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Henry A. Kissinger: A Premortem on the Real Friend of Enemies

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“In Gold’s conservative opinion, Kissinger would not be recalled in history as a Bismarck, Metternich or Castlereagh but as [an odious schlump](#) who made war gladly.”

—Joseph Heller, *Good as Gold*, 1976

“Soon after Christopher Hitchens’ book *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, its subject publicly accused Hitchens of being an anti-Semite and Holocaust-denier. [Hitchens sued Kissinger](#) and ‘... he did offer me a swift retraction. He admitted he had no basis for this foul accusation.’”

—Tariq Ali @TariqAli_News, February 20, 2020

“If it were not for the [accident of my birth](#), I would be antisemitic.”

—Henry Kissinger, in *Forward*, May 20, 2021

“*No hay mal que dure cien años*”, is a popular refrain in Latin America. “There is no evil that lasts 100 years.” As we near May 27th and the 99th birthday of former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, it is appropriate to focus on whether a [vile man](#) who once won the Nobel Peace Prize for the Vietnam War will have ultimately been successful¹ in [reweaving](#) on behalf of an [ever-corruptible](#) Washington Establishment both popular hope and the history of carnage in the Americas.

In favor of Kissinger and his minions, until only recently scholarly works that focus on his policymaking between 1969 and 1997, and his subsequent role as an “elder statesman,” tend to re-litigate common history with the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, as well as his role in the Indochina quagmire popularly referred to as “Vietnam.” Yet as national security advisor and secretary of state the secretive Kissinger spent more time than any of his predecessors, or any of his successors, in Latin America. There, military dictators he coddled not only massacred huge numbers of fellow citizens but engaged in international terrorism in both Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

As pundits now talk about the importance of protecting Ukrainian democracy and the rule of law, and the possible outbreak of a Third World War, it is important to note that Kissinger’s uniformed clients in the Western Hemisphere claimed that they too were fighting, and winning, their own “Third World War”—a canard often tinged with antisemitism and the enemy being their fellow citizens. Only when the generals lost were democracy and the rule of law able to re-emerge as a possibility in what used to be called “America’s backyard.” Interestingly, U.S. military analyses about what impact Vladimir Putin’s Russia has had, or could have had, on American presidential elections draw comparisons to [Kissinger’s covert coup-mongering](#) in what was one of Latin America proudest democracies—Chile.² A real understanding of those hopes and that history is critically important in the context of another interpretation of that refrain about evil and 100 years. “This, too,” the other version goes, “will pass.”

¹ In “Henry Kissinger as Contested Historical Icon in Post-9/11 Debates on Foreign Policy,” David M. Wight notes “that an analysis of Kissinger is useful in understanding how historical figures can utilize their own celebrity to steer the popular remembrance and deployment of memories themselves.” <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/histmemo.29.2.06>.

² In 2019, writing for the U.S. Marine Corps University, [James Lockhart suggested that CIA clandestine operations](#) focused on Chilean elections in the nine-year period before the 1973 coup against Socialist President Salvador Allende were “not decisive and were no more than modestly effective ... findings (that) might offer insight into or conversations about Russian intervention in American presidential elections in 2016.” In “How Effective Are Covert Operations? The CIA’s Intervention in Chile, 1964-1973.”

As I write this, mainstream media centers on [Russian war crimes](#) in Ukraine and the mortal passing of [a Kissinger replacement](#) at Foggy Bottom. Like Kissinger, [Madeleine Albright](#) was a European émigré whose [family was directly affected by Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust](#). It was Albright who, in a final Op-Ed published in [The New York Times](#) the day before the Kremlin invasion of its democratic neighbor, described Putin as “small and pale” and “almost reptilian.” Unlike her State Department predecessor, who proactively sought alliances around the world with even [neo-Nazi military regimes](#), Albright (an [admittedly uneven champion](#) for human rights³) earlier also had starkly warned not to let fascism go “unnoticed until it’s too late.” In [Fascism, a Warning](#), (published in 2019), she correctly noted that: “We should be awake to the assault on democratic values that has gathered strength in many countries abroad and that is dividing America at home. The temptation is powerful to close our eyes and wait for the worst to pass, but history tells us that for freedom to survive, it must be defended, and that if lies are to stop, they must be exposed.”

If Vladimir Putin in fact ever faces [charges before the International Criminal Court](#) in The Hague for war crimes and/or crimes against humanity, it is to be assumed that the wily tyrant may, in offering a full defense, invoke both the legacy of a similarly wily Kissinger and the memorable words of [a long dead German comrade](#): “History repeats itself. The first as tragedy. Then as farce.”

The former KGB agent and [host to the 2014 Olympics](#) in Sochi, [“Dr. K’s” response](#) might compare his own and those of the Nobel Peace laureate’s numbers of

³ In 1999, the [amazingly corrupt Argentine president, Carlos Menem](#), who pardoned the [Argentine “dirty war” military junta leaders who served as CIA proxies](#) in the secret wars in Central America, tangoed at a White House dinner [with Albright, “who gave him a big kiss](#) as they left the dance floor.” Not unimportant was the fact that when he assumed office in 1989, the most important (not to say self-important) invited guest of honor was none other than Kissinger.

Under Menem, those [amnestied](#) were not only the generals given a green light by Kissinger and later convicted in the historic “mini-Nuremberg” 1985 trial. To “balance” the controversial gesture in a manner today seemingly from a page from the Putin handbook, so too was [an ersatz leftwing Montonero guerrilla who actually worked for the Argentine army 601 intelligence battalion](#). (According to Robert Scherrer, the FBI legal attaché in Buenos Aires in the 1970s, Mario [Firmenich worked directly for General Alberto Valin](#), who went on to [secretly organize the Nicaraguan Contras](#) for the Reagan Administration.) “[Firmenich is a traitor](#), a cadaver, worse than (military dictator Rafael) Videla, a despicable being in every sense of the word,” said Hebe de Bonafini, president of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo human rights organization. “Everyone knows that he was on the side of the military.” Perhaps as revealing, the [significant progress made under Menem’s predecessor Raul Alfonsín’s government](#) to reform what was [a neo-Nazi and extortive kidnapping hotbed called the Federal Police](#) was totally undone. The Kissingerian Menem claimed the late death-squad organizer and former Federal Police chief, Alberto Villar, an early dirty warrior, embodied the law enforcement model the country should embrace.

people dead and of those [tortured in Nazi-like concentration camps](#). It might include as well, the relative roles of Russian “desinformaatsiya” in global efforts at map change versus the unimpeachable Richard Nixon-Donald Trump “disinformation” meant to mislead public opinion at home, abroad and on the front. In short, Putin might seek to draw an enticing mental map about who did what in pursuing what the late President John F. [Kennedy once called “following the Hitler line](#)—no matter how big the lie; repeat it often enough and the masses will regard it as the truth.”

In his defense, for example, Putin could quote Brigadier General Telford Taylor, [a former U.S. chief prosecuting counsel at the Nuremberg Trials](#) in which the brutal Soviet Union (an also [victorious World War II ally](#)) participated. Taylor unhesitatingly condemned the Kissinger-Nixon air strikes against villages suspected of harboring Vietnamese guerrillas as [“flagrant violations of the Geneva convention](#) on civilian protection.”⁴

Or perhaps Putin will use, as a supportive amicus curiae brief, the surely recorded friendly chat he had with Kissinger in Moscow in 2016, when the American [was “elected”](#) to the Russian Academy of Sciences just two years after Russia violently annexed Ukraine’s Crimea and Moscow-supported separatists shot down a Malaysia Airlines flight over eastern Ukraine.

Or perhaps the man in Moscow can count on evidence, sure to be handed over from the singular People’s Republic of China, about a man who long before his 99th birthday was given the nickname by the political descendants of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai of “old friend of the Chinese people.” Dr. K’s record on China includes [his helping connect seniormost Chinese apparatchiks](#) with Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner. This while the now twice impeached former [President’s own Patron-in-Chief Sheldon Adelson personally lobbied](#) to kill a bill condemning China’s human rights record. (As the Chinese regime assesses the strengths and weaknesses of Putin’s attack on Ukraine, what is at stake is what will happen to Taiwan.)

“Since Kissinger established his consulting firm Kissinger Associates in 1982, Kissinger began to open doors for American companies in China—while actively dampening criticism of the Party amongst his massive network,” noted critic Isaac

⁴ Taylor was also known for his principled opposition to the activities of the far-right Wisconsin Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy, who made a career out of specious allegations about supposed federal government infiltration, both at the State Department and in the military, of Communists. In a 1953 speech to cadets at West Point, where honor code is “A Cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do,” he called McCarthy “a dangerous adventurer.”

Stone Fish, in [an article appropriately titled](#), “How Kissinger became an asset of China.” If past is prologue one might reasonably expect the former secretary of state to offer the counterpoint to what the [top U.S. diplomat in Taipei, Sandra Oudkirk, said](#) on March 30: “Continued efforts by Beijing to choke Taiwan’s international space, pressure its friends, and interfere in Taiwan’s democratic system represent a threat to all democracies.”

The list of Dr. K’s hands-on involvement in what President Joseph Biden calls, in Putin’s case, the [“war crimes”](#)⁵ of an indiscriminate killer offers the Russian’s defense counsel on a platter the question, “Who does Kissinger work for, exactly, and whose side is he on? They are hardly new questions for Kissinger, who has served as the unofficial voice of [the Chinese government](#) in the West since he left the Gerald Ford administration in January 1977.”

Putin could [make the same case](#) as that made in 2002 in *The Guardian* by a notable human rights campaigner regarding the first European head of state, Sloboban Milošević (known as the [“Butcher of the Balkans”](#)), being prosecuted for genocide and war crime, “Why Milošević, but not Kissinger?” From today’s perspective, it is in fact a coin of the realm with two sides, one applicable to Kissinger as well; on March 25, 2022, [The Hill Times ran an Op-Ed](#), “Is Putin following the self-destructive path of Milošević?” The first half of that summary reads: “Like Putin, Milošević [and Kissinger] seemed indifferent to extreme human suffering and even dared the international response to the most serious international crimes that he and his military were committing.” (On March 11, 2006, the former president of the now non-existent Yugoslavia Milošević died in his prison cell of a heart attack, while being tried for war crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague.)

The case against Kissinger (a virtuoso in playing the Washington bureaucratic revolving door) before an international criminal tribunal could offer an evidentiary trail extending from torture and murder to coups and genocide on at least three continents. On one hand, as *Forward* columnist [Benjamin Ivry wrote](#) last year...

Law experts insist there is scant chance that [Kissinger](#) will ever be tried as a war criminal, although some of his close political associates, including the [Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet](#), did undergo that experience. Kissinger’s policies were, after all, concocted in the White House, and the

⁵ Mr. Biden later raised the stakes, calling Putin “a murderous dictator, a pure thug who is waging an immoral war against the people of Ukraine.” Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken added: “Personally, I agree. Intentionally targeting civilians is a war crime.”

historic legal immunity of that building for myriad crimes has become familiar to Americans over the past four years.⁶

Yet, it is also true that judges seeking accountability in Argentina, Chile, France and Spain have for more than two decades sought Kissinger's testimony on his personal and professional relationships with "friendly" dictators in South America. In April 2002, [Kissinger's travel to London](#) was marked [by an \(ultimately unsuccessful\) effort](#) to get him arrested based on allegations of his complicity in war crimes in South America, and also in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

Also instructive, if unsuccessful, was a civil suit brought against him and former CIA director Richard Helms by the family of Chilean Army Commander-in-Chief Rene [Schneider, who was murdered](#) in 1970 in an effort to block democratically elected Socialist Salvador Allende from taking office. It was the last of three kidnapping attempts by far-right paramilitaries to whom the CIA had provided weapons and other support that ended up with Schneider dead. According to [Schneider V. Kissinger—Opposition](#) filed with the Supreme Court by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2005: "As part of the efforts to prevent (President-Elect) Allende from taking power, the United States' ambassador...Edward Korry, was authorized to make contacts with the Chilean military and to encourage a coup. Ambassador Korry informed National Security Advisor Kissinger that 'General Schneider would have to be neutralized, by displacement if necessary,' if any coup were to succeed."

Anything but loyal to Nixon and his White House peers, according to Seymour Hersh, the celebrated national security reporter for *The New York Times*, "More and more subservient, even fawning, to his patron, Kissinger was increasingly vicious and outspoken outside the Oval Office. The backbiting grew intense...Secretary of State (William P.) Rogers was a 'fag' who had some strange hold over the President; (Defense Secretary) Mel Laird was a megalomaniac who constantly leaked anti-Kissinger stories to the press; and ... Nixon was a secret drunk of dubious intelligence."

During the progression of my own career as a journalist, foreign policy bureaucrat, and human rights and national security whistleblower in Washington, D.C., more than one senior diplomat let me know that indeed Mr. K was concerned about what certain bombshell revelations about his dominant role in U.S. foreign policy between 1969 and 1977 meant to his own security and ability to travel overseas.

⁶ Ivry added: "Even authors whose viewpoints are somewhere between the two extremes, from [Walter Isaacson](#) to [Gil Troy](#), have presented troubling accounts of how Heinz Kissinger, born in Fürth, Germany, ruthlessly achieved worldwide fame and fortune."

There was a specific reason why I was the intended audience for such revelations. In his own biography, the editor and now publisher emeritus of *The Nation* magazine (in the words of journalist and humorist Calvin Trillin, “the wily and parsimonious”) Victor Navasky related a conversation he had with Kissinger in early 1988.

“Tell me, Mr. Navasky,” [Kissinger] said in his famous guttural tones, “how is it that a short article in an obscure journal such as yours about a conversation that was supposed to have taken place years ago about something that did or didn’t happen in Argentina resulted in sixty people holding placards denouncing me a few months ago at the airport when I got off the plane in Copenhagen?”

The article in question, “Kissinger and the ‘Dirty War,’” written by me and published by Navasky on October 31, 1987, broke the story about how the Secretary of State nine years earlier had given Argentina’s far-right “dirty warriors,” many ardent Nazi sympathizers, the green light for their unfolding massacre. The Kissinger curse so dark and lonely was soon at the back door.

In his book *A Cook’s Tour: Global Adventures in Extreme Cuisines* (2001), the late chef and best-selling author Anthony Bourdain, whose frequent travels to Southeast Asia allowed him to highlight the tragic legacy of the Vietnam War, served up Kissinger cold⁷ on his role in the [secret massive bombing of Cambodia](#). The dropping of more bombs in four years than the U.S. military had in the Pacific theater during World War II resulted in the deaths of at least a hundred thousand civilians and probably many more. According to [one credible source](#), “[United States and South Vietnamese aerial bombings](#), on Kissinger’s watch, left approximately 350,000 Laotian civilians and 600,000 Cambodian civilians dead.” Such realpolitik destabilized a traditionally neutral government, the result being the Khmer Rouge seizing power and launching a [genocidal campaign](#) rivaling that of Adolf Hitler. (Those who ended up [taking power](#) “[used the devastation and massacre](#) of civilians as recruitment propaganda and as an excuse for its brutal, radical policies and its purge of moderate[s].”)

During the Paris peace talks on the eve of the 1968 presidential election, as a consultant to the parley [Kissinger passed inside information](#) about the negotiations to the insurgent Republican’s campaign. Faced with the fact that sitting Vice President

⁷ Chief architect of the worst of U.S. war policy in Indochina, by late 1969, as the head of the Vietnam special studies group responsible for supervising the daily conduct of the war, then-Nixon National Security Advisor Kissinger was the final word on target selection. “Not only was Henry carefully screening the raids,” [said the Joint Chiefs of Staff colonel](#) who served as the inter-agency group’s air tactics expert, “he was reading the raw intelligence.”

Hubert Humphrey was steadily rising in the pre-election polls, proto-Nixon plumber Kissinger, inaugurating a behavior perhaps only matched by [national security leaker Edward Snowden](#), used the information in private talks with the South Vietnamese to keep them away from the negotiations.⁸ Kissinger later called [the South Vietnamese government he pretended to help a “fig leaf”](#) that needed to be propped up in order that the United States could retreat with face-saving honor. The Indochina massacres took place while [Kissinger “defended the Vietnam war in public,](#) [he] privately admitted ... that the U.S. could not win.”

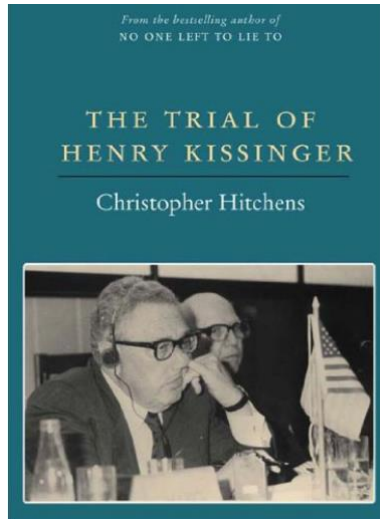
In 2001, the same year as Bourdain’s *Cook’s Tour* hit the bookstands, the tireless maverick British American journalist and Kissinger biographer Christopher Hitchens did Bourdain several better with *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, a work lauded for both its timeliness and its focus. As [noted by Publishers’ Weekly](#),

The [arrest of Augusto Pinochet](#) (in London) signaled [a significant shift in enforcing international law](#), noticed by Henry Kissinger if not others. ... Hitchens ... writes to remedy the awareness gap, focusing on specific charges of Kissinger’s responsibility for mass killings of civilians, genocide, assassinations, kidnapping, murder and conspiracy involving [Indochina](#), [East Timor](#), [Bangladesh](#), [Cyprus](#), [Greece](#) and [Chile](#).

Most of the material (in the book) is known, but Kissinger’s possible culpability has been overlooked for so long that Hitchens’s stylish summation may be precisely what’s required to bring resolution to a chapter in American foreign policy.⁹

⁸ According to [Seymour Hersh, an early Kissinger biographer](#), as early as 1970 Nixon’s national security advisor was shipping his most sensitive files to New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller’s estate at Pocantico Hills, New York, for later use in an autobiography, should he be forced out of the National Security Council by senior White House aides.

⁹ Useful links in the *Publishers’ Weekly* quote, not there originally, have been added by the author for the reader’s convenience.



Hitchens later summarized his searing brief against the former Secretary of State:

the secret and illegal bombing of Indochina [was] explicitly timed and prolonged to suit the career prospects of Nixon and Kissinger. The pair's open support for the Pakistani army's 1971 genocide in Bangladesh, of the architect of which, Gen. Yahya Khan, Kissinger was able to [say](#): "Yahya hasn't had so much fun since the last Hindu massacre." Kissinger's long and warm personal relationship with the managers of other human abattoirs in Chile and Argentina, as well as his role in bringing them to power by the covert use of violence. The support and permission for the mass murder in East Timor, again personally guaranteed by Kissinger to his Indonesian clients. His public endorsement of the Chinese Communist Party's sanguinary decision to clear Tiananmen Square in 1989. His advice to President Gerald Ford to refuse Alexander Solzhenitsyn an invitation to the White House (another favor, as with spitting on Soviet Jewry, to his friend Leonid Brezhnev). His decision to allow Saddam Hussein to slaughter the Kurds after promising them American support. His backing for a fascist coup in Cyprus in 1974 and then his defense of the brutal Turkish invasion of the island. His advice to the Israelis, at the beginning of the first intifada, to throw the press out of the West Bank and go for all-out repression. His view that ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia was something about which nothing could be done.

In "[Kissinger Declassified](#)," published in *Vanity Fair* in 2004, the self-described "coldly furious" [Hitchens](#), who had no tolerance for totalitarian regimes of right or left¹⁰, wrote:

I want to write, now, exactly about the pornography of power. In South America today, the hidden resting-places of *los desaparecidos* are being found all the time. New and democratic governments, assisted by principled lawyers and judges and forensic investigators, are disinterring and identifying the maimed and twisted corpses of men and women, and of boys and girls, who were lost to their friends and families about a quarter of a century ago. (The critical

¹⁰ As noted in the "Christopher Hitchens obituary" in *The Guardian* on December 16, 2011, "His loathing of tyranny was consistent: unlike many of the 1960s generation, he never harboured illusions about Mao or Castro."

resource for this and the rest of the story of Argentina is Martin Edwin Andersen's 1993 book, *Dossier Secreto*.) ... From the standpoint of their victims, the death squads of Argentina and Chile were going about their busy work with the approval—no, the encouragement—of the secretary of state of the United States of America.

“It sickened me,” former Assistant Secretary of State for human rights Patricia Derian told me in the home she shared in Alexandria, Virginia, with fellow Mississippi civil rights crusader Hodding Carter III, her husband and Jimmy Carter’s State Department spokesman, “that with an imperial wave of his hand, an American could sentence people to death on the basis of a cheap whim. As time went on, I saw Kissinger’s footprints in a lot of countries. It was the repression of a democratic ideal.”

At the end of 1985 I traveled from Buenos Aires to Washington, D.C. to continue my research for *Dossier Secreto, Argentina’s Desaparecidos and the Myth of the “Dirty War.”* While there I stayed at the home of Déborah Benchoam and her husband. In July 1976, 16-year-old Déborah watched as plainclothes security officers burst into her family’s home in Buenos Aires, killed her 17-year-old brother, then jailed the now international human rights attorney for more than four years.

Earlier in 1985, Derian walked into the packed courtroom in downtown Buenos Aires where the mini-Nuremberg trials of the dirty “war” junta members took place. Upon her entry all but one of the defense lawyers for the nine former military leaders stomped out of the courtroom in a macho display meant to snub Derian, a woman who intellectually and physically served on the front line of Carter’s human rights policy. During her four-hour-long testimony, she carefully undermined the defense lawyers’ claim that the military was not aware of, or could not control, the Hitlerian carnage created by their subordinates. (Nazi ideology permeated the Argentine security forces as they manned at least 340 secret concentration camps, where Hitler’s speeches were played during torture sessions in which an estimated 12 percent of the victims were Jewish, in a country where Jews were less than one percent of the population.)

At the beginning of the Carter Administration Derian had traveled twice to Argentina, where she met with navy chief Emilio Massera at the naval mechanics school, one of the most notorious of the hundreds of concentration camps run by the military. “We talked about torture,” she recalled. Massera claimed that the navy did not torture people. Rather he proffered that it was his Argentine army and air force colleagues that tortured people. “I said, ‘I have seen a rough diagram of the floor below where we speak, and possibly while we are speaking people are being tortured.’”

“Then a stunning thing happened,” she continued. “He smiled an enormous smile and made a gesture with his hands like this”—she rubbed her hands together—“and he said, ‘You remember the story of Pontius Pilate, don’t you?’”

In a visit with Argentine Interior Minister [Albano Harguindeguy](#), the extraordinarily corrupt army general complained bitterly about Carter Administration pressure at the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS), and various international banking groups to stop the clandestine murder operation. “He was very upset about my presence in his office,” Derian testified, “and talked to me of the problems of terrorists and the problems that people like me cause.” In his own oral history, [Fernando Enrique Rondon](#), later the U.S. ambassador in Ecuador, recalled the exchange between Derian, who he found “very gracious,” and one of those responsible for the death squads run out of the Federal Police:

I will never forget the moment during the conversation when Patt and the Minister seemed about to come to blows. They seemed about ready to stand up to trade blows when both interpreters put their hands on their respective boss’ shoulders; it was an instinctive reflex action by both of us to try to stop matters before they really got out of hand. Then the conversation continued. I must say that Derian was not afraid to call “a spade a spade”; she was very clear about her views.

While interviewing her at her home, Patt handed me a memorandum of conversation written by Rondon based on her 1977 conversation in the Buenos Aires Embassy with then-Ambassador Robert Hill, a conservative five-time GOP ambassadorial appointee.

The memorandum spoke of a first meeting between Kissinger and Argentina Foreign Minister Admiral Cesar Guzzetti in June 1976 following the annual meeting of the OAS in Santiago, Chile. It showed the key role Kissinger played in assuring the military junta that their supposed “antiterrorist” campaign of mass disappearances, torture, and assassination of thousands of noncombatants, as well as a purposefully exaggerated guerrilla threat, would not be criticized by the United States on human rights grounds.

The Argentines were very worried that Kissinger would lecture to them on human rights. ... Guzzetti and Kissinger had a very long breakfast, but the secretary did not raise the subject. Finally, Guzzetti did. Kissinger asked how long it would take ... to clean up the problem. Guzzetti replied that it would be done by the end of the year. Kissinger approved. In other words, Ambassador Hill explained, Kissinger gave the Argentines the green light... Later ... the ambassador discussed the matter personally with Kissinger [who] ... confirmed the conversation.

Derian said later [she had been “nauseated”](#) to learn of Kissinger’s role.



“Concerning Ambassador Hill, he was one of the most competent ambassadors I have ever had the pleasure to work with,” former FBI legal attaché in Buenos Aires [Robert W. Scherrer](#) wrote in a February 9, 1987 letter before meeting with me for an interview at FBI headquarters in November the same year. “The Ambassador did everything in his power to stop repression by the police and intelligence agencies without compromising the sources of intelligence concerning rightwing terrorists provided by the various Embassy components.” Two years later Scherrer would receive the Letelier-Moffitt Human Rights Award commemorating the exiled former Chilean foreign minister Orlando Letelier and [his aide, Ronni Moffitt](#), killed at Pinochet’s direction in a car bomb attack in the worst modern terrorist attack on American soil until September 11, 2001.

In the run-up to the publication of “Kissinger and the ‘Dirty War’” in [The Nation](#) in October 1987, the former Secretary of State had refused to take my phone call. Kissinger’s spokeswoman denied Hill’s claims. Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs William D. Rogers, who attended the Santiago meeting with Kissinger and Guzzetti, said that he did “not specifically remember” a meeting with Guzzetti, but added that Kissinger would have told the Argentine that the military should carry out the fight against terrorism “without abandoning the rule of law.” Guzzetti could not be interviewed, having suffered lasting brain damage years earlier from an attack by leftist guerrillas.¹¹

¹¹ In addition to the several interviews I had—both before and after meeting with Patt at her home in Alexandria, Virginia—with senior Argentine military officials, all of whom said that Kissinger had indeed given the “green light,” Juan de Onis, who was *The New York Times* South America correspondent at the time, told me that he, too, had heard the story of Kissinger’s role from his sources in Buenos Aires in 1976-1977. Two career U.S. diplomats also confirmed the story.

Hill, who died in 1978, bravely waged a behind-the-scenes struggle against Kissinger's secret stamp of approval for those who had earlier staged the coup, refusing to back off when Kissinger's aides warned Hill he might be fired as he sought to save lives in Argentina. This even though the New Hampshire native and his family were themselves the object of several assassination attempts by armed leftists, beginning from the time they arrived in that country in mid-1974. Hill also knew that the guerrilla threat was deliberately overblown, and the slaughter justified by a far-right military disinformation machine not unlike sophisticated psyops machinery used by Putin, inheritor of a Soviet apparatus that, despite ideological differences, remained in the Argentine generals' graces.¹²

Upon publication of *The Nation* article, the Kissinger cabal went to high-gear damage control in a situation in which the State Department documents were still classified. For the most part, headline seeking reporting and academic and policy analyses on what the Argentine military regime had done seemed to ignore what [FBI legal attaché Scherrer \(an investigatory hero](#) in the Letelier-Moffitt murder, a first-ever state terrorism attack in the Washington, D.C., less than a mile from the White House) said was false news:

(Leftist) terrorism was a convenient vehicle for irresponsible elements of the military and their civilian counterparts to seek retaliation against real or imagined wrongs. ... At no time did terrorism ever represent a threat to the stability of the [democratic] government. ... a considerable portion of the murders, kidnappings and extortions attributed to the guerrillas were caused by other elements.

Following publication of the expose, the former Secretary of State claimed in his letter to Navasky that no one ever remembered Hill as a "passionate human rights advocate." [Luigi Einaudi](#), a former Kissinger aide and at the time still a State Department official, dutifully told Foggy Bottom associates he had been in the Santiago, Chile, hotel room (where the okay was in fact given to the Argentine generals) and [that Hill's version was wrong](#).

The version offered by Einaudi (who decades later still defamed the dead Hill) to defend Kissinger was at odds with a cable published on June 11, 1976, in the Argentine newspaper *La Nación* from ANSA, the Italian news agency:

¹² A [1989 RAND "Note" prepared for the U.S. Army](#) underscored that, "Strong trade relations between Argentina and the Soviet Union over the past two decades have forced officials in Buenos Aires to become sensitive to the interests of their trading partner. Similarly, Soviet support on the side of Argentina during the 1982 Malvinas/Falklands War strengthened diplomatic relations between these two countries."

A few hours before leaving for Mexico, after a period of intense activity in Santiago, Kissinger held his longest interview with a foreign minister, that of Argentina, Admiral Cesar Guzzetti. The meeting took place at a very early hour in the Hotel Carrera, where Kissinger was staying. Both Kissinger and his colleague spoke in their own languages, but Guzzetti demonstrated a good knowledge of English. ... The most serious part of the conversation can be synthesized into two points: a) a frank understanding by Kissinger of the current Argentine political stance; b) his promise to support the Argentine economic plan. ... During the meeting, attended by four American officials, including ... William D. Rogers, *Kissinger spoke alone with Guzzetti for a few minutes.* (Italics added.)

A second letter written by his aide William Rogers that Kissinger passed on (invoking “confidentiality”) to *The Nation* publisher was far more revealing. In it, the most important point Rogers made about the five-time conservative (and now dead) political ambassadorial appointee was the claim: “Hill never told us during the last six months of 1976, while he was working the human rights issue so energetically, that you had misled Guzzetti, or that the junta was under a dangerously misguided impression about your attitude.”¹³

¹³ In a June 5, 2004 letter to *The New York Times* reporter Diana Schemo, Chile expert and investigative journalist [John Dinges wrote](#):

... At the heart of the issue raised by Rogers is historical accuracy, not opinion or surmise (as Rogers and perhaps [Foreign Affairs editor James] Hoge would have it). By leaving stand Rogers statements attempting to dismiss the evidence of U.S. foreknowledge and failure to act in advance of the Letelier assassination, *Foreign Affairs* has allowed a distorted and inaccurate picture of the actual documentary record on this issue to go unchallenged. ...

The second item I could have passed on to you is that Rogers did something similar on behalf of Kissinger in 1987. Martin Andersen wrote a piece in *The Nation* (October 31, 1987) saying the US ambassador to Argentina Robert Hill felt that Kissinger had undercut him on human rights in a secret meeting with the Argentine foreign minister. He said the minister, Admiral Guzzetti, met with Kissinger in 1976, during the height of the repression, and Kissinger told him not to worry about getting US human rights criticism as long as Argentina got the repression over with as soon as possible--by the end of 1976. This was a green light to the massive killing underway, Andersen wrote. The Ambassador was furious and told his story later to another State Department officer, who gave Andersen a memo of the conversation. ...

Rogers wrote to *The Nation* on behalf of Kissinger, denying any such thing had happened. ...

Rogers' letter was seriously misleading, not to say outright false. Andersen's piece was accurate and solid. The cables did exist, and I now have them and write about the whole incident in Chapter 12 of my book and in a long note on pp. 291-292. There were two meetings between Kissinger and Guzzetti, and a series of cables from Ambassador Hill complaining bitterly about them.

The scurrilous backfill, including the slandering of the long-dead Hill, by Einaudi and Rogers was later directly contradicted in what once and future Kissinger aide Henry Shlaudeman, later ambassador to Buenos Aires, told William E. Knight, an oral historian working for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs (ADST) Oral History Project:

It really came to a head when I was Assistant Secretary, or it began to come to a head, in the case of Argentina where the dirty war was in full flower. Bob Hill, who was Ambassador then in Buenos Aires, a very conservative Republican politician—by no means liberal or anything of the kind—began to report quite effectively about what was going on, this slaughter of innocent civilians, supposedly innocent civilians, this vicious war that they were conducting, underground war.

He, at one time in fact, sent me a back-channel telegram saying that the Foreign Minister, who had just come for a visit to Washington and had returned to Buenos Aires, had gloated to him that Kissinger had said nothing to him about human rights. I don't know—I wasn't present at the interview.

Perhaps most authoritatively, the [U.S. government Web site, intelligence.gov, now includes](#) in its “Argentine Declassification History” summary, the following:

In July, the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires reported to Washington that estimates of the number of people who had been illegally detained “run into the thousands and many have been tortured and murdered.” In response to the dramatically increasing volume of such cases, U.S. Ambassador to Argentina Robert C. Hill protested to the Argentine government concerning human rights abuses in May 1976. In July, Assistant Secretary of State Harry Shlaudeman told Kissinger that the Argentine “security forces are totally out of control” and that the U.S. would “have to wait until somebody surfaces to get a handle on this.”

In September, Hill protested again, directly to (the head of the military junta, General Jorge R.) Videla, that “not one single person has been brought to justice or even disciplined” for violations of human rights. In response, Videla said that “Kissinger understood their problem and had said he hoped they could get terrorism under control as quickly as possible.”

Years after *The Nation* published its “scoop,” a Freedom of Information request [yielded a declassified memcon](#) and the fact that, seemingly for the first time, it was at the June 10, 1976 meeting with Guzzetti that Kissinger learned (although he pretended he had not) of Operation Condor, an infamous secret alliance of South American military

I have Rogers' letter, which is now shown as a clear factual distortion of the cable record that existed in State Department files, and which he had every reason to know existed.

regimes for the surveillance, rendition and repression in the mid and late 1970s. Kissinger not only gave Guzzetti his infamous “green light” for the far-right dirty warriors, but also endorsed “joint efforts” to address, along with their Southern Cone neighbors, “the terrorist problem.” This after the Argentine admiral told him, in a diplomatic gaffe, that Buenos Aires wanted “to integrate with our neighbors ... All of them: Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, Uruguay, Brazil.”

Kissinger returned to Argentina as the generals’ “guest of honor” at the 1978 World Cup soccer games, some of them not far from a few of the hundreds of death camps holding *los desaparecidos* (the missing). Forty years later, as Russia hosted that year’s games, “[Remembering Argentina 1978: The Dirtiest World Cup of All Time](#),” was published in *Esquire*. “On the pitch, it was as if nothing was wrong. Elsewhere, political opponents were being murdered by the state. Does this sound at all familiar?”

The head of the junta, Videla, “like many world leaders, had little interest in football. But he saw an opportunity, and he was prepared to spend huge sums on infrastructure to get it right. In 1976, the chairman of Argentina’s World Cup organizing committee, General Omar Actis, was assassinated while travelling to his first press conference, where he was expected to criticize the rapidly escalating sums being spent on hosting the tournament. ... (F)ormer US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, both a ... fan and a tacit supporter of the junta regime, joined General Videla on a pre-match parade.” (Actis’ murder was conveniently attributed to leftwing guerrillas, by that time deeply penetrated by Argentine army intelligence battalion.)

Earlier [an avid supporter of Peru’s military dictatorships](#), after the 1982 Falkland/Malvinas war Einaudi was, in his own words, invited by former Kissinger aide and then U.S. Ambassador in Buenos Aires Shlaudeman “as part of an effort to reopen contacts with the military” later the focus of historic mini-Nuremberg prosecutions in civilian courts. And years later he was still engaged in a one-man bureaucratic and ideological dog fight against the Carter human rights policies.

In [his own extensive oral history with the ADST](#) Einaudi complained about how colleagues who—then and later—purposely dragged their feet in the re-alignment of foreign policy goals under [Carter’s human rights banner](#) were, according to him, supposedly treated. A professional diplomat who prides himself on finesse, Einaudi charged that the work of those who even he admitted were “totally unprepared” was “easily disrupted by *militant* human rights advocates newly placed strategically within the Administration. These included Patt Derian, the political appointee assistant

secretary for (human rights) ... and Bob Pastor, just 29 years old when he came from Harvard to become Carter's main Latin America advisor at the NSC."¹⁴ (Italics added.) In his oral history Einaudi spoke expansively of his role in the 1950s traveling throughout Latin America as a representative of the National Student Association; "hence," he added, "[a representative] of the United States." His choice of words was indeed diplomatic. In a 2015 story written by [Aryeh Neier](#) in *The American Prospect*, "When the Student Movement was a CIA Front," [the legendary human rights activist noted that the Agency's manipulation](#) of the other NSA (not the [National Security Agency](#)) "foreshadowed other forms of Cold War blowback that comprised democracy at home. ... Whatever one thinks about the importance of having had such means to wage the battles of the Cold War, it seems difficult to justify the deception that was central to its operation." The "number of young CIA collaborators" Neier listed included Luigi Einaudi, "an American diplomat who served as acting secretary general of the OAS."

"Kissinger, who has maintained [close ties](#) to Russian President Vladimir Putin, is now positioning himself as an intermediary between the Kremlin and the incoming Trump administration," warned Zach Dorfman, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, in a [January 6, 2017 article in Politico](#):

To the best of my knowledge there has never, before now, been proof of Kissinger's secret interference in U.S. politics *after* he left public service. The paper trail for Kissinger dries up; there are no more U.S. government documents subject to declassification. Indeed, we know very, very little about Kissinger's political affairs after 1977. Since 1983, he has run an international consulting firm, Kissinger Associates, that has facilitated contacts between major corporations and a number of authoritarian regimes. During much of this time, he or other members of Kissinger Associates have sat on the President's Intelligence Advisory Board, a little-known civilian panel tasked with intelligence oversight duties where members have access to highly classified data.

In his article Dorfman put in evidence an "extraordinary memo" written by Pinochet's foreign minister, Hernan Cubillos, found among the personal papers that the pinochetista had donated to the Hoover Institute archives of Stanford University. A bookend to his 1968 role in helping scuttle the Paris peace talks on Vietnam on the eve of U.S. elections, the Chilean's memorandum of conversation showed, Dorfman said, how Kissinger used "his considerable influence with foreign leaders—in this case, the

¹⁴ Derian was one of three people to whom I dedicated *Dossier Secreto*. Pastor subsequently wrote the Prologue to my *Peoples of the Earth, Ethnonationalism, Democracy, and the Indigenous Challenge in "Latin" America*.

Pinochet regime—to undermine his domestic political opponents, including a sitting president of the United States.” The Cubillos memorandum focused on a discussion he had with the former Secretary of State after the American hosted him at his home at the River Club in Manhattan which Pinochet’s diplomat described as “fruitful and interesting.”

When Cubillos asked Kissinger how Chile should handle its relationship with the United States, the latter claimed it was a “very difficult question to answer, since the Carter government has ‘*begun making enemies of all its friends and making friends of all its enemies*’” (italics added). In an extensive discussion of the Letelier case, Kissinger added that his only advice was that we treat the current U.S. administration with “brutality.” He suggested “this is the only language they understand,” repeating “this same idea several times during the conversation.” The former Secretary, earlier hailed in the U.S. and foreign paparazzi (and even an often-fawning mainstream) press as a womanizer, added that, in this opinion, “Pat (*sic*) Derian was ‘stupid’ and should receive rough treatment.”

“How inappropriate, how borderline subversive, Kissinger’s counsel to Cubillos was,” Dorfman noted. “Not only did he laud Chile’s decision to stymie a murder trial related to a major act of international terrorism carried out in the U.S. capital, but the former secretary of state also actively encouraged the regime ostensibly responsible for that crime to take a hard line with the U.S. government, in order to further stonewall U.S. prosecutors—that is, the Justice Department.” (The Nobel Peace Prize laureate’s advocacy of “brutality” and the “rough treatment” of a woman was given to senior official of a neo-Nazi regime that had incorporated international state terrorism in its clandestine quiver. In 1976, Cardinal Raul Silva, a crusading Catholic Archbishop of Santiago, when asked [warned Kissinger](#) that the military in power in Chile had a “Nazi mentality.”)

Ten months after Dorfman’s exposé, the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, [Nikki Haley called interference in U.S. elections by another nation “warfare,”](#) saying to the Russians, “Well, don’t interfere in our elections and we won’t be anti-Russian.” She added, “I think we have to be so hard on this and we have to hold them accountable.”

The slow drip of State Department and other documents finally declassified began to threaten a gaping hole in Kissinger’s public relations armor. On October 4, 2004 the former secretary of state [defended his dealings with Latin American strongmen](#) during his time at Foggy Bottom by claiming that, in order to be effective,

he had deliberately eschewed “personal attacks” in the fight against rights abuses. He claimed that the declassified documents used by the media and by his critics failed to reflect the totality of his diplomatic efforts.

To the general public such arguments may initially have appeared to have some validity, particularly given the still fawning and flatulent coverage in much of the major U.S. media. The reality was, however, that Kissinger did purposely and often engage both in deception and in character assassination—against those who criticized the secretary of state’s favorite military dictators, or their American benefactor. Sometimes it was done privately with the likeminded and bureaucratic hangers-on, or even foreigners, such as Chile’s Cubillos. But other times, it occurred in ways that could not escape public view.

As Watergate leeches into the public’s consciousness, Seymour Hersh, a *New York Times* reporter who had in 1970 won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the My Lai massacre and subsequent attempted cover-up in the Pentagon, reported that in May 1969 Kissinger played [a hands-on role in the extensive secret wiretapping](#) of his own NSC staff, as well as several reporters. This after *The Times* published an article that American B-52s were bombing Cambodia. Kissinger not only arguably matched Snowden’s record as a leaker, at the same time he exercised blanket authority for national security wiretaps without a court order—the type of transgression that [Snowden, now in Putin’s Russia](#), claimed he was fighting at the National Security Agency (the authentic NSA).

The case of diplomat Archer Blood, who wrote a “dissent” cable about Nixon-Kissinger policy in East Pakistan (Bangladesh), a story that later served as the basis for Gary J. Bass’s prizewinning history, “[The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide](#),” is also instructive. The Blood trail included his finding out his having used supposedly institutional means for telling truth to power meant irreparable damage to his career.

After British author William Shawcross published the meticulously documented and terrifying *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*, a *New York Times* [book editor asked Kissinger](#) what he thought. He replied, “It’s a shoddy, outrageous work that is filled with inaccuracies.” The editor noted, “Usually, Mr. Kissinger has invoked his old State Department prerogative of speaking ‘on deep background only,’ but on Mr. Shawcross, he added, ‘And you can quote me.’”

The *Times* man added, in reference to the former secretary of state's own *White House Years*, "Mr. Kissinger also said that he had handled the Shawcross accusations—about his and President . . . Nixon's involvement in the secret bombing of Cambodia—only 'in a few footnotes.' But an examination of the changes he made in the galleys of his book disclosed that he had made extensive revisions."

When telling Pinochet's mini-Goebbels that "Pat (sic) Derian was 'stupid,'" Kissinger was talking about a woman who in 1963, as a nurse and civil rights activist in viciously segregated Mississippi, arrived the morning after civil rights champion Medgar Evers was shot and killed outside his home to comfort his wife and small children on the blood-stained yard.¹⁵ While fighting for integrated public schools in arguably the most dangerous state in the Union, she herself [suffered death threats](#) from the Ku Klux Klan.

And when faced with Hitchens' international array of data points of criminal culpability, Kissinger [claimed, "It's so over the top.](#) I have not answered it, and I won't answer it." He then [accused Hitchens of being a Holocaust denier and an antisemite](#), a charge he quickly withdrew after the British journalist, whose mother was Jewish, threatened him with a libel suit.

As a newly-minted CIA director, [William Colby](#), whose previous postings had not focused on Latin America, at first followed NSC chief Kissinger's lead in the run-up and immediately following the September 11, 1973 overthrow of Salvador Allende. [The Kissinger brief](#) not only included making sure that U.S. officials were on the same script in "deny(ing) any CIA involvement," but also in spreading squalid personal postmortems on the now-dead Allende.

It was also Colby, however, who in the wake of Watergate voluntarily submitted to Congress a list of 693 single-spaced pages known as "the family jewels," or "the skeletons," that showed how the agency had violated its charter for 25 years by spying on Americans, tapping their telephones, opening their mail, and reading their tax returns. Included in such jewels were plots to murder foreign leaders such as Fidel Castro and how the agency conducted LSD "mind control" experiments on both unwitting and willing American human guinea pigs.

¹⁵ In 1976, Ambassador Robert [White earned Kissinger's wrath](#) for speaking out against Pinochet's human rights violations at the OAS meeting in Santiago. ("Kissinger told Pinochet he would have to make reference to human rights in his speech," White told me, "but that's all he would hear on the subject." After issuing an official reprimand, Kissinger backed down when White threatened to resign.

On April 11, 1974 the CIA director told Kissinger that the presidents of Brazil were directly involved in summary executions; at the NSC he had made sure that reports about Brazil had any references to torture removed. Faced with the new information Secretary Kissinger did nothing.¹⁶ On December 31 the same year, [Colby's briefing](#) to the Justice Department about the scandals included 18 issues deemed to be of legal concern. These, he reported, were due to a very "compartmentalized" organizational structure used by his predecessor, Richard Helms, in which it was possible for units within the agency to have no knowledge about what other units were doing. In January 1975, Colby fired James Jesus Angleton after *New York Times* reporter Sy Hersh [revealed](#) the conspiratorial counterintelligence chief had overseen a massive spy program to monitor Americans involved in anti-war and black nationalist movements, violating the CIA charter.

The morning of March 5, 1975, Kissinger complained to President Gerald Ford that Colby "is now blackmailing me on the assassination stories." He went on to explain: "Nixon and I asked [then CIA director Richard] Helms to look into possibilities of a coup in Chile in 1970 [against the newly elected Marxist president Salvador Allende]. Helms said it wouldn't work. Then later the people who it was discussed with tried to kidnap [army commander Gen. Rene] Schneider and killed him."

It was only in 2000 that the CIA reported to Congress that the agency and the U.S. government as a whole (meaning Kissinger and Nixon as well) agreed with multiple potential coup plotters in Chile that Schneider's devotion to the Chilean Constitution meant his "abduction ... was an essential step in any coup plan." CIA claimed, "We have found no information, however, that the coup plotters' or CIA's intention was that the general be killed in any abduction effort." Yet after the fact, the CIA doled out \$35,000 to the murderers. And it was only in 2015 that the public learned of a June 1975 telephone conversation, in which Kissinger, who was worried about the Colby's willingness to cooperate with congressional investigations of past agency malpractice and misdeeds, [referred to him](#) as a "psychopath."¹⁷ According to the telephone

¹⁶ Four months before he gave the Argentine military the "green light" for their dirty war, Kissinger traveled to Brazil. "The embassy had previously recommended that he raise the issue with General Geisel. Words like 'flatterer,' 'sycophant,' 'toady,' and 'fawner' could not accurately characterize who Kissinger acted in Brazil," [wrote Stephen G. Rabe](#) in his biography (100).

¹⁷ In "Colby: The Man Who Told the Secrets," [David Wise noted](#) that, "In the 20 years since President ... Ford fired him as director of the CIA, William E. Colby was shunned and reviled by many of his former colleagues because he cooperated with congressional and other investigations of illegal and improper activities by the spy agency. There is great irony in this, because Colby, by his actions at the time, probably saved the CIA from self-destructing."

transcript Kissinger complained, “On top of it you have the pysopath (*sic*)/running the CIA. You accuse him of a traffic violation and he confesses murder.”

Two years ago Stephen G. Rabe provided, in *Kissinger and Latin America; Intervention, Human Rights, and Diplomacy*, [the first full-length history](#) about the amount of time Kissinger dedicated to the countries south of the border. The now historian emeritus at the University of Texas at Dallas and author of *The Most Dangerous Area in the World: John F. Kennedy Confronts Communist Revolution in Latin America* (University of North Carolina Press, 1999) brings to this latest work a treasure trove of recently declassified materials. In some important respects his focus on Kissinger is a biographic distillation of his *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (Oxford University Press, 2012) and its convincing argument that covert and other interventions in Latin America by the United States from 1952 to 1990 resulted in brutal dictatorships that killed hundreds of thousands, a Cold War triumphalism dismissing the dead as “collateral damage.”

As Thomas C. Field, Jr., of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University noted, in *Kissinger and Latin America*, Rabe [importantly highlighted how Dr. K “systematically harangued](#) his own countrymen who used their State Department posts to speak out against the murder and mayhem being perpetrated by Washington’s allies. When Foreign Service Officers filed broadside complaints via the newly created “Dissent Channel,” Kissinger dismissed them as “frustrated missionaries” (100), who wanted “to make revolution in Chile” and elsewhere in Latin America.

In Rabe’s balanced (if dysfunctional) perspective, he details “successes” emanating from Kissinger’s time at the National Security Council and the State Department. Rabe gives credit to the Nobel laureate for resolving nettlesome commercial issues with Ecuador; Mexico (on a Colorado River salinity issue that had long troubled relations which Robert Hill tried but failed to resolve when he served as ambassador there during the Eisenhower Administration); Peru, and Venezuela, and for launching novel initiatives with Panama and Cuba. However, given Kissinger’s legacy and that of his associates in Latin America, their inclusion brings to mind [the](#)

Following the publication of *Dossier Secreto*, where I laid out Operation Condor’s links to European neo-Nazis, including the Italians who took part in the infamous Bolivian narco-coup in 1979, working with the Argentine 601 intelligence unit, I had a private conversation with Colby in Washington. In it, he congratulated me on my research and expressed regret that [Operation Gladio](#), a secret paramilitary organization created by the CIA during the 1950s to organize resistance in the event of a Soviet bloc invasion of Western Europe, came to be dominated, in Italy at least, by a fractious and violent far right.

[excuse made for the brutal Italian dictator](#) Benito Mussolini, that while he and his henchmen were not “nice people,” they did get things done: “Say what you like about Mussolini, he made the trains run on time.”

For that reason and others, it is important to note that nowhere in the text does Rabe quote or otherwise cite the otherwise ubiquitous National Student Associate [alum Luigi Einaudi](#), whose grandfather was the Italian representative for the Rockefeller Foundation and the first elected president of the postwar Italian Republic. In other latitudes, Einaudi might enjoy the mention of Mussolini. His father’s youngest brother, Giulio Einaudi, had the first book he wrote panned in the press by [Il Duce](#) himself (while another uncle became a partner in a steel firm in Argentina).

Immediately after breaking the story for *The Nation*, I was the Latin American and Caribbean project director for the National Democratic Institute (NDI), where my work put me in direct contact with Einaudi while he served as director of policy planning for Inter-American Affairs at the State Department. He warned common friends I was a dangerous “radical.”¹⁸ Later, Einaudi’s own staff from that time who became friends let me know that [my fellow Italian American](#) was well aware of the fact that I became the first in the national security category to receive the U.S. Special Counsel’s “Public Servant Award” for [blowing the whistle](#) during my time as a senior advisor for policy planning at the Criminal Division on Justice Department failures to protect CIA classified information, senior Division management leaving itself open to blackmail in proto-Putin Russia, and myriad violations of other rules, regulations, and law.

Einaudi was serving as Acting Secretary of the OAS when the crusading Italian [judge Giancarlo Capaldo](#) asked me in 2005 to serve as an expert witness for the Italian government in its case against Pinochet and Operation Condor. The famed anti-organized crime prosecuting magistrate was the guest of honor at a dinner at my home the day I testified before him at the Office of the U.S. Attorney in Baltimore. (This February, nearly 17 years later, the Italian Supreme Court [confirmed the life sentence](#)

¹⁸ It should be noted that, just months before publishing *The Nation* expose on Kissinger and as a result of a bald effort to recruit me, I got into a shouting match at the Cuban embassy in Buenos Aires with a supposed diplomat on the fate of what he claimed were “non-existent” political prisons on the island. (In the first paragraph of an article that he published in the July 17, 1986, *New York Review of Books*, Aryeh Neier, a founder of Human Rights Watch, [had written](#): “Since Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Cuba has confined large numbers of political prisoners for longer periods than any other country in the world. No one outside Cuba knows how many, but Fidel Castro himself has said publicly that at one time there were as many as fifteen thousand, and he reportedly told one of his biographers that the number was twenty thousand.”)

for the now nearly 100-year-old former Peruvian dictator Francisco Morales Bermúdez—once so favored by Kissinger¹⁹ and his former National Student Association “militant” aide—for his role in the disappearance of Italians and their descendants in Condor. Last August [Italy asked Chile to extradite](#) three former military officers already sentenced to life imprisonment by European courts for murdering two Italians, including a priest, in 1973.)

A year after Einaudi left the OAS to become a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies²⁰ at the National Defense University (NDU), I was in the midst of an admittedly frantic conversation about becoming the principal aide of OAS Secretary for Political Affairs, [Dante Caputo, a friend](#) and former Argentine foreign minister during the government of Raul Alfonsín. As an assistant professor at the NDU, I had uncovered that the organization where I worked—now called the William Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies—was a haven for the far-right, including torturers and murderers from the time of Pinochet and Videla. The slated move to the OAS came four months after I first raised the possibility that fellow [NDU professor Jaime Garcia Covarrubias](#) was responsible in several cases of torture and murder while working for Pinochet in Chile.

Dante and I agreed that I was to leave my job immediately, so as not to find myself having to again be a whistleblower, or if I was, that I would be out of the line of fire. Yet late one Friday, literally three days before I was to take up the new job, Dante told me that Jose Miguel Insulza, the OAS secretary general, a former Chilean defense

¹⁹ In Rabe’s book, he writes about how while visiting Lima in February 1976, Kissinger toasted to US-Peruvian friendship with Morales Bermúdez by drinking a glass of pure pisco, the powerful alcoholic drink, remarking jokingly, “After this I will agree to everything you ask.”

²⁰ The NDU’s Institute for National Strategic Studies has its own uneven history. For example, in October 1996 and in the wake of the Mexican campesino rebellion in Chiapas, Donna Lee Van Cott [published a 105-page INSS McNair Paper](#), *Defiant Again: Indigenous Peoples and Latin American Security*. At the time promoted in U.S. military circles as something of a thematic breakthrough, the study focused on what at the time were called “ethnic policies” in Brazil and Colombia, including counterinsurgency. *Defiant Again* mentions Guatemala only in passing. Yet, as Rabe noted,

In the case of Guatemala, Kissinger, then the national security adviser, ruled in 1971 that there would be no discussion of curtailing covert assistance to the regime of [Carlos Arana Osorio](#) (1970-1974), even though both aides and the CIA had informed Kissinger that President Arana directly participated in the drawing up of “death lists.” U.S. complicity in the political violence in Guatemala points to the reality that any discussion of Kissinger and Latin America inevitably raised the “war criminal” allegation that has dogged him (6, 153).

In 2009, a year after Kissinger received his NDU award, Van Cott committed suicide when her role in a plagiarism scandal at the University of Connecticut was about to go public.

minister and a good friend of Garcia Covarrubias, told him that I was not to be hired. The reason? I supposedly worked for the CIA.

I never worked for the Agency but [the accusation was a purposefully lobbed bombshell](#); if I protested publicly I was likely to forfeit my CHDS position while allowing others to continue to make specious accusations that were likely a professional death sentence in the international democratic development arena that had become one of my job specialties. The ersatz claim came after I asked hard questions not only about Garcia Covarrubias but also about Argentine dirty warrior Julio Cirino, a former U.S. embassy informant who was purposefully and vigorously promoted by the NDU and later convicted in Buenos Aires for crimes against humanity. Seven years later, as the Pentagon University scandal made headlines in Washington as well as Santiago, a former NDU senior official defended Garcia Covarrubias' hiring by publicly suggesting that the pinochetista got the job due to his work with the CIA.²¹

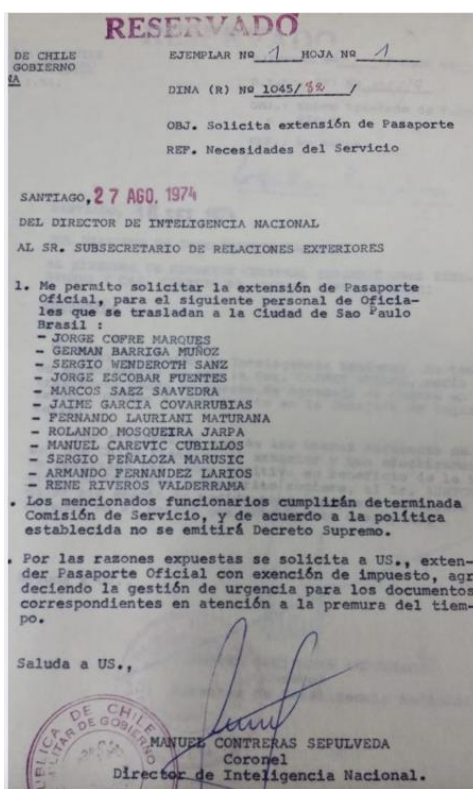
At the end of 2008, with anti-torture Barack Obama victorious over the even more vigorous anti-torture candidate John McCain in the presidential contest, and with what became a vicious cover-up of the role of Garcia Covarrubias in Pinochet's DINA just at the beginning, Kissinger was awarded the NDU American Patriot Award, "in recognition for his distinguished career in public service."

It was not until after I was forced to leave my position at the NDU due to my whistleblowing that [Garcia Covarrubias, a former head of counterintelligence for Pinochet's](#) international terrorist organization (DINA) was actually convicted in two separate cases of torture and murder during a regime that, as Rabe reported (p. 80), had "plunged the nation into the darkness of a Nazi Germany." In August 2020, the NDU professor was one of those found guilty in the September 1973 murder of unarmed detainee and math teacher [Rubén Eduardo Morales Jara](#). The other case involves Chilean lawyer [Jaime Emilio Eltit Spielmann](#), who was detained and went missing on the 13th of September of the same year. It is important to note that Eltit Spielmann was Jewish, and that key partners in a DINA in which Garcia Covarrubias was a rising (and

²¹ Margaret Daly Hayes, the first director of what is now called the Perry Center and the person who hired Garcia Covarrubias, [claimed that the Chilean](#) had been "vetted by the U.S. government, by the (U.S.) Embassy. They obviously didn't have anything either or he wouldn't have been hired." She then appeared to contradict her own tale by saying that he would have been too young to be "in any kind of command position" in DINA, his membership, she said was not itself a disqualifier, depending "on what he might have been doing at the time." "Someone who has previously worked with the CIA might not have been excluded from hiring," Daly Hayes told a McClatchy reporter, seeming to suggest that the Agency had no role in the vetting process. (Asked by reporters whether Garcia Covarrubias had ever worked with the agency, a CIA spokesperson replied: "No comment.")

increasingly powerful) star were intimately linked to a group of German Nazis in hiding in Chile.

Posted on March 31, 2021 by the National Security Archive,²² [a letter dated August 27, 1974 from the head of the DINA](#), Director of National Intelligence Manuel Contreras, to the Chilean deputy foreign minister, requested official passports for a trip to Brazil for 12 Chilean military officers, including state terrorism agents later involved in the car-bomb murders of the exiled democratic General Carlos Prats in Argentina and former foreign minister Letelier in Washington, D.C. Among those listed in the Contreras communication was Garcia Covarrubias; the others included those who ran myriad DINA national and international terrorist operations, including the terrorist unit at Colonia Dignidad, an isolated hamlet of Germans and Chileans created after World War II in Chile by emigrant German Nazis. Under the leadership of fugitive Third Reich soldier Paul Schäfer, the colony later became notorious for the secret internment, torture, and murder of dissidents during the Pinochet regime.



²² <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/20764-11>

Having finished writing *Peoples of the Earth* in 2009, I began work on what I thought would be two fantastic bookends: biographies of conservative Republican Robert Hill and personal idol, the “militant” (as Einaudi called her) Patricia Derian. [Tex Harris, the crusading human rights officer](#) in the embassy in Buenos Aires during the Carter Administration, noted: “Ambassador Hill is a hero to Patt Derian. He briefed her on Argentina early in her tenure. . . . [It] put Argentina early on her list of concerns.”

Einaudi and Garcia Covarrubias worked well together at the NDU. The same could not be said for me. After the OAS experience and with the U.S. economy plummeting to lows unheard of since the Great Depression, I held on to my job as best as I could (my annual performance evaluations were all “outstanding”) as I worked quietly behind the scenes to find a way to have the situation addressed while keeping copious notes.

On December 14, 2010, a few months after Einaudi told me in the hallway at the NDU—without explaining why—that Hill was one of the “sleaziest” U.S. diplomats he had ever met, I tried to interview him about his former colleague for the books I planned to write. By that time, having already been “outed” as a potential once and future whistleblower focused on his friend Garcia Covarrubias, a more cautious Einaudi claimed he could not remember Hill. It was an interesting but not unexpected gambit by Einaudi, who remembered enough to begin recording his own [345-page oral history](#) in May 2013. He went on to receive NDU’s prestigious [William J. Perry Award \(a trophy](#) for which I used to be the selection coordinator) just two years before the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies gave it to [Mexican General Salvador Cienfuegos Zepeda](#), already well known for his role in cases of torture, forced disappearance, and extrajudicial executions.

I was never able to move forward on the dual biographies. After more than three years of quietly lobbying senior DoD officials to address the case of Garcia Covarrubias and a plethora of other violations at the NDU of rules, regulations and laws, after I went public the Chilean’s NDU defenders, a number denizens of the old and infamous [School of the Americas, the U.S. army facility](#) critics labeled a school for dictators, torturers and assassins, [knowingly orchestrated illegal](#) reprisals that cost me my job and tarnished my professional reputation.

When Kissinger and Guzzetti met in Santiago, where in the name of the U.S. government the American gave the Chilean the blessing for Argentina’s dirty war and where Guzzetti abruptly went off script and mentioned Operation Condor, a third and equally complicitous subject was also addressed. As shown in the [official memorandum](#)

[of conversation](#) of the more than hour-long meeting, Kissinger aide William Rogers gushed about having been in “close consultations throughout” with the junta’s economy minister José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz. Asked by Guzzetti to receive him, Kissinger replied, “I will see him for 15 minutes as a symbolic gesture,” to which Guzzetti responded, “Yes, thank you very much. That would help our image greatly.” Kissinger then replied: “The private sector can be of great assistance. I will call David Rockefeller,” as Rogers, later a Kissinger business partner, chimed in, “Yes. Chase could be very helpful.” The Secretary responded: “And I will call his brother, the vice president.”

While earlier biographies of Kissinger focused on his difficult relationship with Nixon and senior White House staff, it is important to remember that his real patron was Nelson Rockefeller, a point well made by Rabe. In *Kissinger and Latin America*, the biographer offers an important part of the conversation that is often purposefully ignored by the Washington-New York establishment. By examining the former Vice President’s role, however, is to understand the extent to which Kissinger continued to essentially service the Rockefeller family fortune in Latin America, and just how much he influenced the ideas held and strategies undertaken by the chief of the National Security Council and then the State Department. It is no accident that the Council on Foreign Relations “honors two distinguished Americans who were influential in the development of U.S. policy in the Western Hemisphere during the past half-century.” In 1969, the New York Governor made four ill-fated “good will” or “fact finding” trips to Latin America on behalf of the new Nixon Administration as a “de facto secretary of state for Latin American affairs.” Calling on heads of state and foreign ministers, the visits to 20 countries were unmitigated and tumultuous failures that inspired violent anti-American clashes in several countries. In his book, Rabe notes that the Rockefeller family’s Standard Oil of New Jersey “was perceived by many Latin Americans as an exploitative enterprise. The company’s history in countries such as Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela had been controversial.” In Argentina, Rabe noted, “[Rockefeller was also enthusiastic about military rule](#) when he met with (Lieutenant General Juan Carlos Onganía for a two-hour conversation in Buenos Aires.” Onganía had come to power in Argentina in 1966 after overthrowing an elected, although minority, government, replacing it with a regime that regularly used violent repression by [the military \(and the police who were subordinate to them\)](#) of social protest. (Rockefeller’s visit there resulted in a wave of urban riots and other violence that included the destruction of a chain of six supermarkets controlled by his family’s fortune.)

“What captured public notice,” Rabe wrote (43), “and became a central feature of the Nixon-Kissinger approach to Latin America was the remarkable assertion in the Rockefeller report that military rule could be in the best interests of Latin America. The ‘new military man’ was prepared to adapt his authoritarian tradition to the goals of social and economic progress.” This new military man would be “a major force for constructive social change in the American republics.” Outside of the U.S. military, “no other agency of the U.S. government had ‘a comparable rapport or integration in its sphere of activity,’” read one report. Retired U.S. military argued that the Latin American officer corps “was no longer composed of sons of wealthy owners of haciendas and plantations. Latin American officers were now urban men, drawn from the middle class, educated and possessing technical expertise.” According to a retired commander in chief of U.S. Southern Command, “They are dedicated to nation-building and improvements in the living conditions of the lower classes.” Rabe noted that Rockefeller claimed that “None of these dictators down there—the military dictators so-called—that I saw are the old-style dictator, the pawn of the oligarchy. These guys are all coming from the people and are sympathetic toward and concerned about the people” (44).

Not since Joseph Stalin’s New Soviet Man canonizing *homo sovieticus*, supposedly indestructible men in a state of continual subservience to the leader and his party, has such a specious iconic archetype been foisted into an international arena. As [Peter Fritzsche and Jochen Hellbeck show](#) in *The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany*, “Taken together, the visions and policies of these regimes represented a radical and total rejection of liberalism and its pursuit of the freedoms and rights of the individual”—precisely what the Latin American militaries, and especially in the Southern Cone, tried to foist on their captive populations. (Much later, at a cocktail party held at the home of a Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies [SAIS] professor who both taught occasionally at CIA headquarters at Langley and who had a part-time job as an advisor on Latin America for the Rockefeller’s Chase Manhattan bank, Colby told me that in his opinion, not a single country in Latin America needed a military, except Colombia and “perhaps Peru.” The other countries, he said, could take care of any problems they faced by having well-armed, well-trained

and well-paid national gendarmes, in essence a community-based police with military capabilities, for the maintenance of public order.²³)

“The aim of the (military government) is the profound transformation of consciousness,” declared General Videla the year he took power in Argentina. “We know that in order to repair so much damage we must recover the meanings of many embezzled words,” added notorious fellow junta member Admiral Emilio Massera the same year. “Unfaithful to their meanings, words perturb our powers of reason.”

“The Dirty War, though unprecedented in its extent and cruelty, did not erupt from a vacuum,” Marguerite [Feitlowitz wrote in her *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* \(1998\)](#). Rather, it drew on a reservoir of beliefs, phobias, obsessions, and rhetoric that have filtered down through a variety of ultraconservative movements, tendencies, and regimes. Resonating through the speeches, articles, and proclamations are echoes ranging from the Inquisition to the Opus Dei, from the Praetorian Guard to the Nazis, from the *ancien régime* to the French war for Algeria. For all their shadings and variations, these elements had long coexisted in Argentine politics. In one guise or another, extreme archaic conservatives have always been a force—now in shadow, now casting the light.

Rabe offers a more than serviceable documentary rendition of just how fictitious Rockefeller’s Pentagon-promoted bureaucratic notion in fact was. For example, after visiting Nicaragua, where the corrupt West Point-educated dictator and head of the National Guard Anastasio Somoza Debayle ruled with an iron fist, Rockefeller received a missive from Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, publisher of the opposition newspaper *La Prensa*. Nicaragua, he wrote, suffered from “an annihilated, rotten, and obsolete political system. . . . The situation in our country is tense and I fear that it is nearing collapse more rapidly than some people expect.” As things started to collapse in the Central American kleptocracy, “Kissinger issued no objection to the continuation of the dictatorship.” When Somoza visited Washington a month after the coup in Buenos Aires, the Vice President reiterated U.S. support, using talking points

²³ During the conversation, I had told Colby that, based on the experience in Argentina, where former President Raul Alfonsín’s government had [successfully pushed the military out of internal security](#) roles and quietly reformed the gangster-like federal police (an [authentically U.S. model](#) was already being promoted, with support from the FBI, in El Salvador), I thought that the U.S. should be pushing its regional allies to do the same hemisphere wide. After hearing his suggested solution, I jokingly replied that in the post-Soviet era, the world had indeed been turned on its head, as the former Director of National Intelligence had a far more “radical” view on hemispheric security reform than someone accused of the same at the State Department, although I did not specifically mention Luigi Einaudi by name.

that read: “We have neither any reason not the intention to make any fundamental change in our relations with Nicaragua” (pp. 166, 169)

In Guatemala,

By the time an international commission negotiated a peace agreement in 1996 between warring factions, a minimum of 200,000 Guatemalans had died in political violence. Most victims were indigenous people, descendants of the ancient Maya... to characterize what happened in Guatemala as civil war can be misleading. ... The Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification (1999), an international “truth commission,” determined that government forces and their allied death squads were responsible for 93 percent of the deaths in Guatemala’s “civil war.” The commission held the armed left responsible for 3 percent of the casualties. ... Henry Kissinger did not create the U.S. alliance with Guatemala’s murderous criminals and racists, but he deepened and strengthened those ties (p. 156).

Argentina offers the most comprehensive rebuttal of the Rockefeller-Kissinger thesis of the role of the military, one that is also rooted in nearly two and a half centuries of U.S. experience in [civilian control of the military dating to George Washington](#), and [the unquestioned primacy of civilian law enforcement](#) over the military in terms of internal security. The 1976 coup was followed by the military crushing organized labor and carrying out a cultural war against intellectuals. The media was effectively silenced, while proto-Putin military organs vastly overstated the threat from leftwing guerrillas while doing nothing to shed light on neo-Nazi links to the armed forces and their intelligence apparatus.

In selecting Martinez de Hoz as Argentina’s economy czar, the generals were indeed picking an oligarch, one about whom much was already known. The Eton-educated scion of one of Argentina’s most prominent families, he was also a large landowner and a member of the board of Pan American Airways and IIT. As I explained in *Dossier Secreto*, in 1975, as the head of an Argentine subsidiary of U.S. Steel, his subordinates paid hundreds of paramilitary goons to kidnap 200 union activists, many of whom were tortured in the company’s basement; [nearly 70 remain disappeared](#). One of those who worked in the torture chamber, one of the first clandestine detention centers in the country, went on to become [one of the most important neo-Nazi paramilitary](#) figures employed by the generals when they took power. His name was [Anibal Gordon](#), and he went on to participate in the extortive kidnapping of businessmen as the “dirty war” came to a close.

When Kissinger traveled to Argentina for the 1978 World Cup, he was photographed in a ranch in Tandil standing next to Martinez de Hoz. As I wrote in *The*

Nation in 1987, when I blew the whistle on Kissinger's green light for the far-right generals,

long after the Argentine military's policy of creating massive disappearances had been conclusively demonstrated, making the country an international pariah, Kissinger was the guest of ... Videla during the World Cup ... The generals used the visit to show they enjoyed the sympathy of the onetime superstar of U.S. diplomacy. At the end of the tournament Kissinger held a news conference in which he criticized the Carter Administration for not understanding that human rights were a necessary casualty in the battle against terrorism. He also spent much time in public in the company of the regime's Minister of Economy—and David Rockefeller's friend—Jose Martinez de Hoz. Known as “the Wizard of Hoz,” his policies were the ideological framework for the murder of hundreds of labor activists unconnected to the guerrillas.

And as Federico [Finchelstein later noted](#): “Ford and Citibank ... collaborated with the disappearance of workers who had been involved in the demands of left-wing trade unions. Guillermo Walter Klein, the right hand of ... Martinez de Hoz ... would put things in their proper place. He stated quite explicitly that the dictatorship's economic policy was ‘incompatible with any democratic system and only applicable if backed by a de facto government.’ Large corporations and international credit institutions supported the dictatorship and its economic plan, as did ‘developed’ countries.”

As chairman of Chase Manhattan bank, David Rockefeller did indeed visit Argentina, where he stressed that U.S. human rights policy should not be allowed to interfere with relations between Washington and Buenos Aires. He praised what he maintained was the strength of Argentina's economy, then in the throes of crisis, [calling the Martinez de Hoz's strategy](#) that was plunging the country into massive foreign debt “brilliant, solid and absolutely realistic.” Rockefeller and other international bankers had lent money to the regime several points above the prime interest rate, the loans helping to finance the nearly \$1 billion security apparatus, including the clandestine repression, and undermining U.S. human rights policies.

Ironically, in offering praise for Kissinger's role in the run-up to the Panama Canal treaty, Rade apparently forgot to mention how the former Secretary of State and David Rockefeller helped create an international incident that directly precipitated the [Iran hostage crisis](#). Through contacts at the State Department Kissinger, Rockefeller and the banker's aides persuaded President Carter to admit the already-overthrown Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, [a brutal ruler whose secret police](#) used as state policy torture and executions in order to stifle political dissent, into the United States for hospital treatment for lymphoma. Earlier, the Carter State Department had

contacted Rockefeller and Kissinger to try to get them to convince Shah that he not enter the United States; both refused to help convince their friendly tyrant to go elsewhere. On May 22, 1979, Kissinger said that the U.S. owed “a debt of honor” to the Shah and should grant him political asylum.

According to a senior [White House official at the time](#),

I mentioned the political consequences: “Mr. President, if the Shah dies in Mexico, can you imagine the field day Henry Kissinger will have with that? He’ll say that you caused the Shah’s downfall and now you’ve killed him.”

The President glared at me. “To hell with Henry Kissinger,” he said, “I am the president of this country!”

After treatment, the [Shah left the United States for Panama](#) as part of a major effort to secure the release of American hostages held in Tehran. “Still numbered among his influential friends are ... Rockefeller and Kissinger,” the [Washington Post reported](#) at the time. “Both were kept informed during the quest for a new haven for the shah but, according to White House officials, neither had a part in the Panama arrangements.”

As Alfonsín took office in December of 1982, the chickens were coming to roost along the Potomac-Río de la Plata axis. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that U.S. military attaches were “running wild” in Buenos Aires, beyond the control of the civilian staff at the embassy. The new ambassador to Argentina was Frank Ortiz, who had been fired by the Carter administration as envoy in Guatemala for his coziness with the genocidal “dirty war” generals there. On the eve of Alfonsín’s inauguration the Reagan administration gave Argentina a present the new government made clear it did not want—the lifting of the U.S. arms ban initiated by Carter.

By the time Ronald Reagan, someone who had been previously sharply critical of Kissinger, appointed the former secretary of state to head what became known as the Kissinger Commission on Central America, the former Nixon aide’s legacy in the region included the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and many others maimed, made homeless, uprooted, or tortured. The commission itself went on to promote even more military aid to an unwinnable civil war in El Salvador as well as support for the Nicaraguan Contra guerrillas, whose beginnings, in which Argentina’s dirty war generals were present at the creation, were later enshrined in what became known as the Iran-Contra scandal that almost resulted in Reagan’s impeachment. The commission’s findings reflected both Kissinger’s previous role in the region as well as his peculiarly accented pomposity, “The Soviet-Cuban thrust to make Central America

part of their geostrategic challenge is what has turned the struggle in Central America into a security and political problem for the United States and for the hemisphere.”

During the presidency of George W. Bush, [Kissinger was forced to withdraw](#) as the head of the commission created to study the security failures of the September 11, 2001 attack on the United States after he refused to disclose the client list of his international consulting firm, Kissinger and Associates. The clients allegedly included several notorious human rights violators. Victims’ families were concerned about potential conflicts of interest as the Rockefellers’ most famous student and courtier attempted to do the public’s business while still raking in millions of dollars from unnamed foreign countries and corporations.

Nonetheless, in January 2008 President [Bush met with Kissinger](#), former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeniy Primakov and other top American and Russian policymakers in the Cabinet Room of the White House. The informal dialogue, chaired by Kissinger and Primakov, it was claimed, “reflects the high value the President attaches to the U.S.-Russia bilateral relationship,” and was initiated the year before with the support of Bush and Putin “to foster discussion of important issues.”

Mala yerba nunca muere. “Bad people last longer,” is another popular Latin American refrain that comes to mind when Kissinger is the subject. However, while biology can steal a march, history helps ensure a final correction. Perhaps [the most useful criticism](#) of Christopher Hitchens’ *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* was made by Reed Brody, the special counsel for prosecutions of Human Rights Watch, shortly after its publication two decades ago.

It’s difficult not to confuse political, moral and historical responsibility for great human suffering with criminal liability. But it’s one thing to say that Henry Kissinger’s policies led to hundreds of thousands of deaths. It’s another to say that, in a strict legal sense, he is criminally responsible for those deaths. Despite the title of his book, Hitchens doesn’t try to separate the politically wrong from the criminally wrong or to make the legal case against Kissinger.

Brody continued:

(T)here is a way to make a legal case. Traditional criminal law principles, as ratified by the Yugoslavia and Rwanda war crimes tribunals, hold that someone may be held liable as an accomplice if he consciously contributes to the perpetration of the crime in a material and substantial way. Under this standard, it would not be impossible to show that a U.S. (or Soviet) official whose support enabled a subservient regime to commit atrocities is an accomplice to those crimes. ...

(V)oices are increasingly heard asking why it is only the dictators of third world countries who are brought to justice and not the western leaders who put them

in to power and sustained them while they committed their atrocities. ... Hitchens's book not only asks this question, it provides the factual fodder for responding "why not?"

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Since Hitchens wrote his book, the factual fodder for bringing Dr. K to real justice has grown exponentially, as democracy allows—through FOIAs, oral histories, international commissions, and a free press—discovery layer by layer of the institutional rottenness created by men, not abstract entities (as ratified in [The Nuremberg Judgement](#)).

It was perhaps the person I worked for at the National Democratic Institute, former Vice President Walter Mondale, who said it best when it comes to Dr. K and all his works. There were two ways America's foes could defeat us, Mondale said. They could win on the battlefield, or we could become like them. It is hard to recall any military action in which the U.S. proved to be victor thanks to the Kissinger legacy. Latin America, in particular, is littered with the corpses of how the former secretary of state worked to make us indistinguishable from those we call enemies. If he escapes being called into account for war crimes, we must hope the rest of the sentence that begins with, "*No hay mal que dure cien años*", proves true. There is no evil that lasts a hundred years, it reads in full, *ni cuerpo que lo resista* (or a body that resists it).