

For What It Is Worth, Is the US an Empire?

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I've been engaged in a long-standing political debate with my brother. The exact details change as time progresses, but the essence of his argument appears to be, that because I'm not a Republican, I am therefore a Liberal, and thus not in full possession of my faculties.

Case in point, "is the US an Empire?"

My brother sent me an essay from William A. Whittle's web site¹ called "*End U.S. Imperialism Now!*" where Mr. Whittle presents the argument shown below.

It is a staple of the left to accuse the US of "Imperialism". That so many people can level such a charge with a straight face is a testament to the efficacy of forty years of standards-free education reform here and around the world.

An "Empire" is defined as a nation state that has political control over other nation states, and uses that political control to extract the wealth and resources from the subjugated country.

The United States of America does not have any political control over any other sovereign nation on the face of the Earth. We have influence, but influence is to control as a rich uncle is to a prison warden. That's all you need to know. The entire idea of American Empire and U.S. Imperialism is dead on its face after that. No control means no empire. Period.

I have not met Mr. Whittle, don't know him and have nothing against him, but he presents a couple of interesting theses, namely:

- The US is not now and by implication has never been an empire.
- Anyone who challenges the above assertion is deluded by the "standards-free" education of the last forty years.

Let's take the last thesis first. Is there any evidence that the US was an empire prior to 1960?

Do you know of Mark Twain? Do you remember the books *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*² and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*³? Author Mark Twain was the Vice President of the Anti-Imperialist League⁴ from 1901 until his death in 1910. Other members of the League included Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (brigadier general, retired), Jane Addams (first woman Nobel Prize Winner), Ambrose Pierce (journalist), Andrew Carnegie (industrialist), Grover Cleveland (24th US President), John Dewey (philosopher), Samuel Gompers (founder of AFL), William James (psychologist) among others.

Surely you've heard of William Jennings Bryan, the special prosecutor of the "Scopes Monkey Trial" (1925) fame? He ran for US President in 1896, 1900, and 1908 and was a renowned anti-imperialist.

Why would these authors, politicians, philosophers, industrialists, retired generals, former presidents, educators, attorneys, protest against something that Mr. Whittle claims never existed? Were they delusional? Why an Anti-Imperialist League if no empire? These people were serious, passionate⁵, and against US Imperialism... in 1901. Were they mysteriously time-warped and required to learn from the "standards-free education" of the last forty years?

I don't think so, do you?

¹ <http://www.ejectejecteject.com/>

² <http://www.amazon.com/Adventures-Huckleberry-Finn-Mark-Twain/dp/1580495834>

³ <http://www.amazon.com/Adventures-Tom-Sawyer-Unabridged-Classics/dp/1402714602>

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Anti-Imperialist_League

⁵ http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_4.3/twain.htm

Could it be that Mr. Whittle is “historically challenged⁶” in his assertion?

So what is an empire?

A dictionary definition⁷ of empire is “A political unit, often comprising a number of territories or nations, ruled by a single supreme authority.” David Koeller⁸, Professor of History, defines an empire⁹ as “A government ruling over a number of different peoples or ethnic groups.” Or “A government that has expanded its territory through the use of force.”

Mr. Whittle, on the other hand, defines an empire as “as a nation state that has political control over other nation states” and reinforces that claim by stating “[t]he United States of America does not have any political control over any other sovereign nation on the face of the Earth.”

Thus, if we accept Mr. Whittle’s definition, and if it can be demonstrated that the US currently has or has had political control over any other sovereign nation, his argument fails.

So what is political control?

Political control is demonstrated if country A:

- Determines the type of government country B is permitted (or the type it is not permitted); or
- Determines who can (or cannot be) the leader of country B; or
- Determines the forms of alliances country B may (or may not) form with other countries; or
- Can and will intercede militarily if country B makes decisions of which A disapproves; or
- Exercises total governmental and/or military control over a significant fraction of country B.

In other words, political control is demonstrated if A controls the political organization or actions of B. Other actions may also indicate political control¹⁰.

Given the above definition of Political Control, has the US engaged in any of those actions?

Let’s look back in history...

⁶ “Historically Challenged” is a tongue-in-cheek politically-correct term for “wrong;” definitely ignorant of the historical facts, but still wrong.

⁷ The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition, 1982.

⁸ <http://www.thenagain.info/CV.asp>

⁹ <http://www.thenagain.info/Webchron/Glossary/Glossary.html>

¹⁰ In Venezuela-British Guiana Boundary Arbitration, **The Printed Argument On Behalf Of The United States Of Venezuela Before The Tribunal Of Arbitration** (1898), Venezuela argues that “It is not sufficient that it [political control] should merely be the control of subjects as subjects who happen to be in the territory. It must be territorial control; or, in other words, a control of all persons within the territory.” In other words, if A controls subjects of A who happen to be in B, that is not political control. On the other hand if A controls everyone in B, subjects and non-subjects alike, that is ipso facto, territorial control and thus political control.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=ZB9eGZ4u1gYC&pg=PA472&lpg=PA472&dq=define+%22political+control%22&source=web&ots=ionkqvTu1S&sig=ReFKMWY5omJDmRL80-dWir-RDcE#PPA37-IA4,M1>

1898.

US declared war on Spain¹¹. Final result of the war, transfer of the following territories from Spain to the US¹²:

- Puerto Rico
- Philippines
- Guam

The US exerted political control over Cuba. While nominally independent, the US imposed various restrictions via the Platt Amendment on the Cuban government. Those restrictions included among other things, the prohibition of alliances with other countries. Furthermore, the US reserved for itself the right of intervention. The Platt Amendment¹³ also forced Cuba to cede to the US Guantanamo Bay. Granted, before the war, Cuba was not a sovereign country, it was a Spanish colony. After the war, Cuba's foreign policy was determined by the US until 1934.

Senator George Frisbie Hoar¹⁴, an outspoken critic of the treaty, during the senate debate of the Treaty of Paris said:

This Treaty will make us a vulgar, commonplace empire, controlling subject races and vassal states, in which one class must forever rule and other classes must forever obey.¹⁵

Those are the facts.

Did the US determine the alliances Cuba could form with other countries?

Did the US reserve for itself the right to militarily intervene in Cuba's affairs?

Did the US force Cuba to cede in perpetuity Guantanamo Bay?

Why would a prominent and well respected US Republican Senator decry the existence of something Mr. Whittle says does not exist?

Was Senator Hoar also delusional?

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American_War and <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/>

¹² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puerto_rico and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_%281898%29

¹³ <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=55> and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Platt_Amendment

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Frisbie_Hoar Hoar was long noted as a fighter against political corruption, and campaigned for the rights of African Americans and Native Americans. He argued in the Senate in favor of Women's suffrage as early as 1886 and opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882. As a member of the Congressional Electoral Commission, he was involved with settling the highly disputed U.S. presidential election, 1876. He authored the Presidential Succession Act of 1886, and in 1888 he was chairman of the 1888 Republican National Convention.

With the Spanish-American War, Hoar became one of the Senate's most outspoken opponents of the imperialism of the William McKinley administration. He denounced the Philippine-American War, calling for allowing independence of the Philippines. He also denounced the U.S. intervention in Panama.

¹⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_\(1898\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Paris_(1898))

1899-1913.

Philippine-American War.

The Philippines declared Independence on 12 June 1898, at Kawit, Cavite. Aguinaldo¹⁶ pre-empted American designs on the Philippines, by declaring Philippine independence from Spain and raising the Philippine flag¹⁷. With the decree of 23 June 1898, he organized his revolutionary government, while pressing on the Spaniards in Manila to surrender to the Filipino revolutionaries. He sent men to organize resistance throughout Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

The Philippines convened a revolutionary constitutional congress on 15 September 1898. On 23 January 1899 they inaugurated the First Philippine Republic.

And on 4 February 1899, Filipinos and Americans faced each other in battle.¹⁸

William Jennings Bryan, Mark Twain, Andrew Carnegie, Ernest Crosby, and other members of the American Anti-Imperialist League, strongly objected to the annexation of the Philippines. Anti-imperialist movements claimed that the United States had betrayed its lofty goals of the Spanish–American War by becoming a colonial power, merely replacing Spain in the Philippines. Other anti-imperialists opposed annexation on racist grounds. Among these was Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina, who feared that annexation of the Philippines would lead to an influx of non-white immigrants, thus undermining white racial purity in America. As news of atrocities committed in subduing the Philippines arrived in the United States, support for the war flagged.¹⁹

After the Americans took the Philippines, mutual distrust among the Filipinos and Americans prompted the Philippine Commission to enact the Flag Law of 1907 that forbade the Filipinos to use or display the Philippine flag anywhere, even inside Filipino homes. The Filipinos responded with bitter protests as they saw the Flag Law as a violation of the fundamental principle of free expression.²⁰

From 1899 to 1935 (Commonwealth of the Philippines²¹), the US exerted political control.

Those are the facts.

As an aside, General Douglas MacArther stated in 1899:

When I first started in against these rebels, I believed that Aguinaldo's troops represented only a faction. I did not like to believe that the whole population of Luzon — the native population that is — was opposed to us and our offers of aid and good government. But after having come this far, after having occupied several towns and cities in succession, and having been brought much into contact with both insurrectos and amigos, I have been reluctantly compelled to believe that the Filipino masses are loyal to Aguinaldo and the government which he heads.²²

And from Mark Twain's essay, *To the Person Sitting in Darkness*²³:

We and the patriots having captured Manila, Spain's ownership of the Archipelago and her sovereignty over it were at an end – obliterated – annihilated – not a rag or shred of either remaining behind. It was then that we conceived the divinely humorous idea of buying both of these spectres from Spain! [It is quite safe to confess this to the Person Sitting in Darkness, since neither he nor any other sane person will believe it.] In buying those ghosts for twenty millions, we also contracted to take care of the friars and their

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emilio_Aguinaldo

¹⁷ http://www.nhi.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=2

¹⁸ http://www.ncca.gov.ph/about_cultarts/comarticles.php?artcl_Id=191

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine-American_War

²⁰ http://www.nhi.gov.ph/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=2

²¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emilio_Aguinaldo

²² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippine-American_War#_note-24

²³ http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_4.3/twain.htm

accumulations. I think we also agreed to propagate leprosy and smallpox, but as to this there is doubt. But it is not important; persons afflicted with the friars do not mind the other diseases.

...

Of course, we must not venture to ignore our General MacArthur's reports – oh, why do they keep on printing those embarrassing things? – we must drop them trippingly from the tongue and take the chances:

"During the last ten months our losses have been 268 killed and 750 wounded; Filipino loss, *three thousand two hundred and twenty-seven killed*, and 694 wounded."

We must stand ready to grab the Person Sitting in Darkness, for he will swoon away at this confession, saying: "Good God, those 'niggers' spare their wounded, and the Americans massacre theirs!"

We must bring him to, and coax him and coddle him, and assure him that the ways of Providence are best, and that it would not become us to find fault with them; and then, to show him that we are only imitators, not originators, we must read the following passage from the letter of an American soldier-lad in the Philippines to his mother, published in Public Opinion, of Decorah, Iowa, describing the finish of a victorious battle:

"WE NEVER LEFT ONE ALIVE. IF ONE WAS WOUNDED, WE WOULD RUN OUR BAYONETS THROUGH HIM."

Having now laid all the historical facts before the Person Sitting in Darkness, we should bring him to again, and explain them to him. We should say to him:

"They look doubtful, but in reality they are not. There have been lies; yes, but they were told in a good cause. We have been treacherous; but that was only in order that real good might come out of apparent evil. True, we have crushed a deceived and confiding people; we have turned against the weak and the friendless who trusted us; we have stamped out a just and intelligent and well-ordered republic; we have stabbed an ally in the back and slapped the face of a guest; we have bought a Shadow from an enemy that hadn't it to sell; we have robbed a trusting friend of his land and his liberty; we have invited our clean young men to shoulder a discredited musket and do bandit's work under a flag which bandits have been accustomed to fear, not to follow; we have debauched America's honor and blackened her face before the world; but each detail was for the best. We know this. The Head of every State and Sovereignty in Christendom and ninety per cent. of every legislative body in Christendom, including our Congress and our fifty State Legislatures, are members not only of the church, but also of the Blessings-of-Civilization Trust. This world-girdling accumulation of trained morals, high principles, and justice, cannot do an unright thing, an unfair thing, an ungenerous thing, an unclean thing. It knows what it is about. Give yourself no uneasiness; it is all right."

Senator Hoar stated during a speech in the United States Senate in May, 1902, in which he chastised the Philippine-American War and three Army officers, who were court-martialed:

You have sacrificed nearly ten thousand American lives—the flower of our youth. You have devastated provinces. You have slain uncounted thousands of the people you desire to benefit. You have established reconcentration camps.

Your generals are coming home from their harvest bringing sheaves with them, in the shape of other thousands of sick and wounded and insane to drag out miserable lives, wrecked in body and mind. You make the American flag in the eyes of a numerous people the emblem of sacrilege in Christian churches, and of the burning of human dwellings, and of the horror of the water torture. Your practical statesmanship which disdains to take George Washington and Abraham Lincoln or the soldiers of the Revolution or of the Civil War as models, has looked in some cases to Spain for your example. I believe—nay, I know—that in general our officers and soldiers are humane. But in some cases they have carried on your warfare with a mixture of American ingenuity and Castilian cruelty.

Your practical statesmanship has succeeded in converting a people who three years ago were ready to kiss the hem of the garment of the American and to welcome him as a liberator, who thronged after your men when they landed on those islands with benediction and gratitude, into sullen and irreconcilable enemies, possessed of a hatred which centuries can not eradicate.²⁴

Obviously, we learn from history, we don't study history.

The Philippines declared their independence, and established a government, but did we accept it? The Philippines also had their own political leaders did we accept them? Did we let the Philippines work out their own destiny after they declared their independence?

Did we exert total political and military control over the Philippines? Did we occupy and rule the Philippines?

²⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Frisbie_Hoar

1903.

Because Columbia refused to ratify the Hay-Herran Treaty²⁵ the US stationed warships on both sides of the Isthmus of Panama and invaded the Columbian province of Panama with ground troops. The province declared its independence from Columbia on 3 November 1903²⁶. Phillipe Bunau-Varilla, a Frenchman, acting as the Panamanian minister negotiated the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty²⁷ ratified in Panama on 2 December²⁸, one month after it declared independence from Columbia. The US ratified the treaty on 23 February 1904 and paid Panama \$10,000,000. Three days later Phillipe Bunau-Varilla resigned and returned to France. The Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, also called “The Treaty No Panamanian Signed”, granted US perpetual control of ten miles to either of the canal route. When completed the Panama Canal Zone encompassed 553 square miles, just under 1.9% of the total Panamanian area²⁹.

By means of overwhelming military force, the US allowed Panama to rebel, secede and declare its independence from Columbia. It’s doubtful the rebellion would have succeeded without the US’s assistance. Once Panama declared its independence it had little choice but to ratify³⁰ the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty desired by the US.

The treaty was a constant source of conflict between Panama and the United States. The conflict peaked during the riots over Panama Canal Zone sovereignty on 9 January 1964.

In January 1963, U.S President John F. Kennedy agreed to fly Panama's flag alongside the U.S. flag at all non-military sites in the Canal Zone. However, Kennedy was assassinated before his orders were carried out. One month after Kennedy's death, Panama Canal Zone Governor Robert J. Fleming, Jr. issued a decree limiting Kennedy's order. The U.S. flag would no longer be flown outside Canal Zone schools, police stations, post offices or other civilian locations where it had been flown, but neither would Panama's flag be flown. The governor's order infuriated many Zonians³¹, who interpreted it as a renunciation of sovereignty over the Canal Zone.

The riot started after a Panamanian flag³² was torn during conflict between Panamanian students and Canal Zone Police officers. The U.S. Army units became involved in suppressing the violence after Canal Zone police were overwhelmed, and after three days of fighting, about 22 Panamanians and four U.S. soldiers were killed.

The events of 9 January 1964, known in Panama as Martyrs' Day³³, are considered a significant factor in the U.S. decision to negotiate the 1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaties, which finally abolished the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties allowed the gradual transfer of control of the Canal Zone to Panama. Full control of the Panama Canal passed to Panama on December 31, 1999.

From 1903 to 1979, the United States controlled the Canal Zone and established a local government with its own courts, judges and police³⁴. From 1979 to 1999 the Canal was under joint US-Panamanian control.

Canal Zone’s governor, Robert J. Fleming³⁵ stated:

The plain fact is that we must begin treating Panamanians as people³⁶...

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hay-Herran_Treaty and <http://www.pancanal.com/eng/history/index.html>

²⁶ <http://www.pancanal.com/eng/history/index.html>

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hay-Bunau-Varilla_Treaty and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panama_Canal

²⁸ <http://www.pancanal.com/eng/history/index.html>

²⁹ Proportionately, the same percent of the United States, 70,530 square miles, would approximately equal the area of North Dakota which is 70,670 square miles. The proportionate area also exceeds the area of each of the following individual states: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin.

³⁰ <http://www.pancanal.com/eng/history/index.html>

³¹ American civilian permanent residents in the Panama Canal Zone.

³² <http://www.americanheritage.com/places/articles/web/20070109-panama-canal-martyrs-day-canal-zone-riots.shtml>

³³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyrs%27_Day

³⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canal_Zone_Police

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_J._Fleming

³⁶ <http://www.americanheritage.com/places/articles/web/20070109-panama-canal-martyrs-day-canal-zone-riots.shtml>

1953.

The US CIA, with help from British intelligence, planned, funded, and implemented the overthrow of popularly elected Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddeq and his cabinet.

Operation Ajax³⁷, the CIA operation, was run agent Kermit Roosevelt, Jr. TP_AJAX funded and supported the coup d'état³⁸ that installed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and was a "setback for democratic government"³⁹. Dan De Luce wrote in a review of *All the Shah's Men*⁴⁰, "the crushing of Iran's first democratic government ushered in more than two decades of dictatorship under the Shah, who relied heavily on US aid and arms".

Did the US decide the government of Iran was not acceptable? We claim to value democratically established institutions and leaders, yet we found Iran's democratic government and more particularly Prime Minister Dr. Mossadegh unpalatable. Did we let the Iranians learn to identify and learn from their own problems?

Did the US determine who could not be the leader of Iran?

³⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ajax

³⁸ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB126/index.htm>

³⁹ Admitted by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. "U.S. Comes Clean About The Coup In Iran", CNN, 04-19-2000.

⁴⁰ <http://www.amazon.com/All-Shahs-Men-American-Middle/dp/047018549X> The Publisher's Weekly editorial review states: "With breezy storytelling and diligent research, Kinzer has reconstructed the CIA's 1953 overthrow of the elected leader of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, who was wildly popular at home for having nationalized his country's oil industry. The coup ushered in the long and brutal dictatorship of Mohammad Reza Shah, widely seen as a U.S. puppet and himself overthrown by the Islamic revolution of 1979. At its best this work reads like a spy novel, with code names and informants, midnight meetings with the monarch and a last-minute plot twist when the CIA's plan, called Operation Ajax, nearly goes awry. A veteran New York Times foreign correspondent and the author of books on Nicaragua (*Blood of Brothers*) and Turkey (*Crescent and Star*), Kinzer has combed memoirs, academic works, government documents and news stories to produce this blow-by-blow account. He shows that until early in 1953, Great Britain and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company were the imperialist baddies of this tale. Intransigent in the face of Iran's demands for a fairer share of oil profits and better conditions for workers, British Foreign Secretary Herbert Morrison exacerbated tension with his attitude that the challenge from Iran was, in Kinzer's words, "a simple matter of ignorant natives rebelling against the forces of civilization." Before the crisis peaked, a high-ranking employee of Anglo-Iranian wrote to a superior that the company's alliance with the "corrupt ruling classes" and "leech-like bureaucracies" were "disastrous, outdated and impractical." This stands as a textbook lesson in how not to conduct foreign policy."

1970. 1973. 1976.

On direct orders from President Nixon⁴¹, the CIA⁴² attempted to prevent Salvador Allende's ratification as president and to foment a coup in Chile. The ensuing events included:

- The assassination of Chile's chief of staff, General Rene Schneider⁴³. Schneider's elimination three years before the coup was regarded as essential by the Nixon administration, since Schneider was a strict constitutionalist and therefore an obstacle to U.S. efforts to promote a military intervention before Allende could take office.⁴⁴
- A coup d'état against Salvador Allende⁴⁵ on September 11, 1973⁴⁶.
- The assassination of Orlando Letelier⁴⁷, former Chilean Minister of Foreign Relations, Interior Minister and Defense Minister⁴⁸.
- Continued executions in Chile after the coup⁴⁹.

In his review of *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*⁵⁰, Kenneth Maxwell wrote:

⁴¹ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/ch26-01.htm> These handwritten notes, taken by CIA director Richard Helms, record the orders of the President of the United States, Richard Nixon, to foster a coup in Chile. Helms' notes reflect Nixon's orders: I in 10 chance perhaps, but save Chile!; worth spending; not concerned; no involvement of embassy; \$10,000,00 available, more if necessary; full-time job--best men we have; game plan; make the economy scream; 48 hours for plan of action. This presidential directive initiates major covert operations to block Allende's ascension to office, and promote a coup in Chile.

⁴² <http://archives.cnn.com/2000/WORLD/americas/09/19/us.cia.chile.ap/>

⁴³ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/ch27-01.htm> These three cables between CIA headquarters in Langley, VA., and the CIA Station in Santiago address the secret shipment of weapons and ammunition for use in a plot to kidnap the Chilean military commander, General Rene Schneider. "Neutralizing" Schneider was a key prerequisite for a military coup; he opposed any intervention by the armed forces to block Allende's constitutional election. The CIA supplied a group of Chilean officers led by General Camilo Valenzuela with "sterile" weapons for the operation which was to be blamed on Allende supporters and prompt a military takeover. Instead, on October 22, General Schneider was killed by another group of plotters the CIA had been collaborating with, led by retired General Roberto Viaux. Instead of a coup, the military and the country rallied behind Allende's ratification by Chile's Congress on October 24.

⁴⁴ <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20031101fareviewessay82615/kenneth-maxwell/the-other-9-11-the-united-states-and-chile-1973.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/ch05-01.htm> In a secret cable, CIA deputy director of plans, Thomas Karamessines, conveys Kissinger's orders to CIA station chief in Santiago, Henry Hecksher: "It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup." The "operating guidance" makes it clear that these operations are to be conducted so as to hide the "American hand," and that the CIA is to ignore any orders to the contrary from Ambassador Korry who has not been informed of Track II operations.

⁴⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvador_Allende

⁴⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orlando_Letelier

⁴⁸ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/ch23-01.htm> This cable, written by the FBI's attache in Buenos Aires, Robert Scherrer, summarizes intelligence information provided by a "confidential source abroad" about Operation Condor, a South American joint intelligence operation designed to "eliminate Marxist terrorist activities in the area." The cable reports that Chile is the center of Operation Condor, and provides information about "special teams" which travel "anywhere in the world... to carry out sanctions up to assassination against terrorists or supporters of terrorist organizations." Several sections relating to these special teams have been excised. The cable suggests that the assassination of the Chilean Ambassador to the United States, Orlando Letelier, may have been carried out as an action of Operation Condor.

⁴⁹ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/ch10-01.htm> This memo, sent to the Secretary of State by Jack Kubisch, states that summary executions in the nineteen days following the coup totaled 320--more than three times the publicly acknowledged figure. At the same time, Kubisch reports on new economic assistance just authorized by the Nixon administration. The memo provides information about the Chilean military's justification for the continued executions. It also includes a situation report and human rights fact sheet on Chile.

The extent of the [US] involvement was originally hinted at during the Senate hearings conducted by the late Frank Church in the mid-1970s. The scope and nature of these clandestine activities are significantly amplified by the documents released in the extensive declassification ordered by President Bill Clinton in 1999 and 2000 and reprinted in Kornbluh's book. These documents include: transcripts of top-secret discussions among President Nixon, Kissinger, and other cabinet members on how "to bring Allende down"; minutes of secret meetings chaired by Kissinger to plan covert operations in Chile; new documentation of the notorious case of Charles Horman, an American murdered by the Chilean military and subject of the movie Missing; comprehensive documentation of the Letelier case and the extensive CIA, National Security Council, and State Department reports surrounding it; and U.S. intelligence reporting on Operation Condor. All these sources, however, are extensively redacted -- that is, sensitive parts of them, especially those from the CIA, have been blacked out.

...

But what is very clear in all of this is that the coup in Chile is exactly what Kissinger's boss wanted. As Nixon put it in his ineffable style, "It's that son of a bitch Allende. We're going to smash him." As early as October of 1970, the CIA had warned of possible consequences: "you have asked us to provoke chaos in Chile. ... We provide you with a formula for chaos which is unlikely to be bloodless. To dissimulate the U.S. involvement will be clearly impossible." The Pinochet dictatorship lasted 17 long and brutal years. According to the Chilean Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, its victims numbered 3,197. Thirty years after its initiation, the coup of 1973 remains deeply etched in collective memory. It is unlikely that this book will be the end of the story.⁵¹

As Colin Powell⁵² remarked, "It is not a part of American history that we are proud of."⁵³

More declassified documents can be found here... <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm>

Did the US determine the type of government Chile was not permitted?

Did the US determine who could not be the leader of Chile?

⁵⁰ <http://www.amazon.com/Pinochet-File-Declassified-Atrocity-Accountability/dp/B000FVQV48>

⁵¹ <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20031101fareviewessay82615/kenneth-maxwell/the-other-9-11-the-united-states-and-chile-1973.html>

⁵² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colin_Powell

⁵³ <http://ftp.fas.org/irp/news/2003/02/dos022003.html>

Conclusion.

Are there other such events?

Yes. Of course. They are available if you care to read history.

But I believe you get the general idea.

My brother, apparently with a straight face⁵⁴, claims that the US is by definition not an Empire, because (a) we hold presidential elections once every four years; and (b) there is no US political office termed “Emperor”.

Um..., I find his definition very **interesting**⁵⁵ ... though for reasons he would definitely not appreciate.

However, has the US:

- Determined the type of governments foreign countries were not permitted?
- Determined who was not acceptable as a leader of a foreign country?
- Determined the alliances a foreign country was allowed to establish with other countries?
- Interceded militarily if a foreign country made decisions of which we disapproved?
- Exercised total governmental and/or military control over a foreign country?

If any other country had engaged in those actions would we praise or condemn their actions?

The historical evidence leads me to believe the US began empire building more than 100 years ago. I’ve found no indication that we, through the actions of our government, have had a change of heart or have modified our actions.

Many of the early US Imperialists did not regard US Imperialism as evil. Yet the facts show those actions, by any common definition of the word, were evil. Both to the recipients of US political control and to ourselves.

Dr. Paul Schroeder, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, stated:

[T]hose who speak of an American empire bringing freedom and democracy to the world are talking of dry rain and snowy blackness. In principle and by definition, empire is the negation of political freedom, liberation, and self-determination.

...

If America goes down the path of empire, it will ultimately fail. How, when, and with what consequences, no one can tell--but fail it will, and harm itself and the world in the process.⁵⁶

Alexander Pope⁵⁷ said it well...

Vice is a monster of so frightful a mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ The conversation was by phone. As best as I could tell and to the best of my belief, he was very serious, and not **intentionally** farcical in his assertions.

⁵⁵ Based on the conversation, my brother does not believe in the “duck test”. (Ref: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duck_typing). Instead, he apparently believes that “if it looks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, if it quacks like a duck, and if in all other ways it behaves like a duck, it is **not** a duck... unless it is explicitly called such.”

⁵⁶ <http://hnn.us/articles/1237.html>

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Pope

⁵⁸ An Essay on Man (1733-1734) Epistle II, Line 217. http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Alexander_Pope

Have we embraced the vice of Empire?

Our founding fathers battled British Imperialism to establish these United States. Yet, for some strange reason, we seem to believe that nearly everyone else is incapable of managing their own affairs without our guidance, assistance and approval. And if by chance the citizens of some foreign nation wish the freedoms we believe “inalienable” how do we treat them?

I find it disconcerting that the grand ideals taught in US civics classes and in US history lessons have been so grubbily perverted. And yet we, through the actions of our elected government, continue similar grubby-minded perversions.

How pray tell, would we handle a group of “revolutionaries” who declare...

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of the inalienable rights of Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Let me put it hypothetically. If a foreign power organized and funded a successful overthrow of the US government; installed for themselves an acceptable US ruler; extracted natural resources and removed US technology; if the US regained independence some time later, would you have warm, fuzzy, happy feelings regarding that foreign power?

No? Then why should anyone else feel differently if we do it to them?

People remember. They remember their dead. They remember their maimed and crippled. They remember being cheated and lied to. They remember being bullied. Just because we’ve forgot, does not mean they have.

A teacher once stated, "If you reverse the circumstances and still find yourself happy with the results, then you've discovered the essence of an ethical decision."

Am I stating the US is totally evil?

No, of course not.

The US does many things right. But ignoring faults and concentrating only on the positive means faults are not identified. Faults not identified are faults not corrected. And faults do not correct themselves.

Does the US do evil things? Unfortunately, yes.

Should we stop doing evil?

Yes.

As my grandfather said...

If you find yourself in a hole, dagnabbit quit digging!

I’m certain he found me more than a little exasperating... my brother, I’m sure, agrees.

But, evil actions have consequences.

Those consequences may take years, decades, centuries or longer before the repercussions damp out. By continuing to “dig” we push the resulting consequences off onto our future selves, our children, and our children’s children.

Why are we so callous of our children’s future? Are our options that limited? So limited, that we have no choice but to do evil?

Or are we blind with self-righteousness justification? Do we see our opponents as benighted knaves who need our stern guiding hand for their own good?

If you’d read history, you’d know.