

Foreign Affairs (1865-1910)

American Foreign Policy in the Gilded Age

In 1898, the United States entered into its first international conflict since the Mexican War of 1845-1848, and its first overseas war since the pirate wars of the first decades of the 19th century. This new conflict was called the Spanish-American War. A series of wars and police actions followed in the twentieth century, from World War I to Afghanistan.

There are really two questions that we might ask at this point:

- ★ Why, after over a century, did the United States abandon a policy of neutrality in international affairs?
- ★ Why did American leaders begin to believe that the United States had a right and a duty to police the world?

We will try to answer those questions today.

Isolationism

During the Gilded Age U.S. foreign policies were largely isolationist. Domestic concerns prevented the United States from becoming involved in foreign affairs. Secretaries of State were politicians who were much more concerned with events at home than with developments abroad. Under these politicians, the United States practiced diplomacy that was generally peaceful, straightforward and unambitious.

American ambassadors were usually wealthy political supporters who achieved their positions as a matter of patronage rather than expertise. Their job was to care for Americans abroad and American foreign commercial interests. The nation's foreign policy was best served by being a friend to all nations and an enemy to none.

Origins of American Imperialism

Some historians argue that a number of factors began to influence the U.S. toward greater expansion after the Civil War. This new expansionist tendency, they argue, was determined by three factors all of which gradually led the nation toward greater globalism.

- ★ industrial expansion,
- ★ the desire to expand markets,
- ★ the closing of the frontier.

I would argue that these factors were important reasons for American expansion, BUT they were much less important until later in the 19th century. In the period following the Civil War, the nation's attention was taken up with domestic affairs:

- ★ Reconstruction,
- ★ expanding the West,
- ★ Indian affairs,
- ★ Partisan politics and domestic policy,

all of which left little national energy for overseas expansion.

Like most historical arguments, the answer that best reflects reality is that there was considerable isolationist sentiment in America, but that, like it or not, the U.S. could no longer hide from the world.

While most foreign relations were peaceful and unambitious in the Gilded Age, the U.S. had begun to develop and even expand on foreign policy in two areas:

- ★ the principles of the Monroe Doctrine.
- ★ an expansion of American commercial interests in the Pacific.

Enforcing the Monroe Doctrine

President James Monroe issued a statement of U.S. foreign policy in 1823, that is named after him—the Monroe Doctrine—and is the cornerstone of American foreign policy the Western Hemisphere. Monroe declared, in essence, that:

- ★ the Western Hemisphere was no longer open to colonization by European powers.
- ★ the United States would not interfere in purely European affairs.
- ★ European powers were not to interfere in the affairs of nations in the Western Hemisphere.
- ★ the U.S. would consider any attempts by European nations to colonize in the Western Hemisphere a violation of U.S. national security.

In 1863, in flagrant violation of the Monroe Doctrine, the Emperor of France, Napoleon III, invaded and conquered the Republic of Mexico and placed Archduke Maximilian of Austria on the throne. Secretary of State William Seward protested, but the U.S. was involved in the Civil War and could not enforce the Monroe Doctrine. When the Civil War ended the U.S. government posted troops along the Mexican border. In response to the threat and to U.S. diplomacy, Napoleon removed his French troops from Mexico in 1867. Maximilian, a very unpopular foreign ruler, suddenly found himself left high and dry. Without the support of French troops, Maximilian was deposed and executed, and the Monroe Doctrine was vindicated. Foreign powers would avoid colonial projects in the Western Hemisphere until the 1950s.

The 1870s and 80s saw an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine. Since peace in the Western Hemisphere was often threatened by quarrels between Latin American states, the U.S. began, with increasing frequency, to step in to arbitrate these disputes.

- ★ In 1876 the U.S. arbitrated a boundary dispute between Argentina and Paraguay,
- ★ in 1880 between Colombia and Chile,
- ★ in 1881 between Mexico and Guatemala,
- ★ in 1884, the U.S. settled a war between Bolivia and Peru.

Gradually, the good will that the U.S. earned in Latin America by keeping European powers out, was strained by increasing interference into Latin affairs, and an increasing attitude of superiority assumed by American diplomats.

Defining a Policy for the Pacific

Secretary of State Seward also had a profound effect on the development of American interest and policy in the Pacific. In 1867, Seward negotiated with Russia and persuaded Congress to purchase Alaska for \$7.2 million. In 1867 he arranged for the U.S. to occupy the Midway Islands. He also began to urge that the U.S. acquire Hawaii. Seward began a process of focusing American attention on the potential for expansion

into the Pacific. But interest wasn't really there in the 1860s for such expansion. In fact, Seward's purchase of Alaska received a lot of criticism since most Americans viewed Alaska as an enormous icy wasteland with no real resources of any interest. It was called "Seward's Icebox."

Sailors and Missionaries and the Pacific

Although many Americans failed to realize it, there was a lot in the new focus on overseas colonization, especially in the Pacific, that was old. Two groups of Americans had made their mark on the islands of the Pacific, each in very different ways, but both longed to return to the islands.

Sailors had been visiting Pacific islands since the early days of the clipper ships and whalers. New England sailors had begun trading with China in the 1780s. It became a profitable alternative to the European trade in the Napoleonic period. Many of these sailors had come to love the islands and island lifestyle. Some would come to see American colonization of the Pacific as a smart business move, especially in the age of coal engined ships that needed to be refueled.

Protestant American Christian missionaries had been involved in missionary work in the Pacific for several decades by the 1880s. These missionaries longed to gain greater control over the people of the Pacific in order to convert them to Christianity and to westernize them as well.

American Pacific expansion would be influenced by both a missionary agenda and a naval agenda.

Missionaries of Peace—Religion

America in the late 1800s was a Christian country. American Protestants believed implicitly in the destiny of Christianity to:

- ★ conquer non-Christian peoples through conversion.
- ★ "civilize" by conversion, education and example.
- ★ bring God's justice to the world. By the end of the century, the missionary movement was tied to the Gospel of Reform.

We were not alone of course in this belief — most of the Western European countries also held the same views. After the Civil War, the pace of American Christian missionary work around the globe, especially in Asia and Africa, increased dramatically.

Soul saving and profit making went hand-in-hand. Robert E. Spear was the head of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church. In one of his speeches, he claimed:

"The civilized nations are beginning to perceive that they have a duty, which is often contemptuously spoken of, to police the world. The recognition of this duty has been forced by trade."

For example, the founder of the Dole pineapple fortunes was the son of a missionary to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). American businessmen learned about potential foreign markets from reports that missionaries brought back. The federal government also had a long-standing policy of protecting the needs of its citizens in foreign lands. More American missionaries around the world meant more American citizens to protect from

discrimination and attack, so the government was drawn into "entangling alliances" with other countries.

In the 1860s-80s, The missionary movement was focused, not only on the Pacific but also on the American West. In 1885, American Protestant clergyman and missionary, Josiah Strong published a book entitled *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*. Although the book was intended to promote domestic missionary activity in the American West. Historians suggest it may have encouraged support for imperialistic United States policy among American Protestants. Strong argued that the Anglo-Saxon race had a responsibility to "civilize and Christianize" the world because it was a superior culture. Strong was a strong supporter of a concept often called the "White Man's Burden." The phrase began in England and provided the British with a rationale for colonization and Imperialism. It stated that Europeans had an obligation, a responsibility, to bring the fruits of European civilization—Christianity, law, western education, etc.— to "primitive peoples" in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Rim.

Missionaries of War—US NAVY

By the 1880s, the once-respectable United States Navy was in shambles. Many Americans realized that the United States was a 10th-rate naval power essentially unprepared if commercial rivalries turned into military conflict. Even landlocked Populists in the Midwest campaigned for a larger navy. There was a widely-held belief that the nation needed ships, not to make war, but to protect its rights and prestige.

One fellow had a profound impact on the recognition that US needed a strong navy. Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) was a naval strategist, historian, and leading advocate of a powerful American navy. He wrote a book called who influenced the thinking of Teddy Roosevelt and other government leaders. He even influenced folks like the German Kaiser who reportedly slept with a copy of Mahan under his pillow.

on sea power in 1890. The book had an amazing effect on U.S. naval policy. It stimulated the building of America's navy from a small coastal navy to a powerful blue water navy. His book was read by other nations as well, and they too began to build up their naval power. In his writings and speeches, especially *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan argued 5 things:

- ★ Surplus production requires commercial colonies
- ★ Oceans should be highways, not barriers
- ★ A powerful navy is essential to protect commerce
- ★ a maintenance of a navy and a commercial fleet required colonies during the coal-burning era
- ★ prudence dictates that colonies be set up if a modern nation wishes to remain strong

Justifying Imperialism

So where are we now? In the latter half of the 19th century, America was gradually pushed onto the world stage by economic and religious factors. The nation possessed an instrument to exert its power, the navy. Missionaries provided a religious/social justification for expansion of "American culture." All that the U.S. needed to make the next step to imperialistic expansion was some justification to do so.

Imperialism and the End of the Frontier

Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932) delivered "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), at the American Historical Association Convention, held at the World's Columbian Exposition, America's self-conscious debut commemorating four hundred years of progress since Christopher Columbus claimed the New World for the king and queen of Spain.

In his paper, Turner presented the "frontier" as the driving catalyst of American history, it was responsible for the development of the American Republic. Turner quoted a passage from the U.S. Census Bureau's Bulletin No. 12, of April 1891 that he believed would soon have enormous consequences on the future of the United States.

Turner noted that until the national census of 1880, the social and political map of the United States changed once one crossed the frontier line between the settled U.S. and the American wilderness. A decade later, the bureau declared this frontier had all but disappeared. Turner believed that the frontier was what molded Americans. America's unique individualism, nationalism, political institutions, its very democracy, depended on it.

For Turner, continental expansion, symbolized by the ever moving frontier creating more free land, was the driving, dynamic factor of American progress. It had been since Christopher Columbus, and remained so until the Census Bureau erased the frontier with the keystroke of a typewriter. Turner warned Americans that, without the energy created by an expanding frontier, America's political and social institutions would stagnate. America must expand or die.

Even as Turner was pontificating to the AHA, President Cleveland and the U.S. Senate were locked into a controversy over the annexation of Hawaii. American thinkers, newsmen, politicians and religious leaders had already begun to ponder the end of the untamed West and the beginning of empire. They were asking questions like:

- ★ Would the United States stop expanding at the shores of the Pacific?
- ★ Must expansion be defined in terms of a line on the ground across prairie or mountains, or might it include strategic and economic projections across a "free" ocean?

Turner didn't provide answers to America's future, but he did note that America's past, was in essence a closed chapter. "And now," he concluded, "four centuries from the discovery of America ... the frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history."

War With Spain

The Spanish-American War caused the people of the United States to move rapidly along the path of empire already clearly defined by the more enthusiastic expansionists in the nation.

The Situation in Cuba.

Throughout the nineteenth century the United States frequently showed its concern over the fate of its close neighbor Cuba, which was Spain's chief possession in the Caribbean.

THE CUBAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE. Continuing Cuban discontent with Spanish rule flared into revolt in 1895. The cause of the war included:

- ★ prices for Cuban sugar and tobacco sharply declined, as a result of high U.S. tariffs and the panic of 1897.
- ★ the island experienced widespread economic depression.
- ★ perceptions on the part of ordinary Cubans that the Spanish colonial government was supportive of great planters and commercial interests at the expense of the people.

The Spanish government sent General Valeriano “Butcher” Weyler to suppress the uprising. Weyler began confining civilians in concentration camps closely supervised by Spanish troops. Many noncombatants in the camps, including women and children died of starvation and disease. Equally brutal, however, were the guerrilla tactics of the revolutionary forces.

During the last months of his second term President Cleveland tried both to maintain neutrality and to persuade the Spanish government to grant the Cubans some self government. Cleveland feared that the growing demand in the United States for intervention would compel his successor, McKinley, to act accordingly.

THE WAR FACTION. The groups most enthusiastic for a war to secure Cuban independence were

- ★ humanitarians who believed that Spanish policy, as exemplified by the actions of Weyler, was both arbitrary and cruel;
- ★ "jingoese,"⁵ who felt that Spain should be chastised;
- ★ certain Republican politicians who hoped that a successful struggle with Spain would increase support for the McKinley administration;
- ★ a few public officials, such as Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt and Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, who were nationalistic in spirit and eager to have the United States become a world power;
- ★ some newspaper publishers, notably William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World*, who printed exaggerated accounts of Spanish atrocities, while de-emphasizing atrocities of the Cuban revolutionists in order to increase their circulation. It has been argued by many that the single most important factor in pushing the United States into war with Spain was the activity of the “yellow press.”

THE DE LÔME LETTER. The position of the war faction was strengthened when, on February 9, 1898, Hearst's *New York Journal* printed a letter that the Spanish minister to the United States, Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, had written to a friend in Cuba. The letter contained slurs against President McKinley, referring to him as “weak and a bidder for

the admiration of the crowd.” To spare his government embarrassment, de Lôme promptly resigned. But the letter provoked anger among many Americans.

The Sinking of the Maine. On February 15, 1898, the United States battleship Maine, which had been ordered to Havana harbor to protect American life and property, blew up and sank with the loss of 260 of its crew. An official U.S. naval inquiry was unable to determine whether the explosion had been the work of hostile Spanish loyalists or of Cuban rebels, or had been entirely accidental. Those in the United States who were eager for war blamed Spain. The war faction made “Remember the Maine” a popular slogan. Sentiment throughout the nation grew for American intervention to liberate Cuba from Spain.

McKinley's War Message — Although personally desirous of averting war, President McKinley realized that a policy of "peace at any price" might split his party and wreck his administration. On April 11, 1898, he sent a message to Congress calling for American military intention to establish peace on the island. As a matter of fact, between the time McKinley wrote his message and the time he transmitted it to Congress, Spain had already agreed to United States demands that:

- ★ Spain proclaim an armistice,
- ★ close the concentration camps,
- ★ enter into negotiations with the rebels.

But the pressure for war was so great in Congress and throughout the nation that McKinley could resist it no longer. On April 19, 1898, Congress adopted a joint resolution for military intervention and McKinley signed it the next day.

The Teller Amendment — Attached to the document was the **Teller Amendment**, sponsored by Republican Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado, which stated that the United States would not exercise control over Cuba and pledged that the Cuban people would be able to establish their own government as soon as the island was liberated.

During the three decades following the Civil War the United States was negligent about maintaining an up-to-date and efficient military organization, primarily because no powerful foe was a threat to the nation. In the war with Spain the American people paid the price for this lack of preparedness.

The Army — For years Congress had shorted the Department of War. When the war with Spain began, the War Department simply wasn't competent to prepare the army for war. The War Department needed to double the size of the regular army (from 30,000 to 60,000 men) and train some 200,000 state militia volunteers. The American people were scandalized as they learned that inferior equipment, spoiled food, improper clothing, poor sanitation facilities, and inadequate medical services caused more deaths than did the fighting on the battlefield.

The Navy — Because of the nature of the war, the brunt of the fighting fell upon the navy of 26,000 men, which was far better prepared than the army. This was the first test of the new steel ships. Construction of these new ships had been going on since 1883.

War on Two Fronts — With the outbreak of war, Spain became vulnerable not only in its Caribbean colonies but also in its Pacific possessions. Despite serious blunders by both

civil and military authorities, the United States won the war with a weak Spain with relative ease.

The Philippine Campaign — The first United States blow for Cuban independence was struck not in the Caribbean but in Pacific Spanish colony of the Philippine Islands. Under orders from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Commodore George Dewey's Asiatic Squadron was prepared to engage the Spanish fleet in the Philippines immediately should war break out. Dewey's fleet steamed from its base near Hong Kong to Manila Bay. On May 1, 1898, Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet, which was wooden and unprepared. The U.S. captured the city of Manila on August 13.

The Caribbean Campaign — On June 22, 1898, 17,000 troops under the command of General William R. Shafter landed to the east of Santiago, Cuba. In the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill, both on July 1, 1898, the American army gained control of the heights to the north and east of Santiago and began preparations for the bombardment of the Spanish fleet below. In a victorious charge led by Theodore Roosevelt during the battle of San Juan Hill, the First United States Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, nicknamed the "Rough Riders," achieved a large measure of fame. On July 17 Santiago surrendered. After the termination of the Santiago operation, American troops were dispatched to capture the nearby Spanish colony of Puerto Rico.

American War Costs — Of the approximately 275,000 men who served, 5,462 died and 1,604 were wounded in combat. Only 385 of the deaths were battle casualties, most of the remainder being caused by disease, attributed to improper food, poor sanitation, and inadequate medical attention. As for financial costs, the United States spent approximately \$250 million in the conflict.

The Treaty of Paris — The terms of the peace settlement with Spain immediately impressed upon the American people how far and how fast they had traveled along the road of expansionism. The United States and Spain signed a peace treaty in Paris on December 10, 1898. The following items were in the treaty:

- ★ Cuba was granted independence and Spain agreed to assume the Cuban debt;
- ★ Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines were ceded to the United States;
- ★ the United States paid \$20 million to Spain for the Philippines.

Ratification — The final realization of American expansion, which was implemented by the Treaty of Paris, was the result of varied motives:

- ★ to increase the prestige of the nation by having it play a larger role in world affairs; (2) to tap the expanding trade with the Far East;
- ★ to frustrate the naval and commercial designs of rivals Germany and Japan in the Pacific;
- ★ to "uplift and civilize" the people of the islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

President McKinley had a tough time persuading the Senate to ratify the treaty. Isolationism was a strong motivator in U.S. politics. Even before the treaty was signed, the Anti-Imperialist League was organized. The league denounced the acquisition of colonial possessions as a policy. They argued that imperial expansion would:

- ★ have Americans control millions of people hostile to their rule;
- ★ impose heavy burdens upon the national treasury.

In the Senate some Republicans condemned any attempt to govern overseas possessions. The Democratic party sought to derive political gains out of the debate over ratification. William Jennings Bryan persuaded some Democratic senators to vote for ratification, hoping to make the new imperialism an issue that Democrats could use to achieve victory in the election of 1900. The treaty was ratified, but it was close.

A Colonial Empire

The administration of its new overseas possessions and relations with an independent Cuba presented the United States with new constitutional, political, and economic problems.

Election of 1900 — Imperialism was the most important issue in the presidential election of 1900.

Democrats — William Jennings Bryan was made the presidential nominee by acclamation. Selected to be his running mate was Adlai E. Stevenson, who had been vice-president during Cleveland's second term. A strong anti-imperialist policy for the nation was recommended by the platform.

Republicans — The delegates to the Republican national convention renominated William McKinley for president with great enthusiasm. Theodore Roosevelt, who after returning from the Spanish-American War a dashing hero had been elected- governor of New York, was chosen for second place on the ticket. The Republican platform praised the McKinley administration for its conduct of a "righteous war" against Spain and its assumption of a "moral duty" in the Philippines after the conflict.

The Campaign — Bryan endeavored to spread the gospel of anti-imperialism. Denunciation of the trusts, condemnation of the protective tariff, and support of the unlimited coinage of silver received less attention from the Democratic candidate than did his demand that the nation repudiate the course of empire upon which the Republicans had embarked. Republican leaders assailed Bryan throughout the campaign as an impractical radical.

McKinley's Victory — McKinley received 292 electoral votes to Bryan's 155. Bryan carried only four states outside of the Solid South. From the outset Bryan's cause had been hopeless. The nation was enjoying widespread prosperity at home and heightened prestige abroad. The voters were ready to assume the burdens of empire and to reward the party that had brought a revival of manufacturing and commercial activity.

The Aguinaldo Insurrection

When the Spanish-American War began, Emilio Aguinaldo, a municipal official who had recently led an unsuccessful revolt against Spanish control of his homeland, formed a native army to aid the American forces sent there. He hoped that after the anticipated American victory was achieved, he would be installed as president of a new Philippine republic. When he realized that the United States would keep the islands, he organized an insurrection which was finally suppressed by American troops in 1902.

Relations with Cuba

Although the United States withdrew its military forces from Cuba as soon as order had been restored, it imposed upon the newly established island republic certain conditions that kept it under American control.

The Platt Amendment — The United States established in Cuba a military government headed by Major General Leonard Wood. In 1901, with American support, a convention of Cuban delegates wrote a constitution for the new nation. As a condition for the withdrawal of American forces, the delegates were compelled to accept provisions that had been passed by Congress as a rider to an army appropriations bill. These provisions, known collectively as the Platt Amendment after their sponsor, Republican Senator Orville H. Platt of Connecticut, stipulated that:

- ★ Cuba would sign no treaty impairing its sovereignty without the consent of the United States;
- ★ Cuba would not incur a debt unless the interest could be met out of current revenues; the United States could intervene to preserve the independence or the political and social stability of Cuba;
- ★ Cuba would grant to the United States land for the establishment of naval bases. (Under the terms of the last clause the United States built at Guantnamo Bay in the eastern part of the island a naval station which it continues to operate.)

In 1902 American troops sailed for home. The following year the Platt Amendment was incorporated into a treaty between the United States and Cuba. In 1934 the Platt Amendment was abrogated, as part of the policy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration to improve relations between the United States and Latin America.

AN AGGRESSIVE FOREIGN POLICY

Roosevelt's foreign relations increased the influence of the United States in world affairs. His style came to be called "big stick diplomacy," a phrase originating from a remark he made before becoming president: "I have always been fond of the West African proverb: 'Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.' " When Taft succeeded Roosevelt as Chief Executive, he endeavored to enlarge American participation abroad by relying on business and financial pursuits.

The Panama Canal

Acquiring island possessions in both the Atlantic and the Pacific dramatically emphasized to Americans the desirability of an isthmian canal under the control of the United States between the two oceans.

THE HAY-PAUNCEFOTE TREATY — In 1850 the United States and Great Britain signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, by which . each nation agreed never to exercise exclusive control over or to fortify an isthmian canal, nor to colonize any part of Central America. But after adhering to the terms of the treaty for half a century, the United States changed their policy in the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901. The new agreement permitted the United States to build and control a canal but stipulated that the use of the waterway should be accorded to all nations on equal terms.

THE HAY-HERRAN TREATY. As soon as the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty was concluded, Congress began considering where the waterway should be constructed-in the republic of Nicaragua or in the Isthmus of Panama, a province of the republic of Colombia. The proposed route through Panama was chosen and Congress paid the New Panama Canal Company (a French firm that had tried to build a canal in the 1880s and still held the franchise for the project) \$40 million for its rights. In 1903 the Hay-Herran Treaty was signed with Colombia. The United States received a ninety-nine-year lease over a canal zone. President Roosevelt was annoyed and frustrated when the Colombian Senate rejected the treaty,

THE PANAMANIAN REVOLUTION — Panamanians wanted the waterway located in their land. Panama had long felt that it was being misruled by Colombia. On November 3, 1903, Panama revolted against Colombia and declared itself a republic. The rebels were successful because of United States action. Roosevelt ordered a warship to Panama, ostensibly to maintain the free and uninterrupted right of way across the Isthmus guaranteed the United States by a treaty with Colombia in 1846. What the vessel accomplished in fact was to prevent Colombia from landing troops in the province to suppress the uprising.

THE HAY-BUNAU-VARILLA TREATY — Two weeks after the revolution the United States negotiated a treaty with Panama, to create a a canal zone in Panama ten miles wide. The new Latin American republic would receive from the United States \$10 million and an annual payment of \$250,000

CONSTRUCTION OF THE CANAL — Excavation for the canal was begun in 1904, but it was hampered by tropical diseases, particularly malaria and yellow fever, among workmen. Colonel William C. Gorgas, a physician in the Army Medical Department, was put in charge of a comprehensive sanitation program. He soon rid the canal zone of

malaria and yellow fever. In 1907 Lieutenant Colonel George W. Goethals of the Army Corps of Engineers was appointed to direct the construction job as chief engineer. In 1914 the first ship passed through the Panama Canal.

Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War

Rivalry between Russia and Japan in China resulted in 1904 in a war between the two powers. President Roosevelt realized that an overwhelming defeat of either belligerent would upset the balance of power in the Far East, and he was sure that such unrivaled strength on the part of one nation would adversely affect American interests in the region. He thus intervened to bring the war to an end by inviting the two nations to engage in discussions at which he would serve as mediator.

Representatives from Russia and Japan conducted their negotiations at the navy yard in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and in September, 1905, signed a treaty terminating hostilities. Due largely to Roosevelt's opposition, Japan received neither the financial reparations nor the full territorial gains it had pressed for. In fact, the treaty negotiations began to undermine the friendship that had existed between the United States and Japan since the 1850s, when Japan was "opened" to the Western world by American Commodore Matthew C. Perry. In 1906 Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for his efforts as mediator.

THE TAFT-KATSURA MEMORANDUM — During the summer of 1905, the Taft-Katsura Memorandum, was signed by the United States and Japan. Under the terms of the memorandum, Japan acknowledged American sovereignty over the Philippines and the United States acknowledged Japanese control of Korea. Further, the two nations pledged to cooperate with each other to maintain peace in the Far East.

THE "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" — Japan was angered over discrimination in California against the large number of Japanese laborers who had gone to the state seeking better job opportunities. What rankled in particular was the recent action of the San Francisco School Board in ordering all Oriental students to attend a separate school. Anticipating a rupture in American-Japanese relations, President Roosevelt decided to intervene. He invited the entire school board of San Francisco to a conference in the White House. After considerable badgering by Roosevelt, the school board agreed to rescind the segregation order. Roosevelt pledged that Japanese immigration would, in some way, be limited.

In a series of diplomatic notes during 1907-1908 between the United States and Japan, the two states created the "Gentlemen's Agreement." Japan promised to deny passports to Japanese laborers seeking to emigrate to the United States. The United States agreed not to prohibit Japanese immigration completely. In 1924 the U.S. unilaterally ended the agreement by a congressional act prohibiting Japanese immigration to the United States.

WORLD CRUISE OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY — Roosevelt was eager to prevent Japan from interpreting his role in the San Francisco school matter fear of Japanese power. He sent a major part of the United States fleet on a fourteen-month world cruise as a demonstration of naval strength.

RELATIONS WITH EUROPE — Realizing that any upset in the balance of power in Europe could weaken American security, Roosevelt decided to play a role in the

European affairs. This course of action meant a departure from the established American policy of noninvolvement in purely European concerns. Increased activity in the affairs of Europe included:

- ★ THE ALGECIRAS CONFERENCE. In 1906 the United States and eight European nations, met in Algeciras, Spain to settle a territorial dispute between France and Germany over colonies in North Africa.
- ★ THE SECOND HAGUE CONFERENCE. In 1907 European nations and the U.S. in a conference to promote peace. The Conference were disappointing. Resolutions to reduce arms, to create an international court and to promote peace failed.

“Dollar Diplomacy”

Unlike Roosevelt, who had used dynamic and sometimes flagrantly aggressive approaches in conducting foreign affairs; Taft was inclined to employ economic means to reach diplomatic objectives. Both supporters and critics of the Taft administration called this policy "dollar diplomacy."

THE CHINESE CONSORTIUM — In 1909 the United States joined with British, French, and Germans to construct a railroad in China. Three years later Taft approved to a more ambitious undertaking—a government loan to the newly proclaimed Republic of China.

THE EFFECTS OF ECONOMIC EXPANSIONISM — The investment of American money abroad, which so many called dollar diplomacy, was described by Taft as merely an effort “directed to the increase of American trade.” The U.S. rarely tried to actually take control over foreign territories, preferring to exert financial pressures, more dollar diplomacy, to achieve U.S. security and business goals in foreign affairs. During the first two decades of the 20th century, the U.S. devoted a great deal of money to foreign investments, but had little interest in European style colonization. The U.S. had little desire to impose direct political control over foreign states. In general, ‘dollar diplomacy’ was profitable to U.S. business interests and positive for at least the ruling classes of those nations who benefitted from U.S. investment.