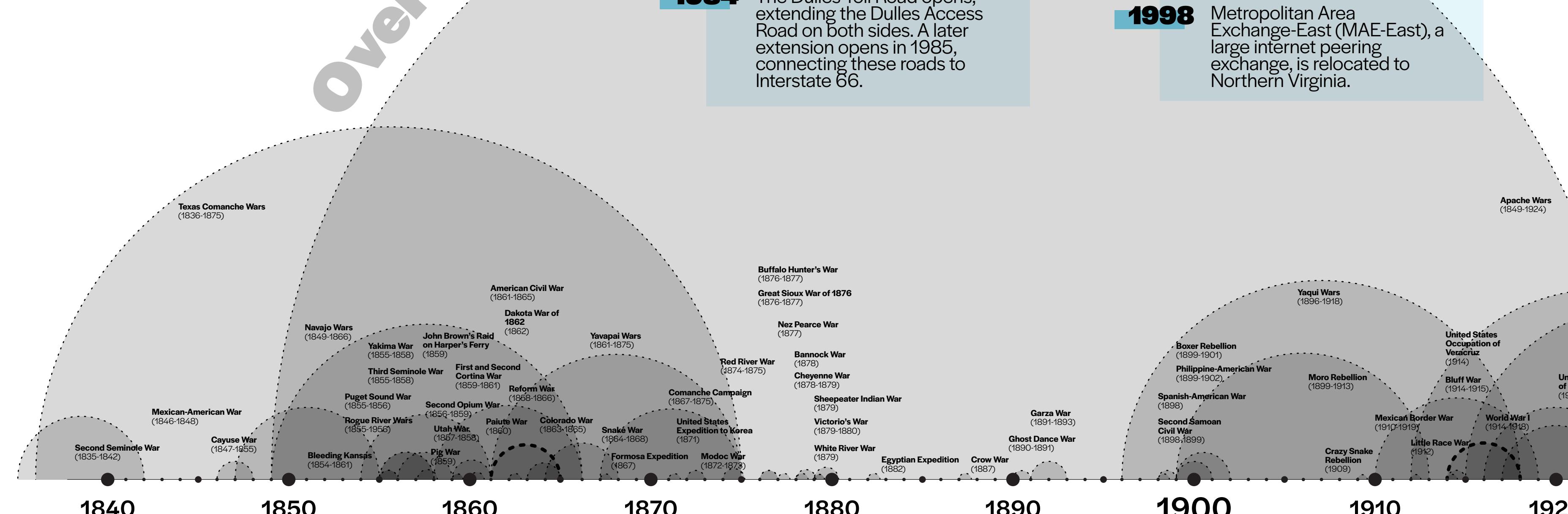


# Powering Up in Northern Virginia: Transportation, Military, and Energy

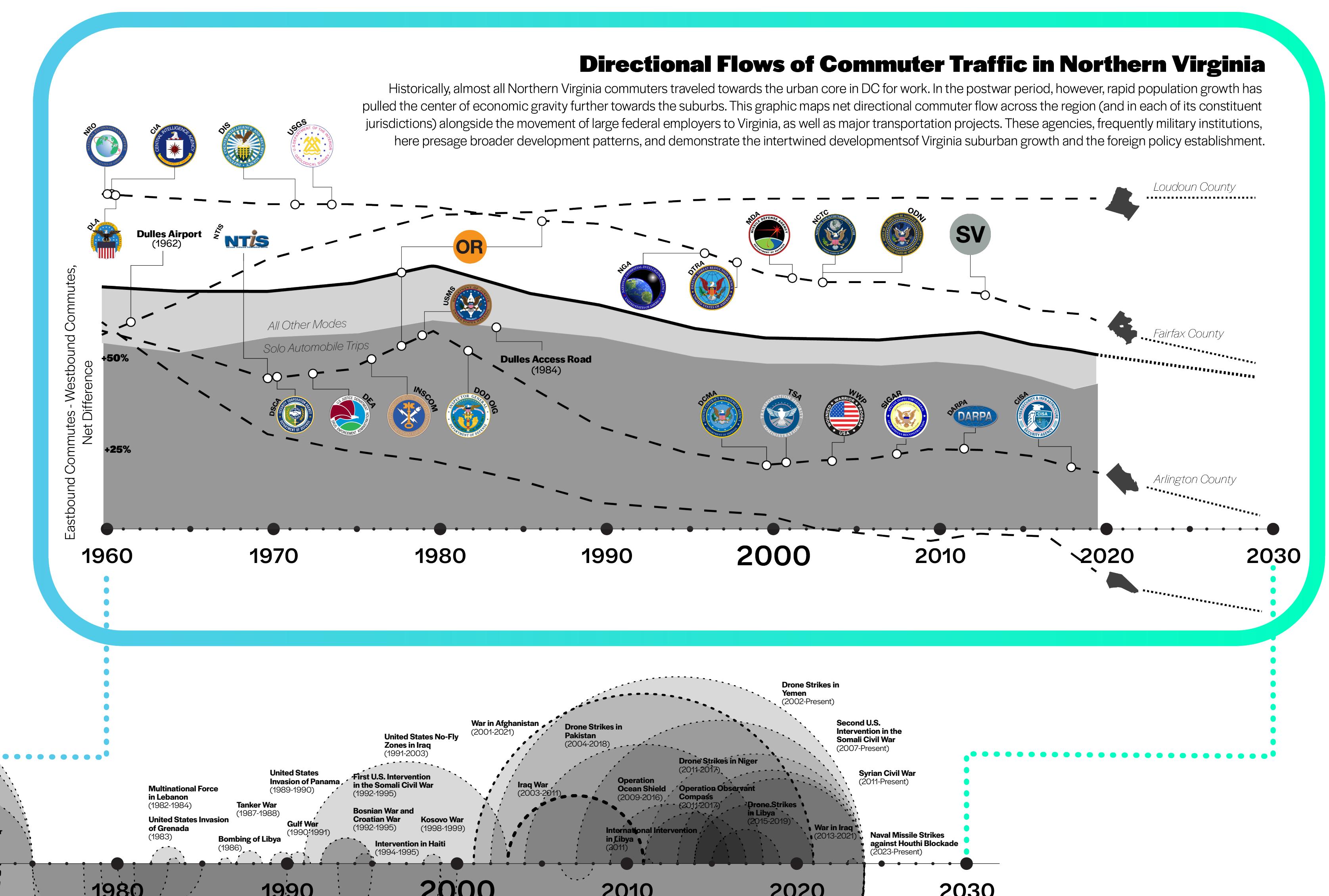
This timeline explores the connections between the buildup of United States military and intelligence capacity and transportation infrastructure development in Northern Virginia from 1840 to the present day, with the backdrop of changes in energy regimes. Northern Virginia is notable for its proximity to Washington DC, the seat of federal power while simultaneously being outside of it. In the present day, the Pentagon building that serves as the headquarters of the Department of Defense is located in Arlington; the CIA headquarters are located in the suburbs of McLean.

Transportation infrastructure is rarely built just for the sake of being built. Its purpose is to connect people to places. Adding modes of transportation, be it railroad or roadways for automobiles, is expensive, requiring the motivating factor of a growing population base, a factor that itself is motivated by changes in the economic opportunities of a region. With each war or intelligence operation comes additional funding and staffing, the two major components to justifying infrastructure buildup. Shifts in energy paradigms drive not only changes in transportation infrastructure, but also serve as impetus for warfare in efforts to secure cheap access for the country. We see how these three factors come together to build the Northern Virginia we know today, and how it might shape the Northern Virginia of tomorrow.

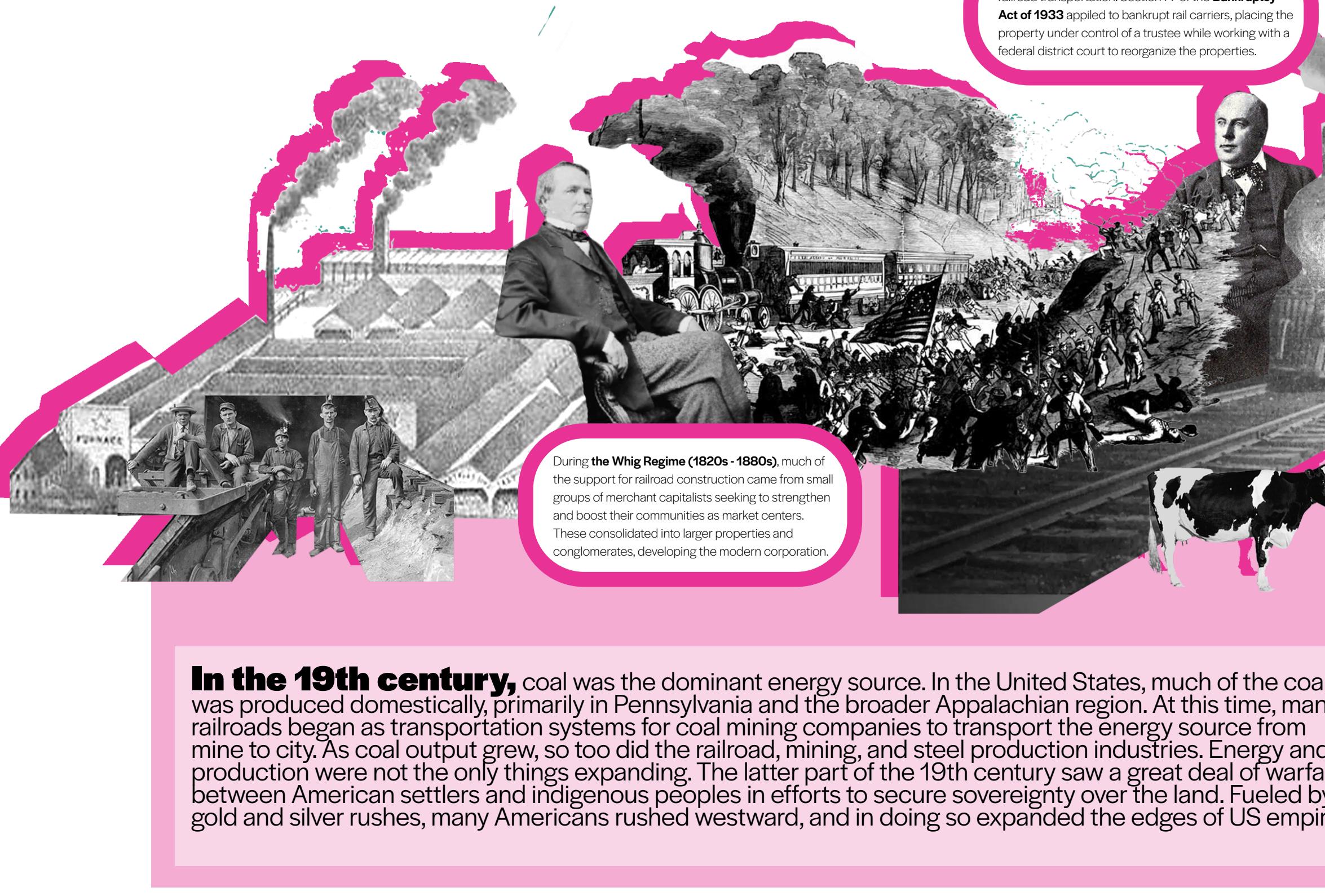
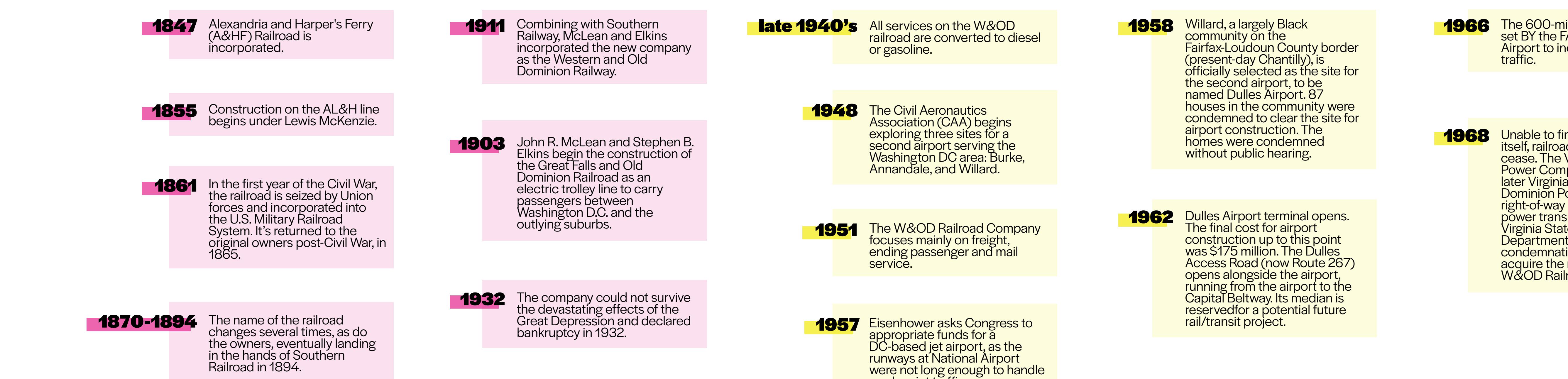
*Overt Warfare*



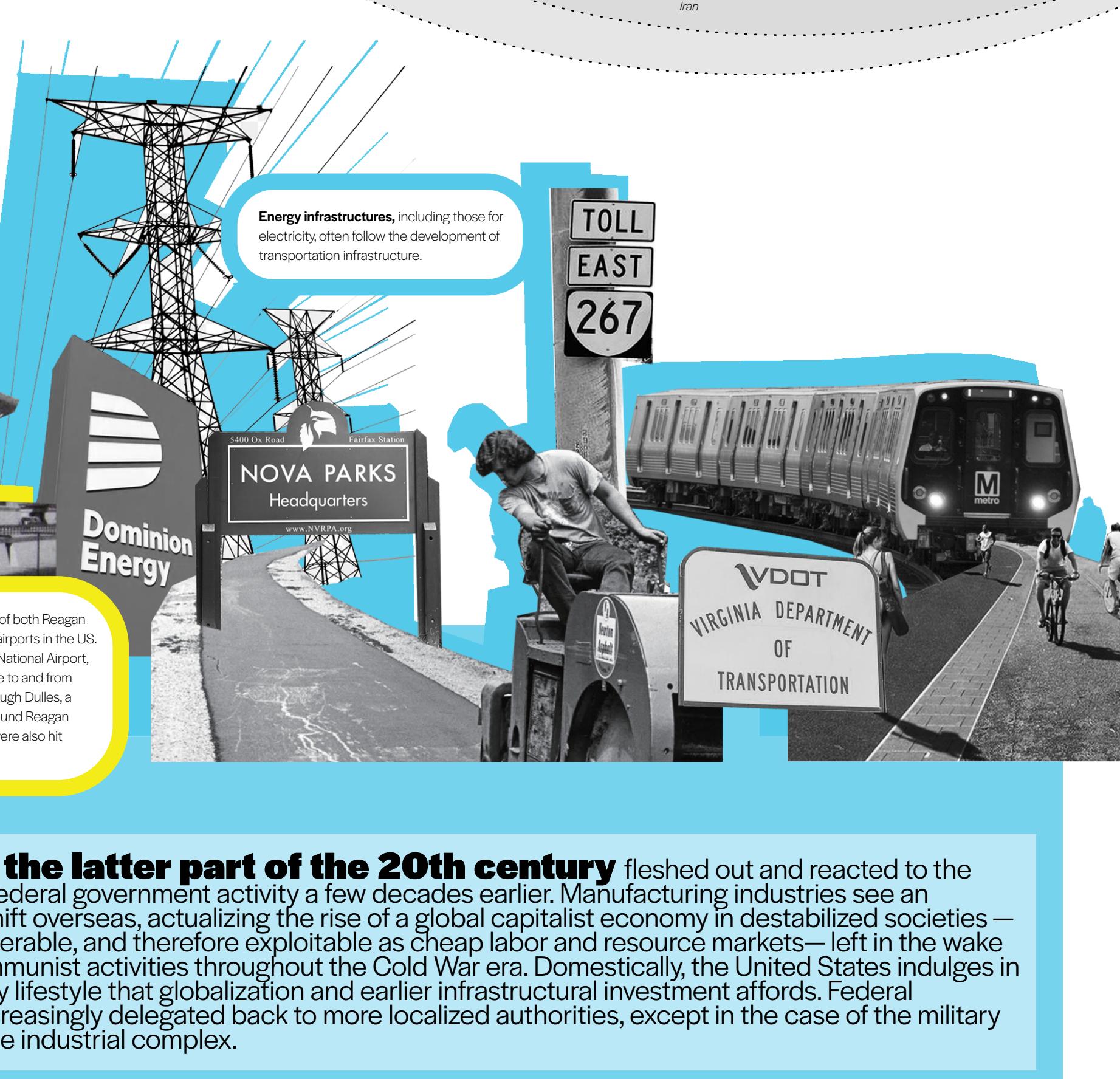
- 1974** The rails-to-trails program is the winning result for the fate of the railroad. The first segment of the W&OD trail opens in Falls Church, with its success leading to further trail paving.
- 1982** The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority completely acquired the use of the railroad right-of-way.
- 1984** The Dulles Toll Road opens, extending the Dulles Access Road on both sides. A later extension opens in 1985, connecting these roads to Interstate 66.
- 1987** The Metropolitan Washington Airports Act of 1986 transfers all Dulles airport property from the FAA to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA).
- 1988** W&OD trail construction completes; the entire length from Falls Church to Leesburg is now a paved bike trail.
- 1998** Metropolitan Area Exchange-East (MAE-East), a large internet peering exchange, is relocated to Northern Virginia.
- 2004** Formal approval is given for the construction of a DC metro connection to Dulles Airport.
- 2009** The State of Virginia enacts a data center tax exemption. Incentives include a 6% sales and use tax exemption on server, generation, chillers, and server-related equipment, and tax deductibility of recruitment and training cost.
- 2014** Phase I (estimated \$2.6 billion) of the Silver Line Metro opens.
- 2018** Dulles airport surpasses Reagan airport as DC's busiest airport.
- 2019** Arlington is selected as the location for Amazon's second headquarters.
- 2022** Phase II (estimated \$2 billion) of the Silver Line Metro opens to, after significant delays. The Coronavirus pandemic cratered an already flagging public transit ridership, in an increasingly wealthy, work-from-home county.
- 2023** Construction for a new (estimated \$675 million) airport concourse at Dulles (replacing Concourse A) begins.



*Covert Operations*



**Several events in the first part of the 20th century** reconfigured industry and infrastructure in the United States. The mobilization for World War I and the end of 1945 pushed the American economy into a period of growth following the Great Depression. Government spending on infrastructure and capital investment in the war effort transformed the economy, including that of the automobile industry. For example, the Ford Motor Company received massive contracts for military vehicles. Around the same time, the utility of a road system for moving military vehicles captured the imagination of presidents, and a promise of individual exploration and freedom captured the imaginations of the everyday citizen. Massive government spending went hand in hand with militarization of infrastructure and economy, all bolstered by technological developments. The invention and deployment of the nuclear bomb at the end of WWII heralded an era of struggle for global hegemony between US-led capitalist order and Soviet Union-led communist order.



**Events in the latter part of the 20th century** fleshed out and reacted to the expansion in federal government activity and a few decades of capitalist expansion. Industries see an acceleration in violence, actual and implied, of the capitalist economy. Industrialized societies – those who are vulnerable, and therefore exploitable as cheap labor and resource markets – left in the wake of US anti-communist activities throughout the Cold War era. Domestically, the United States indulges in the commodity lifestyle that globalization and earlier infrastructural investment affords. Federal authority is increasingly delegated back to more localized authorities, except in the case of the military and intelligence industrial complex.



**Now in the 21st century**, we see the fruition of 20th century activities. We are beginning to see the environmental and economic consequences of the 20th century's growth, as well as the creation of federal authority (and the efforts for accountability) to local authorities, which in turn delegated authority to transportation and energy companies. These efforts, are largely unaccountable to anyone except shareholders, who themselves are stand-ins for "the profit motive". Has made consumption king, while means of production and political economies become ever-more obscured through layers of technological, legal, and corporate bureaucracy, spread out in diffuse supply-chain webs and clouds. Transportation infrastructure projects in the imperial core are largely manifestations of aspirational lifestyles of convenience and recreation. As we continue to grapple with worsening climate change, we may yet see another shift in energy paradigms.