



Transformation of Panama and the Panama Canal

August 15, 2014 marked the one hundredth anniversary of the canal's opening. Former Chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, Robert McMillan, offers a fascinating Power Point insider's look at the history – and the future – of Panama and the Panama Canal. Starting with the continuing efforts of Christopher Columbus to find a shorter path to the Orient, adventures and explorers came to Panama's shores as early as 1502. They were the gold seekers who developed Panama City so that by 1671 it had a population of 30,000 people! Next McMillan covers the efforts by France to construct a canal across the Isthmus and why it was doomed to failure. After the French effort, he goes on to cover the construction of the canal under Teddy Roosevelt.

Panama and the canal have been an important part of America's heritage. The Panama Canal plays a vital role in U.S. naval and maritime assets, all of which are absolutely essential for free world security. Today, almost 70% of the traffic through the Canal is to or from the United States. But today, 15% of the world's merchant ships cannot pass through the Canal locks, because the ships are simply too large. In order for Panama to still operate as a major global crossing, the canal needs to be enlarged – a project currently under way.

What role does China play in Panama and at the Canal? Will China build a new canal across Nicaragua? This is a fascinating chronicle of the Canal's history and of McMillan's personal involvement in Panama and the Canal.

McMillan outlines the historical and strategic importance of the canal. He also supplies fascinating details about the role of dictator Manuel Noriega and his forced removal in "Operation Just Cause." And finally, McMillan covers the transformation of Panama through over eighteen years of democracy, while looking forward to the future of one of the most important global passages in the world's economy.