



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

*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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