The Torrijos-Carter Treaties: Panamanian Sovereignty and United States Neocolonialism in Cold War Panama

By Emma Regan

University of Vermont

Department of History

Supervised by Professor Sarah Osten

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mentor and advisor, Professor Sarah Osten, for her untiring support for me while I worked on this project. Her advice and encouragement were invaluable to me, and I could not have accomplished it without her guidance and expertise.

I would also like to give a sincere thank you to the professors who reviewed my work and asked thoughtful questions during my defense: Professors Caroline Beer and Felicia Kornbluh.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of my friends and family who were interested in what I was working on and believed that I could do it.

I

Introduction, Literature Review, and Historical Context

Introduction

Panama's Cold War experience is different from countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala in many key ways, but like those countries, the US was still keen to preserve its assets and would go to great lengths to protect them. Yet, in 1977 at the height of the Cold War, the United States agreed to relinquish jurisdiction of the Panama Canal. On the outside, the US bowed to Panamanian pressure and handed over a strategic military asset and an immense generator of revenue. However, on closer examination, the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties that transferred jurisdiction of the canal and restored the Canal Zone territory to Panama still aligned with US interests in Central America.

Several questions about US policy remain unanswered in the field and require a closer investigation. Firstly, why did the United States agree to relinquish the canal in 1977, especially when barely a decade later they launched a full-scale invasion of the country? This question will investigate how US-Panamanian relations changed during Omar Torrijos' military dictatorship (1968-1981). Secondly, how do popular reactions towards the Torrijos-Carter treaty drafts reflect the increasingly neocolonial pattern of US policy towards Panama? This question is furthered by an examination into the changing definition of Panamanian sovereignty in the 1970s.

Lastly, how does an improved understanding of foreign relations with Panama inform our understanding of Cold War policy in Central America as a whole? In other words, how can we use Panama to better understand the larger history of colonialism in Latin America, from direct imperial colonialism to post-colonialism and the primary agroexport model, to neoliberalism and

neocolonialism? In what ways does Panama fit or not fit into this trajectory; how is US policy in Panama similar to and different than other Central American countries?

The renegotiation of the Panama Canal treaties in the 1970s is an excellent example of Panamanian agency in the twentieth century. Previous authors have painted the Torrijos-Carter treaties as a product of the global Cold War circumstances or as a particular success of the Carter administration's agenda, without acknowledging the active role that military dictator Omar Torrijos played in pressuring the United States to enter negotiations. We must further analyze how US-Panamanian relations changed during Omar Torrijos' military dictatorship and how the Torrijos-Carter treaty reflects neocolonialism in US policy towards Panama, in order to identify how Panama fits into Central America's Cold War patterns. Ultimately, the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties do not contradict US policy in Central America at all; the new canal arrangement aligns with the evolution of Cold War policy and still protected US interests.

Given the importance of the Panama Canal to international trade, understanding its historical background is significant to current politics and economics. Since 1903, Panama struggled to define their national identity as more than just a canal, despite continued US intervention. Regaining control over the Canal Zone and taking over administration of the canal in 1977 was a step in Panama's path towards independence from the United States. Yet, Panama is often an afterthought in modern scholarship of Central America because it does not share in the same history of brutal civil war like its neighbors. Nonetheless, enhancing our understanding of the history of US-Panamanian relations contributes to dialogue on the legacy of colonialism and interventionalism in Central America. Panamanian history is an important piece to understanding this wider puzzle of US-Central American relations during and since the Cold

War era. This thesis seeks to partly fill the gap that exists in historical scholarship about Panama to connect it to the wider historical patterns in Central America.

The first section of this paper introduces key events and the existing scholarship on Panamanian history and Panamanian-American relations. It also provides a brief overview on US intervention in Central America and Cold War history in the region, and how Panama has been included (or not) in studies on United States foreign policy in the region during the Cold War. The section is meant to point out the gaps in the historiography on Panama and provide context for the connections made in the rest of the paper.

The second section of this paper examines the canal treaty renegotiations in the 1970s, the complex figure of Panama's military dictator Omar Torrijos, and how US interests in Panama were changing. This section closely dissects the question of why the United States renegotiated the canal treaties with Panama in the 1970s, at the height of the Cold War. It will find that Omar Torrijos was an active agent in pressuring the US by leveraging the international Cold War geopolitics.

The final section of the paper turns to explore how Panamanians reacted to the new treaties; many left wing activists, politicians, or intellectuals objected to the new treaties. It exposes some of the shortcomings of Torrijos' renegotiations and explains how the US still benefitted from the treaties. It includes a brief epilogue that discusses how the new treaties and the discourse around them impacted Panama in the 1980s. It connects Panamanian protests to the treaties with the 1989 invasion, arguing that the treaties did not restore complete sovereignty to Panama.

Understanding US Intervention in Central America

US intervention in Latin America is a perpetual trend across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries since the independence of most Latin American nations in the 1820s. The US benefitted from maintaining a status quo that served American business or strategic military interests. Various US presidents would rename versions of the same interventionist strategy throughout the centuries, starting with James Monroe's Doctrine, then Theodore Roosevelt's "Big Stick" strategy, Taft exchanging physical intimidation for "Dollar Diplomacy" economic pressure, and later FDR's Good Neighbor policies.[1] Regardless of the tactics, the objective was always the same: protect US business and strategic interests. However, the justification for it evolved over the course of the centuries.

The US was content to maintain the military-oligarchic system that predominated from 1820 until the Cold War. In this period, Latin America was characterized by economic underdevelopment and wealth inequality, where the economies revolved around primary agricultural or mineral exports. In the case of Panama, due to its geographic advantage, this system was centered around the canal rather than natural resources. But with the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the United States entered a new phase of the Cold War. Revolutionaries across Latin America were increasingly inspired to challenge the pro-US, status quo governments and the elite class that backed them; this was a direct threat to American business interests. The US therefore branded any enemy as communist and a national security threat, using it as an excuse to intervene in that country. Across Latin America, the US injected monetary aid and military expertise into Latin American militaries, shoring up pro-US, anti-communist, authoritarian regimes. From 1961-1966, nine civilian governments were overthrown by their militaries,

[1] LaFeber, Walter. *Inevitable revolutions : the United States in Central America / Walter LaFeber*, 2nd ed.. ed. (New York: New York : W.W. Norton, 1993). Page 36

including Honduras in 1963. In this era, any regime that maintained order and protected private property was acceptable, regardless of if it was democratic.[2]

However, with the closing of the 1970s, US Cold War policy shifted yet again: feeling the loss in Vietnam acutely, President Nixon declared that US would no longer act as "sheriff" in the world. Instead, they should ally themselves with, and arm heavily, other countries' forces who would act as proxy policemen. Generally, his doctrine promoted increased militarism in Latin America. This would play out in both Nicaragua and El Salvador in the eighties, with the Reagan administration funneling money and supplies to counterrevolutionary forces.[3] In Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, the US trained and armed counter-revolutionary forces, resulting in long, bloody wars that further stunted Central American development in the eighties.[4] Conversely in Panama, the US apparently did not have enough leverage to handle Torrijos and evade canal treaty renegotiations.

The US has continually acted in their own interests throughout their relationship with Central America. These historical patterns in Central America have played out simultaneously in Panama throughout the twentieth century. Panama relied on the United States to uphold its initial independence from Colombia, and for the next several decades was economically dependent on the US due to the unjust terms of the initial canal treaty. Panama would spend decades advocating for renegotiations to the treaty, but it would not be until the Cold War that the small country would have the leverage it needed to flip the script on the United States. Ultimately, Panama was exploited in the same model as the rest of Central America, but its resistance to the United States took a different form from its neighbors due to these differences.

---

[2] Ibid Page 83
[3] Ibid Page 323
[4] Ibid Page 9-12

Historical Context: From the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty to the 1964 Flag Riots

"The existence of the Canal was possible because the Isthmus existed. [The Americans] invert the two: they think that the Isthmus exists because the Canal exists." [5]

Multiple countries negotiated with the Colombian government for an agreement to build a canal in the nineteenth century. Acutely aware of their geographical advantage, the elite class in Panama desired the successful completion of a canal more than anything, but depended on foreign investment to do it. They were disappointed that the Colombian government had been denying foreign companies, including American ones, the approval or support they needed to successfully build a canal. In 1899, the War of a Thousand Days broke out between Panama, locally governed by the elite political class, and the central Colombian government. The United States stepped in to repress the Panamanian rebels on behalf of Colombia, hopeful that the Colombian government would then grant the US an agreement to build the canal. When Colombia still did not grant the US a canal deal, the US intimidated Colombian forces into backing down by sending gunboats to the Panamanian coast in 1902. This ensured Panamanian independence from Colombia, but Panama's fate was now in the hands of the US and they still did not have the freedom to make their own canal deal. The US pressured Panama into signing

---

[5] Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 178
Original text: "La existencia del Canal fue posible porque existe un Istmo. Ellos invierten las cosas: Piensan que existe el Istmo porque existe el Canal."
In this expression, Isthmus does not only refer to the geographic feature, but also connotes the community that lived on it and their nationhood. In 1840, Panama declared independence from Colombia to create the Sovereign State of the Isthmus. The local elite political ruling class wanted freedom from the central Colombian government to make their own trade decisions and engage independently in foreign relations. This is an example of Panamanian nationalism taking root far before the United States was involved and the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty. While the Isthmus returned to be part of the Colombian government little more than a year later, Panamanian national consciousness had already been raised. Panamanian nationalism was organic and had always been tied to its "geographic destiny" and the canal, even before it was constructed. Panama was not a construction of the United States in 1903 and spent the rest of the century struggling against that understanding.

away the territory for and jurisdiction of the future canal.[6] Panama and the US solidified this arrangement with the 1903 Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty; however, the Panamanian signatory on the treaty was actually the Frenchman Philippe-Jean Bunau-Varilla, not a true representative of Panama.

The treaty stipulated that the United States would receive exclusive rights to build a canal across Panama and rights to the territory five miles to each side of it, creating a zone that was ten miles wide. The Canal Zone would belong to the United States "in perpetuity," a theme that would remain at the center of the struggle for Panamanian sovereignty for the rest of the century. Additionally, the US would pay Panama an annual "rent" of $250,000; this amount was, of course, a tiny fraction of the profits that the US reaped from managing the canal. Officially, the Canal Zone was regarded as an "enclave," never a true colony of the US like Puerto Rico, the Philippines, or Guam. For the rest of the twentieth century, the United States subverted Panamanian economic development by exploiting the canal. This system of neodependency distorted domestic politics because foreign investors got undue influence by leveraging their capital to have the US intervene on their behalf.

The origins of the 1903 treaty demonstrate how from the very beginning, Panamanian voices were suppressed and the US manipulated Panama to suit its own economic interests. Many older secondary sources paint Panama as a creation of the US, where the US fabricated Panama's independence movement and conflict with Colombia only to trap Panama into the predatory Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty. But while Panama did want a foreign power to build their canal since they did not have the capital to do it themselves, their nationalist independence

[6] Conniff, *Panama and the United States : the end of the alliance / Michael L. Conniff*. Page 66

movement was completely organic and had existed for decades prior to US turning its attention on the isthmus. Regardless, the unequal treaty set the tone for the next century of relations.

Almost immediately after the signing of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty, Panamanians began advocating for a fairer canal arrangement. They wanted to eliminate the concept of perpetuity, terminate US jurisdiction over the Canal Zone territory, participate in defense of the canal, and receive adequate compensation from canal tolls. The idea of an "enclave" and the matter of jurisdiction over the canal and the Zone were a source of confusion for several decades. In 1936, Panama and the US revised the treaty to clarify that the Canal Zone was a "territory of the Republic of Panama under the jurisdiction of the United States."[7] This concession was still obviously not enough for Panama to feel like their sovereignty was restored, and another significant protest occurred in 1947. Led by students carrying the Panamanian flag, protesters rallied in opposition to the suggested 1947 Filos-Hines treaty. They continued agitating until 1955, when another revision granted them a greater annuity, the right to tax canal employees, stricter contraband rules, transfer of several railroad properties, the right to build a bridge over the canal, and equal pay rates for canal employees regardless of nationality.[8] The timing of this treaty is significant, because it coincided with the Suez Crisis, when British and French forces were trying to regain control of the Suez Canal after it was nationalized by Egypt and the US backed Egypt. But while the 1955 concessions were material, they still did not touch the issue of true Panamanian sovereignty over the canal.

These are early examples of Panamanian resistance to US jurisdiction in the canal zone and their influence in politics. However, it would not be until 1964, the first major protest following

---

[7] Burns, E. Bradford. "Panama: A Search for Independence." [In English]. *Current History (pre-1986)* 72, no. 000424 (Feb 1977): 65.
[8] Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States : the end of the alliance / Michael L. Conniff*, 3rd ed.. ed. (Athens: Athens : University of Georgia Press, 2012). Page 115

the 1959 Cuban Revolution and the escalation of the Cold War in Latin America, that Panama would finally have the leverage it needed to renegotiate the canal arrangement with greater seriousness. Following a discussion of existing literature, the next chapter will examine the 1964 Flag Riots, the rise of Omar Torrijos as military dictator of Panama, and how the Cold War geopolitical circumstances finally allowed Panama the leverage it needed to renegotiate the canal treaties. The chapter following that one will reconnect the 1977 treaties to the wider Central American Cold War trends and explore how the US continued to benefit from its arrangement with Panama, regardless of the Torrijos' efforts and the new treaties.

Literature Review

Panama is understudied compared to other Central American countries, because its Cold War history is less dramatic than that of its neighbors. Panama's conflict with the US did not result in the same civil wars that embroiled several other Central American countries or the repressive military authoritarian dictatorships that characterized South America. But, there are a few notable authors who have written overviews of modern Panamanian history. Historiography on Panamanian-American relations differs greatly between English language sources written by foreign scholars and Spanish language sources written by Central Americans. Many English language sources present Panama as a creation of the United States, that was a perpetual nuisance throughout the twentieth century. This line of historiography frames Panamanian history based on the canal and its relations with the US. Outside observers tend towards a bias that denies Panamanians agency in their own history. Another side of Panamanian historiography focuses instead on Panamanian society and their internal politics, economics, and social

movements.[9] This paper largely discusses secondary sources published in English, and a mixture of both Spanish language and English primary sources.

Michael Conniff, historian of Latin America specializing in Panama and Brazil and professor at several universities in California during his career, has written two books on Panamanian-American relations. *Panama and the United States: The End of the Alliance* explores two themes: how the US-Panama relationship has always been unequal and forced, and how Panama has become a "melting pot" due to its geographical location, since even before canal construction.[10] Conniff does not discuss Omar Torrijos or his role in the treaty renegotiations beyond a passing mention. His work raises the question of why the US engaged in treaty renegotiations at the height of the Cold War, a theme most other sources are similarly unable to answer.

The United States worked with Torrijos to renegotiate the canal treaties in the 1960s, and renewed the effort in the 1970s, but few have really examined the circumstances of the 1970s and why the US felt secure enough to relinquish such a strategic asset, especially in the middle of the Cold War. Conniff does not address how Torrijos leveraged the canal and international pressure to force the US into renegotiations. Overall, true understanding of US motives in Panama in the 1970s is lacking. The circumstances of the 1970s treaty renegotiations are important, because they were carried out during an evolution in US Cold War policy; yet Panama

---

[9] Peter Szok, "Beyond the Canal: Recent Scholarship on Panama," review of Panama: Luchas Sociales y Afirmacion Nacional, Víctor Avila; Panama y la Comunicacion Interoceanica, Jorge Conte-Porras; A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panama, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna, James Howe; Charles Edward Magoon: The Panama Years, Gustavo A. Mellander, Nelly Maldonado Mellander; Panama, 9 de Enero: Que Paso y por que, Roberto N. Méndez; We Answer Only to God: Politics and the Military in Panama, 1903-1947, Thomas L. Pearcy, *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 3 (2002), http://www.jstor.org/stable/1512526.

[10] Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States : the end of the alliance / Michael L. Conniff*, 3rd ed.. ed. (Athens: Athens : University of Georgia Press, 2012). Page 4

is rarely included in historical analysis of US policy changes in Central America during this decade.

Many authors have tried to summarize US foreign policy in Central and South America in the twentieth century. These works are important to contextualizing the changes in US-Panamanian relations within Central America as a whole, pointing to trends in US policy during the era. Walter Lafeber, distinguished historian of American foreign policy, published *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* in 1993. In this book, he analyzes the history of US intervention in Central America since the revolutionary era of the early 1800s. Throughout the book, he explains how the United States created an economic system in the Western Hemisphere from which they benefitted, and their continuous efforts to preserve it, despite high human costs. Panama, with only a single reference to the canal, is entirely excluded from the discussion on these trends in Central America.

However, Lafeber also wrote a book specifically on the Panama Canal, titled *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective.* This book is primarily concerned with the various stages of treaty renegotiations, which lasted principally from 1964-1977. In this work, Lafeber examines Torrijos and characterizes him not necessarily as strongly left wing or ideological, but instead leaning authoritarian while having the personal pragmatic relationship with citizens that defines a populist.[11] Still, Lafeber's book, like Conniff's, lacks a real complex analysis of Torrijos and torrijismo, and the international diplomacy he engaged in independently from the United States. Torrijos was an active agent in bringing about the 1977 treaties, but this is obscured in many older historical investigations. It also lacks a specific analysis of what US motivations were in Panama as the Cold War evolved.

---

[11] LaFeber, *The Panama Canal : the crisis in historical perspective / Walter LaFeber*. Page 167

Authors such as Peter Sanchez, who studied the extent of influence that small states have on world politics, have limited Panama to the designation of "small state" and argued that they tend to choose neutral positions, rely on superpowers for protection, or otherwise aim to cooperate and avoid conflict, not addressing or accounting for the Non-Aligned Movement. He argues that the 1977 treaties were more of a reflection on the international Cold War circumstances than they were about any particular influence that Torrijos or Panama had.[12] He dismisses the 1964 Flag Riots and Panamanian nationalism as a part of the general anti-colonialism that swept the world after World War II. He also explains how the canal began to decline in economic and strategic significance to the US as the Cold War waned. Lastly, he argues that it was actually a great liability for the US to maintain a physical military presence in Panama, because it would discredit them in an increasingly decolonized world.

More recent scholarship has started to illuminate how Omar Torrijos was an active agent in leveraging the Canal and the international circumstances in order to pressure the United States into a more favorable treaty arrangement for Panama. Scholars have examined Torrijos as an individual figure and they have compared him to other Latin American or Third World leaders at that time, both military and civilian. Most agree that Torrijos was not particularly ideologically aligned, but it is only newer scholarship that has started to argue that Torrijos was strategic in with whom he aligned and when. Tom Long, for example, frames his study on Torrijos' activities during the 1970s as filling a literature gap, because fewer studies focus on the years leading up to 1977 and the origins of the negotiations themselves.[13] Similarly, in his article

---

[12] Sánchez, Peter M. "Panama: A 'Hegemonized' Foreign Policy." In *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior*, edited by Jeanne A.K. Hey, 53–74. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003. Page 54, 65-69

[13] Tom Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (2014).

exploring the relationship between Torrijos and the Sandinistas, Jonathan Brown explains that he found Torrijos interacted significantly more with foreign governments than with Washington, and yet so much literature around Panama is framed only through the "prism" of Washington.[14]

The next section will address these unanswered questions about Omar Torrijos, examining whether his regime was similar to any of his contemporaries' in Latin America and how he leveraged the canal in the global Cold War to pressure the United States into a new treaty. Then the final section will continue to explore how the treaties, regardless of being branded a success in 1977, followed the evolving patterns of US hemispheric hegemony and neocolonialism in the later stages of the Cold War.

[14] Brown, Jonathan C. "Omar Torrijos and the Sandinista Revolution." [In English]. *The Latin Americanist* 66, no. 1 (Mar 2022). Page 25

II

Omar Torrijos and the Canal Treaty Renegotiations

The 1960s: the Flag Riots and a military coup

The escalation of the Cold War in Central America impacted US-Panamanian relations. In the 1960s, the question of Panamanian sovereignty over the Canal Zone came to a head. In January 1964, Panamanian students rose up to protest continued US occupation of the Canal Zone. They attempted to raise a Panamanian flag in the Zone but were met with police. In the ensuing chaos, several students died and many others were wounded. The demonstrations became known as the Flag Riots, and the students who died were lauded by nationalist Panamanians as anti-Yankee martyrs. The Flag Riots were the turning point for treaty renegotiation, with the US starting to take them more seriously afterward.

President Johnson and Panamanian President Marco Aurelio Robles agreed on a set of guidelines for a new round of treaty renegotiations. The 1967 Johnson-Robles agreement (never formally ratified as an actual treaty), would have created a "Joint Administration of the Panama Canal;" this Administration, made up of five Americans and four Panamanians, would advance but not totally achieve Panamanian jurisdiction in the Canal Zone. It would also give the US exclusive rights in Panama to potentially build a more modern sea-level canal. And finally, it would allow the US to continue all of its military operations, relevant or not to the "defense" of the Panama Canal, and continue to allow for it until 2004 or even 2067. The US stalled discussions on the treaties for several more years and many Panamanians were still not satisfied with the agreements anyway.

In 1968, the Panamanian national guard overthrew the recently elected civilian oligarchic government led by Arnulfo Arias. The national guard did this as a response to Arias' threat that he would replace top officers because they were growing too powerful. Outside of maintaining their own power, the new military government did not have much of an agenda. It would be another two years before Torrijos emerged as the clear leader of the new military government, establishing himself as an alternative to the pro-US, elite oligarchic government that had dominated Panamanian politics until recently.[15]

Torrijos combined the Panamanian version of *machismo* with his military background to create a populist movement known as *torrijismo*.[16] In 1970-1971, the government that Torrijos was consolidating could best be described as leftist-nationalist. In 1972 he wrote a new Constitution that simultaneously changed the structure of government and enacted a labor code. Torrijos supported many reform programs including agrarian reform, redistribution of income, public housing, healthcare, education, and rural development in general. But the primary agenda of his regime was pressuring the US into renegotiating the canal treaties. He campaigned on several goals for the future of Panama: to end the perpetuity clause in the treaty proposals, abolish the Canal Zone and return the territory to Panama, and remove all US military presence.[17]

Cold War Geopolitical Circumstances

In the decades after World War II, many previously colonized countries were engaged in their own independence struggles. In the post WWII world order, each nation wanted a chance at

[15] Villanueva, Miriam Elizabeth. "Third Worldism and the Panama Canal: Liberating the Isthmus, 1971–1978." Page 348
[16] Ibid. Page 349
[17] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*."437

self-determination, free from pressure and influence from hegemonic powers. For several countries in Latin America, that meant throwing off the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, and resisting the economic and political pressure that the US enforced. For Torrijos and Panama, the anti-colonialist rhetoric was even more direct, because the US had jurisdiction of their physical territory.[18] This was at the same time as the US and the USSR divided the world by claiming allies to their side in the Cold War.

The geopolitical climate of the Cold War was an opportunity for Torrijos to challenge the US by taking advantage of the international shifting power balance. The 1970s were a better era for small states to exercise their power than the 60s or 80s were. Several factors had weakened the US by this time: the USSR had achieved military parity and the US was losing the war in Vietnam. The Vietnam war showed Panama the potential that small nations had to fight for their independence. It also opened the US up to international criticism for the intervention, not to mention embarrassment for the loss.[19] In addition to the international self-determination movement, the United States was experiencing domestic conflicts such as the anti-Vietnam war movement and civil rights protests.[20] Lastly, as the Sandinista conflict in Nicaragua escalated, the US could no longer realistically leverage the possibility of a Nicaraguan canal over Panama. The Torrijos-Carter treaties were not simply successful because of their timing; it was not a passive failure on the part of US but an active victory for Panama.

Torrijos and the Non-Aligned Movement

[18] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 539
[19] Villanueva, Miriam Elizabeth. "Third Worldism and the Panama Canal: Liberating the Isthmus, 1971–1978." Page 350
[20] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings."434-435

Torrijos was non-ideological, at least publicly. His primary agenda was to leverage the global Cold War and take advantage of any support Panama could gain from international allies for its nationalist agenda. Torrijos sought to remain friends with the US but also "diversify" Panama's international network of allies.[21] To do this, he brought Panama into the fold of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The NAM, formally established in Yugoslavia in 1961 by the leaders of Yugoslavia, Egypt, Ghana, and Indonesia, was designed as a legitimate alternative movement for smaller countries to join instead either of the two major Cold War power blocs. The NAM was concerned with disarmament, defending new nations in upholding their political sovereignty, and reforming the global capitalist system.

Abroad, Torrijos collaborated with the leaders of the NAM, to build a coalition of states that formed a new, third way forward, as an alternative to either the West or Soviet Union. Each member of the NAM had differences and nuances but they were united in their refusal to be a pawn in Cold War politics. Torrijos' international diplomacy with the NAM and refusal to align with the US on Cold War matters frustrated the US immensely.[22] His nonalignment is an example of resistance by Panama, who was subject for so long to US manipulation and intervention. Torrijos leveraged the canal to engage in independent foreign relations in the 1970s, which he then turned around to use against the US by putting negative attention on the status of the canal.

Torrijos did not establish formal relations with the USSR or with the People's Republic of China, ostensibly to maintain national unity by avoiding accusations of communism from pro-

[21] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 547
[22] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 552

US Panamanian oligarchs.[23] Nonetheless, he did have Panama engage in cultural and commercial exchanges with those countries. Yet, he established formal diplomatic relations with Hungary and North Korea, both communist countries. At the same time, he also recognized Taiwan, the Republic of China. These specific examples are meant to highlight that Torrijos did not align himself with either the US or the USSR specifically during the 1970s. He simply cherry-picked which allyships would serve Panamanian interests, regardless of if they aligned with US interests.[24]

The State Department also acknowledged the communist panic of the Cold War by assuring Americans that conceding the canal to Panama would not play into the hands of the Soviet Union: "interested Americans have questioned the degree of Communist influence in Panama... Panama maintains normal diplomatic relations with Cuba, but Cuban influence is likewise limited, and Panama has no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union."[25] Torrijos had been teasing a relationship between Panama and Cuba to further pressure the United States, playing on Domino Theory weakness. Additionally, Cuba was the first member to join the NAM from the Americas and came to play an even greater role in the NAM in the 1970s. As such, US officials and newspapers such as *Human Events* tried to paint Torrijos as a puppet of Cuba, simply because he was not explicitly a US puppet.

Integrating Panama into the NAM was part of Torrijos' strategy to pressure the United States. He saw Panama's goals and those of the NAM to be the same: "Panama belongs to the movement of non-aligned countries, a club of independent nations that are not willing to take

---

[23] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 548
[24] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 548
[25] *Panama Canal: The New Treaties*. 1977. Washington, Dept. of State. Page 13

orders from the metropolis of a superpower."[26] In 1976 the fifth annual NAM summit was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In his own words, Torrijos went all the way across the world to this summit to offer the Panamanian cause to what he hoped would be a sympathetic audience: "I went to explain our problem, to offer our cause as one of the noblest flags in the struggle of oppressed and harassed peoples. I was sure that Panama would find the solidarity of those who also fight underdevelopment and dependency." [27] Panama's was the delegation to have traveled the farthest miles to be present for the conference in Sri Lanka. Torrijos thought that Panama, being a small country in conflict with a world superpower, would earn the sympathy and solidarity of the other non-aligned countries. To do this, he used rhetoric that connect Panama to other Third World or Non Aligned countries: "Panama feels… the fight that other peoples are waging to eradicate these same evils… Our problems are common; Our desires are the same." [28]

Torrijos was not the only one using Cold War rhetoric to connect Panama to the rest of the Third World. Jorge Turner was a prominent intellectual, journalist, author, professor of law and political science at the Universidad Nacional Autónomo de Mexico. He worked as a journalist for several Mexican and Panamanian newspapers over the course of his life, including *La Estrella* (Panama) and *El País* (Mexico). He served for several years as the president of the Journalists Union in Panama and founded the school of journalism at the national University of Panama. Given his political activity and pro-democratic stance, Turner and many other leftists

---

[26] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 72
Original text: "Panamá pertenece al movimiento de países no alineados, un club de naciones independientes que no están dispuestas a recibir la línea de su conducta internacional desde la metrópolis de una superpotencia."
[27] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 41
Original text: "Fui a explicar nuestro problema, a ofrecer nuestra causa como una de las banderas más nobles en la lucha de los pueblos oprimidos y vejados. Estaba seguro de que encontraría la solidaridad de los que igualmente combaten el subdesarrollo y la dependencia."
[28] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 21-23
Original text: "Panama las siente como siente la lucha que están librando otros pueblos para erradicar estos mismo males… Nuestros problemas son comunes; nuestros deseos son los mismos."

and intellectuals were exiled from Panama after Torrijos and the military came to power. For this reason, most of his opinions were published in Mexico but not in Panama due to censorship. While Turner was exiled from Panama, he shared the struggle to regain sovereignty from the United States from afar, and he and Torrijos were not necessarily in disagreement. He advocated the same strategy of connecting Panama to other Third World countries: "The efforts to raise awareness in Panama… must be inserted… within a broader understanding that includes the vast spectrum of the fight against neocolonialism and for economic development and the suppression of unjust privileges."[29] Torrijos and Turner both saw the strategic merit in connecting Panama to other countries struggling for independence and the right to control their own natural resources. Even though the Panama Canal is not a natural resource to be extracted, the same neodependent economic pattern applied.

But beyond just rhetoric, Torrijos also leveraged his position on the summit's Economic Committee to compare Panama's cause with other nations' struggles. The committee approved a resolution "on the recovery of the natural resources of the non-aligned countries, their raw materials, and their geographical position." [30] Together, the committee also recommended the formation of an international Bank that would keep offices in the countries of the Third World and offer them the loans or other financial backing they needed to make independent decisions. Torrijos explained that the Third World countries with scarce resources only stood a chance if they engaged in reciprocity with each other. Torrijos left the conference feeling secure in the

---

[29] Turner, Jorge. *Colonialismo en Panamá*. Not dated. Preserved and digitalized through the Universidad Autónomo de la Ciudad de Mexico.
Original text: "Los esfuerzos concientizadores en Panamá… deben insertarse… dentro de una concepción más amplia que incluya el vasto espectro de la lucha contra el neocolonialismo y por el desarrollo económico y la supresión de injustos privilegios."
[30] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 47
Original text: "sobre la recuperación de los recursos naturales de los países non-alineados, sus materias primas y su posición geográfica."

allyships that he was making in the NAM: "We have attained many more nations fighting for our Panamanian nationalism. This forces us Panamanians to live up to the affection and great respect that we have been bestowed across the world." [31]

After the NAM summit in Sri Lanka, Torrijos toured Europe to curry favor for the Panamanian cause: he visited France, Italy, West Germany, Finland, and Yugoslavia, among others. This tour brought greater attention to Panama and the treaty renegotiations, contributing to the momentum for the Kissinger-Tack Agreement of 1974, which stipulated new prerequisites for another round of treaty renegotiations. The US was starting to feel some international pressure, kindled by Torrijos, to concede to Panamanian demands for a more favorable canal treaty.[32] Torrijos kept his observations and experiences to share with the Panamanian public via radio or wire throughout the trip. For example, he shared that in England, the prime minister told Torrijos that he supported a neutral agreement between the US and Panama, because Britain had many ships passing through the canal on a regular basis and depended commercially on the canal operating smoothly. Additionally, in Finland, Torrijos connected with President Kekkonen, who assured Torrijos that he agreed that the important thing was that the canal "has the love and respect of the people in whose territory it is located." [33] In Madrid, President Suarez of Spain promised that Torrijos could count on his support in the renegotiation process.

Torrijos' non-ideological strategy was shrewd. He arranged either personal visits or direct monetary aid to the countries with whom he wanted to align. That included Gamal Abdel Nasser

---

[31] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 51
Original text: "hemos logrado que dentro de nuestro nacionalismo panameño militen muchas naciones. Esto nos obliga a los panameños a estar a la altura del cariño y el gran respeto que se nos tiene en el mundo."
[32] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 549
[33] Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 90
Original text: "la única defensa del Canal es que permanezca neutral y, lo más importante, que cuente con el cariño y el respeto del pueblo en cuyo territorio está ubicado."

of Egypt, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia. Torrijos supported the revolutionary independence movements of the Polisario Front in Western Sahara and Guinea Bissau from Portugal (he allowed Guinean students to attend university in Panama).[34] In the Middle East, he formed relationships with Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi, a Libyan revolutionary.

Torrijos' engagement with the Non-Aligned Movement is significant because no other Central American nations officially joined in the 1970s or early 80s. The term "non-alignment" became a buzzword and was increasingly associated with defending developing nations' interests; therefore many larger countries around the world were cautious in engaging with it.[35] President Lopez Mateos and the Mexican government flirted with the NAM in the 1960s and early 1970s, offering ambiguous rhetorical support on numerous occasions. Mexico cautiously aligned themselves with the Third World. Like Torrijos in Panama, Mexico leveraged their unique relationship with the US, taking advantage of the fact that the US depended on their Good Neighbor alliance to uphold American hegemony in the hemisphere. Mexico therefore demonstrated gestures of friendship with the US while strategically emphasizing Mexican sovereignty, knowing that the US could not afford hostilities.[36] But there were limits even to this, and Mexico never formally joined the NAM or formed independent diplomatic relations with Moscow or China, because they were concerned of the political repercussions from the US. [37] Even Mexico, a country far larger and more powerful, with its own special circumstances with

[34] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 548
[35] Zolov, Erica. 2020. *The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties*. Durham: Duke University Press. Page 201
[36] Ibid Page 50
[37] Ibid Page 233

the US, did not have the leverage to stand up to the United States so obviously the way Panama did.

Torrijos did not slow down after meeting with many of these high ranking international leaders. He also attempted to win favor in smaller ways. In September of 1977, after flying over South Carolina on his way to Washington and observing a dam in that state from above, Torrijos sent a letter to the governor, comparing the dam to the canal and expressing that he hoped the governor would be in solidarity with Panama.[38] He did this in anticipation of the US Congress debate on whether to ratify the Torrijos-Carter treaties once they were finished with negotiations.

The 1973 UN Security Council Meeting

Torrijos also engaged with the UN Security Council (UNSC), using it as a platform to launch the Panamanian cause on the global stage. The 1973 UNSC meeting was a crucial turning point for US-Panamanian relations and the treaty renegotiations. While the US desired that this matter be handled more privately and quietly between the US and Panama, Torrijos wanted to get the world's attention in order to hold the US accountable for the promises they might make. He allegedly spent $100,000 on improvements in the city in preparation for this meeting, including security, telecommunications facilities, and building renovations.[39]

In 1971, Torrijos presented at the UN in New York, and earned Panama the right to host the 1973 UN Security Council meeting in Panama City. During this 1971 meeting, he brought up Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal from foreign shareholders in 1956. India, Kenya, Sudan, China, Austria, France, Yugoslavia, and all the Latin American countries voiced their support for Panama. Australia and the United Kingdom were more lukewarm but ultimately

[38] Torrijos, Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 56
[39] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*."431

conceded. [40] It was particularly embarrassing for the US to have this happen in New York, with the American press and public watching.[41]

With this 1973 UNSC meeting, Torrijos sought the "moral backing of the world" and appealed to the international buzzword ideals of justice, fairness, decolonization, and anti-imperialism. In the opening remarks, which are customarily supposed to be more of simply a welcome address, Torrijos started off by comparing his country's struggles to others who fight colonialism.[42] He used language that united Panama with other Asian and African nations who were fighting:

> "We fought for the right of the country to decide for itself its own standard of conduct, without foreign interference; for maintaining the people's right to choose freely their friends or enemies; because no one denies any community its right to exploit and take advantage their own resources." [43]

He declared that it is every sovereign country's right to determine how to use its natural resources or geographic advantages, including a canal. He specifically evoked the Chilean example and Salvador Allende's proclamation of Chile's right to nationalize their copper industry. In 1970, Salvador Allende indicated that he would nationalize Chile's copper industry without paying foreign shareholders any form of indemnification, citing figures that they had already made more than was fair and Chile should not be obligated to pay for expropriating a

---

[40] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*."442
[41] Villanueva, Miriam Elizabeth. "Third Worldism and the Panama Canal: Liberating the Isthmus, 1971–1978." Page 351-2
[42] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*."443
[43] Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 21
Original text: "Pelea[mos] por el derecho de que la patria decidiera por sí misma su propia norma de conducta, sin injerencias extrañas; por mantener el derecho de los pueblos a escoger libremente sus amigos o enemigos; porque nadie le regatee a ningún pueblo del mundo el derecho a la explotación y aprovechamiento de sus propios recursos, porque no se nos niegue el derecho a elegir nuestra propia forma de vida; porque no se nos presione cuando queremos trazar nuestra propia política internacional y el derecho inherente que tiene cada pueblo a poder comunicarse libremente con el pueblo que quiera."

resource that had already been overexploited. Mentioning Chile's copper industry is significant, because comparing the Panama Canal to the copper industry highlights how the United States had profited off of the canal for over sixty years and therefore Panama should not owe the US anything for handing over jurisdiction.

Torrijos then begged the gathered diplomats and the United Nations not to be passive spectators in Panama's struggle, but instead join in advocating for it. He posed a series of provoking questions directly to the Security Council: "Is it fair to disrespect a flag that has never been used as a banner of aggression? Would it be moral to deny a country its inherent natural advantages? In what modern legal dictionary is the concept of perpetuity enshrined as a basis for negotiation?" [44] Here, two years before the Torrijos-Carter treaties were decided, Torrijos prompted the international community to assess the implications of "perpetuity" and counter the United States' insistence on maintaining it.

The assembly was more open to the anti-US sentiment than the US anticipated. Panama and Peru introduced a motion to have the 1903 canal treaty abrogated, and they received support from Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Sudan, Yugoslavia, and later China and the USSR. Each country had their own reasons for backing Panama: some wanted to embarrass the US as a rival, some wanted to achieve greater Latin American unity, some sympathized with Panama's desire to take advantage of its own natural resources, some sympathized with the theme of decolonization.[45] But ultimately, they were united in their desire for self-determination and sovereignty, free from US interference.

---

[44] Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 24
Original text: "¿Es justo no respetar a una bandera que jamás ha sido utilizada como estandarte de una agresión? ¿Será moral negarle a un país sus ventajas naturales que le son inherentes…? ¿En qué diccionario jurídico moderno se consagra el concepto de perpetualidad como base de negociación?"
[45] Long, "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*."443

This UNSC meeting also got the attention of Henry Kissinger, who noted Panama's potential to incite widespread discontentment in LA over this vestige of colonialism. Discussed below, along with Nelson Rockefeller, Kissinger became less concerned about holding on to the canal as he was about sabotaging relations across the rest of Latin America over the matter. Additionally, Kissinger didn't want to seem isolated on any key global issue to the USSR.[46] After 1973, Panama held more leverage over the United States than ever before.

In Central America and around the world, conflicts between leftist revolutionaries and their conservative authoritarian governments were escalating. Nicaragua and El Salvador found themselves fighting in brutal civil wars, with leftist guerrillas fighting right wing governments backed by the US. While all of these countries wanted to remove the outsized influence of the US in their affairs, Panama's resistance to the US took the form of international diplomacy and strategic alliances rather than civil war, due in large part to its ability to leverage the canal.

On Panamanian Solidarity with Central America

Torrijos consistently contradicted US interests in Central America. Towards the end of the decade, Torrijos lent the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) a certain degree of support. Somoza acted on behalf of the US once or twice to dissuade Torrijos from pursuing the Canal treaty and Torrijos perceived Somoza as a barrier to wider Central American unity because he supported US interests in the region.[47] As long as Somoza was there, the US also benefitted from the potential of having a Nicaraguan canal. Torrijos provided the FSLN with some arms (similar to how Venezuela, Mexico, and Costa Rica did), and organized the Victoriano Lorenzo

[46] Ibid page 448
[47] Brown, Jonathan C. "Omar Torrijos and the Sandinista Revolution." [In English]. *The Latin Americanist* 66, no. 1 (Mar 2022): Page 26-28

Brigade of Panamanian volunteers, led by Hugo Spadafora, to fight alongside them.[48] In 1978, when the Sandinistas recovered several hostages after storming Somoza's governmental palace, those hostages were received in Panama for safety and recovery. At the same time, however, he maintained official diplomatic ties with the Somoza government in Managua in the 1970s, though he did pressure the US to help negotiate a compromise where Somoza could step down and install a center-left government.[49] Nonetheless, as Cuba became closer to the FSLN throughout the decade, Torrijos' support became more tenuous.

Torrijos was more limited in the support he offered the FMLN in El Salvador in the early years of the Salvadoran Civil War, again because he was concerned about Cuba's apparent sponsorship of it, or at the least the general public's understanding that they were connected. He attempted to mediate that conflict, but did not provide the FMLN arms. He was concerned about embroiling all of Central America in a Cold War proxy conflict between the US, USSR, and Cuba.[50] However, Torrijos again demonstrated his shrewd political strategy and careful international public relations campaign: in 1980, he offered 350 Salvadoran refugees, mostly women and children, to relocate to Panama in a little settlement called Ciudad Romero. This way, he could take a public stance against the violence committed against civilians in El Salvador, without the perception that he was embracing guerrillas, taking a political side in the conflict, or getting more actively involved. Soon after that, Torrijos reversed his stance and

[48] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 550
[49] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 550
[50] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 550

started to secretly help Honduras smuggle arms to El Salvador, but he clung to the public image of nonintervention in that conflict.[51]

Jorge Turner also speculated on solidarity between the Central American nations, and how it was connected to a larger anti-colonial project:

> "There is dawning understanding that this project must include... the disappearance of foreign military bases;… [and] encompass a position against monopolistic capital and transnational corporations and that include mobilization in favor of Guatemala and El Salvador, considering that ethical support for Central America underpins our own objectives." [52]

Turner was referencing the ongoing conflicts in Central America and speculating that if Panama could remove US military presence entirely, they could create greater Central American unity and even withstand increasing neocolonial pressure. Greater consensus and mutual support across Central America would certainly threaten American military interests across the region.

The US on Torrijos and the Canal Question

Torrijos and Washington were deeply suspicious of each other. Torrijos was afraid the US would either kidnap him or plot a counter-coup against him, meanwhile the US had been content with the previous, status quo administrations and did not know what to expect from

---

[51] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 550

[52] Turner, Jorge. *Omar Torrijos: Causas y consecuencias de su muerte*. 1981
Original text: "Entre los torrijistas de izquierda, que los hay, y entre los oposicionistas de izquierda, que también los hay, se abre paso la comprensión de que este proyecto debe incluir ... la desaparición de las bases militares extranjeras y en favor de un canal panameño; que abarquen una postura contra el capital monopolice y las transnacionales y que comprendan la movilización en favor de Guatemala y El Salvador, considerando que un apoyo eficaz a Centroamérica apuntala nuestros propios objetivos"

Torrijos.[53] In that era, US discourse on the canal was heavily intertwined with anticommunism.[54] They feared Torrijos' physical expression: he wore military fatigues while touring the country and often held a cigar, reminiscent of Castro in the minds of Americans. The Domino Theory was still predominant in Central American foreign policy and the US believed that conceding in any part on the treaty renegotiations, was a sign of weakness and would threaten the US hegemony in the western hemisphere.

Casey VanSise, in his article on leftist military dictatorships in Latin America, characterizes Torrijos as a *rosa-golpista,* along with contemporary dictators in Peru and Bolivia. "Rosa-golpistas" were the military governments that were progressive or even socialist, counterparts to the right-wing military authoritarianism that characterized Chile, Argentina, or Brazil, states that were closely aligned with the US.[55] In a post- Cuban Revolution world, these *rosa-golpista* leaders maintained a balance between leftist rhetoric and policies, and peace with a Cold War- obsessed United States, while their Latin American neighbors either fell into guerrilla civil wars or to right wing military authoritarianism. Víctor Paz Estenssoro, founder of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) in 1941, led the Bolivian Revolution of 1952. The MNR of the 1950s and early 1960s was a leftist reformist party that sought to nationalize the country's mining industry, institute agrarian reform, and extend universal suffrage to all adult citizens. But, he cooperated with the US and the Bolivian military enough to keep US intervention at bay. Meanwhile, in 1968 (the same year as the coup in Panama) General Juan Velasco Alvarado led coup in Peru and formed the Revolutionary Government of the Armed

---

[53] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 544
[54] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 542
[55] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 539-540

Forces. Velasco, like Torrijos, was highly nationalistic and suspicious of the US. He pursued leftist reforms as well, nationalizing several industries and instituting reforms, but he remained staunchly anti-communist.

But as the Cold War evolved and as tensions rose across Central America, the US began to perceive the Panama Canal problem differently. Shortly after Torrijos rose to power, President Nixon sent the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, to Panama to form an opinion on Torrijos and report back. Rockefeller wrote to Nixon that Torrijos embodied a new type of leader in Latin America, one that combined authoritarianism with social and economic progress. He was concerned that Torrijos' regime in Panama was vulnerable to "extreme nationalism," given Panama's historical "ideological unreliability."[56] Rockefeller advised Nixon that making an enemy of Torrijos would be dangerous; he feared that alienating Torrijos would send Panama into closer alliance with the USSR. Instead, being friendly with and even directly aiding Torrijos would detract from the worst of Panamanian resentment toward the US.[57] Ultimately, Rockefeller's conclusions show how Panama fits into a larger Central American context: the United States was willing to renegotiate the canal treaties, and give up a key strategic and economic asset in a highly volatile region, because the alternative was to further destablize the region. Therefore, agreeing to relinquish jurisdiction of the canal in the middle of the Cold War was not a contradiction but aligned with wider regional foreign policy.

Henry Kissinger later agreed with Rockefeller on the importance of courting Torrijos' friendship, saying:

---

[56] Ibid Page 545-546. From the US Congress, Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Rockefeller Report on Latin America: Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., 1969.

[57] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 545-546

> "These stories [of US intervention] reinforce his suspicions, and he may become more nationalistic in his relations with us. [...] Thus our future attitudes and responses to his programs and requests will be important in overcoming suspicions and shaping his perceptions of the value of close cooperation with the US."[58]

Kissinger's response to Torrijos then highlights the leverage Panama had over the United States in the 1970s. His remarks led to the 1974 Kissinger Tack agreement, which set forth the procedures and standards by which to negotiate the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties. This was a step forward for Panama from the previous Johnson-Robles draft proposal of the treaties. Washington finally realized it could not have it both ways: they could not continue to maintain direct jurisdiction of the canal and the Canal Zone at the same time as they were fighting to keep leftist influence from spreading in Central America.

Rockefeller and Kissinger's remarks in these early years would continue to echo in Washington for the next decade as the official justification for renegotiating the treaties. In 1977, with the completion of the new treaties, the State Department published a short informational pamphlet explaining to a US audience in accessible language why the US renegotiated the treaties, how the Torrijos-Carter treaties still protected US interests, and what the main provisions were:

> "Today, our best way of insuring permanent access to the canal is not our exclusive or perpetual control of its operations, but rather the active and harmonious support of the Panamanian population…In today's world, our control of the civilian government in the zone is no longer necessary to operate or defend the canal itself. It contributes only

---

[58] VanSise, "Reaganites and Rosa-golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." Page 545-546
From the United States Department of State, *Documents on American Republics, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, ed. the Historical Office, vol. E-10* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009), 2

> tensions with Panamanian citizens, who resent- as we would- the presence of a foreign power running a government within their territory."[59]

In the pamphlet, the US does not even accept responsibility for the unjust circumstances of the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty, framing Panamanian dissatisfaction passively without explaining how the US had taken advantage of the situation in 1903 to coerce Panama into an unequal treaty.[60] But the pamphlet goes on to say that the new treaties "will silence the accusations of colonialism and disarm the propaganda of our foreign adversaries, enabling us to pursue with enhanced respect and credibility our broad national goals in trade, defense, human rights, and world leadership."[61] This rhetoric is no doubt in response to the efforts, discussed below, of Omar Torrijos to align Panama with the Non-Aligned Movement and court international sympathy. To the US government in the 1970s, the canal question was one of national security; keeping the canal would be more likely to cause instability in Panama than it would be to peacefully negotiate its transfer. In this way, the canal treaty renegotiations align with wider US national security policy in Central America.

The State Department's language therefore both dodges responsibility for imperial ambitions on the canal throughout the century, while explaining that the US needed to relinquish the canal in order to save their international reputation. While holding on to the Panama Canal, the US could hardly claim to be upholders of democracy and self-determination around the world. Torrijos sought to capitalize on that hypocrisy to bring the international community to his side, and put the US in a precarious position of having to walk back on its rhetorical (if not practiced) ideals.

---

[59] *Panama Canal: The New Treaties*. 1977. Washington, Dept. of State. Page 1-3
[60] *Panama Canal: The New Treaties*. 1977. Washington, Dept. of State. Page 4
[61] *Panama Canal: The New Treaties*. 1977. Washington, Dept. of State. Page 15

III

Legacy of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties

In September of 1977, Torrijos and Carter signed the treaties. The first of the two parts, called the "Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal" or the Neutrality Treaty for short, stipulated that the United States could intervene with its military to protect the Canal against any threat that compromised its neutrality. The second part, called the "Panama Canal Treaty" stated that the US would relinquish control of the Canal Zone and it would cease to exist in 1979, and that Panama would assume control over the canal itself on December 31st, 1999. It also laid out a timeline for the gradual transference of control over the course of the next two decades.

The timing of the Torrijos-Carter treaties is also significant. It is important that Torrijos was actively leveraging the international Cold War circumstances to pressure the US into renegotiating the treaties. But additionally, in late 1976 the US elected President Jimmy Carter. He was the first Democratic president since Nixon's election in 1968. His foreign policy model was to achieve stability by promoting democracy and human rights, at the very least rhetorically and in many instances by withholding US monetary aid to those ends. In stark contrast to the previous Cold War administrations, Carter criticized the human rights violations of regimes in countries like Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil. While momentum had been building for years, he was the president to finally finish treaty negotiations and to move them through the US Congress for ratification despite high opposition. Many speculate that these treaties are one of the biggest reasons that he was not reelected for a second term. Carter received strong criticism from the American public for signing the treaties. President Ronald Reagan, elected in 1980,

referenced the Panama Canal many times during his campaign; the rise of the Reagan Right in the 1980s in the US was a response to the perceived weaknesses of the Carter administration, and their soft attitudes towards crises like the canal question.

Panamanian Voices Protesting in 1977

In late 1977, pending the ratification of the Torrijos-Carter treaties in each country, many Panamanian voices emerged expressing their objection. There were two primary concerns with the treaties: that they continued to provide for US military operations in Panama and that they did nothing to combat the neocolonial trend that was replacing direct territorial colonization. The voices discussed in this section highlight the limitations of the 1977 treaties. They point out where the 1977 treaties failed in the end to fully confront the US as hegemon in the hemisphere. These Panamanian voices contradict the narrative put forth by both the US and Panamanian governments that the treaties were the solution to the canal question. They are the connector between the official publications or rhetoric of the Torrijos government, and the wider revolutionary trend in Cold War Central America.

Many of them were intellectuals and activists, who studied political movements and demonstrations in Latin American history or participated in them firsthand. They are all leftists and nationalists, who were pro-democracy and anti-United States. They are not the first ones to analyze and protest US military intervention or neocolonialism; but their voices and lived experiences are important to bringing Panama into the wider discussion on Central America. Many of them were connected to other leftist revolutionaries in Latin America and they were in dialogue with other contemporary agitators. Although in a very different way from how Torrijos

previously did through the NAM, these political scholars rhetorically aligned the Panamanian cause with the wider leftist revolutionary trend that was sweeping Central America.

Many of them, like Jorge Turner, were also exiled from Panama during the Torrijos regime, living abroad in Mexico, Europe, or other countries. They did not agree with Torrijos, the stranglehold that the National Guard held on internal politics, or the repressive methods that his regime employed. There were no opposition political parties, he censored the press, and arrested political dissidents. These Panamanians and the repression they experienced complicate our understanding of the Torrijos-Carter treaties by raising questions about Torrijos' complicity in continued US presence in Panama after the treaties. Though Torrijos was a self-declared nationalist, these other Panamanian nationalists argue that he did not do enough to restore Panamanian sovereignty.

Perpetuity Clause

The first and more obvious concern with the Torrijos-Carter treaties was their provision for continued collaboration between the US and Panama for the defense and neutrality of the canal, for an indefinite period of time into the future. Many voiced concern that the language of the treaties was too ambiguous and left plenty of room for subjective interpretation, and therefore the US could justify any future intervention by pointing to the 1977 treaties.

Miguel Antonio Bernal (born 1949 in Panama City) is a Panamanian professor of Political Science. He studied in Panama and France, and currently works at the University of Panama. Throughout his career, he has been a writer, radio commentator, politician, lawyer, and activist. Around the time that the US and Panama agreed on the 1977 treaties and started the process of ratifying in their respective governments, Bernal was one of many Panamanians who

voiced dissent for the new treaties. Because of his political opinions, he was exiled from Panama during the Torrijos dictatorship. While exiled, he published essays in the Mexican newspapers *Uno Mas Uno* and *El Sol de Mexico*. They addressed the Panamanian public and tried to persuade them of the limitations of treaties. An anthology of those essays, titled *Los tratados Torrijos-Carter, una traición histórica,* was compiled in 1985, and while the individual essays are not dated, context indicates that they were written around 1977 to 1978. The anthology is dedicated to the "pueblo panameño y sus martiros." [62]

Bernal expressed deep opposition to the treaties and concern that neither the international community nor most Panamanians understood the fine print in the treaties. He explained this by arguing that across Panama, there was a general lack of knowledge or understanding of the historic struggle by Panama to regain sovereignty from Washington. He lamented that the treaties did not satisfy every goal that Panamanians had been struggling for in and since 1964, the year of the Flag Riots.[63] It was especially pitiful to him that most Panamanians in that moment believed that the treaties were a victory, because instead he saw them being tricked into a more subtle but equally damaging dynamic with the US.

The language of the military provisions in the treaty was purposefully ambiguous and therefore left plenty of room for the US to infringe on Panamanian sovereignty at any time, and now do it legally under the treaties. Bernal highlighted that technically speaking, the Hay-Bunau-Varilla treaty had not stipulated any continuous US military presence; this new treaty, while ostensibly conceding to Panama great material gains, actually codified the military presence that Panamanians resented more than anything. "And this problem of 'joint defense' is the most

---

[62] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*.
" The Torrijos-Carter Treaties, an historic betrayal"
[63] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 72

concerning in the negotiations carried out by the two countries, … introducing a term that until now did not appear in any of the treaties previously signed by Panama."[64] Now, in 1977 the United States had officially codified their own military intervention in perpetuity. Torrijos had leveraged the NAM and publicly accused the US of imperialism at a time when many countries were decolonizing, and successfully pressured the US in renegotiating the treaties. Yet, the US managed to sidestep responsibility for colonization, escape international condemnation, and simultaneously justify future intervention with a mutual agreement on the books. Bernal even argued that allowing the US complete discretion over the Canal's defense, could even mean defense from an internal threat.

Jorge Turner, previously discussed, was not only an intellectual and a journalist, but also the ambassador of Panama to Mexico from 1988-1990. He also wrote a general biography memorializing thirty different Latin American martyrs, including prominent activists or authors including Leopoldo Aragon, discussed later, and others such as Salvador Allende, Julio Yao, Rigoberta Menchú, Manuel Ugarte, Lázaro Cárdenas, and even Che Guevara. In it, his language is glowing and reverent of all of these figures, highlighting the values that he has in common with them. He agreed with Bernal that the terms of the Torrijos-Carter treaties did not go far enough in restoring sovereignty to Panama. In 1979, as the United States Senate was preparing to ratify the treaties, Turner published an essay that argued: "It is evident that the treaties establish provisions that threaten the sovereignty of Panama..."[65] Turner interpreted the United States

---

[64] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 19
Original text: "Y este problema de la 'defensa conjunta' el que mas preocupa en las negociaciones que llevan a cabo los dos países, puesto que aparte de introducir un término que hasta el momento no aparecía en ninguno de los tratados anteriormente firmados por Panamá..."

[65] Turner, Jorge. *Sobre el tratado y la neutralidad.* 21 de septiembre de 1979.
Original text: "Pero, asimismo, es evidente que los trata--dos establecen disposiciones que atentan contra la soberanía de Panamá…El gobierno de Estados Unidos ha considerado, en diversos documentos, que este artículo IV les concede facultades para decidir unilateralmente la intervención en Panamá, por un período indefinido de tiempo."

perspective on the neutrality treaties as an impossible paradox: as long as US troops were present to defend neutrality, that in and of itself violated neutrality. Similarly, if the treaty still provided for US military boats' priority in passing the canal, that too would violate the concept of neutrality.

Bernal and Turner's concern that the United States would interpret the perpetuity provision of the treaty as justification for an undefined period of time proved valid a decade later, when the US invaded Panama in Operation Just Cause in order to arrest its dictator, Manuel Noriega. For the next decade until the 1989 invasion, Turner would continue to echo the warning that the United States was not finished with their obsession over the canal. Turner would even predict the invasion a year ahead of it, citing US preoccupation with the canal as the primary motivator for US aggression towards Panama in the 1980s. A May 1988 newspaper article, titled "The US insists on controlling the Canal, says Turner, ambassador of Panama in Mexico" quotes him reporting that US petitions to have Noriega removed from power were primarily a ploy to regain control of the canal. Because of these tensions in 1988, the gradual process of transferring canal jurisdiction was temporarily suspended.[66] As early as 1977, these Panamanians were predicting that the Torrijos-Carter treaties would not be the end of US control over the canal.

Perpetuity serves US strategic interest in Central America

The perpetuity clause certainly reflected US interests in Central America given the context of the ongoing conflicts with armed leftist groups in Nicaragua, as well as those escalating in El Salvador. This was the era of the National Security Doctrine, when the US was countering leftist revolutionaries in Latin America by arming and training counterinsurgency

[66] Octavio Bernard Becerril. "Insiste EU en controlar el Canal, dice J. Turner, embajador de Panamá en México" in *El Nacional*. México. 27 de mayo 1988.

groups. Having a proximate military ally in Panama would be a strategic asset in US Cold War operations in the Western Hemisphere. Bernal also pointed out that by introducing the word "defense" into the treaties, they were departing from the Hay-Bunau-Varilla tradition of "protection." This change in rhetoric is representative of the evolution of how the US justified their intervention in Central America in the national security era.[67]

Not only that, but Bernal argued that by signing the treaties, the Panamanian government would be agreeing to US military presence and therefore would be complicit in US intervention across Central America: "If the Panamanian government agrees to participate in a joint defense of the canal… it is presenting itself as an accomplice and ally of the military policy of the United States…"[68] He draws on the universal struggle of Latin American countries against US military presence in the region, and goes so far as to implicate Panama in the United States' infringement on Latin American sovereignty; he claimed that they would become "an interested party in the defense of the North American criteria of strategy and in the persecution of those whom the United States designates as enemies, who do not necessarily have to be enemies of the Panamanian people."[69] Not only would Panama be adjacent to the conflicts that the US engaged in with Central America, but they would become a partner in them.

Similarly, Dr. Cesar Quintero, also a professor of Law and Political Science at Universidad de Panama and exiled for his political activism during the Torrijos dictatorship,

---

[67] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 39

[68] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 19
Original text: "Si el gobierno panameño acepta participar en una defensa conjunta del canal… se está presentando como cómplice y aliado de la política militar de los Estados Unidos…"

[69] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 20
Original text: "Porque lo grave para el pueblo panameño y los pueblos latinoamericanos no es solo la permanencia de bases militares norteamericanas en Panamá, legalizadas por un tratado, sino también, y sobre todo la participación de Panamá como parte interesada en la defensa de los criterios norteamericanos de estrategia y en la persecución de aquellos a quienes los Estados Unidos señalen como enemigos, los cuales no tienen necesariamente por qué ser enemigos del pueblo panameño."

wrote on Panama's autonomy in conducting its own foreign relations. Quintero argued that by insisting that Panama neutralize the Canal, that the US was interfering with Panama's right to decide whether it will engage (either as an ally or enemy) in other armed conflicts:

> "If it is about a State, its obligation is to not enter into any war and therefore not to honor alliances or military pacts with any other State. If it is about a geographical area or route, its neutrality means that that region or route is removed from any act of war. That is to say, they cannot be converted into a theater of war in the event of an armed conflict and, in time of peace, they cannot be treated by any State as military zones." [70]

Even if the Torrijos-Carter treaties were guaranteeing the neutrality of the canal, and not Panama as a whole, Quintero framed the canal's neutrality as inseparable. While neither Bernal nor Quintero expressly stated it, they were thinking of the wider Central American Cold War conflicts and resented that by being involved with the US in this agreement of neutrality, the treaty automatically strips Panama of its choice of whom to support in the wider Central American conflicts.

It is worth noting that US newspapers reporting on the Canal treaties would not dwell on the significance of providing for military intervention in perpetuity; they categorize the treaties as a loss and a weakness on the part of the United States to be conceding physical territory and administration of the Canal. Americans criticized Carter for the treaties and did not celebrate the fact that their military presence would continue to protect their interests in Central America. Instead, they tout it as a victory and net gain for Panama. Thus, the US eluded reproachment on

---

[70] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 38
Original text: "Si se trata de un Estado, en su obligación de no entrar en ninguna guerra y, por tanto, de no celebrar alianzas ni pactos militares con ningún otro Estado. Si se trata de una zona o via geográfica, su neutralización significa que esa zona o vía, esta sustraída de todo acto bélico. Es decir que no pueden ser convertidas en teatro de guerra en caso de un conflicto armado y que, en tiempo de paz, no pueden ser tratados por ningún Estado como zonas militares."

the international stage by focusing on the fact that they were relinquishing the Canal Zone, appeasing the international audience who criticized the US after the famous 1973 UN Security Council meeting. It was an even more specifically a win for the Republican party, to be able to pin this perceived loss on Carter and use it as a key campaign point in the 1980 election cycle.

Panama and Neocolonialism

The situation in Panama after 1977 is representative of the global phenomenon of neocolonialism. Larger, more developed countries like the United States or the United Kingdom had previously colonized other countries directly. They had a military presence and installed puppet governments in order to exploit the natural resources of that country. But by 1977, planting your flag by force in a country that did not welcome it was not a respected foreign policy model among the international community. That obvious form of imperialism violated post-WWII conventions about self-determination. Instead, a neocolonial power would exert its influence on a supposedly independent country by indirect means. This usually meant exercising some sort of financial leverage or pressure, a more sophisticated version of Dollar Diplomacy or the Good Neighbor Policies, but without physical intervention. In the case of Panama, with the new treaties the US would lose its physical control of the Canal Zone. Regardless, Panama had not completely nationalized the canal in the 1977 treaties, and so foreign influence was still a large factor in politics through foreign investment in the canal. Plus, Panama was still in debt financially to the United States. In this phase of the Cold War, direct US imperialism evolved into a more subtle neocolonial form.

Since 1903, Panama had been dependent on the United States. Even if the specific method of control changed over the course of the twentieth century, the outcome of being

economically exploited had not. The clearest example of this is the transference of the Canal Zone: while the US agreed to hand over control of that pivotal territory bisecting the country, the US still financially oppressed Panama through their national debt: "The main projects carried out in Panama in agrarian education, tourism, etc., have not only led Panama's national debt... to be greater than the Gross Domestic Product... but have also created such a dependency that allows the US to look like the guarantor of the current regime's economy."[71] Regardless of the ownership and administration of the canal, Panama was still financially dependent on the US. The Torrijos-Carter treaties may have ended the physical, territorial colonization of the United States, but it was not the end of the imperial designs that the US had on Panama. Therefore, the military perpetuity clause was not just about the canal's "neutrality," but also to protect stability in Panama and Central America, in direct support of ongoing American business interests.

Additionally, Bernal alluded to how other Latin American military dictators demonstrated support for the new treaties, including Pinochet of Chile, Videla of Argentina, Banzer of Bolivia, Stroessner of Paraguay, Aparicio Méndez of Uruguay. These leaders are accused of committing horrific human rights and civil rights violations in their respective countries, and according to Bernal, being legitimized by brutal authoritarian leaders was hardly a recommendation for the treaties.[72] Each of these leaders, pressured by the United States and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), imposed stringent austerity measures on their economies. They invited foreign investment and reduced state-funded social safety nets. Under their leadership, poverty increased and economic inequality skyrocketed.

---

[71] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 16
Original text: "Los principales proyectos que se llevan a cabo en Panamá en matera agraria educativa, turismo, etc, han no solo llevado la deuda nacional de Panamá… a ser mayor que el Producto Interno Bruto… sino que han creado una dependencia tal que le permite a los EEUU aparecer como el garante de la economía Panamá del régimen actual."
[72] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 50-51

> "Of course, for us Torrijos is not Pinochet, but North American imperialism, what is it? Is it not that which promoted and favored Pinochet…? Is it not that same imperialism that has managed to ensure, with the new treaties, the continuity of its control, domination, and hegemony over Panama, but also over the rest of the continent?" [73]

Like Torrijos at the Sri Lanka NAM summit, Bernal compared Panama to Chile and the other military authoritarian dictatorships that experienced North American neocolonial pressure. While acknowledging that their situations are different, Bernal tried to connect Panama to the shared Latin American struggle of fighting US interference, and to warn Panama against the treaties by drawing on the examples of the brutal conservative Latin American dictatorships.

In 1977 many Panamanian intellectuals, politicians, activists, and other leaders (many of them exiled), published an open letter to the Panamanian people expressing their dissent for the Torrijos-Carter treaties.[74] The letter read:

> "The two draft agreements signed between Panama and the United States establish the transition from a colonial situation to a neocolonial situation... To such an extreme that if the treaties come into force as they are now, the principles of self-determination and non-intervention would turn out, in the case of our country, to be a perfect myth."[75]

---

[73] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 59
Original text: "Claro está que para nosotros Torrijos no es Pinochet, pero el imperialismo norteamericano, ¿qué es? ¿no es él quien promovió y propició a Pinochet y quien ahora en Washington le acaba de dar un aval a un mayor? ¿No es ese mismo imperialismo el que ha logrado asegurarse, con los nuevos tratados, la continuidad de su control, dominación y hegemonía sobre Panamá, pero también sobre el resto del continente?"

[74] Notable signatories on this open letter include: ex-chancellor Miguel J. Moreno; Dr. César Quintero, ex-representative of Panama at the ONU and Dean of Faculty in the University of Panama's law school; Manuel Solís Palma, ex Minister of Education; Xavier Gorostiaga y Julio Yao, ex advisors of the Chancellery; Antonio González Revilla, leader of the Christian Democratic Party; Drs. Carlos Iván Zúñiga and Humberto Ricord; novelist Gloria Guardia; Nobel poet José Iván Romero; other professors including Ricaurte Soler, Carmen Miró, and Ligia Herrera; exiled politicians such as Jorge and David Turner, Professor Diana Morán, Federico Britton, and Winston Robles; lawyers Eusebio Marchosky and Iván Robles; many, many others.

[75] Bernal, *Los tratados Carter-Torrijos : una traición histórica*. Page 79
Original text: "Los dos proyectos de convenio suscritos entre Panamá y Estados Unidos establecen de por sí, antes de la consideración del senado norteamericano, el paso de una situación colonial a una situación neocolonial.... Al

Many of these Panamanians agreed with Bernal that the Torrijos-Carter treaties did not improve the imperial situation that Panama faced; rather, they only signified a change in US strategy from colonial to neocolonial.

Additionally, the Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (FER-29), a student activist organization loosely connected to the country's Marxist-Leninist party Movimiento de Liberación Nacional 29 de noviembre (MLN-29), objected against the ratification of the Torrijos-Carter treaties. One of the few available documents of the FER-29 is a letter to the pueblo panameño calling them to action in anticipation of Carter's 1978 trip to Panama City commemorating the official ratification of the treaties. They refer to Carter's visit as a complete humiliation and an affront to the ongoing struggle against Yankee imperialism in Panama. The FER-29 rejected the idea that the new treaties were a step forward for Panama, instead agreeing with Bernal (with even more passionate language than he used) that they simply marked the shift from direct physical colonization to a more subtle but equally nefarious neocolonialism. To the FER-29, the treaties may as well have been called "'the political reformulation of Yankee imperialism, to continue exploiting and oppressing all the peoples of the world in general and Latin America in particular.' This act would be the moment in which one puts on a new mask to continue murdering his victims."[76]

The FER-29 drew attention to the fact that during the twentieth century, many Panamanian elites benefitted from the dependent relationship on the US. Their political influence

---

extremo de que si los tratados tal como se encuentran ahora, entran en vigencia, los principios de autodeterminación y de no intervención resultarían, en el caso de nuestro país, un perfecto mito."

[76] Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (1978). *Proclamación contra los Tratados Torrijos-Carter*. Ciudad Universitaria. Sourced by Special Collections & University Archives, Florida International University Libraries

Original text: "Para Norteamérica, la llegada de Carter a Panamá significa el acto principal de una comedia política, que bien podría denominarse "la reformulación política del imperialismo yanki, para seguir explotando y oprimiendo a todos los pueblos del mundo en general y a América Latina en particular. Este acto sería el momento en que el verdadero se pone una nueva mascara para seguir asesinado a sus víctimas."

was part of the reason it took so many decades to build the momentum to renegotiate the canal treaties. While Torrijos was certainly a leftist and a populist, he was not strongly ideological. Yet, the FER-29 went so far as to accuse Torrijos of going along with the treaties out of self-interest and preservation:

> "For the bourgeois-reformist government, led by the leader of the multinationals in Panama, Omar Torrijos Herrera; Carter's arrival will mean the granting of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty, an unworthy and unpatriotic document that will allow this government to survive in the face of the current economic and political crisis it is experiencing. This will naturally give him more vigor to continue maintaining his undemocratic, anti-popular and repressive political power." [77]

They accused Torrijos of conspiring with the United States to concede the perpetuity provisions in order to protect himself from repercussions. Whether or not it is true that Torrijos was secretly aligned with the US or with the Panamanian elites, the FER-29 connecting the two points is telling of how people understood Panama's relationship with the US. Torrijos was becoming increasingly repressive by censoring the press, exiling opponents, and banning other political parties. While the FER-29 was openly opposed to the Torrijos' dictatorship and therefore their outlook on the Torrijos-Carter treaties is appropriately biased, their words echo the same protests for sovereignty that Bernal and the other intellectuals and politicians used.

---

[77] Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario (1978). *Proclamación contra los Tratados Torrijos-Carter*. Ciudad Universitaria. Sourced by Special Collections & University Archives, Florida International University Libraries

Original text: "Para el gobierno reformista-burgués, dirigido por el líder de las multinacionales en Panamá, Omar Torrijos Herrera; la llegada de Carter significará la concesión del Tratado Torrijos-Carter, documento indigno y antipatriótico que permitirá a este gobierno sobrevivir frente a la actual crisis económica y política que vive. Este naturalmente le dará más vigor para seguir manteniendo su poder político antidemocrático, antipopular y represivo."

The FER-29 were not the only ones accusing Torrijos of sabotaging Panama in favor of the US. One more famous and extreme example of individual dissent towards the Torrijos-Carter treaties is the self-immolation of Leopoldo Aragon. He was a specialist on international law, the author of several books, and a journalist (including a correspondent for the Mexican newspaper *El Día).* On September 1st, 1977, on his fiftieth birthday, Aragon set himself afire in front of the US embassy in Sweden, where he was living in exile. Aragon hoped that his extreme act of protest would inspire Panamanians and their international allies to protest the Torrijos-Carter treaties before their final ratification. Like the others, he was concerned with the perpetuity clause and the increasing neocolonial pressure from the US, even if their direct territorial colonization of the Canal Zone was ending. His testament, directly address to the pueblo panameño, was published after his death.[78]

Aragon accused Torrijos of being a liar and a robber, purposefully installed by the United States as part of a big conspiracy to cheat the Panamanians in the treaty renegotiations. He accused Torrijos of giving away something that did not belong to him: the future of the Panamanian pueblo. While this claim is reaching and unproven, his words demonstrated one extreme of the opinion surrounding the new treaties; even if it is conspiracy, it is telling that people would believe the US capable of such a plot. He compared 1977 directly to 1903 as a stab in the back, after citing several quotes by Carter in which he assured Panama that their interests would be upheld in the new treaties. He even referred to the treaties as the “Bunau-Varilla-Torrijos" treaties, as an ultimate reference to the original betrayal by the United States.

Torrijos did push back against the accusations that he was aligned with the United States. He tried to discredit the dissenters as being concerned with internal Panamanian politics and

[78] Leopoldo Aragón, "El testamento de Leopoldo Aragón," *Triunfo. Año XXXII, n. 764 (17 sep. 1977),p. 66-67*. http://hdl.handle.net/10366/67708.

personal vendettas against himself, rather than focusing on the victory it would be for Panama to regain jurisdiction over the Canal Zone:

> "... No one can prefer a current, physical, and overbearing intervention to a threat of future intervention… Their only argument is a "No for the sake of no" or, in any case, a "No because of Torrijos," a personal and non-political objection, as if it were about Torrijos and not the Treaty." [79]

Regardless of the conspiracies surrounding Torrijos, it is true that in the 1980s, most of Latin America faced a tremendous financial crisis. In Panama, the economy was already structured to revolve around the canal, and the fringe service and commercial sector that supported the canal, without ever having to develop the industry or agricultural sector more fully. Thus, between the economic austerity measures of the 1980s, Panama had to import goods and food, continuing to put them at a disadvantage.[80] These economic realities emphasize the limits of Torrijos' win in the 1977 treaties.

Several years later, Jorge Turner took a much more conciliatory tone towards Torrijos in an obituary that he published for him in 1981. Now several years after the ratification of the treaties by both countries, Turner "forgave" Torrijos for allowing the incomplete neutrality provisions to pass. He explained that perhaps it was the best that could be accomplished for Panama at the time, and therefore something was better than nothing. Turner does, however, acknowledge the peculiar mix of hyper-nationalism and anti-colonialism that Torrijos

---

[79] Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas. Page 60
Original text: Tengo entendido que después vendrán a dar su opinión algunos exilados panameños residentes en los Estados Unidos. Eso nos conviene a nosotros. Estoy seguro de que no atacarán el Tratado de neutralidad. Nadie puede preferir una intervención actual, física y prepotente, a una amenaza de futura intervención. O puede que la prefieran, pero no tendrán la honradez de confesarlo públicamente. Su único argumento es un "No porque no" o, en todo caso, un "No a Torrijos," una objeción personal y no política, como si se tratara de Torrijos y no del Tratado."
[80] Beluche, *La verdad sobre la invasión*. Page 100

demonstrates, while in practice still being very pro-neocolonialist by encouraging foreign investment in Panama.[81]

> "But Torrijos, at the same time, did not manage to break down dependent capitalism, nor to examine the phenomena of neocolonialism and allowed himself to be roped into the goal of establishing Panama as an international financial center or service platform for transnational corporations. It seems paradoxical: Anticolonialist and pro-neocolonialist?" [82]

Although Torrijos may have successfully gotten the United States to return the Canal Zone and give Panama a more equal share in the canal's profits, ultimately he still succumbed to the neocolonial pattern that was developing across Latin America. Torrijos may have aligned himself with the other countries fighting underdevelopment and dependency among the NAM, but he did not entirely achieve those ideals for Panama. As the new decade of the 1980s dawned, the financial situation was as equally based in dependency as it had been before, and the US had guaranteed their own military intervention to protect that status quo in the future.

Epilogue: Operation Just Cause

On December 20th, 1989 the United States launched a full scale invasion of Panama, with nearly 28,000 troops and 300 aircraft. President Bush's ostensible reasons for invading were to safeguard the lives of US citizens living in Panama (prior to the invasion there had been repeated clashes between US soldiers and Panamanian Defense Force guards), defend democracy and human rights in Panama, combat drug trafficking and money laundering, and to protect the

---

[81] Turner, Jorge. *Omar Torrijos: Causas y consecuencias de su muerte*. 1981
[82] Turner, Jorge. *Omar Torrijos: Causas y consecuencias de su muerte*. 1981
Original text: "Pero Torrijos, al mismo tiempo, no llego a penetrar en lo que es el capitalismo dependiente, ni a enjuiciar los fenómenos del neocolonialismo y se dejó arrastrar a la finalidad de erigir a Panamá como un centro financiero internacional o plataforma de servicio de las transnacionales. Pareciera paradójico: ¿Anticolonialista y pro-neocolonialista?"

integrity of the Torrijos-Carter treaties. Bush and members of Congress believed that Panama's political strongman and chief of the national guard, Manuel Noriega, posed a direct threat to each of these goals. Noriega, the CIA, and the Reagan administration had collaborated on a number of clandestine projects earlier in the 1980s, but tensions between Noriega and the Reagan administration had begun to escalate for several years prior to the invasion.

In August of 1988, *El Excelsior* published an article by Turner: "The risk of US invasion in Panama is very real."[83] Only a few months before the actual invasion, Turner repeated that the only reason the US wanted to "liquidate" Noriega (and other nationalist forces) was for the sake of the canal. Even in the year prior to the actual invasion, Turner published the various ways that the US had been pressuring Panama to remove Noriega: the US resorted to a range of economic and political strong-arming techniques to bully Noriega out of power, even threats and coercion, continuing to infringe on self-determination and non-intervention. [84] The US would prefer, Turner articulated, to install a pro-US government if the canal transfer was to continue on schedule. This is partly in response to Senator Phillip Crane proposing to amend the Torrijos-Carter treaties to ensure that the United States could keep their military bases there beyond the year 2000, not just for the purposes of "defending" the canal. Under the Torrijos-Carter treaties, SOUTHCOMM, the axis of most US military operations in the hemisphere at the time, would have to relocate. While Crane's amendment was illegal under international law, thirty nine other legislators signed their support.

---

[83] Turner, Jorge. "Vivo, el riesgo de invasión de EU en Panamá" in *El Excélsior*. México. 20 de agosto 1988
[84] Turner, Jorge. "Vivo, el riesgo de invasión de EU en Panamá" in *El Excélsior*. México. 20 de agosto 1988
Original text: "El riesgo de invasión a Panamá está muy vivo. Los estadounidenses recurrieron a todas las medidas económicas, llevándose de calle la ley internacional. El gobierno de Estados Unidos violó el principio de autodeterminación y no intervención; violó el deber de no recurrir a la amenaza y uso de la fuerza en contra de la independencia de otros países... y la obligación de no tomar ninguna medida coercitiva o política para quebrantar la voluntad soberana de otro Estado"

This is significant because it again brings Panama into the wider context of US Cold War policy in Central America and its evolution into the 1980s; perhaps in 1977 Torrijos was able to leverage some pressure to regain physical control of the Canal Zone and demand a better cut of the canal profits, and President Carter was amenable to those changes. But into the 1980s the civil wars in El Salvador and Nicaragua escalated, and losing the flexibility to operate in Panama became a central issue for the United States. It also reaffirms the reasoning why the US insisted on leaving the door open for military operations in 1977.

Despite all of the US reservations about Noriega, Turner reported in 1988 that most Panamanians had rallied behind him in support: "The military and almost all of the Panamanian people have given decisive support to General Noriega, and only a few small minorities want the US to intervene." [85] Turner was serving in an official government capacity at this point, and therefore was more disposed to defend the Panamanian government abroad, so his report should be entertained with a grain of salt. Nonetheless, it still points to the fact that the US violated Panamanian sovereignty in 1989 by invading to remove him, a full decade after the Torrijos-Carter treaties.

Olmedo Beluche is an essayist, journalist, sociologist, and political scientist at the University of Panama. Shortly after the 1989 invasion, he wrote *La verdad sobre la invasion,* which is a raw retelling of events from Panamanians after the invasion on December 20th. It draws on testimonies and newspaper articles from directly after the invasion, giving readers a

[85] Octavio Bernard Becerril. "Insiste EU en controlar el Canal, dice J. Turner, embajador de Panamá en México" in *El Nacional*. México. 27 de mayo 1988.
Original text: "Los militares y la casi totalidad del pueblo panameno, han brindado un decidido apoyo al general Noriega, y solo unas pequenas minorias, pretenden que intervenga EU."

snapshot of what the invasion was like from the Panamanian side.[86] It offers a different side of the story compared to what US media or official government press releases describe. In this work, Beluche concludes that the invasion paralyzed the process of national independence and created a psychological trauma for Panamanians.[87] He flatly says that the US cannot pretend they invaded to save the Panamanians from Noriega. Instead, he explains how Panama throughout the eighties was full of popular and workers' rights struggles, confronting the military dictatorship and antidemocratic processes on their own volition.[88] Above all, Beluche categorizes the invasion as a complete affront to Panamanian sovereignty for this reason, just like Turner's report emphasized.

[86] The Coordinadora Popular de Derechos Humanos en Panama (COPODEHUPA) compiled a massive report including testimonies of hundreds of Panamanian citizens on their experience during the invasion. One man from El Chorrillo described how all the young men in his town were taken in by US soldiers to be questioned, while everyone else in town was temporarily put in a concentration camp.[86] Another described the panic his neighborhood felt when they heard the sounds of bombing and shooting, and saw some buildings going up in flames. Other describe the injuries they sustained from being caught in the crossfire. One claimed that the army barricaded the road going into their town until the 24th, preventing the Red Cross from arriving on the scene to help.

[87] Olmedo Beluche, *La verdad sobre la invasión*, 5a. ed ed., Biblioteca de autores panameños, (Panamá: Manfer, 2004). Page 22

[88] Beluche, *La verdad sobre la invasión*. Page 39

IV

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to connect the separate spheres of dialogue around Central America in the Cold War and the Panama Canal, by introducing the 1977 canal treaty negotiations and their legacy as an additional example of US Cold War policy in Central America. While perhaps it seems counterintuitive that the US would agree to relinquish the Panama Canal in the middle of the Cold War, in reality this move does not contradict previous patterns of US interference in Central America. Panama does not share a history of brutal guerrilla civil war like its Central American neighbors, but that does not preclude it from offering insight into US strategy and motivation in the region during the Cold War. Nor does that preclude it from serving as an example of the longer-term effects of neocolonialism in the present day.

This paper firstly introduced a brief overview of United States interventionalism in Latin America. It laid out the trends of forced dependency and political influence that have predominated since the nineteenth century. It then examined how Panama's unique history still aligns with those trends, though from the outside it looked different from its neighbors. Then, the paper took a deeper dive into Panama's Cold War history, to understand better how the complex figure of Omar Torrijos and the Cold War geopolitical circumstances impacted the outcome of the canal treaty renegotiations in the 1970s. Further, this paper shows that the 1977 Torrijos-Carter treaties, though obviously very different from the leftist guerrilla movements of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the others, were an example of active Panamanian resistance against the United States.

Additionally, this paper has also tried to demonstrate how that resistance fell short in many ways. While Panama received complete control of the Canal Zone and canal operations in 1977, it did not succeed in eliminating US military presence nor did it completely nationalize the canal from foreign investment. Both of these examples align with the neocolonial model that was taking hold in Central America during the last phase of the Cold War, and even persists to this day. The 1989 invasion, Operation Just Cause, only proved that many Panamanians were justified in voicing their concerns about the 1977 treaties.

Nonetheless, this project continues to raise questions for further research that might contribute to historical scholarship on Central America in the future. Firstly, it opens up many opportunities for research on Panamanian solidarity with other Central American countries during the Cold War. Torrijos was engaged in moving arms and resources between several conflicts while taking a public neutral stance. A better analysis of Torrijos and his support for the FSLN or FMLN would deepen our understanding of Torrijos and how he was operating in the 1970s and into the 1980s. Secondly, there are many unanswered questions about the 1989 invasion of Panama. While many government documents on the full-scale operation remain classified, both Americans and Panamanians continue to speculate on many conspiracies regarding US motivation for the largest American military operation between Vietnam and the Gulf War. Future scholarship might connect the invasion to the growing body of literature about the how the Cold War waned and gave way to the drug wars in Latin America, and how Panama, the canal, and Manuel Noriega, fit at that intersection.

Bibliography

Works Cited

Aragón, Leopoldo. "El Testamento De Leopoldo Aragón." *Triunfo. Año XXXII, n. 764 (17 sep. 1977),p. 66-67*. http://hdl.handle.net/10366/67708.

———. "Un ParaíSo Made in USA." *Triunfo. Año XXV, n. 444 (5 dic. 1970),p. 18-23*. http://hdl.handle.net/10366/43834.

Beluche, Olmedo. *Diez añOs De Luchas PolíTicas Y Sociales En Panamá : 1980-1989).* Panamá: Olmedo Beluche, 1994.

———. *La Verdad Sobre La InvasióN.* Biblioteca De Autores PanameñOs. 5a. ed ed. Panamá: Manfer, 2004.

Becerril, Octavio Bernard. “Insiste EU en controlar el Canal, dice J. Turner, embajador de Panamá en México” in *El Nacional*. México. 27 de mayo 1988

Bernal, Miguel Antonio. *Los Tratados Carter-Torrijos : Una TraiciÓN HistóRica.* [2a ed.] ed. [Panamá]: [Ediciones Nari] [Panamá], 1985.

Brown, Jonathan C. "Omar Torrijos and the Sandinista Revolution." [In English]. *The Latin Americanist* 66, no. 1 (Mar 2022): 25. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/omar-torrijos-sandinista-revolution/docview/2641058177/se-2?accountid=14679

Burns, E. Bradford. "Panama: A Search for Independence." [In English]. *Current History (pre-1986)* 72, no. 000424 (Feb 1977): 65. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/panama-search-independence/docview/202923418/se-2?accountid=14679

Conniff, Michael L. *Panama and the United States : The End of the Alliance / Michael L. Conniff.* 3rd ed.. ed. Athens: Athens : University of Georgia Press, 2012.

Dept. of State. *Panama Canal: The New Treaties*. 1977. Washington.

Field, Thomas C., Stella Krepp, and Vanni Pettinà, eds. *Latin America and the Global Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario. (1978). *Proclamación contra los Tratados Torrijos-Carter*. Ciudad Universitaria. Sourced by Special Collections & University Archives, Florida International University Libraries

LaFeber, Walter. *The Panama Canal : The Crisis in Historical Perspective / Walter Lafeber.* New York: New York : Oxford University Press, 1978.

LaFeber, Walter. *Inevitable Revolutions : The United States in Central America / Walter Lafeber.* 2nd ed.. ed. New York: New York : W.W. Norton, 1993.

Long, Tom. "Putting the Canal on the Map: Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings*," *Diplomatic History* 38, no. 2 (2014), https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dht096, https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dht096.432

Méndez, J. Ignacio. "Azul Y Rojo: Panama's Independence in 1840." *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60, no. 2 (1980): 269-93. https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-60.2.269. https://doi.org/10.1215/00182168-60.2.269.

Sánchez, Peter M. "Panama: A 'Hegemonized' Foreign Policy." In *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior*, edited by Jeanne A.K. Hey, 53–74. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.

Szok, Peter. "Beyond the Canal: Recent Scholarship on Panama." Review of Panama: Luchas Sociales y Afirmacion Nacional, Víctor Avila; Panama y la Comunicacion Interoceanica, Jorge Conte-Porras; A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panama, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna, James Howe; Charles Edward Magoon: The Panama Years, Gustavo A. Mellander, Nelly Maldonado Mellander; Panama, 9 de Enero: Que Paso y por que, Roberto N. Méndez; We Answer Only to God: Politics and the Military in Panama, 1903-1947, Thomas L. Pearcy. *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 3 (2002): 247-59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1512526.

Torrijos Omar. 1984. *Papeles Del General*. Panama. Centro de Estudios Torrijistas.

Turner, Jorge. *Colonialismo en Panamá*. Not dated. Preserved and digitalized through the Universidad Autónomo de la Ciudad de Mexico.

Turner, Jorge. *Omar Torrijos: Causas y consecuencias de su muerte*. 1981

Turner, Jorge. *Sobre el tratado y la neutralidad.* 21 de septiembre de 1979.

Turner, Jorge. "Vivo, el riesgo de invasión de EU en Panamá" in *El Excélsior*. México. 20 de agosto 1988

Villanueva, Miriam Elizabeth. "Third Worldism and the Panama Canal: Liberating the Isthmus, 1971-1978." In Field, Thomas C., Stella Krepp, and Vanni Pettinà, eds. *Latin America and the Global Cold War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021.

VanSise, Casey. "Reaganites and Rosa-Golpistas: Omar Torrijos, Panama-United States Relations, and the Rise of the Reagan Doctrine." *The Latin Americanist* 65, no. 4 (2021): 539-69.

Zolov, Eric. 2020. *The Last Good Neighbor : Mexico in the Global Sixties*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Additional Bibliography

Associated Press Correspondent. "Panama Chief Vows Concessions to Assure Canal Pact's Passage: Panama Chief Vows Concessions to U.S." *New York Times (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 11/13/1977 Nov 13 1977, 1. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/panama-chief-vows-concessions-assure-canal-pacts/docview/123339085/se-2?accountid=14679

Burns, E. Bradford. "Panama's Struggle for Independence." [In English]. *Current History (pre-1986)* 66, no. 000389 (Jan 1974): 19. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/panamas-struggle-independence/docview/202922561/se-2?accountid=14679

Conniff, Michael L., and Gene E. Bigler. *Modern Panama : From Occupation to Crossroads of the Americas.* Cambridge ;: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

From News Dispatches. "Reagan Says He'd Fight for Panama Canal: Reagan: Hard Line on Canal." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 05/03/1976 May 03 1976, 2. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/reagan-says-hed-fight-panama-canal/docview/146448042/se-2?accountid=14679

Goshko, John, M. Washington Post Staff Writer. "Carter, Torrijos Sign Panama Canal Treaties: Carter, Torrijos Sign Canal Treaties; Ceremony Underscores 'Mutual Respect' Here Are Main Provisions of the New Panama Treaties." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 09/08/1977 Sep 08 1977, 2. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/carter-torrijos-sign-panama-canal-treaties/docview/146702073/se-2?accountid=14679

Goshko, John, M. and Writers Karen Deyoung. Washington Post Staff. "Carter, Torrijos Agree on Canal Defense Rights: U.S., Panama Agree on Canal Defense Rights." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 10/15/1977 Oct 15 1977, 2. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/carter-torrijos-agree-on-canal-defense-rights/docview/146778725/se-2?accountid=14679

Gudmundson, Lowell. "Down Panama Way: A Twenty-First-Century Renaissance." *Latin American research review* (2022): 1-10. https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2022.83.

Harbron, John D. "Yankee Dollars Wanted: The Canal Aside, Panama Welcomes American Investment." [In English]. *Barron's National Business and Financial Weekly (1942-1987)* 58, no. 31 (1978 Jul 31): 9. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/yankee-dollars-wanted/docview/350659581/se-2?accountid=14679

Hey, Jeanne A. K. *Small States in World Politics : Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior / Edited by Jeanne A.K. Hey.* Boulder: Boulder : Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.

Hovey, Graham. Special to The New York Times. "U.S.,Panama in Accord on Transfer of Canal by End of the Century: U.S. And Panama Reach Agreement to Transfer Control of Canal by Year 2000." *New York Times (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 08/11/1977 Aug 11 1977, 1. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/u-s-panama-accord-on-transfer-canal-end-century/docview/123218313/se-2?accountid=14679

Jurdem, Laurence R. "A Loss of National Pride
the Panama Canal, 1965–1979." In *Paving the Way for Reagan*. The Influence of Conservative Media on Us Foreign Policy, 115-30: University Press of Kentucky, 2018.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow : America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq.* 1st ed. ed.: Times Books, 2006. Bibliographies Non-fiction. http://library.smcvt.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=cat09029a&AN=smc.oai.folio.org.fs00001050.3151d55e.de6f.492b.832d.948fba585823&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Lehoucq, Fabrice Edouard. *The Politics of Modern Central America : Civil War, Democratization, and Underdevelopment / Fabrice Lehoucq.* Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Linowitz, Sol M. "What Future for the Panama Canal?: The Writer, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States, Is Chairman of the U.S.-Latin American Commission." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 09/05/1975 Sep 05 1975, 1. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/what-future-panama-canal/docview/146239713/se-2?accountid=14679

Mandelbaum, Michael. "Big Ditch Debate: The Panama Canal the Truth About the Panama Canal the Panama Canal Controversy." *New York Times (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 02/19/1978 Feb 19 1978, 1. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/big-ditch-debate/docview/123806762/se-2?accountid=14679

Marco, A. Gandásegui. "El Canal De Panamá Después De La Transferencia." [In Spanish]. *Nueva Sociedad* 166 (Mar/Apr 2012-04-05 2000): 33-41. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/el-canal-de-panamá-después-la-transferencia/docview/199576601/se-2?accountid=14679

McPherson, Alan. "From “Punks” to Geopoliticians: U.S. And Panamanian Teenagers and the 1964 Canal Zone Riots." *Americas* 58, no. 3 (2002): 395-418. https://doi.org/10.1353/tam.2002.0012.

Miriam Elizabeth, Villanueva. "Third Worldism and the Panama Canal: Liberating the Isthmus, 1971–1978." 343: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

Murphy, John M. "Letter & Reply: 'The Incredible Panama Canal Treaty'." *New York Times (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 08/20/1977 Aug 20 1977, 20. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/letter-reply/docview/123399257/se-2?accountid=14679

Robert C. Bell Jr.James Mullanyjames R. Kleilerrick Winninghamh. W. Hendersonselden Spencer Nyedavid E. Siltmanedward A. Jamisonr. L. Schreadleyrichard W. Rastetterclyde Taylorhoward, Keats. "Letters to the Editor: The Panama Canal Treaty: More Reaction." *The Washington Post (1974-)* (Washington, D.C.), 09/11/1977 Sep 11 1977, 34. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/letters-editor/docview/146782500/se-2?accountid=14679

Scranton, Margaret E. *The Noriega Years : U.S.-Panamanian Relations, 1981-1990 / Margaret E. Scranton.* Boulder, Colo.: Boulder, Colo. : L. Rienner Publishers, 1991.

Shultz, Richard H. *In the Aftermath of War [Electronic Resource] : Us Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following Just Cause / by Richard H. Shultz, Jr.* Us Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following Just Cause. Edited by Press Air University. Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. : Air University Press, 1993.

Skacel, Milan B. "Letter: On the Panama Canal Treaties: The More Persuasive Case for Ratification." *New York Times (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 01/21/1978 Jan 21 1978, 18. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/letter-on-panama-canal-treaties/docview/123843106/se-2?accountid=14679

Turner, Jorge. *30 Latinoamericanos En El Recuerdo.* Serie Historia Y Sociedad. 1. ed ed. México, D.F.: La Jornada Ediciones : Facultad de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales, UNAM México, D.F., 1998.

Turner, Jorge. *Colonialismo en Panamá de Jorge Turner*. Not dated.
Turner, Jorge. Panamá: colonialismo y liberación nacional. 1977

Turner, Jorge. “Las declaraciones Marco Robles-Lyndon Johnson y el Canal de Panamá de Jorge Turner en Crítica.” 6 de octubre de 1965

Villanueva, Miriam Elizabeth. "Populist Authoritarianism : A Cultural Interpretation of Military Government in Cold-War Panama, 1968-1989." Texas Christian University Fort Worth, Texas, 2017. https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/20639.

Williams, John D. "Global Report: Many Shippers Find They Don't Need Panama Canal; Prices of Exports Ease." *Wall Street Journal (1923-)* (New York, N.Y.), 11/15/1976 Nov 15 1976,

6. https://login.ezproxy.uvm.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/global-report/docview/134063250/se-2?accountid=14679

Yates, Lawrence A. author. *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama [Electronic Resource] : Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management, June 1987-December 1989 / by Lawrence A. Yates.* United States Military Intervention in Panama : Origins, Planning, and Crisis Management, June 1987-December 1989. Edited by issuing body Center of Military History. Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2008.

———. *The U.S. Military Intervention in Panama [Electronic Resource] : Operation Just Cause, December 1989-January 1990 / by Lawrence A. Yates.* United States Military Intervention in Panama: Operation Just Cause, December 1989-January 1990. Edited by issuing body Center of Military History. Washington, D.C. : Center of Military History, United States Army, 2014.