

PANAMA/ GULF WAR INVASION COMPARATIVE

Panama/Gulf War Invasion Comparative

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Topic: Panama/Gulf War Invasion Comparative

Thesis:

Even though peacekeeping operations are fast becoming the precursor to America's involvement in the development of a sovereign nation's desire to democratize their society within. What went right, wrong and what should have happened to prevent combat operations.

Outline:

I. Panama Invasion:

- A. Historical Background
- B. Shift from peace to armed conflict
- C. Departure Strategy

II. Kuwaiti Invasion:

- A. Historical Background
- B. Cultural acceptance
- C. Battlefield Operations
- D. Departure Strategy

III. Argumentative Stance

- A. Comparative Analysis: What went right/wrong
- B. What should have happened
- C. Conclusion

ABSTRACT

As operations of peacekeeping are becoming the mission for America's involvement in the development of a sovereign country's desire to democratize their society within. However, operations of keeping the peace may sometimes take a turn for the worse and causes the U.S. to engage with brute force. There are two operations which come to mind that I believe share similarities, but have very different results in the application of intelligence and cultural knowledge. Operations in Panama and during the Gulf War both changed to armed intervention. What issues caused one force to succeed and the other to fail? Mainly, cultural awareness, preparedness, and continuity are vital factors for each. During my research I will present my opinions for each conflict and the major issues which contributed to the success or failure for both military interventions.

PANAMA/GULF WAR INVASION COMPARATIVE

During the Panamanian invasion it presented our country's leaders with many firsts since the end of World War II. On an early winter morning, in December 1989, America launched what would become one of the largest joint military operations since Vietnam and the first instance of mobilizing a sizeable military force since 1945 that was not related to the typical concerns of the cold war (Scranton, p. 75). Why did this happen? There are several reasons the relationship between the United States and the Panamanian leader took a turn for the worse, however, American politics ultimately proved to be the deciding factor in applying military intervention in this operation (Buckley, p.74).

Panama's dictator, Noriega, misjudged his relationship with the United States and carried himself above the convictions placed on him by the free world. Noriega's belief that he was invincible resulted in his eventual removal from power. He was involved in all things bad within the confines of this small and once strategically important nation for the Central American region that included his complicity in the trafficking of drugs, weapons, maltreatment of his people, and money laundering. Noriega's actions were becoming more and more of a problem during the end of President Regan's term in office and a clear threat for the Bush Presidency. Utilizing contacts already emplaced, the U.S. embarked on an all out effort to overthrow Noriega from power by employing economic sanctions, taking diplomatic measures, and making elusive military threats; all of which were none effective against Noriega as he continued to defy the demands placed on him by the United States (Associated Press, Vol. XI).

Noriega's stubbornness essentially served as a defiant measure too great for American policies and as his power within the region grew, so did the determination of American officials

to remove him from power. This is the real reason the invasion took place. Noriega was at one time considered a great asset to the U.S., but over time his usefulness dwindled. Noriega's belief he was untouchable took on a different position as his power continued to grow throughout Panama. After receiving an appointment of chief of the Panamanian government and head of the assembly, the assembly declared war against the United States. Then a series of provocations began to take place where Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) soldiers stopped U.S. military personnel at gunpoint, fired upon American vehicles at various checkpoints, killed a Marine Corps Lieutenant and beat American witnesses to the shooting; raping the spouse of the Naval officer while in detention cell. This new behavior caused Americans in Panama to go on high alert and eventually resulted in the shooting of a PDF officer by an American Soldier who thought the Panamanian was going for his weapon. Sensing the situation on the ground was beginning to unravel, President Bush and his panel of military advisors met to discuss the series of incident taking place in Panama. President Bush wanted to low-level extraction operation of Noriega, but General Colin Powell stressed the importance of crippling Noriega and the PDF regime for good in order to usher in democracy for the deprived nation. Once the President approved this plan the wheels of occupation were set in motion and the rest is history (IAC, p.589).

Like Noriega, Saddam Hussein was once considered a critical ally for the region as he clashed with Iranian Islamic fundamentalists in the region. The process for the first Gulf War was very similar in scope as mixed messages and weak policies were devised to deter the direction Saddam was heading. Saddam was beginning to get out of control as he would indiscriminately use chemical weapons against his own people, the Kurds, Israeli's, and

Kuwaiti's. President Bush and his policies were considered weak at best as he totally disregarded the advice of his cabinet and to implement diplomatic and economic sanctions, deploy personnel, and utilize covert operations to weaken Hussein's regime. Instead, President Bush did the exact opposite, by providing loan guarantees and access to technological machinery and equipment. The apparent indecision by U.S. policy makers and our compliant demeanor resulted in Saddam Hussein gaining more power within the region and emboldened his efforts to terrorize the region as he saw fit. Saddam Hussein misjudged the U.S. determination for the last time as he defiantly invaded Kuwait in 1990 (Rayment, 1999). This move was without provocation and was devised out of pure greed as the dictator felt it was owed to him for services rendered against Iranian aggression of the '80's. Saddam needed the Oil reserves Kuwait possessed to fuel his goals of becoming a formidable force in the region with nuclear capability. Once occupied, Saddam annexed the Kuwaiti nation as an extension of his empire and waited for the world to respond. King Fahd solicited the aid of the United States and President Bush responded with the deployment of U.S. Battleships into the region, a formidable ground force, and support air assets into the region to defend Saudi in what would eventually become known as DESERT SHEILD.

United States interests in this situation was clear – stop the atrocities that were taking place, restore peace in the region, and stabilize the world's economic markets. It was absolutely crucial that this occurred swiftly and without hesitation. Unable to dissuade Saddam Hussein from all out war, the U.S. decided to take the fight to Saddam. Once again, headed by the highly convincing General Colin Powell a plan was devised to repel Iraqi Republic Guards and forces back across the desert plains to Iraq (Rayment, 1999). This was the start of the air campaign and

thus DESERT STORM was born. This was a highly successful maneuver that was followed by an equally successful ground campaign that pushed Iraq and Saddam back across the Kuwaiti border. To maintain peace in the region U.S. occupation of Saudi was a must and ultimately paved the way for sustained operations in and around the region. The U.S. could have destroyed Saddam during this campaign but, relented so as to allow him to maintain control over Iran in the region. This decision would come back to haunt the U.S. as he continued to defy all demands placed on him by western officials. This is how I perceive the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs abroad. As the world's police - we are often placed in situations where we must set clear and precise guidelines in very intense situations. We cannot execute these schemes without a thorough review of our host nation historical data, culture, and political views.

In conclusion, current and future operations could be very effective if U.S. leaders, military advisors, and Soldiers on the ground would assess the mistakes of the past and apply these lessons learned to current combat operations. The similarities between Panama and Iraq parallel each other in every way. It is imperative that we begin to think outside the box when we are faced with aggression of this nature from foreign nations. However once we have established an effective plan, it would be behoove us to implement the plan with the intent of destroying the enemy in a decisive and efficient manner. I carefully believe that the study of cultural backgrounds in each case would have an adverse affect, possible peace outcome resulting in fewer loss of lives and investments of dollars from tax payers of this nation.

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