources. CIA officials ensured Castillo Armas that he had support of other leaders in the region, most notably Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza García. Somoza offered an additional channel for military equipment to Castillo Armas, although he never made use of it. On October 13, 1953, Castillo Armas wrote to Somoza's son, "Our work with our friends from the North has ended in complete triumph in our favor...and shortly we will enter into very active plans which will inevitably end with the victorious result we all desire."⁵⁰ Confidence was mounting in the 'revolutionary' camp as a result of Castillo Armas' meeting with J.C. King in Florida just prior to the previously mentioned letter. King, the CIA's Western Hemisphere Chief, presented the Agency's plan:

⁴⁹ Central Intelligence Agency, *Guatemalan Communist Personnel to be Disposed of during Military Operations of Calligeris*, Origin Undated, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB4/cia-guatemala4_1.html (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

⁵⁰ Guatemala, *Secretaria de Propaganda y Divulgación, La Democracia Amenazada: El Caso de Guatemala* (Guatemala City, 1954), 33.

...an elaborate scheme to elevate Castillo Armas to the leadership of a “political party” created by the CIA and to provide him with ten paramilitary groups of twelve soldiers apiece. The CIA also promised Castillo Armas \$3 million to finance an invasion of Guatemala. The United Fruit Company agreed to supply arms to Castillo Armas and smuggle other weapons into Guatemala via the company’s railroad, the IRCA, to equip a ‘subversive fifth column.’⁵¹

With the plan in place, the United States waited for an opportune moment to arouse military action. The CIA had previously thwarted Arbenz’s attempts to import arms and ammunition from Canada and Germany, two capitalistic allies of the United States. The tide turned when Arbenz caught wind of a possible American invasion from a defector of Castillo Armas’ camp. Fearing a massive military incursion by a rebel army, Arbenz looked to Czechoslovakia to acquire arms. The Czechoslovakian government attained a huge weapons cache after the defeat of Germany in the Second World War.

On the morning of May 15, 1954, the Swedish freighter *Alfhem* came into port near the docks of Puerto Barrios. The shipment contained rifles, ammunition, antitank mines, and artillery pieces, for a sum much greater than one million dollars.⁵² This gamble by Arbenz seems to have been a last-ditch effort, as the United States had increased pressure on its allies to stop arms deals with Guatemala. Arbenz had to understand the political implications of purchasing weapons from Czechoslovakia, which in 1954 was part of the Soviet Union’s Eastern European bloc. Castillo Armas’ impending invasion must have forced Arbenz to adopt extraordinary measures.

The United States had learned of Arbenz’s interest in Czech weapons as early as April 4, 1953, when Frank Wisner, head of the Directorate of Plans for the CIA, sent a memo to J.C. King. The memo had asked for King to “verify a rumor that arms from

⁵¹ Kinzer and Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit*, 126.

⁵² Mario Rosenthal, *Guatemala: The Story of an Emergent Latin-American Democracy* (New York: Twayne, 1962), 250.

Czechoslovakia were being clandestinely introduced into Guatemala (with or without the assistance of the Russians).”⁵³ Although this report could never be authenticated, it gave the CIA the liberty to look into the matter. When the CIA and State Department had finally traced the actual shipment aboard the *Alfhem*, it finally gave them a plausible pretext to send Castillo Armas into Guatemala.

CIA Director Dulles called and chaired an emergency meeting of the Intelligence Advisory Committee. The topic of Guatemala became the main focus. Dulles and his associates made it very clear that Guatemala now had enough arms to wage war against its neighbors. Then, Dulles brought his case before the National Security Council, which agreed that the United States needed to increase its assistance of Castillo Armas and his rebels. The date for the military invasion was set for the next month.⁵⁴

On May 19, President Eisenhower issued a statement at a White House press conference. He brought the *Alfhem* incident before the general public, warning that the arrival of Czech weapons in Guatemala would lead to the formation of a “Communist dictatorship...on this continent to the detriment of all American nations...”⁵⁵ This anti-Communist rhetoric resonated throughout Eisenhower’s administration. John Foster Dulles and other officials within the State Department spoke openly about their distrust of Guatemala for accepting such a large arms deal. The foundations were being laid for the future military invasion.

⁵³ Central Intelligence Agency, Frank Wisner, *Memorandum to Col. King, Chief, Western Hemisphere Division CIA*, April 4, 1953, from C.D. Jackson Records Folder: Guatemala, Box 2, Eisenhower Library, http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/Research/Digital_Documents/Declassified_Documents.html.

⁵⁴ Andrew Tully, *CIA: The Inside Story* (New York: Crest, 1963), 58.

⁵⁵ Dwight Eisenhower, *The White House Years*, Vol. I: *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1963), 424.

On the morning of June 18, Carlos Castillo Armas led his battalion of paramilitary units into Guatemala. An unexpected problem occurred though, as the Guatemalan populace did not partake in the revolt. The CIA ordered Castillo Armas to halt his advance. Instead, a series of aerial forays were called upon to inflict rapid damage to some of Guatemala's most important cities. The plan was to intimidate Arbenz into surrendering, however it failed miserably.⁵⁶

The following days saw no improvement for Castillo Armas' Liberation Army. The dual-threat invasion by both ground and air forces were suffering heavy casualties. However, Dulles was reluctant to throw in the towel. Through a series of appeals, he was able to acquire two more planes to add to the decimated Liberation fleet. This action exemplified the willingness of high-ranking CIA officials to succeed in Guatemala. Also, at this time, Arbenz believed that Castillo Armas' invasion would soon be repelled. He couldn't be further from the truth. The increased aerial bombardment began to destroy oil tankers and ammunition caches.⁵⁷

The Fall of a Hero

The constant destruction of Guatemala's infrastructure by aerial bombings, coupled with Castillo Armas' advancing army, took an unprecedented toll on Arbenz. The man that had once been described as "firm, decisive, strong-willed, and commanding" was now an emotional wreck.⁵⁸ The great orator was at a loss for words. CIA orchestrated radio broadcasts mythically claimed that Castillo Armas had two large and heavily armed military units moving on the capital. Realizing that the situation had

⁵⁶ Kinzer and Schlesinger, *Bitter Fruit*, 171-4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 176-82.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 191.

fallen out of his control, Arbenz was forced to accept a final ultimatum. On June 27, at nine-fifteen in the evening, a vexed Arbenz addressed his nation one last time:

Workers, peasants, patriots, my friends: people of Guatemala: Guatemala is enduring a most difficult trail. For fifteen days a cruel war against Guatemala has been underway. The United Fruit Company, in collaboration with the governing circles of the United States, is responsible for what is happening...

I have made a sad and cruel judgment. After reflecting with a clear revolutionary conscience, I have made a decision that is of great importance for our country in the hope of containing this aggression and bringing peace back to Guatemala. I have decided to step down and place the nation's executive power in the hands of my friend Carlos Enrique Díaz...⁵⁹

American officials could finally breathe a sigh of relief. After successive military juntas, Castillo Armas finally took power. The new leader was incredibly inept, and increasingly corrupt. His policies and demeanor rivaled that of the Shah in Iran. Guatemalan society was chaotic, and cronyism became rampant. The "elites and the rest of the right wing used the club of anticommunism...to attack left-of-center political parties, labor organizing, and any reforms that might threaten their vested interests."⁶⁰ These small elites had a misconstrued mindset that the old order prior to 1944 would be reestablished.

Castillo Armas' government was power hungry, and it looked to reap all of the benefits associated with its new rule. Any acts of dissent in society would be countered by the country's security forces, or the paramilitary units that were still prevalent. Organizations like the Movimiento de Acción Nacionalista Organizado, more commonly known as MANO BLANCO, continued to carry out clandestine activities well into the

⁵⁹ Excerpts of Arbenz's Resignation Speech, *El Imparcial*, July 28, 1954.

⁶⁰ Charles D. Brockett, "An Illusion of Omnipotence: US Policy toward Guatemala, 1954-1960," *Latin American Politics and Society* 44, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 92.

1970s. These organizations were entrusted with carrying out tasks similar to that of SAVAK and SAVAMA. Intel reconnaissance, counterintelligence, and purging dissent were just a few powers bestowed upon these agencies. MANO BLANCO had a direct hand in several assassinations, including the prominent Communist politician César Montenegro Paniagua.⁶¹ The tensions between social classes are still relevant today, as Guatemala is still in political, economic, and social upheaval.

The CIA used the 1954 Guatemalan coup as a bridge between Operation AJAX and future operations. The government believed that after the successful overthrow in Guatemala, the process could once again be duplicated in other parts of the world. However, the CIA failed to establish a succinct and lasting post-intervention plan in Guatemala, just as it had done in Iran. The failure of the American government to make adaptations to the Iranian Plan in Guatemala almost proved to be devastating and humiliating. The government exhausted an exorbitant amount of resources to assure the triumph of Operation PBSUCCESS. However, the CIA would soon realize its incompetence with the blunder of the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Our Enemy to the South

Cuba's pre-independence fate was quite similar to that of Guatemala. The first exploration of Christopher Columbus eventually brought him to eastern Cuba on October 12, 1492. The first Spanish settlement was founded in 1511 by Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar at Baracoa.⁶² Spanish dominion over Cuba lasted for nearly four centuries, despite a series of revolts that occurred in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The first

⁶¹ Charles Green, "Guatemala's Violent Past," *The Washington Post*, April 7, 1970, (The Washington Post's Digital Archive).

⁶² Richard Gott, *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 13.

revolutionary movement against the Spanish Crown occurred in 1868, and was led by Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. The United States failed to recognize Céspedes' government, despite increasing pressure from several European and Latin American countries. Spain regained autonomy in 1878 through the Pact of Zanjón. Almost two decades later, violence erupted again on February 24, 1895. A rebel army led by José Martí relied upon guerilla and sabotage tactics in an attempt to suppress Spain's overwhelming numbers.⁶³ Despite their valiant efforts, the insurgency was crushed. Cuba would have to wait to gain its independence.

In the midst of the Cuban uprising, President McKinley was sworn into the White House. The topic of Cuban independence and the atrocities committed by the Spanish were undoubtedly on the President's mind. Cuban rebels were promising land redistribution programs to break up colonial oligarchies. These claims worried American businessmen, which had been investing in Cuba's agricultural economy for years. McKinley dispatched the *USS Maine* to Havana to protect American citizens and its own economic interests. However, the Cuban populace believed that McKinley's reasoning was mendacious. Whatever was the truth, Cuban resentment was rising.

On the evening of February 15, 1898, an explosion ripped the *Maine* apart, killing 250 American sailors. Shockwaves were sent throughout America. Passions flared when a naval report stated that the ship was destroyed by a "double magazine set off from the exterior of the ship, which could only have been produced by a mine."⁶⁴ American journalists used this report to fuel anti-Spanish sentiments. William Randolph Hearst

⁶³ David Arias, *Spanish-Americans: Lives and Faces* (Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2005), 171.

⁶⁴ Samuel Loring Morrison and Norman Polmar, *The American Battleship* (Osceola, WI: Zenith Press, 2003), 18.

published dubious claims in the *New York Journal* by “fabricating interviews with unnamed government officials.”⁶⁵ His readers believed these falsehoods, bringing them to near-hysteria.

The public outcry presented McKinley with limited options. On April 11, he asked Congress to authorize a military invasion of Cuba. The proposal met heavy opposition in Congress. Sensing little to no progress, McKinley accepted an amendment from Senator Henry Teller of Colorado. The “Teller Amendment,” as it came to be known, guaranteed that the United States would not “exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island [Cuba] except for pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.”⁶⁶ The Senate approved the Teller Amendment almost unanimously. On April 25, Congress declared that the United States and Spain were at war.

The military conflict was a short one. On August 12, officials from Spain and the United States met to discuss the terms of the Treaty of Paris. The US would receive Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines for a sum of \$20 million. In addition, Spain would surrender her sovereignty over Cuba.⁶⁷ According to the Teller Amendment, Cuban independence was inevitable. The American political elite had other ideas. It became evident that the US government began to favor hegemony over morality, power over reason, and expansion over legality. Americans believed that the Cubans were unfit for self-government, or barbarians of a sort. The newspapers had a decisive role in creating this image. There were very few reporters that actually witnessed the battles in

⁶⁵ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 36.

⁶⁶ “Teller Amendment,” April 19, 1898, quoted in Louis A. Pérez Jr., *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 21.

⁶⁷ “Treaty of Peace between the United States and Spain,” December 10, 1898, (The Avalon Project: Yale Law School Archives).

Cuba. The war of attrition that the Cubans had been fighting since 1895 went unnoticed. Instead, these correspondents spoke of Cuban incompetence during the incursions. It was just a matter of time before the US government would encroach on Cuban soil.

This is Freedom?

Shortly after Theodore Roosevelt came to the Oval Office, a deal was proposed that would grant Cuba a formal independence from the United States. On May 20, 1902, the Republic of Cuba was born. However, the United States was given extraordinary powers within the Cuban constitution. The pre-existing Platt Amendment, presented by Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut in 1899, ensured American involvement in Cuban affairs. The Teller Amendment was abrogated, as it did not provide the United States the ability to be heavily influential in Cuban affairs. The Platt Amendment dictated:

that the government of Cuba shall not enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers...

that said government shall not assume or contract any public debt...

that the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba...

that to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the

United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States...⁶⁸

In theory, the United States had established the foundations of a neo-colonial state in Cuba. Cuba's future political, economic, and social landscape was to be determined and enforced by the U.S. government. Also, the American naval base at Guantánamo Bay was created. The United States would not hesitate to intervene in Cuban affairs.

American supremacy on the island angered a majority of Cubans. The resentment that Cubans had felt towards the Spanish for decades would soon be transferred towards the United States.

Cuba's chaotic political structure led to American intervention throughout the early twentieth century. On several occasions, the United States used its military power to ensure order. American supremacy over Cuban affairs ended with the termination of the Platt Amendment in 1934. Roosevelt's 'Good Neighbor' policy looked to alleviate relations between the United States and Latin America. This thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations did not affect the status of Cuba's internal political structure. The 1930s saw the complete lack of a constitutional government in Cuba, as military rule and frequent coups became prevalent.

Cuba did witness a decade of successful democratic transitions during the 1940s. A robust economic growth occurred during the presidencies of Fulgencio Batista, Ramón Grau, and Carlos Prío Socarrás. Also, massive social reforms were instituted to

⁶⁸ "The Platt Amendment," *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776-1949*, vol. 8, ed. C.I. Bevans (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), 1116-17.

modernize Cuba's aging economy.⁶⁹ The prosperity and growth of the 1940s would soon give way to despotism and stagnation.

On March 10, 1952, Batista staged a military coup to reassume the presidency. Rather than reforming and modernizing Cuban society, Batista became obsessed with solidifying his power. Free and democratic elections became a distant memory, as civilian government was nonexistent. Anti-Batista animosity reigned in from all corners of Cuban society, and subsequently led to a failed overthrow attempt in 1956. Hostilities rose after the failed coup, and eventually culminated in the Cuban Revolution of 1959. The reasons for the revolution were quite simple; Batista's government became increasingly corrupt and brutal, and failed to meet the needs of society. As President John F. Kennedy later explained:

I believe that there is no country in the world including any and all the countries under colonial domination, where economic colonization, humiliation and exploitation were worse than in Cuba, in part owing to my country's policies during the Batista regime. I approved the proclamation which Fidel Castro made in the Sierra Maestra, when he justifiably called for justice and especially yearned to rid Cuba of corruption. I will even go further: to some extent it is as though Batista was the incarnation of a number of sins on the part of the United States. Now we shall have to pay for those sins. In the matter of the Batista regime, I am in agreement with the first Cuban revolutionaries. That is perfectly clear.⁷⁰

Kennedy, along with other prominent members of the American political elite, had finally acknowledged their blunders in Cuba. U.S. policy towards Cuba had fueled the rise of Fidel Castro, one of the most despised foreign dignitaries of the Cold War period (from an American perspective). Castro's regime completely reformed society by

⁶⁹ Jose Alvarez, *Cuba's Agricultural Sector* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 46.

⁷⁰ John F. Kennedy, "Interview of President John F. Kennedy by Jean Daniel," October 24, 1963 (Accessed through Spartacus Educational Archive).

expropriating private property and nationalizing several sectors of the economy. His policies rendered American investments as obsolete. The groundwork was being set for an eventual clash that was comparable to David versus Goliath.

Cuba, Here We Come!

The major social reforms that were introduced by Castro's regime caused great fear within the United States. Also, the constant threat of Soviet influence in the western hemisphere always loomed over American politicians. Eisenhower's tenacious and stubborn approach to foreign policy led him to the option of intervention. On March 16, 1960, Eisenhower ordered the CIA to construct a plan to overthrow the new government in Cuba.⁷¹ The original plan, code-named Operation Pluto, was designed and organized by CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Mervin Bissell Jr. It called for a sea invasion at the city of Trinidad. After careful consideration, the CIA adopted another plan. Operation Zapata, as it came to be known, shifted the point of infiltration to the Bay of Pigs.

The planned overthrow of Castro's government was not merely a military proposal. The CIA had an intricate and detailed plan to rally support for a regime change. The strategy was wholly similar to two of the CIA's preceding operations. A massive propaganda campaign was implemented and geared towards both pro- and anti-Castro factions. The CIA also trained and funded a formidable paramilitary unit. Furthermore, death threats and assassination attempts were always at the CIA's disposal.

⁷¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 16.

The spread of anti-Castro propaganda was to be done by radio and leaflet dispersals. The CIA's plan had numerous objectives, and was focused on minimizing the appearance of American involvement. A few of the strategic aims were:

To maintain morale of anti-Castro fighting forces.

To instruct pro-patriot forces, and tell them how to join the fight.

To intimidate pro-Castro forces; to make them defect or become panic-stricken, confused, and uncertain.

To counteract Sino-Soviet propaganda and negate inter-national Soviet support.

To appeal to other governments and peoples for support...

To announce the common purpose of military fighting and civic resistance

To instruct the populace how to fight in place...

To cause interference to opposition forces...⁷²

The strategic and tactical approaches of the CIA were far-reaching. The U.S. government underestimated the local support for the Castro regime, as his reform programs touched a majority of the Cuban populace. Its attempts to sway Cuba's public opinion failed, and the subversive plan needed adjustment. Instead of a substantial reliance upon the propaganda component, the CIA modified Operation Zapata to focus more on paramilitary training and death threat proposals.

The training of the anti-Castro force was carried out at Fort Gulick and Fort Clayton, both located in Panama. The more advanced units were transferred to a CIA-run base in Guatemala, code-named *JMTrax*. The training regiment consisted of a vast array of tactical procedures.⁷³ Also, it incorporated training in modern American technology and weaponry. Several high ranking officials in the CIA were quite confident of their

⁷² Central Intelligence Agency, "Propaganda Action Plan in Support of Military Forces," Origin Undated, (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

⁷³ Schlesinger, 74.

Cuban compatriots. The force was described as possessing “superior characteristics...particularly as to motivation, intelligence, and leadership qualities.” It was also believed that the unit “would have no difficulty inflicting heavy casualties on a much larger force.”⁷⁴ The ‘successful’ campaigns in Iran and Guatemala, coupled with the confident outlook in Cuba, made several CIA officials anxious to put Operation Zapata into motion.

The United States also experimented in death threats throughout its preparations. Assassination proposals were first discussed on April 14, 1960, at a National Security Council meeting. Allen Dulles purported that an assassination of Castro could be possible if planned correctly.⁷⁵ Later investigations and discussions have determined that Castro faced roughly 638 attempts on his life. The techniques ranged from exploding cigars to mafia coordinated ‘hits.’ In each case, Castro and his bodyguards outsmarted the CIA. The constant experimentation in planning a successful assassination attempt ended when American focus shifted towards the Bay of Pigs launch date.⁷⁶

As ‘D-Day’ approached, the CIA intensified its propaganda measures. The Agency “recruited and trained and infiltrated small provocateur teams” to carry out clandestine activities; therefore limiting the exposure of any American involvement in the future invasion.⁷⁷ Eisenhower’s policy of plausible deniability had transferred over to Kennedy’s administration. However, a leak in American intelligence made the Cuban

⁷⁴ United States Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, Vol. VI*, 1175 (Digital Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Madison).

⁷⁵ National Security Council, “Memorandum of Discussion at the 441st Meeting of the National Security Council, Washington, April 14, 1960,” in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Cuba, Vol. VI*, 893 (Digital Archives at the University of Wisconsin-Madison).

⁷⁶ United States Department of State, “Memorandum of Conversation between President Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger,” January 4, 1975 (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

⁷⁷ United States Department of State, “Interview of David Atlee Phillips,” Interviewer Unknown, Origin Undated, (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

populace quite aware of the CIA's intentions. British Ambassador to the United States, David Ormsby-Gore, believed that the majority of the Cuban people were behind Castro.⁷⁸ This pro-Castro support decreased the likelihood of defectors joining the CIA's cause.

Operation Zapata

On April 15, the CIA initiated the first leg of Operation Zapata by attacking Cuban air strips with a flurry of aerial assaults. Eight Douglas B-26 bombers concurrently attacked three major Cuban airfields. Each of the CIA's aircrafts were repainted with FAR markings to make it appear as if Cuban air force personnel had defected from Castro's forces.⁷⁹ The goal of Operation Puma was to hinder Cuba's ability to launch air raids in response to the ensuing land invasion. However, glorified accounts by the exiled pilots painted a false picture of the actual damage. It was believed that the air strikes had imposed significant damage, when in reality most of the targets were outdated and obsolete. The CIA's preexisting confidence was further expanded by the pilots' reports.

The actual invasion of Cuba occurred at midnight on April 17, as an anti-Castro unit moved on the Bay of Pigs, situated on the southern coast of the island. Earlier that night, the CIA had orchestrated a mock landing near Bahia Honda to disperse some of Castro's forces. Although this plan succeeded at first, it did not take long for Castro to redistribute his forces to prevent the anti-Castro unit's initial assault. Cuba's air force decimated the sea invasion forces, leaving hundreds dead or injured on the first day of

⁷⁸ Schlesinger, 141.

⁷⁹ Juan Carlos Rodriguez, *Bay of Pigs and the CIA* (Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1999), 156-159. The acronym FAR refers to Fuerza Aérea Revolucionaria, the air force of the Cuban government. The CIA had specifically and intentionally placed the FAR ensign on its air crafts to further ensure plausible deniability in the case of a failed coup.

fighting. The militia soldiers that had reached the shore were left with defunct equipment and weaponry.⁸⁰ The efficacy that was required for the coup was in significant trouble.

The following days were plagued with several casualties from both sides. The deaths were quite equal on each side; however the substantially smaller anti-Castro force felt the brute of the damage. The exiles were outnumbered roughly twenty-five to one, and were not successful in swaying neutral Cubans to join their cause. In most cases, the exiles actually met armed resistance from the civilian population. The constant bombardment by the Cuban military eventually took its toll on the exiled army. By the fourth day of the skirmish, about eighty-five percent of the exiled army had been killed, injured, or captured.⁸¹

The failure of Operation Zapata humiliated Kennedy and his administration. The policy of plausible deniability was erased from history when American involvement became apparent. The American president had to initiate negotiations for the roughly 1200 exiles that had been captured. After almost two years of deliberations, the two sides finally reached an agreement to exchange 1,113 prisoners for about \$53 million in U.S. food and medicine.⁸²

From the Cuban perspective, the failed invasion unified the entire population. It crushed a major element of dissent and showcased America's ambitions to establish hegemony in the western hemisphere. Also, Castro became increasingly cautious of America's actions, and mobilized different sectors of his regime to ensure similar results. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a staunch supporter, revolutionary, and good friend of Castro,

⁸⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, "Bay of Pigs, 40 Years Later: Chronology," (National Security Archives at George Washington University).

⁸¹ "JFK in History: The Bay of Pigs," Kennedy Library, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/JFK+in+History/JFK+and+the+Bay+of+Pigs.htm>.

⁸² Schlesinger, 126.

spoke openly of America's failures. In an interview with the *Monthly Review*, he argued that the Cuban suppression of the exiled army had put an end to the counter-revolution. He continued that the success of the "socialist revolution left the opportunists, the ambitious, and the fearful far behind..."⁸³ Members of Castro's inner circle truly believed that they had purged Cuban society of all of its inaccuracies and faults.

What Went Wrong...?

On April 22, 1961, President Kennedy ordered the creation of a commission to analyze the failures of the invasion. The commission, chaired by General Maxwell Taylor, also included several prominent members ranging from Attorney General Robert Kennedy, CIA Director Allen Dulles, and Admiral Arleigh Burke. After months of inquiries and research, Taylor submitted the commission's report on June 13. It was determined that the CIA had failed to realize the difficulty of a full-scale covert operation. Also, the lack of adequate aircrafts, weaponry, and ammunitions factored into the debacle.⁸⁴

After the catastrophe in Cuba, the CIA also ordered an investigation into the matter. In November 1961, then-CIA Inspector Lyman Kirkpatrick wrote a report entitled "Survey of the Cuban Operation." His assumptions differed greatly from the "Taylor Report" and encompassed a much wider scope:

The CIA exceeded its capabilities in developing the project from guerrilla support to overt armed action without any plausible deniability.

⁸³ Ernesto Guevara, "Cuba and the U.S.," Interview by Leo Huberman, *Monthly Review* 13, no. 4 (September, 1961).

⁸⁴ *Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba*, ed. Peter Kornbluh (New York: The New Press, 1998), 324.

Failure to realistically assess risks and to adequately communicate information and decisions internally and with other government principals.

Insufficient involvement of leaders of the exiles.

Failure to sufficiently organize internal resistance in Cuba.

Failure to competently collect and analyze intelligence about Cuban forces.

Poor internal management of communications and staff.

Insufficient employment of high-quality staff.

Insufficient Spanish-speakers, training facilities and material resources.

Lack of stable policies and contingency plans.⁸⁵

The aforementioned analyses tend to omit the preceding factors that contributed to the failure. The first decade of CIA clandestine activities revolved around a rigid set of guidelines that derived from the Iranian Plan. The CIA relied upon a strong propaganda movement, establishment of opposition to the ruling party, and attaining the support of active-duty soldiers. Also, during Operation AJAX, the CIA attempted quasi-legal means to eliminate the party in power. In subsequent missions, the CIA also worked vigorously to institute a strong nucleus of paramilitary forces for combat purposes. The failure to achieve these goals undoubtedly influenced the outcome in Cuba.

Neither report scrutinized the CIA-run propaganda campaign that was supposed to rally anti-Castro support. Ironically, the program swung it in the other direction, as a majority of the Cuban population had already favored Castro's economic programs. This became evident during the actual invasion, when the civilian militia joined Castro's forces rather than defecting. Most of the Cuban population applauded Castro's nationalistic sentiments in the face of American imperialistic ambitions.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 99.

The use of quasi-legal and ethical measures in Iran certainly contributed to the eventual downfall of Prime Minister Mossadegh. Prior to any violent action, Kermit Roosevelt and the CIA attempted to remove the Iranian Premier by bribing several members of the parliament. In return for the financial compensation, these individuals would support a no-confidence motion against Mossadegh to ‘legally’ remove him from office. Although this attempt failed, it did set the groundwork for further actions of the CIA in Iran. However, subsequent interventions failed to incorporate this approach during the planning process, and struggles ensued. By the

The CIA’s ineptitude and lack of financial support in regards to Cuba exemplifies the arrogance and ignorance of the Agency at the time. After two successful overthrows, officials within the CIA became increasingly confident. This over-confidence led to a skewed outlook of the situation in Cuba. CIA funding for Operation PBSUCCESS was exponentially greater than that of Operation AJAX. The reason for this drastic increase is quite simple; the task was much more complex and sophisticated. Following this trend, the CIA should have allocated increased funds for the operation in Cuba. However, the Agency’s egotistic viewpoint on global interventions led it in the other direction, and ultimately to failure in Cuba.

Lessons Learned

America’s imperialistic ambitions during the Cold War led to direct intervention on a scale never before witnessed. The constant threat of Soviet aggression instilled fear within the American political elite. As a result, the United States began its attempt to establish political and economic hegemony to counter Soviet encroachment. The policy

of containment took precedent to all others in the foreign relations spectrum. Political and financial support was extended to democratic countries combating internal communist forces. In the most extreme cases, the United States government approved direct action to instigate regime changes.

In the early stages of the Cold War, the CIA was given the task of orchestrating clandestine actions abroad. The Agency was essential in the distribution of funds throughout the Cold War to political allies of the United States. Also, when Soviet influence became eminent in a country, the U.S. government called upon the CIA to analyze the situation. In most cases, especially during the Eisenhower administration, the CIA was directed to covertly infiltrate foreign governments and societies to create chaos and pandemonium. The Eisenhower administration had implemented a particular framework in regards to foreign policy. Rather than attempting diplomatic measures with foreign governments, Eisenhower and his aides became fixated on coordinating regime changes abroad under the veil of plausible deniability. The Agency's plans and actions in Iran, Guatemala, and Cuba were all carried out under the auspices of Eisenhower.⁸⁶

The ousting of Premier Mossadegh of Iran was the first experiment of the CIA to directly overthrow a foreign government. The Agency's operational planner, Donald Wilber, invented an intricate and far-reaching strategy to successfully instigate a regime change. Operation AJAX consisted of four main components, with each one targeting a certain individual or aspect of society. The BEDAMN campaign was established to sway the Iranian populace against Mossadegh. It was necessary for the CIA to consult the Shah to attain the *firmons* needed to attempt a quasi-legal removal of the Prime Minister. Also, certain members of the Majlis were targeted with bribes and blackmail to gain their

⁸⁶ Helms, *A Look Over My Shoulder*, 107-8.

support in the quasi-legal dismissal. Finally, the Agency sought the support of several prominent military officers in the case of a violent overthrow. At the time, the Iranian Plan was innovative and well-developed. The efficacy of the plan eventually led to a successful overthrow of Mossadegh, and established a precedent for future interventions.⁸⁷

The CIA, building on its success in Iran, applied a similar plan in Guatemala. However, high-ranking officials in the Agency were quite reluctant to alter their strategy. Operation PBSUCCESS called for a massive propaganda campaign, the training of paramilitary units, and the issuing of death threats to staunch supporters of Arbenz. Although these approaches were different than the preceding components of Operation AJAX, there are several parallels that exist. Propaganda campaigns were incorporated into each operational plan with the goal of adjusting the society's perspective of its leader. As was previously mentioned, the primary goal of garnering the support of prominent military officers during Operation AJAX was to attain a strong military force in the case of a violent overthrow. In regards to Guatemala, the focus shifted towards the training of paramilitary units, however the overall goal remained the same. These detachments were essential for the proposed course of military action that the CIA had planned for the overthrow of the Guatemalan government. In addition, the use of death threats was a more extreme case of the bribery and blackmail that had been persistent in Iran. In each case, the end goal revolved around the denigration of each country's respected leader. It was believed that this would subsequently lead to a decrease in the

⁸⁷ Wilber, *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, 85-6.

number of supporters of each leader. Although the actual coup was a success, these approaches failed to accomplish the goals that were set forth by the Agency.⁸⁸

The haughtiness and ignorance of the CIA would eventually lead to the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. The Agency was unwilling to make modifications to the Iranian Plan in the face of more complex situations. The prepared plan for Operation Zapata consisted of three components, each of which was completely identical to the plans for Operation PBSUCCESS. However, this was the first time the CIA planned to use assassination attempts on foreign dignitaries. The CIA and the State Department worked assiduously to take Castro's life, and failed with each attempt. Furthermore, the propaganda wing of Operation Zapata failed to garner the support of the Cuban populace, and the subsequent invasion was unsuccessful as a result. The aforementioned reasons for this catastrophe primarily focus on the ineptness of the CIA to understand the scope of its actions in Cuba. The measures needed to successfully overthrow the Castro regime were far greater than each of the preceding coups, and the CIA did not adopt a plan to account for these obstacles.

The fiasco that occurred in Cuba forced the U.S. government to reevaluate its covert and overt operations abroad. In the years that followed, the CIA worked in collaboration with other governmental agencies to delineate its outlook on foreign matters. Regime change policies were adapted to account for the modernizing world. America's willingness to finally change her ways proved to be successful in places like Chile and Grenada. In each country, the CIA and the State Department worked diligently to create policy measures to ensure that the Bay of Pigs failure would not be repeated. In

⁸⁸ Cullather, *Operation PBSUCCESS*, 89.

retrospect, it took one massive debacle in foreign policy to completely revamp America's clandestine network to account for the modern-day issues

The effects of American actions abroad are still undoubtedly prevalent today. As journalist Stephen Kinzer explains, "...the coups, revolutions, and invasions that the United States mounted to depose governments it feared or mistrusted...have had terrible unintended consequences."⁸⁹ The subsequent regimes in Iran and Guatemala can best be characterized by brutality and oppression. The SAVAK in Iran and the MANO BLANCO in Guatemala, ruthlessly controlled dissidence and opposition in their respective societies. Also, each country witnessed lasting effects to its socio-economic structure. After each coup, the political and economic elite in each society gained even greater power and wealth. The land reforms and nationalization programs that had been put in place under Mossadegh and Arbenz were abrogated, resulting in a loss of prosperity amongst the peasantry. Even today, these societies exhibit the political, social, and economic rifts that were created as a result of American interventions decades prior.

⁸⁹ Kinzer, *Overthrow*, 1.

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