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- Stephen R. Weissman, “What Really Happened in Congo: The CIA, the Murder of Lumumba, and the Rise of Mobutu,” 14-24.
- Jack Devine, “What Really Happened in Chile: The CIA, the Coup Against Allende, and the Rise of Pinochet,” 26-35.
- Harold H. Saunders, “What Really Happened in Bangladesh: Washington, Islamabad, and the Genocide and East Pakistan,” 36-42.

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Introduction by Gregory Mitrovich, Columbia University

While covert action had been a staple of American national security policy long before the Cold War, it was with that conflict that it gained wide-spread recognition as a key instrument of policy. Even after decades of analysis, however, we still are grappling with the question of what benefits these operations have provided to America's national security. How has their use actually promoted key foreign policy objectives? Even more mundanely, can we even determine that they were successful? These questions have become even more acute as covert action has become an increasingly important weapon in our worldwide struggle against terrorism. Its extensive use throughout the world since 9/11—and the questions that have arisen about their effectiveness—has once again brought these concerns to center stage. Simply put, has covert action provided any benefits to the promotion of American national security interests?

The current debate regarding the role of the Central Intelligence Agency and the relative importance of covert action is hamstrung by two interrelated problems: a surprising unfamiliarity today with dangers of the Cold War and the extensive uses of covert action—despite a vast historical literature. This in turn is compounded by the resistance of the U.S. government to release key documentation about these operations even decades after their completion. Memories of the Cold War have faded in the twenty-five years since the Berlin Wall fell; indeed many have forgotten the intensity of the first few decades when war was not just considered possible but even likely.¹ Despite the threat of nuclear war it is not uncommon to hear scholars and public officials claim that the threat from terrorism represents the most significant threat the West has faced. Only recently John Sawers, the former head of Britain's Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, claimed that the terrorist threat to Europe “poses more serious challenges” than the Cold War.² Even our knowledge of Cold War covert action has declined. As Lise Namikas writes in her review: “There is a prevailing assumption that intervention in the Cold War was significantly different from that of the twenty-first century in which we live. The interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have been treated as new departures in history.” One reason for this is the highly classified nature of these operations, something that President Bill Clinton tried to ameliorate with his 1995 executive order 12958 which did result in the release of millions of pages of materials, including some pertaining to covert action. Consequently, over the past twenty years more and more material has been released, but what has been released still remains only a fraction of what currently exists locked behind ‘the vault’ at the National Archives. This does not even take into consideration the possibility that materials have been lost or destroyed.

¹ My book, *Undermining the Kremlin: America's Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc* (Cornell University Press, 2000) discusses these fears in depth. See in particular 47-58.

² “Middle East Terror ‘bigger threat to Europeans than Cold War’-ex-MI6 chief.
<http://rt.com/uk/224159-terrorism-worse-cold-war/>

In order to increase our familiarity with these Cold War era operations, the journal *Foreign Affairs* has published a series of four commentaries in its July-August 2014 issue to assess “What Really Happened” during four signature covert actions: in Iran, Congo, Chile, and Bangladesh. Their objective is to evaluate the CIA’s role in each action and the long-term implications of these events. Ray Takeyh, the Council on Foreign Relations’ Middle East expert, pens the Iran article; Steven R. Weissman, author of *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*³, covers the Congo; Jack Devine, former Acting Director of the CIA, addresses Chile; and Harold H. Saunders, former U.S. Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, writes about Bangladesh. A follow-up exchange between Takeyh and Christopher de Bellaigue, author of a recent study on Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh and the 1953 coup,⁴ took place in the September/October 2014 issue, and another exchange appeared in the January/February 2015 issue involving Weissman, Herman J. Cohen, the former U.S. Ambassador who served as Assistant Secretary of State for Africa from 1989-1993 and Charles G. Cogan,⁵ the author of a case-study “Containing the Chaos: The US-UN Intervention in the Congo, 1960-1965.”⁶

These articles have stirred significant controversy among historians of intelligence affairs, especially the article by Takeyh, who has openly criticized the historical community for promoting the myth that “CIA machinations” were critical to the overthrow of Mossadegh, chastising them for providing fodder to many in Iran to attack the United States for meddling in Iran’s internal affairs and blaming the United States for the subsequent disasters the nation has undergone.⁷ Instead, Takeyh contends in his article that any ‘machinations’ were ultimately unsuccessful and that indeed, when the coup was launched to overthrow Mossadegh, the Eisenhower administration was “hardly in control and was in fact surprised by the way events played out.”⁸ Jack Devine, similarly denies any significant involvement of the CIA in the military coup that overthrew the democratically elected socialist leader Salvador Allende claiming that as a ‘young spymaster’⁹ on one of his first

³ Steven Weissman: *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Cornell University Press, 1974.)

⁴ Christopher De Bellaigue, *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Tragic Anglo-American Coup* (Harper, 2012). See his exchange with Takeyh here: <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141857/christopher-de-bellaigue-ray-takeyh/coupdunnit>

⁵ Response: “Who Lost Congo,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/issues/2015/94/1>

⁶ Charles G. Cogan, “Containing the Chaos: The US-UN Intervention in the Congo, 1960-1965,” case study by Harvard-Kennedy School, 1999.

⁷ Takeyh, “What Really Happened in Iran,” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141527/ray-takeyh/what-really-happened-in-iran>

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Devin, “What Really Happened in Chile” <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141453/jack-devine/what-really-happened-in-chile>

overseas assignment for the CIA he first heard of the coup from his wife who had received a cryptic call from a friend leaving the country in advance of the coup.

Stephen Weissman condemns the U.S. for its enormous involvement in the operation that led to the execution of democratically elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba of Congo. From 1960-1968 the CIA's efforts in Congo were so extensive that, writes Weissman "they ranked as the largest covert operation in the agency's history, costing an estimated \$90-\$150 million in current dollars, not counting the aircraft, weapons, and transportation and maintenance services provided by the Defense Department."¹⁰ The operations resulted in the coming to power of a pro-U.S. government under the rule of Army chief Joseph Mobutu that alienated many across Africa and eventually plunged Congo into chaos and a civil war that would result in the deaths of millions. Harold Saunders offers an interesting contrast, a critique of America's non-intervention in the Pakistani-Bangladeshi conflict of 1971 that led to a 'forgotten genocide.'¹¹ Saunders contends that President Richard Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger refused to intervene in the Civil War in deference to their Pakistani ally, and highlights the important role that Pakistan's military leader General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan in the Nixon Administration's backchannel opening to China. The result of the Pakistani civil war and subsequent Indian intervention led Senator Edward Kennedy to denounce the administration for allowing "the most appalling tide of human misery in modern times."¹²

This H-Diplo forum brings together three leading scholars of U.S. covert action to assess these cases: Mark Gasiorowski, Tanya Harmer, and Lise Namikas. Harmer and Namikas have prepared lengthy assessments of all four cases, whereas Gasiorowski focuses on his area of expertise, Iran. The three discussants offer a stimulating discussion of these cases. However, Takeyh comes under especially pointed criticism for his critique of the historiography of the coup. Gasiorowski, who for three decades has pioneered the study of the CIA's role in Iran, contends that "Takeyh has produced an account that is one-sided and misleading," whereas Harmer argues that he "relies on discredited sources to argue that the United States should *not* be held responsible for the 1953 Iranian coup." Lise Namikas is less critical but nonetheless points to other flaws in his narrative. Takeyh declined the opportunity to respond to this forum but has written a response to a critical commentary published by Christopher de Bellaigue in the September-October 2014 edition.¹³ Namikas and Harmer also disagree with Devine's contention that the CIA did not play an important role in the 1973 military coup in Chile.

¹⁰ Weissman, "What Really Happened in the Congo,"
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141523/stephen-r-weissman/what-really-happened-in-congo>

¹¹ Saunders, "What Really Happened in Bangladesh,"
<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141530/harold-h-saunders/what-really-happened-in-bangladesh>

¹² Saunders, *Ibid.*

¹³ See footnote 4.

To come to any significant conclusions about the use of covert action will require a commitment by all parties to examine and debate the declassified materials available in order to foster creative engagement and to prevent the participants from talking past each other. It is to be hoped that this discussion may once more spark interest in these questions and help spur the declassification of further materials from not just the United States but foreign governments as well.

Participants:

Gregory Mitrovich is a Research Scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University, where he is Co-Principal Investigator of the “Culture and Power Transitions” project sponsored by the Department of Defense’s Minerva Research Initiative. He is the author of *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Cornell University Press, 2000). He holds a Ph.D. from the School of International Relations at University of Southern California.

Tanya Harmer is an Associate Professor in International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is the author of *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (UNC, 2011) which won the Latin American Studies Association’s Luciano Tomassini book prize in 2013 and was published in Spanish as *El Gobierno de Allende y la Guerra Fría Interamericana* (Santiago, Chile: UDP, 2013). She has also published an edited volume with Alfredo Riquelme entitled *Chile y la Guerra Fría Global* (Santiago, Chile: Ril, 2014) and articles on the Cold War in Latin America in *Diplomatic History*, the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, and *Cold War History*. She is currently working on a biography of Beatriz Allende and a global history of the Cold War in Latin America.

Lise Namikas, Ph.D., is an independent scholar and adjunct instructor in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her book *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo* (Wilson Center and Stanford University Press) was published in 2013. She is currently working on an article about the Ford administration and Mobutu and a book length project, “Banging the Shoe, Breaking the Gavel” about the UN General Assembly of September 1960.

Mark Gasiorowski is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at Tulane University. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Tehran and at St. Antony’s College, Oxford University. He has a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina. He is the author of *US Foreign Policy and the Shah* and many scholarly articles and a co-editor (with Malcolm Byrne) of *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran*. He is currently researching the decision-making that led the United States to undertake the 1953 coup.

Ray Takeyh's "What Really Happened in Iran" is a revisionist account of the August 1953 coup that deposed Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq. Takeyh dismisses the idea that the CIA played a crucial role in the coup, calling this a "myth." (1) Rather, he argues that Mosaddeq was overthrown in a popular uprising catalyzed by his own poor leadership, which turned many Iranians against him. Takeyh presents no new evidence in support of his claim and ignores extensive evidence that not only the CIA, but also the British government, were deeply involved in Mosaddeq's downfall. His account is overly simplistic, portraying in black-and-white terms a series of events that were complex and remain unclear in important ways. It is also riddled with errors.

Takeyh's argument has three major flaws. First, he ignores the extensive efforts both Britain and the United States made to undermine Mosaddeq before the coup. After Iran nationalized its British-controlled oil industry in April 1951, Britain was very inflexible in negotiating a resolution of the oil dispute and organized a global embargo of Iran's oil exports. Iran's export income quickly shriveled, triggering a deep recession and fiscal crisis. Britain nearly invaded Iran and made extensive covert efforts to turn Iranians against Mosaddeq, backing three major coup plots. The last of these plots centered around retired general Fazlollah Zahedi, elevating him to the status of a major opposition figure. Mosaddeq learned of this plot and broke diplomatic relations with Britain in October 1952.

Under the Truman administration, the United States saw Mosaddeq as a moderate nationalist alternative to the radical nationalists and leftists then emerging in the region. U.S. officials therefore tried to broker a settlement of the oil dispute, provided modest amounts of aid to Iran, and even hosted Mosaddeq in Washington. They also began a large covert operation codenamed TPBEDAMN aimed at undermining Iran's communist Tudeh Party and heightening fear of the Tudeh among Iranians. U.S. officials grew increasingly frustrated with Mosaddeq as he failed to settle the oil dispute, but they did not work against him during Truman's tenure.

This changed after the Eisenhower administration's inauguration in January 1953. Within a few weeks, top U.S. and British officials decided to try to overthrow Mosaddeq. They chose Zahedi to replace him and appointed Kermit Roosevelt, the head of CIA covert operations in the Middle East, to lead the effort, codenamed TPAJAX. After the last U.S. initiative to settle the oil dispute collapsed in March, CIA officials began planning a coup and provided \$1 million to the Tehran CIA station to finance covert operations against Mosaddeq through TPBEDAMN. They also provided \$135,000 to Zahedi, who was agitating against Mosaddeq. U.S. and British officials drew up a detailed plan for the coup in May and June. President Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill approved the plan in early July.

In the following weeks, Roosevelt and two other CIA officers traveled to Iran to initiate the coup. The Tehran CIA station began an 'all-out' propaganda campaign against Mosaddeq and hired gangs to foment public disturbances to make it appear as if Mosaddeq were

losing control. Since Zahedi had failed to create an organization to carry out the coup, Roosevelt's CIA team assembled a network of military officers for this purpose. They also paid large bribes to members of parliament to turn them against Mosaddeq. The CIA sent a series of emissaries to persuade Iran's reluctant Shah to dismiss Mosaddeq. For weeks the Shah resisted, until Roosevelt threatened to overthrow Mosaddeq with or without his support.

Takeyh downplays or ignores these various U.S. and British actions and does not acknowledge their contribution to Mosaddeq's downfall. He blames Mosaddeq for the failure to resolve the oil dispute and the resulting damage to Iran's economy and to his own popularity, though Britain was equally intransigent and organized a devastating embargo of Iranian oil. He fails to consider how Britain's extensive plotting and the CIA's covert political activities before the coup undermined popular support for Mosaddeq. He criticizes Mosaddeq for rigging a referendum to close parliament in early August 1953 but fails to mention that Mosaddeq did so because foreign operatives were subverting this institution. And he fails to mention the CIA's role in building up Zahedi and assembling the military officer network. While Mosaddeq's poor leadership and other domestic factors certainly facilitated the coup, it is disingenuous to ignore the role of these U.S. and British actions.

The second major flaw in Takeyh's argument is that he ignores extensive evidence that Roosevelt's CIA team continued to work against Mosaddeq after their initial coup attempt failed on the night of August 15-16, 1953. CIA officers hid Zahedi and other conspirators in the U.S. embassy compound and a CIA safehouse, preventing Mosaddeq's security forces from arresting them. They reproduced and distributed copies of the Shah's decrees dismissing Mosaddeq and appointing Zahedi as Prime Minister, publicizing these important actions. They used the TPBEDAMN network to organize raucous crowds in Tehran on August 17 and 18, adding to the atmosphere of chaos. They also encouraged prominent clerics and the commanders of army garrisons outside Tehran to turn against Mosaddeq. On the morning of August 19, agents in the TPBEDAMN network organized crowds that marched into central Tehran chanting anti-Mosaddeq slogans. Army units commanded by members of the CIA-organized officer network also appeared on the streets that day, seizing key locations, clashing with pro-Mosaddeq units, and soon taking over. Mosaddeq went into hiding but surrendered the next day. While various Iranian opponents of Mosaddeq contributed to the events of August 16-19, these events were hardly an Iranian initiative, as Takeyh claims.

The third flaw in Takeyh's argument is that he gives only a vague explanation of who Mosaddeq's domestic opponents were and what they did to depose him. He argues that Iran's middle class, army officers, Shi'a clergy, intelligentsia, and "professional syndicates" (5) turned against Mosaddeq. But there are no polls, election results, mass protests, or other evidence to support (or refute) this conjecture; and the anti-Mosaddeq crowds that appeared on August 19 were fairly small and were triggered at least partly by the CIA team's actions. Although army units were crucial to Mosaddeq's downfall, most of the units involved in the coup also had been organized by the CIA team. A CIA history of the coup (cited selectively by Takeyh) indicates that Zahedi had few contacts among active-duty

officers and that many officers supported Mosaddeq. Most clerics probably opposed Mosaddeq, but there is little concrete evidence on the clergy's views of him and their role in his downfall. And some clerics were manipulated by U.S. and British operatives before and during the coup. The Shah certainly played a crucial role in Mosaddeq's downfall, but he had refused to oppose Mosaddeq for 27 months and agreed to do so only after extensive pressure by U.S. emissaries.

In short, while Mosaddeq certainly had domestic opponents, Takeyh fails to explain clearly who they were and what they did, independently of the CIA team, to topple him. Indeed, if Mosaddeq's domestic opponents were primarily responsible for his downfall, why did they act only after Roosevelt's CIA team had begun working feverishly to achieve this goal, rather than a few months earlier or later? Takeyh does not explain this.

Much about the 1953 coup remains unclear. How much had Mosaddeq's popularity fallen by August 1953? To what extent were British and U.S. machinations responsible for this? To what degree were the crowds and army units that appeared on August 19 acting on their own, instigated by the CIA team, or instigated independently by Iranian actors? Which Iranians did what to instigate these crowds and army units? How influential were certain key actions taken by Mosaddeq, the Shah, Roosevelt, and other central figures? Although existing primary and secondary sources and an important forthcoming book by Ali Rahnema¹ shed considerable light on these questions, much remains uncertain.

Only by sifting through all of the available evidence and carefully weighing it can we come to a good understanding of the factors that led to Mosaddeq's downfall. Most scholars who have done so conclude that both domestic and foreign actors played crucial roles in this fateful event, though they differ somewhat on the relative importance of the various participants. By downplaying or ignoring crucial evidence on the U.S. and British roles in the coup, Takeyh has produced an account that is one-sided and misleading.

¹ Ali Rahnema, *Behind the 1953 Coup in Iran: Thugs, Turncoats, Soldiers, and Spooks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

One of the main problems with the “What Really Happened” series in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs* is the idea that the four short articles chosen by the journal’s editors can ‘solve’ what happened in the past. The sub-title for the series “Solving the Cold War’s Cold Cases” suggests that these articles can put history to bed, wrap up old controversies, and move on. Yet, if anything, they raise more questions and problems than they resolve. For the non-expert reader, to varying degrees, they also have a danger of distorting the way history unfolded as it did in Iran, the Congo, Pakistan, and Chile, let alone during the global Cold War.

As my expertise relates to Chile, I will deal mostly here with Jack Devine’s article in the series. However, some broader comparative issues that relate to all four case studies in the *Foreign Affairs* issue are worth raising at the outset. First and foremost, we need to pause and understand what it is we are dealing with. Contrary to the cover image of a single silhouetted murdered victim, the articles read together remind us the sheer scale of the human tragedy associated with the Cold War. True, in the case of the Congo and Chile, historians invariably focus in on the deaths of Patrice Lumumba and Salvador Allende. But Stephen R. Weissman reminds us that “at least 100,000” died in the conflict that besieged the Congo in the 1960s, with a further 3.5 million killed in the late 1990s and 2000s in a regional conflict that directly had its roots in the Cold War (19, 21). In what would become Bangladesh, Harold H. Saunders relates the story of how Pakistan’s military engaged in the “systematic massacre of some 200,000 defenseless citizens,” which in turn led to “more than six million” seeking refuge in India. (36). In the case of Chile, despite Devine’s downplaying of the figures, about which more in a moment, the officially recognised figure for those known to have been murdered or disappeared during the dictatorship that ruled the country between 1973 and 1990 stands at more than 3,000, with over 40,000 having been tortured during this period and 200,000 sent into exile.¹ In short, in these three cases alone – out of many more that could be cited during the Cold War – we are dealing with catastrophic examples of state-led terror and civil war on a grand scale, the consequences of which are still being played out today.

Indeed, for the relatives, friends, and colleagues of the victims of these catastrophes, these are not “Cold Cases” but very hot, present, and painful. Solving them – if such a thing is possible – will involve bringing perpetrators to justice and engaging in long-term reconciliation processes. In Chile, cases will certainly remain open until the disappeared are identified and accounted for, as was so vividly portrayed by the scenes of elderly women sifting through grains of sand in the Atacama desert to find fragments of their loved ones’ remains in Patricio Guzman’s 2010 film, *Nostalgia for the Light*.

The United States has a role to play in solving these on-going cases. It can – and should – immediately disclose all information it has regarding disappearances, murders, torture, and

¹ Amnesty International, “Chile 40 years on from Pinochet’s coup, impunity must end,” 10 September 2013, online at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/chile-40-years-pinochet-s-coup-impunity-must-end-2013-09-10>

repression. This does not mean that the United States was always responsible or in control. To the contrary, in the majority of cases, local actors were the ones who carried out the killing, torture, and repression of their fellow compatriots, often for locally-framed reasons or, at least, locally inflected Cold War causes. Excessive focus on the United States' culpability should also not overshadow its role in the Cold War or let them off the hook. Yet, very often, the CIA either knew or trained those who knew what happened and had information that can help piece together the still unsolved cases that relate to the everyday lives of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide who were caught up in the Cold War's conflicts.

This being said, the purpose of the articles in *Foreign Affairs* is somewhat different. Their aim is not to solve everyday open cases from the past but instead to put to rest – or add another voice to – historical debates that have dominated public and scholarly discussion for decades regarding the role of the United States in precipitating these human tragedies in the first place. Harold Saunders and Jack Devine also have the added incentive of wanting to explain their own roles in government for historical prosperity. The most obvious overall focal question for all four articles is Harold Saunders's challenge as to “whether Washington becomes an accomplice in another government's wrongdoing when it preserves a working relationship with that government for larger purposes?” (42). The authors provide very different answers:

Stephen R. Weissman is the most outspoken in saying yes. His well-documented account of the role of the United States in the Congo, which is based on newly released documents, is also the most convincing, credible, and significant of the four articles. Drawing on declassified materials related to the assassination of Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and the United States's relationship with the Congo's subsequent President, Joseph Mobutu, he persuasively argues that Washington was not only complicit but directly involved. As he argues, it has a “well-known pathology” when it comes to “clinging” to bad allies and has an extensive documented track record of promoting bad, anti-democratic governance (21-22). Although he probably over-emphasises the responsibility of the United States at the expense of Congolese actors themselves and their own agency in events, it is very clear from the newly available record that Weissman draws on that through Lawrence Devlin, the CIA station chief in Congo, Washington had the ability to influence events on the ground in a significant way.

Ray Takeyh, on the other hand, relies on discredited sources to argue that the United States should *not* be held responsible for the 1953 Iranian coup and that its role was “ultimately insignificant” (2), even if he acknowledges that the CIA did intervene to help the British topple Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Reza Mossadeq. As Roham Alvandi recently argued in the *New York Times*, the problem with ascertaining “What Really Happened” in Iran in 1953 depends on the United States and Britain opening their archives.² We know that the Eisenhower administration intervened in Iran, but until all documents related to this intervention are declassified we will not know to what extent, with what consequences, and

² Roham Alvandi, “Open the Files on the Iran Coup,” *The New York Times*, July 9, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/10/opinion/open-the-files-on-the-iran-coup.html>.

how significant this intervention was. To be sure, Takeyh's article is compelling in its argument that "outdated notions of victimhood and domination by foreigners" should not absolve or ignore the roles played by Iranians themselves "who were the principal protagonists" in their country's history (12). These need investigating too, as do the roles of Pakistanis, Congolese, and Chileans in the other crises under examination. But the question with regards to Iran is what the still-classified U.S. documents might hide. Until all records related to 1953 – U.S., British *and* Iranian – are released, any claim to be debunking 'myths' once and for all, as Takeyh does, is problematic.

Harold Saunders and Jack Devine take what are probably more accurate in-between stances in answering the question. Saunders's depiction of President Richard Nixon's role as the "critical factor" (38) in decision making is persuasive and rings true from my own research into U.S. intervention in Chile around the same time.³ Even so, when the weight of history is accounted for in lives lost during the Pakistan crisis of 1971, Saunders's attempt to suggest that "pragmatic" "real-world" strategic Cold War considerations were key, is unconvincing (42). Was this – and is this – the best that we can expect when it comes to dealing with systematic massacres carried out by the United States's close allies? No matter what the "agonizing complexity of policymaking" (42) was during the crises under review in the "What Really Happened" series, the fact remains that decisions made in each case could have been better and would almost certainly have averted the lives lost in the process had Washington not clung on to the likes of President Mobutu or General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan in Pakistan. In answer to his own question about culpability in other governments' wrongdoing, the answer Saunders implies strongly in his own article is yes – at the very least by association.

When it comes to Chile, the answer is also yes, although there are a few different layers to Devine's portrayal of the 1973 coup and beyond. On one level, he is mostly right about U.S. responsibility for the coup itself. He acknowledges that the CIA "helped create a climate for the coup" (33) and that it knew in advance that a military coup would be launched on 11 September but did nothing to warn the government. He states that the CIA "took pride" (33) in having helped contribute to Allende's overthrow, that it funded *El Mercurio* and opposition parties. He depicts the CIA as inconsistent when it came to deciding whether to actively encourage a coup or not. He states that Nixon's Track II in 1970 was the kind of serious "misstep" that the CIA "needs to avoid" in the future (32-33, 35). When it comes to the United States's failure to fully grasp General Augusto Pinochet's position, or the Chilean military's decision to inform the CIA station of a coup, rather than receive instructions from it, his account mirrors the available documentary record.⁴ But these are all aspects of the story of U.S. intervention in Chile that we already know. In telling us 'what really happened' in these respects his article adds nothing particularly new to the historical record.

³ Tanya Harmer, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 227; Kristian Gustafson, "Double-Blind: Predicting the Pinochet Coup," *RUSI* 150, no. 6 (2005).

Where the article does add to existing knowledge, the author's new insights meanwhile prompt immediate questions. For example, we learn about the kind of assets that Devine worked with when he served as a CIA officer in Chile. As he explains, his job was to "recruit people who could supply the U.S. government with secrets and act at its behest" (29). They included a "senior Communist Party official" for \$1000 a month (a substantial sum at the time), a "high value asset who infiltrated an extremist wing of the Chilean Socialist Party," military assets, political assets, media assets, and a "grandmotherly" middle-class woman (29, 30, 33). We also learn concretely for the first time that Devine offered money to this woman to organise the first major 'pots and pans march' against the government in December 1971, when she raised the possibility with him (30). But what we do not learn is who initiated these contacts, what kind of information or assistance these assets provided, why they were chosen, whether the Communist Party official had a role within the government, if he and the asset who infiltrated the Socialist Party were kept on the CIA payroll after 1973 etc. Some of this kind of information can be picked up in the still-heavily redacted declassified record, but redactions are so extensive that piecing a coherent picture about the strengths, weaknesses, and extent of intelligence gathering in Chile during the Allende years is immensely difficult to this day. It is obvious that Chilean left-wing parties were infiltrated, for example, but by whom, how, and with what specific consequences for the opposition's actions is difficult to ascertain.

This kind of information about the people that the CIA worked with is important since it is part of the picture of "What Really Happened" in Chile. Certainly, to grasp the full picture we need to examine the local actors who opposed Allende, their motivations for doing so, and their roles in precipitating the coup. We also need to know who took the initiative, how, when, and where. Why did these Chileans collaborate with the CIA, do left-wing parties know how significantly they were infiltrated, and what effect does this have on our understanding of the Left's weaknesses and faults during the Allende years? Was the elderly grandmother Devine was in touch with also involved in coup plotting? Knowing exactly who (and how many) collaborated with the CIA, how the CIA got its information, and what kind of information it received will also help us to better evaluate its intelligence capabilities and ability to influence events on the ground. In short, despite the reams and reams of pages written about Chile, there still seems a lot that we do not yet know.

There are nevertheless things that we do know that Devine ignores. And this is the most problematic aspect of his article. In Devine's words, "the CIA should not be blamed for bad outcomes it did not produce" and he expends considerable efforts to distance himself from the Pinochet dictatorship's brutality, discussing how "disturbed" and "disillusioned" he and his colleagues were when they heard what the military junta was doing (27, 34). I myself have argued elsewhere that Chilean military officials had their own agency, their own agenda, and their own ideas when it came to waging the Cold War in Chile; that they strenuously resisted all calls (including those from Washington) to improve human rights.⁵ However, this does not mean that they did not remain allies of United States or that the CIA

⁵ Tanya Harmer, "Fractious Allies: Chile, the United States, and the Cold War, 1973-76," *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 109-43.

did not support them and actively involve itself in the “bad outcome.” Devine’s account neglects to mention the CIA’s collaboration with the dictatorship’s new secret intelligence service, the DINA. It fails to mention that U.S. intelligence services provided information to the Chilean military about two Americans (Charles Horman and Frank Terrugi), who were subsequently murdered in 1973.⁶ It does not say anything about U.S. complicity in, and knowledge of, the state-led terrorist network, Operation Condor.⁷ Devine ignores documents that prove Washington was ready and willing to offer military coup plotters support should they need it when seizing power. He does not say that the CIA station warned against any future civilian Christian Democrat government as an alternative to Allende on the grounds it would be unable to “reverse” left-wing trends in the country. Nor does he say that CIA analysts believed the United States would only obtain a “pyrrhic victory” by waiting for scheduled democratic elections to take place in 1976.⁸ He does not include evidence that shows Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger fawning over the military Junta after 11 September 1973. And he omits the inter-departmental strategy paper drawn up three days before the coup that proposed encouraging any military Junta that seized power to seek support from neighbouring right-wing dictators. Both Kissinger and U.S. ambassador Nathaniel Davis personally and explicitly suggested that Pinochet seek assistance from the right-wing military Brazilian dictatorship after the coup.⁹ When these facts are taken into consideration, the idea that the coup was a good thing to take “pride” in but that the CIA cannot be associated or held responsible for what happened next therefore falls flat.

One wonders why an article that aims to stimulate a “productive debate about covert action” and to clear up the “muddy” picture surrounding the history of U.S. involvement in Chile omits so much and mis-reports readily available facts. For example, the article oddly quotes the number of those killed and disappeared by the dictatorship as 2,200 instead of the real figure of more than 3,000 which, Similarly, one wonders why the article includes the statement that Leftists “physically attacked the women” (30) who marched against Allende in December 1971 but does not mention the paramilitary right-wing group, *Patria y Libertad*, that received CIA funds channelled through the Nationalist Party and repeatedly attacked pro-government demonstrators, placed bombs on trains and in schools in the months leading up to the coup.

⁶ Pascale Bonnefoy, “Chilean Court Rules U.S. Had Role in Murders,” The New York Times, June 30, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/01/world/americas/chilean-court-rules-us-had-role-in-murders.html>.

⁷ John Dinges, *The Condor Years: How Pinochet and His Allies Brought Terrorism to Three Continents* (New York: New Press, 2004); Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File : A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability* (New York: New Press, 2003), 212–17.

⁸ Harmer, *Allende’s Chile*, 206–7.

⁹ Harmer, *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War*, 206–7, 228–29, 248; Harmer, “Fractious Allies,” 120–21, 124.

Devine's article admits some U.S. wrongdoing while promoting the idea that Chile proves U.S. covert intervention abroad can be useful and productive today. This is an extraordinarily difficult sell to make. It thus makes sense that he does not want to dwell too long on the negative consequences of destabilisation efforts or associate the United States too closely with the repressive nature of the regime that came after the coup. Yet the negative consequences and the mistakes made in the past (told fully, and unequivocally) are *precisely* what we need to understand if U.S. governments and intelligence services in the future are going to avoid the kind of tragedies that these case studies deal with. Knowing "What Really Happened" in the past in all respects is important because today's policymakers need to know what the likely consequences of their actions or support for bad allies today may be in the decades to come. Ultimately, that is what these articles in *Foreign Affairs* do best. Whether it comes to intervening in coups or supporting murderous dictatorial regimes, they may not solve the past but they can challenge the present by raising questions and spelling out the effects of interventionist policies abroad. On another level, by sparking renewed interest, raising questions and highlighting problems, the "What Really Happened" series may serve to illustrate the need for prompt, full declassification of archival records on all of these Cold War cases and the many more in which the United States intervened in during the Cold War. This must obviously be accompanied by declassification of records *outside* the United States as well. Only once the full picture is available through declassified records can these cases be put to rest. Until then, and until victims of the Cold War are able to bury their dead or walk down the street without fear of bumping into the people who tortured them, they will never be "solved."

At a time when the political debate is increasingly polarized over covert action and the role of the CIA, *Foreign Affairs* (July 2014) has raised the stakes with its feature quartet of articles “What really happened in...” Iran, Congo, Chile, and Bangladesh. Two follow up responses appeared in the subsequent issue (September/October 2014) one on Iran and one on Chile.¹ Three of the four original articles focus on the role of the CIA in a foreign crisis, and one focuses on secret diplomacy during a regional conflict. Each case measures an American intervention in the domestic political affairs of another state. In each case Washington aligned itself with right wing dictators or strong-men, often against a socialist-leaning or anti-American government. These similarities aside, the four articles have distinct approaches and offer different perspectives on the use and usefulness of the CIA, covert action and secret diplomacy.

In today’s world of militant fundamentalism, Arab springs and winters, and revanchism, the place of the CIA and its spy versus spy repertoire has become ambiguous. The CIA has been heavily criticized for engaging in torture, eavesdropping on the Senate Intelligence Committee, and more generally for failing to change with the new times of social media and technology.² This low mark in CIA confidence follows the judgment of President George W. Bush, who in 2004 charged that the CIA was “just guessing” on Iraq; ten years earlier former Secretary of State George Schultz had accused the CIA of peddling policy.³ Analysts have been equally scathing. Chalmers Johnson, a former CIA consultant, warned about “blowback”, while historian John Prados traced the “upheavals and untold suffering” brought by undercover policy.⁴

¹ Christopher de Bellaigue, “Coupdunnit: What Really Happened in Iran,” *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 2014) retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141857/christopher-de-bellaigue-ray-takeyh/coupdunnit> and Peter Kornbluh, “Showdown in Santiago,” *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 2014), retrieved from <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141859/peter-kornbluh-jack-devine/showdown-in-santiago>

² Mark Mazzetti, “New terror strategy shifts C.I.A. focus back to spying.” *The New York Times*, 23 May 2013.

³ See respectively, Robert Novak, 27 September 2004, “CIA versus Bush,” *CNN*, retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/09/27/cia.bush/> and the reaction by the author of the report Paul Pillar (see below) see George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of States* (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), 865. Columbia professor and former Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs Roger Hilsman called the CIA nothing more than a “gimmick” and an “overused” foreign policy tool. See his “Does the CIA Still Have a Role?” *Foreign Affairs* 74:5 (September-October 1995), 112.

⁴ Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (NY: Henry Holt, 2000), 8-9 for quote; John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), xv for quote. See also Hugh Wilford, *The mighty Wurlitzer: how the CIA played America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Andrew Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War* (NY: Metropolitan Books, 2011), especially on the influence on Allen Dulles see pp. 34-44 and 53-57; Marvin Ott, “Shaking up the CIA” *Foreign Policy* No. 93 (Winter 1993-1994), 132-151; Melvin Goodman, “Ending the CIA’s Cold War Legacy,” *Foreign Policy* No. 106 (Spring 1997), 128-143.

Despite the drubbing, the CIA has seen its budget increase and has retained an aura of utility in being able to circumvent obstacles inherent in foreign policy traditions. Leaked documents show the CIA has enjoyed a “surge in resources” and new billions to spend since 9/11.⁵ The underlying reason seems to be that the CIA’s covert action gives a president a bold and daring way to act without red tape, although it should be said the risks of failure are great. Even those critical of the CIA argue that if its actions are done right, and if its intelligence is read right, the agency can play a positive role in U.S. security.⁶ Tim Weiner concluded after surveying the entire history of the organization in *Legacy of Ashes*, that people have “lost faith” in the CIA. Yet he remained optimistic that, with reform, it might one day usefully inform the President about what is going on the world.⁷

There is a prevailing assumption that intervention in the Cold War was significantly different from that of the twenty-first century in which we live. The interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq have been treated as new departures in history.⁸ Yet the Cold War cases of Iran and Congo, Chile and Bangladesh show that the history of intervention resonates for today’s foreign policy makers. Some of the same tactics used now were used then. Political action programs such as those in Afghanistan were first tried in the Congo, the growing unrest in Syria mirrored in some ways that of Chile, and covert U.S. support for what is benignly called regime change in Honduras compares with Iran, Chile and Congo together.⁹

⁵ Mark Ehrenfreund, “CIA is largest US spy agency according to black budget led by Edward Snowden,” *Washington Post*, 30 August 2013 retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/cia-is-largest-us-spy-agency-according-to-black-budget-leaked-by-edward-snowden/2013/08/29/d8d6d5de-10ec-11e3-bdf6-e4fc677d94a1_story.html. The words quoted are those of Barton Gellman and Greg Miller, *Washington Post*, 29 August 2013 and linked in the above article.

⁶ Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, *The CIA and American Democracy* 3rd ed. (1989, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003) called intelligence “an integral part of American democracy.” Paul Pillar, “Intelligent Design?: The Unending Saga of Intelligence Reform,” *Foreign Affairs* 87:2 (March-April 2008), suggested that policy makers need to review their own use of intelligence, p. 138-144. See also Richard K. Betts, *Enemies of Intelligence: Knowledge and Power in American National Security* (Columbia University Press, 2007).

⁷ Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (NY: Anchor Books, 2008), 599 and xx respectively for quotes.

⁸ Jeremy Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield* (NY: Nation books, 2013), xxiii tells the reader that his book is “a story about the United States came to embrace assassination as a central part of its national security policy”; Steve Coll, *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, From the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001* (NY: Penguin Books, 2004).

⁹ See for example Matthew “With Bags of Cash, CIA seeks influence in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, April 28, 2013 retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/29/world/asia/cia-delivers-cash-to-afghan-leaders-office.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>; Amy Goodman, “Kerry, Kissinger, and the Other 9/11,” *Democracy Now* (2013) retrieved from http://www.democracynow.org/blog/2013/9/12/kerry_kissinger_and_the_other_sept_11; and Robert Naiman, “WikiLeaks Honduras: State Dept. Busted on support of coup,” *Huffington Post*, November 28, 2010,

These four articles evaluate the success or failure of U.S. covert policy in light of new evidence available to researchers and the new perspective offered by hindsight. In each of the four cases– Iran, Congo, Chile, and Bangladesh– covert policy achieved Washington’s stated objective, and in official terms can be considered a success. Each case, however, came perilously close to disaster, only to be rescued in the strictest of senses. Each author views the long-term consequences in remarkably different terms.

In Iran, the mix of oil and politics helped produce the clash with Britain in the early 1950s. Rising nationalism had forced the Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to appoint Mohammad Mosaddeq as Prime Minister in 1951. Mosaddeq nationalized the oil industry, and with it the British owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The recently re-elected British Prime Minister Winston Churchill stopped oil production at Abadan, blockaded Iran’s petroleum exports and turned to Washington for help in getting Mosaddeq removed from power. After a tumultuous two years, in August of 1953 Mosaddeq was overthrown. The Shah remained in power with heavy American support until 1979 Islamic Revolution deposed him. President Dwight Eisenhower wrote in his memoirs that the Shah had not restored his power by a “military coup” but had done “what the Constitution permitted him to do” and appointed a successor, General Zahedi. When mobs filled the streets, “we did not stop trying to revive the situation” he recalled, the closest the President would come toward acknowledging an American role in the affair.¹⁰ What was in fact a *coup d’état* continues to generate almost as much controversy today– given the history of U.S. Iranian relations –as in the days and weeks after it took place.

Despite the open secret of CIA involvement, the Agency refused to confirm its role for five decades. Finally in the year 2000, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright came out to say that the United States “played a significant role” in the coup and later that year *The New York Times* followed up by publishing a 1954 CIA report by Donald Wilber that proved it.¹¹ Since then, the National Security Archive has helped bring much more to light on the overthrow of Mossadeq and the TPAJAX project of the CIA. More is expected both from the Eisenhower Presidential Library and the volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series is slated for publication in 2014.¹² The revelations we do have are

retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/29/world/asia/cia-delivers-cash-to-afghan-leaders-office.html?pagewanted=all& r=0>.

¹⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (NY: Doubleday and Company, 1963), 163-164.

¹¹ The remarks of Albright before the American-Iranian Council, 17 March 2000, are reproduced at <http://fas.org/news/iran/2000/000317.htm>; and James Risén, 16 August 2000, *The New York Times*, retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/04/16/world/secrets-history-cia-iran-special-report-plot-convulsed-iran-53-79.html>.

¹² For the history of the declassification of documents on Iran see the National Security Archive website, especially Malcolm Byrne, July 2, 2014, “Iran 1953: US Envoy to Baghdad Suggested to Fleeing Shah he not acknowledge foreign role in Coup,” National Security Archive retrieved from <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB477/>. For newly released documents from DDE Library

extraordinary. The recently re-released CIA report “Battle for Iran” written circa 1974 stated that “the coup was carried out under CIA direction as an act of U.S. foreign policy, conceived and approved at the highest levels of government.”¹³ Mosaddeq, the report stated, threatened to call on the Soviet Union, an act the CIA believed would lead Moscow to justify an occupation of northern Iran. So the theory went that a Soviet wedge into the defense chain that surrounded Iran would significantly reduce American power at a time when the United States was involved in an undeclared war in Korea against forces supported by the Soviet Union and China.¹⁴

Available documents also make clear that U.S. policy makers feared the growing risk of civil war in Iran the longer the crisis persisted. The British economic strangulation forcing Mosaddeq’s hand had to stop, and Washington made it a priority “to get Iranian oil flowing again” and get the country back to normal.¹⁵ Washington looked for ways to offer the British face-saving retreats but also accepted the need to act unilaterally. The most important thing was to prevent the United States from becoming a “second-rate power” if the Soviets moved into Iran.¹⁶ Thus while oil was the key to the crisis, documents suggest that the Cold War rivalry and perceptions of power provided the guiding rationale that spurred U.S. policy makers to act.

Ray Takeyh, a former State Department official and senior fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, challenges the prevailing interpretations of what happened in Iran in August 1953.¹⁷ Takeyh argues that “the CIA’s impact on the events of 1953 was ultimately insignificant” in large part because “Mossaddeq was bound

see John Milburn, “Eisenhower’s Insights: More papers released at Abilene presidential museum,” February 11, 2011 *The Wichita Eagle* summary at <http://www.kansas.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/the-story-of-kansas/article1053918.html> and see the U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, for the projected volume on Iran.

¹³ CIA, *Battle for Iran*, author’s name excised, (n.d., c. mid-1970s), retrieved from <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB435/>. For quotes see p. 26.

¹⁴ CIA, *Battle for Iran*, 28.

¹⁵ Memo for the President, 125th NSC meeting, 19 November 1952, document 238, volume x, FRUS, 1952-54, retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v10/d238>.

¹⁶ Memorandum for the President, Office of National Intelligence estimates, 1 March 1953, and State to Iran, 2 March 1953, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1952-1954, Iran, 1951-1954*, volume X, document 310 and 312 respectively.

¹⁷ Mark Gasiorowski and Malcolm Byrne, Eds., *Mohammad Mosaddeq and the 1953 Coup in Iran* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 227-277; Ervand Abrahamian, *The Coup: 1953, the CIA, and the roots of modern U.S.-Iranian relations* (NY: The New Press, 2013); and Christopher de Bellaigue, *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Tragic Anglo-American Coup* (NY: Harper Collins, 2012); Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (NY: John Wiley and Sons, 2003); Hugh Wilford, *America’s Great Game: The CIA’s Secret Arabists and the Shaping of the Modern Middle East* (NY: Basic Books, 2013).

to fall” (2) anyway. The Eisenhower administration, he asserts, “was hardly in control and was in fact surprised by the way events played out” (12). Takeyh’s argument sends a strong message to today’s foreign policy establishment. Instead of issuing an apology for the coup, the United States should take credit for stabilizing the country at a time of great peril (3) and move forward in its relations with Iran.

Takeyh builds his case (of CIA inconsequentiality and Iranian agency) around three propositions: the sharp decline in Mosaddeq’s support by the summer 1953, the failure of the American-led (first) phase of the coup, and the popularity of the Shah and his “centrality” to events. Each proposition is highly controversial. Christopher de Bellaigue’s follow up will help highlight how Takeyh minimizes the role of the CIA despite evidence to the contrary.

In his first point, Takeyh argues that Mosaddeq built his Prime Minister-ship on a shaky coalition of liberal reformers, clerics, intellectuals, and the middle classes and what united them was his deal with parliament to take control of national oil resources. Mosaddeq has often been depicted as a tragic hero, but just as historians have weakened the aura around him, so does Takeyh.¹⁸ The tenacity of British economic warfare was unexpected, but Mosaddeq alienated even his allies, Takeyh states, by rejecting compromise, demanding special powers, and seeking to take charge of the armed forces. The groundswell of opposition to Mosaddeq then, was homegrown and not CIA inspired. The clergy, such as Ayatollah Kashani, opposed modernization and demonstrated against Mosaddeq, and even leaned toward the Shah (a fact they don’t like to admit), Takeyh states.¹⁹ Furthermore, many of the military forces that had been sent by Mosaddeq to defend his regime “joined in” (11) the demonstrations against him.²⁰

Documents now available suggest there was great fluidity in Iran. The CIA was sinking hundreds of thousands of dollars into what the CIA’s Wilber report called “a war of nerves” against Mosaddeq. But the Prime Minister held onto considerable influence.²¹ Despite the reasonably lush efforts of the CIA to buy votes in parliament, Mosaddeq was able to secure Kashani’s ouster as speaker in July. Mosaddeq also maintained key support of military

¹⁸ See de Bellaigue, *Patriot of Persia*, especially pp. 226-227 and Abrahamian, *The Coup*, 141-147.

¹⁹ Takeyh has written more about the role of the clergy in 1953 in “Clerics responsible for Iran’s failed attempt at democracy,” 18 August 2010, *The Washington Post*.

²⁰ On a wider opposition to Mosaddeq see Mark Gasiorowski, “The 1953 Coup d’etat against Mosaddeq,” in *Mohammad Mosaddeq*, 243-246.

²¹ Tim Weiner notes that the CIA had at least \$1 million a year to spend in Iran, *Legacy of Ashes*, 95, while James Rieen, April 16, 2000, *The New York Times* cites \$5 million. See CIA memorandum, 1 March 1953, at http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/declassified/fy_2011/1953_03_01.pdf and the CIA Clandestine Service History, *Overthrow of Premier Mosaddeq of Iran, November 1952-August 1953*, written by Donald Wilber, March 1954, see p. 30 (in chapter “Mounting Pressure against the Shah”) for quote. Retrieved from <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB28/summary.pdf>. The report was initially published by *The New York Times* in 2000 (referenced above).

officers and army units several days after the coup started through at least August 16 and large groups of demonstrators came out in his support.²²

The second crux of Takeyh's argument is that the first phase of the coup, the American phase, was actually a failure, but a second Iranian phase, was not. A "mood of resignation" descended on Washington after the initial lull in coup activity after August 13 and advisor General Walter Bedell Smith told President Eisenhower that he might now need to "snuggle up" to Mosaddeq (10). It is known that Washington instructed the CIA officer in charge Kermit Roosevelt to make plans to return home after the inconclusive events of August 13. Kermit, however, was not ready to concede despite the bleak news that the CIA had lost touch with Zahedi and the Shah fled the country for Baghdad. Christopher de Bellaigue challenges Takeyh, particularly on the contact between the CIA and Zahedi (and the veracity of Wilber's account). The CIA station in Tehran, Takeyh states, may or may not have "maintained some contact" (10) with Zahedi after August 13 an interpretation which clearly minimized the role of the CIA. But Wilber's account found that the CIA worked hard to relocate Zahedi, which it did after about 12 hours, and after the morning of August 17 Wilbur wrote, Zahedi remained under CIA protection. De Bellaigue quotes the report that Zahedi was now "told to wait for instructions" (164) while the CIA and Roosevelt spread the news that Zahedi had been legally appointed Prime Minister to serve the Shah.²³ In a reply to Bellaigue Takeyh defends his original position by noting that a number of Iranian participants, have "disputed" Wilber (167) although he names only Zahedi's son Ardeshir as a specific source.²⁴

The Shah, in Takeyh's third proposition, remained a "central actor" (8). Most accounts overstate the American and British hand and neglect the fact that the Shah was "still popular" (12) with the Iranian people and with the army. Takeyh implies that the Shah could sense the public mood (6) and refers to him as "tentative" and requiring "reassurance" (9). The important point in the days before the coup, Takeyh recounts, is not that he met with his pro-Western sister or other important Americans (Kermit Roosevelt and U.S. General Norman Schwarzkopf Sr.) but that he signed the decree appointing Zahedi Prime Minister. The CIA history by Wilber and the *Battle for Iran* both paint a different picture. Both suggest that, all along, the Shah had to "be forced to play a specific role" and the agency treated him with barely disguised contempt. The Shah was deeply indecisive and as a result the CIA, by the CIA's own admission, took over everything related to the coup, fully managing it, and carrying it out.²⁵

²² Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup," in Byrne, *Mohammad Mosaddeq*, 249-50.

²³ CIA, *Clandestine Services History* (Wilber), "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran," 50. See also Gasiorowski, "The 1953 Coup," in Byrne, *Mohammad Mosaddeq*, 251-252 and de Bellaigue, "Coupdunnit," *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 2014).

²⁴ For the views of Ardeshir Zahedi, see "Zahedi warns Washington on Iran," (n.d. but circa early 1990s) retrieved from <http://www.ardeshirzahedi.org/zahediwarns.html>.

²⁵ See CIA, *Clandestine Services History* (Wilber), *Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran*, "Summary," p. x. See part v, p. 22 and p. 29 for quotes on Shah and Zahedi. See also *Battle for Iran*, Section III,

What happened on August 19 then, the day the coup turned in favor of the Shah and Zahedi? Takeyh suggests that communists (the Tudeh party) and national front groups overplayed their hand in calls for a republican government. The growing presence of these artificial ideologies galvanized the Iranian people. Phase two of the coup was successful because the Iranian people and the army were loyal to the Shah, whom they still believed (in the words of an American observer) as a “symbol of national unity” (12). While one might welcome some recognition of Iranian agency, Takeyh’s position hinges on the goals of the demonstrators on August 19.²⁶ The CIA reports reveal Kermit Roosevelt’s hand in first enlisting the Tudeh party and then others to counteract it, but also notes that many people, from the middle class, came out in “spontaneity.”²⁷ But it is the meaning of this spontaneity that raises questions. It is unclear whether the expression of support for the Shah can translate into support for his dismissal of Mosaddeq and appointment of Zahedi as Prime Minister.

Although Eisenhower defended the appointment of Zahedi as constitutional, and Takeyh calls the coup a pro-Shah action, the documents give the CIA a much greater role. While relatively bloodless, it was anything but peaceful and while not costly by CIA standards, it was anything but cost-less. The coup, and how it happened, remains a defining moment in the Cold War and in the Middle East. Takeyh’s interpretation suggests there is still a need to come to terms with the CIA’s role in Iran and the domestic politics in Iran itself. Other questions about the importance of oil and the British, and the desire to keep the Soviet Union contained and out of Iran, and how all these factors help drive American support for the coup in Iran.

The CIA has also long been implicated in the crisis in the Congo in the early 1960s where another civil war loomed large. The CIA helped to depose and later facilitate the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the Congo’s first democratically elected Prime Minister.²⁸ The Congo celebrated its independence from Belgium in June 1960. Less than

p. 47 (1981 release) retrieved from

[http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB476/docs/Doc%201%20\(b\)%20-%20Battle%20for%20Iran%20-%202014%20release%20-%20pages%2026-80.pdf](http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB476/docs/Doc%201%20(b)%20-%20Battle%20for%20Iran%20-%202014%20release%20-%20pages%2026-80.pdf).

²⁶ Ambassador Henderson to State, 20 August 1953, in *FRUS* vol X, doc 348. Henderson notes that the crowds were civilians, not hoodlums from all classes but with a “high degree of spontaneity.”

²⁷ CIA, *Clandestine Services History* (Wilber), “Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran,” see chapter “The Shah is Victorious,” 65-75 for a discussion of the crowds, and see also *Battle for Iran*, 66-70 (1981 release).

²⁸ See Lise Namikas, *Battleground Africa: Cold War in the Congo, 1960-1965* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, C.A.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2013) and Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956-1964* (Washington, D.C. and Stanford, C.A.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2010), and Alessandro Iandolo, “Imbalance of Power: the Soviet Union and the Congo Crisis, 1960-1961,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 16:2 (Spring 2014), 32-55.

two months later, according to NSC staffer Robert Johnson, Eisenhower “said something” at a National Security Council meeting that “came across” as an order for the assassination of Lumumba.²⁹ The CIA worked with, or alongside, the former Belgian colonizers to plot his demise. Unsuccessful and pinned down by the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC), it finally forfeited the problem to President Joseph Kasavubu and the Army Chief of Staff Joseph Mobutu in late 1960. In the publication of his memoirs in 2007, Lawrence Devlin, the CIA Chief of Station (COS) in the Congo, defended his use of “intelligence techniques and operations” (270) in the Congo and in support of Mobutu, but remained adamant that these actions did not include assassination...despite orders from Washington. He and others had acted, he said, to stop “the threat of Soviet domination” and prevent “chaos never before experienced” (270-271) in Africa.³⁰

Stephen Weissman argues that what really happened in the Congo was not only an “extensive” U.S. involvement but “it was also malignant” (16) in its results. Weissman is the author of a book and several important articles on the Congo crisis³¹ and served as staff director of the U.S. House Subcommittee on Africa. His article builds on the 2001 Belgian parliamentary commission report, the recently released *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968* which includes a retrospective on the Lumumba years, and his own previous contributions to the release of information on the CIA activity in the Congo.³² Weissman notes that the CIA operation in the Congo, spanning over 6 years, was one of the largest in the Agency’s history costing \$90 to \$150 million not including substantial aircraft and weapons provided by the Department of Defense. The *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968* only accounted an \$11.7 million budget for the operation (5). More than just budgetary figures, Weissman raises important questions about the implications of CIA aid and where it went. Money not only lined pockets, he states, but discouraged Congolese politicians from “building genuine bases of support and adopting responsible policies.” Instead, the legacy of “clients and techniques” led to a “long-running spiral of decline” (16) of democratic politics in the Congo.

The CIA contacts with Mobutu had an inauspicious start, although the new documents show just how important they were. In September 1960, after Lumumba’s dismissal as

²⁹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, *Foreign Relations of the United States, (FRUS)*, volume xxiii, *Congo, 1960-1968* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013), 19.

³⁰ Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: A memoir of 1960-1967* (NY: Public Affairs/Perseus Books, 2007).

³¹ Stephen Weissman, *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), and see his articles, “CIA Covert Action in Zaire and Angola: Patterns and Consequences” *Political Science Quarterly* 94:2 (1979), 263-286 and “An Extraordinary Rendition,” *Intelligence and National Security* 25:2 (April 2010).

³² *FRUS*, vol. xxiii, *Congo, 1960-1968* and for the Belgian parliamentary commission see Chambre des représentants de Belgique, *Enquête parlementaire visant à déterminer les circonstances exactes de l’assassinat de Patrice Lumumba et l’implication éventuelle es responsables politique belges dans celui-ci* (Brussels, 2001).

Prime Minister, Devlin “bet on the long shot” and supported Mobutu’s half-baked schemes to secure greater power.³³ From that point onwards, the CIA masterminded the rise of Mobutu, attaching him at least temporarily to Kasavubu, who provided a necessary constitutional cover for the Army Chief. The Kasavubu cover helped mollify many contributors to the UN operation in the Congo.³⁴ Still, the CIA, with Washington’s blessing, dumped more money into Mobutu’s hands, at first to prevent him from reconciling with Lumumba and then to encourage him to arrest the ousted Prime Minister, who in early December 1960 escaped his U.N. guard. Newly released documents clearly show that the situation remained uncertain even after Lumumba’s arrest. Although Washington believed the return of Lumumba would be achieved with communist support and would therefore have disastrous consequences for the United States, contingency planning for the Congo relied heavily on covert action and involved sending in arms and ammunition.³⁵

According to Weissman, after Lumumba was arrested Devlin then engaged in artful deception that was every bit as morally responsible for murder as pulling the trigger. The COS learned on January 14, 1961 that Lumumba was going to be taken out of Thysville prison (where unrest was escalating) and transferred to the province of Kasai (then Katanga) a full two days before it happened. Not only did Devlin fail to oppose the transfer, a certain death sentence for Lumumba, he withheld vital information from Washington about the transfer. Devlin, Weissman contends, had a motive for withholding the truth, fearing that the State Department would have blocked the transfer as a matter of “high policy” (17) better left for the incoming Kennedy administration. John F. Kennedy was known to be reconsidering the hard line toward Lumumba and Devlin saw a chance to achieve a long-standing CIA objective to eliminate the ex-Prime Minister.

Problems for the United States did not disappear with the end of Lumumba. New documents from *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968* show a long CIA campaign to find a negotiated settlement that was favorable to American interests. Kennedy authorized the CIA to bolster the quasi constitutional government of Cyrille Adoula. Newly available documents also show a certain amount of indecisiveness toward Mobutu during these years, something Weissman’s account does not emphasize. The suspicion was that Mobutu was not powerful enough to secure the country and defeat the secessionist movements which threatened to divide the Congo and invite the Soviet Union into the heart of Africa.³⁶ It is likely that during this time, too, Mobutu became wary of his American benefactors, a wariness that would remain until the last days of his regime in 1997.

³³ *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968*, vol. XXIII, editorial note, document 19.

³⁴ See Station to CIA, 8 October 1960 and NSC Briefing, 20 December 1960, *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968*, vol. XXIII, document 17 and 51. It is worth noting that at this point the U.N. operation in the Congo was represented by Rajeshwar Dayal who was opposed to Mobutu’s growing powers.

³⁵ See for instance, Memorandum for the Special Group, (n.d. but prepared November 10, 1960), *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968*, vol. XXIII, 56-57.

³⁶ See for example 14 May 1962, *FRUS, Congo 1960-1968*, vol. XXIII, document 117.

After years of fruitless efforts to find stability, Kasavubu recalled Moise Tshombe, the pro-Belgian former secessionist leader of Katanga, back to Leopoldville. While Tshombe brought his mercenaries, the CIA offered Mobutu more money, and later, in August 1964 weapons including aircraft and Cuban exile pilots to defeat the Lumumbist rebels and their supporters. As the rivalry between Kasavubu and Tshombe escalated, Mobutu easily took power in another coup, and flush with CIA cash, used the methods of bribery he learned over the years to firm up loyalty among key military officers. Here Weissman's account shows how malignant the tactics of the CIA were. CIA money kept coming for a few more years, although it would gradually shrink in the late 1960s.

Despite the revelations in the new *FRUS* volume on the Congo, Weissman states, the CIA's involvement still "remains partly obscured" (20). The long delayed *FRUS* volume was welcome, but "overly cautious" in redactions, omitting individual financial costs, and excising the CIA's key Congolese clients, even after many have been identified, some by Devlin himself. What is less obscure, as Weissman shows, is that the eight years of covert action, "burdened" (23) U.S. policy and "had done much to rule out any alternative U.S. policy, then or ever" (22). The United States senselessly clung to Mobutu instead of "engaging diplomatically with Lumumba and his successors as part of a broad effort to keep the Cold War out of the Congo" (24). The latter, however, was never part of Washington's goal however much it promised in the first place.

Jack Devine, a self-described young spy-master, was on his first overseas assignment in Chile in the early 1970s. His career in the CIA would eventually span 32 years until the early 1990s. Two years after he arrived, on September 11, 1973 Chile's military bombed the presidential palace, La Moneda, and the democratically elected socialist President Salvadore Allende was found dead. Although the United States had been implicated in a coup attempt three years earlier in 1970, Devine insisted this was not the case in 1973. "I can say with conviction" he writes, "that the CIA did not plot with the Chilean military to overthrow Allende in 1973." In a surprising revelation, Devine states he was given the warning of an imminent coup via his wife. She relayed a message, via phone, from his "friend" who was about to board a plane and leave the country. The message: two days later the military would "move" and "it's going to happen on September 11. The navy will lead it off" (26) at 7 am. After another confirmation of the "move" Devine immediately sent a highest CRITIC priority cable to Washington meaning that it would be sure to reach President Nixon.

Knowing what was about to happen, the station chief, Devine and a few others stayed in the CIA building to anxiously await more news. Finally word of the coup's actual start came at 8 AM. Six hours later it was over, Allende had died by a gun-shot, reportedly suicide, and the Commander in Chief of the army General Augusto Pinochet was in control. Jack Kubisch, the Assistant Secretary for inter-American affairs, said that the leaders were "very cagey, they

refrained from tipping us off” and was quoted as saying “we knew nothing about it. . .it came as a complete surprise to us.”³⁷

The CIA was not involved in the coup, and Devine argued “should not be blamed for bad outcomes it did not produce” (27). Part of the mystery lies in the fact that Pinochet had only held the top military position for three weeks before the coup. Reports of Pinochet’s brutality came within hours, and six weeks after the coup the CIA had reports that 16,000 civilians had been killed. More reports came. And more. The brutality of Pinochet over the next seventeen years “seriously disillusioned” him, Devine wrote. He now concludes that a covert action program could have been sufficient to overturn Allende’s government. Yet this very option, well-known as Track I, had been in place since 1970 without the desired tangible results of removing Allende.

Where does CIA and U.S. responsibility lie? Events in Chile have attracted a lot of attention, especially since Secretary of State Colin Powell commented that what went on with Allende “is not a part of American history that we’re proud of.”³⁸ The National Security Archive and the Clinton Administration’s Chilean Declassification project helped bring at least 16,000 new documents to light.³⁹ In 2014 *Foreign Relations of the United States* published a new volume on Chile.⁴⁰ Additionally, the work of Peter Kornbluh, Tanya Harmer and Lubna Qureshi has added significantly to our understanding of the CIA’s role in Chile.⁴¹ All three historians agree that the CIA did not have a direct hand in the actual execution of the coup, but find that the CIA was responsible for creating the conditions that made it possible. Harmer concludes that “U.S. intervention was a messy reaction to events on the ground”

³⁷ For quotes see Minutes of Special Actions Group, 14 September 1973, and telephone transcript (Kissinger / Rush), 13 September 1973, in U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Chile, 1969-1973*, volume XXI, (Washington, GPO, 2014), documents 353 and 352 respectively. Retrieved from <http://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1969-76v21/pdf/frus1969-76v21.pdf>.

³⁸ Secretary Powell, February 20, 2003, in an interview on Black Entertainment Television, retrieved from <http://fas.org/irp/news/2003/02/dos022003.html>.

³⁹ Press release, November 13, 2000, “Chile: 16,000 secret U.S. documents declassified,” National Security Archive, retrieved from <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/news/20001113/#docs>; see also Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*, updated edition (Washington: The New Press, September 2013).

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Chile, 1969-1973*, volume XXI, (Washington, GPO, 2014).

⁴¹ For some of the new work on Chile see Peter Kornbluh, “Kissinger and Chile: The Declassified Record,” (September 11, 2013) *The National Security Archive*, retrieved from <http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB437/> and Kornbluh’s dossier, *The Pinochet File*, and his follow up response to Devine, “Showdown in Saniago: What Really Happened in Chile?” *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2014), 168-172; Tanya Harmer, *Allende’s Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Capel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Lubna Qureshi, *Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009); and Kristian Gustafson, *Hostile Intent: U.S. Covert Operations in Chile, 1964-1974* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007).

rather than a “White House masterminding” but once the coup took place, the administration helped the new regime survive and consolidate its power.⁴²

At the heart of the matter is the extent of U.S. contacts with the Chilean military. Devine rests his interpretation on the fact the CIA “had no meaningful relationship with Pinochet before he took power” (30). Peter Kornbluh questions this key component of Devine’s interpretation. The CIA was not the only intelligence arm of the U.S. government, Kornbluh pointed out. The Department of Defense maintained contact with top generals, including Pinochet, and in meeting with him in the Panama Canal Zone in 1972 let it be known that Allende “must be forced to step down or be eliminated” (170).

Both Nixon and Kissinger wanted Allende gone even before he took power in 1970. The administration seems to have made Chile a litmus test for itself, in an effort to prevent any so-called “Soviet style” or communist party or pro-Castro presence in the southern American hemisphere.⁴³ Devine suggests that the “new” (that is, 1973) policy of the CIA was to support Allende’s political opponents (29) and states that CIA played “an important role in the political turmoil” growing in Chile. But in the final analysis, the “fierce opposition” Allende faced was a broad spectrum Chilean response to his flawed economic policies, including land reform. Chilean opposition came from women who joined in the 1971 “Empty Pots and Pans” march (which Devine admits instigating but says it took on a life of its own) and from the October 1972 trucker’s union strike. According to Devine the CIA had wanted to support the strike but Ambassador Nathaniel Davis sent the CIA request to Washington knowing it would reach a graveyard there. At the very least, both examples show the CIA interest in domestic unrest.

New documents show the need to take a closer look at the events of 1973. In February 1973 the CIA requested additional money for Chile, above the \$1.4 million already approved to help combat the poor parliamentary election results of that year.⁴⁴ Equally of concern, Chilean troops, long loyal, were showing signs of eroding discipline.⁴⁵ Throughout the summer of 1973 Washington grew more impatient with the Chilean military. Kornbluh’s *The Pinochet File* documents how the CIA helped translate this impatience into a “smear campaign” against General Carlos Prats, Army Commander in Chief, and strong supporter of Allende. The campaign was run by *El Mercurio*, a newspaper that Devine portrays as independent, but which Kornbluh points out was the mouthpiece of the CIA

⁴² Harmer, *Allende’s Chile*, 253.

⁴³ See for instance Memorandum for the 40 Committee, March 1970, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 29.

⁴⁴ Memorandum from State (Eliot) to Kissinger, 7 March 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI document 321.

⁴⁵ Harmer, *Allende’s Chile*, 227. Davis described how a “bread-and-butter, sit-down mutiny” had frightened, shamed, and enraged senior officers who were almost sure to take some kind of action, see *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, doc 330, 871.

(171) and counseled by Devine himself.⁴⁶ Fatefully as it turned out, Colonel Prats resigned on August 22, 1973. According to Devine, that left Pinochet in the top post, worried that he too would be “swept away” by the “upstarts” (32).

Another important shift was taking place during the summer 1973. Newly released documents show that U.S. officials were moving closer toward granting greater aid for the “private sector” – an ambiguous term used to refer to key select groups opposed to Allende.⁴⁷ The CIA Santiago station reported in a cable on June 25 that it felt “strongly” that financial support for the private sector was “essential.”⁴⁸ Kissinger was known to support this position although he was marginally more cautious about the risks involved. The two key hold outs were Ambassador Davis and Jack Kubisch. Kubisch finally agreed in late July that “this financial help is absolutely critical to the survival of an opposition in Chile.”⁴⁹ Still, Ambassador Davis continued to express reservations and saw the private sector’s connections with the military as tempting “rash actions.” But he also agreed that “soundings” should be made out to Washington on the situation.⁵⁰ Both opponents thus gave the impression that they were weakening their stance by August.⁵¹ The 40 Committee, on August 20, 1973 approved additional expenditure both to political parties and the private sector.⁵²

“Our hand doesn’t show on this one though” Nixon boasted on September 16, 1973. Kissinger answered: “we didn’t do it. I mean we helped them. [Redacted] created the conditions as great as possible.”⁵³ Days after the coup Pinochet referred to fact that he had

⁴⁶ Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File*, 111-116. Prats was the subject of an “intense public smear campaign” Kornbluh writes (111). Kornbluh also makes this point in his review of Devine, “Showdown in Santiago,” *Foreign Affairs* (Sept/Oct 2014).

⁴⁷ Harmer, *Allende’s Chile*, 227 offers a characterization of this group (indirectly) stating that at this time (late August 1973) Washington decision makers “still disagreed about whether to offer assistance to strikers and right-wing paramilitary forces...” in its efforts to destabilize Allende.

⁴⁸ Station to CIA, 25 June 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 332.

⁴⁹ Harmer notes that Kubisch had threatened to resign over covert aid to Chile, see *Allende’s Chile*, 227. See Memorandum from Kubisch to Porter, 25 July 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 337.

⁵⁰ Memorandum from Jordan (NSC Staff) to Kissinger, August 29, 1973, and Memorandum from Colby (DCI) to Kissinger/Kubisch, 25 August 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 343 and 342.

⁵¹ Memorandum from Jordan (NSC Staff) to Kissinger, August 29, 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 343.

⁵² Memorandum from Colby (DCI) to Kissinger/Kubisch, 25 August 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 342.

⁵³ Telephone transcript, Kissinger/Nixon, 16 September 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 357.

not “hinted to us beforehand of their developing resolve to act” because what was done “had to work” in Pinochet’s words.⁵⁴ Pinochet needed to offer no hints, since Washington had already made its position clear, as Kornbluh demonstrates. As for the events in Chile, then, we really do know a lot more. But questions remain about how far the United States went in destabilizing Chile, what Pinochet knew about this activity, and what the U.S. knew about his pending coup, and when it knew it.

In 1971 Yahya Khan, President of Pakistan, ordered a brutal crackdown on its eastern Bengali region 1000 miles away (now Bangladesh, then East Pakistan). This crackdown came on the heels of a major cyclone which destroyed the East Bengal coast and cost 500,000 lives in November 1970. President Yahya’s indifference to the people’s plight led to the parliamentary victory of the Awami League, led by Mujibur Rahman (aka Mujib) in East Pakistan. Yahya’s troops blocked Mujib from assuming his seat and then declared martial law, taking retribution on the population, especially the Hindu minority and intellectuals, and causing another 200,000 casualties. Waves of refugees, totaling perhaps 6 million, fled into India while Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared India’s support for the Bengalis in East Pakistan. A brief but tense Indo-Pakistan war flared up in mid-December 1971. In these circumstances, the position of the United States, tacitly supportive of West Pakistan and Yahya, became critical.

New documents and research show just how tangled this crisis and short war had become in the international arena.⁵⁵ At the time of events, Harold Saunders was Henry Kissinger’s National Security Council aide on South Asia. Harold Saunders uses his review of the new book by Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram*⁵⁶ to come to terms with the policy of the Nixon administration. Bass’s title echoes the damning evidence sent to Washington by Archer Blood, the U.S. consul in Dhaka, East Pakistan, regarding the brutality of Yahya’s troops. On April 6, 1971 Blood, and almost all his staff declared their “strong dissent” to U.S. silence in the face of repeated atrocities and “selective genocide” including the midnight annihilation of educated Bengali at the Dacca University.⁵⁷ Bass argues that to its shame, the United States was not just uncaring and disengaged as in so many past cases of atrocities, but was formally allied with the executioners.

⁵⁴ Chile (embassy) to State, 12 September 1973, *FRUS, Chile, 1969-1973*, vol. XXI, document 350.

⁵⁵ For the crisis in South Asia in 1971 see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, volume XI, (GPO: Washington, 2005) and *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, volume E-7, Documents on South Asia, 1969-1972* (GPO: Washington, 2005); Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); See also the audiotapes at nixontapes.org and Luke Nichter, (2007) “Superpower Relations, backchannels, and the subcontinent: using the Nixon tapes to examine the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War,” nixontapes.org, retrieved from <http://nixontapes.org/india-pakistan.html>.

⁵⁶ Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

⁵⁷ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, xii-xiii.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers at the time called the telegram “miserable.”⁵⁸ It certainly did evoke important questions about the U.S. position. As a young advisor back in 1971 Saunders offered an alternative (as Bass outlines), in suggesting a policy to urge Yahya to restrain his military and to avoid greater loss of life.⁵⁹ Saunders now seems to accept why this did not happen and why his advice lay dormant. A negotiated resolution to the crisis was not to be, in part because Kissinger “had to deal with the strong prejudices that Nixon revealed in confidence” (38). Nixon was clear: “I don’t like the Indians” he said, “the Pakistanis have been our friends.”⁶⁰ His message: “don’t squeeze Yahya at this time.”⁶¹ In addition to personal prejudices, Nixon and Kissinger also had a secret that, for Saunders, more fully explains their support of Pakistan.

Unbeknownst to others at the time, Pakistan had become the very secret back channel to China, helping to prepare the way for Nixon’s opening to China. Yahya first helped smooth the way for a visit between Premier Zhou En lai and Henry Kissinger as a special envoy of the President. Kissinger defended “the tilt” toward Yahya, a term he used in his own memoirs, *The White House Years* (842), with a heavy emphasis on the China channel. But he also noted that “quiet diplomacy” was at work and claims that American approaches to Moscow encouraged the latter to restrain India.⁶² The historian Srinath Raghavan agrees that the U.S. tilt was “understandable” and was viewed as a test by China of America’s commitment to a close ally.⁶³

At the time, Saunders, like everyone else, was unaware of Nixon’s strong bias or the link to China. Bass made an eloquent case for the protection of lives, Saunders agreed, but in hindsight the picture is more complicated. The decisions of 1971 reflect a case “in real-world policymaking” where Nixon and Kissinger “had to choose between moral and pragmatic considerations” (42). While a negotiated settlement would have been better, Saunders agrees now that Washington’s “larger interests would have argued against doing

⁵⁸ Transcript of telephone conversation between Secretary Rogers and Kissinger, 6 April 1971, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 20 retrieved from <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v11/d20>

⁵⁹ Raghavan, 1971, 94.

⁶⁰ Quoted by Richter, “Superpower Relations,” [nixontapes.org](http://nixontapes.org/india-pakistan.html), retrieved from <http://nixontapes.org/india-pakistan.html>

⁶¹ See Henry A. Kissinger, *The White House Years* (NY: Little, Brown, and Company, 1979), see Chapter XXI “The Tilt”, 856.

⁶² See Kissinger, *The White House Years*, and especially p. 913 for U.S. influence on Moscow to intervene with India. Nixon used the term “quiet diplomacy” in a letter to Indira Gandhi on 28 May 1971, as quoted in *The White House Years*, 857.

⁶³ Raghavan, 1971, 92, 106.

that.” He now wonders if we can ever know “whether the United States could have prevented the violence without doing more harm than good” (42).

Bass however does make a case that Nixon’s policy was guided by more than the channel to China. Nixon, he writes, was “emphatic” and stated that “even apart from the Chinese thing, I wouldn’t do that to help the Indians, the Indians are no goddam good.”⁶⁴ Nixon and Kissinger’s racism and prejudices were two highly charged emotions that shaded their understanding of events in South Asia and negatively impacted their policy. They missed opportunities to approach India, or for that matter even China.⁶⁵ Bass also challenges the notion Washington needed to prove it would stand by its ally, suggesting that China was even more “wobbly” on its commitment to Pakistan.⁶⁶ Ironically, in addition to the American consulate in Dhaka, the CIA was also offering up similar reports of bloodshed and retribution.⁶⁷

Recent documents suggest that a heavy Cold War cloud overlay the thinking of Nixon and Kissinger. Their “tilt” toward Pakistan was far more than the opening to China. Rather, the two top foreign policy makers, overlooking evidence of genocide, were determined to keep the Cold War balance in the United States’ favor. The United States could not look “too weak” to China⁶⁸ which might look elsewhere to break out of its isolation. But that stand came at the cost of urging China “to move” to restrain India and possibly invoke a Soviet counter response. Moscow, the rationale continued, had to be shown “that the ‘man in the White House’ was tough.”⁶⁹ Most importantly, the United States needed to avoid any change in the “world’s complete psychological balance of power” that would come with a strong Soviet-Indian “combination.”⁷⁰ But if Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev did not

⁶⁴ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 153, quoting *FRUS, Documents on South Asia*, vol. E-7, White House tapes, Oval Office 521-13, 15 June 1971.

⁶⁵ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 155-157. Bass writes that “Kissinger’s route to Beijing might have literally gone through Dacca.”

⁶⁶ Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 259.

⁶⁷ See for instance Bass, 148-49; 262, 323. A CIA mole was used occurred 8-12 December 1971 confirmed suspicions that India wanted to occupy parts of Pakistan (Kashmir) and emasculate its military. Neither Nixon or Kissinger questioned the reliability of the mole, and although the identity is still unclear, there are suggestions it was a political rival of Indira Gandhi’s, see p. 289 and footnotes on p. 457-458. The original CIA cable is found in *FRUS, 1969-1976*, vol. XI, document 246.

⁶⁸ See Kissinger quoted in Editorial note, 8 December 1961, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 251.

⁶⁹ See the summary of Nixon’s comments, 12 December, 1971, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 281.

⁷⁰ See the summary of Nixon/ Kissinger’s discussion, 9 December 1971, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 256.

concede, then “we just may as well forget the summit.”⁷¹ Chances were, according to Nixon, that everything would “go down the tube.”⁷² In the narrowest of views from Washington, that did not happen, although many others would pay with their lives.

Can we ever *really* know what happened in Iran, Congo, Chile and South Asia? Or for that matter, Guatemala, Angola, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Afghanistan, to name a few other comparable cases? Maybe the safest thing that can be said, after reviewing the four cases here, is that we can know considerably *more*. As greater documentation of U.S. foreign policy becomes available important details and decisions change our understanding. In Iran, CIA goals were covert, clear and determined on the removal of Mosaddeq, but shaky on the ground. In Congo, Eisenhower wanted Lumumba out and he was easily assassinated, but the weight of the United Nations presence and Congolese politics meant the situation was in flux and a solution a lot less clear. In Chile Nixon and Kissinger wanted the pro-Castro Allende out, created conditions to topple his government, and then helped install a strong man who would turn out to be too strong. In Southeast Asia the support for Yahya was integrally tied to the balance of power and linked in frightening ways to China and the Soviet Union. As domestic crises were internationalized, the dangers to more and more people seemed only to escalate.

Decisions at the highest levels in each of these cases were reliant on the dynamics of Cold War power politics. In Iran, Congo and Chile, the role of the CIA reflected decisions made at the highest levels of government but in important ways added its own panache to policy. This is something historians will surely have to take into greater account. The reference to Cold war priorities is not to endorse the contemporaneous explanations of the policy makers. They shrouded their interest in professions of support for freedom, liberty and the real interests of the people. Yet that had little to do with their motives. The guidelines of the Cold War confrontation and its equations of power pervaded the smallest details of decision-making. The narrow political goals of the United States – as executed by the CIA in three cases -- ran rough-shod over many people. What really happened had more to do with the assumptions of power politics pursued with tragic consequences for domestic security and many lives. How different are things today?

⁷¹ See Nixon’s comments summarized in Editorial note, 10 December 1971, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 268.

⁷² See Nixon quoted in Editorial note, 12 December 1971, *FRUS, South Asia Crisis, 1971*, vol. XI, document 281.