

Document 1: The Panama Revolution, *Constitutional Rights Foundation*

In 1903, the United States negotiated a treaty with Colombia that granted the United States the right to construct and operate a canal for 100 years within a zone six-miles wide across Panama. Because of uncertainty over its sovereignty (supreme political authority) in the canal zone, Colombia's senate refused to ratify the treaty.

Panama was an isolated province, and its inhabitants often rebelled against the government of Colombia. While the Colombian senate was debating and rejecting the canal treaty with the United States, a group of Panamanians was plotting a revolution. Soon, Bunau-Varilla was conspiring with them.

In October 1903, Bunau-Varilla met with Roosevelt and informed him that a revolution was brewing in Panama. Bunau-Varilla suggested that a revolution, establishing an independent Panama, might be the way to secure the elusive canal treaty. Roosevelt did not express a view on this but did order U.S. Navy ships in the Caribbean and Pacific to sail nearer to Panama. Bunau-Varilla, however, flatly promised the plotters in Panama that the United States would protect them against Colombia once the revolt began.

On November 2, the U.S. warship *Nashville* with 500 Marines aboard docked at Colon on the Caribbean side of Panama. The appearance of the *Nashville* was all the revolutionaries needed to launch a bloodless takeover of Panama. Colombian troops in Colon left after the officer in charge received a bribe advanced by the American superintendent of the Panama Railroad. More U.S. gunboats and Marines soon arrived in Panama. Barely three days after the revolt began, the United States recognized the Republic of Panama.

The revolutionary government appointed Bunau-Varilla to negotiate a canal treaty with the United States in exchange for American protection of the newly independent nation. Roosevelt's secretary of state, John Hay, proposed an American-controlled canal zone 10-miles wide across Panama "in perpetuity" (forever).

To secure rapid ratification of the treaty by the U.S. Senate, Bunau-Varilla made the treaty even sweeter for the Americans. He proposed a provision granting the United States "all the rights, power, and authority within the zone . . . [as] if it were the sovereign." In effect, Bunau-Varilla agreed to give away Panama's sovereignty over its own territory.

Hay and Bunau-Varilla signed the canal treaty on November 18, 1903. It gave the United States the right to construct and operate a canal "in perpetuity" for \$10 million, an annual payment of \$250,000, and a guarantee of Panama's independence.

No Panamanians had participated in the negotiations. While surprised at the treaty's provisions, the new government in Panama quickly ratified it, fearing the United States might make another deal with Colombia or even Nicaragua.

The United States also paid the reorganized French canal company \$40 million for its rights and assets in Panama. Bunau-Varilla got \$440,000 of this for his investments in the French company.

1. How did the United States acquire the land that would become the Panama Canal?

Document 2: *Influence of Sea Power Upon History* by Alfred Thayer Mahan (1890)

The history of Sea Power is largely, though by no means solely, a narrative of contests between nations, of mutual rivalries, of violence frequently culminating in war...

In these three things - production, with the necessity of exchanging products, shipping, whereby the exchange is carried on and colonies, which facilitate and enlarge the operations of shipping and tend to protect it by multiplying points of safety - is to be found the key to much of the history, as well as of the policy of nations bordering upon the sea...

If one (a central American canal) be made, and fulfill the hopes of its builders, the Caribbean will be changed from a terminus, and place of local traffic, or a best a broken and imperfect line of travel as it now is, into one of the great highways of the world. Along this path great commerce will travel, bringing the interests of the other great nations, the European nations, close along our shores, as they have never been before ...

Furthermore, as her distance from the Isthmus, though relatively less, is still considerable, the United States will have to obtain in the Caribbean stations fit for contingent, or secondary, bases of operations; which by their natural advantages, susceptibility of defence, and nearness to the central strategic issue, will enable her fleets to remain as near the scene as any opponent ...

....we can live off ourselves indefinitely in 'our little corner,' to use the expression of a French officer to the author. Yet should that little corner be invaded by a new commercial route through the Isthmus, the United States in her turn may have the rude awakening of those who have abandoned their share in the common birthright of all people, the sea ...

The government by its policy can favor the natural growth of a people's industries and its tendencies to seek adventure and gain by way of the sea . . . The influence of the government will be felt in its most legitimate manner in maintaining an armed navy, of a size commensurate with the growth of its shipping and the importance of the interests connected with it.

1. According to Mahan, why should the US pursue the construction of a canal in Central America?
2. According to Mahan, why should a nation pursue sea power?
3. Does Mahan provide evidence for his claims?

Crossroads of Pacific Ready

By Elmer E. Paxton

The Panama Canal - the severance of two great continents and the union of two mighty oceans whose shores mark the world's greatest empires - will soon be a reality. American history will justly claim this work as the greatest engineering achievement of modern times, to endure for all the ages. Although built primarily for the national defense, in the years to come it may be a highway of universal peace, through which an international commerce will be developed, binding the nations of the east and west together in a strength of commercial amity hitherto impossible and unknown.

It has often been said that the Pacific ocean, with its shores and islands, will be the future theater of the world's greatest commercial activity. The possibilities of awakened China, the growing world power of Japan, the vast undeveloped resources of Western America, in conjunction with the opening of the great waterway, certainly point to an ocean commerce of colossal proportions in comparison with present day traffic.

Four thousand six hundred miles westward from Panama lie the Hawaiian islands, the "Crossroads of the Pacific" and America's greatest future naval base. These islands are unique in their location with relation to ocean routes, in their climatic and scenic attractions and in their natural resources, considering limited area and population. The opening of the canal is therefore a matter of the keenest interest to everyone in Hawaii who has a feeling of patriotic pride in great national achievements, who realize the important part these islands will play in the national defenses, and who look forward to the great commercial and material benefits which will accrue to the territory under the vastly improved transportation facilities.

The importance to the Navy

The importance of the island of Oahu as a great fortified naval base will be greatly increased by the opening of the canal. Admiral Cowles, commandant, naval station, Hawaii, sums up the situation as follows: "The importance of Honolulu as a naval base has been so well recognized by those in authority as is shown in the liberal spending which has been granted by Congress for the development of this station, that it is not necessary to say any more on the subject except in so far as the strategic position of Honolulu is affected by the opening of the Panama Canal.

Its situation will then be not far from the line of communication between the Canal and China and Japan. One of our fleets coming out from the Atlantic through the canal for operations in the Pacific would probably make its first stop here for final preparations. The stock of coal, ammunition, and supplies of all kinds would therefore be kept at the maximum, as whether going or returning, the fleet would naturally make this station its principal resort for replenishing or for repair. It would also furnish a rendezvous for commerce destroyers and submarines. It also offers great opportunities for a rendezvous for reinforcement so that personnel of a fleet engaged in Chinese waters, that is a rendezvous most convenient and secure. It may also be noted that with strong defensive batteries a fleet or its component parts could not be well confined in port, as opportunities for its escape from a blockading fleet would be excellent...In fact, almost in proportion as the opening of the canal would increase the efficiency of the fleet it would increase the importance of Honolulu as a naval base...."

1. According to the first paragraph, why was this canal originally built?

2. According to the article, which organization responsible for US defense will benefit the most: the army, navy, or airforce? Why will this entity of US defense benefit?

Document 4: *The Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine* - President Theodore Roosevelt's Annual Message Before Congress December 6th 1904 (abridged)

Excerpt 1

...it is not true that the United States feels any land hunger All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable order and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence [commitment] of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may lead the United States, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

Excerpt 2

Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. They have great natural riches, and if within their borders the reign of law and justice obtains, prosperity is sure to come to them. While they thus obey the primary laws of civilized society they may rest assured that they will be treated by us in a spirit of cordial and helpful sympathy. **We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment [harm] of the entire body of American nations.** It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence cannot be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

Excerpt 3

...In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba,...and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies.... In extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it. The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few.

1. According to President Roosevelt, does the United States intend to take over any lands in the Western Hemisphere?
2. What does President Roosevelt suggest the nation's desire is for neighboring nations?