



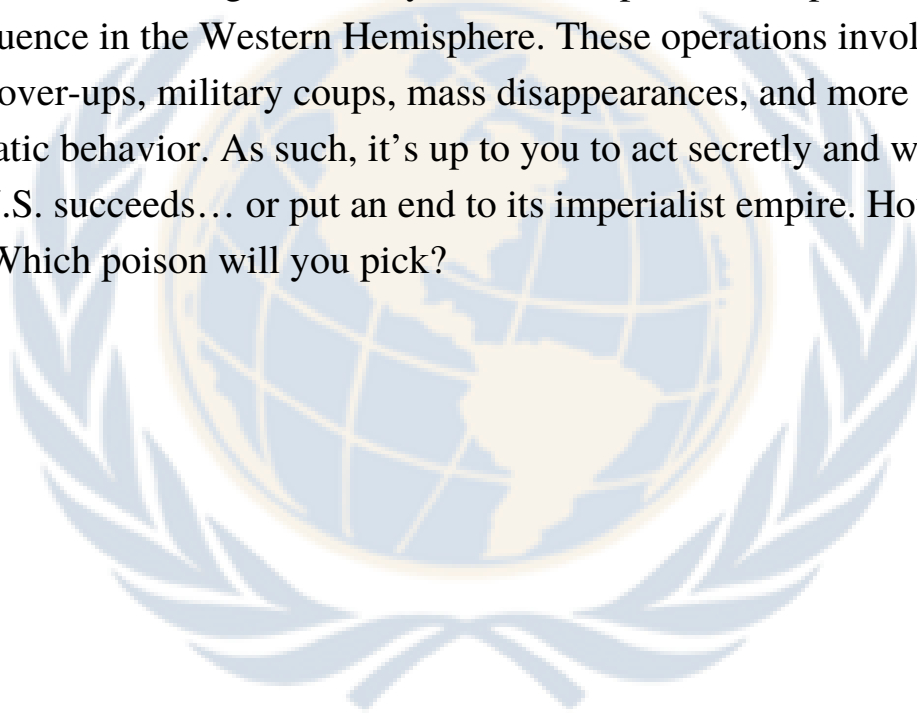
BACKGROUND GUIDE

WAMUNC XXIV

Operation Condor

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The world is shivering. The Cold War has led the U.S. and Russia to turn other regions into their battlefields, and one particularly exploited region is that of Latin America. Delegates in this committee will represent various organizers and instigators of Operation Condor, a series of U.S. sanctioned operations to influence Latin American governments and overthrow those sympathetic to Russia- or worse, communism. Your mission? The United States' ultimate victory over Russian influence, resulting in a steady influx of capital and unprecedented regional influence in the Western Hemisphere. These operations involved espionage, cover-ups, military coups, mass disappearances, and more than a little anti-democratic behavior. As such, it's up to you to act secretly and wisely to ensure the U.S. succeeds... or put an end to its imperialist empire. How? More covert ops. Which poison will you pick?

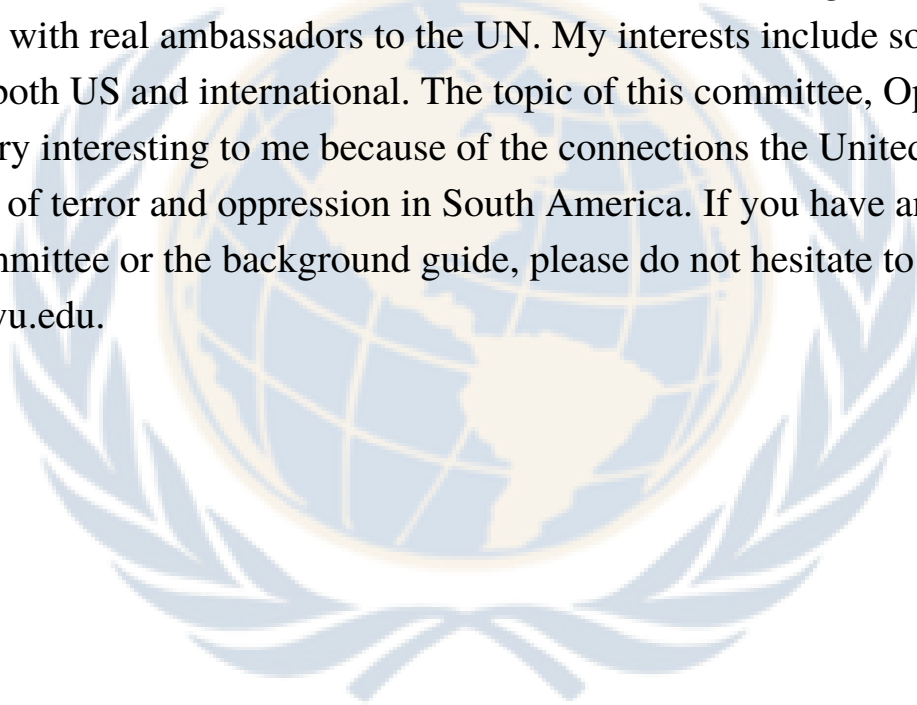


LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello!

My name is Ryan McGowan, and I am a freshman at The George Washington University majoring in international affairs and minoring in music. I will be the Crisis Director for the Operation Condor committee for the 2022 Washington Area Model United Nations Conference. I am from Berlin, Connecticut and participated in Model United Nations in high school where I was treasurer of the club. I have attended multiple conferences and even visited the United Nations building in New York City twice to meet with real ambassadors to the UN. My interests include soccer, music, and politics, both US and international. The topic of this committee, Operation Condor, is very interesting to me because of the connections the United States had to the campaign of terror and oppression in South America. If you have any questions about the committee or the background guide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at rcmcg@gwu.edu.

Best,
Ryan



BACKGROUND GUIDE

Current Issues Facing Operation Condor

It is now 1976 and while Operation Condor enters its first full year having prevented any further breakthroughs of International Communism in Latin America, it is not without its own created challenges. Excesses carried out in the name of anti-communism have badly damaged the international reputations of the South American Juntas and to a lesser extent the United States as well. With 1976 being an election year in the United States; President Ford is trailing badly in both the GOP Primaries and the general election against popular Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter (D-GA), who has made respect for human rights a center of his policies, the absolute last thing his administration can afford is another incident originating from Condor. The Latin American Junta's themselves have now found themselves in a trap of their own making, having crushed the left for the time being, they are now leading nations with cratered economics and high civil unrest without any plan to return to constitutional governance anytime soon, in effect trapping themselves into an ever worsening cycle.

At the same time divisions are growing within many of the Juntas over disputes of power-sharing, appropriate levels of repression, and even possible returns to democracy. Operation Condor by design only works if there is coordination and cooperation between the participating nations, and this is now no longer a given with tensions between Argentina and Chile over border disputes escalating closer to war. And then of course there are those opposed to these regimes of bayonets; some from the political center who wish a return to pre-junta democracy, but many more far left forces who wish to emulate the model of Cuba. Despite the murderous repression on the part of the Condor regimes, these forces still maintain their supporters and contacts within universities, labor unions, and in the regions impoverished masses. With recent communist victories in Vietnam, Angola, and Ethiopia, the initiative is clearly in the favor, with any potential major error by the Junta's giving them the chance to create a second Cuba.

History

Operation Condor was a formal system of coordinating repression of communist dissenters and activities in multiple Latin American countries in the mid-1970s to early 1980s conducted by military regimes across the continent with the assistance of the United States. The aim was to persecute and eliminate political, social, and student activists that spoke out against right-wing governments in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil in the name of protecting the continent from communist subversion. The era saw the rise of several military juntas who overthrew or supplemented democratically elected civilian regimes with the promise of once and for all crushing the communist threat regardless of the damage to human rights and life. It is regarded as the bloody climax of the Cold War in Latin America, its origins lay in paranoia about Soviet infiltration in what was regarded as the US' backyard, and its legacy still scars the continent to this day.

As the 1960s began most of Latin America was still fairly peaceful under fairly democratic, mostly pro-American democracies; this did not mean that underground communist movements and the counter reaction to it were not active. Democracy and stability on the continent was dependent on the acquiescence of conservative military's and continued economic growth. After the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington was dead set against further real, (or perceived) communist growth in the hemisphere, and a paranoid posture of vigilance against a "second Cuba" meant that even leaders that came to power democratically and weren't open marxists were considered a threat to the US if they had leftwing/nationalist agendas. US policy towards Latin America was modified under JFK to be composed of two vital, and contractionary pillars; the first of which was economic aid under the "Alliance for Progress" which had the aim of reducing poverty so as to close the opening for unwanted ideologies and create an anti-communist middle class that could support democracy. The second and ultimately much more influential pillar was military training and aid to Latin American armies, who were seen by Washington, and by most locals to this day as, "the most stable and modernizing social organization."

It became clear to everyone involved that stopping the communists carried priority over promoting democracy as the Cold War intensified, US attitudes were summarized by George Kennan, “ It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by communists.”

The shift from trying to promote anti-communist democracy via economic progress to heavy handed tactics accelerated as the previous centrist governments who had been able to keep their militaries in line were replaced by more left wing ones who disturbed the balance of power. The more unstable countries in South America were a precursor to the later wave of Junta's throughout the Southern cone nations, with Argentina locked in a bitter cycle of weak civilian governments and “revolutionary military juntas” since 1931 and isolated Paraguay firmly under despot Alfredo Stroessner's boot. The momentum that would lead to Condor proper however, began only when, following a botched political maneuver by Brazil's incumbent center-right President, resulted in a left wing, nationalist Vice President João Goulart ascending to leadership of South America's biggest economy. His policies of pursuing trade with the People's Republic of China (Red China), non-alignment in the Cold War, and most of all an ambitious plan to nationalize large parts of Brazil's economy greatly angered Brazil's conservative officer corps and the United States.

US tolerance for ambiguous leftist governments like Brazil's narrowed further after JFK's assassination as his successor President Lyndon Baines Johnson was preoccupied with the escalating prairie fire of Vietnam and adopted a much firmer policy towards stopping communism in America's backyard. Washington now explicitly encouraged, but importantly did not contrary to popular belief manage or direct, military coup d'etats against governments that were perceived to be either openly sympathetic to communism or that were opening the door for it. This new doctrine was applied in Brazil where on March 31, 1964 the Armed Forces overthrew President Goulart in a bloodless operation with American diplomatic and material backing. Although it was before Operation Condor would enter into its stride in the early to late 1970s, the Brazilian coup served as a blueprint for what would be replicated across the continent, uniting the armed forces behind removing a controversial leftist, using civilian supporters such as the catholic church, traditional right-wing parties, and the middle class to firm up a base of support, and for the US to give aid and diplomatic recognition once the job was done.

Brazil's generals once in power formulated a doctrine that would in a way become the guiding charter driving the regimes behind Operation Condor, serving as the "model" to their plotting counterparts across the continent. This "Doctrine of National Security" provided a formal justification for military intervention against elected governments if they were threats that the economic and political security of the nation was in grave danger, so that the generals could "correct" the ship's course. Not only was this doctrine shared among the armies of the Americas, but the United States began to both materially and tacitly encourage greater cooperation at the tactical level as well. In 1968 US Army General Robert W Porter, head of US Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) stated that, "...we are endeavoring to foster inter-service and regional cooperation by assisting in the organization of of integrated command and control centers...operating procedures [among the Latin American security forces and militaries]." Moves towards further efforts to "continental defense against communism" expanded further in 1969 under President Nixon and his then National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger; the two Americans most associated with Operation Condor and the politics of fighting communism "dirty".

Many of the officers that would be involved in the execution of Condor were being trained at the US Army's School of the Americas in the Panama Canal zone, and American involvement only deepened when in 1970 Salvador Allende won a very close 3 way election in Chile; becoming the first open Marxist to win a free democratic election. His alliance with Cuba, moves towards nationalizations, and rhetorical support for Far-Left guerillas in places such as Bolivia were regarded by Nixon and South American leaders with hostility. Allende was accused of being a conduct of Soviet influence, and was subject of various CIA backed, but not directed attempts at ouster that eventually succeeded after both economic collapse following US covert actions and Allende's actions alienating every major political force in Chile. The Chile coup, just like Brazil 9 years prior was another blueprint to ambitious anti-communist officers that if they moved to overthrow their unstable government, not only could they succeed but the US would, quietly, support it, paving the way for subsequent coups in Uruguay that same year, Peru in 1975, and Argentina in 1976.

It is important to note that this did not translate into immediate support for a military coup d'état, Washington made sure to exhaust all legal and "semi-legal" methods before turning to more questionable options. In most cases traditional right, center-right, and some centrist political forces implicating supported, at the very least initially, military action against communist leaning governments that had brought their countries to the brink of economic ruin. However once in power these regimes had their own conflicts between "pragmatic" branch and a "hardliner" one. Pragmatic generals still participated in Condor and its harsh crackdowns against left wing forces, but they tolerated political openness within a controlled environment for non-communist groups, rotated power within the junta so no one general could form a personal dictatorship, and expressed willingness for a return to civilian rule once they had "corrected the nation's course" namely by rewriting its constitution. Brazil's military government was an example of the pragmatic junta path, while still brutal to dissents and leftists it perverse a variable degree of democracy and opposition, and was thus much more acceptable to the US government and public opinion.

Hardliner juntas on the other hand not only aimed to cleanse their nation's national politic of any socialist thought, but to fundamentally redesign the country from the ground up to where their regime becomes indistinguishable from it. Hardliners see no reason to make concessions to civilian representation or limited democratic openings, seeing them as useless concessions to old politicians who "failed" in their task of keeping order. These regimes not only didn't attempt to abide by constitutional proceedings, they instead went for the personal dictatorship route to cement their one man, one rule governance. Hardliners would go beyond merely arresting and torturing dissents, they would execute them in both large numbers and in gruesome methods. These regimes' extreme tactics would lead them to be commonly compared to "facisits" and created headaches for the US government as US Public and Congressional opposition to aiding them increased, particularly in the mid to late 1970s. One of the most prominent cases of a hardliner junta, and one that was one of the founders of Operation Condor was Chile under General Augusto Pinochet.

Pinochet would play a leading role in expanding what was previous domestic repression and anti-subversive activity into one that would span three continents. In 1974 representatives of the police forces of Chile, Bolivia, and Uruguay met with select Argentine Federal Police commanders to coordinate the liquidation of potential dangerous political exiles, who soon started to show up brutally killed on the streets of Buenos Aires. By November 25th of the next year, the date of General Pinochet's birthday, the military intelligence bosses of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay formally launched Operation Condor as a coordinated, cross border, transcontinental effort to eradicate left wing dissents. The length and scope of this operation would shock even its erstwhile American backers, with the CIA reporting that this long range cooperation went “well beyond information exchange...with the intension of striking against the leaders of indigenous terrorist groups residing abroad.” In a report written from Assistant Secretary of State for Latin America Harry W. Shlaudeman to Secretary Kissinger on August 3, 1976, it was reported that the military regimes in South America were coming together to kill their opponents including those in exile in Western Europe and North America. Shlaudeman warned that this could lead to further isolation of the condor regimes and force the US to break with them, showing the power of Operation Condor’s blowback upon those who sponsored it.

Questions to Consider

1. Is it right for the United States to work to stop the spread of socialism and communism since it has brought about famine and death in the past?
2. Should the United States wage war on the countries involved in Condor in order to protect human rights and stop abuses?
3. Is there a “cleaner” way to stop the spread of communism that doesn't require empowering brutal dictators?

Positions

Julio Vadora (former commander of Uruguayan army)

Julio César Vadora was a Uruguayan national who was a strong supporter of the 1973 coup d'état where President Juan María Bordaberry became the military dictator of the country. He was rewarded for his support with an appointment to the position of military attache in Washington, D.C. When he returned to Uruguay, he was picked by the president to become Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In this role, he directly facilitated Operation Condor and its disappearings and assassinations. Vadora was a strong opponent of Marxism and called out Communist Parties for “bombarding” the Americas with their ideology.

Augusto Pinochet (Commander of the Chilean Army and later President of Chile)

Augusto Pinochet was a Chilean Army General who ruled Chile from 1973 to 1990. He rose through the ranks of the army until he was appointed Commander-in-Chief on August 23, 1973 by President Salvador Allende. Pinochet then used his power to stage a coup against the democratically elected left-wing government. Importantly, he did this with the support of the US government. After gaining power, Pinochet persecuted leftists, socialists, and critics of his regime. The total number of executions and disappearances by the Chilean government is estimated at around 3,000. He was a key figure in Operation Condor, which was in part led by the Chilean Intelligence Service, DINA.

Miguel Ángel Furci (Automotores Orletti Clandestine Detention Center)

Miguel Ángel Furci was a senior intelligence officer in Argentina during Operation Condor. He is shrouded in secrecy in the public eye, and what does emerge from the rumor mill (and an often confirmed one, at that) are tales of his cold and brutal demeanor as an officer. No substantive proof has yet emerged of his involvement in disappearances or government suppression, but his tactics could be used to great effect to prevent enemy interference in the operation. However, he must be wary. As the rumor mill grows larger, people grow angrier, and it would be wise for him to consider alternative methods to the operation's success.

George H.W Bush (as CIA director)

George H.W. Bush was born in Massachusetts in June 1924. He enlisted in the Navy at age 18. After that, he worked multiple different business jobs and was eventually elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Texas's 7th Congressional District. In January 1976, President Gerald Ford nominated Bush to the post of Director of Central Intelligence (head of the CIA). Under his leadership from January 1976 to January 1977, the United States poured millions of dollars into helping South American regimes handle political dissenters. It was incredibly bloody during the mid 1970s, and Orlando Letelier was assassinated in D.C. during Bush's tenure. After the assassination, Bush and the CIA apparently leaked a story that was meant to put down the idea that the Chilean Secret Police (DINA) and the CIA had any role in it, even though they clearly did. In 1974, Bush even warned the U.S. Congressman Edward Koch that his sponsorship of legislation to cut off U.S. military assistance to Uruguay because of human rights violations might cause the secret police to "put a contract out" on him. Bush was very obviously aware of what was occurring in South America but continued to approve U.S. support and information to the dictatorships that were committing horrible atrocities.

Henry Kissinger (US Secretary of State, National Security Advisor)

Henry Kissinger was born in Germany in 1923 and became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1934. From there, he served in the Army, worked as a professor at Harvard University, advised presidents on foreign policy, and finally became Secretary of State in 1973. He served both the Nixon and Ford administrations. Kissinger's family escaped Nazi Germany when he was only fifteen, so he obviously was against all forms of facism. Like many other political leaders and even regular Americans at the time, he saw left-wing social and labor movements (some promoting socialism and communism) as a direct path to facism. Kissinger implicitly allowed Operation Condor to occur because he knew in the long-run it did help the United States reach its goal of stopping the spread of communism and facism, even if it was incredibly violent. He told Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet that the United States was "sympathetic" to what he was trying to do. Kissinger was well aware of what was happening in the "Southern Cone" countries in regards to Operation Condor. In 1976, he even told the foreign minister of Argentina: "If there are things that have to be done, you should do them quickly" and to "eliminate subversion within ten months."

Gerald Ford (US President 1974-1976)

Gerald Rudolph Ford was a former WWII US Navy war hero and prominent post war Republican politician born in Omaha, Nebraska. He began his political career at the age of 36 after successfully beating the incumbent isolationist Republican representing Michigan's 5th district in the primary, placing heavy emphasis on his internationalist views. A modest and well liked moderate who rose to the rank of House Minority Leader, he was nominated Vice President by President Nixon after Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned, and subsequently assumed the Presidency after Watergate forced Nixon's resignation. Ford largely attempted to stay the course of Detente with the USSR and follow Nixon's foreign policy, but was facing pressure from the expanded Democratic majority in Congress on the left, and from conservative Republicans regarding Latin America. With Operation Condor ramping up at the same time as the 1976 election season approached, Ford wanted to avoid any incidents relating to Condor that would look bad upon his administration. Conversely, any further communist victories in the wake of the Fall of Saigon, but this time in the US' own backyard, would be even more fatal to his hopes of winning the GOP nomination and the general election.

Harry W. Shlaudeman

Harry W. Shlaudeman was a United States diplomat who was born in 1926 in Los Angeles, California. He worked his way up through the State Department and eventually became Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs. It was during his tenure in this position where he worked under Henry Kissinger and also was involved in Operation Condor. On September 20, 1976, Shlaudeman told his deputy, William Luers, to inform US ambassadors in the Condor countries not to relay the US's apprehensions about the operation. Under orders from Kissinger, Shlaudeman essentially made it so the leaders of Condor never knew that the United States had fears and worries about the entire operation. Five days later, Orlando Letelier, an opponent of Augusto Pinochet, was murdered by a car bomb on Embassy Row in Washington DC.

Vernon Walters

Vernon Walters was a United States Army officer and Central Intelligence Agency official born in New York City in 1917. He served with distinction during WWII in the 5th Army and later served as a key US officer in NATO, where he proposed US military intervention in Italy if the Socialist Party (PS) entered government. He became close to National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger when helping to facilitate the Paris Peace Talks to end the Vietnam War, and would help to coordinate further activities in Latin America under Operation Condor. In 1972 he was appointed by President Nixon as Deputy Director of the CIA (DDCI) and played a key role in CIA Activities in Latin America and in managing the crisis that Operation Condor would cause. In particular he was involved with spearheading CIA funding and support for the 1973 Chilean Coup d'etat, however he would later have to deal with the fallout of the Letelier Assassination, when agents of General Pinochet's Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA) murdered Chilean dissident Carlos Letelier with a car bomb on the streets of Washington DC in 1976. The ensuing diplomatic fallout, further threats by the DINA against Chilean Christian-Democrat Bernardo Leighton and US Congressman Ed Koch (D-NY) and increased Congressional pressure forced LTG Walters to deal with increasing opposition and challenges to Condor.

Jorge Videla

Jorge Rafael Videla was an Argentinean military general, Junta Member, and Dictator/De Facto President of Argentina at the height of its Dirty War against domestic communist insurgents. After the death of towering President Juan Perón in , his wife and Vice President Isabel assumed the Presidency and proved unable and incompetent to deal with a cratering economy, form a stable government, or deal with far left insurgents and far right violence gave the Army an opening. The military gradually gained more power as Isabel Perón crippled itself, and now General Commander of the Army Videla overthrew the weak administration under the guise that a strong hand was needed to save Argentina from internal disaster. Assuming the head of the new junta, he presided over mass arrest and forced disappearances of accused subversives, with death flights being frequently used to dispose of certain dissents. Despite the disparity of power between the Junta and its opponents, the collapsing economy and relative strength of the internal communist guerilla movement in the provinces meant that even compared to its Operation Condor it faced the greatest challenges.

Manuel Contreras

Juan Manuel “Mamo” Guillermo Contreras Sepúlveda was a Chilean Army General and the head of the Chilean Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional (DINA, who by 1976 was effectively the second man in the Pinochet regime. Educated at the School of the Americas at Fort Gulick, he learned counter intelligence and repression tactics to be used against communist forces. Under Marxist President Allende he began to form an extra-judicial intelligence network within the lower ranks of the Chilean military to collect information on leftists groups. He used informants within Chile’s right wing and far right parties such as “Frente Nacionalista Patria y Libertad” as proxies along with CIA and US Naval Intelligence contacts to counter the growth of left wing forces in the run up to the 1973 Coup. Following Pinochet's assumption of power he named Conteras his intelligence chief and tasked him with liquidating the enemies of the Junta, particularly those who had escaped abroad. He played a decisive role in the birth of Operation Condor, and by 1975 while the US government approved continued CIA contact with him, they concluded that, “he [Contreras] was the principal obstacle to a reasonable human rights policy within the Pinochet government.” Amid the fallout of the Orlando Letelier bombing, the US government envisaged Contreras involvement and cut CIA contact with him the following year, at the same time tensions grew between him and Pinochet over the PR fallout to the regime and internal junta power struggles.

Alfredo Stroessner

Alfredo Stroessner Matiauda was a Paraguayan Army general and politician who later served as Dictator of Paraguay for more than forty years. A major when the Paraguayan Civil War broke out in 1947 his unit ensured the survival of then Dictator Higinio Morínigo, who rewarded him with a promotion to Brigadier and the youngest General Officer in South America. After several coups and using the Colorado Party as his political vehicle, he gained power and turned Paraguay into a one party military state known as “El Stronato” in 1954, at a time when most of his neighbors were still democracies. Although he presided over a stability unprecedented in Paraguaya’s recent history, his regime was barbarically brutal even by the standards of Operation Condor, with allegations made against him of Genocide of the Aché indeigous people.

Although the United States supported his government out of anti-communist Operation Condor expediency, relations slowly frayed over Strossner's involvement in drug trafficking and the sheer excesses of his regime. Finally his personal affinity for Nazism led to already isolated Paraguay becoming a heaven for Nazi including Josef Mengele, leading many to refer to his government as the "poor man's Nazi regime.

Hugo Banzer

Hugo Banzer was a Bolivian politician and military officer who was the latest in a long line of Bolivian generals who gained power the old fashioned way; by coup. Bolivia, unlike many of its Condor counterparts, had a longstanding schism conflict within its own military between a left wing clique and the right wing with which Banzer sided. After unsuccessfully attempting to topple leftist aligned General Juan José Torres in early 1971, he later succeeded in August of that year in an military uprising of considerable bloodshed. Key financial and political support from the Nixon Administration and Brazil were key to his success along with political support from both Bolivia's center and far right for his first three years. However after showing no intentions in holding elections he ruled purely by military force alone, the subsequent "Banzerato" saw all political activity banned, the exiling of all major leaders including sympathetic right wing ones, and a hardening of repression against opposition. Thousands were tortured in the "horror chambers" of the Interior Ministry basement where infamous Lyon Gestapo Boss Klaus Barbie was integrated into the security services to "renew" the regime's repression tactics. However even after this repression induced a false sense of stability, Banzer's regime was still open to challenges from both democratically minded and opportunistic sectors of the military waiting for an opportunity when the regime stumbled.

William D. Luers

William D. Luers is a member of the United States Foreign Service that is rising quickly in the ranks as a skilled and tactful diplomat. He is particularly invested in the area of Venezuela and previously served in the U.S. Navy. Not much is known of Luers yet, but he currently serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. He is fluent in Russian, Italian, and Spanish, uniquely positioning Luers as a potential source of more global involvement in this operation, for better or for worse.

Hewson Ryan

Hewson Ryan served as the United States Ambassador to Honduras, a position which he held from 1969 to 1973. This has made him very aware of conflict in the region leading up to the widespread activities of Operation Condor, including the nation's battles with El Salvador. His knowledge of international conflict within Central America is easily exploitable for the operation's success, but even more important is his deep understanding of the region and their capabilities. While his government capabilities are diminished, his knowledge (and how he presents it) will be instrumental to the operation's success in Central America.

Aparicio Méndez

Aparicio Méndez currently serves as the de facto President of Uruguay following a military coup in the nation. He's a part of the National Party, in which he has established himself as an expert in administrative law, and served as Minister of Health from 1961 to 1964. While his involvement in and cooperation with the military coup is undeniable, he has also shown signs that he wishes to break off from traditional party values and policies. He also wishes to democratize the nation following the heavy toll the coup took on Uruguay, a stance which may anger more traditionalist members of committee. Nevertheless, his expertise speaks for itself and he is still firmly rooted in Uruguay's National Party and the fight to win the Cold War.

Francisco Morales-Bermúdez

Francisco Morales-Bermúdez is the de facto President of Peru following the military coup of 1975. He comes from a family of army colonels and former presidents, setting him up for success at a very early age. He became Minister of Economy and Finance in 1968, although unknown problems within the administration caused him to resign after two months. Soon after in the same year, the president was deposed in a military coup and Bermúdez was asked to return to his post as Minister of Economy and Finance until 1974, when he became Commander-in-Chief of the Peruvian Army. He used this position to overthrow the unhealthy president and assume presidency of the nation in 1975, diverting from Peru's socialist policies of the era. His participation in Operation Condor has included the capturing of Argentinians in Lima. His administration is marked by one of the country's worst economic crises and a radical shift from Peru's previous political platforms.

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