

US Military Intervention in Latin America Testing Grounds for New Defense Policies

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Outline

- Post-Cold War environment
- Southcom/defense reorganization
- Panama (Just Cause 1990-1991)
- Haiti (1993 and Uphold Democracy 1994-1995)
- Disaster Relief and nontraditional missions
- Plan Colombia and militarized counternarcotics
- Border Security (Joint Task Force – North) *time permitting*

Post-Cold War



Signe Wilkinson
9.14.92

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UNIFIED COMBATANT COMMAND'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

U.S. SPACE COMMAND



U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND



U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND



U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND



U.S. AFRICA COMMAND



U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND



U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND

FUNCTIONAL COMBATANT COMMAND

- U.S. Special Operations Command
- U.S. Transportation Command
- U.S. Strategic Command
- U.S. Cyber Command



Panama

- Manuel Noriega, Panamanian Strong Man (CIA collaborator in support of Nicaraguan Contras).
- 1987 Senate resolution calling for democratic government and cutting military aid
- 1988 Drug trafficking charges against Noriega
- May 1989 elections nullified by Noriega, Carlos Duque installed in place of Guillermo Endara
- December 1989 Noriega made head of state
- 20 December 1989-31 January 1990 Operation Just Cause

Panama

- Democracy Promotion
- Narcotrafficking
- Geopolitics (Canal Zone)

} Motivations

- Renewed faith in US intervention
- Success of joint operations
- Overwhelming force

} Interpretation of results

Haiti

- 1991 Military Coup led by Raoul Cedras, ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide
- Haitian refugee issue important to 1992 US presidential election campaign
- 1993 UN negotiated agreement created October 31 deadline for Aristide's reinstatement
- 11 October, *USS Harlan County* retreats from Port-au-Prince
- Diplomatic effort backed by threat of force resolved crisis in September 1994
- Operation Uphold Democracy, 19 September 1994-31 March 1995

Haiti

- Democracy promotion
- Political pressure

} Motivations

- Reiterates Panama
- Threat of force sufficient
- If forces sufficient

} Interpretation of results

Disaster relief

- 2005 Deployments in Guatemala after Hurricane Stan and in Honduras following Tropical Storm Gamma
- 2008 Interagency task forces setup within Southcom
 - Joint Task Force-Bravo in Honduras focused on disaster relief
- 2010 Haiti earthquake – Operation United Response, 20,000 troops

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- Non-traditional (noncombat) roles central to Southcom activities
 - Model for other commands

Plan Colombia – militarized counternarcotics

- Original proposed by Colombian President Andrés Pastrana in 1999
- Congress authorizes funding for “Plan Colombia” in 2000 (\$10 billion by 2015)
- Expands as Andean Regional Initiative in 2001 (Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela)
- Colombian president Álvaro Uribe (2002-2010) realignment to fit into war on terror – “narcoterrorists”

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- Model for Mérida Initiative (2008) in Mexico and Central America
 - More generally cited as template for building partner capacity, especially for counterinsurgency

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Border Security (Northcom)

- Joint Task Force-Six, 1989-today (Joint Task Force-North since 2004)
- Counterdrug to Counterterrorism

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- Debate about non-combat roles and missions of military

Proving grounds

- Geography broadens how US defines interests in Latin America
- New roles and missions often appear here first
- If successful, model for elsewhere