

# BECOMING A WORLD POWER, 1865–1917

*We are Anglo-Saxons, and must obey our blood and occupy new markets, and, if necessary, new lands.*

Senator Albert Beveridge, April 27, 1898

*Our form of government, our traditions, our present interests, and our future welfare, all forbid our entering upon a career of conquest.*

William Jennings Bryan, December 13, 1898

Since the 1790s, U.S. foreign policy had centered on expanding westward, protecting U.S. interests abroad, and limiting foreign influences in the Americas. The period after the Civil War saw the development of a booming industrial economy, which created the basis for a major shift in U.S. relations with the rest of the world. Instead of a nation that—at least since the War of 1812—had been relatively isolated from European politics, the United States became a world power controlling territories in the Caribbean and extending across the Pacific to the Philippines. How and why did the United States acquire an overseas empire and intervene in the affairs of Cuba, Mexico, and other Latin American nations? The origins of these developments appear in the years just after the Civil War.

## **Seward, Alaska, and the French in Mexico**

A leading Republican of the 1850s and 1860s, William H. Seward of New York served as secretary of state (1861–1869) under both Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson. Seward was the most influential secretary of state since John Quincy Adams (who formulated the Monroe Doctrine in 1823). During the Civil War, Seward helped prevent Great Britain and France from entering the war on the side of the Confederacy. He led the drive to annex Midway Island in the Pacific, gained rights to build a canal in Nicaragua, and purchased the vast territory of Alaska.



Though a powerful advocate for expansion, Seward did not get all he wanted. For example, he failed to convince Congress to annex Hawaii and to purchase the Danish West Indies.

### ***The French in Mexico***

Napoleon III (nephew of the famous emperor Napoleon Bonaparte) had taken advantage of U.S. involvement in the Civil War by sending French troops to occupy Mexico. As soon as the Civil War ended in 1865, Seward invoked the Monroe Doctrine and threatened U.S. military action unless the French withdrew. Napoleon III backed down, and the French troops left Mexico.

### ***The Purchase of Alaska***

For decades, Russia and Great Britain both claimed the vast territory of Alaska. Russia finally assumed control and established a small colony for seal hunting, but the territory soon became an economic burden because of the threat of a British takeover. Seeking buyers, Russia found Seward to be an enthusiastic champion of the idea of the United States purchasing Alaska. As result of Seward's lobbying, and also in appreciation of Russian support during the Civil War, Congress in 1867 agreed to buy Alaska for \$7.2 million. However, for many years, Americans saw no value in Alaska and referred to it derisively as "Seward's Folly" or "Seward's Icebox."

### ***The "New Imperialism"***

As the United States industrialized in the late 19th century, it also intensified its foreign involvement, partly because it wanted both sources of raw materials for manufacturing and worldwide markets for its growing quantity of industrial and agricultural products. In addition, many conservatives hoped that overseas territories and adventures might offer a safety valve for unhappiness at home after the Panic of 1893. They were concerned about the growing violence of labor-management disputes and the unrest of farmers. For the most part, advocates of an expansionist policy hoped to achieve their ends by economic and diplomatic means, not by military action.

### ***International Darwinism***

Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest was applied not only to competition in business but also to competition among nations and races for military advantage, colonies, and spheres of influence. Therefore, to demonstrate strength in the international arena, expansionists wanted to acquire territories overseas. They saw this expansion as an extension of the idea of manifest destiny into the Caribbean, Central America, and the Pacific Ocean.

**Imperialism** Americans were not alone in pursuing imperialism, which meant either acquiring territory or gaining control over the political or economic



life of other countries. Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and other nations struggled to influence or possess weaker countries in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Ocean. Some in the United States believed that the nation needed to compete with the imperialistic nations for new territory or it would be reduced to a second-class power. In the United States, advocates of American expansion included missionaries, politicians, naval strategists, and journalists.

**Missionaries** In his book *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Present Crisis* (1885), the Reverend Josiah Strong wrote that people of Anglo-Saxon stock were “the fittest to survive.” He believed that Protestant Americans had a religious duty to colonize other lands in order to spread Christianity and the benefits of their “superior” civilization (medicine, science, and technology) to less fortunate peoples of the world. Many missionaries who traveled to Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands believed in the racial superiority and natural supremacy of whites. Mission activities of their churches encouraged many Americans to support active U.S. government involvement in foreign affairs.

**Politicians** Many in the Republican party were closely allied with business leaders. Republican politicians therefore generally endorsed the use of foreign affairs to search for new markets. Congressional leaders such as Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and the Republican governor of New York, Theodore Roosevelt, were eager to build U.S. power through global expansion.

**Naval Power** U.S. Navy Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote an important book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* (1890), in which he argued that a strong navy was crucial to a country’s ambitions of securing foreign markets and becoming a world power. Mahan’s book was widely read by prominent American citizens—as well as by political leaders in Europe and Japan. Using arguments in Mahan’s book, U.S. naval strategists persuaded Congress to finance the construction of modern steel ships and encouraged the acquisition of overseas islands, such as Samoa, that were desired as coaling and supply stations so that the new fleet could project its sea power around the world. By 1900, the United States had the third largest navy in the world.

**Popular Press** Newspaper and magazine editors found that they could increase circulation by printing adventure stories about distant and exotic places. Stories in the popular press increased public interest and stimulated demands for a larger U.S. role in world affairs.

### **Latin America**

Beginning with the Monroe Doctrine in the 1820s, the United States had taken a special interest in problems of the Western Hemisphere and had assumed the role of protector of Latin America from European ambitions. Benjamin Harrison’s Secretary of State James G. Blaine of Maine played a principal role in extending this tradition.



**Blaine and the Pan-American Conference (1889)** Blaine's repeated efforts to establish closer ties between the United States and its southern neighbors bore fruit in 1889 with the meeting of the first Pan-American Conference in Washington. Representatives from various nations of the Western Hemisphere decided to create a permanent organization for international cooperation on trade and other issues. Blaine had hoped to bring about reductions in tariff rates. Although this goal was not achieved, the foundation was established for the larger goal of hemispheric cooperation on both economic and political issues. The Pan-American Union continues today as part of the Organization of American States, which was established in 1948.

**Cleveland, Olney, and the Monroe Doctrine** One of the most important uses of the Monroe Doctrine in the 19th century concerned a boundary dispute between Venezuela and its neighbor—the British colony of Guiana. In 1895 and 1896, President Cleveland and Secretary of State Richard Olney insisted that Great Britain agree to arbitrate the dispute. The British initially said the matter was not the business of the United States. However, the United States argued that the Monroe Doctrine applied to the situation. If the British did not arbitrate, the United States would back up its argument with military force.

Deciding that U.S. friendship was more important to its long-term interests than a boundary dispute in South America, the British agreed to U.S. demands. As it turned out, the arbitrators ruled mainly in favor of Britain, not Venezuela. Even so, Latin American nations appreciated U.S. efforts to protect them from European domination. Most important, the Venezuela boundary dispute marked a turning point in U.S.–British relations. From 1895 on, the two countries cultivated a friendship rather than continuing their former rivalry. The friendship would prove vital for both nations in the 20th century.

## The Spanish-American War

A principal target of American imperialism was the nearby Caribbean area. Expansionists from the South had coveted Cuba as early as the 1850s. Now, in the 1890s, large American investments in Cuban sugar, Spanish misrule of Cuba, and the Monroe Doctrine all provided justification for U.S. intervention in the Caribbean's largest island.

### Causes of War

In the 1890s, American public opinion was being swept by a growing wave of *jingoism*—an intense form of nationalism calling for an aggressive foreign policy. Expansionists demanded that the United States take its place with the imperialist nations of Europe as a world power. Not everyone favored such a policy. Presidents Cleveland and McKinley were among many who thought military action abroad was both morally wrong and economically unsound. Nevertheless, specific events combined with background pressures led to overwhelming popular demand for war against Spain.



**Cuban Revolt** Cuban nationalists, after fighting but failing to overthrow Spanish colonial rule between 1868 and 1878, renewed the struggle in 1895. Through sabotage and laying waste to Cuban plantations, they hoped to either force Spain's withdrawal or pull in the United States as an ally. In response, Spain sent autocratic General Valeriano Weyler and over 100,000 troops to crush the revolt. Weyler forced civilians into armed camps, where tens of thousands died of starvation and disease, and gained him the title of "The Butcher" in the American press.

**Yellow Press** Actively promoting war fever in the United States was yellow journalism, sensationalistic reporting that featured bold and lurid headlines of crime, disaster, and scandal. Among the most sensationalistic were two New York newspapers, Joseph Pulitzer's *World* and William Randolph Hearst's *Journal*, which printed exaggerated and false accounts of Spanish atrocities in Cuba. Believing what they read daily in their newspapers, many Americans urged Congress and the president to intervene in Cuba for humanitarian reasons and put a stop to the atrocities and suffering.

**De Lôme Letter (1898)** One story that caused a storm of outrage was a Spanish diplomat's letter that was leaked to the press and printed on the front page of Hearst's *Journal*. Written by the Spanish minister to the United States, Dupuy de Lôme, the letter was highly critical of President McKinley. Many considered it an official Spanish insult against the U.S. national honor.

**Sinking of the *Maine*** Less than one week after the de Lôme letter made headlines, a far more shocking event occurred. On February 15, 1898, the U.S. battleship *Maine* was at anchor in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, when it suddenly exploded, killing 260 Americans on board. The yellow press accused Spain of deliberately blowing up the ship, even though experts later concluded that the explosion was probably an accident.

**McKinley's War Message** Following the sinking of the *Maine*, President McKinley issued an ultimatum to Spain demanding that it agree to a ceasefire in Cuba. Spain agreed to this demand, but U.S. newspapers and a majority in Congress kept clamoring for war. McKinley yielded to the public pressure in April by sending a war message to Congress. He offered four reasons for the United States to intervene in the Cuban revolution on behalf of the rebels:

1. "Put an end to the barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries" in Cuba
2. Protect the lives and property of U.S. citizens living in Cuba
3. End "the very serious injury to the commerce, trade, and business of our people"
4. End "the constant menace to our peace" arising from disorder in Cuba



**Teller Amendment** Responding to the president's message, Congress passed a joint resolution on April 20 authorizing war. Part of the resolution, the Teller Amendment, declared that the United States had no intention of taking political control of Cuba and that, once peace was restored to the island, the Cuban people would control their own government.

### ***Fighting the War***

The first shots of the Spanish-American War were fired in Manila Bay in the Philippines, thousands of miles from Cuba. The last shots were fired only a few months later in August. So swift was the U.S. victory that Secretary of State John Hay called it "a splendid little war."

**The Philippines** Theodore Roosevelt, McKinley's assistant secretary of the navy, was an expansionist who was eager to show off the power of his country's new, all-steel navy. Anticipating war and recognizing the strategic value of Spain's territories in the Pacific, Roosevelt had ordered a fleet commanded by Commodore George Dewey to the Philippines. This large group of islands had been under Spanish control ever since the 1500s.

On May 1, shortly after war was declared, Commodore Dewey's fleet fired on Spanish ships in Manila Bay. The Spanish fleet was soon pounded into submission by U.S. naval guns. The fight on land took longer. Allied with Filipino rebels, U.S. troops captured the city of Manila on August 13.

**Invasion of Cuba** More troublesome than the Philippines was the U.S. effort in Cuba. An ill-prepared, largely volunteer force landed in Cuba by the end of June. Here the most lethal enemy proved to be not Spanish bullets but tropical diseases. More than 5,000 American soldiers died of malaria, typhoid, and dysentery, while fewer than 500 died in battle.

Attacks by both American and Cuban forces succeeded in defeating the much larger but poorly led Spanish army. Next to Dewey's victory in Manila Bay, the most celebrated event of the war was a cavalry charge up San Juan Hill in Cuba by the Rough Riders, a regiment of volunteers led by Theodore Roosevelt, who had resigned his navy post to take part in the war. Roosevelt's volunteers were aided in victory by veteran regiments of African Americans. Less heroic but more important than the taking of San Juan Hill was the success of the U.S. Navy in destroying the Spanish fleet at Santiago Bay on July 3. Without a navy, Spain realized that it could not continue fighting, and in early August 1898 asked for U.S. terms of peace.

### ***Annexation of Hawaii***

Since the mid-1800s, American missionaries and entrepreneurs had settled in the Pacific islands of Hawaii. Expansionists coveted the islands and, in 1893, American settlers aided in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarch, Queen Liliuokalani. However, President Cleveland opposed imperialism and blocked Republican efforts to annex Hawaii. Then the outbreak of war in



the Philippines gave Congress and President McKinley the pretext to complete annexation in July 1898. The Hawaiian islands became a territory of the United States in 1900 and the fiftieth state in the Union in August 1959.

### ***Controversy Over the Treaty of Peace***

Far more controversial than the war itself were the terms of the treaty of peace signed in Paris on December 10, 1898. It provided for (1) recognition of Cuban independence, (2) U.S. acquisition of two Spanish islands—Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and Guam in the Pacific, and (3) U.S. acquisition of the Philippines in return for payment to Spain of \$20 million. Since the avowed purpose of the U.S. war effort was to liberate Cuba, Americans accepted this provision of the treaty. However, many were not prepared for taking over a large Pacific island nation, the Philippines, as a colony.

**The Philippine Question** Controversy over the Philippine question took many months longer to resolve than the brief war with Spain. Opinion both in Congress and the public at large became sharply divided between imperialists who favored annexing the Philippines and anti-imperialists who opposed it. In the Senate, where a two-thirds vote was required to ratify the Treaty of Paris, anti-imperialists were determined to defeat the treaty because of its provision for acquiring the Philippines. Anti-imperialists argued that, for the first time, the United States would be taking possession of a heavily populated area whose people were of a different race and culture. Such action, they thought, violated the principles of the Declaration of Independence by depriving Filipinos of the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” and also would entangle the United States in the political conflicts of Asia.

On February 6, 1899, the the Treaty of Paris (including Philippine annexation) came to a vote in Congress. The treaty was approved 57 to 27, just one vote more than the two-thirds majority required by the Constitution for ratification. The anti-imperialists fell just two votes short of defeating the treaty.

The people of the Philippines were outraged that their hopes for national independence from Spain were now being denied by the United States. Filipino nationalist leader Emilio Aguinaldo had fought alongside U.S. troops during the Spanish-American War. Now he led bands of guerrilla fighters in a war against U.S. control. It took U.S. troops three years and cost thousands of lives on both sides before the insurrection finally ended in 1902.

### ***Other Results of the War***

Imperialism remained a major issue in the United States even after ratification of the Treaty of Paris. An Anti-Imperialist League, led by William Jennings Bryan, rallied opposition to further acts of expansion in the Pacific.

**Insular Cases.** One question concerned the constitutional rights of the Philippine people: Did the Constitution follow the flag? In other words, did the provisions of the U.S. Constitution apply to whatever territories fell under



U.S. control, including the Philippines and Puerto Rico? Bryan and other anti-imperialists argued in the affirmative, while leading imperialists argued in the negative. The issue was resolved in favor of the imperialists in a series of Supreme Court cases (1901–1903) known as the insular (island) cases. The Court ruled that constitutional rights were not automatically extended to territorial possessions and that the power to decide whether or not to grant such rights belonged to Congress.

**Cuba and the Platt Amendment (1901)** Previously, the Teller Amendment to the war resolution of 1898 had guaranteed U.S. respect for Cuba's sovereignty as an independent nation. Nevertheless, U.S. troops remained in Cuba from 1898 until 1901. In the latter year, Congress made withdrawal of troops conditional upon Cuba's acceptance of terms included in an amendment to an army appropriations bill—the Platt Amendment of 1901. Bitterly resented by Cuban nationalists, the Platt Amendment required Cuba to agree (1) to never sign a treaty with a foreign power that impaired its independence, (2) to permit the United States to intervene in Cuba's affairs to preserve its independence and maintain law and order, and (3) to allow the U.S. to maintain naval bases in Cuba, including one permanent base at Guantanamo Bay.

A Cuban convention reluctantly accepted these terms, adding them to its country's new constitution. In effect, the Platt Amendment made Cuba a U.S. protectorate. As a result, Cuba's foreign policy would, for many years, be subject to U.S. oversight and control.

**Election of 1900** The Republicans renominated President McKinley, along with war hero and New York Governor Theodore Roosevelt for vice president. The Democrats, as they had in 1896, nominated William Jennings Bryan. He again argued for free silver and vigorously attacked the growth of American imperialism. However, most Americans accepted the recently enacted gold standard and saw the new territory, including the Philippines, acquired during the war as an accomplished fact. With growing national economic prosperity, the electorate gave McKinley a larger margin of victory than in 1896.

**Recognition of U.S. Power** One consequence of the Spanish-American War was its effect on the way both Americans and Europeans thought about U.S. power. The decisive U.S. victory in the war filled Americans with national pride. Southerners shared in this pride and became more attached to the Union after their bitter experience in the 1860s. At the same time, France, Great Britain, and other European nations recognized that the United States was a first-class power with a strong navy and a new willingness to take an active role in international affairs.

## Open Door Policy in China

Europeans were further impressed by U.S. involvement in global politics as a result of John Hay's policies toward China. As McKinley's secretary of state, Hay was alarmed that the Chinese empire, weakened by political corruption



and failure to modernize, was falling under the control of various outside powers. In the 1890s, Russia, Japan, Great Britain, France, and Germany had all established *spheres of influence* in China, meaning that they could dominate trade and investment within their sphere (a particular port or region of China) and shut out competitors. To prevent the United States from losing access to the lucrative China trade, Hay dispatched a diplomatic note in 1899 to nations controlling spheres of influence. He asked them to accept the concept of an Open Door, by which all nations would have equal trading privileges in China. The replies to Hay's note were evasive. However, because no nation rejected the concept, Hay declared that all had accepted the Open Door policy. The press hailed Hay's initiative as a diplomatic triumph.

**Boxer Rebellion (1900)** As the 19th century ended, nationalism and *xenophobia* (hatred and fear of foreigners) were on the rise in China. In 1900, a secret society of Chinese nationalists—the Society of Harmonious Fists, or Boxers—attacked foreign settlements and murdered dozens of Christian missionaries. To protect American lives and property, U.S. troops participated in an international force that marched into Peking (Beijing) and quickly crushed the rebellion of the Boxers. The countries forced China to pay a huge sum in indemnities, which further weakened the imperial regime.

**Hay's Second Round of Notes** Hay feared that the expeditionary force in China might attempt to occupy the country and destroy its independence. In 1900, therefore, he wrote a second note to the imperialistic powers stating U.S. commitment to (1) preserve China's territorial integrity as well as (2) safeguard "equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese empire." Hay's first and second notes set U.S. policy on China not only for the administrations of McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt but also for future presidents. In the 1930s, this Open Door policy for China would strongly influence U.S. relations with Japan.

Hay's notes in themselves did not deter other nations from exploiting the situation in China. For the moment, European powers were kept from grabbing larger pieces of China by the political rivalries among themselves.

## Theodore Roosevelt's Big-Stick Policy

In 1901, only a few months after being inaugurated president for a second time, McKinley was fatally shot by an anarchist (person who opposed all government). Succeeding him in office was the Republican vice president—the young expansionist and hero of the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt. Describing his foreign policy, the new president had once said that it was his motto to "speak softly and carry a big stick." The press therefore applied the label "big stick" to Roosevelt's aggressive foreign policy. By acting boldly and decisively in a number of situations, Roosevelt attempted to build the reputation of the U.S. as a world power. Imperialists applauded his every move, but critics disliked breaking the tradition of noninvolvement in global politics.



## ***The Panama Canal***

As a result of the Spanish-American War, the new American empire stretched from Puerto Rico in the Caribbean to the Philippines in the Pacific. As a strategic necessity for holding on to these far-flung islands, the United States desired a canal through Central America to connect the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. However, building a canal would be difficult. The French had already failed to complete a canal through the tropic jungles. And before the United States could even try, it needed to negotiate an agreement with the British to abrogate (cancel) an earlier treaty of 1850 in which any canal in Central America was to be under joint British-U.S. control. This agreement, called the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, was signed in 1901. With the British agreement to let United States build a canal alone, the young and activist President Roosevelt took charge.

**Revolution in Panama** Roosevelt was eager to begin the construction of a canal through the narrow but rugged terrain of the isthmus of Panama. He was frustrated, however, by Colombia's control of this isthmus and its refusal to agree to U.S. terms for digging the canal through its territory. Losing patience with Colombia's demands of more money and sovereignty over the canal, Roosevelt orchestrated a revolt for Panama's independence in 1903. With the support of the U.S. Navy, the rebellion succeeded immediately and almost without bloodshed. However, the new government of an independent Panama had to sign the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty of 1903 granting the United States all rights over the 51-mile-long and 10-mile-wide Canal Zone as "if it were sovereign . . . in perpetuity" to keep U.S. protection. Years later, Roosevelt boasted, "I took Canal Zone and let Congress debate."

**Building the Canal** Started in 1904, the Panama Canal was completed in 1914. Hundreds of laborers lost their lives in the effort. The work was completed thanks in great measure to the skills of two Army colonels—George Goethals, the chief engineer of the canal, and Dr. William Gorgas, whose efforts eliminated the mosquitoes that spread deadly yellow fever.

Most Americans approved of Roosevelt's determination to build the canal, but many were unhappy with his high-handed tactics to secure the Canal Zone. Latin Americans were especially resentful. To compensate, Congress finally voted in 1921 to pay Colombia an indemnity of \$25 million for its loss of Panama. In 1999, United States returned the Canal Zone to the Republic of Panama to end the growing bitterness over the original treaty (See Chapter 29).

## ***The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine***

Another application of Roosevelt's big-stick diplomacy involved Latin American nations that were in deep financial trouble and could not pay their debts to European creditors. For example, in 1902, the British dispatched warships to Venezuela to force that country to pay its debts. In 1904, it appeared that European powers stood ready to intervene in Santo Domingo (the Dominican



Republic) for the same reason. Rather than let Europeans intervene in Latin America—a blatant violation of the Monroe Doctrine—Roosevelt declared in December 1904 that the United States would intervene instead, whenever necessary. This policy became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. It meant that the United States would send gunboats to a Latin American country that was delinquent in paying its debts. U.S. sailors and marines would then occupy the country's major ports to manage the collection of customs taxes until European debts were satisfied.

Over the next 20 years, U.S. presidents used the Roosevelt Corollary to justify sending U.S. forces into Haiti, Honduras, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. One long-term result of such interventions was poor U.S. relations with the entire region of Latin America.

## **East Asia**

As the 20th century began, Japan and the United States were both relatively new imperialist powers in East Asia. Their relationship during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, though at first friendly, grew increasingly competitive.

**Russo-Japanese War** Imperialist rivalry between Russia and Japan led to war in 1904, a war Japan was winning. To end the conflict, Roosevelt arranged a diplomatic conference between the two foes at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1905. Although both Japan and Russia agreed to the Treaty of Portsmouth, Japanese nationalists blamed the United States for not giving their country all that they believed they deserved from Russia.

**“Gentlemen’s Agreement”** A major cause of friction between Japan and the United States concerned the laws of California, which discriminated against Japanese Americans. San Francisco’s practice of requiring Japanese American children to attend segregated schools was considered a national insult in Japan. In 1908, President Roosevelt arranged a compromise by means of an informal understanding, or “gentlemen’s agreement.” The Japanese government secretly agreed to restrict the emigration of Japanese workers to the United States in return for Roosevelt persuading California to repeal its discriminatory laws.

**Great White Fleet** To demonstrate U.S. naval power to Japan and other nations, Roosevelt sent a fleet of battleships on an around-the-world cruise (1907–1909). The great white ships made an impressive sight, and the Japanese government warmly welcomed their arrival in Tokyo Bay.

**Root-Takahira Agreement (1908)** An important executive agreement was concluded between the United States and Japan in 1908. Secretary of State Elihu Root and Japanese Ambassador Takahira exchanged notes pledging mutual respect for each nation’s Pacific possessions and support for the Open Door policy in China.



## **Peace Efforts**

Roosevelt saw his big-stick policies as a way to promote peaceful solutions to international disputes. For his work in settling the Russo-Japanese War, Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906. In the same year, he helped arrange and direct the Algeciras Conference in Spain, which succeeded in settling a conflict between France and Germany over claims to Morocco. The president also directed U.S. participation at the Second International Peace Conference at the Hague in 1907, which discussed rules for limiting warfare. As an expansionist, interventionist, and finally as an internationalist, Theodore Roosevelt embodied the vigor of a youthful nation arriving on world stage.

## **William Howard Taft and Dollar Diplomacy**

Roosevelt's successor, William Howard Taft (1909–1913), did not carry a big stick. He adopted a foreign policy that was mildly expansionist but depended more on investors' dollars than on the navy's battleships. His policy of promoting U.S. trade by supporting American enterprises abroad was known as *dollar diplomacy*.

### ***Dollar Diplomacy in East Asia and Latin America***

Taft believed that private American financial investment in China and Central America would lead to greater stability there, while at the same time promoting U.S. business interests. His policy, however, was thwarted by one major obstacle: growing anti-imperialism both in the United States and overseas.

**Railroads in China** Taft first tested his policy in China. Wanting U.S. bankers to be included in a British, French, and German plan to invest in railroads in China, Taft succeeded in securing American participation in an agreement signed in 1911. In the northern province of Manchuria, however, the United States was excluded from an agreement between Russia and Japan to build railroads there. In direct defiance of the U.S. Open Door policy, Russia and Japan agreed to treat Manchuria as a jointly held sphere of influence.

**Intervention in Nicaragua** To protect American investments, the United States intervened in Nicaragua's financial affairs in 1911, and sent in marines when a civil war broke out in 1912. The marines remained, except for a short period, until 1933.

### ***The Lodge Corollary***

Henry Cabot Lodge, a Republican senator from Massachusetts, was responsible for another action that alienated both Latin America and Japan. A group of Japanese investors wanted to buy a large part of Mexico's Baja Peninsula, extending south of California. Fearing that Japan's government might be secretly scheming to acquire the land, Lodge introduced and the Senate in 1912 passed a resolution known as the Lodge Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. The resolution stated that non-European powers (such as Japan) would be excluded from owning territory in the Western Hemisphere. President Taft opposed the corollary, which also offended Japan and angered Latin American countries.



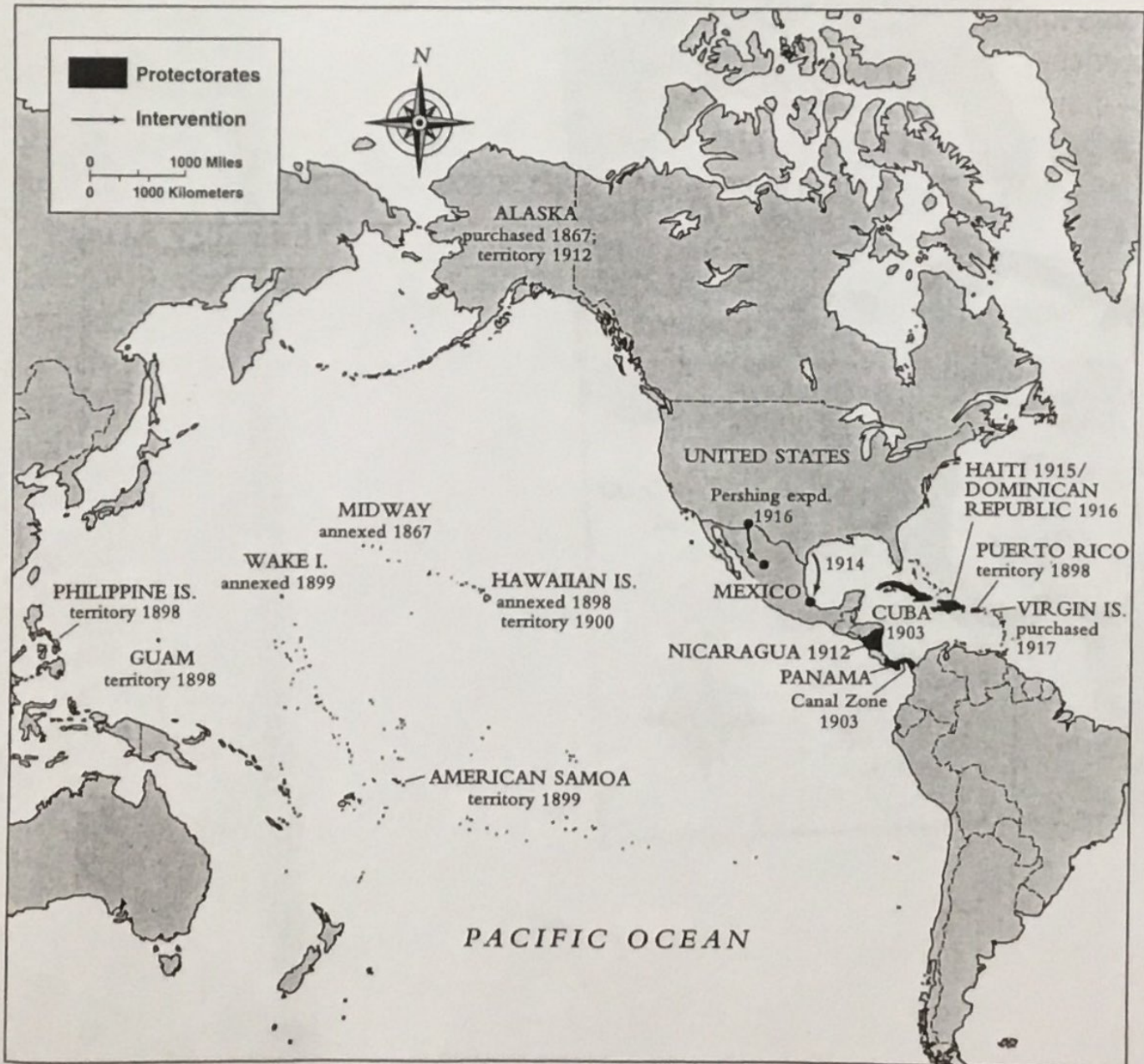
## Woodrow Wilson and Foreign Affairs

In his campaign for president in 1912, the Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson called for a *New Freedom* in government and promised a moral approach to foreign affairs. Wilson said he opposed imperialism and the big-stick and dollar-diplomacy policies of his Republican predecessors.

### *Wilson's Moral Diplomacy*

In his first term as president (1913–1917), Wilson had limited success applying a high moral standard to foreign relations. He and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan hoped to demonstrate that the United States respected other nations' rights and would support the spread of democracy. Hoping to demonstrate that his presidency was opposed to self-interested imperialism, Wilson took steps to correct what he viewed as wrongful policies of the past.

U.S. TERRITORIES AND PROTECTORATES, 1917





**The Philippines** Wilson won passage of the Jones Act of 1916, which (1) granted full territorial status to that country, (2) guaranteed a bill of rights and universal male suffrage to Filipino citizens, and (3) promised independence for the Philippines as soon as a stable government was established.

**Puerto Rico** An act of Congress in 1917 granted U.S. citizenship to all the inhabitants and also provided for limited self-government.

**The Panama Canal** Wilson persuaded Congress in 1914 to repeal an act that had granted U.S. ships an exemption from paying the standard canal tolls charged other nations. Wilson's policy on Panama Canal tolls angered American nationalists such as Roosevelt and Lodge but pleased the British, who had strongly objected to the U.S. exemption.

**Conciliation Treaties** Wilson's commitment to the ideals of democracy and peace was fully shared by his famous secretary of state, William Jennings Bryan. Bryan's pet project was to negotiate treaties in which nations pledged to (1) submit disputes to international commissions and (2) observe a one-year cooling-off period before taking military action. Bryan arranged, with Wilson's approval, 30 such conciliation treaties.

U.S. INTERVENTION IN THE CARIBBEAN, 1898 TO 1917





## ***Military Intervention Under Wilson***

Wilson's commitment to democracy and anticolonialism had a blind spot with respect to the Mexico and countries of Central America and the Caribbean. He went far beyond both Roosevelt and Taft in his use of U.S. marines to straighten out financial and political troubles in the region. He kept marines in Nicaragua and ordered U.S. troops into Haiti in 1915 and the Dominican Republic in 1916. He argued that such intervention was necessary to maintain stability in the region and protect the Panama Canal.

Wilson's moral approach to foreign affairs was severely tested by a revolution and civil war in Mexico. As a supporter of democracy, Wilson refused to recognize the military dictatorship of General Victoriano Huerta, who had seized power in 1913 by having the democratically elected president killed.

**Tampico Incident** To aid revolutionaries fighting Huerta, Wilson called for an arms embargo against the Mexican government and sent a fleet to blockade the port of Vera Cruz. In 1914, several U.S. sailors went ashore at Tampico where they were arrested by Mexican authorities. They were soon released. However, Huerta refused to apologize, as demanded by a U.S. naval officer. Wilson retaliated by ordering the U.S. Navy to occupy Veracruz. War seemed imminent. It was averted, however, when South America's ABC powers—Argentina, Brazil, and Chile—offered to mediate the dispute. This was the first dispute in the Americas to be settled through joint mediation.

**Pancho Villa and the U.S. Expeditionary Force** Huerta fell from power in late 1914. Replacing him was a more democratic regime led by Venustiano Carranza. Almost immediately, the new government was challenged by a band of rebels loyal to Pancho Villa. Hoping to destabilize his opponent's government, Villa led raids across the U.S.–Mexican border and murdered several people in Texas and New Mexico. In March 1916, President Wilson ordered General John J. Pershing and an "expeditionary force" to pursue Villa into northern Mexico. They failed to capture Villa. President Carranza protested the American presence in Mexico. In January 1917, the growing possibility of U.S. entry into World War I caused Wilson to withdraw Pershing's troops.



## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: DID ECONOMICS DRIVE IMPERIALISM?

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For most of the 20th century, historians writing on U.S. emergence as a world power stressed economic motives as the principal reason for the imperialism. Whether explaining the Spanish-American War or later actions, historians such as William Appelmann Williams and Walter La Feber focused on U.S. desires for overseas markets, raw materials, and investments.

Some historians have challenged this economic explanation of U.S. imperialism. In the Spanish-American War, historians note that business interests initially opposed U.S. intervention in Cuba because they feared that it would disrupt commerce. Only later did bankers and manufacturers support the war as a stabilizing influence. The change in view may have occurred only after war had started.

Other critics of the economic interpretation of imperialism stress the importance of noneconomic motives. Influenced by shocking stories in the yellow press, Americans public opinion seemed to express genuine humanitarian impulses—and also nationalistic outrage over the sinking of the *Maine*. Other historians, studying the motives of nationalist leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, have concluded that their chief interest was in establishing U.S. power on the world stage. In securing U.S. control of the Philippines, Roosevelt's role was crucial, and he was motivated by strategic considerations (establishing a naval base in the Pacific), not by economics. In response, those stressing economic motives argue that, even if Roosevelt had not ordered Dewey to Manila Bay, the Philippines would soon have become a target of U.S. ambitions.

Other historians believe that a new generation of foreign-policy makers had come to power around 1900. These talented leaders—chiefly Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson—were critical of the mediocre leadership in Washington in the post-Civil War years and were eager to take bold new directions. Historians taking this view portray Theodore Roosevelt as a realist who saw diplomacy as a question of balance-of-power politics, as opposed to the idealist, Woodrow Wilson, who approached foreign policy as a matter of morals and legality.

Historian Richard Hofstadter interpreted the Spanish-American War from the perspective of social psychology. He argued that the popular support for war resulted from a psychic crisis in the nation. In Hofstadter's view, the American people were expressing aggression built up by economic depressions, the closing of the frontier, the rise of big business, and fears of labor radicalism.



## KEY TERMS BY THEME

### Overseas Involvement (WOR)

William Seward  
 Monroe Doctrine  
 French in Mexico  
 Alaska purchase (1867)  
 Pan-American Conference (1889)  
 James Blaine  
 Venezuela boundary dispute  
 Cleveland and Olney  
 Hawaii  
 Pearl Harbor  
 Queen Liliuokalani  
 Cleveland blocks annexation

### Causes of U.S. Imperialism (WOR, NAT)

international Darwinism  
 business and imperialist competitors  
 spreading religion and science  
 Josiah Strong  
 expansionist politicians  
 steel and steam navy  
 Alfred Thayer Mahan  
 nationalist media

### Spanish-American War, (WOR, POL)

Cuban revolt  
 Valeriano Weyler  
 "jingoism"  
 "yellow journalism"  
 De Lôme Letter  
 sinking of the *Maine*  
 Teller Amendment  
 "a splendid little war"  
 invade the Philippines

George Dewey  
 Rough Riders  
 Theodore Roosevelt  
 Treaty of Paris: Puerto Rico  
 Guam and Philippines annexation dispute  
 Emilio Aguinaldo  
 Anti-Imperialist League  
 Insular cases  
 Platt Amendment (1901)

### China Policy (WOR)

spheres of influence  
 John Hay  
 Open Door policy  
 Boxer Rebellion  
 U.S. joined international force  
 Second Hay Note

### TR Policies (WOR)

"big-stick policy"  
 TR supports Panama revolt  
 Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty (1903)  
 building the Panama Canal  
 George Goethals  
 William Gorgas  
 Roosevelt Corollary  
 Santo Domingo  
 Russo-Japanese War  
 Treaty of Portsmouth (1905)

Noble Peace Prize (1906)  
 segregation in San Francisco schools  
 gentlemen's agreement  
 Great White Fleet  
 Algeciras Conference (1906)  
 Hague Conference (1907)  
 Root-Takahira Agreement (1908)

### Dollar Diplomacy (WOR, WXT)

William Howard Taft  
 role of American money  
 railroads in China  
 Manchurian problem  
 intervention in Nicaragua  
 Henry Cabot Lodge  
 Lodge Corollary

### Moral Diplomacy (WOR)

Woodrow Wilson  
 anti-imperialism  
 William Jennings Bryan  
 Jones Act (1916)  
 Puerto Rico citizenship  
 Conciliation treaties  
 military intervention  
 Mexican civil war  
 General Huerta  
 Tampico incident  
 ABC powers  
 Pancho Villa  
 expeditionary force  
 John J. Pershing