American Imperialism

The United States declared war on Spain in April 1898, which resulted in the United States gaining control over the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The U.S. lost 379 troops in combat and over 5,000 to disease.

Reasons for the Spanish-American War

- Prior to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, President McKinley felt the U.S. needed to get involved in Cuba in order to protect its business interests there.
- Americans supported Cuban rebels who wanted to gain independence from Spain.
- Tensions rose as a result of the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana Harbor; although it was never proven, many Americans placed responsibility on Spain. "Remember the Maine!" became the war's most famous slogan.
- American newspapers slanted the news with "yellow journalism" to create more public support for the Cubans.
- Before Congress would declare war, they passed the Teller Amendment. It stated that the U.S. would not annex Cuba after it had gained independence from Spain.

Results of the Spanish-American War

- The Treaty of Paris was signed in 1898.
- The United States emerged as a world power.
- Cuba gained its independence from Spain, the U.S. obtained the Philippines for $20 million, and Puerto Rico and Guam were ceded to the U.S.
- Imperialism is the idea that one country has the right to conquer another country and put that territory under its control and influence. U.S. expansion of its influence into the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam are examples of imperialism.
- The Platt Amendment allowed the U.S. to protect Cuba, so the U.S. built a military base at Guantánamo Bay.
- Though Spain had sold the Philippines to the United States, Filipinos wanted to be part of an independent country. Most Americans, however, believed the people of the Philippines were ignorant natives who could not take care of themselves. This idea, known as the "white man's burden," was used as justification for American imperialism.
- In 1899, the Philippine Republic declared war on the U.S. and fought until 1902, though they were ultimately defeated.
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listed below are some of the important ideas and events involving American diplomacy during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Monroe Doctrine

President Monroe outlined his foreign policy in a speech given to Congress in 1823. This policy became known as the Monroe Doctrine. It stated that European countries would no longer be allowed to create new colonies or interfere with the affairs of independent nations in the Western Hemisphere. The United States would be willing to fight to prevent new colonies from falling under European control. This doctrine was used as justification for U.S. involvement in the affairs of various countries in Latin America.

Manifest Destiny

First used in a newspaper article written by John O'Sullivan in 1845, the term "Manifest Destiny" described the idea that the westward expansion of the United States was inevitable because of fate. In 1845, John O'Sullivan wrote a newspaper article on the annexation of Texas in which he said it was America's "manifest destiny to overspread the continent." The concept of Manifest Destiny was also used to justify expansion into California, Oregon, and Alaska.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Manifest Destiny experienced a brief resurgence. Some politicians began to use the ideas of Manifest Destiny to justify expansion overseas, especially to areas of Asia, Latin American, and the Pacific. In 1898 two distinct phases of expansion occurred. The U.S. signed a resolution to annex the Republic of Hawaii, while the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War included the acquisition of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines from Spain. In the early 20th century, American military forces were sent to places such as the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Haiti in order to protect the interests of American companies that had invested in those places. Many American companies were quite powerful and were involved in mining, railroads, and banana and sugar plantations.

Alfred Thayer Mahan

Mahan was the president of the U.S. Naval War College. In 1890, he wrote The Influence of Sea Power upon History in which he made the argument that a country needed a strong navy in order to be powerful. He also believed that the U.S. needed overseas bases to support ships involved in trade and defense. Mahan's ideas influenced the expansionist policies of the time.

Open Door Policy

Secretary of State John Hay initiated the Open Door Policy in 1899. At that time, several Western powers had control over trade in China. Each country—including Great Britain, France, and Germany—controlled trade in a certain section of China. The U.S. did not want to be left
Hay convinced the other countries to sign a treaty that would open up trade with China to all countries, but most countries ignored the policy anyway.

**Boxer Rebellion**

The Boxer Rebellion of 1899-1901 was a Chinese uprising against foreign nations. Supporters of the rebellion believed foreign nations had been exploiting the country. The United States feared that the rebellion threatened its trade interests in Asia and was one of several nations that put down the rebellion.

**Banana Republics**

"Banana republic" was a name given to developing nations that were virtually controlled by United States companies. U.S. private companies owned large banana plantations in many nations throughout Central America. The governments of these nations were influenced by the companies, whose vast property could be protected by the United States and its military. The most famous of these was the United Fruit Company, which began running some of Guatemala's government services in 1901 and continued to influence its government through the Cold War.

**Roosevelt Corollary**

President Theodore Roosevelt shared his Roosevelt Corollary with Congress in 1904. It was his addition to the Monroe Doctrine. It said that the U.S. would intervene in the finances of smaller countries in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. wanted to help these countries and prevent the Europeans from taking them over.

**Big Stick Diplomacy**

Roosevelt's foreign policy was called "big stick diplomacy." It came from the saying, "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." Roosevelt used a "big stick," or threat of using military force, to protect America's interests. This policy was especially prevalent when dealing with Europe and Latin America.

**Dollar Diplomacy**

President Taft developed the concept of Dollar Diplomacy to deal with other countries, especially those in Latin America. This policy said that the U.S. should use its financial strength, not its military power, to influence other countries. It encouraged Americans to invest money in foreign markets.

**Missionary Diplomacy**

Missionary Diplomacy was a U.S. foreign policy concerning Latin America during the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. Under Missionary Diplomacy, the United States attempted to spread democracy to other nations of the Western Hemisphere. Wilson believed that
a democratic system would bring as much success to Latin American nations as it had to the United States. Unfortunately, this meant that Wilson often used the U.S. military to forcibly remove Latin American governments he did not approve of. The U.S. intervened in Mexico, Haiti, Cuba, Panama, and Nicaragua during Wilson's presidency.
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Following the Spanish-American War, the United States began to use its position as a world power in order to influence important global politics. Two events proved America’s dominance on the world stage. The U.S. used its position and resources to secure the Panama Canal and the territory of Hawaii.

The Panama Canal

The United States had an economic interest in the construction of a canal in Panama. Panama was controlled by Colombia, but the U.S. hoped to negotiate a treaty with Colombia that would give them power to build the canal. The Colombian government, however, would not sign the treaty. As a result of Colombia’s rejection of the U.S. treaty offer, the U.S. government decided to help Panama fight for independence. Once Panama became an independent country, it signed the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. Under the terms of the treaty, the U.S. paid $10 million to purchase the land needed to build the canal. The U.S. maintained complete control of the Panama Canal Zone until 1979, when they started to turn over control to Panama.

Hawaii

The Kingdom of Hawaii had good relations with the United States during the late 1800s. An 1875 treaty between the Kingdom of Hawaii and the United States allowed for duty-free importation of Hawaiian sugar into the United States beginning in 1876. This action resulted in the development of sugar plantations throughout Hawaii. The sugar cane planters supported being annexed by the U.S. because they believed that not having to pay tariffs would mean that they could get more money when selling their crops. The American planters formed a militia and forced the Hawaiian government to draft a new constitution that allowed them more
When Queen Liliuokalani, the traditional Hawaiian monarch, attempted to restore more power to the native Hawaiians, the American militia overthrew the government. Despite some opposition, the sugar cane planters got the U.S. to annex Hawaii in 1898. In 1900, Hawaii became a U.S. territory, and all Hawaiian citizens became U.S. citizens. It was the first territory the U.S. acquired in the Pacific Ocean and would later become the 50th U.S. state in 1959.