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On the cover:
Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog, by Caspar David Friedrich in 1818. Friedrich was an influential painter of the German romantic period that roughly spanned the late 1700s to the early 1800s. Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog was chosen to present this special issue of Portland Spectrum for the subject’s reflective, appreciative, and perhaps humble appearance. The subject is portrayed gazing into the morning mist, one of Friedrich’s most beloved landscapes. In many of his works Friedrich depicts the vastness of the natural world in juxtaposition to the miniscularity of man. Here we use the image to describe a deference to human history – its teachings, mysteries, and prophecies that shape our understanding of past, present, and future.
In this special issue of Portland Spectrum, we highlight stories of history from around the world, ranging from the throes of Aeneas (approximately 19 B.C.E.) to modern day Ukraine. As a nonpartisan publication, we’ve done our best to present history in its rightful and respectful context: factually, using quality evidence with a neutral tone. Through a lens like this you might find that studying history can be more informative of current events than the study of current events themselves.

History is not so much a simple study of what happened, but further aims to weave an accurate chronology of how things came to be. There are no sudden movements, nothing unprecedented. Rather than looking to an event merely for admiration or description, a goal of history is to describe the conditions that enabled that event to emerge in the fantastic way it did. And what previous state(s) brought about those conditions? On contemplation one can begin to understand the unique task of history in its retroactive sense-making of the world.

Borne of our appreciation for history we’d like to express a profound mourning of the recent destruction of the Mosul public library in Iraq by ISIS followers. In December 2014, several thousand rare and ancient books and manuscripts were eliminated from record by explosion. The exact number of books destroyed remains ambiguous, but some sources estimate the numbers reaching or exceeding 100,000 total, around 8,000 listed as “rare” by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Mosul library was hailed as one of the most historically and culturally rich repositories of knowledge in the country, even once serving as the official library of the ancient Assyrian empire when Mosul was capital. This grievous loss affronts more than just the scholarly domain, wiping out priceless resources and references for anyone inquiring into the reasons we live as we do today. In the words of Faiza Sultan of the Dar Safi publishing house, former student in Mosul, “History is also telling us that Iraqi people are like the phoenix; we will survive this and rebuild our nation again.”

Corinne Hutfilz
Editor-in-Chief of Portland Spectrum
The Heroism of Aeneas

By Lilie Pudnos

In the creation of the Aeneid, Virgil endeavored to recreate an etiological epic based within mythology – a mirror to the significance Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey had upon their Greek audience. The Aeneid tells the story of Rome’s very own epic hero founding the great city after the destruction of Troy, following a series of Odyssey-like pitfalls and misfortunes on the journey to Italy. Scholars throughout the ages recognize Aeneas for his incredible pietas -the ancient Roman notion of piety toward family, the nation and gods- and being the representative of a new Roman, Virgilian hero. But within the context of book two as Aeneas describes his actions during the fall of Troy, he has yet to realize his own pious potential. Instead, he displays his initial use of Homeric tradition as a Greek hero to fit into the context of the Iliad. Book two narrates the transition from Aeneas in the Iliad, a prince of Troy worthy enough to face Achilles, to Aeneas in the Aeneid, the original founder of Rome.

The Roman reader would have known Aeneas originally from his presence in the Iliad when he faced various Greeks and even Achilles himself. The fact that Aeneas survives Achilles’ attack stands out against the bloody slaughter of book twenty, in which Achilles ravages the battlefield. The reader knows from these Greek references that Aeneas will have a dire future and a destiny to carry on the Trojan line of Dardanus:

“...He is destined to survive.
Yes, so the generation of Dardanus will not perish,
Obliterated without an heir, without a trace:
Dardanus, dearest to Zeus of all the sons
That mortal women brought to birth for Father.
Now he has come to hate the generation of Priam,
And now Aeneas will rule the men of Troy in power—
His sons’ sons and the sons born in future years.”

The new Aeneas, starting his tale just days after the Homeric Aeneas, took the stage. The Roman audience was well-versed in Homer and Homeric tradition, and Virgil came onto the scene with the intention of adding onto the Trojan myth, giving written word to centuries of whispered oral history of Aeneas’ story. Because of this, Aeneas enters the Aeneid with the history and all the customs attached to the events in the Iliad, including concepts of honor, glory, and heroism.

In Homeric tradition, a man’s value is marked by his worth in honor and his skill in battle. When he has exceptional possessions of both aspects, he may be deemed a hero, like Achilles, Hector, and Odysseus. In the Iliad, Aeneas attempts to become a hero through glory by holding his own against Achilles in a duel, and through his history of successful battles. He also displays detrimental attempts in honor by “[shrinking] from battle, fast as he was in arms, when he saw that pair of fights side-by-side, standing their ground against him...” He is working to become a hero within the Homeric context, but has not yet achieved this goal. Aeneas is predestined to rule the men of Troy sometime in the undetermined future, but in the present, he is more preoccupied by trying to put himself in the same context as Hector. However, different from the heroism oriented toward Achilles and Odysseus, Aeneas favors a heroism more resembling that of Hector’s—brave, glorious, and defensive, already displaying an early Greek version of the developing Roman pietas.

Hector and Aeneas fight on the side of life, acting as the ones besieged and countering the Greek siege, and try to keep Troy and her people safe. While continuously pursuing the same Homeric ideal, Hector displays a new addition to his characterization befitting the besieged victim.

This is the goal with which Aeneas enters the Aeneid. Still with a mind in the Greek context, Aeneas acts as a Hector-oriented Homeric hero in the pursuit of glory and protection. Book two of the Aeneid follows a bit after the end of the Iliad with the plot of the Greek wooden horse resting outside the Trojan walls. After a series of arguments and tragic deaths, the Trojans accept the famous horse into their walls, escorting it through a parade of citizens rejoicing the end of the war. The city falls into a blissful sleep, but not all is at peace – Hector’s ghost appears to Aeneas in the middle of the night, hinting at a sense of foreboding from which Aeneas must escape. He tells Aeneas to leave the city with the Penates: “…hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere / magna, pererrato statues quae
denique ponto; ’...Take them with you to face your destiny, and find for them the walled city which one day after ocean-wandering you shall build to be great, like them.” For a man so revering of Hector to exclaim “O lux Dardaniae, spes O fidissima Teucrum!” upon his appearance, Aeneas disregards his command immediately. Upon seeing his city in flames, Aeneas’ Homeric tendencies rise up within him and he innately goes to fight, for “furor ira-que mentem / praecipit, pulchrumque mori succurrnit in armis; Frantic in my fury I had no time for decisions; I only remembered that death in battle is glorious.”

Gods, spirits, and mortals, all of good judgment and trusted status, repeatedly try to encourage Aeneas to quick Troy and escape while he can, reminding him of his destiny to become the leader of the Trojans. But repeatedly, Aeneas ignores their advice in favor of fighting for his city in the attempt of achieving a glorious death in war. He constantly chooses war and fighting over thought to his abandoned family and predestined future, disregarding the pietas his companions attempt to enforce upon him. Even as he fights heroically, Aeneas again displays his detrimental effort toward Homeric glory in challenging a losing battle. Heroes were expected to fight in battles of his equal or weaker caliber, but they were not expected to fight zealously without chance of success and the likelihood of certain death.

By entering a battle he knows he can never win, Aeneas expresses uncontrollable emotionalism against those with better judgment and foresight than his own. Likewise, stricken from the cries of war around him and the memory of the beheading of his king fresh in mind, Aeneas sees a terrified Helen hiding in the altar of the palace, afraid of the wrath of the Trojans and the Greeks:

Exarsere ignes animo; subit ira cadentem
Ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas.

Non ita. Namque eti nullum memorabile nomen
Feminea in poena est nec habet Victoria laudem,
Extinxisse nefas tamen et sumpsisse merentis

Exorsse ignes animo; subit ira cadentem
Ulcisci patriam et sceleratas sumere poenas.

Out flashed all the fire in me and i was filled with a rage to avenge my home, and wreak punishment, crime for crime... ’Not so. There may be no great honor in killing a woman; such a victory can bring no fame. But I shall have some credit for having stamped dead a mortal sin, and punished a wrong which cries out for justice; and it will be joy to have glutted my desire for the vengeance of the fire and satisfied the ashes of all that were ever dear to me.’

Once again, he contemplated committing dishonorable slaughter upon the Trojae et patriae communis Erinys, though it is a vile, pitiable thing to kill a woman. Before he can lower his murderous sword and exact his revenge, mother Venus stays his hand and reminds him again of the wife and father he left behind, as well as tearing away the mortal fog over his eyes that kept him from seeing that the gods are the true destroyers of Troy. Characters like Venus, Anchises, Hector, and Creusa are meant to represent the piety that Aeneas currently lacks during his continuous endeavors toward heroism and his displays of Homeric behavior. He will soon acquire the hinted piety through their influence after Troy falls and he runs out of reason for a Homeric character, but for now in book two, his mind is stuck in the Iliad. It takes the entirety of book two, a story told within the stage of the Troy of the Iliad, for Aeneas to relinquish his striving for Greek heroism and forfeit his vagrant emotionalism in order to acquire Roman pietas and carry on new values to the city that is foretold to become the greatest empire on Earth.

THE HISTORY OF THE MODEL OF DNA

BY Corinne Hutfilz
The year 1953 marked the culmination of nearly a hundred years of investigation into one of the most ancient and essential instruments of life. The image is as iconic as it is complex: the double helical model of DNA. Often bundled with the image are the names of the two vernal scientists from the University of Cambridge, James Watson and Francis Crick. Their publication was, and is still, seen as the climactic juncture not only for the immediately relevant domains of biochemistry, microbiology, genetics or genomics, but for all areas seeking understanding in the fundamental, mechanical functions of life. However, as with any picture of achievement, it is gravely fallacious to award all credit to those at the highest peak of the story. Without reaching so far back as the notes of Gregor Mendel’s 1865 inquiries into genetic inheritance, an accurate depiction of the intellectual trail can be constructed through examination of a few key figures and their vital associates.

The notion of genes and genetic inheritance (or transference, in cases of bacteria) was around much earlier than the notion of DNA— in fact the two ideas existed as separate phenomena for about seventy-five years. DNA was only determined to be the vehicle for genetic information in 1944, and even then was not related to genes and their greater impact as the mode of organismal development. In 1950 Erwin Chargaff, an Austrian chemist inspired by the 1944 work of Oswald Avery, determined the equivalent ratios in DNA of adenine to thymine, and cytosine to guanine— the four bases composing normal DNA. He utilized the then-new methods of paper chromatography to separate DNA and ultraviolet spectrophotometry to identify the bases by relative absorption. The quantities measured became an indispensable clue to the composition of DNA.

In 1951, an early model of DNA was proposed by Edward Ronwin from The University of California. In his model, Ronwin had a single phosphate-sugar backbone constituting the middle of the acid, and the bases all branched down this core. The model was compatible with knowledge of the acid at that time, and was consistent with the X-ray photographs of DNA published by William Astbury of the University of Leeds in 1947. The model did not acclimate to broad acceptance, however, facing severe criticism by Portland’s own Linus Pauling. Pauling commented on the model’s instability in water (water was known at the time to be present in abundant quantities around DNA) and the irregular number of bonds Ronwin proposed extended from the phosphorus atoms.

Linus Pauling could very well have added the solution of the structure to his extensive resume—indeed he had already by this time determined the atomic arrangement of the alpha helix, but attributed his shortcoming to a lack of the very evidence that Watson and Crick were not entitled to have. According to Pauling in a 1977 interview, “I was working on the problems at the same time Watson and Crick were and I thought in the course of time I would determine the structure but I... got beaten by Watson and Crick.” He continued that he was “handicapped, of course, by not having access to the experimental information that they had-- the X-ray photographs. I tried to get hold of the X-ray photographs that Rosalind Franklin had made and I couldn’t get them. I wrote trying to get them but didn’t succeed in getting them, whereas Watson and Crick had them and were able to analyze them.” Pauling eventually had a three-heliced model of DNA in publication, very similar to an initial proposal thought up by Watson and Crick. But in addition to her photographs, Pauling did not have the vital criticism of Rosalind Franklin that Watson and Crick had.

Rosalind Franklin was a prominent physical chemist, who, before her involvement in DNA, specialized in studying microstructures of coal and was regarded as an expert in X-ray diffraction techniques. In 1951 she came to King’s College in London to assume leadership of a group researching the structure of DNA, similar to a group led by Maurice Wilkins, assistant director to the laboratory of Sir John Turton Randall. She corresponded with Watson and Crick relatively early in their model-building, sharp with criticism about the pair’s calculations of molecular density, and subsequent
capacity for the model to remain intact in the presence of all the water it ought to be drawing to itself. She is thought to have come the closest to revealing the correct structure of DNA, but an unfortunate leakage of her data deprived her of first place.

There was an ambiguous tension between Franklin and Wilkins—some historians of the “DNA race” have attributed it to Wilkins’ disapproval of Franklin’s scientific rank, equal to his own, considering her gender. With more evidence, though, it has been postulated that Wilkins grew to dislike Franklin after her assignment was swapped from proteins to DNA by Randall, who acted then as the head of the new biophysics department. It was actually by Wilkins’ suggestion that Franklin’s skills be utilized for the rising study of DNA, but Randall’s decision to give her authority of her own lab on the matter was not communicated to Wilkins. The competition between the laboratories, perhaps coupled with the clashing personalities of Franklin and Wilkins, may have led to Wilkins delivery of some of her coveted X-ray photographs to Watson and Crick without her knowing. Franklin’s work clearly illustrated several key factors in enabling Watson and Crick to design the correct model of DNA, and in fact she had a manuscript prepared that explained the same structure in light of her results with X-ray crystallography, when news reached her that Watson and Crick had found the model first. Her manuscript was published, nevertheless, in the same issue of Nature in 1953, though she published her work as corroborating data to Watson and Crick. It would not be unreasonable to label Rosalind Franklin’s X-ray crystallography the prime determinant of the structure of DNA; many historians of science have argued just that.

Watson and Crick’s final model, published in 1953, detailed the features of the one we know today: each base is attached to one, five-carbon sugar, together composing the nucleoside, and each sugar is held together by phosphates. Bases bond complimentarily, adenine to thymine and cytosine to guanine, and under normal circumstances the bases bound are on antiparallel chains. They provided experimental evidence for the phosphate-sugar backbones’ helical nature as well, citing Franklin and her student, Raymond Gosling, numerous times, though the data was received back-handedly. Indeed Watson and Crick dedicated a great deal of the legitimacy of their model to Franklin, writing such things as, “...the only source of detailed information about the configuration of the atoms within the fibres is X-ray analysis [Franklin and Gosling cited],” or, “we have only considered such structures as would fit the preliminary X-ray data of Wilkins, Franklin, and their co-workers.” Watson and Crick even went so far as to propose a foundational concept of DNA replication; taking notice of the complementary nature of each chain, they introduced the possibility of a template nature to the molecule. If the two chains were to split by the hydrogen bonds linking each base, the sequence of each severed chain’s bases could allow for the complementary sequence of bases to bind, effectively having duplicated the original molecule. The problem of replication was to extend far beyond Watson and Crick, and the inclusion of this insight testifies to the pair’s creativity and intelligence.

Watson, Crick, and Wilkins were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1962. Franklin died in 1958 of ovarian cancer, and the Nobel prize is not awarded posthumously. Surprisingly, during the final four years of her life, Franklin, Watson, and Crick had a close, friendly relationship through their joint research on the tobacco mosaic virus. She toured Spain with Crick and his wife, and was even invited to stay with them in Cambridge through her treatments. Later on Watson, in his famous book detailing his account of the discovery process, made the unfortunate mistake of outrightly dismissing Franklin, making several remarks about her lack of qualification for the emerging field of molecular genetics, due to her being a woman. The was not taken lightly— as a result Franklin’s reputation took an upshot as an inspiration to women.
aspiring toward scientific careers and interests. Crick also took on the task of explaining the discovery process, but via lectures instead of writing. Humorously, Crick made several rather bold comments against Watson’s book, going so far as to say, “the difference between my lecture and your book is that my lecture had a lot more intellectual content and nothing like so much gossip.”

While Watson and Crick are certainly credited most robustly with discovering the currently-accepted structure of DNA, on further introspection it becomes difficult to call the process one of “discovery” at all. Like most - maybe all - scientific achievements, there exists a thick trail of previous research whose authors are inevitably lost to the short memory of popular culture— even those an inch before the finish line, like Franklin. “Discovery” carries implications of novelty, of revelation and unprecedented experimentation. Instead we see the opposite, a necessity for correspondence and collaboration. It is possible that were Linus Pauling provided more amply with the community of Watson and Crick, his name would accompany the iconic double helix instead of those two young men from Cambridge.


In December of 2013, American media exploded after Barack Obama and Raul Castro shook hands at a memorial service for Nelson Mandela. Just over a year later, on December 17, 2014, the two leaders of two very different nations agreed to normalize their relations in what has come to be known as the “Cuban Thaw,” a decision met with overwhelming global approval and yet lingering sentiments of hesitancy.

The ice that formed before the “Thaw” occurred had been accruing slowly for centuries, beginning with the Spanish colonization of Cuba. Before Columbus “discovered” Cuba in 1492 the island community was composed of indigenous peoples that modern history knows little of. The Tainos, one tribe of people that Columbus encountered upon arrival, spanned across Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico as well as the central and eastern portions of Cuba, were a presence that faded through disease and demolition as Spanish colonization spread across the island. By the early 1500s, slavery was authorized by the King of Spain in Cuba and by 1555, there were roughly 700 Africans enslaved in Cuba.

It wasn’t until several hundred years later that Cuba was drawn to the international economic forefront when Spain lifted trade restrictions set on the colony. The tropical climate and lush soils of Cuba aided the Sugar Boom, which was fueled on the backs of slaves. French refugees fleeing the slave revolt in Haiti during the brink of the 19th century brought more slaves and the agrarian expertise needed to continue the success of Cuba’s sugar exports.

In 1880, slavery was abolished in Cuba. Similarly to the US, many ex-slaves remained on the plantations of their enslavement as indentured servants.

The hierarchy imposed by the sugar economy would soon lead Cuban rebels on a bloody journey towards political reform. The war for independence began in 1895, spearheaded by General Máximo Gómez and aided by a diverse group of insurgents. The goal was not only to escape Spain’s reign over the country, but to redesign Cuba’s socio-economic structure altogether by redistributing land and scrapping the colonial caste system.

That very year, Gómez proclaimed a moratorium on the sugar industry. Those who engaged in farming or processing sugar would be put to trial for treason, their property torched.

Wealthy Spanish sugar plantation owners, who were comfortable with the idea of a reform of colonialism but not with the economic redistribution that would cost them their wealth, formed the Autonomist party to counter the rebellion which they considered to be criminal.

Discrimination between Autonomists and the grassroots rebels were not made in 1896, when Spain employed General Veleriano Weylor along with 200,000 troops to counter the revolution. Weyler placed rural Cubans into concentration camps, catching the sympathetic eye of American media.
Spain’s efforts were quickly imploding. Weyler’s actions resulted in death and heartbreak but also pushed Cuban peasants to side with and strengthen revolutionary efforts. Spain had eliminated the Autonomist Party and fueled revolutionary efforts in one fowl swoop.

In 1898, current president William McKinley moved to help decolonize Cuba, sparking the Spanish-American war. Spain surrendered, and although congress only authorized the war on the understanding that Cuba would maintain autonomy, the Platt Amendment forced the country to lease land to the U.S for the construction of naval bases at Guantanamo Bay.

In the early 20th century, the Cuban government was fragile, the land riddled by on and off U.S occupation. Revolution round two for Cuba began in the 1950s with a young lawyer named Fidel Castro and would eventually lead to the somewhat mysterious Cuba that Americans are familiar with today. Castro and his brother worked together to overthrow the US supported, yet constitutionally ruling Fulgencio Batista. Starting in 1952, many facets of Cuban society spoke out against the Batista Regime and on New Years Eve, after one mutiny and a failed assassination, Batista fled the country and Fidel Castro took the lead.

US relations with Cuba promptly grew cold as Castro nourished political ties with the fellow communist nation the Soviet Union. Cuba would grow sugar for the Soviet Union in trade for oil. Cuba also recognized Red China and identified itself as a ‘Marxist-Leninist’ state 6, a term that didn’t jive well with the capitalist patriotism of the 1950s and 60s apple pie America.

Cuba’s divergence from Western capitalist support and ideals was followed by a series of events that challenged the notions of a globally powerful US. In 1961, the failed Bay of Pigs mission to overthrow the Castro regime marked the Kennedy administration. The following year, the Cuban Missile Crisis left the Soviet Union, Cuba and the US in a nervous deadlock.

Cuba had accepted the Soviet Union’s proposal to house missiles on the island, and when the US found out, international panic over potential nuclear war ensued. Eventually, Premier Khrushchev of the Soviet Union and Kennedy came to an agreement that the US would not invade Cuba and eventually remove its missiles from Turkey if the missiles in Cuba were removed.

A US embargo against Cuba followed the Crisis. The embargo has been largely opposed by the UN, and reportedly caused a profit loss between 1.2 and 4.8 billion a year for the U.S.

In the late 80s, as the Soviet Union began to lose its communist values and discontinued its strong ties with Cuba, Cuba entered what Castro titled the ‘Special Period.’ This period is marked by a 15 percent fall of the economy in 1992, largely inadequate food supply and poor public transportation, and continuous surprise that the communist regime remains intact.

In December 2012, two Portland State Faculty lead a group of twenty undergraduate and graduate students to Cuba. Director of Education Abroad at PSU, Jennifer Hamlow was able to attend the two week trip to explore where future opportunities for PSU might lie in Cuba.

Hamlow describes a Cuba adopting sustainable practices due to lack of resources. “Urban farming is not a luxury as it is here, it’s a necessity, because they don’t have access.... There, organic is less expensive because they can’t afford to buy the expensive pesticides for things.”

In April 2013, the Portland State Portland Spectrum featured a story about the trip, highlighting the opportunities for future students to visit the island and explore the challenges Cuba faces. The story was written by Jessica Pollard.

Urban farming is not a luxury as it is here, it’s a necessity, because they don’t have access.... There, organic is less expensive because they can’t afford to buy the expensive pesticides for things.

– Jennifer Hamlow
cides for things. Organic is not special, it’s what they have to do,” Hamlow said.

The graduate students on the trip had taken a course on sustainable urban renewal prior to their travels. “I think a lot of students thought they would be going there to see how they could make recommendations to Cuban city planners. In reality, they learned a lot about what they could bring back in Portland. It doesn’t have to be as high tech and complicated as we may think it should be because they have so many limited resources there that they have just been really resourceful and innovative in making due with what they have,” Hamlow said.

Hamlow describes a modern-day Cuba that is struggling with an under-educated middle class that profits highly off of low-skill tourism jobs, while free-educated professionals are economically lower as they are paid on a set rate. The difference in income is causing some Cubans to stray from education.

Due to their lack of building materials, the country has also become a “test lab” of sorts for new building materials from countries like Italy. There are notions that Cuba is somewhat stuck in the past, Hamlow explains. “It’s not untouched by globalization, but it certainly is far less impacted than the vast majority of the world. They have new cars, but they’re not US cars. There is this stereotypical image of Cuba that it’s stuck in the 50s and 60s, and there are pieces that are,” Hamlow said.

Now that the embargo has lifted, many are unsure as to what will happen next between Cuba and America. According to an article in the New York Times published shortly after the “Thaw” was finalized, Latin America has largely supported the political move, with sprinklings of weariness.2

Some Cuban dissidents and exiles fear the lifting of the embargo was too friendly of an action towards the still communist country. “I share the concerns of dissidents there and human rights activists that this is still a regime that represses its people,” Obama said following the “Thaw” 10.

“The vast majority of US Americans, prior to this development don’t really understand the situation. It’s just the history of the embargo and this notion that Cuba is a threat, which is kind of ridiculous once you get there and see how limited their resources are. It’s a little bit silly to perpetuate this ‘we must keep these sanctions and keep the embargo in place’ because it’s such a small country,” Hamlow said.

The future of Cuba and its diverse people remains an enigma across the globe. “It’s just a hop over, to be that close and that untouched by the US is pretty amazing,” Hamlow said.

Hamlow, Jennifer. Personal interview. 16 Mar. 2014.
Prior to the mid-19th century spark of firearm advancements, progress was slow in the conquest and colonization of Africa. British interests were focused elsewhere in economic enterprise through the grand-encompassing European free market, along with colonial interest in North America. However, with the loss of control in America, they, like other European nations, turned their attention to other colonial ventures, particularly in Africa and Asia. Africa held potential in great amounts of land, homeland economic support, and national prestige, along with the sense of the Rudyard Kipling idea of the ‘white man’s burden’ to spread civilization to the uncivilized. With this motivation to colonize, Europeans went through great lengths to develop their military might in the face of previously inefficient firearms, resulting in an arms race for the best firearm technology. From the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, inspired by the rush to colonize, European nations divvied up the African continent amongst themselves and created country borders without regard to national and ethnic groups already in place in the areas. With new weaponry in hand spurred on from the 1860s “breechloader revolution,” Europeans ventured into a new wave of imperialism within Africa, facing differentiating military strategies. Such African strategies, such as those found in the South African Zulu Empire, countered the firearm-based attack of European powers, such as with the British imperialists in South Africa.

Development in military technology was slow going before the 1860s. There was no large push to have the most up-to-date technology and advanced weapons were typically acquired only when previous weapons needed to be replaced. Early muskets and rifles were slow and difficult to reload, requiring a great deal of attention toward upkeep of the weapon. More often than not, they were used for the bayonet fashioned at the end to stand in as a pike in close combat, due to the time it took to ready the weapon for fire and the inaccuracy of its shot. The breech loader weapon, advanced by Johann Nikolaus von Dreyse in the late 1820s beyond the use of hunting, was the precursor to the coming revolution of military technology that would change the Western world and its aptitude toward imperialism, but it did not pick up immediately. The Dreyse rifle’s convenient paper cartridges, advanced loading speed, and new fashion of direct ignition of the bullet by a long needle and percussion cap on the bullet found use in the Prussian army in the 1840s, where it started to gain global attention due to its strategic advantage:

“During the war of 1866 between Prussia and Austria over the mastery of the German states, Prussian soldiers, kneeling or lying down, could fire their Dreyse seven times in the span it took the Austrians to load and fire one, standing up...

This battle not only assured Prussia’s supremacy in Germany but revolutionized the art of warfare.”

The Prussian victory with the use of new breechloader technology showed the Western world that military technology could be the difference between a massacre and
a resounding victory. With the breechloader showcased, the great European empires worked endlessly to have the better technology, resulting in an arms race to adapt better firearm design technology. Nations scrambled to produce the best and urge factories and laboratories to manufacture the best product in competition with the rest. The Dreyse breechloader and French Chassepot took the contemporary market, but still produced problems such as gas leaks and frequent fouling, along with unreliability and inaccuracy in various climates due to the paper cartridges’ susceptibility to moisture.

In 1866, just as breechloading technology became widespread from its Prussian use, British superintendent Colonel Boxer had the idea of a brass cartridge, rather than paper, which sealed a harder bullet and the correct amount of powder in each shot. This improved breech-inserted bullet vastly increased range. From the Dreyse of the 1820s to the Snider-Enfield to the Martini-Henry of 1869, the development of the 1884 Maxim machine gun, and that “any European infantryman could now fire lying down, undetected, in any weather, fifteen rounds of ammunition in as many seconds at targets up to half a mile away,” a military technology revolution had begun. This revolution was one of the deciding factors of European imperialism in Africa, along with critical technologies such as quinine, railroads, and steamboats.

The use of firearms was lacking farther down Africa and away from direct European influence like in northern and coastal Africa due to transportation complications and trading policies. In the face of the 1860-70s European breechloader revolution, Africans geographically located closer to European influence caught their own arms race in pursuit of acquiring these advanced weapons. They lacked a strong iron industry due to expensive and difficult blacksmithing in low supply, so relied on cheaply-made and priced European weapons. As firearm technology developed and European armies were equipped with these advanced weapons, the out-of-date guns were disposed and sold to local Africans.

Recent firearms were used as occasional currency and trade in weaponry was severely taxed by European governments. Compared to the original struggles of colonialism and imperialism where exploring Europeans found themselves greatly outnumbered by local Africans, the revolutionized firepower applied to this new wave of imperialism made all the difference of a small colonizing nation settling and conquering a large local people: “In 1897 a Royal Niger Co. force composed of 32 Europeans and 507 African soldiers armed with cannons, Maxim guns, and Snider rifles defeated the 31,000 man army of the Nupe Emirate of Sokoto…”

Despite this, European conquest met with great resistance on the part of the local Africans. The Zulu Empire of South Africa, spanning from 1816-1897, met the British with a worthy adversary. Developing from first Zulu king Dingiswayo’s unified age-grade regiments and military reorganization to “weaken the influence of territorially based kinship relation,” Shaka implemented tactical battle strategies by use of speed, courage, and regimented military training to bring the Zulu Empire to glory. He made use of weapons attuned to stealthy raiding tactics, such as the bow and arrow, assegai (a short lunging spear), and iklwa, a short, spearhead-shaped dagger used for close-combat attacks. He used a “bullhorn” attack formation in which veteran “body” fighters attacked the enemy in a full-frontal assault, while the younger “horns” round-ed them and locked them in the center of a battle, the “loin” fighters picking off anyone who might escape. Shaka recognized the benefit of the British firearms, but dismissed them as ineffective, as the swiftly attacking Zulu warrior would be on the gun-bearer before he finished loading his weapon. Furthermore, he tightened the Zulu political structure through an authoritarian rule to maintain ferocity in battle and firm personal power among his people. However, by 1828, Shaka was assassinated due to his growing terrorizing rule.

Even after Shaka’s death, the reign of terror continued among the new Zulu kings as the British and Boer settled in the area, though keeping to themselves in fear of the Zulu military might. The kings following Shaka’s death contin-
ued his regime, but weakened it through political instability between the king and his chiefs until 1873, when the current Zulu king, Cetshwayo, was formally coroneted by the will of the British Empire as its colonial might grew within South Africa. Finally, in 1878, the British colonists challenged the Zulu Empire. Armed with a force of approximately 40,000, the Zulu faced a match of superior technology and limitless resources in the British, and King Cetshwayo decided to take a defensive approach in the hopes of a short war and to appear as the passive, attacked victim. Faced with a decision of the variety of directions in which the British could attack, Cetshwayo correctly attacked the central column and massacred the unsuspecting British camp through outmaneuvering in the Battle of Isandlwana. This would be the greatest Zulu victory of the war. Forced to retreat, the British colonizers reorganized their forces for a second wave of attack, resulting in the failed Zulu offer of a peace negotiation, thus followed by the final elimination of Cetshwayo’s forces.

![LIEUTENANTS MELVILL AND COGHILL (24TH REGIMENT) DYING TO SAVE THE QUEEN’S COLOURS. AN INCIDENT AT THE BATTLE OF ISANDLWANA. CHARLES EDWIN FRIPP (1854–1906) PUBLIC DOMAIN FROM PROJECT GUTENBERG.](image)


Simply put, there’s no easy way to talk about the ongoing tensions between Russia and Ukraine that have captured news headlines for the past year. Citing tensions from the Cold War, many Americans have been quick to vilify the Russian government without a real understanding of the historical bases that have brought these two countries into turmoil. The Russian-Ukrainian relationship is rooted deep in the past, branching thousands of years back. Current tensions between the states, however, can be traced back to the rise of the Soviet Republic.

Between 1932 and 1933, the burgeoning Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Ukrainian SSR)—and to a lesser extent the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a whole—experienced a massive, man-made food shortage that has come to be known as the “Holodomor.” Procuring roughly half of the previous year’s harvest in 1932, between two and ten million Ukrainians perished during the famine, starved to death by meager government rations. Losses were estimated to be so great that the Soviet government strictly forbade a 1937 census. Only in 1987 were Ukrainians told by their Ukrainian Communist leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky that the famine had been caused by “drought and a poor harvest.”

Though most of the current Russian-Ukrainian tensions stem from problems following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the Holodomor is now woven into the tapestry of Ukrainian history. The famine, lasting an entire year, continues to be a topic of hot debate for Ukrainians and Russians alike, with no consensus as to the famine’s origins. In 2006, Ukraine officially recognized the event as a genocide and posthumously charged Soviet leaders like Joseph Stalin with the crime.

Nikita Khrushchev, former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, released the peninsula that lies between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, Crimea, into the control of the Ukrainian SSR in 1954. The city of Sevastopol, situated in the southwestern peninsula, remained under Russian control following the USSR’s dissolution—acting as a military stronghold for the Federation, and housing the infamous Black Sea Fleet. Citizens of Sevastopol voted to enter into Ukrainian control in the early 1990s, but by 1993 the city had been reclaimed by Russia. The issue was ultimately resolved in 1997 by partitioning the Black Sea Fleet and allowing Russian usage of naval bases until 2017. Following the Ukrainian Revolution of 2014, the peninsula’s sovereignty has been debated between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

The peninsula has continued to play an important role in the recent escalation of tensions between the two states. In late 2013, Russian president Vladimir Putin offered Ukraine a fifteen billion dollar loan and reduced prices on natural gas imports. This deal was troublesome to Ukrainians hoping for the country to soften Russian relations and increase those with the European Union (EU), a plan initially outlined by Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych, who felt that years of corruption had marred Ukrainian governance beyond Russian repair. Tensions between those who sought to remain with Russia and those wanting succession reached a boiling point in Kiev last February, ultimately culminating in the Ukrainian Revolution, wherein protesters clashed with police forces, leading to the eventual overrun of the Yanukovych government. Seeing this action as a coup d’état, the Russian government refused to recognize Ukraine’s interim government, who have since signed an association agreement with the EU. Unable to fulfill the contractual obligations of the former government, Ukraine’s interim system received funding from the International Money Fund, which will require major overhauls to Ukraine’s economic system. It has since been announced that Viktor Yanukovych will remain the legitimate, legal President of Ukraine.

The political upheaval in Kiev has sparked protest throughout Russia and Ukraine, but especially so in...
Crimea where pro-Russians reside in high numbers. In late February of 2014 Russia military agents seized the Supreme Council of Crimea. Members of Crimea’s parliament held an emergency meeting and voted to replace the current prime minister with Russian unity Party-member Sergey Aksyonov. Russian troops created checkpoints and sealed Crimea from the rest of Ukraine, effectively annexing the peninsula. On March 17, 2014 the Supreme Council of Crimea declared the independence of the Republic of Crimea, announcing that the Russian ruble would become the official currency and the official time be set to Moscow Time (UTC +4) following an application for admission into Russia. Restrictions have been placed on Ukrainians travelling to Kiev and Ukraine has halted all transit services to the peninsula, restricting Russian access without a passport. Throughout the country movements boycotting Russian-made products have sprung.

Russian responses to the action have been decidedly more positive, where government intervention has been seen as a peace-keeping measure. Though still contested, protests on either side of the debate have dwindled since actions by the Russian Military.

Half a world away, the tensions in Eastern Europe are complex and tough to pinpoint. However, it increasingly seems to stem from a simple difference in opinion going back to the dissolution of the USSR—there are those who want to break from Russia’s constant sway and involvement in the Ukrainian economy and government, and those who see Russia’s efforts as peacekeeping and necessary. Ultimately, it looks as though Ukrainians either want to stick with the old school (Russian involvement) or venture to the new school (admission to the EU). Whichever side of the issue, there’s no denying the complexity and nuance involved in a situation that’s as delicate as the tumultuous relationship between these two powers, peace and turmoil are equally close.

Hollywood has long had a love affair with the American Civil War, starting as early as 1913 with the silent film *The Battle of Gettysburg*. Despite this, few films star a Confederate hero because, of course, the victors write the history. What sets Clint Eastwood’s *The Outlaw Josey Wales* and Ang Lee’s *Ride with the Devil* apart from other Civil War movies is not just their use of a Confederate protagonist, but also the message that they both share about the needless waste of war, and its futility. One will not find such themes in *The Red Badge of Courage*. The films also act as a vehicle for the discussion of brutal civil wars happening at the time of their making.

Eastwood was mocked in many spheres following his appearance at the 2012 Republican National Convention for his rambling speech directed at an empty chair supposed to represent President Barack Obama. What many Americans don’t realize is that Eastwood is also a major supporter of environmentalism, as well as an advocate for peace. In his review of *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, published in “The Christian Science Monitor,” David Stearitt states “The screenplay, co-written by [Phil] Kaufman, has some stirring passages about peace and cooperation, and at one point sets up for a complicated showdown which never happens because everyone decides to live in harmony instead.” In a particularly telling scene, Wales rides to Comanche chief Ten Bears’ camp where he delivers an impassioned speech to the chief of the tribe in order to save the lives of his newfound friends.

*Josey-* I came here to die with you – or live with you. Dyin’ ain’t so hard for men like you and me. It’s livin’ that’s hard, when all you’ve ever cared about’s been butchered or raped. Governments don’t live together; people live together. From governments you don’t always get a fair word or a fair fight. Well, I’ve come here to give you either one, or get either one from you. I came here like this so you’ll know my word of death is true and that my word of life is then true. The bear lives here, the wolf, the antelope, the Comanche—and so will
we. Now, we’ll only hunt what we need to live on, same as the Comanche does; and every spring when the grass turns green and the Comanche moves north, he can rest here in peace, butcher some of our cattle and jerk beef for the journey. The sign of the Comanche—that will be on our lodge. That’s my word of life.

Ten Bears—These things that you say we will have, we already have.

Josey—That’s true. I ain’t promisin’ you nothin’ extra. I’m just givin’ you life and you’re given me life. And I’m sayin’ that men can live together without butcherin’ one another.”

The speech itself is remarkably long for the famously stoic Eastwood, and is filled with the strong political overtones of coexistence, environmentalism, and the distrust of large governments, particularly in war time. All of this is just a reinforcement of many of the major political issues at the time, and in this case, Eastwood comes down pretty easily on the liberal side of the spectrum.

At the time of the production of the movie, the United States was dealing with the loss of Vietnam and the years and lives they invested in the conflict. In the film Wales says of the war in Kansas, “I guess we all died a little in that damn war.” Michael Coin argues, “The new community Josey and his friends forge in Texas is emblematic of the multicultural consensus steadily evolving in the United States in the Wake of Vietnam.” Eastwood himself tersely declared that there are “a lot of thoughts about war and victims of war” in the film. For the general public, it is obvious that Wales is trying to reconcile the killing machine he has become with his new role as protector of an entirely new family. In one review, Micheline Keating postulates, “Despite all the violence, Clint Eastwood manages to leave you with the feeling that Josey Wales was fundamentally a good and moral man who killed, not because he wanted to but because it was something that had to be done.”

However, not all of the reviews were favorable, with Richard Eder of the New York Times critically declaring, “The movie tends to muffle and sell short whatever points it may be trying to make. There seems to be a ghost of an attempt to assert the romantic individualism of the South against the cold expansionism of the North... There is something cynical about this primitive one-sidedness... To the degree a movie asserts history, it should at least attempt to do it fairly.” This review is truthfully the exact opposite of those for Ang Lee’s Ride With the Devil. Both cover the same subject matter and the same time period, however reviewers favored Ride With the Devil’s depiction of the war. Stephan Holden asserts, “In its attention to period detail, to 19th-century customs and locutions of speech, “Ride With the Devil...” feels at times like an anthropological study... Instead of stately plantations and gliding Southern belles, “Ride With the Devil” beckons us into a world of austere farmhouses and primitive frontier towns. It is a place of dust and mud and untamed woods, where day-to-day life is so spare that a chicken dinner is considered a luxury reserved for weddings.”

Although the public more closely associated Ride With the Devil with the ongoing war in the Balkans, Ang Lee’s film also has a Vietnam connection. In an interview, Woodrell remarked, “In 1970 I dropped out halfway through my junior year and enlisted in the Marines. I was only seventeen, and the political issues of Vietnam didn’t mean much to me. Maybe I was
They are fighting for a cause, but they don’t really understand what they are fighting for, or why. It is eerily reminiscent of tales of child soldiers, who were – and are – used frequently in wars all over the world. Neither really loves the South; neither holds a slave. But they love each other, they love their region, they love its traditions, and so they become Confederate guerrillas without “Dixie” having been whistled once. It’s a war without honor or quarter, and each boy struggles to hold on to his humanity.”

This chilling description could be applied just as equally to the neighbors who ended up slaughtering each other in the Balkans. Neither really hates the other, but they love their families and so they become soldiers for whichever side their ethnic heritage told them was their place, and as they kill innocents, they struggle to hold on to their humanity. These boys exhibit the same sort of complacency that was found in many cases, such as the Hitler Youth. They are fighting for a cause, but they don’t really understand what they are fighting for, or why. It is eerily reminiscent of tales of child soldiers, who were -and are- used frequently in wars all over the world.

This slaughter is the way of the old western; it is the mindless killing as portrayed by Wales himself, and Hunter comments, “Unlike older westerns that cele-
brated such a quick-draw code of honor without irony or wisdom but just as something cool, this one lets you see the weight of accumulated killings. It plays with melodrama. You feel the old formula being deployed, as cause for retribution is set up and the last stalk begins. But Lee is too clever to fall for this. By the end, these hard-gun boys are too exhausted to fight it out for nothing. They've seen too much killing. They've learned the lesson the hard way: Live and let live.” This is the ultimate hippie peace, love and tolerance ethos exhibited by Wales in his speech to Ten Bears. In the end when Jake Roedel and Pitt Mackeson finally meet up, the two ride off their separate ways. They put their rivalry behind them, not becoming friends, but no longer being enemies.


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Malcolm X is a figure whose name is synonymous with controversy and radicalism. He was born on May 19, 1925 to Louise and Earl Little in Omaha, Nebraska. Malcolm was Louise's fourth child and Earl's seventh, both parents members of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), which Earl was elected president of the Omaha chapter. Earl Little was a self-ordained Baptist preacher and a devout follower of Marcus Garvey, who founded the UNIA and was an advocate for both the Black Nationalist movement as well as Pan-Africanism. The Littles eventually left Omaha and, after a series of moves, wound up in Lansing, Michigan where Earl continued to preach and advocate for the UNIA.

On November 7, 1929 the Little’s house was set on fire. Malcolm recorded in his autobiography that the Lansing Fire Department “came and stood around watching as the house burned down to the ground.” Earl Little eventually met an early demise, after an argument with Louise he stormed out of the house, later to be discovered lying beside rail tracks. Malcolm would later claim that his father’s death was the result of white assailants who were weary of his preaching. Trooper Laurence Baril, the officer who responded to Earl’s death tells a different story: that they found Earl conscious and he told them he had slipped while trying to hop a train. On January 12, 1946 Malcolm was arrested in Boston, Massachusetts and indicted for carrying firearms, larceny, and breaking and entering. He was ultimately charged with larceny and sentenced to an 8-year prison term. While in prison a fellow inmate introduced Malcolm to the teachings of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm subsequently converted to the Nation of Islam (NOI). Upon his release in 1952 Malcolm relinquished his surname “Little” which he replaced with “X”, a symbolic rejection of his slave name and an acknowledgement of the unknown African name he may otherwise have donned.

Malcolm soon became a prominent member of the NOI; in June 1953 he was named assistant minister at Detroit Temple No. 1. That winter he was named first minister of Boston Temple No. 1, then acting minister of Philadelphia Temple No. 12 in March 1954 and finally minister of New York Temple No. 7 in 1954. While in New York Malcolm soon became

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acquainted with Betty Sanders, later renamed Betty X. The two married on January 14, 1958 by a justice of the peace in Lansing. They remained married until Malcolm's death in 1965 and had 6 children.

By the early 1960s Malcolm had become a controversial and influential orator. He famously advocated civil rights "by any means necessary" and was highly critical of non-violent methods stating ". . . it is criminal to teach a man not to defend himself, when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks. It is legal and lawful to own a shotgun or a rifle." Malcolm's approach to Civil Rights was often juxtaposed to that of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s efforts, a sentiment Malcolm was well aware of and to which he said, "If the white people realize what the alternative is, perhaps they will be more willing to hear Dr. King."

As Malcolm grew in fame his relationship with the NOI became increasingly tense. Rampant rumors insinuating that Elijah Muhammad had fathered six illegitimate children spurred Malcolm to interview three of Muhammad's former secretaries, all of whom had children by him thus confirming the rumors. Malcolm was later suspended from his ministry in 1963 for 90 days after making remarks about the assassination of John F. Kennedy, which he was specifically forbidden to do by Elijah Muhammad. Malcolm ultimately announced severance with NOI on March 8, 1964. Shortly thereafter he made pilgrimage to Mecca under the name Malik El-Shabazz. In a letter he sent home from Mecca, Malcolm retracted many of the radical ideologies taught by NOI that he had previously propagated stating: "I am not a racist. . . . In the past I permitted myself to be used...to make sweeping indictments of all white people... and these generalizations have caused injuries..."

Malcolm was assassinated on February 21, 1965 at 3:10 p.m. He was addressing a rally for his newly formed Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) when he was shot several times. Malcolm was pronounced dead on arrival at Vanderbilt Clinic, Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital. Elijah Muhammad quickly denied his involvement with the assassination and Talmadge Hayer (a.k.a. Thomas Hagan) was taken into custody at the scene of the crime. While Hayer and two other accomplices were ultimately tried and sentenced for Malcolm's death in 1966, the assassination is still shrouded in controversy. Many insisted on government complicity and asserted that "the official government version of how the assassination occurred is not credible." Regardless of who killed Malcolm X or why they killed him, he remains one of the most influential and controversial figures in recent history.

Malcolm X’s only meeting with Martin Luther King Jr., March 26, 1964.

George Breitman et al., The Assassination of Malcolm X (New York: Pathfinder 1991)
In 1976 New York Congressman Ed Koch introduced a proposal to the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs. His proposal was to cut the three million dollars of American funds that was being used to support the Uruguayan military dictatorship that had a grasp on the country. As a strong proponent of human rights Koch thought that it was entirely immoral for Americans to be supporting a government that brutally repressed its people through any means, including assassinations. In the 1970s, Uruguay was part of a loose alliance of nations in what is known as the Southern Cone of South America. In addition to Uruguay, these nations included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Paraguay. According to CIA documents, the purpose of the alliance at the start was to share information regarding political dissidents. This alliance quickly turned violent however, and was crucial in allowing the oppression and killings of thousands of citizens of the participating nations. Unfortunately, the CIA knew full well what was happening, and failed to stop, and or condemn the actions taken by members of the military dictatorships. Even when American lives were threatened, they were reticent to cut ties with members of governments known to be involved in human rights abuses.

By sponsoring this legislation, Koch had inadvertently made himself a target of their ire. He received a call in October from the head of the CIA, George HW Bush, who told Koch “Listen, my agents have gotten news that there’s a contract out on your life, I’m sorry, Ed. There’s nothing I can do about it.” Koch had every reason to be concerned by this revelation as only a month earlier; the Chilean government perpetrated what was at the time the most violent terrorist action that had occurred in the nation’s capital. Orlando Letelier, a former official in the deposed Salvador Allende government was now working at a Washington DC think tank, The Institute for Policy Studies. On the morning of September 21 Letelier and two of his colleagues at the Institute were making their way to work when, as they rounded Sheridan Circle, a car bomb that had been placed in Letelier’s car exploded, tearing him in half, and sending shards of glass and metal into the throat of one of his passengers, Ronni Moffitt. The outrage was immediate. Senator James Abourezk denounced the attack, stating that it “means that the tyranny of the dictatorship in Chile has now been extended in part to the United States” while Senator Edward M. Kennedy called it “political terror...
ism.” This attack however could have been prevented, had the State Department and CIA acted differently. In August of 1976, Kissinger sent out a memo to all the ambassadors in the countries involved in Operation Condor. It advised the ambassadors to meet with the highest ranking politicians from each country and tell them, in essence, that they know about Operation Condor. Kissinger writes, “while we cannot substantiate the assassination rumors, we feel impelled to bring to your attention our deep concern. If these rumors were to have any shred of truth they would create a most serious moral and political problem. Counter-terrorist activity of this type would further exacerbate public world criticism of governments involved.”

However, the U.S. Ambassador to Chile David Popper shied away from speaking with Pinochet. He tells Kissinger that “in my judgment, given Pinochet’s sensitivity regarding pressures by USG, he might well take as an insult any inference that he was connected with such assassination plots... it is quite possible, even probable, that Pinochet has no knowledge whatever of Operation Condor. Particularly of its more questionable aspects.” Rather Popper suggests that the CIA station chief be sent to meet with Manuel Contreras, the head of the Chilean intelligence agency, (the National Intelligence Directorate or DINA.) This was not approved until two weeks after the bombing that killed Letelier. The day before the assassination, Harry Schlaudeman, the deputy for Latin America, sent out a cable to the ambassadors which read, “Instruct the ambassadors to take no further action, noting that there have been no reports in some weeks indicating an intention to activate the Condor scheme.” On top of all of this, the men who planted the bomb were all CIA trained veterans of the Bay of Pigs disaster.

This was however only the latest in a string of attacks that had been linked to Operation Condor. Starting in the summer of 1974, Operation Condor began to take shape as more than just an intelligence sharing operation. In a State Department memo, it is revealed that the CIA in fact knew that Operation Condor was more than just an intelligence sharing operation. The memo reads, “[Name redacted] spoke about the growth of this organization of security services of the Southern Cone countries and of accompanying disturbing developments in its operational attitudes. Originally designed as a communications system and data bank to facilitate defense against the guerrilla Revolutionary Coordinating Junta, the organization was emerging as one with a far more activist role, including specifically that of identifying, locating, and ‘hitting’ guerrilla leaders.” In Buenos Aires, the exiled former vice president of Chile, General Carlos Prats and his wife, were killed, the victims of a car bomb that was planted by an American expatriate with ties to the CIA and operative of the Chilean secret police Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA), Michael Townley. Just days after the assassination of Prats, an exiled Chilean politician, Bernardo Leighton, was gravely wounded by a hail of machine gun bullets while leaving his apartment in Rome. Townley was found involved in this as well, as he acted as an intermediary between the DINA and the Italian fascists who shot Leighton. Then again, in June 1976, former Bolivian president Juan Torres was found dead, under a bridge with a bullet hole in his chest.

Knowing all of this, Koch was understandably worried by the prospect of having a threat on his head. On October 19th he received a phone call from an FBI agent who, as Koch writes, “Advised me that in July of 1976 a conversation took place between a Uruguayan military official and a member of our Central Intelligence Agency in Montevideo, in which the Uruguayan military person said, in a conversation relating to my legislative efforts… ‘Maybe we would have to send someone to the U.S. to get Congressman Koch.’” He likely would have been more worried had he known that both of the Uruguayans who were discussing plans to murder him, Major Jose Nino Gavazzo (who
is referred to as “apparently a dangerous type” in a diplomatic cable) and Col. Jose Fons were appointed by the Uruguayan government to prominent diplomatic posts in DC. The State Department however, forced the Uruguayans to withdraw their posting, advising that they only tell the Ambassador that the reason for their hesitancy is that they “could be the objects of unpleasant publicity or incidents,” when in reality the reason for their refusal was “the fact alone of the threat against Koch.”

Koch’s views on human rights violations were not held by everyone else in the government as exhibited by the transcript of a conversation about a coup in Argentina between Secretary of State Kissinger and the Assistant Secretary for Latin America William Rogers. During the conversation Rogers states, “I think that we’re going to look for a considerable effort to involve the United States—particularly in the financial field.” Kissinger interjects with, “Yes, but that’s in our interest.” Later, Rogers advises that embracing the new regime could be a poor choice, as he expects “a fair amount of repression, probably a good deal of blood, in Argentina before too long. I think they’re going to have to come down very hard not only on the terrorists but on the dissidents of trade unions and their parties.” He also acknowledges that they are going to recognize the regime change, however Kissinger asks what that means exactly and postulates “Whatever chance they have, they will need a little encouragement from us... because I do want to encourage them” This is not the only discussion in the government about potential killings following the coup. More than two months before the coup even occurred Ambassador Robert Hill reported to Kissinger that he has spoken with some officers who would be involved, telling him that “they intend to carry forward an all-out war on the terrorists and that some executions would therefore probably be necessary,” but that they also wish to minimize any resulting conflicts with the US and want to avoid issues of human rights. Hill relays an Argentinian generals message that he understands that it is important to avoid human rights violations, however “there are many officers below them who do not and who wish to take strong measures even if such measures offend the US Congress” and that “patience and understanding will be needed on both sides.” This too proved to be an issue in Chile where the CIA requested permission to make General Manuel Contreras, the head of DINA, a paid asset despite the fact that only two months before they had determined that “Contreras was the principal obstacle to a reasonable human rights policy within the Junta.” This is revealed in a document released in 2000 that is an overview of the CIAs activities in Chile. In this document we also find proof that the CIA continued contact with Contreras even after it was determined that he played a role in the Letelier assassination. Contained too is the admission by the CIA that they knew there was torture happening. “It was apparent that the 17 January 1974 Chilean government circular prohibiting torture and providing instructions for the handling of prisoners was a public relations ruse.” The memo ends by admitting that the CIA learned some serious lessons in Chile, and claims that because of the way things went down during Operation Condor they are very careful in reviewing “all contacts for potential involvement in human rights abuses... these standards would likely have altered the amount of contact we had with perpetrators of human rights violations in Chile had they been in effect at that time.”
We have one additional problem. You will note from Siracusa’s telegram (Tab 2) that the Uruguayan Government now intends to assign Fons and Major Jose Nino Gavasso, also of the Defense Intelligence Service, to the Inter-American Defense Board in Washington next month. (Gavasso is apparently a dangerous type.) Siracusa recommends that the Department inform the Uruguayan Ambassador that these two gentlemen would not be welcome in the United States, perhaps referring to the risks they might run here as officers prominently identified with the anti-terrorist campaign in their country.

I agree with Ernie that we should block their coming to the US. The fact alone of the threat against Koch seems to me sufficient grounds for that judgment. If you concur, ARA would request Ambassador Perez Caldas to have the assignments withdrawn, limiting our explanation to the point that Fons and Gavasso could be the objects of unpleasant publicity or incidents.

Recommendation

That we inform the Uruguayan Ambassador that the two officers should not come to the US.

Approve [Stamp]

Disapprove


“[Staff Meeting Transcripts].” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu


“Condo 03.” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu

“Condo 09.” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu

“Condo 6.” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu


“Koch 01.” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu


“The CIA and Chile.” National Security Archive. http://www2.gwu.edu