

# 11A: IMPERIALISM

## ESSENTIAL TERMS



### KEY CONCEPTS

**American Exceptionalism:** The idea that the United States is unique in the world, usually in the sense that the United States is better than all other nations due to our history and form of government.

**City Upon a Hill:** An image borrowed from the Bible by Puritan minister John Winthrop to describe the United States as a model society that the rest of the world should look up to as an example.

**Social Darwinism:** The idea that people, businesses and nations operate by Charles Darwin's survival of the fittest principle. That is, successful nations are successful because they are inherently better than others. At the turn of the century, White culture was seen as superior to others because Europeans and the United States were imperial nations and had defeated the people of their colonies.

**White Man's Burden:** The idea that White Americans and Europeans had an obligation to teach the people of the rest of the world how to be civilized.

**Spheres of Influence:** Nickname for the regions of China that were controlled by the various European nations. Within these zones, only one European power was permitted to carry out trade.

**Banana Republic:** A small nation dominated by foreign businesses. This nickname was used especially for Central American nations dominated by fruit growers based in the United States.



### LOCATIONS

**Pearl Harbor:** Naval base on Oahu in Hawaii. The United States annexed Hawaii in part to gain control over this important coaling station.

**Cuba:** Island nation just south of Florida that was a Spanish colony until the United States secured its independence in the Spanish-American War.

**Philippines:** Island nation in Asia won by the United States from Spain in the Spanish-American War. It was granted independence in 1946.

**Panama Canal:** Canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It was an important success of President Theodore Roosevelt.



### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**Alfred T. Mahan:** Author of the book "The Influence of Seapower upon History."

**American Anti-Imperialist League:** Organization of Americans opposed to imperialism.

**Rough Riders:** Nickname for Theodore Roosevelt's cavalry regiment in Cuba during the Spanish-American War.

**Smoked Yankees:** Nickname for African-American troops during the Spanish-American War.

**William Howard Taft:** American governor of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War and later president of the United States.

**Mark Twain:** American author of such books as Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn and famous anti-imperialist.

**John Hay:** American Secretary of State who introduced the Open Door Policy.



### EVENTS

**Annexation of Hawaii:** June 14, 1900 resolution by Congress that made Hawaii a territory of the United States.

**Explosion of the USS Maine:** Event that caused the United States to declare war on Spain in 1898.

**Spanish-American War:** 1898 conflict with Spain in which the United States won control of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, and also won independence for Cuba.

**Philippine-American War:** Conflict between the American army and Philippine independence fighters after the Spanish-American War.

**Boxer Rebellion:** 1899-1901 conflict between Chinese nationalists and Europeans, Japanese and Americans over control of China.

**Great White Fleet:** American fleet of battleships that sailed around the world between 1907 and 1909 to demonstrate American military might.



### BOOKS

**The Influence of Seapower upon History:** Book by Alfred T. Mahan in which he argued that great nations have colonies and navies to protect trade with those colonies. This book inspired Theodore Roosevelt and led to the acquisition of overseas colonies such as Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam and Samoa.



### TREATIES, POLICIES & LAWS

**Teller Amendment:** Amendment to the declaration of war against Spain in 1898 that stated that the United States would not annex Cuba.

**Treaty of Paris of 1898:** Treaty that ended the Spanish-American War and granted the United States control of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

**Platt Amendment:** Law passed in 1903 in which the United States claimed the right to intervene in Cuban affairs, to maintain a naval base at Guantanamo, and limited the freedom of Cuba to make treaties without American consent.

**Open Door Policy:** American policy at the turn of the century that stated that all of China would be open to trade, essentially ignoring the European spheres of influence.

**Big Stick Diplomacy:** Theodore Roosevelt's approach to foreign policy. He emphasized the threat of military force as a way to force other nations to accept American positions.

**Roosevelt Corollary:** Theodore Roosevelt's addition to the Monroe Doctrine in which he stated that the United States would act as policeman for the Americas.

**Dollar Diplomacy:** President Taft's approach to foreign policy. He emphasized the use of American financial power rather than the threat of military force.

**Moral Diplomacy:** President Wilson's approach to foreign policy. He emphasized the use of American power to promote democracy and self-rule.