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From Invasion to Influence: The Evolution of U.S. Strategy in Panama (1989 And the Present)

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ABSTRACT

This study contends how US national strategy in Panama evolved since the military invasion of 1989 in “Operation Just Cause” to participation in politics, the economy and security. The dynamics within the Cold War, concerns of drug trafficking and defenders for American assets plus personnel each greatly influenced at that time U.S. strategy.

For maintaining influence in Panama also Central America, the research explores how the U.S. has shifted from military intervention to diplomacy, institutional partnerships, plus regional cooperation. In this paper, declassified government documents and policy statements in addition to planned frameworks are examined. Meaningful stages in the entire development of U.S. strategy can thus be identified. These include the immediate post-invasion stabilization period (1990s), security cooperation surged during the war on Drugs, with the current emphasis on infrastructure, migration, also governance in response to growing Chinese influence.

According to the study, U.S. planned goals like trade route security, regional stability, and counter-narcotics initiatives have largely not changed. However, the language and instruments that are employed for achievement of planned U.S. goals have changed now. Finally, this study emphasizes Panama's strategic importance as a geopolitical pivot in the Americas and advances a better understanding of the long-term dynamics in U.S. foreign policy.

Keywords: Diplomacy, George H.W. Bush, Noriega, Intervention, Canal Zone