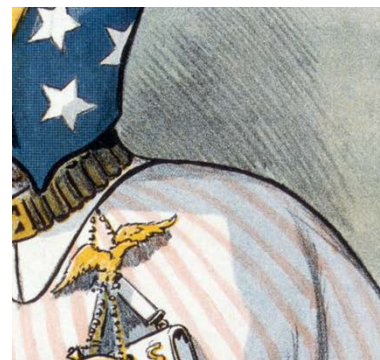
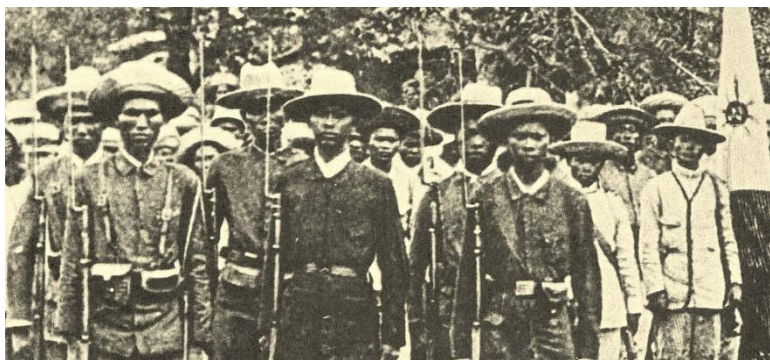




Did the IMPERIALIST ERA  
**EXPAND** or **BETRAY**  
America's **FOUNDING IDEALS?**



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# QUESTION ELEVEN, PART ONE

Did the IMPERIALIST ERA

EXPAND or BETRAY

America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

EXPLORING AMERICA'S HISTORY THROUGH COMPELLING QUESTIONS

## SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?
- 2 DID AMERICA DESERVE THE OUTCOMES OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN AND PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WARS?
- 3 HOW SHOULD AMERICA PROJECT ITS POWER AROUND THE WORLD?

DEVELOPED AND COMPILED BY  
JONATHAN LOOMIS

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## QUESTION ELEVEN , PART ONE

# Did the IMPERIALIST ERA EXPAND or BETRAY

## America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

Since the early days of Jamestown colony, Americans stretching their boundaries to encompass more territory. When the United States was founded in 1776, the practice continued. The 1800s were spent defining the nation's borders through negotiation and war and as the 20th Century dawned, many believed that the expansion should continue.

Different groups pushed for overseas expansion. Industrialists sought new markets for their products and sources for cheaper resources. Nationalists claimed that colonies were a hallmark of national prestige. The European powers had already claimed much of the globe. America would have to compete or perish. Missionaries continually preached to spread their messages of faith. Social Darwinists such as Josiah Strong believed that American civilization was superior to others and that it was an American's duty to diffuse its benefits. Alfred Mahan wrote an influential thesis declaring that throughout history, those that controlled the seas controlled the world. Acquiring naval bases at strategic points around the world was imperative.

Before 1890, American lands consisted of little more than the contiguous states and Alaska. By 1920, America could boast a global empire. American Samoa and Hawaii were added in the 1890s by force. The Spanish-American War brought Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines under the American flag. Through negotiation and intimidation, the United States secured the rights to build and operate an canal in Panama.

The country legitimately call itself an empire. But the transition was not without its critics. The American Anti-Imperialist League argued that the conquest of foreign lands betrayed America's founding ideas. How could a nation founded on liberty, conquer distant nations such as the Philippines, deny the Filipinos the rights accorded to Americans, and still claim to carry to be a model of enlightened freedom for the world to follow? If the Americans could rise up against a king in 1776, why shouldn't the Filipinos be equally justified in their rebellion against American rule?

To advocates for imperialism, the answer was clear. America, as a leader among nations, had an obligation to spread the message of freedom and democracy. Although the cost may be high, less developed, and less civilized nations needed the United States and the European powers to

show the way. In the eyes of the imperialists, foreign intervention was a way to spread the ideals of the Founding Fathers. Imperialism was a positive good, not a betrayal.

What do you think? Did the Imperialist Era expand or betray America's founding ideals?



# 1

## F I R S T Q U E S T I O N DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

Did the IMPERIALIST ERA  
**EXPAND** or **BETRAY**  
America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

### INTRODUCTION

Historian Paul Kennedy has called the emergence of the United States as a player on world stage the most decisive change in late 19th Century. America saw herself as exceptional and felt justified in projecting influence beyond her borders. Americans still intended to avoid “entangling alliances” that George Washington had warned against but felt free to be more actively involved in the affairs of the world.

America had always been driven by the idea of manifest destiny, which was at first at first meant expansion over the whole continent of North America. With the ending of the frontier and the completion of the settlement from sea to shining sea, however, the impulse for further expansion spilled out over America’s borders. American isolationism began to change late in the century for a variety of reasons.

First, the industrial revolution had created challenges that required a broad reassessment of economic policies and conduct. The production of greater quantities of goods, the need for additional sources of raw materials and greater markets all called for American to look outward.

But did this have to happen? It’s true that money is a powerful motivator and American business leaders naturally wanted places to sell their products and find raw materials, but the same is true today and we do not need to invade China to buy and sell with the Chinese. Couldn’t the same have been true 120 years ago?

What do you think? Did America need to be an imperial nation?

# 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

## AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

**American Exceptionalism** is the theory that the United States is inherently different from other nations. In this view, American exceptionalism stems from its emergence from the American Revolution, becoming what political scientist Seymour Martin Lipset called "the first new nation" and developing a uniquely American ideology based on liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, and the rule of We the People. Although the term American Exceptionalism does not necessarily imply superiority, many Americans come to see the United States as exceptional and therefore better than those other countries who are not exceptional. To them, the United States is the **City upon a Hill**, a shining example for other nations.

During the late 1800s, industrialization caused American businessmen to seek new international markets in which to sell their goods. Additionally, the increasing influence of **Social Darwinism** led to the belief that the United States was inherently responsible for bringing concepts such as industry, democracy, and Christianity to less developed savage societies. The combination of these attitudes and other factors led the United States toward imperialism.

Pinpointing the actual beginning of American imperialism is difficult. Some historians suggest that it began with the writing of the Constitution. Historian Donald Meinig argues that the imperial behavior of the United States dates back to at least the Louisiana Purchase. He describes this event as an, "aggressive encroachment of one people upon the territory of another, resulting in the subjugation of that people to alien rule." Here, he is referring to policies toward Native Americans, which he said were, "designed to remold them into a people more appropriately conformed to imperial desires."

Whatever its origins, American imperialism experienced its pinnacle from the late 1800s through the years following World War II. During this Age of Imperialism, the United States exerted political, social, and economic control over countries such as Hawaii, Russia, the islands of Micronesia, the Philippines, Cuba, Spain, Germany, Japan and Korea.

## ALASKA

America's first real foray into acquiring territory outside of what we now call **the contiguous United States** was Alaska. Often overlooked, the purchase of Alaska from Russia marks the opening of America's Imperialist Era.

Russia owned the territory of Alaska and had ventured down the western coast of North America as far as Northern California, where they built Fort Ross, a mere two hour's drive north of San Francisco. Anticipating, however, that holding on to a distant territory on a different continent might be difficult and unprofitable, the Russians were in the mood to get



**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.



**Contiguous United States:** The 48 states that touch. In other words, all the states except Alaska and Hawaii.



**Seward's Folly:** A nickname for the purchase of Alaska, alluding to the idea that it was a mistake.



## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

rid of the territory and sent a German negotiator to meet with the United States. In 1867, Secretary of State William Seward purchased Alaska for \$7.2 million, a venture which critics referred to as **Seward's Folly**.

Only if gold were found, newspaper editors decried at the time, would the secretive purchase be justified. That is exactly what happened. Seward's purchase added an enormous territory to the country, nearly 600,000 square miles, and gave the United States access to the rich mineral resources of the region, including the gold that triggered the Klondike Gold Rush at the close of the century and later vast reserves of oil. As was the case elsewhere in the American borderlands, Alaska's industrial development wreaked havoc on the region's indigenous and Russian cultures.



Primary Source: Photograph

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline now carries millions of barrels of crude oil from wells in along the Arctic coast to ports in the South where it is loaded onto tanker ships and carried to refineries in California and elsewhere. This discovery of gold and oil have made Seward's purchase of Alaska from Russia appear to be one of the wisest and best deals America ever concluded.

### ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM

While the United States slowly pushed outward and sought to absorb the lands in the American West and the indigenous cultures that lived there, the country was also changing how it functioned. As a new industrial United States emerged in the 1870s, economic interests began to lead the country toward a more expansionist foreign policy. By forging new and stronger ties overseas, the United States could gain access to international markets for export, as well as better deals on the raw materials needed domestically.

The concerns raised by the economic depression of the early 1890s further convinced business owners that they needed to tap into new markets, even at the risk of foreign entanglements. Because of these growing economic pressures, American exports to other nations skyrocketed in the years following the Civil War, from \$234 million in 1865 to \$605 million in 1875.

## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

By 1898, on the eve of the new century, American exports had reached a height of \$1.3 billion annually. Imports over the same period also increased substantially, from \$238 million in 1865 to \$616 million in 1898. Such an increased investment in overseas markets in turn strengthened Americans' interest in foreign affairs.

At a time when business leaders such as Carnegie and Rockefeller had tremendous influence over political decisions, it is no surprise that politicians bent to the will of business.

### RELIGIOUS IMPERIALISM

Businesses were not the only ones seeking to expand. Religious leaders and Progressive reformers joined businesses in the growing interest in American expansion, as both sought to increase the democratic and Christian influences of the United States abroad. Editors of magazines such as Harper's Weekly supported an imperialistic stance as the democratic responsibility of the United States. Several Protestant faiths formed missionary societies in the years after the Civil War, seeking to expand their reach, particularly in Asia. Missionaries conflated Christian teaching with American virtues, and began to spread both gospels with zeal. This was particularly true among women missionaries, who composed over 60% of the overall missionary force. By 1870, missionaries abroad spent as much time advocating for the American version of a modern civilization as they did teaching the Bible.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

Uncle Sam and John Bull, representing the United States and Great Britain, carry the people of their respective colonies toward civilization over rocks labeled "ignorance," "oppression" and "superstition." It is hard to image and more clear visualization of the racist idea of the White Man's Burden.

### THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

"The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands", an 1899 poem by the British poet Rudyard Kipling, invites the United States to

## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

assume colonial control of that country.

In the poem, Kipling, the acclaimed author of such classics as *The Jungle Book*, exhorts the reader to embark upon the enterprise of empire, yet gives somber warning about the costs involved nonetheless. Perhaps serious or perhaps satire, the poem describes the virtues of spreading Western Protestant Christian culture despite the financial and military costs incurred by the imperialist power. This, according to Kipling was the **White Man's Burden** – that being superior implied the burden of teaching less civilized people. Clearly, it was a racist idea, but one held by many Europeans and Americans at the time.

### EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM

Furthermore, even if Americans had reservations about expansionist, as many did, their doubts were often tempered by the fact that everybody seemed to be doing it. The late-1800s were a time of colonialism, when the European powers seemed bent on gobbling up all the underdeveloped areas of the world and turning them into colonies for military, commercial or political purposes. Europeans had divided Africa amongst themselves, without the consent of anyone in Africa. They were expanding into China. It was said that the sun never set on the British Empire since Britain controlled territory on every continent around the world.

Surely if the Europeans were doing it, many Americans figured, America could conquer foreign lands as well. Besides, if Britain, Italy, Germany or France got there first, Americans might be cut off from access to lucrative markets.

### SEA POWER

Perhaps no one did more to promote the idea of empire than **Alfred T. Mahan**. Mahan was a former navy man and historian and in his 1890 book, **The Influence of Seapower upon History**, he suggested three strategies that would assist the United States in both constructing and maintaining an empire.

First, noting the sad state of the United States navy, he called for the government to build a stronger, more powerful version. Only a strong navy, he argued could protect American merchant ships as they plied the world's oceans expanding American trade.

Second, he suggested establishing a network of naval bases to fuel this expanding fleet. This was vital, as the limited reach of steamships and their dependence on coal made naval coaling stations imperative for increasing the navy's geographic reach.

Finally, Mahan urged the future construction of a canal across the isthmus of Central America, which would decrease by two-thirds the time and power required to move the new navy from the Pacific to the Atlantic



**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.



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



**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.

## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

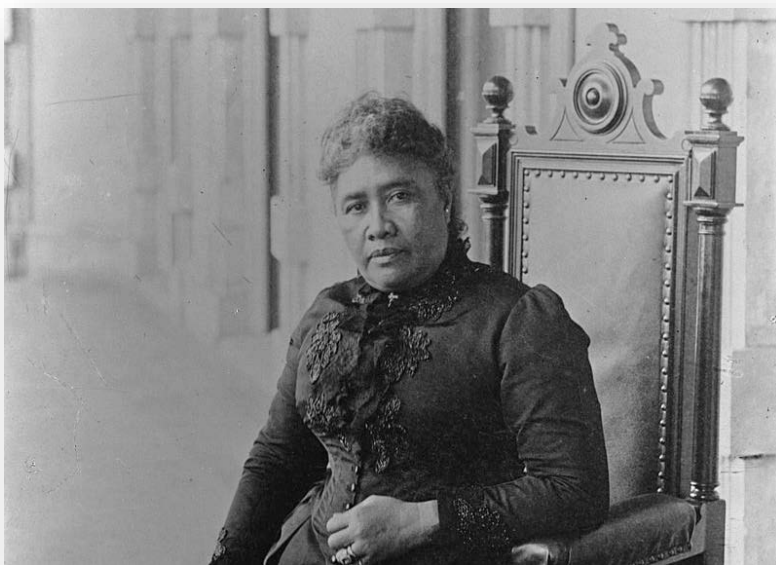
oceans.

Overall, Mahan made a strong case for his thesis: great nations controlled distant territory to enrich the mother country and had strong navies to protect trade.

Heeding Mahan's advice, the government moved quickly, passing the Naval Act of 1890, which set production levels for a new, modern fleet. By 1898, the government had succeeded in increasing the size of the navy to an active fleet of 160 vessels, of which 114 were newly built of steel. In addition, the fleet now included six battleships, compared to zero in the previous decade. As a naval power, the country catapulted to the third strongest in world rankings by military experts, trailing only Spain and Great Britain.

### HAWAII

American interest in the Hawaiian Islands goes back to post-revolutionary days when American traders first started traversing the Pacific. Hawaii was a convenient stopping-off place for ships bound for China and Japan. American missionaries arrived in the islands in the early 19th Century. The scenery, climate and valuable crops like sugar and fruits attracted the attention of investors. In 1842, Secretary of State Daniel Webster recognized the importance of Hawaii for the United States. Native Hawaiians wanted to resist foreign intervention and saw the Americans as an ally in that effort. Although the United States made no move to annex or otherwise control Hawaii, American policy consistently sought to keep other nations from extending their influence over the islands.



**Primary Source: Photograph**

Queen Liliuokalani, who gave up her throne peacefully rather than see bloodshed and then lobbied unsuccessfully for the United States to intervene to correct the injustice.



## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

In 1875, the United States signed a reciprocity trade treaty with Hawaii that admitted Hawaiian sugar to the United States duty free. Under the terms of the treaty, no Hawaiian territory was to be disposed of to a third party. The Reciprocity Treaty was renewed in 1884, and in 1887, rights to a fortified naval base at **Pearl Harbor** were added to the agreement. Later that year a revolution of White, mostly American, planters forced Hawaiian King Kalakaua to create a constitutional government, which was dominated by minority White Americans. By 1890, American planters controlled two-thirds of the land in Hawaii.

The McKinley Tariff of 1890 ended the favorable sugar trade situation for Hawaii, resulting in large losses for American planters. Americans also lost power when **Queen Liliuokalani**, a strong Hawaiian nationalist, acceded to the throne in 1891 following the deaths of her brother, King Kalakaua. An educated woman, she claimed that “Hawaii is for the Hawaiians!” and opposed political reforms. In 1893, a Sanford Dole, the son of an American missionary, formed a Committee of Safety to overthrow the native government. American Minister to Hawaii John L. Stevens violated international law by improperly ordering American Marines ashore from a warship, threatening the government. Dole became president of a new provisional government.



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



**Queen Liliuokalani:** Last queen of the independent Kingdom of Hawaii.



Primary Source: Photograph

US Marines in Honolulu helping to enforce the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. The action was clearly a violation of international law and was reversed by the US government, but the damage had already been done.

An annexation treaty was hastily sent to Washington and then submitted to the Senate by President Harrison, but, recognizing the obvious illegality of the overthrow, Democrats in the Senate blocked it. When President Cleveland took office in March 1889, he withdrew the treaty and ordered an investigation. Cleveland sent former congressman James Blount to Hawaii. Blount reported wrongdoing against Queen Liliuokalani, and President Cleveland tried to have her restored to her throne. However, the

## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

provisional government refused to step down and Cleveland was unwilling to use force in the matter.

Despite opposition, annexing Hawaii fit well into Mahan's plan for American expansion. The naval station at Pearl Harbor provided a critical stopping point in the middle of the Pacific and Hawaii's plantations were the source of valuable agricultural products.

President McKinley negotiated a new annexation treaty, but it was blocked by anti-imperialists in the Senate, failing to get the necessary 2/3 vote. **Congress then annexed Hawaii** by a joint resolution of Congress, which required only a simple majority. President McKinley approved the resolution on July 7, and Hawaii became a United States territory on June 14, 1900.



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

### THE PACIFIC

Hawaii was not the only Pacific Island to receive American attention. The United States also expanded its influences, most notably Samoa. The United States had similar strategic interests in the Samoan Islands as they did in Hawaii, most notably, access to the naval refueling station at Pago Pago where American merchant vessels as well as naval ships could take on food, fuel, and supplies.

Germany in particular showed a great commercial interest in the Samoan Islands, especially on the island of Upolu, where German firms monopolized copra and cocoa bean processing. Britain also sent troops to protect British business enterprise and access to Samoa's harbors.

An eight-year civil war broke out, during which each of the three powers supplied arms, training and in some cases combat troops to the warring Samoan parties. The Samoan crisis came to a critical juncture in March 1889 when all three colonial contenders sent warships into Apia Harbor, and a larger-scale war seemed imminent. A massive storm damaged or destroyed the warships, ending the military conflict and giving the great powers a chance to find a diplomatic solution to their competing claims for Samoa.

The United States, Great Britain and Germany divided the island chain. The eastern island group was given to the United States and became **American Samoa**. The western islands, by far the greater landmass, became German Samoa. The United Kingdom gave up all its claims in Samoa and in return, Germany surrendered its claims to Tonga and the Solomon Islands.



**American Samoa:** Island group in the Pacific annexed by the United States. It was divided with Germany and remains an American territory.

After World War I German Samoa was granted independence, but American Samoa remains a territory of the United States.

### OPPOSITION TO IMPERIALISM

Not everyone in the nation was happy with America's new possessions.



## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

The Platform of the Anti-imperialist League of October 17, 1899, opened as follows:

“We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism, an evil from which it has been our glory to be free. We regret that it has become necessary in the land of Washington and Lincoln to reaffirm that all men, of whatever race or color, are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We maintain that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We insist that the subjugation of any people is ‘criminal aggression’ and open disloyalty to the distinctive principles of our Government.”

The moral costs of creating an empire were not lost on many Americans. The **American Anti-Imperialist League** was an organization established in the United States on June 15, 1898, to battle the American annexation of the Philippines. The League also argued that America’s war with Spain in 1898 was a war of imperialism under the guise of a war of liberation.



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

The anti-imperialists opposed expansion because they believed imperialism violated the credo of republicanism, especially the need for “consent of the governed.” They did not oppose expansion on commercial, constitutional, religious, or humanitarian grounds, rather, they believed that the annexation and administration of third-world tropical areas would mean the abandonment of American ideals of self-government and isolation—ideals expressed in the United States Declaration of Independence.

The Anti-Imperialist League represented an older generation and was rooted in an earlier era. In the end, they lost their campaign to win over public opinion and in the 1900 election President McKinley and imperialists in Congress won by wide margins.

### CONCLUSION

America became an imperial nation for many reasons. There were business interests, military interests, racist cultural interests, and sometimes simply the motivation of not losing out to European rivals. However, did this have to happen? American business relationships thrive today with nations that are fully independent. Americans maintain friendly relationships with governments who welcome American military personnel and host our military bases on their soil. American culture has been widely adopted in many places. In fact, it is hard to find a place on earth where one cannot buy Coca-Cola.

Certainly the present is an argument that the Imperialist Era was a mistake – a time when Americans succumbed to our most racist, greedy tendencies that were contrary to our founding ideals.

What do you think? Did America have to be an imperial nation?

## 1 DID AMERICA NEED TO BE AN IMPERIAL NATION?

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### SUMMARY

Americans have believed for a long time that we are exceptional in the world. This idea has led American leaders to involve ourselves in other countries. Sometimes we think we can fix problems or can teach other people the best way to live or run their government. This idea might go as far back as the Pilgrims who believed that their success as a colony in the 1600s was because they had a special covenant with God.

The most common reason Americans took control of distant lands was to make money. Sometimes they were looking for raw materials. Sometimes they wanted to have access to markets with people who would buy American-made goods.

Sometimes imperialism was motivated by religion. Christian missionaries in the United States travelled abroad to spread their beliefs. Usually they looked down on the beliefs and traditions of the people they met. Hawaii is one example where this was true.

Other Americans (and Europeans) believed that their culture was superior to all others, and it was their responsibility to share their way of life with the lesser people of the world. This idea was nicknamed the White Man's Burden. Clearly, it is based on racism.

An important reason politicians became interested in taking control of territory was to provide ports for the navy to stop and refuel their ships. The author Alfred Mahan argued that great nations need colonies and navies to protect trade. Theodore Roosevelt believed in this idea. Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines all had good harbors.

The United States began taking control of territory outside of the contiguous 48 states in 1867 when we purchased Alaska. Later in the 1890s we took control of more territory by annexing Hawaii and Samoa. The European nations also were involved in imperialism at this time in both Asian and Africa.

Not all Americans liked imperialism. Some believed it was bad to take land that belonged to other people. Some thought it was too expensive. Still others did not like the thought of foreign people moving to the United States after their homes became American territories.



### 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.



### LOCATIONS

**Contiguous United States:** The 48 states that touch. In other words, all the states except Alaska and Hawaii.

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

**American Samoa:** Island group in the Pacific annexed by the United States. It was divided with Germany and remains an American territory.



### 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.



### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

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

**Queen Liliuokalani:** Last queen of the independent Kingdom of Hawaii.

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



### EVENTS

**Seward's Folly:** A nickname for the purchase of Alaska, alluding to the idea that it was a mistake.

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



# 2

## S E C O N D Q U E S T I O N DID AMERICA DESERVE THE OUTCOME OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN AND PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WARS?

Did the IMPERIALIST ERA  
EXPAND or BETRAY  
America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

### INTRODUCTION

In 1898, the United States fought a war with Spain. It was a “splendid little war” as one politician called it. Few Americans died. The army and navy proved themselves in battle and America won significant territory. In short, it was a smashing success.

Afterward, the United States found itself engaged in a long, ugly, bloody war to try to impose its authority in the Philippines over a determined Filipino independence movement.

While the Spanish-American War was an unqualified victory, the Philippine-American War proved to be a cautionary tale of the challenges of empire building.

Did the United States deserve the spoils of its victory over the Spanish? Did we deserve the trouble we had in the Philippines?

In short, did we deserve the outcomes of these two wars?

## CUBA

America's relationship with **Cuba** long predated the Imperialist Era. Even before the Civil War, southern planters had considered annexing Cuba as a way of adding to another slave state to the Union. In the end, this scheme failed, and Cuba remained a Spanish colony, but the island so close to Florida remained a particular interest of many Americans.

Cubans were not particularly excited about the idea of being annexed by the United States, but by the late 1800s, they were certainly not interested in remaining a part of the Spanish empire. Most other nations in Central and South America had long before become independent.

Revolts against Spanish rule were becoming common. With the abolition of slavery in 1886, former slaves joined the ranks of farmers and the urban working class in agitating for change. Many wealthy Cubans lost their property, and the number of sugar mills declined. Only companies and the most powerful plantation owners remained in business, and during this period, American money began flowing into the country as American investors bought up struggling plantations. Although it remained Spanish territory politically, Cuba started to depend on the United States economically.

In 1881, the Cuban revolutionary leader **José Martí** moved to the United States to escape Spanish authorities. There he mobilized the support of the Cuban exile community, especially in southern Florida. He aimed for a revolution and independence from Spain, but also lobbied against American annexation of Cuba, which some American and Cuban politicians desired.

For a variety of reasons, Americans sympathized with the Cuban rebels in their struggle for independence. The United States had gone through a similar struggle with Great Britain a century earlier. The revolutionists also carried out an effective propaganda campaign, which included destruction of American sugar mills and railroads, designed to bring about American intervention in the revolt. The Cuban rebels strategies, not unreasonably, that if America became involved in dispute, it would likely be on the side of the Cubans seeking independence. The propaganda campaign was carried on in New York City under the guidance of rebel leader José Martí.

Spain did not have any intention to grant Cuban independence and in 1895, the Spanish government dispatched 50,000 troops to the island. Things did not go well, and with their efforts to suppress the rebellion going badly, in 1896 Spain sent General Valeriano Weyler to Cuba. Weyler established concentration camps to hold captured rebels in addition to other hard-nosed policies. During the presidential election of that year in the United States, the Republican Party had adopted an expansionist platform, which helped get William McKinley elected. The existence of the Weyler policy of reconcentrado, which led to his being known as "Butcher Weyler," kept



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



**José Martí:** Cuban poet and leader of the Cuban independence movement.



interest in the Cuban affair at a high level. Americans began demonstrating in order to display their opposition to Spanish rule in Cuba.

As Congress called for recognition of the rights of the rebelling Cubans, President McKinley offered to mediate with Spain for Cuban independence. Spain declined, but otherwise did its best to satisfy American concerns, not wishing war with an emerging world power. Meanwhile, the two American ambassadors involved, seemed to be working in opposite directions. While Ambassador Stewart L. Woodford was trying to pursue a peaceful resolution with Spain in Madrid, Ambassador Fitzhugh Lee in **Havana** seemed to be stirring things further in the opposite direction.



**Havana:** Capital city of Cuba.

## Primary Source: Drawing

The provocative, and entirely fictitious, strip searching of American women by Spanish authorities that was reported in William Randolph Hurst's newspapers. Stories like these inflamed public opinion and pushed President McKinley to ask for a declaration of war.

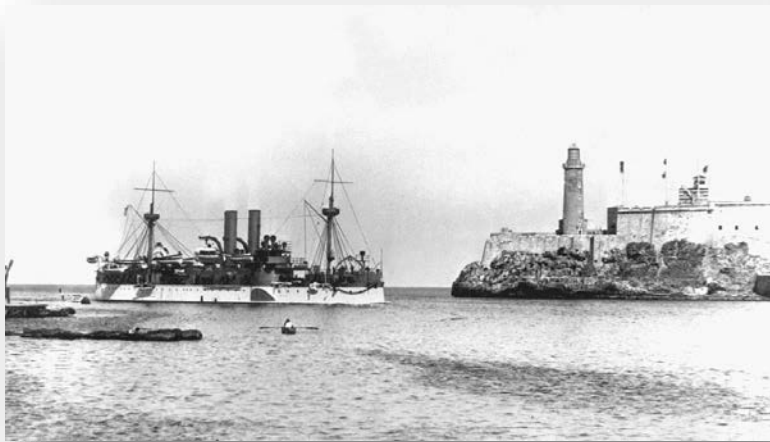


## REMEMBER THE MAINE

Yellow journalism made itself felt during the Cuban conflict. William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer vied for readership in a circulation war using tactics of exaggeration and sensationalism to keep readers buying their papers. One myth of the war says that when Hearst dispatched a photographer to Cuba to take pictures of the war, his man telegraphed back that there was not any war to photograph. Hearst is said to have responded, "You take care of the pictures. I'll take care of the war!" Hearst published a sensational drawing on the front page of his Journal of an American woman

being strip-searched by Spanish officers. The story was false, but it sold newspapers. Historian Page Smith has called the press behavior in the Cuban matter “disgraceful,” an opinion widely shared today.

Still attempting to avoid war, Spain replaced General Weyler with General Blanco and began to reform its policy in Cuba in an attempt to meet America’s growing demands. With various interests in Spain, Cuba, and the United States all pulling in different directions, however, President McKinley was at something of a loss to find the most reasonable course. Just when it looked as though a peaceful settlement might be reached, two unfortunate events occurred.



Primary Source: Photograph

The USS Maine sailing into Havana Harbor.

American Consul in Havana, Fitzhugh Lee, the son of Confederate general Robert E. Lee, requested a show of naval force to calm things down, and the **USS Maine** was sent to Havana harbor, clearly a provocative act.

While the Maine lay at anchor in Havana, a letter written by Spanish ambassador De Lome in Washington insulting President McKinley was stolen from the mail by a Cuban revolutionary. He turned it over to a reporter of the Hearst newspapers, which Hearst published in the New York Journal. Americans were outraged, and De Lome was forced to resign.

One week later the Maine, which had been sent “as a friendly act of courtesy” to protect American lives and property, blew up, killing over 200 American sailors. Of all those least likely to be responsible, Spain headed the list. Nevertheless, the yellow press adopted the slogan “**Remember the Maine! To hell with Spain!**” Much later it was determined that the **explosion aboard the Maine** was probably an accident, but the damage to international relationships had been done.

The Spanish ambassador was not the only one who thought President McKinley was wishy-washy. Although it is clear that he wanted Spain out of Cuba, even going so far as to offer to purchase the island, he was not hell-



**USS Maine:** American battleship that exploded mysteriously in Havana Harbor. The explosion was the catalyst for the Spanish-American War.



**Remember the Maine:** Rallying cry during the Spanish-American War.



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

bent on going to war. Historians have generally concluded, however, that the American public, aroused by the yellow press, pushed the president into seeking a declaration of war. Reluctantly President McKinley, himself a veteran of the horrors of the Civil War, asked Congress to declare war on Spain and on April 25, 1898, the United States officially entered a state war with Spain. An amendment known as the **Teller Amendment** was added to the declaration, indicating that the United States had no intention to annex Cuba.



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



## Secondary Source: Painting

No photographs of the actual explosion of the Maine exist. This is one artist's depiction of the event which certainly captures the nation's horror.

## THE SPLENDID LITTLE WAR

The **Splendid Little War**, as the **Spanish-American War** was later called by Secretary of State John Hay, was handily won by the United States over an inept Spanish army and navy. Americans supported the war enthusiastically, and many young men volunteered. However, the regular army, which had done little but fight Native Americans since the Civil War, was ill prepared to manage the mobilization necessary to get on a war footing and mobilization was slow, clumsy and it was months before any American soldiers actually landed on Cuba.

The navy, on the other hand, was in good trim, having been expanded during the previous decades in response to the writings of Mahan and the support of other navalists like Theodore Roosevelt. The navy fought well from the beginning. Commodore **George Dewey**, dispatched from Hong Kong, **destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay** in the Philippines, suffering only minor casualties to his ships and men. Later Admirals Sampson and Schley defeated the Spanish fleet off the coast of Cuba. The movement of naval vessels between Asia and the United States and around the tip of South America underscored the need for a canal between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans in Central America.

Although the Army was plagued by inefficiency, disease and disorder, American ground forces were bolstered by volunteers such as Theodore



**Splendid Little War:** Nickname for the Spanish-American War.



**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.



**George Dewey:** American naval commander at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.



**Battle of Manila Bay:** Naval encounter between American and Spanish ships in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. It was a total victory for the United States.

Roosevelt's famous **Rough Riders**. American soldiers fought bravely enough to defeat a hapless Spanish army near Santiago. American troops also occupied Puerto Rico, another Caribbean island Spanish colony. The fighting, which lasted less than four months, saw fewer than 400 American soldiers killed in combat. Over ten times as many died from disease, however.

The most popular image of the Spanish-American War is of Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders, charging up San Juan Hill. But less well known is that the Rough Riders struggled mightily in several battles and would have sustained far more serious casualties, if not for the experienced black veterans, over 2,500 of them, who joined them in battle. These soldiers, who had been fighting the Indian Wars on the American frontier for many years, were instrumental in the victory in Cuba.



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

**Primary Source: Photograph**

Some of the African American troops who fought in Cuba. Many of them were veterans of the Indian Wars in the West where they had been called Buffalo Soldiers by the Native Americans. In Cuba, they were given the nickname Smoked Yankees.

The choice to serve in the Spanish-American War was not a simple one. Within the African American community, many spoke out both for and against involvement in the war. Some felt that because they were not offered the true rights of citizenship it was not their burden to volunteer for war. Others, in contrast, argued that participation in the war offered an opportunity for African Americans to prove themselves to the rest of the country. While their presence was welcomed by the military which desperately needed experienced soldiers, the Black regiments suffered racism and harsh treatment while training in the southern states before shipping off to battle.



Once in Cuba, however, the **Smoked Yankees**, as the Cubans called the African American soldiers, fought side-by-side with Roosevelt's Rough Riders, providing crucial tactical support to some of the most important battles of the war. After the Battle of San Juan, five African American soldiers received the Medal of Honor and 25 others were awarded a certificate of merit. One reporter wrote that "if it had not been for the Negro cavalry, the Rough Riders would have been exterminated." For some of the soldiers, their recognition made the sacrifice worthwhile. Others, however, struggled with American oppression of Cubans and Puerto Ricans, feeling kinship with the black residents of these countries who fell under American rule.



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

## THE PHILIPPINE-AMERICAN WAR

As the war closed, Spanish and American diplomats arranged for a peace conference in Paris. They met in October 1898, with the Spanish government committed to regaining control of the Philippines, which they felt were unjustly taken in a war that was solely about Cuban independence. President McKinley was reluctant to relinquish the strategically useful prize of the Philippines. He certainly did not want to give the islands back to Spain, nor did he want another European power to step in to seize them. Neither the Spanish nor the Americans considered giving the islands their independence, since, with the pervasive racism and cultural stereotyping of the day, they believed the Filipino people were not capable of governing themselves. **William Howard Taft**, the first American governor-general to oversee the administration of the new American possession, accurately captured American sentiments with his frequent reference to Filipinos as "our little brown brothers."



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

Philippine revolutionary **Emilio Aguinaldo** refused to exchange Spanish occupation for American and continued the insurrection he had been leading against the Spanish with a fight against the new American invaders. The result was the **Philippine-American War**, or the Filipino Insurrection. It was one of the ugliest wars in American history.



**Emilio Aguinaldo:** Leader of the Philippine independence movement who fought both the Spanish and the United States.



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

The Filipinos' war for independence lasted three years, with over 4,000 American and 20,000 Filipino combatant deaths. The civilian death toll is estimated to be as high as 250,000. Under the rule of the American military, the Philippines remained a war zone with terrible atrocities committed by American troops against Filipino soldiers and civilians alike. Frustrated with a lack of progress, President McKinley turned the Philippines over to a civilian governor. Under Taft's leadership, Americans built a new transportation infrastructure, hospitals, and schools, hoping to win over the local population. The rebels lost influence, and Aguinaldo was captured by American forces and forced to swear allegiance to the United States.



**Primary Source: Photograph**

This photograph of Emilio Aguinaldo was taken in 1898 at the start of the Spanish-American War. As he grew older he continued to play a vital role in the development of his country.

Taft continued to introduce reforms to modernize and improve daily life for the country despite pockets of resistance that continued to fight through the spring of 1902. Much of the commission's rule centered on legislative reforms to local government structure and national agencies, with the commission offering appointments to resistance leaders in exchange for their support.

The war officially ended on July 2, 1902, with a victory for the United States. However, some Philippine groups led by veterans of the Katipunan continued to battle American forces. Among those leaders was General Macario Sakay, a veteran Katipunan member who assumed the presidency of the proclaimed Tagalog Republic, formed in 1902 after the capture of President Emilio Aguinaldo. Other groups, including the Moro people and Pulahanes people, continued hostilities in remote areas and islands until their final defeat a decade later at the Battle of Bud Bagsak on June 15, 1913.

The occupation by the United States changed the cultural landscape of the islands. English became the primary language of government, education, business, and industry, and increasingly in future decades, of families and



educated individuals. The Catholic Church lost its place as the official state religion, although most Filipinos remain Catholic to this day.



Primary Source: Photograph

Katipuneros, Filipinos who continued the fight against the Americans even after Aguinaldo was captured.

In 1916, Congress passed the Philippine Autonomy Act, **Jones Act**, that the United States officially promised eventual independence, along with more Philippine control in the meantime over the Philippines. The 1934 Philippine Independence Act created in the following year the Commonwealth of the Philippines, a limited form of independence, and established a process ending in Philippine independence, which was originally scheduled for 1944, but interrupted and delayed by World War II. Finally in 1946, following World War II and the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the United States granted independence through the **Treaty of Manila**.

## OPPOSITION

Some Americans, notably William Jennings Bryan, **Mark Twain**, Andrew Carnegie, Ernest Crosby, and other members of the American Anti-Imperialist League, strongly objected to the annexation of the Philippines. Anti-imperialist movements claimed that the United States had become a colonial power by replacing Spain as master of the Philippines. Other anti-imperialists opposed annexation on racist grounds. Among these was Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina, who feared that annexation of the Philippines would lead to an influx of non-White immigrants into the United States. As news of atrocities committed in subduing the Philippines arrived in the United States, support for the war flagged. President McKinley and Governor Taft's efforts to end the conflict by exchanging peace for partial self-rule was, in part, due to a loss of public support.



**Jones Act:** 1916 law that promised independence for the Philippines.



**Treaty of Manila:** Treaty that officially granted the Philippines independence in 1946.



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

## LEGACY OF THE WARS

The result of the Spanish-American War was the 1898 **Treaty of Paris**, negotiated on terms favorable to the United States. The United States gained several island possessions. Spain turned over **Puerto Rico**, **Guam**, and the **Philippines** to the United States, for which the United States paid Spain \$20 million. Puerto Rico and Guam remain American territories and the people of those territories are US citizens, although since they are not states, they have no representation in Congress and no vote for president.

The wars marked America's entry into world affairs. Before the Spanish-American War, the United States was characterized by isolationism, an approach to foreign policy that emphasized keeping the affairs of other countries at a distance. Although Americans still disagree about the extent we should play in world affairs, since the Spanish-American War, the United States has had a significant hand in various conflicts around the world, and has entered many treaties and agreements.

After the Spanish-American War, the United States entered a long and prosperous period of economic and population growth and technological innovation that lasted through the 1920s. The war redefined national identity, served as a solution of sorts to the social divisions plaguing the American mind, and provided a model for future news reporting.

The war also effectively ended the Spanish Empire. Spain had been declining as an imperial power since the early 1800s. Spain retained only a handful of overseas holdings: Spanish West Africa, Spanish Guinea, Spanish Sahara, Spanish Morocco, and the Canary Islands. Never again would Spain be a major player on the world stage.

The United States continued to occupy Cuba at the end of the war. As in the Philippines, reforms were initiated in public administration, and public health agencies were brought under the direction of General Leonard Wood. American doctors Walter Reed and William Gorgas exterminated yellow fever in Cuba and pushed education and other reforms. A constitutional convention called in 1900 set up a Cuban government, and Americans withdrew in 1902.

However, Cuban independence was not without limits. Congress passed the **Platt Amendment** of 1903 which added these stipulations. First, Cuba could make no treaties with other nations without America's consent. The Cuban government could not go into debt beyond its ability to pay. The United States reserved the right to intervene in Cuba to maintain law and order. And, The United States was granted rights to a naval base at Guantanamo Bay. Despite the antagonist relationship the United States has with the Cuban government today, the base at Guantanamo Bay remains in American hands. Because it is not on American soil, it has served as a legally ambiguous place to detain permanently accused terrorists captured in Afghanistan.



**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.



**Puerto Rico:** Island in the Caribbean won by the United States from Spain in the Spanish-American War. It remains an American territory.



**Guam:** Island in Micronesia won by the United States from Spain in the Spanish-American War. It remains an American territory.



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



**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.

**CONCLUSION**

The Spanish-American War gave the United States new territory, national pride, and launched the nation into first class status among the leaders of the world. While the reasons for declaring war might have been dubious, the cause of Cuban independence was noble and achieved. The spoils of war – territory won – was seemingly earned.

In the Philippines, the spoils of war were less lustrous. Those who oppose imperialism might see the horrors of the Filipino Insurrection as a just punishment for hubris.

What do you think? Did the United States deserve the outcomes of these two wars?

**SUMMARY**

The United States went to war with Spain in 1898 because of Cuba. Cuba was one of the last Spanish colonies in the Americas. Cubans wanted independence, and some people in the United States were sympathetic to the Cuban cause.

At the time, newspapers were competing with each other to sell more copies. Writers and publishers exaggerated stories and used bold, sensational headlines. A popular topic was Spanish cruelty toward Cubans. After reading such stories, many Americans wanted the United States to intervene in Cuba.

The USS Maine, an American battleship, exploded while visiting Havana, Cuba. It is still unclear why the explosion happened, but Americans blamed the Spanish and demanded war.

As part of the declaration of war, Congress passed a law stating that it would not make Cuba an American colony.

The Spanish-American War was a lopsided victory for the United States. American ships destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Philippines and American troops overran the Spanish troops in Cuba. Theodore Roosevelt became a national hero while leading his men in battle in Cuba.

True to their promise, the United States allowed Cuba to become independent, but passed a law saying that they would intervene if there were problems in Cuba. In this way, Cuba was always mostly, but not entirely independent.

As a result of the war, the United States took control of the Spanish territories of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines.

The Filipinos had also been fighting for independence when the war broke out. Filipino leaders thought that the war would lead to independence the same that it had for Cuba. However, after defeating the Spanish, the Americans stayed. The Filipino freedom fighters began a rebellion against American rule. A bloody conflict resulted.

In the end, Americans captured Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the Filipino resistance and the rebellion ended. The Filipinos agreed to a deal in which the Americans maintained control of the country but allowed the Filipinos to make many of their own decisions. The United States kept the Philippines as a colony for about 50 years.



### KEY CONCEPTS

**Remember the Maine:** Rallying cry during the Spanish-American War.

**Splendid Little War:** Nickname for the Spanish-American War.



### LOCATIONS

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

**Havana:** Capital city of Cuba.

**Puerto Rico:** Island in the Caribbean won by the United States from Spain in the Spanish-American War. It remains an American territory.

**Guam:** Island in Micronesia won by the United States from Spain in the Spanish-American War. It remains an American territory.

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



### TREATIES & LAWS

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

**Jones Act:** 1916 law that promised independence for the Philippines

**Treaty of Manila:** Treaty that officially granted the Philippines independence in 1946.

**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.



### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**José Martí:** Cuban poet and leader of the Cuban independence movement.

**George Dewey:** American naval commander at the Battle of Manila Bay during the Spanish-American War.

**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.

**Emilio Aguinaldo:** Leader of the Philippine independence movement who fought both the Spanish and the United States.

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



### EVENTS

**Explosion of the USS Maine:** Event that cause 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.

**Battle of Manila Bay:** Naval encounter between American and Spanish ships in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. It was a total victory for the United States.

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



### SHIPS

**USS Maine:** American battleship that exploded mysteriously in Havana Harbor. The explosion was the catalyst for the Spanish-American War.





# 3

## T H I R D Q U E S T I O N HOW SHOULD AMERICA PROJECT ITS POWER AROUND THE WORLD?

Did the IMPERIALIST ERA  
**EXPAND** or **BETRAY**  
America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

### INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of his presidency, George Washington warned his countrymen to avoid entanglements with foreign nations. He feared that the new nation might be overwhelmed by other countries' problems. A little less than 100 years later the United States was a very different place. No longer a fledgling nation, the nation had grown to be an economic powerhouse fed by waves of immigrants that successfully spread from sea to shining sea.

Many Americans felt that Washington's ideas no longer applied. They felt confident to project power in distant lands, especially after success in the Spanish-American War.

But, how should the country spread its influence? Three presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, William Taft, and Woodrow Wilson all offered different answers to that question. One, based on the threat of force, one based on the use of money, and the last on an appeal to morality.

What do you think? How should America project its power around the world?

#### EUROPEANS IN CHINA

Since the journeys of Marco Polo and Christopher Columbus, many Westerners have dreamt making their fortunes in China. With the defeat of the Spanish and the addition of the Philippines as a base for American ports and coaling stations, American businesses were ready to make that myth a reality. Although China originally accounted for only a small percentage of American foreign trade, captains of American industry dreamed of a vast market of Asian customers desperate for manufactured goods they could not yet produce in large quantities for themselves.

American businesses were not alone in seeing the opportunities. Other countries, including Japan, Russia, Great Britain, France, and Germany also hoped to make inroads in China. Earlier treaties between Great Britain and China in 1842 and 1844 when the British Empire coerced the Chinese to accept the import of Indian opium in exchange for its tea, had forced China to give all foreign nations free and equal access to Chinese ports.

This was at a time when Great Britain maintained the strongest economic relationship with China. However, other western nations used the new arrangement to send Christian missionaries who began to work across inland China. In 1895, Japan successfully defeated Chinese troops on the battlefield and China lost its claims to Korea. By 1897, Germany had obtained exclusive mining rights in northern coastal China as reparations for the murder of two German missionaries. In 1898, Russia obtained permission to build a railroad across northeastern Manchuria. One by one, each country carved out their own **sphere of influence**, where they could control markets through tariffs and transportation, and thus ensure their share of the Chinese market.



**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.

#### THE OPEN DOOR POLICY

Alarmed by the pace at which foreign powers were dividing China into pseudo-territories, and worried that they had no significant piece for themselves, the United States government intervened. In contrast to European nations, however, American businesses wanted the whole market, not just a share of it. They wanted to do business in China with no artificially constructed spheres or boundaries to limit the extent of their trade.

In 1899, Secretary of State **John Hay** made a bold move to acquire China's vast markets for American access by introducing the **Open Door Policy**. His policy, if agreed to by the other five nations maintaining spheres of influences in China, would erase all spheres and essentially open all doors to free trade, with no special tariffs or transportation controls that might give unfair advantages to one country over another.



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



**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.

While on paper, the Open Door Policy would offer equal access to all, the reality was that it greatly favored the United States. Free trade in China would give American businesses the ultimate advantage, as American companies were producing higher-quality goods than other countries, and were doing so

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more efficiently and less expensively. The United States could flood the Chinese market with American goods, virtually squeezing other countries out of the market.



#### Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

Uncle Sam holds the Open Door Policy as he dictates to the European powers who hold scissors ready to divide up China into spheres of influence.

Although the foreign ministers of the other five nations sent half-hearted replies on behalf of their respective governments, with some outright denying the viability of the policy, Hay proclaimed it the new official policy on China, and American goods were unleashed throughout the nation. China was quite welcoming of the American policy, as they also stressed the United States commitment to preserving the Chinese government and territorial integrity.

The policy was invoked barely a year later, when a group of Chinese insurgents, the Righteous and Harmonious Fists, known better in the West as the **Boxer Rebellion**, fought to expel all western nations and their influences from China. The United States, along with Great Britain and Germany, sent 2,000 troops to withstand the rebellion. The troops signified American commitment to the territorial integrity of China, albeit one flooded with American products. Despite subsequent efforts, by Japan in particular, to undermine Chinese authority in 1915 and again during the Manchurian crisis of 1931, the United States remained resolute in defense of the open door principles.

Only when China turned to communism in 1949 following an intense civil war did the Open Door Policy become relatively meaningless. However, for nearly half a century, United States military involvement and a continued relationship with the Chinese government cemented their roles as preferred trading partners, illustrating how the country used economic power, as well as military might, to grow its empire.



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

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Primary Source: Photograph

International troops stand in the square in front of the Forbidden City in Beijing during the Boxer Rebellion.

#### ROOSEVELT'S BIG STICK

While President McKinley ushered in the era of the American empire through military strength and economic coercion, his successor, Theodore Roosevelt, established a new foreign policy approach, allegedly based on a favorite African proverb, “speak softly, and carry a **big stick**, and you will go far.” At the crux of his foreign policy was a coercion by threat. Roosevelt believed that in light of the country’s recent military successes, it was unnecessary to use force to achieve foreign policy goals, so long as the military could threaten force. In other words, the United States could get its way so long as foreigners were afraid of what might happen if they refused.

Roosevelt believed that while the coercive power wielded by the United States could be harmful in the wrong hands, the Western Hemisphere’s best interests were also the best interests of the United States. He felt, in short, that the United States had the right and the obligation to be the policeman in North and South America.

To demonstrate the nation’s military might – the big stick – President Roosevelt sent the navy on a round-the-world voyage between 1907 and 1909. Officially a cruise of friendship, the ships’ hulls were painted white to show America’s peaceful intent. However, the message of the **Great White Fleet** was clear. America was a powerful nation with the ability project its military power anywhere on earth. The 16 battleships and various escorts made Roosevelt’s point better than any speech ever could.



**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.



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

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Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

President Theodore Roosevelt carries his big stick as he stomps around the Caribbean Sea, pulling his navy behind him.

#### THE PANAMA CANAL

One of the great impediments to world trade had always been the fact that North and South America are connected, thus preventing ships from easily passing between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This narrow strip of land, the isthmus of Central American was the subject of various schemes. After gold was discovered in California in 1858, the Panama Railway was established to carry 49ers across the isthmus. The French attempted to construct a canal. Begun in 1881, their project failed due to a combination of financial crises and health hazards, including malaria and yellow fever, which led to the deaths of thousands of French workers. Upon becoming president in 1901, Roosevelt was determined to succeed where others had failed. He resolved to build what the world now calls the **Panama Canal**.

The best point for the construction of a canal was across the 50-mile-wide isthmus of Panama, which, at the turn of the century, was part of the nation of Colombia. Roosevelt negotiated with the government of Colombia, sometimes threatening to take the project away and build through Nicaragua, until Colombia agreed to a treaty that would grant the United States a lease on the land across Panama in exchange for a payment of \$10 million and an additional \$250,000 annual rental fee. The matter was far from settled, however. The Colombian people were outraged over the loss of their land to the United States, and saw the payment as far too low. Influenced by the public outcry, the Colombian Senate rejected the treaty and informed Roosevelt there would be no canal.



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



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Primary Source: Photograph

The massive effort to dig the Panama Canal is evident in this photograph showing rail lines carrying millions of tons of dirt and rock out of the man-made canyons that would eventually be flooded to form the canal.

Undaunted, Roosevelt chose to wield the big stick. In comments to journalists, he made it clear that the United States would strongly support the Panamanian people should they choose to revolt against Colombia and form their own nation. In November 1903, he sent American battleships to the coast of Colombia, ostensibly for practice maneuvers, as Panamanian business leaders who stood to benefit from the American canal effort led a revolution against Colombian rule.

The warships effectively blocked Colombia from moving additional troops into the region to quell the growing Panamanian uprising. Within a week, Roosevelt recognized the new country of Panama, welcoming them to the world community and offering them the same terms he had previously offered Colombia. It was a clear, and successful, wielding of the big stick. Roosevelt never fired a shot but got his way because American battleships made it clear what would happen if the Columbians resisted.

Construction on the canal began in 1904. For the first year of operations, the United States worked primarily to build adequate housing, cafeterias, warehouses, machine shops, and other elements of infrastructure that previous French efforts had failed to consider. Most importantly, the lives of workers were protected with the introduction of fumigation systems and mosquito nets following **Dr. Walter Reed**'s discovery of the role of mosquitoes in the spread of malaria and yellow fever.

 **Dr. Walter Reed:** Army doctor who led the effort to eradicate mosquitos in Panama and make the area safe for the workers who built the Panama Canal.

At the same time, a new wave of American engineers planned for the construction of the canal. Even though they decided to build a lock-system rather than a sea-level canal, workers still had to excavate over 170 million cubic yards of earth with the use of over one hundred new rail-mounted



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steam shovels. Excited by the work, Roosevelt became the first sitting United States president to leave the country while in office when he traveled to Panama where he visited the construction site, taking a turn at the steam shovel and removing dirt. The canal opened in 1914, permanently changing world trade and military defense patterns.



Primary Source: Photograph

Never one to miss a photo opportunity, President Roosevelt took the controls at a steam shovel while touring the Panama Canal during its construction.

#### THE ROOSEVELT COROLLARY

With the construction of the canal underway, Roosevelt wanted to send a clear message to the rest of the world, and in particular to his European counterparts, that the colonization of the Western Hemisphere had ended, and their interference in the countries there would no longer be tolerated.

At the same time, he sent a message to his counterparts in Central and South America, should the United States see problems erupt in the region, that it

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would intervene in order to maintain peace and stability throughout the hemisphere.

Roosevelt articulated this seeming double standard in a 1904 address before Congress, in a speech that became known as the **Roosevelt Corollary**. The Roosevelt Corollary was based on the original Monroe Doctrine, which warned European nations to stay out of the business of the nations of the Americas. In this addition, Roosevelt states that the United States would use military force “as an international police power” to correct any “chronic wrongdoing” by any Latin American nation that might threaten stability in the region. Unlike the Monroe Doctrine, which proclaimed an American policy of noninterference with its neighbors’ affairs, the Roosevelt Corollary loudly proclaimed the right and obligation of the United States to involve itself whenever necessary.

Roosevelt put the new corollary to work in Cuba, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Colombia. Later presidents including Franklin Roosevelt softened American rhetoric regarding United States domination of the Western Hemisphere proclaiming a new **Good Neighbor Policy** that renounced American intervention in other nations’ affairs. However, subsequent presidents would continue to reference aspects of the Roosevelt Corollary to justify American involvement in Haiti, Nicaragua, and other nations.

Latin Americans have long resented what they perceive as American arrogance and unfair and unwanted interference in their affairs. In the eyes of many of America’s southern neighbors, a powerful military does not give the United States the right to meddle.

#### THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR

Although he supported the Open Door Policy as an excellent economic policy in China, Roosevelt lamented the fact that the United States had no strong military presence in the region to enforce it. Clearly, without a military presence there, he could not as easily use his big stick threat credibly to achieve his foreign policy goals. As a result, when conflicts did arise on the other side of the Pacific, Roosevelt adopted a policy of maintaining a balance of power among the nations there. This was particularly evident when the **Russo-Japanese War** erupted in 1904.

In 1904, angered by the massing of Russian troops along the Manchurian border in China, and the threat it represented to the region, Japan launched a surprise naval attack on the Russian fleet. Initially, Roosevelt supported the Japanese position. However, when the Japanese fleet quickly achieved victory after victory, Roosevelt grew concerned over the growth of Japanese influence in the region and the continued threat that it represented to China and American access to those markets. It was better for America to have Russia and Japan as equals balancing each other out.



**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.



**Good Neighbor Policy:** Policy promoted by Franklin Roosevelt and other presidents that contradicted the Roosevelt Corollary. It stated that the United States would respect the independence of Latin American nations.



**Russo-Japanese War:** 1904 conflict between Russian and Japan. Theodore Roosevelt helped negotiate a peace treaty and won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

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Wishing to maintain a balance of power, Roosevelt arranged for diplomats from both nations to attend a secret peace conference. The negotiations secured peace in the region, with Japan gaining control over Korea, several former Russian bases in Manchuria, and the southern half of Sakhalin Island. For his role in resolving the conflict, Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the first American to receive the award.

#### TAFT'S DOLLAR DIPLOMACY

When William Howard Taft became president in 1909, he chose to adapt Roosevelt's foreign policy philosophy to one that reflected American economic power at the time. In what became known as **Dollar Diplomacy**, Taft announced his decision to "substitute dollars for bullets" in an effort to use foreign policy to secure markets and opportunities for American businessmen. Not unlike Roosevelt's threat of force, Taft used the threat of American economic clout to coerce countries into agreements to benefit the United States.

Of key interest to Taft was the debt that several Central American nations still owed to countries in Europe. Fearing that the Europeans might use the debts as leverage to use military intervention in the Western Hemisphere, Taft paid off the debts with American dollars. Of course, this move made the Central American countries indebted to the United States instead of the Europeans.

When a Central American nation resisted this arrangement, Taft responded with military force to achieve the objective. This occurred in Nicaragua when the country refused to accept American loans to pay off its debt to Great Britain. Taft sent a warship with marines to the region to convince the government to agree. Similarly, when Mexico considered the idea of allowing a Japanese corporation to gain significant land and economic advantages in its country, Taft urged Congress to pass the Lodge Corollary, an addendum to the Roosevelt Corollary, stating that no foreign corporation, other than American ones, could obtain strategic lands in the Western Hemisphere.

Taft's policies, although not as reliant on military aggression as Roosevelt's Big Stick Diplomacy, did create difficulties for the United States, both at the time and in the future. Central America's indebtedness would create economic problems for decades, as well as foster nationalist movements in countries resentful of American's interference. In Asia, Taft's efforts to mediate between China and Japan served only to heighten tensions between Japan and the United States.

#### THE BANANA REPUBLICS

Out of Taft's Dollar Diplomacy grew the idea of a **Banana Republic**. The name was coined by British author O. Henry and it described a nation so dependent on foreign trade that the leaders of foreign corporations effectively ruled. In the early 1900s, the two best examples were the Central American nations of Honduras and Guatemala.



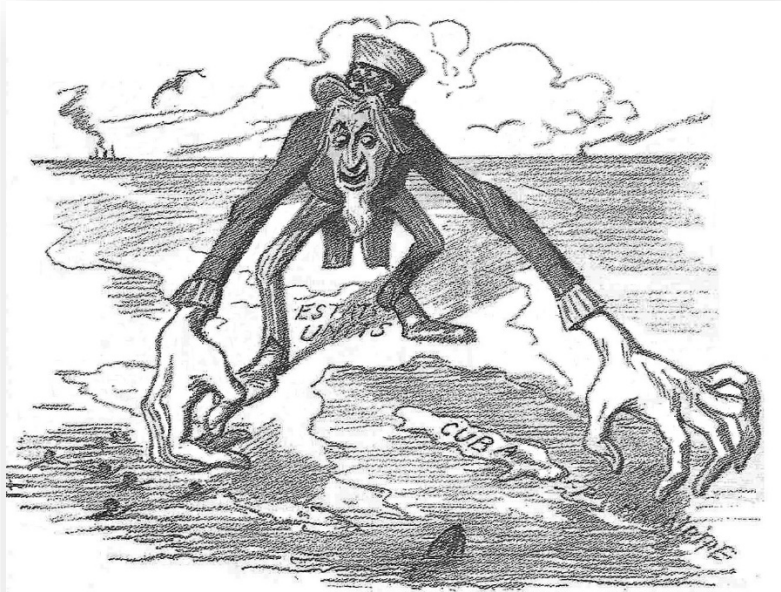
**Dollar Diplomacy:** President Taft's approach to foreign policy. He emphasized the use of American financial power rather than the threat of military force.



**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.

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In 1912, for the Cuyamel Fruit Company, the American mercenary "General" Lee Christmas overthrew the civil government of Honduras to install a military government friendly to foreign business.



Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon

This cartoon depicts Uncle Sam with long, greedy fingers interfering in the affairs of Latin America.

In Honduras an American businessman, Sam Zemurray, entered the banana-export business by buying overripe bananas from the United Fruit Company to sell in New Orleans. In 1910, Zemurray bought 23 square miles of banana producing land along the Caribbean coast of Honduras for exploitation by the Cuyamel Fruit Company and conspired with Manuel Bonilla, an ex-president of Honduras to overthrow the civil government and install a military government friendly to foreign businessmen. Zemurray hired a private, mercenary army and the resulting coup d'état installed Bonilla as the new president.

Back home, the United States ignored the deposition of the elected government of Honduras by a private army. The political instability resulting from the coup d'état stalled the Honduran economy. With a struggling economy, the Honduran government could not pay back its debt to the United States, which in turn perpetuated economic stagnation and the image of Honduras as failed nation. Such a historical, inherited foreign debt undermined the Honduran government, which allowed foreign corporations to manage the country and become sole employers of the Honduran people. The American fruit companies built and controlled the roads, railroads, ports, and telephones in Honduras. If the elected government ever threatened the power of the American businesses, they simply threatened to fire workers or shut down critical infrastructure. In the end, although the people of Honduras

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voted for their presidents, it was American businessmen who ran the nations through the power of the dollar.

A similar story played out in Guatemala. Dependent on exports of bananas, coffee, and sugar cane, inequitable land distribution became an important cause of national poverty and frustration. During the 1950s, the American-owned **United Fruit Company** was frustrated that the popular, elected leaders of Guatemala were seizing their land in giving to poor Guatemalans. They convinced Presidents Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower that the Guatemalans were secretly communist. Eisenhower ordered a coup d'état in which the Central Intelligence Agency deposed the democratically elected government of President Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán. Once again, when American dollars were at stake, American military might was not far behind, and Dollar Diplomacy worked to build and preserve American economic might. The United Fruit Company is still thriving today, although its name changed in 1984. Today we know it as Chiquita Banana.

It could be argued that American support for the overthrow of Queen Liliuokalani in Hawaii, although it occurred long before Taft's presidency, is another example of Dollar Diplomacy at work and that the Kingdom and subsequent Republic of Hawaii were both stereotypical banana republics.

#### WOODROW WILSON'S MORAL DIPLOMACY

When Woodrow Wilson took over the White House in 1913, he promised a less expansionist approach to American foreign policy. Wilson did share the commonly held view that American values were superior to those of the rest of the world, that democracy was the best system to promote peace and stability, and that the United States should continue to actively pursue economic markets abroad. Instead, he proposed an idealistic foreign policy based on morality, rather than American self-interest. His **Moral Diplomacy** emphasized the encouragement of self-rule and independence rather than what he believed were selfish American interests.

Wilson appointed former presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan, a noted anti-imperialist and proponent of world peace, as his Secretary of State. Bryan undertook his new assignment with great vigor, encouraging nations around the world to sign treaties in which they agreed to resolve international disputes through talks, not war. Bryan negotiated friendly relations with Colombia, including a \$25 million apology for Roosevelt's actions during the Panamanian Revolution. Even with Bryan's support, however, Wilson found that it was much harder than he anticipated to keep the United States out of world affairs.

Furthering his goal of reducing overseas intervention, Wilson promised not to rely on the Roosevelt Corollary, Theodore Roosevelt's explicit policy that the United States could involve itself in Latin American politics whenever it felt that the countries in the Western Hemisphere needed policing. Once president, however, Wilson again found it was more difficult to avoid



**United Fruit Company:** American company that dominated the economies of Central American nations leading to their being nicknamed Banana Republics. It is now called Chiquita Banana.



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



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American interventionism in practice than in rhetoric. Indeed, Wilson intervened more in Western Hemisphere affairs than either Taft or Roosevelt. In 1915, when a revolution in Haiti resulted in the murder of the Haitian president and threatened the safety of New York banking interests, Wilson sent over 300 marines to establish order. The United States assumed control over the island's foreign policy as well as its financial administration. One year later, in 1916, Wilson again marines the Dominican Republic to ensure prompt payment of a debt that nation owed and in 1917, Wilson sent troops to Cuba to protect American-owned sugar plantations from attacks by Cuban rebels.

**Primary Source: Editorial Cartoon**

"I've had about enough of this," cries a frustrated Uncle Sam as he jumps the border to chase Pancho Villa into Mexico. As it turned out, Latin Americans had about enough of American incursions as well.



Wilson's most noted foreign policy foray prior to World War I focused on Mexico, where a civil war had broken out. Wilson chose to make an example of Mexico and demanded that the warring parties hold democratic elections and establish laws based on his moral principles. Officially however, Wilson supported Venustiano Carranza, who opposed Victoriano Huerta's military control of the country. When American intelligence learned that a German



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ship was allegedly preparing to deliver weapons to Huerta's forces, Wilson ordered the navy to land forces at Veracruz to stop the shipment.

On April 22, 1914, a fight erupted between the American and Mexican troops, resulting in nearly 150 deaths, 19 of them American. Although Carranza's faction managed to overthrow Huerta in the summer of 1914, most Mexicans, including Carranza, had come to resent American intervention in their affairs.

When another Mexican revolutionary, **Pancho Villa** led 1,500 of his followers across the border into New Mexico and attacked and burned the American town of Columbus, Wilson responded by sending General John Pershing into Mexico to capture Villa and return him to the United States for trial. With over 11,000 at his disposal, Pershing marched three hundred miles into Mexico but failed to capture Villa. He did, however, manage to infuriate the Mexicans who saw it as yet another betrayal of Wilson's promises.



**Pancho Villa:** Mexican revolutionary who led a raid on the town of Columbus in New Mexico leading to President Wilson launching an invasion of Mexico in an unsuccessful attempt to capture him.

#### CONCLUSION

After success in the Spanish-American War and struggling to establish control over the Philippines, the nation's leaders offered differing visions of American power in the world.

First, Theodore Roosevelt argued that a powerful military was the key to achieving the nation's goals, although with the right touch it would not be necessary to every call the military into action.

President Taft took a less belligerent tone, but was no less assertive. His use of the power of American business and willingness to swoop in with the military to protect economic interests differed little from Roosevelt's administration in the final outcome.

The Democrat Wilson spoke out on the campaign trail for a different, more humane and moral approach, but ended up looking more like Roosevelt than Roosevelt himself.

Which approach was right, or were they all misguided? What do you think? How should America project its power in the world?

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#### SUMMARY

European powers had been interested in having control in China for many years. There were important markets with lots of customers in China. Instead of taking full control and making China a colony, Europeans carved up China into zones. These spheres of influence were places where only businesses from one country could operate. The British controlled Shanghai, for example.

The United States did not like this arrangement. American leaders declared an Open Door Policy. They said that Europeans had to let American companies do business anywhere they wanted.

Some leaders in China objected to the control Europeans and Americans had in their country. In one case, a group called the Boxers launched a rebellion and the Europeans and American had to send 2,000 soldiers to defeat them.

During the early 1900s, three American presidents dealt with issues related to imperialism. The first was Theodore Roosevelt. His approach was nicknamed the Big Stick. He believed that he could use American military power (usually the navy) to intimidate less powerful nations. One example was when he sent the navy to Panama to support the Panamanian Revolution and secure the right to build the Panama Canal.

The Panama Canal was a major undertaking that was initiated by Theodore Roosevelt. The canal connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and allows the United States to quickly shift its warships from one ocean to the other. It also serves as an important trade route.

Roosevelt expanded the Monroe Doctrine. President Monroe had declared that the Western Hemisphere was off limits to European nations. Roosevelt added his own Corollary in which he declared that the United States would intervene in Latin American nations when there were problems. The United States has done this multiple times. This American policy has not been particularly popular south of the border.

Theodore Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to negotiate an end to the Russo-Japanese War.

President Taft followed Dollar Diplomacy. He wanted to use American economic power to influence other nations. This led to the development of the so-called banana republics. One notable example was Honduras where the American United Fruit Company manipulated the government in order to pay lower taxes.

President Wilson believed in Moral Diplomacy. He wanted people to decide on their own government. However, his idealism did not extend to American territories. When Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa attacked an American town, Wilson sent the army into Mexico to try to catch him.



### KEY CONCEPTS

**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

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



### POLICIES

**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.

**Good Neighbor Policy:** Policy promoted by Franklin Roosevelt and other presidents that contradicted the Roosevelt Corollary. It stated that the United States would respect the independence of Latin American nations.

**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.



### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

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

**Dr. Walter Reed:** Army doctor who led the effort to eradicate mosquitos in Panama and make the area safe for the workers who built the Panama Canal.

**Pancho Villa:** Mexican revolutionary who led a raid on the town of Columbus in New Mexico leading to President Wilson launching an invasion of Mexico in an unsuccessful attempt to capture him.



### EVENTS

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

**Russo-Japanese War:** 1904 conflict between Russian and Japan. Theodore Roosevelt helped negotiate a peace treaty and won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.

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



### BUSINESSES

**United Fruit Company:** American company that dominated the economies of Central American nations leading to their being nicknamed Banana Republics. It is now called Chiquita Banana.



## QUESTION ELEVEN , PART ONE

# Did the IMPERIALIST ERA EXPAND or BETRAY

## America's FOUNDING IDEALS?

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

This is what Thomas Jefferson eloquently wrote in the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the idea that all Americans should be granted an equal chance to pursue their own dreams has been something we have shared ever since. Millions of immigrants came to America because they knew that in the United States, they were guaranteed an equal chance.

But not all people who lived under the American flag were equal. In Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines, Samoa, Panama, Hawaii, Alaska and from time to time in China, Cuba, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Columbia and many other places, people were subject to the authority of the United States government, but enjoyed none of the freedoms guaranteed to citizens of the 50 states. It is true that Alaska and Hawaii eventually gained statehood, and the Philippines gained independence. It is also true that Americans brought advances and improvements to many of the places they went. They built roads, schools, hospitals and government institutions. But at a cost, both in lives and lost respect.

What do you think? Did America's Imperialist Era expand or betray its founding ideals?



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