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Putting the Canal on the Map:

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Abstract

In the early 1970s, Panama's negotiations with the United States over the status of the Panama Canal ground to a standstill. General Omar Torrijos had rejected treaties left unratified by previous governments only to receive a less generous offer from the Nixon administration. Realizing that the talks were being ignored in Washington, the Panamanian government worked to internationalize the previously bilateral issue, creating and exploiting a high-profile forum: extraordinary meetings of the U.N. Security Council in March 1973 held in Panama City. In those meetings, Panama isolated the United States in order to raise the issue's profile and amplify the costs of leaving the matter unsettled. Using underutilized Panamanian sources, this article examines that meeting, the succeeding progress, and the effect of this early stage on the final negotiations several years later. The case also illustrates how, during the unsettled international environment of the 1970s, a small state utilized international organizations to obtain attention and support for its most important cause.

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**Putting the Canal on the Map:
Panamanian Agenda-setting and the 1973 Security Council Meetings¹**

“The United States has vetoed Panama’s resolution, but the world has vetoed the United States.”²

-Panamanian Foreign Minister Juan Antonio Tack, March 1973

In the middle of March 1973, ambassadors from the fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council gathered in Panama City for an extraordinary meeting on the status of the Panama Canal. Representatives from many more Latin American countries traveled to the isthmus to represent their concerns before the world body. Panama was ready. At an expense of about \$100,000, the Panamanian government installed state-of-the-art telecommunications facilities, refurbished halls and government buildings, and added layers of security to curtail any unwanted protests. The government had honed its message, aimed both abroad and at buttressing the image of military leader General Omar Torrijos amongst the Panamanian people. Torrijos sought no less than the “moral backing of the world.”³ The United States was perhaps less prepared, despite months of trying to avoid the Panama meeting for fear it would be an anti-Yankee propaganda event. Shortly before the meeting, John Scali, a relative diplomatic novice, replaced George Bush as head of the U.S. delegation. While the Panamanians appealed to broad principles of justice, decolonization, and fairness, the United States calmly insisted that, “problems with the canal will be solved by very quiet and painstaking negotiations and not by speeches in any international forum.”⁴

With its opposition to the meeting well-known, Richard Nixon's administration threatened that bombastic rhetoric would scuttle private negotiations. If Panama wanted even modest concessions, it would get them only if it respected U.S. conditions that talks would be strictly bilateral and strictly confidential. What the Nixon administration failed to understand was that General Torrijos was not interested in modest concessions, but in a dramatically different relationship, "even if it was necessary to wait for a new generation of Americans to achieve Panamanian demands."⁵ Torrijos countered U.S. pressures by maneuvering for a showdown on his home turf.

The Panama Canal in perspective

The negotiations over the Panama Canal Treaties have been a frequent and important case study in diplomatic history, political science, and international relations. Opposition to the treaties is considered a crucial episode in the formation of the "new right" and a proxy for a wider debate over the U.S. role in the world.⁶ In international relations, the talks were a prominent example of how negotiators can employ legislative constraints as part of a "two-level game" to narrow acceptable outcomes.⁷ In presidential studies, some supporters of President Jimmy Carter have offered the negotiations as a symbol of his determination and sense of justice, just as his opponents cast the issue as capitulation.⁸

Despite its breadth, the literature on the Panama Canal negotiations focuses largely on the actions of the United States and the consequences for U.S. political actors.⁹ There has been little attention to the interaction between the United States and Panama and less to the Panamanian government's strategies—with the exception of colorful anecdotes about Panama's quotable leader, Omar Torrijos.¹⁰ Case narratives on the treaties typically focus on the arrival of Jimmy

Carter, whose determination led to the conclusion of the treaties, but this ignores why the Panama Canal became a top issue on Carter's foreign policy agenda. It also underestimates the work that had been done on political, military, technical, and economic issues prior to Carter's arrival. A framework for negotiations had been developed not by the justice-minded Carter but by the realpolitik-minded Henry Kissinger. By exploring an early part of Panamanian strategy, this article begins to remedy the one-sidedness of earlier studies. Despite the large amount written on the Panama Canal Treaties, Panamanian sources have played only a minor role.¹¹ Employing the archives of Panama's foreign ministry and other underutilized Panamanian sources, this article illustrates the central role played by Panamanians throughout the process.

However, the implications of this case go beyond the history of U.S.-Panamanian relations. The UNSC meetings studied here, like the rest of the negotiations, played out in the turbulent international landscape of the 1970s. That decade offered a better moment for small-power agency than the 1960s had or the 1980s would. Emerging U.S.-Soviet détente opened space for dissent within the American sphere of influence, partially because President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger placed less emphasis on Latin America than their Democratic predecessors. Mark Atwood Lawrence writes that "the developing world was significant for Nixon and Kissinger only to the extent that turmoil there might complicate the pursuit of their core geopolitical agenda."¹² The administration's initial response to Panama manifested this lack of interest; however, Panamanian strategies would highlight implications for the U.S. image throughout the developing world. The U.S. desire to position itself with emerging, postcolonial regimes in Africa handed Panamanian leaders a powerful weapon. Panama made constant appeals in the language of the national self-determination and decolonization; these reverberated as the United States neared defeat in Vietnam. Both anti-Vietnam War protests and the U.S. civil

rights movement seemed to prove to Panamanians that dramatic appeals to the consciences of American voters could lead to substantial changes in U.S. policies. Transnational movements were amplifying discourses of post-colonialism and human rights, to which Panama tied its cause. Panamanians equated the Canal Zone with colonialism and apartheid, drawing on a history of discrimination against darker-skinned Panamanians in favor of white Zonians.¹³ The story of the 1973 meetings speaks to broader issues of how smaller nations, in Latin America and beyond, acted not only as subjects in the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, but also as agents taking advantage the changing international panorama of the 1970s.

Secondly, this case illustrates how a tiny country can use international organizations to gain a place on the world agenda. Following the bloody 1964 riots sparked by a dispute between Panamanian and Zonian high school students over the flying of the Panamanian flag in the Canal Zone, Panama tried to use the Organization of American States to “try” U.S. in the court of world opinion.¹⁴ In 1973, Panama sought a global instead of a hemispheric audience. Though formally dominated by veto-wielding great powers, the UNSC provided a forum for Panama to air grievances and alter the international agenda. Scholars have argued that an important, and intentional, purpose of the United Nations is to allow peripheral states to voice complaints through the system instead of challenging it or resorting to force. Much of this attention has focused on the General Assembly.¹⁵ Meanwhile, work on the Security Council has more typically focused on the dominant role of permanent members,¹⁶ and studies focused on voting behavior have confirmed the limited power of small, rotating members on the Security Council.¹⁷ However, Ian Hurd has noted the importance of “symbolism and recognition” to small states that seek to get their issues onto the UNSC agenda,¹⁸ where they can “use resources that are endogenous to international society as levers against militarily powerful states.”¹⁹ This case

illustrates that the UNSC agenda can be a means not only to gain the attention of the council, but of a world audience.

Third, this is an important case to illuminate how small states can be actors in the international system more broadly. This question that has, by turns, been ignored by or bedeviled International Relations theories, which are often better at explaining structures than agency and traditionally focus on great powers.²⁰ While Panama's leaders could not re-shape the international system, in this case they were able to understand and exploit it to pursue their top priority, the end of the Canal Zone and transfer of the canal to national control. This case describes the strategies they used to do so—strategies which might be applicable in other cases of contention between small and great powers.

The article focuses on how and why Panama advocated for and then exploited UNSC meetings in Panama City. Those meetings spurred advances in negotiations, leading up to the Tack-Kissinger agreement—despite U.S. warnings that the meetings would scuttle ongoing talks. The 1973 forum was momentous in its own right. It was just the second time the council had met outside its New York headquarters. Panama's deft tactics forced the United States first to accept the extraordinary meeting against its wishes and then to employ its veto—for just the third time—to reject a nearly unanimous resolution. The meeting also holds a broader significance in the history of the treaty negotiations. The story of how the Panama Canal Treaties came to be is not just a story of Jimmy Carter's willingness to take political risks. It is also a story of Panama's persistence and shrewd strategizing.

Divergent goals, irreconcilable positions?

The creation of the Panama Canal is inextricably linked with Panama's birth as an independent state. The United States served as midwife, offering Panamanian secessionists protection from the Colombian authorities. That guarantee, however, was linked to Panama's willingness to give the U.S. extraordinarily generous terms to take over the construction of an interoceanic canal from a failed French company. Within fifteen days of Panamanian independence, the United States negotiated a one-sided treaty with Philippe Bunau-Varilla, who represented both the new Central American republic and his own interests in the failed concessionaire. Under the implicit threat that Washington would withdraw its support, Panama ratified a pact that gave the United States a ten-mile-wide zone through the middle of the country, in perpetuity.²¹ Within a year of its ratification, Panama began to contest the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, asking for revisions due to how, and by whom, it was negotiated.²² The complaints only grew. During the decade-long construction, Panama criticized the exclusion of local workers, who were paid much less, if they were hired at all. The U.S.-run construction authority instituted complex pay and work divisions based on race and nationality, none of which favored Panamanians.²³ President Belisario Porras called the treaty "inadequate" in 1916, and made several unsuccessful attempts to renegotiate it. The first revision took place in 1936, removing the broad right of the U.S. to intervene in Panama under a clause similar to the Cuban Platt Amendment. Shortly afterwards, the Second World War provoked an immense build-up of the U.S. military presence in the Canal Zone, probably representing the highpoint for the canal's strategic value to the United States.

In 1953, Panama agitated for further revisions, including an end to perpetuity, recognition of full Panamanian sovereignty, and a \$5 million annuity.²⁴ In 1955, the Eisenhower-Remón Treaty increased the payment to Panama to nearly \$2 million per year. It also officially eliminated the gold and silver payroll system and adjusted some labor and taxation policies; in

practice discrimination continued. However, resentment at the very basis of the 1903 treaty—the existence of the Canal Zone as a state within a state—continued to build. As decolonization and third-world nationalism became potent global forces, the zone began to look anachronistic. In the late 1950s, Panamanian professionals and students launched small-scale protests. In 1959, politicians advocated a peaceful “invasion” of the Canal Zone. Marchers’ confrontation with U.S. police turned violent and drew Washington’s attention. A year later, on September 21, 1960, the Panamanian flag was raised for the first time in the zone, alongside the American in Shaler Triangle, near Panama City.²⁵

In January 1964, sparked by a confrontation between Panamanian and Zonian students over which flag would be flown outside Balboa High School, decades of resentment boiled over. Panamanian protestors faced off with Zonian police and U.S. soldiers. Riots and confrontations consumed the city, leading the Panamanian president to break diplomatic relations with the United States. As the two countries slowly moved to resume relations later that year, Lyndon B. Johnson yielded to Panama’s pressure. Johnson announced the United States would open the 1903 treaties to revision, designating Robert Anderson, Eisenhower’s former secretary of Treasury, as his special envoy. On December 18, 1964, Johnson announced that the United States and Panama would not revise the existing treaties, but instead would replace them with entirely new agreements.²⁶ The concession opened nearly three years of negotiations, which culminated in the “three-in-one,” Johnson-Robles Treaty of 1967. The unpopularity of the pact was clear, and neither president presented it for ratification.²⁷

After Torrijos came to power in a 1968 coup, his government rejected the treaties. Even though the pact would have ended perpetual U.S. control, Panamanian nationalists saw it as insufficient. Ratifying that treaty, or using it as the basis for new negotiations would have been

politically difficult for Torrijos, who sought to unseat not just the previous administration but the entire political class.²⁸ Torrijos decided early on that he would resolve the canal issue with finality, so Torrijos and his advisers renounced the 1967 treaty and took a blank-slate approach.

Torrijos had very different roots than Panama's previous leaders. He hailed from the country's interior and his education was almost entirely military, whereas previous leaders emerged from the economic elite of Panama City and Colón. Torrijos did not have a long, personal history with the United States and certainly did not feel he owed his position to the northern colossus; in fact, Torrijos suspected the United States had tried to thwart his rise to power. Torrijos' principal base of support came from Panama's National Guard, and his vocal nationalism and populism gained the support of the leftist student movement, which had grown powerful as a result of the 1964 riots. Given his personal history and his political bases, Torrijos was willing to press the United States for broad changes in the goals and nature of negotiations.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the United States showed little interest in changing the status of the canal. For decades, the United States had placated Panamanian complaints with minor adjustments or increases in compensation. In the first few years, Torrijos' decision yielded no results. The Nixon administration took a much harder line than Lyndon Johnson had in 1967. Parts of the U.S. defense establishment viewed the change in Panama's government as an opportunity to renege on concessions made under Johnson. In 1970, the Pentagon accepted renewed talks, but argued that "U.S. control over canal operations and defense for the indefinite future" should be "nonnegotiable."²⁹ National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, who four years later would sign onto a radically different set of principles, recommended the core of Defense's position to the president.³⁰ Nixon set out U.S. goals: "In any new negotiations three points are to

be considered nonnegotiable: a) effective US control of canal operations; b) effective US control of canal defense; and c) continuation of these controls for an extended period of time preferably open-ended.”³¹ For Panamanians seeking a solution to longstanding grievances, the U.S. reversion was a slap in the face.

The Torrijos government’s goals remained essentially the same from 1970 to the ratification of the treaties in 1978. The principal goal was the immediate elimination of the Canal Zone. On this goal, the Panamanian government and population were united. Other goals included an end to the “perpetuity” clause of the original treaty, the transfer of the canal to Panamanian control, the increase of economic benefits and compensation derived from the canal, and the withdraw—or at least substantial reduction—of the U.S. military presence in the country. Panamanian Foreign Minister Juan Antonio Tack said during the re-started negotiations:

*Panama manifested that the negotiations had been restarted with the aim of eliminating one government inside of another government, so that the so-called Canal Zone could be integrated physically and politically into the rest of the territory of the Republic of Panama, under the full jurisdiction of the Panamanian government.*³²

Though Torrijos’ principle aims were concretized in 1971, many of the more specific goals regarding questions like the treaty’s lifespan lacked definition or shifted over the subsequent years. By the end of 1972, Panamanian goals were more explicit. They included: 1) an end to the “perpetuity” clause of 1903, with an end date of December 31, 1994; 2) elimination of U.S. jurisdiction in the Canal Zone and the institution of Panamanian legal and political authority there; 3) an immediate reversion of all lands and waters not needed directly for the operation or

defense of the canal, 4) immediate Panamanian participation in the administration of the canal, with 85 percent of the payroll destined to Panamanian citizens; 5) the cessation of U.S. military activities not directly related to the canal, such as the School of the Americas, and stipulations and limits on the U.S. military presence; 6) neutrality of the canal under a UN mandate; 6) a dramatic increase in the revenue Panama derived from the canal; 7) exclusive use of the Panamanian flag; 8) neutral arbitration of disputes; 9) Panamanian determination over the construction of a new or expanded canal, to be negotiated later.³³

Despite decades of negotiations, supplementary treaties, and agreements, Panama was convinced the United States did not understand the fundamental nature of its principal goal. For Panamanians the real problem—the issue that gnawed at their national consciousness and wrecked their sense of sovereign dignity—was the broad strip of segregated land that surrounded the canal. The Canal Zone. The Zonians. The foreign population, school system, grocery stores, post offices, and legal system that occupied the heart of the isthmus. The problem for Panamanians was the “state within a state” that did not answer to the authorities of the country in which it existed. It was the domain of a governor they did not appoint or elect, and of a legal system that had as its basis the laws of the state of Louisiana. “Panama was born in 1903 with a contradiction between the nation and the Canal Treaty of 1903. This wasn’t the result of the military bases, or that the canal was managed by the United States,” treaty negotiator Adolfo Ahumada said. “The major problem was the existence of the Canal Zone. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be an independent state with such an overwhelming presence in the middle of the national territory.”³⁴

1972-1973: Rejecting the past and crafting a strategy

In early 1971, talks were renewed, but the sides were miles apart. Anderson insisted Panamanian demands would never pass Congress, while towing the new Pentagon line of permanent control over operations and defense.³⁵ In April, Torrijos asked if the U.S. was willing to end the Canal Zone, and Anderson said no, he would only alter the 1967 arrangements—and apparently not in the direction of Panama’s wishes.³⁶ By July 1971, Panama’s initial hopes had collapsed into disappointment. Foreign Minister Tack wrote that, “[I]t became obvious that the Panamanian positions from January 1971 were not acceptable to the United States, and that the basic points of the U.S. position from December 1970 were not acceptable to Panama.³⁷ What the Panamanian team did not realize was that their counterpart, Ambassador Anderson, was operating from the wilderness of the Nixon administration, unable to overcome the president’s personal dislike of him or the weak bureaucratic position of Secretary William P. Rogers compared to Kissinger. “There was a chasm between the White House and the Panama talks that never was bridged during the Anderson years.”³⁸ Neither Nixon nor Kissinger ever met with the ambassador.

In late 1972, Torrijos appointed a new ambassador to the United States, filling a position that had been vacant for six months with a 27-year-old political recruit who evinced strong personal loyalty. Ambassador Nicolas González Revilla recalled Torrijos telling him, “ ‘You are not being requested to go to Washington because you are an expert in either [the treaties or history].’ ” Torrijos wanted the young ambassador to “take a look, a fresh look.” González Revilla went to Washington, and in his first report back, he asked Torrijos, “Have you ever solved a problem that you don’t have?” The new ambassador explained that Panama’s concerns were nowhere to be found on the U.S. agenda—the Americans did not consider Panama’s grievances a real problem. The negotiating guidelines were not being actively reviewed, and the

changes to policy were merely cosmetic. Torrijos gathered his advisors, and they decided to adopt a new approach. “So then [Torrijos] realized that he needed to create an issue, and he did it brilliantly,” González Revilla said. “He went to the third world. ... He started to travel a lot, within Latin America and out of Latin America.”³⁹

Panama fired the first salvos of its new strategy in international organizations, obtaining Latin American support for a UN Security Council term starting in 1972. When the Security Council held an extraordinary meeting in Addis Ababa—the first held in the developing world—Panama’s Ambassador Aquilino Boyd used the forum to equate the U.S. presence in Panama with colonial and racial oppression. The attack caught the U.S. representative, George Bush, off guard.⁴⁰ Secretary of State Rogers warned President Nixon “that Panama has intimated its interest in having a Council meeting there on the U.S.-Panama dispute over the Canal Zone.”⁴¹ Boyd’s suggestion was apparently improvised on his own initiative.⁴² The U.S. condemned Boyd’s departure from bilateralism, with U.S. negotiator David Ward warning that “the Panamanian presentation of a complaint against the United States in the Security Council had provoked adverse reactions in many circles of the U.S. government, in the executive and legislative, which in his opinion would reverse progress by at least three years.”⁴³ Though the Panamanian representative had put himself out on a limb, the support the idea garnered from Torrijos was as strong as the resistance it engendered in the United States.

Boyd continued gaining support from Latin American and African governments. Meanwhile, Torrijos engaged in intensive personal diplomacy to secure the support of his democratic neighboring countries.⁴⁴ In March 1972, Boyd invited UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to visit Panama to gain a better appreciation of how the stagnated negotiations threatened peace. “I told Mr. Waldheim that if the current negotiations for a new treaty failed,

the Panamanian government, with the goal of winning international public support for its just cause, had the intention of appealing to the United Nations.”⁴⁵ Throughout 1972, U.S. representatives at the UN tried to mobilize allies to oppose further meetings outside New York, employing arguments ranging from fiscal strain and organizational headaches to increased regional tensions.⁴⁶ The administration pushed the Panamanians directly, sending NSC staffer William Jordan to dissuade Torrijos,⁴⁷ while Rogers warned Tack that the meetings would generate public opposition to improving relations with Panama.⁴⁸ U.S. lead negotiator Anderson told both Boyd and foreign ministry advisor Jorge Illueca “that regardless of what happened in the Security Council or any U.N. organism, the U.S. would continue considering these problems as internal to the two countries.”⁴⁹

Despite these pressures, Panama received a favorable response to its informal inquiries from most Security Council members and by November was moving ahead with plans for a meeting in Panama City.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the December round of negotiations approached a complete collapse. There was little common ground between the positions advanced by each side; the talks were further complicated by internal struggles within both the U.S. and Panamanian governments that undermined support for the negotiators. Frustrated at the bargaining table, and seeing further talks with Anderson as futile, Panama was willing to take greater risks by openly challenging the United States internationally.

The Panamanian strategy at the United Nations and through Torrijos’ personal diplomacy had two main goals. The first was to raise the issue’s profile on the international agenda, and thereby gain the attention of more important officials who set the U.S. foreign policy agenda. The second was to increase the diplomatic costs to the United States of failing to resolve the problem. On these points, the gambit was a remarkable success. Rómulo Escobar Bethancourt, a

leftist university rector who spent a decade as a negotiator, reflected: “Torrijos traveled throughout the Americas, central, north, and south, reinforcing his connections with leaders in every corner of the continent. The United States of America began to feel a horsefly biting its leg, and there were more horseflies coming. Panama had broken the isolation of its past and its obsequious foreign policy.”⁵¹ Now that Torrijos had the United States’ attention—negative as it was—he pushed for another change to the negotiating approach between the two countries. Instead of focusing on details, Torrijos (no lover of details himself, by all accounts) and Foreign Minister Tack advocated starting with broad principles.⁵² This suggestion, made as early as November 1972, would pay dividends in the wake of the contentious Security Council meeting.

On January 26, 1973, the Security Council approved Panama’s initiative to host a meeting.⁵³ Panama had secured letters of support from Latin American, African, and Arab regional groups. China, Austria, France, Sudan, and India readily enunciated support for the meetings, citing the earlier meetings in Addis as proof that leaving New York could enhance the council’s understanding of regional issues. Ambassadors noted the unanimous support from Latin America and argued that the Security Council needed to keep pace with the changing international system. With only the United States voicing strong objections and the developing world unified, Australia and the United Kingdom tepidly accepted the Panamanian proposal.⁵⁴ The United States recognized that it had at least eleven of fifteen votes against it. A vote against the meeting would appear closed-minded.⁵⁵ In the end, the U.S. put aside its opposition and voted to hold the meeting in Panama, hoping that it could modify the Panamanian position and minimize the damage.

1973-1974: From conflict to cooperation

In the council's opening session on March 15, Panama's chief of government took the stage to welcome the delegates. Representatives expecting a brief and courteous welcome would have been taken aback. Instead, the general compared his country's struggles with those of everyone who suffered injustice. "Panama understands the fight of countries that suffer the humiliation of colonialism," Torrijos proclaimed. "Highest leaders of North America, it is nobler to amend an injustice than to perpetuate an error."⁵⁶ Torrijos appealed to the American people's sense of justice. Protests had brought the Vietnam War to an end, and the Panamanian hoped to create international and domestic pressure on U.S. politicians.

Early in the week, the U.S. opposed several draft resolutions on the grounds that the United Nations should not be involved in bilateral affairs. State Department instructions to the U.S. delegation fixated on the desire to prevent the Security Council from "passing resolutions on subjects that are not properly of its concern." State did not expect any statement would be able to secure a majority in the council, so elected to play defense. "For us, Panama will essentially be a damage-limiting operation," Secretary Rogers wrote Scali before the meetings. "No possible glory can come to us (or the UN) from it."⁵⁷ Once in Panama, it was quickly obvious that the climate was more propitious to anti-U.S. resolutions than the Americans had anticipated. Scali publicly threatened that the U.S. would veto any resolution that did not adequately consider its interests, while also saying that the U.S. had no intention of introducing its own resolution.⁵⁸

On the second day, Panama and Peru introduced a resolution that demanded the abrogation of the 1903 treaty,⁵⁹ re-affirmed Panama's sovereignty over the Canal Zone, and called for immediate Panamanian jurisdiction. Panama initially showed some willingness to

work with the United States—if the U.S. would support a resolution that was not too watered down. That window closed as the United States initially sought to block any text at all on the canal. As had happened with the decision to hold the meeting in Panama, U.S. efforts to convince other members failed. Panama’s aggressive approach, coupled with a defensive U.S. attitude, once again put the U.S. at a disadvantage. The United States became increasingly isolated, with only Great Britain in its corner. While Panama and Peru lined up cosponsors including Guinea, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Sudan, and Yugoslavia for a revised resolution,⁶⁰ the United States continued to claim the United Nations had no place in the matter—though the second draft included significantly softer language. By the time the China and Russia announced they would back Panama, the U.S. was just beginning to consider a counterproposal.⁶¹ On March 19, Scali went to Foreign Minister Tack’s office. The new U.S. diplomat told the Panamanian that the United States “would prefer no resolution at all. Tack replied that he was aware that was our preference, but indicated that there would, of course, have to be a resolution.” Scali then pushed a resolution with vague, general wording that only urged the continuation of negotiations, but without any statement of specific goals. Tack listened quietly, then told the U.S. delegation that he would check with Torrijos.⁶²

The Panamanians thought there was “about an 80 or 90 percent chance that [Scali] was going to veto.”⁶³ According to Jorden, Panama decided during the meetings that it preferred a U.S. veto to U.S. approval. “Torrijos told me later that, after consulting with University Rector Escobar and other advisers, he decided Panama’s cause might be better served if the United States opposed the resolution. That, they concluded might attract even more world attention than the unanimous approval of a more balanced statement.”⁶⁴ Many in Torrijos’ circle of foreign policy advisors had also concluded that, having already isolated the United States, forcing it to

veto would be a major public relations victory.⁶⁵ While it is likely Torrijos did realize that a veto would serve Panama's interests, the Panamanians did not give up on getting U.S. support. The U.S. insisted on referring to U.S. "legitimate interests" in the canal in any resolution. Panama, knowing it had the support of nearly the full council, refused to compromise. The Panamanian delegation did offer Scali a third, revised resolution that incorporated some of his complaints, as Tack emphasized, but Scali's reiterated veto threat closed the matter.⁶⁶ To drive home the point, Manuel Antonio Noriega, second in command of the National Guard, made an ominous call to the U.S. delegation, telling Scali that if he planned on casting a veto, "it would be best to do it from Panama's Tocumen airport." The call, Torrijos told the U.S. ambassador was "not sent as blackmail or threatened violence," but was just a helpful piece of close U.S.-Panamanian cooperation on security for the meeting! At the same time, Torrijos "almost pleaded" Scali to find compromise wording on a resolution that would benefit both sides.⁶⁷

The U.S. offered its first counterproposal on the conference's last day, well after Boyd and Tack had united council members behind the Panama-Peru proposal.⁶⁸ The U.S. text was too little, too late. Thirteen countries voted in favor of Panama's proposal. Great Britain abstained, on the grounds that given U.S. opposition the resolution did nothing to advance the issue. Ambassador Scali cast the third Security Council veto in U.S. history on direct orders from the White House,⁶⁹ saying that though "there is so much in it [the resolution] with which we agree," the matter was not the business of the United Nations and "the present resolution addresses the points of interest to Panama but ignores those legitimate interests important to the United States."⁷⁰ Foreign Minister Tack closed the week of meetings, saying, "The United States has vetoed Panama's resolution, but the world has vetoed the United States."⁷¹

The thirteen supportive members of the council based their votes of different lines of argument. The Soviets, Chinese, and Yugoslavs saw the issue as an opportunity to denounce U.S. imperialism and embarrass a rival. After the vote, the Yugoslav ambassador said the message of the U.S. veto was “that the time of fairness and generosity had not yet arrived and that they would have to continue their struggle.”⁷² Peru, Panama’s first and staunchest supporter on the council, advocated Latin American unity. India and Indonesia emphasized that Panama must be able to take advantage of its natural resources to improve economic conditions for its population. African members Kenya, Sudan, and especially Guinea echoed the themes of decolonization and sovereignty that Panamanian Ambassador Boyd had raised in the Security Council meeting in Ethiopia. Guinean representative Jeanne Martin Cisse equated the vestigial colonialism of the Canal Zone to Portuguese brutality in Africa. Australia, having changed its position because of revisions in the draft, offered more a tepid endorsement, saying it supported the general principle that the U.S. and Panama should peacefully negotiate.⁷³

In trying to block the Security Council meeting in Panama, and later in trying to halt Panama’s resolution, the Nixon administration repeatedly warned that any such publicity would set back the negotiations for years. This ominous warning was the main bargaining chip the United States sought to employ, and it failed spectacularly. The Panamanian historian Omar Jaén Suárez reflects, “The Nixon administration had faced a small, military-led country without a trained civil or diplomatic service, without any economic or military power, and it had been beaten on difficult ground.”⁷⁴ Why? The Panamanians had decided the negotiations were stalemated, even though they continued to engage in them sporadically. The United States had failed to grasp that the approach that had succeeded in reducing tensions with previous Panamanian governments—piecemeal concessions—would not satisfy Torrijos. The Security

Council meeting did produce an immediate breakdown, but this breakdown served not to delay negotiations for years, but to provoke a serious reevaluation on the U.S. side. Just a year earlier, Henry Kissinger had yielded to the Pentagon's reactionary negotiating positions with seemingly little thought. U.S. Ambassador Sayre had pushed similar positions. In the wake of the UN debacle, both took a fresh look at the costs and benefits of U.S. intransigence. On April 6, Sayre wrote to the State Department that Torrijos was a nationalist who would not accept the previous relationship. The U.S. ambassador criticized the United States' lack of clarity over the importance of the canal, which produced inconsistent negotiating positions.⁷⁵

Panamanian negotiators moved from their polemic criticisms of the United States to push for specific goals. Many saw longtime negotiator Robert Anderson as a problem, and by mid-April 1973, they began to push for his removal. In so doing, they picked up on divisions within the U.S. government, which had been exacerbated by the UN meetings. Due to Anderson's stubbornness and his increasingly obvious isolation from his own team and his superiors, Panamanians concluded that continuing negotiations with him was pointless. State Department representative Morey Bell went so far as to tell his Panamanian counterpart that Anderson would be replaced.⁷⁶ A prominent advisor wrote to Tack:

Ambassador Robert B. Anderson is an unyielding exponent of the U.S. position, and while he remains at the front of the U.S. delegation, it will be very difficult to achieve any change in the U.S. position that would facilitate an understanding with Panama. This opinion is shared by some within the U.S. government, like Morey Bell, who told Manfredo that for Ambassador Anderson, the strict maintenance of the U.S. position had become a point of honor; that he had

become inflexible and that a change of that position would require Anderson's exit as chief of delegation.⁷⁷

That Panamanians related years of stalled negotiations to Anderson personally set the stage for progress upon his removal.

While the meetings succeeded on the world stage, they also got the attention of an audience of one. Henry Kissinger, the preeminent voice in the Nixon administration's foreign policy, took note of the Panama Canal issue in a way that he previously had not. A month before the meeting, Kissinger had told Scali that he didn't "have any very clear views on [Panama]."⁷⁸ The spotlight of international attention forced Kissinger to clarify his own position.⁷⁹ Kissinger was not particularly concerned about the Panama Canal itself, but he saw the issue in broader terms. First, Panama was an irritant in U.S. relations with much of Latin America. Kissinger later wrote, "Without exception, the Latin American countries were advocating a change in conditions which they considered the last vestiges of colonialism in the hemisphere, and a revised treaty served our interests by heading off a permanent crisis with Latin America."⁸⁰ Secondly, Kissinger was reluctant to hand the Soviets an issue on which the United States was clearly isolated, as the UNSC meetings had demonstrated—particularly since he doubted the strategic necessity of controlling the canal in perpetuity. The meeting also empowered Jorden, who was predisposed to a treaty, to advance his views in the NSC. Jorden penned text on Panama for Nixon's annual address to Congress on foreign policy, marking the first time the president had directly addressed the issue in such a prominent venue.⁸¹

Another important unresolved problem concerns the Panama Canal and the surrounding Zone. ... For the past nine years, efforts to work out a new treaty

acceptable to both parties have failed. That failure has put considerable strain on our relations with Panama. It is time for both parties to take a fresh look at this problem and to develop a new relationship between us--one that will guarantee continued effective operation of the canal while meeting Panama's legitimate aspirations.⁸²

Panama seized upon Nixon's call for a "fresh look."⁸³ Panamanian Ambassador González Revilla met with Morey Bell before traveling for consultations with Torrijos. The Panamanian inquired about the possibility of informal talks instead of written exchanges, suggesting that both sides might be more flexible that way.⁸⁴ Others were less optimistic. Juan Antonio Stagg, who served for many years as Panama's consul in New York, noted that the political crisis faced by the Nixon administration made the possibility of successful negotiations increasingly remote.⁸⁵

Tack looked for an opportunity to advance the negotiations by going over Anderson's head. In early May, the foreign minister finally responded to Anderson's February letter. In a twelve-page missive laced with frustration, Tack criticized what he saw as the U.S. propensity to make lofty statements that seemed to agree with Panamanian positions, only to back away from them later. "The experience in the negotiating table shows that the 'broad changes' proposed by the U.S. delegation are a mirage. Those changes turn to smoke when it is time to come to concrete formulas."⁸⁶ Much of Tack's anger was aimed at Anderson, who he perceived as ineffectual and out of touch. Tack tried to capitalize on Nixon's "fresh look" by seeking to appeal directly to Secretary of State Rogers.

The opportunity materialized when Rogers announced he would attend the investiture of the new Argentine president, taking advantage of the trip to visit Brazil, too. The foreign

minister correctly surmised that the upper echelon of the Nixon administration had not been involved in the negotiations; Tack wrote his Brazilian homologue that he was “convinced that Secretary Rogers does not receive regular briefings from his subordinates regarding the progress of negotiations with Panama.”⁸⁷ Panama appealed to Brazil to intercede on its behalf, and requested a meeting through the U.S. embassy in Panama. Seeking to answer criticisms that Panama sought concessions while offering none, Panama for the first time proposed the end of the century for the end of U.S. control, backing off its previous position of December 1994. Tack asked that face-to-face negotiations be restarted.⁸⁸

Tack decided the previous approach of focusing on details and trying to negotiate up to the bigger issues was doomed. On May 24, 1973, at the Plaza Hotel in Buenos Aires, Tack delivered to Rogers a letter that included eight principles. The men also discussed the make-up of the U.S. negotiating team, with Rogers indicating in a veiled reference to Anderson that certain changes would be desirable.⁸⁹ Tack’s eight principles, for the most part, reiterated Panama’s key demands: 1) the abrogation of the 1903 treaty, 2) an end to perpetuity, 3) the complete end of U.S. jurisdiction at treaty’s end, 4) elimination of the Canal Zone, 5) a fair share of economic benefits, 6) limiting U.S. activities to the maintenance, operation, and defense of the canal, 7) limitation of U.S. military activities, and 8) mutually agreed upon options for any new construction.⁹⁰

Though Rogers did discuss the proposal directly with President Nixon, the timing could hardly have been worse.⁹¹ Both the Panamanian team and the Nixon administration were in upheaval. In Panama, Tack’s success at the UNSC meetings led to changes in the negotiating team, with the foreign minister pushing aside hardliners. With Torrijos’ backing, Tack took the

lead himself and deputized Ambassador González Revilla.⁹² In Washington, congressional hearings on Watergate had started a week before the meeting; Nixon's attention was clearly elsewhere. However, Tack's portrayal of Anderson appeared to speed the negotiator's demise. A month after the meeting, word leaked into the press that the veteran diplomat Ellsworth Bunker was being considered as a new chief for the delegation.⁹³ Bunker was just returning from a long stay in Vietnam, where he had worked to negotiate the war's conclusion. The energetic seventy-nine-year-old was internationally recognized and well respected in the Department of Defense. If the newspaper reports on Bunker were intended as a trial balloon, they worked. Panamanians told U.S. officials that Bunker would be an "excellent choice."⁹⁴ Anderson resigned a few days later. His term had started with the negotiations for the 1967 "three-in-one" treaties, but ended with his estrangement from his own team and from his negotiating partners.

State Department shakeups dominated the summer, and it took nearly two months until Secretary of State Rogers answered Tack's letter. Rumors of Rogers' impending departure swirled around Washington, as the secretary became ever-more vocal in criticizing the "White House plumbers" break-ins at the Watergate and against Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg. Roger's resignation, announced August 22, did little to change the decision-making dynamic in the administration, which rested squarely between Nixon and Kissinger.⁹⁵ Still, Rogers' reply to Tack showed a shift in the administration's tenor regarding the canal. He clearly stated that the U.S. would abrogate the 1903 treaty, something Anderson had waffled on. Though he was no longer in a position to make firm commitments, Rogers told Tack that he "read these principles with great interest and find important elements in them that my government is prepared to accept."⁹⁶

September 1973 brought with it a new U.S. team, with both Bunker and Kissinger confirmed to their new positions, and started a burst of progress. The two men enjoyed a level of confidence that Anderson and Rogers never had with Nixon. Panama still was not the central issue for Kissinger, but it was at least on his radar. He gave Bunker wide latitude with the Panamanians and support with the Pentagon, which the ambassador saw as crucial for a successful negotiation.⁹⁷ Bunker began his appointment by consulting widely within the U.S. government and working to establish his own administration's position before meeting with the Panamanian team.

The upcoming UN General Assembly, scheduled just days after Kissinger's confirmation, set another deadline for U.S. policymakers, who were certain the canal would be raised there. Kissinger sought to prevent an embarrassment like the one suffered in March. He adopted an accommodating tone in a bilateral meeting with the Panamanian delegation in New York, pressing Panama to dial down its public rhetoric. Kissinger told Tack on October 5 that he was aware of the principles the foreign minister had proposed to Rogers, and emphasized that Bunker had been appointed because of Kissinger's faith in him.⁹⁸ The second prong of Kissinger's strategy to minimize was to make a warm, though vague, proposal to Latin America as a whole for a "new dialogue."⁹⁹ The approach avoided fireworks, and Kissinger got positive reviews from many in Latin America.

The parties agreed that negotiations between the new teams would start in November. In the interregnum, Bunker worked the Pentagon and Foggy Bottom to come up with an acceptable response to the Tack's eight principles. Bunker continued to meet resistance from the military, in particular from the Army.¹⁰⁰ The Navy's willingness to reconsider was partly driven by the

changing military role of the canal. During World War II, it had been essential for the transport of men and materiel, as well as the transit of some ships. Increasingly, U.S. ships were too large to pass through the turn-of-the-century landmark, restricting the role the waterway played in naval planning in which enormous aircraft carriers were the central component. Many military plans assumed the canal would be closed by attack during worldwide conflict, noting that simple sabotage could render it inoperative for as long as two years. In short, an attack from Panamanians could close the canal as easily as an attack from Soviets and Cubans, and protecting the length of the canal from an unfriendly population could require 100,000 soldiers.¹⁰¹ Despite the decreased strategic role of the canal itself, U.S. military facilities including the headquarters of Southern Command, training schools, and large air and submarine bases were considered valuable assets, while the Army had used the canal for moving men and supplies as recently as the Vietnam War.¹⁰²

In preparation for the negotiations, Secretary of the Army Calloway took a four-day trip to Panama, where he met with Torrijos, Tack, and President Demetrio Lakas. He had a long conversation with Carlos López Guevara, a negotiator close to Torrijos. Calloway was surprised by the depth of Panama's feelings regarding military bases, especially the Southern Command headquarters. Though Calloway continued to emphasize his opposition to moving the base, he did state that he hoped to conclude a new treaty.¹⁰³ While the Pentagon continued to put up a bureaucratic battle, Bunker was at least weakening the resistance.

On November 26, the new U.S. negotiator arrived to the tranquil island of Contadora, part of the Pearl Islands archipelago off Panama's Pacific Coast. Contadora, which was being developed as a resort by Torrijos' confidant, businessman Gabriel Lewis Galindo, would be the

site of many rounds of talks. Panama's decision to host Bunker there, instead of in the city, was intended to create a decisive break from the frigid negotiating style that had characterized talks with Anderson. Having learned that Bunker was a boating enthusiast, the Panamanians put President Lakas' yacht at his disposal.¹⁰⁴ On the first evening, Tack greeted the new negotiator by recalling how they had met ten years before at the OAS, mostly eschewing the historical diatribes often recounted by the Panamanian team.¹⁰⁵ Bunker approved of the meetings' tone, telling Kissinger that they had gone better than hoped. Torrijos told Bunker that "for the first time he has faith and hope that all will turn out well." The two sides reached near-total agreement on seven of the eight principles, which Bunker suggested could serve as a joint declaration between the two presidents. At length, Bunker described the rapport he had developed with Torrijos during chats and a helicopter tour of Panama.¹⁰⁶

Bunker offered an astute analysis of the Panamanians' position, more clearly understanding their sensitivities regarding jurisdiction and treaty duration. He referenced the need to take Panama's national pride into account, and to try to take advantage of the "euphoria...of long-disheartened people being extremely glad that there is at last a decent climate for forward movement."¹⁰⁷ After Bunker's departure on December 3, State Department officer Morey Bell stayed behind on Contadora to hammer out language on the principles with Ambassador González Revilla. The two men knew one another from Washington, where they had frequent consultations. Over the next two weeks in Panama, they worked through several drafts of the eight points, which had now moved from Tack's proposals to Rogers through Bunker's modifications to become a real joint document. While there were many changes in wording from Tack's letter—for example, to clarify that the 1903 treaty would be abrogated by the conclusion of a new treaty, not as a prerequisite—the subjects and primary effects of the eight

points remained the same.¹⁰⁸ Bell felt that the Panamanian team was being flexible on wording, using more open phrasing on issues of jurisdictional rights during the treaty.¹⁰⁹ One of the main changes in the U.S. position was the recognition on various points that Panama would “grant” the U.S. rights for operation of defense of the Canal, something the U.S. had often claimed to have a right to.¹¹⁰ As both sides recognized, the eight principles contained substantial ambiguity and failed to address major details such as the length of the treaty, beyond an allusion to the end of perpetuity.¹¹¹ The first seven principles initialed by Bell and González Revilla held up to the scrutiny of Bunker and Tack when the two returned in early January. Bunker initialed the principles with Tack before returning to Washington.

In the capital, Bunker set about convincing Kissinger to travel to Panama to sign the accords himself. Kissinger initially had little interest in doing so, seeing a signature from the negotiators as being sufficient given the principles’ lack of finality. Bunker, however, appealed to Kissinger’s sense of importance, noting that the ceremony would be widely viewed as a major step across Latin America. The secretary’s presence would amplify the effect.¹¹² By mid-January, word leaked out that the U.S. and Panama had agreed on a statement of principles and that Kissinger would travel to Panama to sign them. The news of progress on the treaties after years of stagnation began to shake treaty opponents from their slumber. At the same time, the Panamanians showed great appreciation for the progress they had seen since Bunker’s arrival, and stated a new level of flexibility and patience. Panamanian interlocutors acknowledged the Congressional and political constraints faced by the Nixon administration, with Torrijos telling his ambassador, “If they want a treaty in a few months, that is good, but if they want to have it next year or even later, that’s good too, and we will wait.”¹¹³

Kissinger planned a whirlwind visit to Panama for the signing, along with meetings with Tack and Torrijos. The general met Kissinger at the airport, joining him in his motorcade through Panama City to the site of the ceremony. The two foreign ministers signed the eight principles at a lively ceremony at the Palacio Justo Arosemena, the home of the shuttered national assembly, which had also hosted the UNSC meetings. The Panamanian crowd roared at the reading of the second principle, declaring an end to the hated “perpetuity” clause of 1903. In his speech, the secretary directed himself beyond the borders of Panama to stress the importance of the principles as an example of the “new dialogue” he had proposed with Latin America.¹¹⁴ The eight principles, elaborated by Bunker, Tack, and their assistants, now bore the name Tack-Kissinger.

After the signing, Kissinger met Torrijos at the Panama City apartment of Rory González, a close personal friend to Torrijos whose home often served as a getaway for the general. The two powerful men chatted comfortably. Torrijos noted that he didn’t expect Kissinger to have all the answers to the problem with Panama, nor did he expect miracles. “I have told the Panamanian people,” Torrijos told Kissinger in a strange aside, “that the man who wrought miracles left this earth some 2,000 years ago.” Torrijos wanted to break each of the eight principles into several smaller issues to allow for “successive stages of achievement,” starting with easier matters to build trust between Panamanians, Americans, and Zonians. Of the latter, Kissinger said, “I think it is very important for [the Zonians] to get used to living in Panama and abiding by Panamanian rules,”—an exceptional concession if he indeed meant it. Both leaders evinced frustration with the residents’ ability to stymie progress. Torrijos stressed how much he had worked to keep the peace in Panama with respect to the Canal Zone, making sure there had been no outbreaks of violence during his tenure. He constantly met with students

and other protest groups, listening to their speeches for as long as six hours. Both men faced a similar problem. “There is a large group of people, however, whose mission is to see to it there is no agreement. They live off this problem,” Torrijos said. Of course, this was a problem Kissinger would begin to appreciate, as the agreement drew a sharp backlash from Congress.

Conclusion

The Tack-Kissinger agreement would not immediately lead to a new treaty. However, the principles did constitute the framework under which the final treaties were negotiated in 1977, and they deserve to be treated as more than a footnote. So, too, does the UNSC meeting in March 1973, which made that agreement possible. Panama deftly created and then exploited that forum to isolate the United States, raising the profile of the canal issue on the U.S. and international agendas, while also raising the costs of not coming to an agreement. This can be seen in Kissinger’s about-face and his recognition that failing to address the Panama Canal’s status incurred significant diplomatic costs to the United States across Latin America. Before the UNSC meeting, Kissinger expressed nearly no interest in Panama and passively accepted Defense Department positions. Afterwards, he took important steps that bred substantial advances—replacing the chief negotiator, pressing Defense, putting Panama in the State of the Union address, and going to Panama to sign the accords. That the Tack-Kissinger accords did not lead to faster progress was in large part due to very unusual political conditions in the United States—namely Nixon’s scandals and resignation and the extreme weakness of the unelected Gerald Ford, which led to a primary challenge from the anti-treaty Ronald Reagan. However, using the UNSC meetings as a model, Panama continued to press its cause internationally whenever it began to slip off the U.S. agenda. The case helps illuminate the role how, through astute diplomacy, one of the world’s smallest countries could place itself at the center of world

affairs and gain concessions from the world's strongest, particularly by internationalizing a bilateral issue in a way that changed the international agenda. Panama increased the costs to the United States of ignoring the matter, while also reframing the issue as one of sovereignty, justice, and colonialism that were internationally salient in the 1970s. It was this work, beginning in late 1972, that made Panama the visible issue that Carter boldly hoped to solve as a watershed for a new style of foreign policy and an era of improved relations with Latin America.

Endnotes

¹ I am grateful to Robert A. Pastor, Max Paul Friedman, and to the editor and two anonymous reviewers of *Diplomatic History*, whose comments made this article much stronger. My research in Panama was made possible by grants from the Tinker Foundation and American University. I appreciate their support.

² Juan Antonio Tack to the U.N. Security Council, speech, March 21, 1973. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, no. 17, 1973, Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de Panamá, Panama City, Panama (henceforth AMREP), 1-4. Translation from Spanish by the author.

³ Eric Morgenthauer, "UN Security Council is meeting in Panama amid anti-U.S. chorus," *Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 1973, pp. 1. Quote from Richard Severo, "UN panel sits in Panama today," *New York Times*, March 15, 1973, pp. 16; Sayre to State Department, "UN Security Council in Panama – GOP preparations," March 12, 1973. RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files, Electronic Telegrams. NARA-AAD. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=8048&dt=2472&dl=1345>. Reference to this collection of U.S. telegrams from Record Group 59, published online by the NARA, will henceforth be referenced as NARA-AAD, RG59.

⁴ Qtd. in Marlise Simons, "Panama's leader hits U.S. on Canal," *Washington Post*, March 16, 1973.

⁵ Jorge Illueca to Tack, memorandum, December 7, 1972, Folder no. 1118, AMREP, pp. 5. Translation from Spanish the author.

⁶ Adam Clymer, *Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch : The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2008); James Michael Hogan, "The "Great Debate" over Panama: An Analysis of Controversy over the Carter-Torrijos Treaties of 1977" (Ph.D., 1983); George D. Moffett, *The Limits of Victory : The Ratification of the Panama Canal Treaties* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Natasha Zaretsky, "Restraint or Retreat? The Debate over the Panama Canal Treaties and U.S. Nationalism after Vietnam*," *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 3 (2011).

⁷ Robert A. Pastor, "The United States and Central America: Interlocking Debates," in *Double-Edged Diplomacy : International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*, ed. Peter B. Evans, Harold Karan Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 03 (1988).

⁸ Robert A. Pastor, *The Carter Administration and Latin America : A Test of Principle* (Atlanta, Ga.: Carter Center of Emory University, 1992); Craig Allen Smith, "Leadership, Orientation, and Rhetorical Vision: Jimmy Carter, the 'New Right,' and the Panama Canal," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1986); Robert A. Strong, "Jimmy Carter and the Panama Canal Treaties," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (1991).

⁹ The same could be said for most studies of Panama-U.S. relations generally. From the building of the canal to the U.S. invasion to overthrow Manuel Noriega, the United States has had as large a role in Panama's history as in any other Latin American country. For a survey of U.S.-Panama relations, see Michael L. Conniff, *Panama and the United States : The Forced Alliance* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Most attention given to Panama's actions comes in works written by participants. See William J. Jorden, *Panama Odyssey* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984); Robert A. Pastor, *Exiting the Whirlpool : U.S. Foreign Policy toward Latin America and the Caribbean* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001).

¹¹ The only history to extensively employ both Panamanian and U.S. sources is written by treaty participant *cum* historian Omar Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979* (Panamá: Autoridad del Canal de Panamá, 2005). Unfortunately, this very comprehensive text has been scarcely cited and is not widely available in the United States.

¹² Mark Atwood Lawrence, "Containing Globalism : The United States and the Developing World in the 1970s," in *The Shock of the Global : The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. Niall Ferguson (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹³ On the history of labor discrimination in the Canal Zone, see Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders : Making America's Empire at the Panama Canal* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Alan McPherson, "Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964," *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004).

¹⁵ Franklin Roosevelt famously wrote that the purpose of the U.N. General Assembly was to let smaller powers "blow off steam."

¹⁶ David L. Bosco, *Five to Rule Them All : The Un Security Council and the Making of the Modern World* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Barry O'Neill, "Power and Satisfaction in the United Nations Security Council," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 2 (1996).

¹⁸ Ian Hurd, "Legitimacy, Power, and the Symbolic Life of the Un Security Council," *Global Governance* 8, no. 1 (2002). Because they constituted such a large percentage of the original UN membership, Latin American leaders had an important role in the organization's founding. For example, the Colombian Alberto Lleras Camargo was an especially influential voice in the founding debates about the creation of the UN system—also arguing for maintaining a regional inter-American system within its bounds.

¹⁹ Ian Hurd, "The Strategic Use of Liberal Internationalism : Libya and the Un Sanctions, 1992-2003," *International Organization International Organization* 59, no. 3 (2005).

²⁰ Important works in the IR literature on small or weak states includes Jacqueline Braveboy-Wagner, "Opportunities and Limitations of the Exercise of Foreign Policy Power by a Very Small State: The Case of Trinidad and Tobago," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23, no. 3 (2010); Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *Small States in Global Affairs : The Foreign Policies of the Caribbean Community (Caricom)* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Christopher S. Browning, "Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 4 (2006); Jeanne A. K. Hey, *Small States in World*

Politics : Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003); P. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets* (1985); Robert O. Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics," *International Organization* 23, no. 02 (1969); Robert O. Keohane, "The Big Influence of Small Allies," *Foreign Policy* 2 (1971).

²¹ The revolt is treated in great depth in *FRUS, 1903*, pp. 231-243. Omar Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones Sobre El Canal De Panamá : 1964-1970* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002), pp. 27.

²² For the original treaty, see "Convention between the United States and the Republic of Panama for the construction of a ship canal," *FRUS, 1904*, pp. 543-552.

²³ Greene.

²⁴ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones Sobre El Canal De Panamá : 1964-1970*, pp. 63-66.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 180-183.

²⁷ The product of negotiations held in the wake of the 1964 riots, the tri-partite treaty would have replaced the 1903 treaty with a new structure for canal governance as part of a transition to Panamanian control of the waterway; provided the U.S. significant military bases without compensation to Panama; and offered an extension of U.S. control for up to a century if a new, sea-level canal was constructed. On those treaties, see Walter Darnell Jacobs, "New Treaties for the Panama Canal?," *World Affairs* 130, no. 4 (1968); Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones Sobre El Canal De Panamá : 1964-1970*; Jorden, pp. 107-119.

²⁸ Juan Antonio Tack, "La Lucha De Omar Torrijos Por La Recuperación De La Integridad Nacional," *Revista Lotería* agosto-diciembre, no. 305-309 (1981).

²⁹ David Packard to Henry Kissinger, "NSSM 68 – Panama Canal," May 4, 1970, *FRUS 1969-1976*, vol E-10. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d534>

³⁰ Kissinger to Richard Nixon, June 1, 1970, *FRUS 1969-1976*, vol E-10. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d535>

³¹ Nixon, "National Security Decision Memorandum 64," June 5, 1970. *FRUS 1969-1976*, vol E-10. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d536>

³² Tack to Anderson, letter, Oct. 26, 1972. Folder negociaciones, 1972-1974, no. 545, AMREP, sec. 2, pp. 5-6.

Translated from Spanish, emphasis in original.

³³ "Posiciones básicas de Panamá en las principales materias," December 4, 1972. Folder negociaciones, 1972-1974, no. 545, AMREP, sec. 9, pp. 1-19.

³⁴ Author interview with Adolfo Ahumada, September 27, 2011, Panama City, Panama. Translation from Spanish by the author.

³⁵ Anderson to de la Ossa, Feb. 19, 1971. Folder negociaciones, 1972-1974, no. 545, AMREP, sec. 4, pp. 1-8.

³⁶ Jorden, pp. 154.

³⁷ Tack to Anderson, letter, Oct. 26, 1972. Sec. 2, pp. 5. Translated from Spanish.

³⁸ Jorden, pp. 159. Sol Linowitz also wrote that Anderson "had neither access nor influence in the White House." Sol M. Linowitz, *The Making of a Public Man : A Memoir* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985), pp. 147.

³⁹ Author interview with Nicolas González Revilla, September 20, 2011, Panama City, Panama. The former ambassador's recollections are corroborated by Jorden's account in which he notes that after the signing of Tack-Kissinger, U.S. negotiators returned to the table under the constraint of three-year-old instructions. "The general said he based his strategy on a 'very simple principle.' That was: 'to resolve a problem, the first thing you have to do is *make* it a problem.' He was persuaded the only way to do that was to move the issue to the center of the world stage." Jorden, pp. 241. Torrijos also used similar language talking to a reporter in early 1975, saying, "The first thing was to get them to consider that it was a problem. Until very recently, they didn't even think it was a problem." Qtd. in "Panama's leader hopeful on canal," February 4, 1975, *New York Times*, pp. 7.

⁴⁰ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 228-229.

⁴¹ Rogers to Nixon, "Security Council meeting in Africa," February 10, 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976, vol. 5*, doc. 124.

Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v05/d124>

⁴² Carlos Ozores, "Omar Torrijos Y Sus Proyecciones En La Política Internacional," *Revista Lotería* agosto-diciembre, no. 305-309 (1981).

⁴³ Illueca, "Informe de la conversación," March 23, 1972, Folder no. 1118, AMREP, n.p. Ward's account of the meeting is much briefer and less passionate, but concurs with the basic points presented by Illueca. David Ward,

"Memorandum of Conversation: Panama Canal Treaty Negotiations," March 23, 1972, Folder no. 1118, AMREP, 1-2.

⁴⁴ Jorden, pp. 177-178. These support of democratically elected leaders was highlighted in nearly all of my interviews with Panamanian policymakers. Their support throughout the 1970s was crucial to Torrijos in his dealings with the U.S. executive and also in convincing senators concerned about the lack of democracy and political rights in Panama.

⁴⁵ Boyd to Tack, March 29, 1972, letter. Folder no. 1118, AMREP, n.p.

⁴⁶ Rogers to all American Republic Posts, "Possible SC meeting in Panama," August 10, 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976, vol. 5*, doc. 126. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v05/d126>; Armitage and Herz to Bush, "Possible Security Council meeting in Panama," October 3, 1972, *FRUS, 1969-1976, vol. 5*, doc. 131. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v05/d131>

⁴⁷ Jorden to Kissinger, "General Torrijos and Captain Villa, *FRUS 1969-1976, vol E-10*, doc. 562. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d562>; Jorden, pp. 185-189.

⁴⁸ Rogers to Tack, "Proposed Security Council meeting in Panama," October 16, 1972, *FRUS 1969-1976, vol 5*, doc. 137. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v05/d137>

⁴⁹ "Memorandum," Illueca to Tack, letter. December 7, 1972, Folder no. 1118, AMREP, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ Tack to Kurt Waldheim, November 23, 1972. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, 1973, AMREP, n.p.

⁵¹ Rómulo Escobar Bethancourt, *Torrijos : Colonia Americana, No!* (Bogotá: C. Valencia Editores, 1981), pp. 201-202.

⁵² Jorden to Kissinger, "General Torrijos and Captain Villa, *FRUS 1969-1976, vol E-10*, doc. 562. Online: <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve10/d562>

⁵³ "U.N. council decides to meet in Panama," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1973; Chi Ping Fei to Tack, January 14, 1973, Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, no. 33, AMREP; Boyd to Brin, c. January 1973. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, tomo II, Archivo del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores.

⁵⁴ *U.N. Monthly Chronicle* (February 1973), pp. 2-12.

⁵⁵ <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76v05/d146>

⁵⁶ Speech of Omar Torrijos at U.N. Security Council inaugural session, March 15, 1973. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, no. 17, 1973, AMREP, 1-6.

⁵⁷ Rogers to Scali, "For Ambassador Scali from the Secretary," March 9, 1973, NARA-ADA, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=147&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁵⁸ Francis B. Kent, "U.S. warns of UN veto on Panama issue," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1983; Simons, "UN body ways Canal Zone stand," *Washington Post*, March 17, 1983, pp. 8; Sayre to State Department, "Panama SC Mtg Amb Scali Press Conf," NARA-ADA, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=5529&dt=2472&dl=1345>.

⁵⁹ This condition, though sometimes treated as a concession by the U.S. team, had actually been accepted by President Lyndon B. Johnson after the flag riots.

⁶⁰ "Proyecto de resolución revisado," n.d., 1973. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, no. 17, 1973, AMREP, 1-2.

⁶¹ Kent, "China, Russia Endorse Panama's canal stand," *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1973, pp. 11.

⁶² U.S. Delegation to State Department, "UNSC meeting – Canal resolution," March 20, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59.

Online: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=5324&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁶³ Interview with González Revilla.

⁶⁴ Jorden, pp. 195.

⁶⁵ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 247.

⁶⁶ Scali to Rogers, "Ref: Panama 1491," March 14, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=5321&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁶⁷ Scali to Rogers, "Panama SC meeting," March 21, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=729&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁶⁸ Draft resolution submitted by the United States, March 21, 1973. Folder Consejo de Seguridad, no. 28, AMREP, section 15.

⁶⁹ Jorden, pp. 195-196.

⁷⁰ Speech by Scali before the U.N. Security Council, March 21, 1973. Folder Consejo de Seguridad, no. 28, AMREP, section 15.

⁷¹ Tack to U.N. Security Council, speech, March 21, 1973. Folder Reunión del Consejo de Seguridad, no. 17, 1973, AMREP, 1-4.

⁷² *U.N. Monthly Chronicle* (April 1973), pp. 53

⁷³ *U.N. Monthly Chronicle* (April 1973), pp. 34-55

⁷⁴ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 250.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 252.

⁷⁶ Manfredo to Tack, "Memorandum," April 17, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 8, pp. 1-9.

⁷⁷ De la Rosa to Tack, "Memorandum," April 23, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 8, pp. 2.

⁷⁸ Meeting request from John Scali, February 22, 1973, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, *Digital National Security Archive*. Henceforth, online database referred to as *DNSA*.

⁷⁹ Jorden, pp. 206.

⁸⁰ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Renewal* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999), pp. 761.

⁸¹ Jorden, pp. 198-199.

⁸² Nixon, "Fourth Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy.," May 3, 1973. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=3832>.

⁸³ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 277.

⁸⁴ Bell to Sayre, "Panamanian ambassador comments on USG-GOP relations and treaty negotiations," May 7, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59.

⁸⁵ Stagg to Tack, "Respuesta al cuestionario sobre las proyecciones de la reunión del Consejo de Seguridad en las negociaciones del nuevo tratado" May 8, 1973. Folder Consejo de Seguridad, no. 27, AMREP, n.p.

⁸⁶ Tack to Anderson, May 7, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 6, pp. 1-12.

⁸⁷ Tack to Gibson Barboza, May 10, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 5.

⁸⁸ Bell to Sayre, "Panamanian foreign minister's request for interview with secretary in Buenos Aires," May 17, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=23694&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁸⁹ Ricaurte Antonio Acheen, "Puntos fundamentales de la conversación de Rogers con Tack," May 27, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 3.

⁹⁰ Tack to Rogers, May 21, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 2, 1-7.

⁹¹ Jorden, pp. 206.

⁹² Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 278-280.

⁹³ "Bunker Is Expected to Get Panama-Negotiations Post," *New York Times* 1973. For background on Bunker, see Howard B. Schaffer, *Ellsworth Bunker : Global Troubleshooter, Vietnam Hawk* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

⁹⁴ Bennett (USUN) to Rogers, "U.S.-Panama relations," August 1, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=50915&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁹⁵ So much so that a *New York Times* column on Kissinger's nomination as secretary of state was titled simply, "Kissinger gets the title, too."

⁹⁶ Rogers to Tack, Aug. 6, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 1, 1-2. Rogers did, however, maintain a level of ambiguity regarding the issue of jurisdiction and sovereignty that Tack found very frustrating.

⁹⁷ Jorden, pp. 209.

⁹⁸ Bell and Pickering to Sayre, "Secretary's bilateral with Panama Fonmin Tack," October 9, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59.

Online: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=77648&dt=2472&dl=1345>

⁹⁹ Bernard Gwertzman, "Kissinger calls on Latins to join 'new dialogue'", *The New York Times*, October 6, 1973, pp.1.

¹⁰⁰ Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 279; Jorden, pp. 212.

¹⁰¹ Report of the Atlantic-Pacific Interoceanic Canal Study Commission, 1970, qtd. in Thomas M. Franck and Edward Weisband, "Panama Paralysis," *Foreign Policy* 21 (1975).

¹⁰² This view of the Canal Zone's strategic significance is expressed in Jacobs: pp. 228-229.

¹⁰³ Callaway to Bunker, "Secretary of army's conversation with Panamanian treaty negotiator," November 12, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=93202&dt=2472&dl=1345>

¹⁰⁴ Jorden, pp. 214.

¹⁰⁵ "Salutación: Embajador Bunker," Nov. 26, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 11.

¹⁰⁶ President Nixon quickly signed off on Bunker's request. Bell to Sayre, "Announcement of U.S. unilateral actions," December 27, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=109449&dt=2472&dl=1345>

¹⁰⁷ December 2, 1973 – Bunker recommends adopting "joint presidential declaration on principles."

Bunker to Kissinger, "Resumption of Panama-U.S. treaty negotiations," December 2, 1973. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=108252&dt=2472&dl=1345>

¹⁰⁸ Jaén Suárez coincides with this assessment, saying that "A comparison of the eight principles proposed by Tack with the U.S. proposal does not show great differences." Jaén Suárez, *Las Negociaciones De Los Tratados Torrijos-Carter : 1970-1979*, pp. 281.

¹⁰⁹ Bell to Bunker, "Resumption of U.S.-Panama treaty negotiations," December 4, 1973, NARA-AAD, RG59. Online:

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=108581&dt=2472&dl=1345>

¹¹⁰ "Ocho principios," Dec. 19, 1973, Folder Negociaciones 1973, no. 546, AMREP, sec. 14.

¹¹¹ In a later NSC meeting, Kissinger referred to the principles as deliberately ambiguous "platitudes."

¹¹² Jorden, pp. 216-217.

¹¹³ Bell to Bunker, "U.S.-Panama treaty negotiations: report on developments," January 24, 1974, NARA-AAD,

RG59. Online: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=1382&dt=2474&dl=1345>

¹¹⁴ David Binder, "U.S. agrees to yield sovereignty of canal to Panama," *New York Times*, February 8, 1974, pp. 2;

Jorden, pp. 219-222.