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THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND PANAMA CANAL (LATE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze the San Francisco Exposition, which marked the ceremonial opening of the Panama Canal, and the Ottoman Empire's approach to this event. Additionally, the study examines the historical, political, economic, strategic, and social importance of the Panama Canal from its inception to completion.

The scientific novelty of research paper lies in its detailed examination and analysis of the Panama Canal's construction and opening, with a specific focus on the Ottoman Empire's interactions and responses. The study provides unique insights into the diplomatic interactions between the United States and the Ottoman Empire during the canal's inauguration. This research uncovers lesser-known aspects of the canal's history, highlighting the persistent efforts of the United States to involve the Ottoman Empire and other nations in the celebrations, thereby showcasing the complex global geopolitical dynamics of the early 20th century.

Conclusions. The history of the Panama Canal is a testament to remarkable engineering feats, international diplomacy, and significant geopolitical shifts. Initially envisioned by the Spanish, attempted by the French, and ultimately realized by the United States, the canal has had a profound impact on global trade by reducing maritime distances and fostering economic growth.

The United States' successful construction of the canal was a demonstration of advanced engineering and a strategic diplomatic achievement. By supporting Panama's independence and carefully navigating international agreements, the US secured its control over this vital waterway, further solidifying its influence on the global stage.

The absence of the Ottoman Empire at the San Francisco Exposition, despite persistent American invitations, highlights an intriguing diplomatic nuance. Ottoman archival documents reveal multiple efforts by the United States to engage the Empire, underscoring the canal's significance in international relations. This diplomatic episode illustrates the broader geopolitical implications of the canal's opening and US's message of emerging dominance.

In summary, the Panama Canal's history is not only about engineering triumphs but also about the complex interplay of international relations, exemplified by the interactions with the Ottoman Empire. The canal's completion marked the beginning of a new era, with the United States at the forefront, reshaping global trade and political dynamics.

Keywords: Panama Canal, Ottoman Empire, United States, Diplomatic relations, Global geopolitics, San Francisco Exposition

ОСМАНСЬКА ІМПЕРІЯ ТА ПАНАМСЬКИЙ КАНАЛ (КІНЕЦЬ 19 – ПОЧАТОК 20 СТ.)

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою роботи є аналіз виставки в Сан-Франциско, яка ознаменувала урочисте відкриття Панамського каналу, та підходу Османської імперії до цієї події. Крім того, у дослідженні розглядається історичне, політичне, економічне, стратегічне та соціальне значення Панамського каналу від його заснування до завершення.

Наукова новизна статті полягає у детальному дослідженні й аналізі будівництва та відкриття Панамського каналу з особливим акцентом на взаємодії та відповідях Османської імперії. Дослідження дає унікальне уявлення про дипломатичну взаємодію між США й Османською імперією під час урочистого відкриття каналу. Дослідження розкриває маловідомі аспекти історії каналу, підкреслюючи наполегливі зусилля Сполучених Штатів залучити Османську імперію й інші країни до святкування, демонструючи таким чином складну глобальну геополітичну динаміку початку 20 століття.

Висновки. Історія Панамського каналу є свідченням видатних інженерних досягнень, міжнародної дипломатії та значних геополітичних змін. Задуманий іспанцями, підтриманий французами та зрештою реалізований Сполученими Штатами, канал мав глибокий вплив на світову торгівлю, зменшивши морські відстані та сприяючи економічному зростанню.

Успішне будівництво Сполученими Штатами каналу було не лише демонстрацією передової інженерної думки, а й стратегічним дипломатичним досягненням. Підтримуючи незалежність Панами та ретельно дотримуючись міжнародних угод, США забезпечили свій контроль над цією життєво важливою водною артерією, ще більше зміцнивши свій вплив на світовій арені.

Відсутність Османської імперії на виставці в Сан-Франциско, незважаючи на постійні запрошення американців, підкреслює інтригуючий дипломатичний нюанс. Османські архівні документи свідчать про численні спроби Сполучених Штатів залучити Османську імперію, підкреслюючи значення каналу для міжнародних відносин. Цей дипломатичний епізод ілюструє ширші геополітичні наслідки відкриття каналу та послання США про зростаюче домінування.

Таким чином, історія Панамського каналу – це не лише інженерні тріумфи, а й складна взаємодія міжнародних відносин, прикладом яких є взаємодія з Османською імперією. Завершення будівництва каналу ознаменувало початок нової ери із Сполученими Штатами в авангарді, змінивши світову торгівлю та політичну динаміку.

Ключові слова: Панамський канал, Османська імперія, США, дипломатичні відносини, глобальна геополітика, виставка у Сан-Франциско

INTRODUCTION

Panama, with its strategic location in Central America, serves as a unique tropical bridge between North and South America, as well as the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Panama Canal, a marvel of engineering, extends beyond the late 19th and early 20th centuries to embody a rich tapestry of historical, economic, political, and strategic significance.

The construction of the Panama Canal involved enormous efforts by both the French and Americans, demonstrating its global importance. The canal's history intertwines with various international dynamics, notably including the reactions and interactions of the Ottoman Empire. The United States undertook significant diplomatic initiatives to involve the Ottoman Empire and other nations in the San Francisco Exposition, which celebrated the canal's inauguration.

From its inception to its completion the historical, political, economic, strategic, and social importance of the Panama Canal is profound. The Ottoman Empire's approach to the canal's opening therefore deserves special attention, as it reveals previously unexplored aspects of this relationship through a detailed study of Ottoman archival documents. These documents reveal unique insights into the diplomatic interactions between the United States and the Ottoman Empire, providing a nuanced understanding of this pivotal historical event.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The construction of the Panama Canal marked one of the most significant events and achievements of the 20th century, which has been the subject of extensive scientific examination. The scientific discourse on this topic explores historical, political, diplomatic, social, economic, and medical dimensions.

William R. Scott provides a deep insight into the early visions of the canal within the historical context¹. Richard Cooke and Luis Alberto Sanchez Herrera, in their article, further illuminate the indigenous influences and early European interactions in Panama, highlighting the strategic importance of the isthmus long before the canal's construction². The construction of the Panama Canal was accompanied by challenges of various natures, through which Ralph E. Avery and Raymond Paul Giroux highlight the technological and logistical obstacles faced by the French and Americans³. Meanwhile, the strategic and technical aspects that shaped the ultimate success of the canal are reflected in Francis E. Griggs' analysis⁴. Ruben F. Hull examines the construction of the Panama Canal in the hands of the French, mentioning details such as financial

¹ Scott W.R. *The Americans in Panama*. New York: The Statler Publishing Company, 1912. XIII, 258 p.

² Cooke R.G., Sanchez Herrera L.A. *Panama Indigena: 1501-1550. Historia General de Panama*. Panama: Comite Nacional Del Centenario, 2004. Vol. 1 (2). P. 47-78.

³ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama*. New York: Leslie-Judge Company, 1915. 384 p.; Giroux R.P. *Building the Panama Canal (Men, Machines, and Methods). Engineering the Panama Canal, Proceeding of Sessions Honoring the 100th anniversary of the Panama Canal at the ASCE Global Engineering Conference 2014* / Ed. by Bernard G. Dennis, Jr. Virginia: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2014. P. 27-69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784413739.003>

⁴ Griggs F.E. *Georges S. Morison and Philippe Bunau-Varilla: The Indispensable Men of Panama. Engineering the Panama Canal, Proceeding of Sessions Honoring the 100th anniversary of the Panama Canal at the ASCE Global Engineering Conference 2014* / Ed. by Bernard G. Dennis, Jr. Virginia: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2014. P. 70-111. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784413739.004>

mismanagement, technical and medical failures⁵. In contrast, David McCullough's work offers an exhaustive account of the American phase of construction. This research emphasizes the political maneuvers, engineering triumphs, and health innovations that enabled the United States to complete the canal⁶.

The geopolitical implications of the Panama Canal are discussed in a broader historical context of territorial treaties and their impact on waterway and canal diplomacy by Thomas Duve⁷. Additionally, Lawrence Ealy in his study examines the legal infrastructure established during the construction and operation of the canal until it came under the control of the Panamanian Republic⁸.

A recurring theme in the scientific literature is the economic and strategic importance of the Panama Canal. Scholars like Noel Maurer and Carlos Yu emphasized the canal's impact on trade efficiency and military strategy. Their study highlights that the canal not only transformed global water routes but also reinforced the military reach and economic interests of the United States⁹. The strategic aspects are also mentioned by Michael Mark Chrimes, who examines British interests and the canal's role in global geopolitics¹⁰.

While the Panama Canal has been extensively studied through various historical perspectives, the interactions of the Panama Canal with the Ottoman Empire is an unexplored aspect in the existing literature. The Ottoman Empire's involvement in the narrative of the Panama Canal is a new segment examined and evaluated in our work, offering valuable insights into the diplomacy and complex historical-geopolitical dynamics of the early 20th century.

THE SPANISH AND THE FIRST IDEA ON THE CANAL

Panama's history begins with Columbus and the Spanish explorations, though Rodrigo de Bastides arrived there around 1501, before Columbus. In 1509, Vasco Núñez de Balboa took control of the area¹¹. The construction of a canal through the Panama Isthmus is originally mentioned in the 16th century. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa for the first time in 1513 discovered that only a tiny strip of land divides the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

⁵ Hull R.F., Jr. The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama. *Engineering the Panama Canal, Proceeding of Sessions Honoring the 100th anniversary of the Panama Canal at the ASCE Global Engineering Conference 2014* / Ed. by Bernard G. Dennis, Jr. Virginia: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2014. P. 14-26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784413739.002>

⁶ McCullough D. *The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal 1870-1914*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon & Schuster Paperback, 1978. 698 p.

⁷ Duve T. El Tratado de Tordesillas: Una 'Revolucion Espacial'? *Cosmografia, Practicas Juridicas y la Historia Del Derecho Internacional Publico. Revista de historia del derecho*. 2017. Nº 54. P. 77-107. URL: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6296386>

⁸ Ealy L. The Development of an Anglo-American System of Law in the Panama Zone. *The American Journal of Legal History*. 1958. Vol. 2 (4). P. 283-303. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/844538>

⁹ Maurer N., Carlos Yu. What T.R. Took: The Economic Impact of the Panama Canal, 1903-1937. *The Journal of Economic History*. 2008. Vol. 68, Nº 3. P. 686-721. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050708000612>

¹⁰ Chrimes M.M. UK Britain and the Trans-isthmian Dream. *Engineering the Panama Canal, Proceeding of Sessions Honoring the 100th anniversary of the Panama Canal at the ASCE Global Engineering Conference 2014* / Ed. by Bernard G. Dennis, Jr. Virginia: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2014. P. 1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1061/9780784413739.001>

¹¹ Scott W.R. The Americans in Panama... P. 21-22; Cooke R.G., Sanchez Herrera L.A. Panama Indigena: 1501-1550... P. 48.

Under these circumstances, Charles V was interested in carrying out a research to explore the South Sea and uncover a strait connecting it to the Atlantic Ocean¹². In 1516, he instructed the governors of the American colonies to explore the coastline from Darien to Mexico for a possible waterway. In line with this goal, Gil Gonzale de Avila was send out in 1521 with instructions to explore this region along the coast in order to open a strait to the west. In January 1522, he sailed from the Gulf of Panama to the Gulf of Fonseca, where he discovered Lake Nicaragua. Research continued, with Captain Diego Machuca exploring the lake and discovering the San Juan River in 1559¹³.

As mentioned above, the Spanish have been interested in constructing a canal in the Panama¹⁴ region since the 16th century. This interest was formalized when the Spanish government approved legislation in 1814 allowing for the construction of a canal across the Isthmus of Panama. This marked the beginning of a long and complex endeavor to create a waterway linking the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic Ocean through this narrow land corridor¹⁵.

In 1821, Panama was caught up by the spirit of rebellion and gained its freedom from Spain. Thus, the Spanish dealings in Panama ended¹⁶. Under these conditions, Panama, along with Nueva Granada, Ecuador, and Venezuela, joined the Republic of Greater Colombia. After Gran Colombia was destroyed in 1831, Panama and Nueva Granada merged to become the Republic of Colombia¹⁷. Under those circumstances, Spain missed out on the opportunity to connect the two oceans.

Panama was one of the Americas' oldest Spanish settlements. The Isthmus had a legal heritage dating back to the early colonial period when Panama was under the Spanish Crown. So the Spanish were the ones who came up with the idea of constructing the canal, which was practically started by the French and finished by the Americans¹⁸.

¹² *Griggs F.E.* Georges S. Morison and Philippe Bunau-Varilla: The Indispensable Men of Panama... P. 70; *Duve T.* El Tratado de Tordesillas: Una 'Revolucion Espacial'?... P. 93. Isthmus, narrow strip of land connecting two large land areas otherwise separated by bodies of water.

¹³ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 45. Charles V was King of Spain (Castile and Aragon) from 1516 to 1556. – *Elliot J.H.* Imperial Spain 1469-1716. New York: Penguin Books, 2002. P. 208. The name South Seas, or simply South Sea, is used in a variety of settings. It usually refers to the part of the Pacific Ocean south of the Equator. The term 'Mar del Sur', or South Sea, was invented by Vasco Nuñez de Balboa and was used to the entire area of the present-day Pacific Ocean.

¹⁴ Panama was founded on August 15th, 1519. The origin of the name Panama is disputed. There are several theories on the origin of the name Panama. Some think it was derived from a tree common in the area known as Panama. Others link it to the fact that the city was founded in August, when there are a lot of butterflies, and that Panama means 'abundance of butterflies' in the indigenous language. Another theory says that the word is a Castilianization of the Kuna language word 'bannaba' which means 'far away'. A commonly transmitted and well-known legend in Panama is that there was a fishing village named 'Panamá', which supposedly meant land rich in fish. – *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 16.

Darien was the region's first name, and it was long used as a synonym for Panama. Darien now refers to the eastern part of the Republic of Panama, especially the area between the Gulf of Darien in the Atlantic and the Gulf of San Miguel in the Pacific, as well as the adjoining Colombian region west of the Gulf of Uraba. – *Anderson C.L.G.* Old Panama and Castilla del Or. Boston: The Page Company, 1911. P. 1.

¹⁵ *Forbes Lindsay C.H.* The Story of Panama and the Canal. W.E. SCULL, 1907. P. 28-29.

¹⁶ *Scott W.R.* The Americans in Panama... P. 28.

¹⁷ *Hudson R.A.* Colombia: a country study. Washington: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2010. P. 18-28; *Harding R.C.* The History of Panama. Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 2006. P. 12-16, 42-50.

¹⁸ *Ealy L.* The Development of an Anglo-American System of Law in the Panama Zone... P. 288.

THE PANAMA CANAL DURING THE FRENCH ERA

In the early 19th century, newly independent states explored various schemes for improving communications in Central America and connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. John Augustus Lloyd, an Englishman, was among the first to express a desire to construct a canal in the Panama region. However, his ideas did not receive support. In contrast, the French pursued their canal ambitions more actively, translating their ideas and interests into concrete actions¹⁹.

Conflicts of diverse political natures characterized 19th century Europe, leading to wars and changes in the balance of power. Under these conditions, the Prussian War crushed and humiliated France, causing it to lose reputation in the eyes of other nations. To reclaim its triumph, it began a step toward accomplishing the most difficult engineering challenge in history. To build a canal through Central America that would connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Ferdinand de Lesseps would spearhead this endeavor. Initially, in 1872, de Lesseps indicated his interest in building a canal across the isthmus in Nicaragua, rather than Panama, but Nicaragua favored the United States, therefore he was unsuccessful. Hence, Lesseps turned his attention to another sea-level canal in Panama. When the Lesseps idea was accepted, this project took shape²⁰.

Under these conditions, Ferdinand de Lesseps founded the French Canal Company, the International Civil Society of the Inter-oceanic Canal (La Société Civile Internationale du Canal Interocéanique), to initiate and oversee the Panama Canal project. Despite the lack of thorough studies, the project received funding from the French middle class, largely due to de Lesseps' reputation²¹. Lesseps believed that the Panama Canal would be his second great triumph, following the success he had achieved with the Suez Canal²². General Stephen Türr, known to Lesseps, obtained the concession for the construction of the Panama Canal from Colombia in May 1876. The work would begin no later than 1883 and would be finished in 12 years, with a six-year extension option²³.

Under the terms of the concession, the canal concept was presented before an International Engineering Congress in Paris in 1879, led by Ferdinand de Lesseps. A resolution was proposed in Congress that it was believed that the digging of a canal at sea level was possible, desirable, and would serve the interests of commerce and navigation, and that this canal should extend from Lemon Bay²⁴ to The Gulf of Panama. The proposal

¹⁹ *Chrimes M.M.* UK Britain and the Trans-isthmian Dream... P. 3-4; *H.M.C. Lloyd, John Augustus.* In *Lee S.* (Ed.). *Dictionary of National Biography.* Vol. 33: Leighton-Lluelyn. London: Smith, Elder, & Co, 1893. P. 427-428.

²⁰ *Hull R.F., Jr.* The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama... P. 14-16.

²¹ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 45-46.

²² The geographical location of Panama and the Suez Canal were not the same; the location where the Panama Canal was to be built had mountainous and rocky features, a tropical environment where the rainy season lasted up to nine months, and, worst of all, thousands of people couldn't resist the harsh climate and tropical fever. – *Abdulhafedh A.* The Panama Canal: A Man-Made Engineering Marvel. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research.* 2017. Vol. 5, No. 1. P. 320. URL: <https://www.researchpublish.com/papers/the-panama-canal-a-man-made-engineering-marvel>

²³ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 47-49. This concession would be valid for 99 years if the Panama Railway Company, which had a monopoly on the Isthmian line, would grants the required approval.

²⁴ *Limón Bay*, Spanish *Bahía Limón*, natural harbour of the Caribbean Sea, in Panama at the north end of the Panama Canal. Approximately 4.5 miles (7 km) long and 2.5 miles wide, it is protected from storms by breakwaters at its entrance. The bay serves as a waiting area for ships about to enter the canal. On its eastern shore are the twin cities of Cristóbal and Colón, the Atlantic terminus of the canal. – *Britannica, T.* Editors of *Encyclopaedia* (2014, August 18). *Limon Bay.* *Encyclopedia Britannica.* URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Limon-Bay>

was approved 74-8. None of the French Society of Engineers' five delegates supported this proposal. Of the 74 votes cast, only nineteen were engineers, of whom only one had arrived in Central America²⁵. Many engineers, including Gustave Eiffel, were skeptical of the project, and the technical committee was aware that the geology of Panama was unfathomable. As a result, securing financial resources was difficult. But, with Lesseps' ability, expertise, and confidence, the Company was able to secure enough funds to commence construction activity within a year²⁶. The inauguration of the beginning of the construction of the Canal took place on January 20, 1882²⁷.

The Panama Railroad, which belonged to the United States and had a monopoly on transportation to the Panama Isthmus, was the most difficult task during this two-year preparatory period. After lengthy negotiations between Paris and New York, an agreement was achieved in which the Panama Canal Company seized control of the railroad²⁸.

As the work progressed, problems began. The problem was caused by a disease known as 'yellow fever', which occurs during the rainy season. Landslides were another issue that the French had to deal with. Deforestation caused landslides, which resulted in additional excavations and deaths. Due to these challenges, Couvreux and Hersent decided to abandon the project and requested from De Lesseps to terminate their contract on December 31, 1882²⁹.

By 1888, total expenses for the canal project had reached \$234,795,017. This amount was claimed to have been spent on canal works, with the remainder lost or stolen. Apart from financial mismanagement, very little work has been completed. Regardless of what happened on the ground, the company went through financial crisis, and Panama's stock dropped on the Paris stock exchange³⁰. It was evident as early as

²⁵ Hull R.F., Jr. *The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama...* P. 18. The project cost was put at \$120,000,000, and so the French Canal Company's first step started. – Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 47-49.

²⁶ Hull R.F., Jr. *The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama...* P. 19.

²⁷ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 52.

Although the concessions from France were received on February 11th, 1882, we have a correspondence from London for the Panama Canal project presented to the British Parliament entitled *United States No. 1 1882, return to the Panama project*. – Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) HR. SFR, 3/285/11/1. 20 January 1882.

²⁸ Ferdinand de Lesseps realized that the canal couldn't be built without a railway, the French took over the railway in August 1881. The cost of acquiring the railways was extraordinarily expensive, totaling more over one hundred million francs, or one-third of the Company's resources. – Hull R.F., Jr. *The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama...* P. 21.

The railway's importance to the canal is mentioned in an Ottoman archive document, which emphasizes that the preparations for the canal are great, but not the digging. – Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), HR. SYS, 58/8. 18 April, 1883.

²⁹ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 58; Hull R.F., Jr. *The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama...* P. 19. The company created medical services and hospitals on both sides of the Atlantic and Pacific Isthmus. There were 5,618 deaths during the construction period, which lasted from 1881 to 1889. According to sources, due to this sickness 50-75 percent of French officials who came to serve in Panama, died. That's why in France, Panama was dubbed the 'white man's graveyard'. – Harding R.C. *The History of Panama...* P. 23.

³⁰ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 59; Hull R.F., Jr. *The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama...* P. 27. Financial mismanagement includes almost all sectors, the Panama Canal's Managing Director spent \$100,000 on a house at the expense of the stockholders. A concrete example is when a building is constructed for \$100,000 when it could be constructed for \$50,000. Even engineering equipment that did not meet the actual needs of the works was purchased. – Haskin F.J. *The Panama Canal*. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company; J.J. Little & Ives Co., 1913. P. 208-209.

1885 that the Canal couldn't be built on schedule and at this financial costs. Under these difficult conditions, the company went bankrupt, and another liquidator was appointed to take over. After inspecting the situation on the ground, the commission determined that the Canal would require eight years of work and 174 million dollars to finish³¹.

After all the events in France, popular pressure on the government culminated to what was nicknamed the 'Panama Affair'. Three years after this, the company went bankrupt, the French Republic was rocked by the largest corruption scandal of the 19th century. In 1888, many ministers were accused of accepting bribe from Lesseps³². Under these conditions, control of the Canal's construction and concession was taken over by a new company that didn't produce much results. The New Panama Canal Enterprise, on the other side, had no other goal but to keep the concession alive in the hope that it could be sold to the US³³. After the previous company's scandal, the leaders of the new company faced the reality of their situation: the public had lost faith in the project, they hadn't financial funds, and the government didn't support the project³⁴. According to a telegram sent from Paris to the Ottoman Empire on July 14, 1897, France, Germany, and America have agreed on the continuation of the Panama Canal³⁵. But, since they lack funds, the French were looking for a buyer; they demanded \$100,000,000 for work completed and equipment, but the only possible bidder was the United States. Then the plans changed, and the company sold all of the equipment and work done at a low price, otherwise it would have had to give it away for free³⁶. By this time, the French company had completed around 40% of the excavation for the canal's construction and had constructed various facilities, including hospitals, that would eventually be utilized by the United States³⁷.

Despite their vast experience, the French left an invaluable legacy to the Americans. The machinery that the French bequeathed to the Americans was extremely valuable³⁸. Regardless of the fact that the French were unable to build the canal, their presence in Panama improved the cosmopolitan character of Panamanian towns and offered more access to contemporary technologies³⁹. The Isthmian Canal Commission appraised the works, equipment, supplies, and different assets for which the United States had to pay the French Company 7 years after the Canal was taken over by the Americans, and it was estimated that this payment costs were \$42,000,000⁴⁰.

³¹ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 61-62.

³² *Hull R.F., Jr.* The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama... P. 24. The scandal involving state officials who took bribes from a Panamanian company is also described in an Ottoman archive document dated January 20th, 1893. – Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Y.PRK.TKM, 27/8. 20 January, 1893.

³³ *Haskin F.J.* The Panama Canal... P. 219.

³⁴ *Hull R.F., Jr.* The French Attempt to Construct a Canal at Panama... P. 25.

³⁵ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Y.MTV, 162/210/1. 14 July 1897.

³⁶ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 62-66.

³⁷ *Harding R.C.* The History of Panama... P. 24.

³⁸ When the Americans acquired control of the Canal, they found rusty and useless equipment that had never been used. – *Haskin F.J.* The Panama Canal... P. 219, 209.

³⁹ *Lasso M.* Erased: The Untold Story of the Panama Canal. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2019. P. 7. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674239746>

⁴⁰ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 68.

THE PANAMA CANAL IN THE AMERICAN HANDS

The United States have expressed an early interest in any canal link across the Isthmus of the Americas. This is confirmed in documents sent to the US Senate in 1880 by the 27th US Secretary William M. Evarts. According to him, the inter-oceanic connection via the American Isthmus was not only properly described by the government, but was also completely recognized by other governments since the nation's existence⁴¹. However, the 34th President of the United States was the first to put the United States' Canal idea into practice.

Theodore Roosevelt became president when President William McKinley was assassinated in September 1901⁴². Roosevelt was adamant on making the United States a world power. As a result, the Panama Canal in Central America was regarded as a necessary waterway for the US Navy to become an effective two-ocean power. So Roosevelt immediately ordered that work on the Central American Canal design begin in 1901⁴³. The Spooner Act, approved by the United States Congress on June 28, 1902, was the first concrete step. This legislation gave the President of the United States the authority to buy the rights to construct the Panama Canal for no more than \$40 million. The Law stipulated that the Americans would have permanent authority of the Isthmus's area⁴⁴.

The problem in getting concessions for the construction of the Panama Canal was Colombia⁴⁵, with whom the US had not struck an agreement. Thus, the United States had influenced Colombia's November 1903 revolution, and with its assistance, Panama was able to break away from Colombia and declare its independence⁴⁶. With this, the new Panamanian Republic and the United States signed a new treaty. The United States declared to the globe on October 14 that it fully recognized Panama. Hay and Bunau-Varilla signed a treaty with 26 Articles on November 13, 1903. Through this treaty the United States guaranteed Panama's independence⁴⁷.

Under this treaty, the Americans were granted 436 square miles of what is known as the Canal Zone, which runs from one side of the Atlantic to the other in the Pacific⁴⁸. The United States paid \$10,000,000 in exchange for the Panama agreement and agreed to pay \$250,000,000 when the agreement is ratified⁴⁹. The treaty was ratified on

⁴¹ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. SYS. 48/3. 15 April 1880.

⁴² *McCullough D.* The Path Between the Seas... P. 251-252.

⁴³ *Giroux R.P.* Building the Panama Canal... P. 32.

⁴⁴ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 69; History and Present Status of The Panama Canal. *Scientific American* (New York). 1905. Vol. 92, No. 22. P. 443. URL: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/issue/sa/1905/06-03/>

⁴⁵ *Faley G.F.* Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Panama, 1903-1928: Master Thesis. Kansas: B.S., Kansas State Agricultural College, 1928. P. 9.

⁴⁶ *Giroux R.P.* Building the Panama Canal... P. 33.

⁴⁷ *Faley G.F.* Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Panama... P. 12.

⁴⁸ Final Environmental Impact Statement for the New Panama Canal Treaties, Department of State, Superintendent of Documents. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977. P. 1-5; *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 69; The Canal Zone was founded as a United States post-colonial territory. Control of the Panama Canal would have a huge impact on the United States' expansion as a continental and commercial world power over the following almost 100 years, and would be a major catalyst for the reversal of historic American isolation. – *Harding R.C.* The History of Panama... P. 8.

⁴⁹ Panama Canal Treaty (Disposition of United States Territory). Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977. P. 183.

February 26, 1904, and the agreement for the proportional determination of the US territory's borders was signed in Ismuths in July 1904⁵⁰. Concerning the Panama Canal, the United States of America, and the Ottoman Empire, we have a document from the Ottoman archives dated August 29, 1904, in which the United States Legation in Istanbul informs the Ottoman Imperial Government that by order of the President of the United States of America, the ports of Ancon and Crystobal are declared open as ports of entry for the Isthmus of Panama Canal Zone, that is, immediately after the signing of the above Agreement of 1904⁵¹. Roosevelt appointed John Wallace to the Eastman Canal Commission as Chairman and Chief Engineer⁵². Roosevelt clearly emphasized expectations about the channel: "This nation will persevere to achieve results"⁵³.

President Roosevelt visited Panama in November 1906, becoming the first president to travel outside of the United States. He would travel with Stevens, the new chief engineer, to the work site and to meet the workers. He addressed a crowd saying, "This is one of the greatest creations in the world"⁵⁴.

The issues that required serious attention throughout the development of the works were social and health factors such as the fight against malaria and yellow fever, which were one of the most critical challenges for employees. The Americans have done an excellent job of recruiting many doctors to study this issue. Based on these researches, it has been proven that mosquitoes are disease carriers. Hence, they tried various methods to remove mosquitoes since they frequently caused the Canal's construction work to be stopped⁵⁵. The Americans were able to totally transform the lives of the people who lived there. According to statistics, the number of deaths under the American leadership was quite low in comparison to the French leadership. Two of the most revolutionary developments in the Canal Project were the disappearance of yellow fever, and a substantial drop in the number of malaria cases in the isthmus.

The United States have elevated Panama's cities to the level of other American cities⁵⁶. The canal's workforce was only 500 workers in September 1904. With the arrival of the Americans, the labor force in Panama increased, including industries working on the Panama Railroad and the Panama Canal. According to statistics, the

⁵⁰ *Epstein M.* The Statesmen's Year-Book. London: Macmillan and Co., 1941. P. 1187.

⁵¹ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. SYS. 77/23. 29 August 1904.

⁵² *Rogers J.D.* Engineering the Panama Canal. *Civil Engineering-New York then Reston*. 2014. Vol. 84, Issue 9. P. 73. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1061/ciegag.0000507>

⁵³ *Giroux R.P.* Building the Panama Canal... P. 39; The American authorities established many divisions for the implementation, management, and organization of the work in the Panama Canal construction. These departments were headed by the following individuals: Theodore P. Shonts was in charge of finances, material procurement, and accounting; Charles E. Magoon was in charge of administration and law enforcement in the area; and John F. Wallace was the chief engineer in charge of constructing the canals and operating the railroads. Engineers and other professionals were also recruited. – *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 74.

⁵⁴ *Giroux R.P.* Building the Panama Canal... P. 39. During this period, departments and engineers were continuously changing, including Stevens, who resigned in February 1907. – *McCullough D.* The Path Between the Seas... P. 518-519.

⁵⁵ *McCullough D.* The Path Between the Seas... P. 418-420; Doctor William Crawford Gorgas, a health worker who helped rid the world of the deadly yellow fever, made one of the most dangerous parts of the world habitable, the Panama Canal area. – The Panama Canal, Crossroads of the world: Special 55th Anniversary Issue – August 15, 1914-1969. *Panama Canal Review*. 1969. P. 4.

⁵⁶ *Abdulhafedh A.* The Panama Canal... P. 324-326.

number of workers employed by Americans in Panama steadily increased from 33,170 in 1908 to 44,733 in 1913. Specifically, there were 35,405 workers in 1909, 38,676 in 1910, 37,826 in 1911, and 40,159 in 1912. Different employees were recruited from Europe, mostly Spanish, Italians, and Greeks, while West Indians, such as Trinidad, Jamaica, and Barbados, dominated worker recruitment in other years⁵⁷.

Control of the Panama Canal by the United States had altered the techniques and manner of opening the Canal. Based on the Ismuth's committee findings, President Roosevelt went to Congress and told them: "The Canal Commission, in terms of greater safety, feasibility, and attractiveness of construction, was for the blocking canal in Panama". As a result, on June 29, 1906, the Congress approved the concept of an 85-meter-high blocking canal⁵⁸.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE PANAMA CANAL'S OPENING

The first passage of a ship through the Panama Canal took place on September 26, 1913. The Panama Canal was scheduled to open on July 4, 1915, but it would be tested first by merchant and navy vessels. On August 15, 1914, the United States War Department passed through the Canal, and the passage across the waterway was officially opened to world traffic. The streets of Ancona were filled with government guests and officials from the Canal and the Republic of Panama, such as the District Governor, Colonel Goethals, Panamanian President Porras, and US Port Manager Captain Hugh Rodman. The Canal's official opening ceremony would take place later⁵⁹. On February 20, 1915, the Panama International Exposition in San Francisco officially marks the opening of the Panama Canal as an official national holiday. It also celebrates humanity's achievements in the decade before 1915, demonstrating the tremendous

⁵⁷ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 95-99.

More than 75,000 men and women worked on the Panama Canal construction by the United States. – *Abdulhafedh A. The Panama Canal...* P. 332.

When it comes to workers, a document dated January 28th, 1907 indirectly provides us with interesting details, revealing that the United States did not like workers from China, and the latter had even submitted a request to the Chinese authorities. Nevertheless, the Chinese government's and parliament refused to accept America's proposal that Chinese employees should not emigrate for work on the Panama Canal. – Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). Y.PRK.TKM. 49/66. 28 January 1907.

⁵⁸ On August 24th, 1912, former President Taft signed the Panama Canal Act. This Law addresses the Panama Canal's opening, maintenance, and operation, as well as its future. President Taft announced the tolls for the Panama Canal with the Canal Act on November 14th, 1912, exempting American ships from payment. The British government protested, citing the Hay-Pauncefote Agreement, which mandated non-discriminatory access for all nations' ships. In response, President Wilson ordered the repeal of this exemption on March 5th, 1914, and the repeal law was passed on June 12th, 1914. The new tolls for merchant vessels were set between \$0.75 and \$1.25 per net registered tonnage. Congress also addressed the canal's fortification, aligning with the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901, which required the canal to remain open to all nations. To ensure the canal's security, \$10,676,950 was appropriated for its care by June 23rd, 1913, and two heavily armed forts were constructed at each end of the canal. These measures highlighted that the Panama Canal was built not only for trade but also for national defense. – *McCullough D. The Path Between the Seas...* P. 501; *Avery R.E. The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 135-138, 213, 219-222; *Harding R.C. The History of Panama...* P. 283-303; *Faley G.F. Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Panama...* P. 28, 37; *Coker W.S. The Panama Canal Tolls Controversy: A Different Perspective. The Journal of American History.* 1968. Vol. 55, Is. 3. P. 563. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1891013>

⁵⁹ *Avery R.E. The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 316-321. *Giroux R.P. Building the Panama Canal...* P. 66.

progress achieved in every field of human endeavor, and explains the human race's current capabilities⁶⁰. A document dated June 28, 1894 from the Ottoman archive in French sent to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Said Pasha, proves that the idea of a large fair in San Francisco was not new. This document contains a report on the overall aspects of the California Exposition in San Francisco, especially the section of the Ottoman bazaar. The Ottoman section has a 2500 m² area in the Production and Liberal Arts Square, in front of the French and Russian sections. Silk, art objects, carved souvenirs, furniture, oriental jewellery, and religious stuff from Palestine will be sold here. Merchants from the Ottoman Empire who took part in the Chicago exhibition in 1893 are expected to join to the California exposition⁶¹.

The construction of the exposition in San Francisco began on December 7, 1909, but only the concept defined. The first meeting was held on April 28, 1910, with 1,000 firms in attendance; it was the first success, with the exhibiting company selling more than 4 million shares⁶². The exposition's opening ceremony was a huge success. The Exposition was proclaimed open to the public by President Charles C. Moore. Of course, it was the last celebration of the merger of the two oceans, due to President Wilson's initiative, which led to the creation of the big display. However, this exposition also attempted to help San Francisco recover from the 1906 earthquake and fire⁶³. President Wilson was represented at the opening ceremony by Secretary of State Franklin Ie Lane. The slogan 'San Francisco invites the world' was already famous. Homer S. King was the exposition's first president⁶⁴.

The first invitation for the Ottoman Empire to participate in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco came from the State Department in Washington on February 6, 1912. This invitation arrived at the Ottoman Embassy in Washington and is delivered to the Ottoman Empire's Ambassador, Yusuf Zija Pasha. Along with the invitation, this document includes the President of the United States' proclamation of February 2, 1912⁶⁵. President William Howard Taft published this proclamation, inviting all foreign countries to participate in the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, California, in 1915⁶⁶. Considered as 'an event of great interest to the United States and of worldwide importance', an invitation was also extended to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Assim Bey, after 17 days, corresponding to February 23 at the Ottoman Embassy in Washington. Attached to this letter was a copy of US Secretary of State Philander C. Knox's statement including President Taft's speech. President Taft, on behalf of his government and the people of

⁶⁰ Reid R.A. *The Panama Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco 1915*. San Francisco: Panama-Pacific International Exposition Company, 1915. P. 13.

⁶¹ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Hariciye Nezâreti İdari (HR. ID), 1222/69/1, 28 June 1894.

⁶² Lipsky W. *San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition*. Arcadia Publishing Library Editions, 2005. P. 23.

⁶³ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 347; Brechin G. *Sailing to Byzantium: The Architecture of the Panama Pacific International Exposition*. *California History*. 1983. Vol. 62. No. 2. P. 106. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/25158152>

⁶⁴ Avery R.E. *The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama...* P. 348, 352; *The Panama-Pacific International Exposition is estimated to have cost \$50,000,000. – Ackley L.A. San Francisco's Jewel City: The Panama-Pacific International Exposition of 1915*. Berkeley: Heyday, 2015. P. 350.

⁶⁵ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. ID. 1222/70/3. 6 February 1912.

⁶⁶ Ibid. HR. ID. 1222/70/2. 6 February 1912.

the United States, cordially invites all nations to participate the Panama Canal opening ceremony⁶⁷. According to American officials, the completion of the Panama Canal is an achievement that impacts the interests of every civilized nation, and so all nations should participate in the opening ceremony⁶⁸.

The American Embassy in Istanbul sent out another invitation to the Ottoman Empire's Minister of Foreign Affairs one day after the invitation to Washington. The American authorities constantly sent information to the Ottoman authorities about the process of conducting the ceremony, and in this document, the Embassy informed Mustafa Assim Bey that the American Government had decided to carry out the opening ceremony of the completion and inauguration of the Panama Canal through the International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. Therefore, the President of the United States, speaking on behalf of the American people, has expressed his hope that all nations of the world will participate in this exposition by appointing representatives and sending products from their countries that can demonstrate their resources, industries, and civilizational progress. So the products of its arts, sciences and natural resources. In this document, on behalf of the Government and on behalf of the President of the United States, the American Embassy invites the Imperial Government to participate in this celebration. Other details about the establishment of committees for the reception and treatment of foreign delegates in San Francisco by American authorities are also included in the document⁶⁹.

Another letter is sent to the Ottoman Embassy in Washington at the end of April of the same year, with a copy of the San Francisco Exposition regulation. While it has been announced that a commission chaired by John Hays Hamoond will shortly begin in European cities to invite various governments to participate in the exposition⁷⁰. To encourage the Ottoman Empire's participation in the exposition, the American Embassy sent updates to Ottoman institutions on a continuous basis. One such is the one dated September 28, 1912, in which the Ottoman Empire's officials are notified about the countries that have confirmed the invitation of the United States to participate in the Canal's inaugural ceremony. The countries that confirmed their participation are: Bolivia, France, Mexico, Canada, Great Britain (temporarily) Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru, Cuba, Haiti, Salvador, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Uruguay, Ecuador, Japan⁷¹. The US State Department instructed the American Ambassador, which expressed the President's hope that the invitation would be accepted by the Ottoman Imperial Government⁷². The letter was addressed to the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gabriel Noradunkyan Efendi, who assumed office in July 1912⁷³.

Based on a document dated April 30, 1913, we may infer that the Ottoman Empire responded negatively to the invitation of American officials to participate in the Panama Canal official opening ceremony. According to this, the Ottoman Government,

⁶⁷ Ibid. HR. ID. 1222/70/1. 23 February 1912

⁶⁸ The Panama Pacific International Exposition San Francisco 1915. Chicago: Artgravure, C.T.Co, 1915. P. 7.

⁶⁹ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. ID. 1222/70/4. 24 February 1912.

⁷⁰ Ibid. HR. ID. 1222/71/1. 27 April 1912.

⁷¹ Ibid. HR. ID. 1222/72/1. 28 September 1912.

⁷² Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/8/6. 28 September 1912.

⁷³ *Simavi Lütüfi*. Osmanlı Sarayının Son Günleri. İstanbul: Pegasus Yayinlari, 2006. P. 46.

in its current state, rejected to participate in the International Exposition on the occasion of the opening of the Panama Canal. Thus, the American Embassy expressed regret for not accepting the invitation and thanked the Ottoman Empire's Imperial Department of Trade and Agriculture for taking the required procedures for merchants and private individuals who desire to participate in the Exposition⁷⁴. Another document from May 1913 shows that the Ottoman Empire rejected the invitation; this document relates to another document dated February 18, 1913. With this document, the second most important position after the American President, US Secretary of State Bryan expresses his regret that the Ottoman Government will not participate in San Francisco⁷⁵. Despite the Ottoman Empire's confirmation that it would not participate, the United States did not give up. The American Embassy in Istanbul continuously sends reports and letters in which it is informed about the course of developments surrounding this ceremony and aspects of other natures related to this event, which will be presented there. The US embassy sends a brochure to Ottoman institutions around a month after the American Secretary's letter, describing the progress and preparation of the exposition grounds to celebrate the opening of the Panama Canal⁷⁶.

To ensure the best possible management of this event, the United States established a National Exposition Commission, which would be tasked with arbitrating any disagreements that may arise between foreign government commissioners⁷⁷. Notwithstanding the Ottoman Empire's rejection, on October 30, 1913, American Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire William Woodville Rockhill reiterated the United States' request to Hilmi Pasha to participate in the International Exposition in San Francisco⁷⁸.

On December 31, 1913, the American Embassy in Istanbul announced that an international sailing yacht race and another motor vehicle race would be part of the Canal's inaugural event. While the ceremony's leaders and organizers request that the Ottoman government appoint a commissioner for this organization⁷⁹. After three days, the American Embassy wrote another letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Grand Vizier Hilmi Pasha, clarifying the invitation dated October 30, 1913 regarding a 'representative' from the Ottoman side. Representatives that would participate in the marine program in Hampton Roads, Washington, must only be marine representatives. However, these naval representatives must not only be military navy officers, but also civilian navy officers, Lords, Admirals, and Ministers of the Navy⁸⁰. On January 12, 1914, the US Embassy in Istanbul sent to the Ottoman Imperial Government a copy of a statement by President Woodrow Wilson establishing the rules for measuring ships for the Panama Canal⁸¹.

Interesting information about the activities in the opening of the Canal in Panama is provided by the document of May 16, 1914, where the Embassy of the United States of America informs the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the leaders of the

⁷⁴ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. ID. 1223/2/3. 30 April 1912.

⁷⁵ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/2/2. 13 May 1913.

⁷⁶ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/4/1. 20 June 1913.

⁷⁷ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/5/1. 7 August 1913.

⁷⁸ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/6/4. 30 October 1913.

⁷⁹ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/8/1. 31 December 1913.

⁸⁰ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/8/4. 3 January 1914.

⁸¹ Ibid. HR. ID. 1216/66/1. 12 January 1914.

International Exposition in San Francisco will hold an airplane race of the whole world. This race will be carefully conducted in May, 1915, commencing and ending on the grounds of the San Francisco Exposition. The winners of the race will get around \$150,000 in rewards, and since this amount has been deposited in a New York bank, additional awards will be awarded. The American Embassy requests that the Ottoman Imperial Government give the proper publicity to this event⁸². A month later a diplomatic note is sent to the Foreign Ministry with a request for an official list or authorized by the Ottoman Government for the issuance of Panama Canal certificates⁸³. On October 9, 1914, the US ambassador in Istanbul, H. Morgenthau, sent the program for the opening of the Panama Canal to Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha.

The program is as follows:

- February 10 to 15, 1915 – Hampton Roads Meeting of Foreign Ships.
- February 20 – Foreign navies' delegates will be welcomed by the President in Washington.
- February 22 – The President will proceed to Hampton Roads, where he will observe the combined fleet, and then the fleet will proceed to the Isthmus of Panama.
- March 5 – The President will depart on a warship for the Panama Canal.
- March 10 – The President arrives in Colon.
- March 12 – The President and the fleet cross the Channel.
- March 13 – March Ceremonies in Balboa or Panama.
- March 13 – The President departs on a warship⁸⁴.
- March 23 – The President arrives in San Francisco.

Aside from that, he adds that this program may be revised with slight changes. The Marine Department allowed the Ambassador to give seals to the participating ships prior to the international fleet's departure to Panama. Furthermore, coal for naval boats will be supplied at the same cost as coal for US navy vessels. Ships are suggested to arrive in Hampton Roads between February 10 and 15. While the US Government should be informed about the number of ships to be dispatched, the size of the ships, and the amount of coal⁸⁵. Also, the US Embassy in Istanbul informs the Grand Vizier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Said Kalim Pasha, that the President of the United States will receive the special commissioners and representatives of other foreign countries in San Francisco following the completion of the Panama Canal opening ceremony⁸⁶. On December 18, 1914, the Imperial Ottoman Embassy in Vienna confirmed and informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria-Hungary that the ships of the Imperial Navy will not participate in the celebrations marking the opening of the Panama Canal and in the international exposition in San Francisco in 1915⁸⁷.

Around 40 foreign countries had confirmed their participation in this exposition. Some of these countries are: Italy, Argentina, Austria, Japan, Australia, Liberia, Bolivia, Mexico, Brazil, New Zealand, Canada, Nicaragua, Paraguay, China, etc⁸⁸. The total

⁸² Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/11/2. 16 May 1914.

⁸³ Ibid. HR. ID. 1216/69/2. 16 June 1914.

⁸⁴ Ibid. HR. ID. 1216/69/2. 16 June 1914.

⁸⁵ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/13/2. 9 October 1914.

⁸⁶ Ibid. HR. ID. 1223/16/2. 30 November 1914.

⁸⁷ Ibid. HR. ID. 0223/19/5. 18 December 1914.

⁸⁸ The Exposition Fact-Book. Panama–Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco 1915. Bancroft Library, The Library of University of California. P. 18.

amount allocated to nations and states for participation is 10 million dollars. President Charles C. Moore in the opening ceremonies of the exposition emphasized that "Today we enjoy the fruits of peace"⁸⁹. The Panama Canal and San Francisco gave the United States a new global standing. Both served as gates between East and West, provided a fluid boundary between nations and national entities, and were the product of American expansionism's success. The completion of the Panama Canal, celebrated during the 1915 Exposition, marks the beginning of the historical arc of the American empire's rise⁹⁰.

THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION, THE ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE PANAMA CANAL

The Panama Canal is one of the rare government projects that was finished on schedule and on budget. The biggest reason for this was that the US Congress gave the money as fast as it could put it to effective use⁹¹. Up until that time, the Panama Canal was the most costly public works project in American history. Between 1903 and 1914, the United States spent \$326 million directly on the Panama Canal's construction⁹². From the start of the French endeavor in 1879 until the completion of the Canal by the Americans, 35 years had passed and nearly \$639 million had been spent⁹³.

The Panama Canal was built largely with economic and strategic military aims in mind, making it simpler to protect the US coast. By providing a faster and more direct route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, the Canal significantly enhanced the efficiency of maritime transportation and military logistics. This strategic infrastructure project was not only a feat of engineering but also a pivotal element in American defense policy⁹⁴.

The control of the Panama Canal by the US have caused concern in other countries. As a result, in a telegram from Vienna on May 5, 1886, emphasized that there should be an exchange of ideas between the European powers with the aim of ensuring full neutrality of the canal after completion. During this time, the United States had not yet taken the Panama Canal, but it was emphasized in this telegram that in the event of a war between the United States and a European power, the Panama Canal would be the key to the road leading to the United States' southern borders, a key that the American people cannot in any way leave in the hands of another nation⁹⁵.

Strategically, the Panama Canal's geographic location determines main routes and

⁸⁹ *Avery R.E.* The Greatest Engineering Feat in the World at Panama... P. 360.

⁹⁰ *Moore S.J.* Empire on Display: San Francisco's Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. P. 11.

⁹¹ *Sibert W.L., Stevens J.F.* The Construction of the Panama Canal (1915). New York, London: D. Appleton and Company, 1915. P. 323.

⁹² *Maurer N., Carlos Yu.* What T.R. Took: The Economic Impact of the Panama Canal... P. 688. There is no doubt, without the failure of the French, America might have failed as well. According to worker death records, 25,000 people died during construction of the Canal, 20,000 workers died during the French management, and 5,600 workers died during the American management. – Panama Canal Expansion and Florida Seaports: A Preliminary Study of Post Panamax Vessels Calls and Pacific Rim Region Container Volumes. *Florida Department of Transportation, Seaport Office* FDOT, USA, 2018. P. 3.

⁹³ *Giroux R.P.* Building the Panama Canal... P. 67.

⁹⁴ *Sabonge R., Sanchez R.J.* The Panama Canal turns 100: history and possible future scenarios. *FAL Bulletin*. 2014. Issue No. 334 – Number 6. P. 4.

⁹⁵ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. SYS. 77/16. 5 May 1886.

their economic impact, especially in terms of shortening the distance and saving time. The Panama Canal connects New York and San Francisco at a distance of 5,262 nautical miles; an alternate route over the Strait of Magellan would be 13,135 nautical miles. The distance between San Francisco and Liverpool via the Panama Canal is 7,836 nautical miles; the distance via the Strait of Magellan is 13,522 nautical miles⁹⁶.

STATUS OF THE PANAMA CANAL

The Panama Canal Zone is officially recognized by law according to the Hay and Bunau-Varilla Treaty, signed on November 13, 1903, between the United States and Panama. The Canal Zone meant the area around the Canal ceded to the United States by Panama in 1903 and is administered by the United States for the purpose of building a waterway known as the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal is not operated by Panama, but the legal powers were given to another country, the United States⁹⁷. It is no coincidence that this treaty's first clause deals with recognizing Panama's independence from the United States⁹⁸. According to the second Article, the Republic of Panama gave the United States permission to administer a particular territory and build the Panama Canal.

The treaty's other 25 articles include other legal provisions that the United States and the Republic of Panama had agreed to. As an example, clause 14 states that the United States must pay the Republic of Panama \$10,000,000. Then, according to Article 18, the entries made after the Canal's construction will be neutral⁹⁹. Therefore, each article has its own characteristics defined by both parties, and after the signing of the treaty, the status of the treaty is fully legal and supported by the highest government institutions.

With this Agreement, it can be said that the status of the Panama Canal and the Canal Zone has been defined in general lines. The Canal Zone is under the authority, administration, and jurisdiction of the United States. Meanwhile, Panama maintains legal and nominal sovereignty. The status of the Panama Canal is broader, it includes not only the canal, but also the territory. Under these conditions, one state maintains sovereignty over this region, while the other state exercises its sovereign rights¹⁰⁰.

Since the Panama Canal's opening in 1914, the US has been in charge of managing it. After years of debate, it was officially returned to the Republic of Panama on December 31, 1999¹⁰¹. The Panama Canal Authority then took over management of the

⁹⁶ *Sabonge R., Sanchez R.J.* The Panama Canal turns 100... P. 4; *Barrett J.* Panama Canal, What it is What it Means. Washington: Pan American Union, 1913. P. 9.

⁹⁷ *Maduro M.F.* The Panama Question in the Light of International Law: Master Thesis. Edmonton: The University of Alberta, Department of Political Science, 1969. P. 3-4.

⁹⁸ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Directorate of state archives Ottoman Archives (Istanbul), Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA). HR. SYS. 50. 5 September 1912.

⁹⁹ Treaties and Acts of Congress, Relating to The Panama Canal. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917. P. 14-17.

¹⁰⁰ *Maduro M.F.* The Panama Question in the Light of International Law... P. 95.

¹⁰¹ *Brevik T., Melleby Ch.* The Expansion of the Panama Canal: A study of consequences in the container shipping industry: Master Thesis. Bergen: Norwegian School of Economics, 2014. P. 14. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/222775>; *Conniff M.L., Bigler G.E.* Modern Panama: From Occupation to Crossroads of the Americas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. P. 20.

A number of new agreements with the Republic of Panama were made as long as the United States managed the Panama Canal. One of these was the 1936 treaty, which stated that in the case of a conflict on a global scale or a threat to the security of the Republic of Panama or the Panama Canal, the

Canal from the joint US-Panamanian Panama Canal Commission at noon on December 31, 1999. The administration, operation, preservation, maintenance, and modernization of the Panama Canal are the responsibilities of the ACP, which was established by a constitutional amendment. Additionally, it is responsible for the upkeep, preservation, and protection of all water resources in the Panama Canal watershed¹⁰².

CONCLUSION

The history of the Panama Canal is a testament to remarkable engineering feats, international diplomacy, and significant geopolitical shifts. Initially envisioned by the Spanish, attempted by the French, and ultimately realized by the United States, the canal has had a profound impact on global trade by reducing maritime distances and fostering economic growth.

The United States' successful construction of the canal was a demonstration of advanced engineering and a strategic diplomatic achievement. By supporting Panama's independence and carefully navigating international agreements, the US secured its control over this vital waterway, further solidifying its influence on the global stage.

governments of the Republic of Panama and the United States would work together to safeguard their shared interests. – *Maduro M.F.* The Panama Question in the Light of International Law... P. 95.

Another treaty was that of September 7, 1977, known as the Panama Canal Treaty (Torrijos-Carter Treaty) between the Republic of Panama and the United States in Washington. The treaty was signed by Jimmy Carter, President of the USA, and General Omar Torrijos, Prime Minister of the Republic of Panama. The Agreement was signed in the presence of 28 governments and 19 heads of state. That guarantee that the Republic of Panama will receive ownership of the Panama Canal and will be in control of its management, operation, and maintenance in its entirety. By establishing a neutrality regime, this Agreement ensures that the Canal is open, secure, neutral, and accessible to ships from all countries. This agreement, also known as the 'treaty of neutrality', guarantees that the United States will retain permanent power to protect the Panama Canal against threats that could jeopardize its ability to continue serving ships from all countries impartially. This treaty abrogated all agreements established by the Treaty of 1903. With this Agreement, the Canal zone is abolished, and the Republic of Panama now has control over it. However, after twenty years, the Panamanian government will be given control of the Canal Zone and the Panama Canal. – United States Treaties and Other International Agreements, Department of State. Vol. 33: 1979-1981. Washington: U.S Government Printing Office, 1987. P. 39; International Organizations and the Law of the Sea. Documentary Yearbook 1995. Vol. 11: 1995. The Hague-London-Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea, 1998. P. 218; *Krakenes J.T.* The Panama Canal: the Gateway Between the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean: A case study. Master's Thesis. Bergen, Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, 2008. P. 31. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/11250/168113>; *Tratados Torrijos-Carter: 44 Anos de su firma.* El Faro (Septiembre 2021, No. 159). Canal de Panama, 2021. P. 4; *Alstyen van R.W.* The Panama Canal: A Classical Case of an Imperial Hangover. *Journal of Contemporary History.* 1980. Vol. 15. No. 2. P. 300. URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/260515>; *Henrichs W.* The Panama Canal in History, Policy and Caricature (Review Essays). *Latin American Research Review.* 1982. Vol. 17, Is. 2. P. 258. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002387910003377X>

¹⁰² *Bray W.D., Cho A., Padelford N.J., Worthington W.E., Gordon B.L.* (2024, August 17). Panama Canal. *Encyclopedia Britannica.* URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Panama-Canal/Canal-traffic>. The Panama Canal Authority (PCA) is an autonomous agency of the Government of Panama, established pursuant to Article 316 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Panama. The PCA is in charge of overseeing the Panama Canal's administration, operation, preservation, maintenance, modernization, and other associated tasks required to ensure the Canal's safe, uninterrupted, efficient, and profitable operation in accordance with the Constitution and applicable legal regulations. – Panama Canal Authority, Statement of Costs of Investments in Progress and Operating Expenses of the Panama Canal Expansion Program, 2011. P. 4.

The absence of the Ottoman Empire at the San Francisco Exposition, despite persistent American invitations, highlights an intriguing diplomatic nuance. Ottoman archival documents reveal multiple efforts by the United States to engage the Empire, underscoring the canal's significance in international relations. This diplomatic episode illustrates the broader geopolitical implications of the canal's opening and America's message of emerging dominance.

In summary, the Panama Canal's history is not only about engineering triumphs but also about the complex interplay of international relations, exemplified by the interactions with the Ottoman Empire. The canal's completion marked the beginning of a new era, with the United States at the forefront, reshaping global trade and political dynamics.

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