



Emperors in the Jungle: The Hidden History of the U.S. in Panama (American Encounters/Global Interactions)

By John Lindsay-Poland

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Emperors in the Jungle is an exposé of key episodes in the military involvement of the United States in Panama. Investigative journalism at its best, this book reveals how U.S. ideas about taming tropical jungles and people, combined with commercial and military objectives, shaped more than a century of intervention and environmental engineering in a small, strategically located nation. Whether uncovering the U.S. Army's decades-long program of chemical weapons tests in Panama or recounting the invasion in December 1989 which was the U.S. military's *twentieth* intervention in Panama since 1856, John Lindsay-Poland vividly portrays the extent and costs of U.S. involvement.

Analyzing new evidence gathered through interviews, archival research, and Freedom of Information Act requests, Lindsay-Poland discloses the hidden history of U.S.–Panama relations, including the human and environmental toll of the massive canal building project from 1904 to 1914. In stunning detail he describes secret chemical weapons tests—of toxins including nerve agent and Agent Orange—as well as plans developed in the 1960s to use nuclear blasts to create a second canal in Panama.

He chronicles sustained efforts by Panamanians and international environmental groups to hold the United States responsible for the disposal of the tens of thousands of explosives it left undetonated on the land it turned over to Panama in 1999. In the context of a relationship increasingly driven by the U.S. antidrug campaigns, Lindsay-Poland reports on the myriad issues that surrounded Panama's takeover of the canal in accordance with the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty, and he assesses the future prospects for the Panamanian people, land, and canal area. Bringing to light historical legacies unknown to most U.S. citizens or even to many Panamanians, *Emperors in the Jungle* is a major contribution toward a new, more open relationship between Panama and the United States.

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Editorial Review

Review

“John Lindsay-Poland’s book *Emperors in the Jungle* should be read by all Americans who do not understand why the U.S. has a serious image problem overseas and how the Department of Defense weakens U.S. policy. My experience is that the U.S. military becomes arrogant, hypocritical and unwilling to comply with treaty commitments when there is a budgetary cost involved, even if it means like in Panama, leaving behind threats to human life, health and safety.”— Fernando Manfredo Jr., former Panama Canal Treaty negotiator and co-Chairman of the Panama-U.S. Working Group for the removal of the hazards in the U.S. military ranges in Panama.

“[John Lindsay-Poland] tells us of ill-known truths and badly understood realities and thus helps prevent useless hatreds between two peoples who share so much common history. Panamanians must aspire to be universal if we want to survive as a people and as a nation in a globalized world, but we can only achieve that if we are authentic. On that path toward ourselves, John Lindsay-Poland has been and will be a welcome friend.”— Guillermo Castro, Panamanian sociologist, from the afterword

”*Emperors in the Jungle* stands out as a most valuable contribution to understandings of the complex relationship between the United States and a tiny neighbor. It is one of the best available examples of Thucydides’s dictum that large nations do what they want, and small nations accept what they must, yet at the same time a reminder that small nations are not without power—after all is said and done, Panama now owns its canal.”—Lars Schoultz, author of *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*

”John Lindsay-Poland has dedicated himself to issues of human rights and justice for Panamanians. His tireless efforts continue to motivate people and shed needed light on the truths he discovers. *Emperors in the Jungle* is a timeless look at the real dimensions of U.S. foreign policy.”—Barbara Trent, director of the Academy Award®-winning documentary, *The Panama Deception*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

John Lindsay-Poland is Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation’s Task Force on Latin America and the Caribbean. He is a coauthor of *Inside Panama: The Essential Guide to its Politics, Economy, Society, and Environment*. He was the editor of and staff writer for the quarterly *Panamá Update* and has written for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *NACLA Report on the Americas*, *The Progressive*, *Covert Action Quarterly*, and

Fellowship, among other publications.

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From reader reviews:

Corrina Sutton:

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