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## The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish American War to the Invasion of Panama

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wherever it is needed. Like the submarine, she is a creature of the war of maneuver, not of the line of battle.

Hagan makes a good case that our naval policy has been too much influenced by the British use of great fleets. He argues that Mahan, expounding with ringing language upon England's experience two centuries ago, fixed the idea of *commanding* the sea upon us just when submarines, aircraft, communications technology, radar, missiles, and computers were beginning to change the old rules.

Fleet action is grander than commerce raiding and thus more attractive to persons bred to the pursuit of glory, as naval officers were in Horatio Nelson's day. But as Hagan states, in all our wars except for that with Spain in 1898 (and always excepting the September 1781 Battle of the Virginia Capes during our Revolutionary War) it was the *guerre de course*, the war of maneuver—much of it commerce raiding—that got the job done. This was especially true during World War II.

Not all will agree with everything Ken Hagan says, and there are a few unimportant bloopers (the *Oregon* went through the Straits of Magellan and not around Cape Horn, Admiral Spruance commanded at Midway from the carrier *Enterprise* and not "a cruiser," and Japanese tankers were top-rated submarine targets from the beginning of World War II and not only since 1944).

But though I admire former secretary of the navy John Lehman, I cannot but disagree with the

penultimate paragraph of his otherwise outstanding review published in *The Washington Post*. There was no "lunatic" who got hold of one of the manuscript pages and scribbled nonsense. Ken Hagan may have misplaced part of his sequence of events, but he is right-on in predicting impending and fundamental changes in how we look at sea power.

In sum, *This People's Navy* is a totally admirable book, a veritable *tour de force* that not only goes at our naval history in an original way but is fascinating reading at the same time.

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Musicant, Ivan. *The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama*. New York: Macmillan, 1990. 470pp. \$24.95

Military intervention is touted by statesmen as a diplomatic tool of last resort. The statesman boasts of personal and diplomatic skills, eschewing the use of military force, as most effective and proper for managing relations between nations. Ivan Musicant, in his book, *The Banana Wars*, clearly shows that American diplomatic skill in Latin American affairs in the last ninety years has been replaced by military force as the primary diplomatic tool.

Ivan Musicant is a historian who writes from Minnesota and has authored two previous works on naval

history. In this work he has put together an exciting but flawed history of U.S. military involvement in Latin America. It is clear from the start that U.S. military intervention in the early years of the "Banana Wars" was economically driven but cheaply cloaked in the mantle of U.S. national defense necessity. From 1898 to the 1930s, it appears that the U.S. State Department had essentially only one diplomatic tool for use in Latin America—military force. Marines were even referred to as "State Department troops." The adage comes to mind, "when all you have is a hammer, then everything looks like a nail."

Since 1898 the United States has intervened militarily in the internal affairs of seven Latin American nations, for a total of ten major interventions. Beginning with the Spanish-American War in 1898, the author concludes with the final U.S. occupation of Cuba. The first two chapters, on Cuba, are the best in the book. Musicant provides a detailed and intriguing account of the political background that led to the war, and focuses on U.S. military in combat and in rebuilding the Cuban country after the depredations of the Spanish.

Following the excellent chapters on Cuba, Musicant discusses Panama (1885-1904) and the development of the Panama Canal, Nicaragua with its two interventions (1912 and 1927-1934), Haiti (1915-1934), the Dominican Republic's two interventions (1916-1924 and 1965), and finishes with Grenada (1983) and the

most recent Panama intervention in 1989.

The strength of this book is in the author's handling of the military in these interventions. While the overall political and moral aspect of U.S. military intervention in Latin America is not very complimentary, Musicant fairly and sympathetically relates the combat and peacetime activity of U.S. soldiers, sailors, and marines throughout the "Banana Wars." He brings to life the significant contributions of men like army Brigadier General Leonard Wood, who had the unpleasant task of creating order out of chaos in Cuba: restoring peace, sanitation, civil government, and the Cuban economy.

The author is a former marine, and he tells of the many adventures of such famous marines as Smedley Butler, Chesty Puller, Christian Schilt, and Herman Hanneken. Many legends of the Corps were created during these intervention years.

While this book has much to recommend it, it contains serious flaws. Most glaring is the author's omission of the U.S. military intervention in Mexico in 1914. From April to November 1914, 7,500 marines, soldiers, and sailors forcibly occupied the Mexican coastal city of Veracruz, as an affair of honor—the U.S. flag had not been accorded the proper respect by the Mexican government. That intervention cost eighty-eight American casualties and 126 Mexican dead, but there is no mention of it.

Additionally, the book contains only eighteen photographs and only one large area map with three inserts to support ninety years of history in a large geographic area. The closing chapter on the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989 is an incomplete and sterile effort. The author appears to have relied mostly on news accounts for its substance. Finally, there is no conclusion! After 470 pages of relatively good work on a sensitive and still contemporary topic, there was no effort by the author to tie it all together.

*Banana Wars* is not the complete history of U.S. military intervention one might expect. However, it is a good effort, especially of the military role up to 1934. It has action, humor, and many "lessons learned" for the student of low-intensity conflict. After reading this book, it will be no wonder that our Latin American neighbors mistrust and fear the United States.

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Rosenquist, R.G. et al. *Our Kind of War: Illustrated Saga of the U.S. Marine Raiders of World War II*. Richmond, Va: The American Historical Foundation, 1990.

When was the last time you saw a photograph of seven members of the same battalion receiving the Navy Cross for their actions in the same operation? Well, it hap-

pened at least once, after the Makin Island raid of August 1942. Two of the recipients were navy doctors who were members of the 2nd Raider Battalion.

During their two years of existence, the four marine Raider battalions performed heroic deeds far beyond proportion to their numbers: seven of the seventy-nine Medals of Honor awarded marines during World War II went to Raiders; twelve percent of all Navy Crosses were earned by marines of the Raider battalions, and two-thirds of the army's Distinguished Service Crosses presented to marines were pinned on Raider chests.

*Our Kind of War* is, as the subtitle suggests, a saga. Beginning with the activation of the Raiders in January 1942 (not without a great deal of opposition from Marine Corps Headquarters), Rosenquist concludes with the occupation of Japan. By that time, the Raiders had been disbanded and redesignated, and had participated in the Guam and Okinawa campaigns as battalions of the 4th Marine Regiment. A particularly poignant event occurred in Japan when these "new" 4th Marines passed in review. The colors were held high for the surviving members of the "old" 4th Marines that had been captured in the Philippines in 1942.

Rosenquist has presented an accurate historical account of each Raider operation; these are followed