

35 countries where the U.S. has supported fascists, drug lords and terrorists

As the situation in Ukraine continues to fester, a handy history guide -- from A (Argentina) to Z (Zaire)


By **NICOLAS J.S. DAVIES** PUBLISHED MARCH 8, 2014 3:00PM (EST)



Soldiers stand guard next to bags of marijuana being displayed to the media at a military base on the outskirts of Monterrey, Mexico. (Reuters/Tomas Bravo)

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 **AlterNet** The U.S. is backing Ukraine's extreme right-wing Svoboda party and violent neo-Nazis whose armed uprising paved the way for a Western-backed coup. Events in the Ukraine are giving us another glimpse through the looking-glass of U.S. propaganda wars

against fascism, drugs and terrorism. The ugly reality behind the mirror is that the U.S. government has a long and unbroken record of working with fascists, dictators, druglords and state sponsors of terrorism in every region of the world in its elusive but relentless quest for unchallenged global power.

Behind a firewall of impunity and protection from the State Department and the CIA, U.S. clients and puppets have engaged in the worst crimes known to man, from murder and torture to coups and genocide. The trail of blood from this carnage and chaos leads directly back to the steps of the U.S. Capitol and the White House. As historian Gabriel Kolko observed in 1988, "The notion of an honest puppet is a contradiction Washington has failed to resolve anywhere in the world since 1945." What follows is a brief A to Z guide to the history of that failure.

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1. Afghanistan

In the 1980s, the U.S. worked with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to overthrow Afghanistan's socialist government. It funded, trained and armed forces led by conservative tribal leaders whose power was threatened by their country's progress on education, women's rights and land reform. After Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew Soviet forces in 1989, these U.S.-backed warlords tore the country apart and boosted opium production to an unprecedented level of **2,000 to 3,400 tons per year**. The Taliban government cut opium production by 95% in two years between 1999 and 2001, but the U.S. invasion in 2001 restored the warlords and drug lords to power. Afghanistan now ranks **175th out of 177** countries in the world for

corruption, **175th out of 186** in human development, and since 2004, it has produced an unprecedented 5,300 tons of opium per year. President Karzai's brother, Ahmed Wali Karzai, was well known as **a CIA-backed drug lord**. After a major U.S. offensive in Kandahar province in 2011, Colonel Abdul Razziq was appointed provincial police chief, boosting a **heroin smuggling operation** that already earned him \$60 million per year in **one of the poorest** countries in the world.

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2. Albania

Between 1949 and 1953, the U.S. and U.K. set out to overthrow the government of Albania, the smallest and most vulnerable communist country in Eastern Europe. Exiles were recruited and trained to return to Albania to stir up dissent and plan an armed uprising. Many of the exiles involved in the plan were former collaborators with the Italian and German occupation during World War II. They included **former Interior Minister Xhafer Deva**, who oversaw the deportations of "Jews, Communists, partisans and suspicious persons" (as described in a Nazi document) to Auschwitz. Declassified U.S. documents have since revealed that Deva was one of **743 fascist war criminals** recruited by the U.S. after the war.

3. Argentina

U.S. documents declassified in 2003 detail conversations between U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Argentinian Foreign Minister Admiral Guzzetti in October 1976, soon

after the military junta seized power in Argentina. Kissinger explicitly approved the junta's "dirty war," in which it eventually killed up to 30,000, most of them young people, and stole 400 children from the families of their murdered parents. Kissinger told Guzzetti, "Look, our basic attitude is that we would like you to succeed... the quicker you succeed the better." The U.S. Ambassador in Buenos Aires reported that Guzzetti "returned in a state of jubilation, convinced that there is no real problem with the US government over that issue." ("Daniel Gandolfo," "Presente!")

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4. Brazil

In 1964, General Castelo Branco led a coup that sparked 20 years of brutal military dictatorship. U.S. military attache Vernon Walters, later Deputy CIA Director and UN Ambassador, knew Castelo Branco well from World War II in Italy. As a clandestine CIA officer, Walters' records from Brazil have never been declassified, but the CIA provided all the support needed to ensure the success of the coup, including funding for opposition labor and student groups in street protests, as in Ukraine and Venezuela today. A U.S. Marine amphibious force on standby to land in Sao Paulo was not needed. Like other victims of U.S.-backed coups in Latin America, the elected President Joao Goulart was a wealthy landowner, not a communist, but his efforts to remain neutral in the Cold War were as unacceptable to Washington as President Yanukovich's refusal to hand the Ukraine over to the west 50 years later.

5. Cambodia

When President Nixon ordered **the secret and illegal bombing of Cambodia** in 1969, American pilots were ordered to falsify their logs to conceal their crimes. They killed at least half a million Cambodians, dropping more bombs than on Germany and Japan combined in World War II. As the Khmer Rouge gained strength in 1973, the CIA reported that its "propaganda has been most effective among refugees subjected to B-52 strikes." After the Khmer Rouge killed at least 2 million of its own people and was finally driven out by the Vietnamese army in 1979, the **U.S. Kampuchea Emergency Group**, based in the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok, set out to feed and supply them as the "resistance" to the new Vietnamese-backed Cambodian government. Under U.S. pressure, the World Food Program provided \$12 million to feed 20,000 to 40,000 Khmer Rouge soldiers. For at least another decade, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency provided the Khmer Rouge with satellite intelligence, while U.S. and British special forces trained them to lay millions of land mines across Western Cambodia which still kill or maim hundreds of people every year.

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6. Chile

When Salvador Allende became President in 1970, President Nixon promised to **"make the economy scream"** in Chile. The U.S., Chile's largest trading partner, cut off trade to cause shortages and economic chaos. The CIA and State Department had conducted sophisticated propaganda operations in Chile for a decade, funding conservative politicians, parties, unions, student groups and all forms of media, while expanding ties with the military. After General Pinochet seized power, the CIA kept Chilean officials on its

payroll and worked closely with Chile's DINA intelligence agency as the military government killed thousands of people and jailed and tortured tens of thousands more. Meanwhile, the "**Chicago Boys**," over 100 Chilean students sent by a State Department program to study under Milton Friedman at the University of Chicago, launched a radical program of privatization, deregulation and neoliberal policies that kept the economy screaming for most Chileans throughout Pinochet's 16-year military dictatorship.

7. China

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By the end of 1945, **100,000 U.S. troops** were fighting alongside Chinese Kuomintang (and Japanese) forces in Communist-held areas of northern China. Chiang Kai-Shek and the Kuomintang may have been the most corrupt of all U.S. allies. A steady stream of U.S. advisers in China warned that U.S. aid was being stolen by Chiang and his cronies, some of it even sold to the Japanese, but the U.S. commitment to Chiang continued throughout the war, his defeat by the Communists and his rule of Taiwan. Secretary of State Dulles' brinksmanship on behalf of Chiang twice led the U.S. to the brink of **nuclear war with China** on his behalf in 1955 and 1958 over Matsu and Quemoy, two small islands off the coast of China.

8. Colombia

When U.S. special forces and the Drug Enforcement Administration aided Colombian forces to track down and kill drug lord Pablo Escobar, they worked with **a vigilante group**

called **Los Pepes**. In 1997, Diego Murillo-Bejarano and other Los Pepes' leaders co-founded the **AUC (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)** which was responsible for 75% of violent civilian deaths in Colombia over the next 10 years.

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9. Cuba

The United States supported the Batista dictatorship as it created the repressive conditions that led to the Cuban Revolution, **killing up to 20,000 of its own people**. Former U.S. Ambassador Earl Smith **testified to Congress** that, "the U.S. was so overwhelmingly influential in Cuba that the American Ambassador was the second most important man, sometimes even more important than the Cuban president." After the revolution, the CIA launched a **long campaign of terrorism against Cuba**, training Cuban exiles in Florida, Central America and the Dominican Republic to commit assassinations and sabotage in Cuba. CIA-backed operations against Cuba included the attempted invasion at the Bay of Pigs, in which 100 Cuban exiles and four Americans were killed; several attempted assassinations of Fidel Castro and successful assassinations of other officials; several bombing raids in 1960 (three Americans killed and two captured) and terrorist bombings targeting tourists as recently as 1997; the apparent bombing of a French ship in Havana harbor (at least 75 killed); a biological swine flu attack that killed half a million pigs; and the **terrorist bombing of a Cuban airliner** (78 killed) planned by Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, who remain free in America despite the U.S. pretense of waging a war against terrorism. Bosch was granted a presidential pardon by the first President Bush.

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10. El Salvador

The civil war that swept El Salvador in the 1980s was a popular uprising against a government that ruled with the utmost brutality. At least 70,000 people were killed and thousands more were disappeared. The UN Truth Commission set up after the war found that 95% of the dead were killed by government forces and death squads, and only 5% by FMLN guerrillas. The government forces responsible for this one-sided slaughter were almost entirely established, trained, armed and supervised by the CIA, U.S. special forces and the U.S. School of the Americas. The UN Truth Commission found that the units guilty of the worst atrocities, like the Atlacatl Battalion which conducted the infamous El Mozote massacre, were precisely the ones most closely supervised by American advisers. The American role in this campaign of state terrorism is now hailed by senior U.S. military officers as a model for "counter-insurgency" in Colombia and elsewhere as the U.S. war on terror spreads its violence and chaos across the world.

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11. France

In France, Italy, Greece, Indochina, Indonesia, Korea and the Philippines at the end of World War II, advancing allied forces found that communist resistance forces had gained effective control of large areas or even entire countries as German and Japanese forces withdrew or surrendered. In Marseille, the CGT communist trade union controlled the docks that were critical to trade with the U.S. and the Marshall plan. The OSS had worked with the U.S.-Sicilian mafia and Corsican gangsters during the war. So after the OSS merged into the new CIA after the war, it used its contacts to restore Corsican gangsters to power in Marseille, to break dock strikes and CGT control of the docks. **It protected the Corsicans as they set up heroin labs** and began shipping heroin to New York, where the American-Sicilian mafia also flourished under CIA protection. Ironically, supply disruptions due to the war and the Chinese Revolution had reduced the number of heroin addicts in the U.S. to 20,000 by 1945 and heroin addiction could have been virtually eliminated, but the CIA's infamous **French Connection** instead brought a new wave of heroin addiction, organized crime and drug-related violence to New York and other American cities.

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12. Ghana

There seem to be no inspiring national leaders in Africa these days. But that may be America's fault. In the 1950s and 1960s, there was a rising star in Ghana: **Kwame Nkrumah**. He was Prime Minister under British rule from 1952 to 1960, when Ghana became independent and he became president. He was a socialist, a pan-African and an anti-imperialist, and, in 1965, he wrote a book called *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Nkrumah was overthrown in a CIA coup in 1966. The CIA denied involvement at the time, but the British press later reported that 40 CIA officers operated out of the U.S. Embassy "distributing largesse among President Nkrumah's secret adversaries," and that their work "was fully rewarded." Former CIA officer John Stockwell revealed more about the CIA's decisive role in the coup in his book **In Search of Enemies**.

13. Greece

When British forces landed in Greece in October 1944, they found the country under the effective control of ELAS-EAM, the leftist partisan group formed by the Greek Communist Party in 1941 after the Italian and German invasion. ELAS-EAM welcomed the British forces, but the British refused any accommodation with them and installed a government that included royalists and Nazi collaborators. When ELAS-EAM held a huge demonstration in Athens, **police opened fire and killed 28 people**. The British recruited members of the Nazi-trained Security Battalions to hunt down and arrest ELAS members, who once again took up arms as a resistance movement. In 1947, with a civil war raging, the bankrupt British asked the U.S. to take over their role in occupied Greece. The U.S. role in supporting an incompetent fascist government in Greece was enshrined in the **"Truman Doctrine,"** seen by many historians as the beginning of the Cold War. ELAS-EAM fighters laid down their arms in 1949 after Yugoslavia withdrew its support, and **100,000 were either executed, exiled or jailed**. The liberal Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou was overthrown in a CIA-backed coup in 1967, leading to seven more years of military rule. His son Andreas was elected as Greece's first "socialist" president in 1981, but many ELAS-EAM members jailed in the 1940s were never freed and died in prison.

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14. Guatemala

After its first operation to overthrow a foreign government in Iran in 1953, the CIA launched a more elaborate operation to remove the elected liberal government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala in 1954. The CIA recruited and trained a small army of mercenaries under Guatemalan exile Castillo Armas to invade Guatemala, with 30 unmarked U.S. planes providing air support. U.S. Ambassador Peurifoy prepared a list of Guatemalans to be executed, and Armas was installed as president. The reign of terror that followed led to 40 years of civil war, in which at least 200,000 were killed, most of them indigenous people. The climax of the war was the campaign of genocide in Ixil by President Rios Montt, for which he was sentenced to life in prison in 2013, until Guatemala's Supreme Court rescued him on a technicality. A new trial is scheduled for 2015. Declassified CIA documents reveal that the Reagan administration was well aware of the indiscriminate and genocidal nature of Guatemalan military operations when it approved new military aid in 1981, including military vehicles, spare parts for helicopters and U.S. military advisers. The CIA documents detail the massacre and destruction of entire villages, and conclude, "The well documented belief by the army that the entire Ixil Indian population is pro-EGP (Guerrilla Army of the Poor) has created a situation in which the army can be expected to give no quarter to combatants and non-combatants alike."

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15. Haiti

Almost 200 years after the slave rebellion that created the nation of Haiti and defeated Napoleon's armies, the long-suffering people of Haiti finally elected a truly democratic government led by Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991. But President Aristide was overthrown in a U.S.-backed military coup after eight months in office, and the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) recruited **a paramilitary force called FRAPH** to target and destroy Aristide's Lavalas movement in Haiti. The CIA put FRAPH's leader Emmanuel "Toto" Constant on its payroll and shipped in weapons from Florida. When President Clinton sent a U.S. occupation force to restore Aristide to office in 1994, FRAPH members detained by U.S. forces were freed on orders from Washington, and the **CIA maintained FRAPH as a criminal gang to undermine Aristide and Lavalas**. After Aristide was elected president a second time in 2000, a force of **200 U.S. special forces trained 600 former FRAPH members and others** in the Dominican Republic to prepare for a second coup. In 2004, they launched a campaign of violence to destabilize Haiti, which provided the pretext for U.S. forces to land in Haiti and remove Aristide from office.

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16. Honduras

The 2009 coup in Honduras has led to severe repression and **death squad murders of political opponents, union organizers and journalists**. At the time of the coup, U.S. officials denied any role in the coup and used semantics to avoid cutting off U.S. military aid as required under U.S. law. But two Wikileaks cables revealed that **the U.S. Embassy was the main power broker** in managing the aftermath of the coup and forming a government that is now repressing and murdering its people.

17. Indonesia

In 1965, General Suharto seized effective power from President Sukarno on the pretext of combatting a failed coup and unleashed **an orgy of mass murder** that killed at least half a million people. U.S. diplomats later admitted providing lists of 5,000 Communist Party members to be killed. **Political officer Robert Martens said**, "It really was a big help to the army. They probably killed a lot of people, and I probably have a lot of blood on my hands, but that's not all bad. There's a time when you have to strike hard at a decisive moment."

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18. Iran

Iran may be the most instructive case of a CIA coup that caused endless long-term problems for the United States. In 1953, the CIA and the U.K.'s MI6 **overthrew the popular, elected government of Mohammed Mossadegh**. Iran had nationalized its oil industry by a unanimous vote of parliament, ending a BP monopoly that only paid Iran a 16% royalty on its oil. For two years, Iran resisted a British naval blockade and international economic

sanctions. After President Eisenhower took office in 1953, the CIA agreed to a British request to intervene. After the initial coup failed and the Shah and his family fled to Italy, the CIA payed millions of dollars to bribe military officers and pay gangsters to unleash violence in the streets of Tehran. Mossadegh was finally removed and the Shah returned to rule as a brutal Western puppet until the Iranian Revolution in 1979.

19. Israel

Just as the U.S. uses its economic and military power, its sophisticated propaganda system and its position as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council to violate international law with impunity, it also uses the same tools to shield its ally Israel from accountability for international crimes. Since 1966, the U.S. has **used its Security Council veto 83 times**, more than the other four Permanent Members combined, and 42 of those vetoes have been on resolutions related to Israel and/or Palestine. Just last week, **Amnesty International published a report** that, "Israeli forces have displayed a callous disregard for human life by killing dozens of Palestinian civilians, including children, in the occupied West Bank over the past three years with near total impunity." Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories **condemned the 2008 assault on Gaza** as a "massive violation of international law," adding that nations like the U.S. "that have supplied weapons and supported the siege are complicit in the crimes." **The Leahy Law** requires the U.S. to cut off military aid to forces that violate human rights, but it has never been enforced against Israel. Israel continues to build settlements in occupied territory in violation of the **4th Geneva Convention**, making it harder to comply with **Security Council resolutions** that require it to withdraw from occupied territory. But Israel remains beyond the rule of law, shielded from accountability by its powerful patron, the United States.

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20. Iraq

In 1958, after the British-backed monarchy was overthrown by General Abdul Qasim, **the CIA hired a 22-year-old Iraqi named Saddam Hussein** to assassinate the new president. Hussein and his gang botched the job and he fled to Lebanon, wounded in the leg by one of his companions. The CIA rented him an apartment in Beirut and then moved him to Cairo, where he was paid as an agent of Egyptian intelligence and was a frequent visitor at the U.S. Embassy. Qasim was killed in a CIA-backed Baathist coup in 1963, and as in Guatemala and Indonesia, the CIA gave the new government a list of at least 4,000 communists to be killed. But, once in power, the Baathist revolutionary government was no Western puppet, and it nationalized Iraq's oil industry, adopted an Arab nationalist foreign policy and built the best education and health systems in the Arab world. In 1979, Saddam Hussein became president, conducted purges of political opponents and launched a disastrous war against Iran. The U.S. DIA provided satellite intelligence to target chemical weapons that the West helped him to produce, and Donald Rumsfeld and other U.S. officials welcomed him as an ally against Iran. Only after Iraq invaded Kuwait and Hussein became more useful as an enemy did U.S. propaganda brand him as **"a new Hitler."** After the U.S. invaded Iraq on false pretenses in 2003, **the CIA recruited 27 brigades of "Special Police,"** merging the most brutal of Saddam Hussein's security forces with the Iranian-trained Badr militia to form death squads that murdered tens of thousands of mostly Sunni Arab men and boys in Baghdad and elsewhere in a reign of terror that **continues to this day.**

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21. Korea

When U.S. forces arrived in Korea in 1945, they were greeted by officials of the Korean People's Republic (KPR), formed by resistance groups which had disarmed surrendering Japanese forces and begun to establish law and order throughout Korea. General Hodge had them thrown out of his office and placed the southern half of Korea under U.S. military occupation. By contrast, Russian forces in the North recognized the KPR, leading to the long-term division of Korea. The U.S. flew in Syngman Rhee, a conservative Korean exile, and installed him as President of South Korea in 1948. Rhee became a dictator on an anti-communist crusade, arresting and torturing suspected communists, brutally putting down rebellions, killing 100,000 people and vowing to take over North Korea. He was at least partly responsible for the outbreak of the Korean War and for the allied decision to invade North Korea once South Korea had been recaptured. He was finally forced to resign by mass student protests in 1960.

22. Laos

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The CIA began providing air support to French forces in Laos in 1950, and remained involved there for 25 years. The CIA engineered at least three coups between 1958 and 1960 to keep the growing leftist Pathet Lao out of government. It worked with right-wing

Laotian drug lords like General Phoumi Nosavan, transporting opium between Burma, Laos and Vietnam and protecting his monopoly on the opium trade in Laos. In 1962, the CIA recruited a clandestine mercenary army of 30,000 veterans of previous guerrilla wars from Thailand, Korea, Vietnam and the Philippines to fight the Pathet Lao. As large numbers of American GIs in Vietnam got hooked on heroin, the CIA's Air America transported opium from Hmong territory in the Plain of Jars to General Vang Pao's heroin labs in Long Tieng and Vientiane for shipment to Vietnam. When the CIA failed to defeat the Pathet Lao, the U.S. bombed Laos almost as heavily as Cambodia, with 2 million tons of bombs.

23. Libya

NATO's war on Libya epitomized President Obama's "**disguised, quiet, media-free**" approach to war. NATO's bombing campaign was fraudulently justified to the UN Security Council as an effort to protect civilians, and the instrumental role of Western and other foreign special forces on the ground was well-disguised, even when **Qatari special forces** (including **ex-ISI Pakistani mercenaries**) led the final assault on the Bab Al-Aziziya HQ in Tripoli. NATO conducted **7,700 air strikes**, **30,000 -100,000 people were killed**, loyalist towns were bombed to rubble and ethnically cleansed, and **the country is in chaos** as Western-trained and -armed Islamist militias seize territory and oil facilities and vie for power. The Misrata militia, trained and armed by Western special forces, is one of the most violent and powerful. As I write this, protesters have just stormed the Congress building in Tripoli for the fourth or fifth time in recent months, and two elected Representatives have been shot and wounded as they fled.

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24. Mexico

The death toll in **Mexico's drug wars** recently passed 100,000. The most violent of the drug cartels is **Los Zetas**. **U.S. officials call the Zetas** "the most technologically advanced, sophisticated and dangerous drug cartel operating in Mexico." The Zetas cartel was formed by Mexican security forces **trained by U.S. special forces** at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia, and at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

25. Myanmar


After the Chinese Revolution, Kuomintang generals moved into northern Burma and became powerful drug lords, with Thai military protection, financing from Taiwan and air transport and logistical support from the CIA. Burma's opium production grew from 18 tons in 1958 to 600 tons in 1970. The CIA maintained these forces as a bulwark against communist China but they transformed the **"golden triangle"** into the world's largest opium producer. Most of the opium was shipped by mule trains into Thailand where other CIA allies shipped it to heroin labs in Hong Kong and Malaysia. The trade shifted around 1970 as CIA partner General Vang Pao set up new labs in Laos to provide heroin to GIs in Vietnam.

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26. Nicaragua

Anastasio Somoza ruled Nicaragua as his personal fiefdom for 43 years with unconditional U.S. support, as his National Guard committed every crime imaginable from massacres and torture to extortion and rape with complete impunity. After he was finally overthrown by the **Sandinista Revolution** in 1979, the CIA recruited, trained and supported "**contra**" **mercenaries** to invade Nicaragua and conduct terrorism to destabilize the country. In 1986, the International Court of Justice found the United States **guilty of aggression against Nicaragua** for deploying the *contras* and mining Nicaraguan ports. The court ordered the U.S. to cease its aggression and pay war reparations to Nicaragua, but they have never been paid. The U.S. response was to declare that it would no longer recognize the binding jurisdiction of the ICJ, effectively setting itself beyond the rule of international law.

27. Pakistan; 28. Saudi Arabia; 29. Turkey

After reading my last **AlterNet piece** on the failed war on terror, former CIA and State Department terrorism expert Larry Johnson told me, "The main problem with respect to assessing the terrorist threat is to accurately define the state sponsorship. The biggest culprits today, in contrast to 20 years ago, are Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Iran, despite the right-wing/neocon ravings, is not that active in encouraging and/or facilitating terrorism." In the past 12 years, **U.S. military aid to Pakistan** has totaled \$18.6 billion. The U.S. has just negotiated **the largest arms deal in history** with Saudi Arabia. And Turkey is a long-standing member of NATO. All three major state sponsors of terrorism in the world today are U.S. allies.

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30. Panama

U.S. drug enforcement officials wanted to arrest **Manuel Noriega** in 1971, when he was the chief of military intelligence in Panama. They had enough evidence to convict him of drug trafficking, but he was also a long-time agent and informer for the CIA, so like other drug-dealing CIA agents from Marseille to Macao, he was untouchable. He was temporarily cut loose during the Carter administration but otherwise kept collecting at least \$100,000 per year from the U.S. Treasury. As he rose to be the de facto ruler of Panama, he became even more valuable to the CIA, reporting on meetings with Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and supporting U.S. covert wars in Central America. Noriega probably quit drug trafficking in about 1985, well before the U.S. indicted him for it in 1988. The indictment was a pretext for the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989, whose main purpose was to give the U.S. greater control over Panama, at the expense of **at least 2,000 lives**.

31. The Philippines

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Since the U.S. launched its so-called war on terror in 2001, a task force of 500 US JSOC forces has conducted covert operations in the southern Philippines. Now, under Obama's "pivot to Asia," U.S. military aid to the Philippines is increasing, from \$12 million in 2011 to \$50 million this year. But Filipino human rights activists report that the increased aid coincides with increased military **death squad operations against civilians**. The past three years have seen at least **158 people killed by death squads**.

32. Syria

When President Obama approved **flying weapons and militiamen from Libya** to the "Free Syrian Army" base in Turkey in unmarked NATO planes in late 2011, he was calculating that the U.S. and its allies could replicate the "successful" overthrow of the Libyan government. Everyone involved understood that Syria would be a longer and bloodier conflict, but they gambled that the end result would be the same, even though **55% of Syrians** told pollsters they still supported Assad. A few months later, Western leaders undermined Kofi Annan's peace plan with their "Plan B," **"Friends of Syria."** This was not an alternative peace plan, but a commitment to escalation, offering guaranteed support, money and weapons to the jihadis in Syria to make sure they ignored the Annan peace plan and kept fighting. That move sealed the fate of millions of Syrians. Over the past two years Qatar has spent \$3 billion and flown in **planeloads of weapons**, Saudi Arabia has shipped **weapons from Croatia**, and Western and Arab royalist special forces have trained thousands of increasingly radicalized fundamentalist jihadis, now allied with al-Qaeda. The Geneva II talks were a half-hearted effort to revive the 2012 Annan peace plan, but Western insistence that a "political transition" means the immediate resignation of Assad reveals that Western leaders still value regime change more than peace. To paraphrase **Phyllis Bennis**, the U.S. and its allies are still willing to fight to the last Syrian.

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A promotional banner for Bitdefender's 20th anniversary. The banner has a blue and purple gradient background. On the left, the Bitdefender logo is displayed. In the center, there is a graphic of a person in a dynamic pose, surrounded by glowing digital lines and dots, with a large '20' integrated into the design. To the right of the graphic, the text 'YEARS OF CYBERSECURITY INNOVATION' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. On the far right, there is a white button with the text 'LEARN MORE' and a small icon of a play button and a close button.

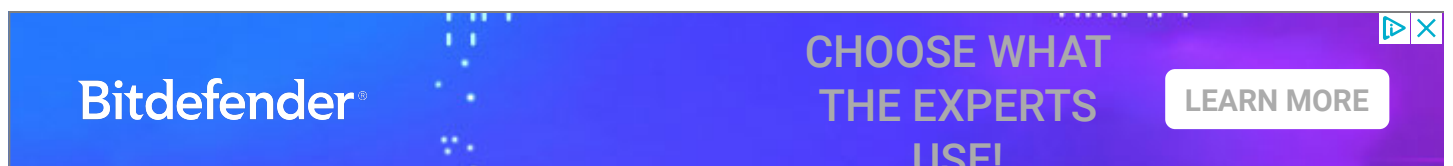
33. Uruguay

The foreign officials the U.S. has worked with include many who have benefited from their cooperation in American crimes around the world. But in Uruguay in 1970, when Police Chief Alejandro Otero objected to Americans training his officers in the art of torture, he was demoted. The U.S. official he complained to was **Dan Mitrione**, who worked for the U.S. Office of Public Safety, a division of the US Agency for International Development. Mitrione's training sessions reportedly included torturing homeless people to death with electric shocks to teach his students how far they could go.

34. Yugoslavia

The NATO aerial bombardment of Yugoslavia in 1999 was a flagrant crime of aggression in violation of **Article 2.4 of the UN Charter**. When British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told Secretary of State Albright that the U.K. was having "difficulties with its lawyers" over the planned attack, she told him the U.K. should "**get new lawyers**," according to her deputy James Rubin. NATO's proxy ground force in its aggression against Yugoslavia was the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), led by **Hashim Thaci**. **A 2010 report by the Council of Europe** and a book by **Carla Del Ponte**, the former prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, support long-standing allegations that at the time of the NATO invasion, Thaci ran a criminal organization called the Drenica group which sent more than 400 captured Serbs to Albania to be killed so that their organs could be extracted and sold for transplant. Hashim Thaci is now the Prime Minister of the NATO protectorate of Kosovo.

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35. Zaire

Patrice Lumumba, the president of the pan-Africanist Mouvement National Congolais, took part in the Congo's struggle for independence and became the Congo's first elected Prime Minister in 1960. He was deposed in a CIA-backed coup led by **Joseph-Desire Mobutu**, his Army Chief of Staff. Mobutu handed Lumumba over to the Belgian-backed separatists and Belgian mercenaries he had been fighting in Katanga province, and he was shot by a firing squad led by a Belgian mercenary. Mobutu abolished elections and appointed himself president in 1965, and ruled as a dictator for 30 years. He killed political opponents in public hangings, had others tortured to death, and eventually embezzled at least \$5 billion while Zaire, as he renamed it, remained one of the poorest countries in the world. But U.S. support for Mobutu continued. Even as President Carter publicly distanced himself, Zaire continued to receive 50% of all U.S. military aid to sub-Saharan Africa. When Congress voted to cut off military aid, Carter and U.S. business interests worked to restore it. Only in the 1990s did U.S. support start to waver, until Mobutu was deposed by Laurent Kabila in 1997 and died soon afterward.

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Major Joe Blair was the director of instruction at the [U.S. School of the Americas \(SOA\)](#) from 1986 to 1989. He described the training he oversaw at SOA as the following: "The doctrine that was taught was that if you want information you use physical abuse, false imprisonment, threats to family members, and killing. If you can't get the information you want, if you can't get that person to shut up or stop what they're doing, you assassinate them—and you assassinate them with one of your death squads."

The stock response of U.S. officials to the exposure of the systematic crimes I've described is that such things may have occurred at certain times in the past but that they in no way reflect long-term or ongoing U.S. policy. The School of the Americas was moved from the Panama Canal Zone to Fort Benning, Georgia, and replaced by the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) in 2001. But Joe Blair has something to say about that too. Testifying at [a trial of SOA Watch protesters in 2002](#), he said, "There are no substantive changes besides the name. They teach the identical courses that I taught, and changed the course names and use the same manuals."

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A huge amount of human suffering could be alleviated and global problems solved if the United States would make a genuine commitment to human rights and the rule of law, as opposed to one it only applies cynically and opportunistically to its enemies, but never to itself or its allies.

NICOLAS J.S. DAVIES