United States Involvement in the Panama Canal

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1. The main idea around this presentation will be posed around this question, “What was the impact that the United States made on the Panama Canal and was it for Panama’s benefit or their own benefit?”

The United States wanted a way to make trade between the Atlantic side of the U.S. and the Pacific side to go faster but before it had to make a journey around South America and it would take many months, so it was considered to create a canal that would make the trip significantly shorter.

2. The first idea was to create a canal around Nicaragua around 1850 but the plan ultimately never went through and instead a new plan was constructed when The Spooner Act of 1902 was passed by President Theodore Roosevelt which gave the U.S. freedom to take assets that were originally owned by the French like Panama but they must agree to terms with them first before any agreement could go through.

The canal began construction in 1903 and was completed in 1914. Panama agreed to the construction of the canal because they believed that they would profit from it majorly and seriously help it economically and help stop or at least lower unemployment but they would soon learn that would not be the case.

3. The U.S. intended first and foremost for the canal to benefit themselves and the benefits to the canal to Panama was of no interest to them. The U.S. didn’t help Panama as the U.S. did not employ any workers from Panama to avoid having to pay them and this was a big missed opportunity to help the unemployment rate to stop in Panama.

There is also the fact that Panama businesses were not allowed to trade or sell any goods or services from within the area that the canal operated in so that ended up making Panama’s trade to wind up being far more limiting then it was before.

4. The U.S. also used military threats to force Panama to receive a low payment from the Canal territory, despite the heavy use of an important part of its region being used by a foreign power.

Things however began to change when backlash became more apparent and eventually led to a deal in 1977 where President Jimmy Carter signed a treaty with Panama to transfer all power of the canal to Panama by the end of the 20th Century, as well as the canal zone to no longer be under strict control and free to be used by Panama however they like and the Panama Canal was under complete control by Panama in 1999.

Conclusion

Overall, the Panama Canal was a big accomplishment that the U.S. took advantage of. However, they took things too far when they made Panama be taken advantage of rather than its partner in the deal. By the end of it all, Panama eventually regained control over it all at the end of it all and is now under their complete control.

Bibliography


Methodology

I did my research by looking into what made the Panama Canal into what it ultimately became and how America contributed into its creation as well as how the U.S. used it to its own advantage. It massively effected on how Panama operated and how it continued to contribute until it would become merely used by the U.S. without getting any meaningful piece of the resources and money the canal gave the United States.