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# 20

## Empire and Wars

1898–1918

### AMERICAN HISTORIES

Alfred Thayer Mahan came from a military family. Born in 1840, he grew up in West Point, New York, where his father served as dean of the faculty at the U.S. Military Academy. Seeking to emerge from his father's shadow, Alfred attended the U.S. Naval Academy, from which he graduated and received his commission in 1861, just as the Civil War was getting under way. His wartime experience convinced him that the navy, with its plodding, antiquated wooden vessels, needed a dramatic overhaul.

After the war, Mahan continued his naval career. Rather than making his mark on the high seas, Captain Mahan built his reputation as a military historian and strategist at the U.S. Naval War College. In 1890 he published *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, in which he argued that the great imperial powers in modern history—Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and France—had succeeded because they possessed strong navies and merchant marines. In his view, sea power had allowed these nations to defeat their enemies, conquer territories, and establish colonies from which they extracted raw materials and opened markets for finished goods. Appearing at a time when European nations were embarking on a new round of empire building, this book and subsequent writings had an enormous influence on American imperialists, including Theodore Roosevelt. Mahan's work reinforced the belief of men like Roosevelt that the long-term prospects of the United States depended on the acquisition of strategic outposts in Asia and the Caribbean that could guarantee American access to overseas markets.



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Puck magazine cover showing Theodore Roosevelt admiring "imperialism" crown on display, 1904.

Alabama troops of the 167th Infantry in a trench near Arcenville, France, 1918.

Red Cross poster, 1917.

Alfred Thayer Mahan  
and José Martí

As the economic and strategic importance of the Caribbean grew in the minds of imperial strategists such as Mahan and Roosevelt, the Cuban freedom fighter José Martí developed a very different vision of the region's future. Born in 1853 to Spanish immigrants who had migrated to Cuba for economic reasons, Martí got involved in the fight for Cuban independence from Spain as a teenager. In 1869, at age seventeen, he was arrested for protest activities during a revolutionary uprising against Spain. Sentenced to six years of hard labor, Martí was released after six months and was forced into exile. He returned to Cuba in 1878, only to be arrested and deported again the following year.

Martí settled in the United States, where, along with other Cuban exiles, he continued to promote Cuban independence and the establishment of a democratic republic. He conceived of the idea of *Cuba Libre* (Free Cuba) not just as a struggle for political independence



both photos: Library of Congress

but also as a social revolution that would erase unfair distinctions based on race and class. "Our goal," Martí declared in 1892, "is not so much a mere political change as a good, sound, and just and equitable system." Martí united disparate elements in expatriate communities in the United States and the Caribbean under the banner of a single Cuban Revolutionary Party.

When Cubans once again rebelled against Spain in 1895, Martí returned to Cuba to fight alongside his comrades. On May 19, 1895, only three months after he had returned to Cuba, Martí died in battle. Cuba ultimately won its independence from Spain, but Martí's vision of *Cuba Libre* was only partially realized. In 1898 the United

States intervened on the side of the Cuban rebels, guaranteeing their victory, but not their freedom. America entered the war to gain control over Cuba, not to help Cubans take control of their own country. ♦

use its power to secure order and thwart revolution wherever American interests were seen to be threatened. Having become a major power on the world stage in the early twentieth century, the United States chose to enter World War I, in which rival European alliances battled for imperial domination. The end of the war heightened America's critical role in world affairs but brought neither lasting peace nor the dissolution of empire.

## The Awakening of Imperialism

The United States became a modern imperial power relatively late. In the decades following the Civil War, the U.S. government concentrated most of its energies on settling the western territories, pushing Native Americans aside, and extracting the region's resources. Unlike Europe, the United States possessed a sparsely inhabited frontier

1898–1918

that would furnish land for its growing population, as well as raw materials and markets for its industries. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, sweeping economic, cultural, and social changes led many Americans to conclude that the time had come for the country to assert its power beyond its borders. Convinced of the argument for empire advanced by Mahan and other imperialists, American officials embraced an expansionist foreign policy. In a burst of overseas expansion from 1898 to 1904, the United States acquired Guam, Hawaii, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico; established a protectorate in Cuba; and exercised force to build a canal through Panama. These gains paved the way for subsequent U.S. intervention in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.

## The Economics of Expansion

The industrialization of America and the growth of corporate capitalism stimulated imperialist desires in the late nineteenth century. Throughout its early history, the United States had sought overseas markets for exports, particularly its agricultural products. However, the importance of exports to the American economy increased dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century, as industrialization gained momentum. In 1870 American exports totaled \$500 million. By 1905 the value of American exports had increased sixfold to \$1.5 billion (Figure 20.1). John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company led the way in selling products to European and Asian markets, and firms such as Coca-Cola, Kodak, and McCormick earned profits by exporting soft drinks, cameras, and farm machinery, respectively.

The bulk of American exports went to the developed markets of Europe and Canada, which had the greatest purchasing power. Although the less economically advanced nations of Latin America and Asia did not have the same ability to buy American products, businessmen still considered these regions—especially China, with a population of millions of potential consumers—as future markets for American industries.

The desire to expand foreign markets remained a steady feature of American business interests. The fear that the domestic market for manufactured goods was shrinking gave this expansionist hunger greater urgency. The fluctuating business cycle of boom and bust that characterized the economy in the 1870s and 1880s reached its peak in the depression of the 1890s, the most severe economic downturn up to that point in American history. The social unrest that accompanied this depression, including protest marches and strikes (see chapter 17), worried business and political leaders about the stability of the country. The way to sustain prosperity and contain radicalism, many businessmen agreed, was to find foreign markets for goods that

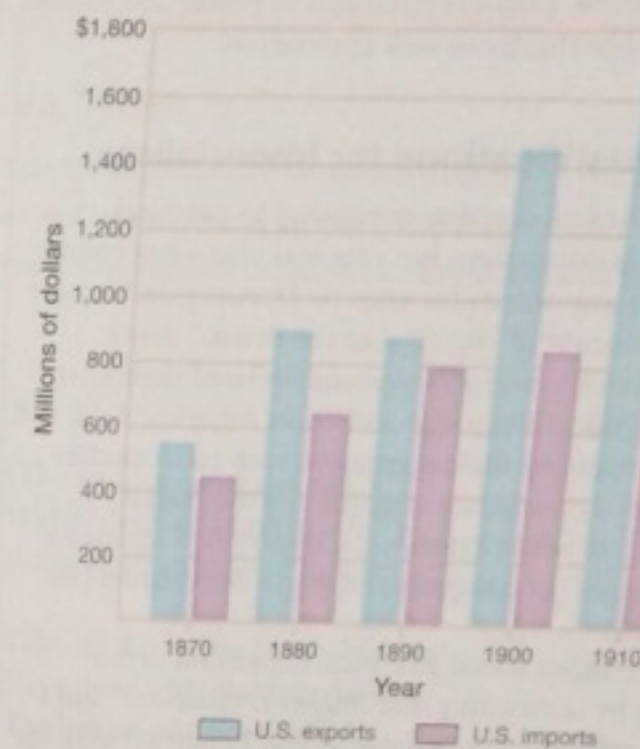


FIGURE 20.1 U.S. Exports and Imports, 1870–1910

As American industrial power increased at the end of the nineteenth century, exports increased dramatically. Between 1870 and 1910, U.S. exports more than tripled. Imports rose as well but were restrained by protective tariffs.

poured out of factories but could not be absorbed at home. Senator William Frye of Maine argued, "We must have the market [of China] or we shall have revolution."

Similar commercial ambitions led many Americans to see Hawaii as an imperial prize. Interest in the islands dated back to the early nineteenth century. American missionaries first visited the Hawaiian Islands in 1820. As missionaries tried to convert native islanders to Christianity, American businessmen sought to establish plantations on the islands, especially to grow sugarcane, as the market for sugar had grown rapidly during the 1870s and 1880s. In exchange for duty-free access to the U.S. sugar market, white Hawaiians signed an agreement in 1887 that granted the United States exclusive rights to a naval base at Pearl Harbor in Honolulu.

The growing influence of white sugar planters on the islands alarmed native Hawaiians. In 1891 Queen Liliuokalani, a strong nationalist leader who voiced the slogan "Hawaii for the Hawaiians," sought to increase the power of the indigenous peoples she governed, at the expense of the sugar growers. In 1893 white plantation owners, with the cooperation of the American ambassador to Hawaii and 150 U.S. marines, overthrew the queen's government. Once in command of the government, they entered into a treaty of annexation with the United States. However, President Grover Cleveland opposed annexation and withdrew the

treaty. Nevertheless, planters remained in power and waited for a suitable opportunity to seek annexation.

### Cultural Justifications for Imperialism

Imperialists linked overseas expansion to practical, economic considerations, but race was also a key component in their arguments for empire. Drawing on Herbert Spencer's concept of "survival of the fittest," many Americans and western Europeans declared themselves superior to nonwhite peoples of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Buttressing their arguments with racist studies claiming to demonstrate scientifically the "racial" superiority of white Protestants, imperialists claimed a "natural right" of conquest and world domination (see chapter 19).

Imperialists added an ethical dimension to this ideology by contending that "higher civilizations" had a duty to uplift inferior nations. In *Our Country* (1885), the Congregationalist minister Josiah Strong proclaimed the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon, or white northern European, race and the responsibility of the United States to spread the "blessings" of its Christian way of life throughout the world. Secular intellectuals, such as historian John Fiske, praised the English race for settling the United States and predicted that "its language . . . its religion . . . its political habits, and . . . the blood of its people" would become "predominant" in the less civilized parts of the globe.

As in Hawaii, Christian missionaries served as foot soldiers for the advancing American commercial empire. In fact, there was often a clear connection between religious and commercial interests. For example, in 1895 industrialists John D. Rockefeller Jr. and Cyrus McCormick created the World Student Christian Federation, which dispatched more than five thousand young missionaries throughout the world, many of them women. Likewise, it was no coincidence that China, an enormous potential market for American products, became a magnet for American missionary activity. By 1920 missionaries in China were operating schools, hospitals, orphanages, leper colonies, churches, and seminaries, seeking to convert the "backward" Chinese to Christianity and the American way of life. Many Americans hoped that, under missionary supervision, the Chinese would become consumers of both American ideas and American products.

### Gender and Empire

Gender anxieties provided an additional motivation for American imperialism. In the late nineteenth century, with

the Civil War long over, many Americans worried that the rising generation of American men lacked opportunities to test and strengthen their manhood. For example, in 1897 Mississippi congressman John Sharp Williams lamented the waning of "the dominant spirit which controlled in this Republic [from 1776 to 1865] . . . one of honor, glory, chivalry, and patriotism." Such gender anxieties were not limited to elites. The depression of the 1890s hit working-class men hard, causing them to question their self-worth as they lost the ability to support their families. In this context, the poem "The White Man's Burden," written by the British writer and poet Rudyard Kipling in 1899, touched a nerve with American men. In the poem, Kipling urges white men to take up the "burden" of bringing civilization to non-Western peoples. By embracing the imperialist project, they would regain their manly honor.

#### Explore

See Document 20.1 for part of Kipling's famous poem.

The growing presence of women as political activists in campaigns for suffrage and moral, humanitarian, and governmental reforms was particularly troubling to male identity. Some men warned that dire consequences would result if women succeeded in feminizing politics. Alfred Thayer Mahan believed that women's suffrage would undermine the nation's military security because women lacked the will to use physical force. He asserted that giving the vote to women would destroy the "constant practice of the past ages by which to men are assigned the outdoor rough action of life and to women that indoor sphere which we call the family." As Mahan's comment shows, calling American men to action was often paired with a call for American women to leave the public arena and return to the home.

American males could reassert their manhood by adopting a militant spirit. An English verse from 1878 described this attitude: "We don't want to fight, yet by Jingo! If we do, we've got the ships, we've got the men, and got the money too." Known as **jingoists**, war enthusiasts such as Theodore Roosevelt could not contain their desire to find a war in which to prove their masculinity. "You and your generation have had your chance from 1861 to 1865," Roosevelt exclaimed to a Civil War veteran. "Now let us of this generation have ours!" Captain Mahan concurred. "No greater danger could befall civilization than the disappearance of the warlike spirit (I dare say war) among civilized men," he asserted. "There are too many barbarians still in the world." Mahan and Roosevelt echoed the British jingoists' pride in naval power. The Naval Act of 1890 authorized funding for construction of three battleships to join the two existing ones. These

### DOCUMENT 20.1

#### Rudyard Kipling | "The White Man's Burden," 1899

The English writer Rudyard Kipling was a leading exponent of British imperialism. His famous poem "The White Man's Burden" originally appeared in the popular American magazine *McClure's* with the subtitle "The United States and the Philippine Islands." Given this subtitle, the poem can be seen as a direct appeal to American men to join their British counterparts in the global imperial project.

#### Explore

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go, bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait, in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child. . . .

Take up the White Man's burden—  
The savage wars of peace—  
Fill full the mouth of Famine,  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest

(The end for others sought)  
Watch sloth and heathen folly  
Bring all your hope to nought. . . .

Take up the White Man's burden!  
Have done with childish days—  
The lightly-proffered laurel,  
The easy ungrudging praise:  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years,  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers.

Source: Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," *McClure's Magazine*, February 1899, 290–91.

#### Interpret the Evidence

- How does Kipling characterize the relationship between colonizers and the colonized?
- According to Kipling, why was it appropriate to describe imperialism as a "burden"?

#### Put It in Context

How was the notion of "the white man's burden" used to justify expansion and annexation?

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### REVIEW & RELATE

- What role did economic developments play in prompting calls for an American empire? What role did social and cultural developments play?
- Why did the United States embark on building an empire in the 1890s and not decades earlier?

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### The War with Spain

The United States went to war with Spain in 1898 not to defend itself from attack but because American policymakers decided that Cuban independence from Spain was in America's national interest. American leaders had long coveted Cuba for its economic resources and strategic location in the Caribbean. When the Cubans revolted against Spain in the mid-1890s, the United States seized its chance. Victory over Spain, however, brought America much more than control over Cuba. In the peace negotiations following the war, the United States acquired a significant portion of Spain's overseas empire, turning the United States into a major imperial power.

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### Cuba Libre

The Cuban War for Independence began in 1895 around the concept of *Cubanidad*—pride of nation. José Martí envisioned that this war of national liberation from Spain would provide land to impoverished peasants and offer genuine racial equality for the large Afro-Cuban population that had been liberated from slavery less than a decade earlier, in 1886. Black Cubans, such as Antonio Maceo, flocked to the revolutionary cause and constituted a significant portion of the senior ranks in the rebel army.

The insurgents fought a brilliant guerrilla war. Facing some 200,000 Spanish troops, 50,000 rebels ground them down in a war of attrition. The Cuban insurgents burned crops, laid siege to land, and cut railroad lines to keep the Spaniards from using these vital resources. Within eighteen months, the rebellion had spread across the island and garnered the support of all segments of the Cuban population. The Spanish government's brutal attempts to crack

down on the rebels only stiffened their resistance. By the end of 1897, the Spanish government recognized that the war was going poorly and offered the rebels a series of reforms that would give the island home rule within the empire but not independence. Sensing victory, the insurgents held out for total separation to realize their vision of *Cuba Libre*, an independent Cuba with greater social and racial equality.

The revolutionaries had every reason to feel confident as they wore down Spanish troops. First, they had help from the climate. One-quarter of Spanish soldiers had contracted yellow fever, malaria, and other tropical illnesses and remained confined to hospitals. The chief military commander of the rebel forces, General Maximo Gómez, bragged that his three best generals were "*Junio, Julio, and Agosto*," referring to the months of June, July, and August, which ushered in the rainy season and increased the spread of disease. Second, mounting a successful counterinsurgency would have required far more troops than Spain



Cuban Revolutionary Soldiers

Under the command of General Maximo Gómez, these Cuban soldiers fought against Spanish forces in 1896. Gómez waged guerrilla warfare for Cuban independence from Spain before the United States entered the war. His army consisted of numerous Afro-Cubans, whose race troubled white American commanders when they occupied Cuba. The Granger Collection, New York

could spare. Its forces were spread too thin around the globe to keep the empire intact. In addition to Cuba, Spain stationed some 200,000 troops in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Africa. Finally, antiwar sentiment was mounting in Spain, and on January 12, 1898, Spanish troops mutinied in Havana. Speaking for many, a former president of Spain asserted: "Spain is exhausted. She must withdraw her troops and recognize Cuban independence before it is too late." U.S. Secretary of State John Sherman concurred: "Spain will lose Cuba. . . . She cannot continue the struggle."

### The War of 1898

With the Cuban insurgents on the verge of victory, American policymakers, including President William McKinley, came to favor military intervention as a way to increase American control of postwar Cuba. By intervening before the Cubans won on their own, the United States staked its claim for determining the postwar relationship between the two countries and protecting its vital interests in the Caribbean, including the private property rights of American landowners in Cuba.

The American press, however, helped build support for American intervention not by focusing on economic interests and geopolitics but by framing the war as a matter of American honor. Most Americans followed the war through newspaper accounts. William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* competed with Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* to see which could provide the most lurid coverage of Spanish atrocities. The two newspapers sent correspondents to Cuba to cover every grisly story they could find—and to make up stories, if necessary. Known disparagingly as **yellow journalism**, these sensationalist newspaper accounts aroused jingoistic outrage against Spain.

On February 9, 1898, the *Journal* printed a letter that had come into Hearst's possession. Under the headline "Worst Insult to the United States in History," the newspaper quoted a private letter from Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, the Spanish minister in Washington, scolding President McKinley as a "weak" politician who pandered to "the crowd" to win public favor. Nearly a week later, on February 15, the battleship *Maine*, anchored in Havana harbor, exploded, killing 266 American sailors. American newspapers blamed Spain. The *World* shouted the rallying cry "Remember the *Maine*! To hell with Spain!" Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt seconded this sentiment by denouncing the explosion as a Spanish "act of treachery." Why the Spaniards would choose to blow up the *Maine* and provoke war with the United States while already losing to Cuba remained unanswered, but the incident was enough to turn American opinion toward war.

On April 11, 1898, McKinley asked Congress to declare war against Spain. The declaration included an amendment proposed by Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado declaring that Cuba "ought to be free and independent." Yet the document left enough room for American maneuvering to satisfy the imperial ambitions of the McKinley administration. In endorsing independence, the war proclamation asserted the right of the United States to remain involved in Cuban affairs until it had achieved "pacification." On April 21, the United States officially went to war with Spain.

In going to war, McKinley embarked on an imperialistic course that had been building since the early 1890s. The president signaled the broader expansionist concerns behind the war when, shortly after it began, he successfully steered a Hawaiian annexation treaty through Congress. Businessmen joined imperialists in seizing the moment to create a commercial empire that would catch up to their European rivals.

It was fortunate for the United States that the Cuban insurgents had seriously weakened Spanish forces before the Americans arrived. The U.S. army, consisting of fewer than 30,000 men, lacked sufficient strength to conquer Cuba on its own, and McKinley had to mobilize some 200,000 National Guard troops and assorted volunteers. Theodore Roosevelt resigned from his post as assistant secretary of the navy and organized his own regiment, called "Rough Riders." American forces faced several problems: They lacked battle experience; supplies were inadequate; their uniforms were not suited for the hot, humid climate of a Cuban summer; and the soldiers did not have immunity from tropical diseases.

African American soldiers, who made up about one-quarter of the troops, encountered additional difficulties. As more and more black troops arrived in southern ports for deployment to Cuba, they faced increasingly hostile crowds, angered at the presence of armed African American men in uniform. In Tampa, Florida, where troops gathered from all over the country to be transported to Cuba, racial tensions exploded on the afternoon of June 8. Intoxicated white soldiers from Ohio grabbed a two-year-old black boy from his mother and used him for target practice, shooting a bullet through his shirtsleeve. In retaliation, African American soldiers stormed into the streets and exchanged gunfire with whites, leaving three whites and twenty-seven black soldiers wounded. Reporting the story of this "riot," the *Atlanta Constitution* denounced the "wild and demonic conduct of the [N]egro regulars," completely ignoring the behavior of the white troops that had prompted the fracas. Undaunted, black troops went on to distinguish themselves on Cuban battlefields.

Despite military inexperience, logistical problems, and racial tensions, the United States quickly defeated the

weakened Spanish military, and the war was over four months after it began. During the war, 460 Americans died in combat, far fewer than the more than 5,000 who lost their lives to disease. It was not surprising, then, that Secretary of State John Hay referred to the hostilities as "a splendid little war." The subsequent peace treaty ended Spanish rule in Cuba, ceded Puerto Rico and the Pacific island of Guam to the United States, and recognized American occupation of the Philippines until the two countries could arrange a final settlement. As a result of the territorial gains in the war, American foreign-policy strategists could now begin to construct the empire that Mahan had envisioned.

### A Not-So-Free Cuba

Although Congress had adopted the **Teller Amendment** in 1898 pledging Cuba's independence from Spain, President McKinley and his supporters insisted that Cuban self-rule would come only after pacification. Racial prejudice and cultural chauvinism blinded Americans to the contributions Cubans had made to defeat Spain. When white commanding officers arrived in Cuba, they expressed shock at the large number of blacks in the Cuban military, many of whom held leadership positions. One U.S. officer reported to the *New York Times*: "The typical Cuban I encountered was a treacherous, lying, cowardly, thieving, worthless half-breed mongrel, born of a mongrel spawn of [Spain], crossed upon the fetches of darkest Africa and aboriginal America." José Martí may have been fighting for racial equality, but the U.S. government certainly was not.

Because U.S. officials presumed that Cuba was unfit for immediate freedom, the island remained under U.S. military occupation until 1902. The highlight of Cuba's transition to self-rule came with the adoption of a governing document based on the U.S. Constitution. However, the Cuban constitution came with strings attached. In March 1901, Congress passed the **Platt Amendment**, introduced by Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut, which limited Cuban sovereignty. The amendment prohibited the Cuban government from signing treaties with other nations without U.S. consent, permitted the United States to intervene in Cuba to preserve independence and remove threats to economic stability, and leased Guantánamo Bay to the United States as a naval base, an arrangement that continues to this day. American officials pressured Cuban leaders to incorporate the Platt Amendment into their constitution. When U.S. occupation ended in 1902, Cuba was not fully independent. Instead, the United States established Cuba as a protectorate, paving the way for economic

exploitation of the island and the return of American troops to safeguard investments.

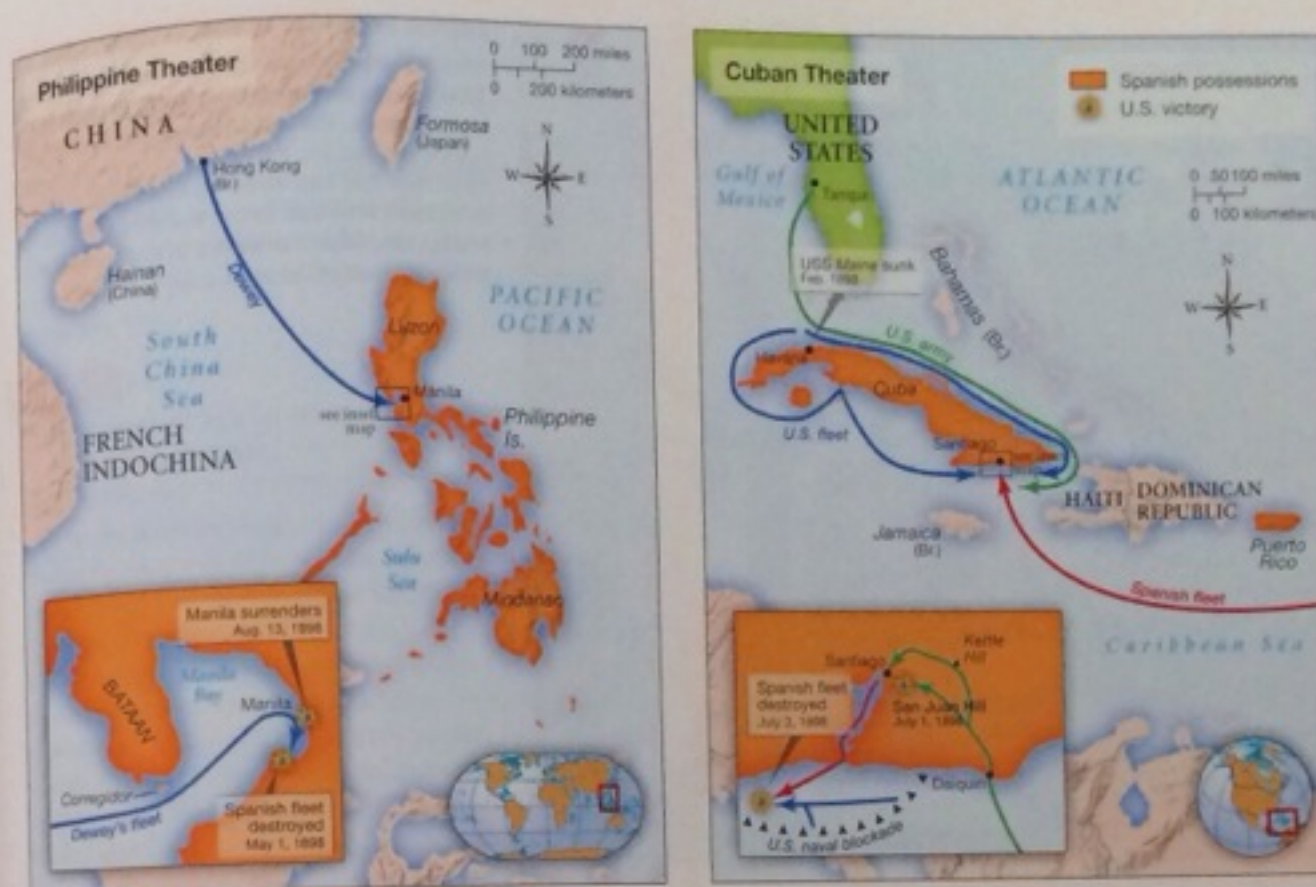
### The Philippine War

Even before invading Cuba, the United States had won a significant battle against Spain on the other side of the world. At the outset of the war, the U.S. Pacific Fleet, under the command of Commodore George Dewey, attacked Spanish forces in their colony of the Philippines. Dewey defeated the Spanish flotilla in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, killing nearly four hundred Spanish sailors, while eight Americans suffered only minor injuries. Two and a half months later, American troops followed up with an invasion of Manila, and Spanish forces promptly surrendered (Map 20.1).

While pacifying Cuba, the U.S. government had to decide what to do with the Philippines. Imperialists viewed American control of the islands as an important step forward in the quest for entry into the China market. The Philippines could serve as a naval station for the merchant marine and the navy to safeguard potential trade with the Asian mainland. Moreover, President McKinley believed that if the United States did not act, another European power would take Spain's place, something he thought would be "bad business and deplorable."

With this in mind, McKinley decided to annex the Philippines. As with Cuba, McKinley and many other Americans believed that nonwhite Filipinos were not yet capable of self-government. Indiana senator Albert Beveridge commented: "We must never forget that in dealing with the Filipinos we deal with children." McKinley agreed and set out "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them." As was often the case with imperialism, assumptions of racial and cultural superiority provided a handy justification for the pursuit of economic and strategic advantage.

The president's plans, however, ran into vigorous opposition. Anti-imperialist lawmakers took a strong stand against annexing the Philippines. Despite the jingoist fervor surrounding the War of 1898, opponents of imperialism constituted a vocal group. Their cause drew support from such prominent Americans as industrialist Andrew Carnegie, social reformer Jane Addams, writer Mark Twain, and labor organizer Samuel Gompers, all of whom joined the **Anti-Imperialist League**, founded in November 1898. Some argued that the United States would violate its anticolonialist heritage by acquiring the islands. Union leaders feared that annexation would prompt the migration of cheap laborers into the country and undercut wages. Others worried about the financial costs of supporting military forces across the Pacific. Most anti-imperialists had



MAP 20.1 The War of 1898

The United States and Spain fought the War of 1898 on two fronts—the Philippines and Cuba. Naval forces led by Admiral George Dewey made the difference in the U.S. victory by first defeating the Spaniards in Manila Bay and then off the coast of Cuba. In Cuba, rebels had seriously weakened the Spanish military before U.S. ground troops secured victory.

racial reasons for rejecting the treaty. Like imperialists, they considered Asians to be inferior to Europeans. In fact, many anti-imperialists held an even dimmer view of the capabilities of people of color than did their opponents, rejecting the notion that Filipinos could be "civilized" under American tutelage. **See Document Project 20: Imperialism versus Anti-Imperialism, page 644.**

Despite this opposition, the imperialists won out. Approval of the treaty annexing the Philippines in 1898 marked the beginning of problems for the United States. As in Cuba, rebellion had preceded American occupation. At first, the rebels welcomed the Americans as liberators, but once it became clear that American rule would simply replace Spanish rule, the mood changed. Led by Emilio Aguinaldo, insurgent forces fought back against the 70,000 troops sent by this latest colonial power. "Either independence or death!" became the battle cry of Aguinaldo's rebel army. The rebels adopted guerrilla tactics and resorted to terrorist assaults against the U.S. army.

U.S. forces responded in kind, adopting harsh methods to suppress the uprising. General Jacob H.

Smith ordered his troops to "kill and burn, and the more you kill and burn, the better you will please me." Racist sentiments inflamed passions against the dark-skinned Filipino insurgents. One American soldier wrote home saying that "he wanted to blow every nigger into nigger heaven." American counterinsurgency efforts, which indiscriminately targeted combatants and civilians alike, alienated the native population. An estimated 200,000 Filipino civilians died between 1899 and 1902.

The Americans' taste for war and sacrifice quickly waned. Nearly 5,000 Americans died in the Philippine war, far more combat deaths than in Cuba. With casualties mounting and reports growing of combat-related atrocities, antiwar sentiment spread in the United States. Dissenters turned imperialist arguments of manly American honor upside down. Reports of battlefield horrors inflicted on Filipino civilians prompted Senator George L. Wellington of Maryland to complain that the army had "step by step departed from the broad highway of honorable warfare . . . and [had] adopted methods of barbarism



### Filipino Prisoners of War

After the United States annexed the Philippines in 1899, Filipino rebels continued their struggle for independence. The United States had a more difficult time subduing the rebels led by Emilio Aguinaldo than they had defeating Spain, but after three years American forces triumphed. In this photograph, Filipino prisoners of war are held in Manila. Library of Congress

and savagery such as the wild natives of the unconquered Philippine Islands could not approach." For many Americans, the "splendid little war" had turned into a sordid affair. Anti-imperialists claimed that the war had done nothing to affirm American manhood; rather, they charged, the United States acted as a bully, taking the position of "a strong man" fighting against "a weak and puny child."

Despite growing casualties on the battlefield and antiwar sentiment at home, the conflict ended with an American military victory. In March 1901, U.S. forces captured Aguinaldo and broke the back of the rebellion. Exhausted, the Filipino leader asked his comrades to lay down their arms. In July 1901, President McKinley appointed Judge William Howard Taft of Ohio as the first civilian governor to oversee the government of the Philippines. For the next forty-five years, except for a brief period of Japanese rule during World War II, the United States remained in control of the islands.

### REVIEW & RELATE

Why did the United States go to war with Spain in 1898?

In what ways did the War of 1898 mark a turning point in the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world?

## Extending U.S. Imperialism, 1899–1913

The War of 1898 turned the United States into an imperial nation. Once the war was over, and with its newly acquired empire in place, the United States sought to extend its influence, competing with its European rivals for even greater global power. President Theodore Roosevelt and his successors achieved Captain Mahan's dream of building a Central American canal and wielded American military and financial might in the Caribbean with little restraint. At the same time, the United States took a more active role in Asian affairs.

### Theodore Roosevelt and "Big Stick" Diplomacy

After President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeded him as president. As in domestic matters, Roosevelt believed in using power to protect American commercial and strategic interests as well as to preserve international order and stability. In his view, the United States required a strong military and the political will to use it. "It is contemptible for a nation, as for

an individual," Roosevelt instructed Congress, "[to] proclaim its purposes, or to take positions which are ridiculous if unsupported by potential force, and then to refuse to provide this force." This Progressive Era interventionist, inspired by Captain Mahan's writings, welcomed his nation's new role as a major world power. From this point on, the United States would play the role of an international policeman, using force if necessary to keep the peace.

### Explore

See Document 20.2 for Roosevelt's views on the virtue of exhibiting strength.

As the most important part of his international agenda, Roosevelt sought to demonstrate American might and preserve order in the Caribbean and Central and South America. The building of the Panama Canal provides a case in point. Mahan considered a canal across Central America as vital because it would provide faster access to Asian markets and improve the U.S. navy's ability to patrol two oceans effectively. The United States took a step toward realizing Mahan's goal in 1901, when it signed the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty with Britain, granting the United States the right to construct a canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. After first considering Nicaragua, Roosevelt settled on Panama as the prime location. A French company had already begun construction at this site and had completed two-fifths of the operation; however, when it ran out of money, it sold its holdings to the United States for the bargain price of \$40 million.

Before the United States could resume building, it had to negotiate with the South American country of Colombia, which controlled Panama. Secretary of State Hay and Colombian representatives reached an agreement highly favorable to the Americans, which the Colombian government refused to ratify. When Colombia held out for a higher price, Roosevelt accused the Colombians of being "utterly incapable of keeping order" in Panama and declared that transit across Panama was vital to world commerce. In 1903 the president supported a pro-American uprising by sending warships into the harbor of Panama City, an action that prevented the Colombians from quashing the insurrection. Roosevelt quickly recognized the new government of Panama and signed a treaty with it granting the United States the right to build the canal and exercise "power and authority" over it. In 1914, under American control, the Panama Canal opened to sea traffic.

With the United States controlling Cuba, the Panama Canal, and Puerto Rico, President Roosevelt intended to deter any threats to America's power in the region. The economic instability of Central American and Caribbean

nations provided Roosevelt with the opportunity to brandish what he called a "big stick" to keep these countries in check and prevent intervention by European powers also interested in the area. (The term comes from a proverb Roosevelt was fond of quoting: "Speak softly and carry a big stick.") Referring to neighboring countries to the south, the president grumbled: "These wretched republics cause me a great deal of trouble." In 1904, when the government of the Dominican Republic was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and threatened to default on \$22 million in European loans, Roosevelt sprang into action. He announced U.S. opposition to any foreign intervention to reclaim debts, a position that echoed the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, which in 1823 proclaimed that the United States would not tolerate outside intervention in the Western Hemisphere. However, the president went even further and added his own corollary to the Monroe Doctrine by affirming the right of the United States to intervene in the internal affairs of any country in Latin America or the Caribbean that displayed "chronic wrong-doing" and could not preserve order and manage its own affairs. The **Roosevelt Corollary** proclaimed what Cubans and Panamanians already knew: The United States considered the region south of its border to be within its sphere of influence. Retaining nominal independence, the countries of Central America and the Caribbean had to behave according to U.S. wishes or face American military invasion.

### Opening the Door in China

Roosevelt displayed American power in other parts of the world. His major concern was protecting the **Open Door** policy in China that his predecessor McKinley had engineered to secure naval access to the China market. By 1900 European powers already dominated foreign access to Chinese markets, leaving scant room for newcomers. When the United States sent 2,500 troops to China in August 1900 to help quell a nationalist uprising against foreign involvement known as the Boxer uprising, European competitors in return were compelled to allow the United States free trade access to China.

In 1904 the Russian invasion of the southern Chinese province of Manchuria prompted the Japanese to attack the Russian fleet. Roosevelt held mixed emotions about the Japanese. The president admired Japanese military prowess, but he worried that if Japan succeeded in driving the Russians out of the area, it would cause "a real shifting of equilibrium as far as the white races are concerned." To prevent that from happening, Roosevelt convened a peace conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1905. Under the agreement reached at the conference, Japan received

## DOCUMENT 20.2

## Theodore Roosevelt | The Strenuous Life, 1899

Imperialists often promoted U.S. overseas expansion as a way for overly civilized men to develop their virility. In the following passage, Theodore Roosevelt urges Americans to embrace a “strenuous life,” one that includes an active role for the United States in international affairs.

## Explore

How can men and women contribute to the health of the nation?

On what grounds does Roosevelt criticize men who oppose American imperialism? What fears does he express about American society?

In Roosevelt’s view, what is the relationship between material prosperity and a strenuous life?

We of this generation do not have to face a task such as that our fathers faced, but we have our tasks, and woe to us if we fail to perform them! We can not, if we would, play the part of China, and be content to rot by inches in ignoble ease within our borders, taking no interest in what goes on beyond them, sunk in scrambling commercialism; heedless of the higher life, the life of aspiration, of toil and risk, busying ourselves only with the wants of our bodies for the day, until suddenly we should find, beyond a shadow of question, what China has already found, that in this world the nation that has trained itself into a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound, in the end, to go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities. If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play a great part in the world. We can not avoid meeting great issues. All that we can determine for ourselves is whether we shall meet them well or ill. . . .

We can not avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines. All we can decide is whether we shall meet them in a way that will redound to the national credit, or whether we shall make of our dealings with these new problems a dark and shameful page in our history. . . . The timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the overcivilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful values, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills “stern men with empires in their brains”—all these, of course, shrink from seeing the nation undertake its new duties; shrink from seeing us build a navy and an army adequate to our needs; shrink from seeing us do our share of the world’s work, by bringing order out of chaos in the great, fair tropic islands from which the valor of our soldiers and sailors has driven the Spanish flag. These are the men who fear the strenuous life, who fear the only national life which is really worth leading. They believe in that cloistered life which saps the hardy virtues in a nation, as it saps them in the individual; or else they are wedded to that base spirit of gain and greed which recognizes commercialism the be-all and end-all of national life, instead of realizing that, though an indispensable element, it is, after all, but one of the many elements that go to make up true national greatness.

Source: Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* (New York: The Review of Reviews, 1910), 7–9.

## Put It in Context

How did concerns over masculinity encourage U.S. imperialism?



## Boxer Uprising

In 1900 the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, a Chinese militaristic and secret society known as the Boxers, attacked foreign diplomatic offices in Beijing to expel outsiders. This illustration from Hunan province portrays the Boxers killing foreigners and burning Christian books. The Boxers viewed Christian missionaries as cultural enemies. A coalition of multinational forces crushed the uprising. Kharbine-Tapabor/The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY

control over Korea and parts of Manchuria but pledged to support the United States’ Open Door policy. In 1906, fresh from this achievement, the president sent sixteen American battleships on a trip around the globe in a show of force meant to demonstrate that the United States was serious about taking its place as a premier world power.

When Roosevelt’s secretary of war, William Howard Taft, became president (1909–1913), he continued his predecessor’s foreign policy with slight modification. Proclaiming that he would rather substitute “dollars for bullets,” Taft encouraged private bankers to invest money in the Caribbean and Central America. Eager to embrace the president’s policy of **dollar diplomacy**, the bankers doubled their investments in the region. Yet Taft did not rely on financial influence alone. He backed up American commercial investments by dispatching more than 2,000 U.S. troops to the region to guarantee economic stability. The president sought to extend his dollar diplomacy to China by trying to weaken Russia’s and Japan’s hold over Manchuria, but he succeeded only in drawing the two rivals closer together.

Taft’s diplomacy also led to extensive intervention in Nicaragua. In 1909 American fruit and mining companies in Nicaragua helped install a regime sympathetic to their interests. When a group of rebels threatened this pro-American government, Taft invoked the Roosevelt Corollary and sent in American marines to police the country and deter further uprisings. They remained there for another twenty-five years.

Under the U.S. occupation, American bankers took control of the country’s customs houses and paid off debts owed to foreign investors, a move meant to forestall outside intervention in a nation that was now under American “protection.”

## REVIEW &amp; RELATE

- How did the United States assert its influence and control over Latin America in the early twentieth century?
- How did U.S. policies in Latin America mirror U.S. policies in Asia?

LEARNINGCurve [bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson/LC](http://bedfordstmartins.com/hewittlawson/LC)

## Wilson and American Foreign Policy, 1912–1917

When Woodrow Wilson became president in 1913, he pledged to open a new chapter in America’s relations with Latin America and the rest of the world. The United States would continue to support order, stability, and American access to overseas markets, but it would no longer “carry a big stick.” Disdaining power politics and the use of force, Wilson vowed to place diplomacy and moral persuasion at the center of American foreign policy. Diplomacy, however, proved less effective than he had hoped. Despite Wilson’s



stated commitment to the peaceful resolution of international issues, during his presidency the American military intervened repeatedly in Latin American affairs, and American troops fought on European soil in the bloody global conflict that contemporaries called the Great War.

### Diplomacy and War

Despite his stated preference for moral diplomacy, Wilson preserved the U.S. sphere of influence in the Caribbean using much the same methods as had Roosevelt and Taft. To protect American investments from political disturbances and economic crises, the president sent marines to Haiti in 1915, to the Dominican Republic in 1916, and to Cuba in 1917.

The most serious challenge to Wilson's diplomacy came in Mexico, where he found his ideals tempered by reality. The **Mexican revolution** in 1911 spawned a civil war among various insurgent factions. The resulting instability threatened U.S. interests in Mexico, particularly oil. When Mexicans refused to accept Wilson's demands to install leaders he considered "good men," Wilson withdrew diplomatic recognition from Mexico. In a disastrous attempt to influence Mexican politics, Wilson sent the U.S. navy to the port of Veracruz on April 22, 1914, leading to a bloody clash that killed 19 Americans and 126 Mexicans. The situation worsened after Wilson first supported and then turned against one of the rebel competitors for power in Mexico, General Francisco "Pancho" Villa. In response to this betrayal, Villa and 1,500 troops rode across the border and attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico. In July 1916, Wilson ordered General John Pershing to send 10,000 army troops three hundred miles into Mexico in an attempt to capture Villa. The operation was a complete failure that only further angered Mexican leaders and confirmed their sense that Wilson had no respect for Mexican national sovereignty. In January 1917, Wilson ordered Pershing to withdraw his troops.

The president had little choice. At the same time as the situation in Mexico was deteriorating, a much more serious problem was developing in Europe. On June 28, 1914, an ardent Serbian nationalist, intending to strike a blow against Austria-Hungary, assassinated the Austrian archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo, the capital of the province of Bosnia. This terrorist attack plunged Europe into what would become a world war, fracturing the unsteady peace that had been maintained for the previous forty years. On August 4, 1914, the Central Powers—Germany, the Ottoman empire, and Austria-Hungary—officially declared war against the Allies—Great Britain, France, and Russia (Italy joined them in 1915).

As the most powerful neutral nation, the United States looked on from afar. For the first three years of the Great War, Wilson kept the United States neutral, though privately he believed that a British defeat would be "fatal to our form of Government and American ideals."

Nevertheless, the president urged Americans to remain "in fact as well as in name impartial in thought as well as action." Peace activists sought to keep Wilson to his word. In 1915 women reformers and suffragists such as Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt organized the Women's Peace Party to keep the United States out of war. One of its leaders, Lucia True Ames Mead, called replacing war with law "the most pressing reform before civilization to-day." Yet even Mead showed how difficult it was to keep a neutral mind. "There can be no peace," she exclaimed, "until the military domination of [Germany] is destroyed."

Wilson faced two key problems in keeping the country out of war. First, America had closer and more important economic ties with the Allies than with the Central Powers, a disparity that would only grow as the war went on. The Allies purchased more than \$750 million in American goods in 1914, a figure that quadrupled over the next three years. By contrast, the Germans bought approximately \$350 million worth of American products in 1914; by 1917 the figure had shrunk to \$30 million. Moreover, when the Allies did not have the funds to pay for American goods, they sought loans from private bankers. Initially, the Wilson administration followed the wishes of Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, who argued that providing these loans would violate "the true spirit of neutrality." In 1915, however, Wilson reversed course. Concerned that failure to keep up the prewar level of commerce with the Allies would hurt the country economically, the president authorized private loans. The gap in financial transactions with the rival war powers grew even wider; by 1917 American bankers had loaned the Allies \$2.2 billion, compared with just \$27 million to Germany.

The second problem facing Wilson arose from Great Britain's and Germany's differing war strategies. As the superior naval power, Britain established a blockade of the North Sea to quarantine Germany and starve it into submission. The British navy violated international law by mining the waters to bottle up the German fleet and keep foreign ships from supplying Germany with food and medicines. The blockade even ensnared U.S. ships, despite the fact that the United States, as a neutral nation, had the right to ship non-war items to Germany. However, Britain extended the list of prohibited items and hauled American vessels into British ports. Although Wilson protested this treatment, he did so weakly. He believed that the British could pay compensation for such violations of international law after the war.

Confronting a strangling blockade, Germany depended on the newly developed U-boat (*Unterseeboot*, or submarine) to counter the British navy. In February 1915, Germany declared a blockade of the British Isles and warned citizens of neutral nations to stay off British ships in the area. U-boats, which were lighter and sleeker than British battleships and merchant marine ships, relied on surprise. This strategy violated the rules of engagement under international maritime

law, which required belligerent ships to allow civilians to leave passenger liners and cargo ships before firing. The British complicated the situation for the Germans by flying flags of neutral countries on merchant vessels and arming them with small "defensive" weapons. Therefore, if U-boats played by the rules and surfaced before inspecting merchant ships, they risked being blown out of the water by disguised enemy guns.

Under these circumstances, American neutrality could not last long. On May 15, 1915, catastrophe struck. Without surfacing and identifying itself, a German submarine off the Irish coast attacked the British luxury liner *Lusitania*, which had departed from New York City en route to England. Although the ship's stated objective was to provide passengers with relaxation, sumptuous dining, and dancing, its cargo contained a large supply of ammunition for British weapons. The U-boat's torpedoes rapidly sank the ship, killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans.

Outraged Americans called on the president to respond; some, including Theodore Roosevelt, advocated the immediate use of military force. Despite his pro-British sentiments, Wilson resisted going to war. Instead, he held the Germans in "strict accountability" for their action. Appalled by the loss of human life, Wilson demanded that Germany refrain from further attacks against passenger liners and offer a financial settlement to the *Lusitania*'s survivors. Unwilling to risk war with the United States, the Germans consented.

Wilson had, however, only delayed America's entry into the war. By pursuing a policy of neutrality that treated the combatants unequally and by insisting that Americans had a right to travel on the ships of belligerent nations, the president diminished the chance that the United States would stay out of the war. Recognizing this situation, Secretary of State Bryan resigned following the *Lusitania* affair over what he considered the president's one-sided understanding of "strict accountability." Wilson quickly replaced him with a more pro-British secretary of state, Robert Lansing, who endorsed Wilson's expansion of the loan program to Britain.

Throughout 1916, Wilson pursued two separate but interrelated policies that embodied the ambivalence that he and the American people shared about the war. On the one hand, with Germany alternating between continued U-boat attacks and apologies, the president sought to build the country's military preparedness in the event of war. He signed into law the National Defense Act, which increased the size of the army, navy, and National Guard. On the other hand, Wilson stressed his desire to remain neutral and stay out of the war. With American public opinion divided on the Great War, Wilson chose to run for reelection as a peace candidate. The president sent his personal emissary, Colonel Edward House, to Europe to negotiate an armistice and end the fighting, without success. The Democrats adopted the slogan "He kept us out of war" and also emphasized the president's substantial record of progressive reform. Wilson won a narrow victory

against Charles Evans Hughes, the former governor of New York, who wavered between advocating peace and criticizing Wilson for not sufficiently supporting the Allies.

### Making the World Safe for Democracy

As 1917 dawned, the Great War headed toward its third bloody year. Neither side wanted a negotiated peace because each counted on victory to gain sufficient territory and financial compensation to justify the great sacrifices in human lives and materiel caused by the conflict. Nevertheless, Wilson tried to persuade the belligerents to abandon the battlefield for the bargaining table. On January 22, 1917, he declared that the world needed a "peace without victory," one based on self-determination, freedom of the seas, respect for international law, and the end of hostile alliances. It was a generous vision from a nation that had made few sacrifices.

Germany quickly rejected Wilson's proposal. America had never been truly neutral, and Germany's increasingly desperate leaders saw no reason to believe that the situation would change. In 1915 and again in 1916, to prevent the United States from entering the war, Germany had pledged to refrain from using its most potent weapon, the U-boat, against passenger ships and merchant ships. However, the Germans now chose to change course and resume unrestricted submarine warfare, calculating that they could defeat the Allies before the United States declared war and its troops could make a substantial difference. On February 1, 1917, Germany announced that it would attack all ships, including unarmed American merchant vessels that penetrated its blockade of Great Britain. In response, Wilson used his executive power to arm merchant ships, bringing the United States one step closer to war.

The country moved even closer to war after the **Zimmermann telegram** became public. On February 24, the British turned over to Wilson an intercepted message from Arthur Zimmermann, the German foreign minister, to the Mexican government. The decoded note revealed that Germany had offered Mexico an alliance in the event that the United States joined the Allies. If the Central Powers won, Mexico would receive the territory it had lost to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century—Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. When U.S. newspapers broke the story several days later, it inflamed public opinion and provided the Wilson administration another reason to fear a German victory.

In late February and March, German U-boats sank several armed American merchant ships, and on April 2, 1917, President Wilson asked Congress to declare war against Germany and the other Central Powers. After four days of vigorous debate led by opponents of the war—including the first female elected representative, Jeanette P. Rankin from Montana—Congress voted to approve the war resolution. However, the United States underscored its historic commitment against "entangling alliances" by

refusing to officially join the Allies, instead declaring itself an “Associated Power.”

**Explore**

See Document 20.3 for one senator’s argument against going to war.

President Wilson had not reached his decision lightly. For three years, he resisted calls for war. His policies had tended to favor the Allies, but the president understood that

going to war would have grave consequences. He knew that he would be sending thousands of American men to their deaths and that the “spirit of ruthless brutality [would] enter the very fiber of our national life.” In the end, however, Wilson decided that only by going to war would he be able to ensure that the United States played a role in shaping the peace. For the president, the security of the nation rested on respect for law, human rights, and extension of free governments. “The world must be made safe for democracy,” he informed Congress in his war message, and he had concluded that the only way to

**DOCUMENT 20.3****Robert La Follette | Antiwar Speech, 1917**

Wisconsin senator Robert La Follette strongly opposed America’s entry into World War I. He urged Congress to reject Wilson’s request for a declaration of war against Germany. In his remarks to Congress, La Follette accused Wilson of hypocrisy for arguing that the autocratic nature of the German government made friendship between the United States and Germany impossible.

**Explore**

Just a word of comment more upon one of the points in the President’s address. He says that this is a war “for the things which we have always carried nearest to our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government.” In many places throughout the address is this exalted sentiment given expression.

It is a sentiment peculiarly calculated to appeal to American hearts and, when accompanied by acts consistent with it, is certain to receive our support; but in this same connection, and strangely enough, the President says that we have become convinced that the German Government as it now exists—“Prussian autocracy” he calls it—can never again maintain friendly relations with us. His expression is that “Prussian autocracy was not and could never be our friend,” and repeatedly throughout the address the suggestion is made that if the German people would overturn their Government it would probably be the way to peace. So true is this that the

dispatches from London all hailed the message of the President as sounding the death knell of Germany’s Government.

But the President proposes alliance with Great Britain, which, however liberty-loving its people, is a hereditary monarchy, with a hereditary ruler, with a hereditary House of Lords, with a hereditary landed system, with a limited and restricted suffrage for one class and a multiplied suffrage power for another, and with grinding industrial conditions for all the wageworkers. The President has not suggested that we make our support of Great Britain conditional to her granting home rule to Ireland, or Egypt, or India. We rejoice in the establishment of a democracy in Russia, but it will hardly be contended that if Russia was still an autocratic Government, we would not be asked to enter this alliance with her just the same.

Source: *Congressional Record*, April 4, 1917, 228.

**Interpret the Evidence**

- How does La Follette counter Wilson’s claim that America is siding with the proponents of democracy?
- What are La Follette’s chief criticisms of Great Britain?

**Put It in Context**

Under what circumstances do you think someone like La Follette might have supported America’s entry into the war?

guarantee this outcome was by helping to defeat Germany.

It would take a while for Americans to live up to the lyrics of George M. Cohan’s patriotic song “Over There,” which announced that “the Yanks [were] coming” to rescue the Allies from defeat. First, the United States needed a large army, which it created through the draft. The Selective Service Act of 1917 conscripted 3 million men by war’s end. Mobilizing such a large force required substantial time, and American troops on the battlefield did not make much of an impact until 1918. Before then, the U.S. navy made the greatest contribution. American warships joined the British in escorting merchant vessels, combating German submarines, and laying mines in the North Sea. The United States also provided crucial funding and supplies to the Allies as their reserves became depleted.

U.S. troops finally began to make an impact in Europe in May 1918. Allied forces were exhausted and weary, and in November 1917 they had suffered a further blow when the

Russian Revolution installed a Bolshevik (Communist) regime that negotiated a separate peace with the Central Powers. Fresh recruits from the United States helped shift the war toward Allied victory. From May through September, more than 1 million American troops under the command of General Pershing helped the Allies repel German offensives in northern France near the Belgian border. One momentous battle in the Argonne Forest lasted two months until the Allies broke through enemy lines and pushed toward Germany. Nearly 50,000 American troops died in the fierce fighting, and another 230,000 were injured. Like their European counterparts, who suffered a staggering 8 to 10 million casualties, Americans experienced the horrors of war magnified by new technology. Dug into filthy trenches, soldiers dodged rapid machine-gun fire, heavy artillery explosions, and poison gas shells. In the end, however, American troops succeeded in tipping the balance in favor of the Allies. On November 11, 1918, an exhausted Germany surrendered.

**Trench Warfare**

Trench warfare was at the center of the fighting in World War I. Both sides constructed a network of trenches and dugout shelters, fortified by barbed wire, and fought from these trenches to wear the enemy down. In this photograph, members of the 369th Infantry, a segregated African American unit nicknamed the “Harlem Hellfighters,” occupy trenches to repel a German offensive into France in 1918. The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY

**Fighting the War at Home**

Modern global warfare required full mobilization at home. With U.S. ground forces entering the fray late in the war, most Americans felt the effects of mobilization far more dramatically on the home front than on the battlefield. In preparing to support the war effort, the country drew on recent experience. The progressives’ passion for organization, expertise, efficiency, and moralistic control was harnessed to the effort of placing the economy on a wartime footing and rallying the American people behind the war. In the process, the government gained unprecedented control over American life. At the same time, the war effort also produced unforeseen economic and political opportunities.

**Government by Commission**

Progressives had relied on government commissions to regulate business practices as well as health and safety standards, and in July 1917 the Wilson administration followed suit by establishing the **War Industries Board (WIB)** to supervise the purchase of military supplies and to

**REVIEW & RELATE**

- In what ways, if any, did President Wilson’s approach to Latin American affairs differ from that of his predecessors?
- Why did President Wilson find it so difficult to keep the United States out of World War I?

gear up private enterprise to meet demand. However, the WIB was largely ineffective until March 1918, when the president found the right man to lead it. He chose Wall Street financier Bernard Baruch, who recruited staff from business enterprises that the board regulated. Baruch prodded businesses into compliance mainly by offering lucrative contracts rather than by coercion. Working for a token \$1 a year (but still on their company payrolls), the members of this agency helped reduce the chaos of mobilization. Ultimately, these businessmen created a government partnership with the corporate sector that would last beyond the war.

Labor also experienced significant gains through government regulation. Shortages of workers and an outbreak of strikes—more than four thousand in 1917—hampered the war effort. In April 1918, Wilson created the **National War Labor Board (NWLB)** to settle labor disputes. The agency consisted of representatives from unions, corporations, and the public.



Recruitment Poster

Artist Howard Chandler Christy created this poster in 1917 to encourage enlistment in the U.S. navy. This illustration appealed to masculinity not just by showing an attractive woman but also by challenging potential recruits to "Be a Man and Do It." Library of Congress

In exchange for obtaining a "no strike pledge" from organized labor, the NWLB supported an eight-hour workday with time-and-a-half pay for overtime, labor's right to collective bargaining, and equal pay for equal work by women.

The NWLB fell short of reaching this last goal, but the war employed more than a million women who had not held jobs before. As military and government services expanded, women found greater opportunities as telephone operators, nurses, and clerical workers. At the same time, the number of women employed as domestic servants declined. Women took over formerly male jobs driving streetcars, delivering ice, assembling airplane motors, operating drill presses, oiling railroad engines, and welding parts. Yet women's incomes continued to lag significantly behind those of men performing the same tasks.

Americans probably experienced the expanding scope of government intervention most directly through the efforts of three new agencies that regulated consumption and travel. Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover, a progressive mining engineer, to head the Food Administration. Hoover sought to increase the military and civilian food supply mainly through voluntary conservation measures. He generated a massive publicity campaign urging Americans to adopt "wheatless Mondays," "meatless Tuesdays," and "porkless Thursdays and Saturdays." Chicago housewives demonstrated their ingenuity in cooking leftovers, as evidenced by a sharp decline in the volume of raw garbage in the city. The government also mobilized schoolchildren to plant vegetable gardens to increase food production for the home front. Wilson considered children's work in the School Garden Army "just as real and patriotic an effort as the building of ships or the firing of cannon."

Consumers saved gas and oil under the prodding of the Fuel Administration. The agency encouraged fuel "holidays" along the line of Hoover's voluntary restrictions and created daylight saving time to conserve fuel by adding an extra hour of sunlight to the end of the workday. The Fuel Administration also offered higher prices to coal companies in order to increase productivity. Patterns of consumer travel changed under government regulation. The Railroad Administration acted more forcefully than most other agencies. Troop and supply shipments depended on the efficient operation of the railways. The administration controlled the railroads during the war, coordinating train schedules, overseeing terminals and regulating ticket prices, upgrading tracks, and raising workers' wages.

### Winning Hearts and Minds

America's entry into the Great War did not immediately end the significant antiwar sentiment. Consequently, Wilson waged a campaign to rally support for his aims and

to stimulate patriotic fervor. To generate enthusiasm and ensure loyalty, the president appointed Denver journalist George Creel to head the **Committee on Public Information (CPI)**, which focused on generating propaganda. Creel recruited a vast network of lecturers to speak throughout the country and spread patriotic messages. The committee coordinated rallies to sell bonds and raise money to fund the war. The CPI persuaded reporters to censor their war coverage, and most agreed in order to avoid government intervention. The agency helped produce films depicting the Allies as heroic saviors of humanity and the Central Powers as savage beasts. The CPI also distributed colorful and sometimes lurid posters emphasizing the depravity of the enemy and the nation's moral responsibility to defeat the Central Powers. All the talk of fighting for democracy encouraged groups with long-standing grievances because of their treatment at home to rally around the flag. W. E. B. Du Bois, one of the founders of the NAACP, backed Wilson's democratic aims in the hope that the war would lead to racial equality in the United States.

#### Explore

See Documents 20.4 and 20.5 for Du Bois's thoughts on supporting the war.

Propaganda did not, however, prove sufficient, and many Americans remained deeply divided about the war. To suppress dissent, Congress passed the Espionage Act in 1917 and the Sedition Act a year later. Both limited freedom of speech by criminalizing certain forms of expression. The **Espionage Act** prohibited antiwar activities, including interfering with the draft. It also banned the mailing of publications advocating forcible interference with any laws. The **Sedition Act** punished individuals who expressed beliefs disloyal or abusive to the American government, flag, or military uniform. Of the slightly more than two thousand prosecutions under these laws, only a handful concerned charges of actual sabotage or espionage. Most defendants brought to trial were critics who merely spoke out against the war. In 1918, for telling a crowd that the military draft was a form of slavery that turned inductees into "cannon fodder," the Socialist Party's Eugene V. Debs was tried, convicted, and sentenced to ten years under the Espionage Act. (President Warren G. Harding pardoned Debs in 1921.) The Justice Department also went after the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), which continued to initiate labor strikes during the war. The government broke into the offices of the IWW, ransacked the Wobblies' files for evidence of disloyalty, and arrested more than 130 members, including their dynamic leader Big Bill Haywood, who subsequently fled to the Soviet Union to avoid jail.

Government efforts to promote national unity and punish those who did not conform prompted local communities to enforce "one hundred percent Americanism." Civic groups banned the playing of German music and operas from concert halls, and schools prohibited teaching the German language. Arbiters of culinary taste, prompted by patriotic enthusiasm, renamed foods with German origins—sauerkraut became "liberty cabbage," and hamburgers became "liberty sandwiches." Such sentiments were expressed in a more sinister fashion when mobs assaulted German Americans.

Prejudice toward German Americans was further inflamed by the formation of the **American Protective League (APL)**, a quasi-official association endorsed by the Justice Department. Consisting of 200,000 chapters throughout the country, the APL employed individuals to spy on German residents suspected of disloyal behavior. In cooperation with the Bureau of Investigation (later the FBI), APL members tried to uncover German spies, but most often they found little more than German immigrants who merely retained attachments to family and friends in their homeland. Gossip and rumor fueled many of the league's loyalty probes. In May 1918, the APL sent one of its agents to investigate the cook of a family living in Manhattan, because she allegedly had "a picture of the Kaiser in her room" and was "very pro-German and talks in favor of the Germans." The investigator found no photograph of the kaiser or any other evidence of suspicious behavior.

The repressive side of progressivism came to the fore in other ways as well. Anti-immigrant bias, shared by many reformers, flourished. The effort to conserve manpower and grain supplies bolstered the impulse to control standards of moral behavior, particularly those associated with immigrants, such as drinking. This anti-immigrant prejudice in part explains the ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, prohibiting the sale of all alcoholic beverages. Yet not all the moral indignation unleashed by the war resulted in restriction of freedom. After considerable wartime protest and lobbying, women suffragists succeeded in securing the right to vote (see chapter 19).

### Waging Peace

In January 1918, ten months before the war ended, President Wilson presented Congress with his plan for peace without rancor. Wilson centered his ideas around **Fourteen Points**, principles that he hoped would prevent future wars. Based on his assessment of the causes of the Great War, Wilson envisioned a generous peace treaty that included freedom of the seas, open diplomacy and the abolition of secret treaties, free trade, self-determination for colonial subjects, and a

## DOCUMENTS 20.4 AND 20.5

## African Americans and the War: Two Views

African Americans played an active role in the war effort; however, given their poor treatment by much of white America, it is not surprising that many blacks were ambivalent about their service. In a controversial editorial in the *Crisis*, the journal of the NAACP, W. E. B. Du Bois urged the black community to “close ranks” with the rest of American society to fight Germany. Du Bois hoped that their service would lead to greater acceptance for African Americans by white society. Less than a year later, Du Bois published a bitter attack against the treatment of African American soldiers and enduring American racism.

## Explore

## 20.4 W. E. B. Du Bois | “Close Ranks,” 1918

This is the crisis of the world. For all the long years to come men will point to the year 1918 as the great Day of Decision, the day when the world decided whether it would submit to military despotism and an endless armed peace—if peace it could be called—or whether they would put down the menace of German militarism and inaugurate the United States of the World.

We of the colored race have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German

power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes and all darker races for equality, freedom, and democracy. Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy. We make no ordinary sacrifice, but we make it gladly and willingly with our eyes lifted to the hills.

Source: W. E. B. Du Bois, “Close Ranks,” *The Crisis*, July 1918, 111.

reduction in military spending. More important than any specific measure, Wilson’s proposal hinged on the creation of the **League of Nations**, a body of large and small nations that would guarantee peaceful resolution of disputes and back up decisions through collective action, including the use of military force as a last resort.

Following the armistice that ended the war on November 11, 1918, Wilson personally took his message to the Paris Peace Conference, the postwar meeting of the victorious Allied nations that would set the terms of the peace. The first sitting president to travel overseas, Wilson was greeted in Paris by joyous crowds when he arrived leading the American delegation.

For nearly six months, Wilson tried to convince reluctant Allied leaders to accept the central components of his plan. Having exhausted themselves financially and having suffered the loss of a generation of young men, the Allies intended to scoop up the spoils of victory and make the Central Powers pay dearly. The European Allies intended to hold on to their respective colonies regardless of Wilson’s

call for self-determination, and as a nation that depended on a strong navy, Britain refused to limit its options by discussing freedom of the seas. Perhaps Georges Clemenceau, France’s president, best expressed his colleagues’ skepticism about Wilson’s idealistic vision: “President Wilson and his Fourteen Points bore me. Even God Almighty has only ten!”

During the conference, Wilson was forced to compromise on a number of his principles in order to retain the cornerstone of his diplomacy—the establishment of the League of Nations. He abandoned his hope for peace without bitterness by agreeing to a “war guilt” clause that levied huge economic reparations on Germany for starting the war. He was willing to sacrifice some of his ideals because the league took on even greater importance in the wake of the Communist revolution in Russia. The president believed that capitalism, as regulated and reformed during the Progressive Era, would raise living conditions throughout the world as it had done in the United States, would prevent the spread of communism, and would benefit U.S. commerce by paving the way to free trade. Wilson needed the league to keep the peace so that war-ravaged and

## Explore

## 20.5 W. E. B. Du Bois | “Returning Soldiers,” 1919

We are returning from war! . . .

. . . We return from the slavery of uniform which the world’s madness demanded us to don to the freedom of civil garb. We stand again to look America squarely in the face and call a spade a spade. We sing: This country of ours, despite all its better souls have done and dreamed, is yet a shameful land.

It lynches. . . .

It disfranchises its own citizens. . . .

It encourages ignorance. . . .

It steals from us. . . .

It insults us. . . .

This is the country to which we Soldiers of Democracy return. This is the fatherland for which

we fought! But it is *our* fatherland. It was right for us to fight. The faults of *our* country are *our* faults. Under similar circumstances, we would fight again. But by the God of Heaven, we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land.

We return.

We return from fighting.

We return fighting.

Make way for Democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why.

Source: W. E. B. Du Bois, “Returning Soldiers,” *The Crisis*, May 1919, 13–14.

## Interpret the Evidence

- In both articles, how does Du Bois explain why African Americans fought in World War I?
- What did Du Bois see as the greatest threat to the black community in 1918? What about in 1919? Why do you think Du Bois reversed his position?

## Put It in Context

What do both these editorials reveal about the treatment of black Americans during World War I?

recovering nations had the opportunity to practice economic freedom and political democracy. In the end, the president won agreement for the establishment of his cherished League of Nations. The final treaty signed at the palace of Versailles, just outside Paris, authorized the league to combat aggression against any member nation through collective military action.

## The Failure of Ratification

In July 1919, after enduring bruising battles in Paris, Wilson returned to Washington, D.C., only to face another wrenching struggle in the Senate over ratification of the Versailles treaty. The odds were stacked against Wilson from the start. The Republicans held a majority in the Senate, and Wilson needed the support of two-thirds of the Senate to secure ratification. Moreover, Henry Cabot Lodge, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, opposed Article X of the League of Nations covenant, which sanctioned collective security arrangements against military aggression. Lodge argued that such an alliance compromised

the United States’ independence in conducting its own foreign relations. The Massachusetts senator wanted the United States to preserve the possibility of unilateral action without being restrained by the league’s policies. Lodge had at least thirty-nine senators behind him, more than enough to block ratification. Conceding the need to protect the country’s national self-interest, the president agreed to modifications to the treaty so that the Monroe Doctrine and America’s obligations in the Caribbean and Central America were kept intact. Lodge, who loathed Wilson, was not satisfied and insisted on adding fourteen “reservations” limiting compliance with the treaty, including strong language affirming Congress’s right to declare war before agreeing to a League of Nations military action.

Wilson’s stubbornness more than equaled Lodge’s, and the president refused to compromise further over the league. Insisting that he was morally bound to honor the treaty he had negotiated in good faith, Wilson rejected additional changes demanded by Lodge and his supporters. Making matters worse, Wilson faced resistance from


sixteen lawmakers dubbed “irreconcilables,” who opposed the league under any circumstances. Mainly Republicans from the Midwest and West, they voiced the traditional American rejection of entangling alliances.

To break the logjam, the president attempted to rally public opinion behind him. In September 1919, he embarked on a nationwide speaking tour to carry his message directly to the American people. Over a three-week period, he traveled eight thousand miles by train, keeping a grueling schedule that exhausted him. After a stop in Pueblo, Colorado, on September 25, Wilson collapsed and canceled the rest of his trip. On October 2, Wilson suffered a massive stroke that nearly killed him. The effects of the stroke, which left him partially paralyzed, emotionally unstable, and mentally impaired, dimmed any remaining hopes of compromise. The full extent of his illness was kept from the public, and his wife, Edith, ran the White House for the next eighteen months.

On November 19, 1919, the Senate rejected the amended treaty. The following year, Wilson had one final chance to obtain ratification, but still he refused to accept reservations. He ignored leaders of his own party who were willing to vote for the Republican-sponsored amendments. “Let Lodge compromise,” the president responded defiantly. In March 1920, treaty ratification failed one last time, falling just seven votes short of the required two-thirds majority. Had Wilson shown the same willingness to compromise that he had in Paris, the outcome might have been different. In the end, however, the United States never signed the Treaty of Versailles or joined the League of Nations, weakening the league and diminishing the prospects for long-term peace.

#### REVIEW & RELATE

- What steps did the U.S. government take to control the economy and public opinion during World War I?
- How did President Wilson’s wartime policies and his efforts to shape the peace that followed reflect his progressive roots?

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### Conclusion: An American Empire

In the final decade of the nineteenth century, the United States transformed itself into an imperial power. Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt carried out the strategy outlined by Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan to enlarge the navy, construct a canal linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and acquire coaling stations and bases in the Pacific to

service the fleet. U.S. officials disregarded the nationalistic aspirations of freedom fighters such as José Martí in Cuba and Emilio Aguinaldo in the Philippines in favor of the imperial spoils gained from winning the War of 1898. The United States justified intervention on moral grounds predicated on racist beliefs: As a fit and manly nation, the United States had the responsibility to uplift inferior peoples to “civilized” standards and make them capable of self-government. This justification quickly wore thin. To crush the rebellion in the Philippines, the military engaged in atrocities that called into question the honor and virtue of the United States. Once it achieved victory in the Philippines, the nation concentrated its efforts on maintaining territories primarily for commercial purposes. Within the few short years from 1898 to 1904, this commercial empire had fallen into place.


The progressive presidents, Roosevelt and Wilson, created and sustained an American empire. They disagreed significantly in approach—Roosevelt favoring force, Wilson preferring negotiations; Roosevelt a realist, Wilson a moralist—but in practice they shared a willingness to use military power to protect national interests. These two presidents helped construct the modern American state, an expanded federal government that officially sanctioned cooperation with responsible corporate leaders. This relationship reached its peak during World War I. In mobilizing the home front, the Wilson administration blurred the line between public and private business by expanding the reach of government over the economy and curtailed personal liberty.

In 1917, because of its heavy reliance on trade with foreign countries, especially in Europe, the United States confronted its first major international crisis of the twentieth century. Wilson reluctantly led the country into war to guarantee a world order in which reasonable nations attempted to resolve controversies through negotiation, not violence. The failure of the United States to join the League of Nations, for which the president was largely responsible, shattered that idealistic dream.

The United States retreated from joining an international body offering collective security, but it did not isolate itself from participation in the world. The country emerged from the war in excellent financial shape; it had become the leading foreign creditor, and its industrial capacity had greatly expanded. Tending its commercial empire in the Caribbean and Central America, the United States probed for new markets in Asia and the Middle East. It would take another two decades for policymakers to realize that the country’s refusal to support a strong collective response to expansionist aggression posed serious dangers for American commerce and values.

## Chapter Review

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#### KEY TERMS

jingoists (p. 624)  
*Cuba Libre* (p. 626)  
 yellow journalism (p. 627)  
 Teller Amendment (p. 628)  
 Platt Amendment (p. 628)  
 Anti-Imperialist League (p. 628)  
 Roosevelt Corollary (p. 631)  
 Open Door (p. 631)  
 dollar diplomacy (p. 633)  
 Mexican revolution (p. 634)  
 Zimmermann telegram (p. 635)  
 War Industries Board (WIB) (p. 637)  
 National War Labor Board (NWLB) (p. 638)  
 Committee on Public Information (CPI) (p. 639)  
 Espionage Act (p. 639)  
 Seditious Act (p. 639)  
 American Protective League (APL) (p. 639)  
 Fourteen Points (p. 639)  
 League of Nations (p. 640)

#### REVIEW & RELATE

1. What role did economic developments play in prompting calls for an American empire? What role did social and cultural developments play?
2. Why did the United States embark on building an empire in the 1890s and not decades earlier?
3. Why did the United States go to war with Spain in 1898?
4. In what ways did the War of 1898 mark a turning point in the relationship between the United States and the rest of the world?
5. How did the United States assert its influence and control over Latin America in the early twentieth century?
6. How did U.S. policies in Latin America mirror U.S. policies in Asia?
7. In what ways, if any, did President Wilson’s approach to Latin American affairs differ from that of his predecessors?
8. Why did President Wilson find it so difficult to keep the United States out of World War I?
9. What steps did the U.S. government take to control the economy and public opinion during World War I?
10. How did President Wilson’s wartime policies and his efforts to shape the peace that followed reflect his progressive roots?

#### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1880–1900	U.S. creates third most powerful navy in the world
1890	Alfred Mahan publishes <i>The Influence of Sea Power upon History</i>
1893	American plantation owners overthrow Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii
1895	Cuban War for Independence begins
1898	U.S. battleship <i>Maine</i> explodes The War of 1898 begins Anti-Imperialist League founded
1899–1902	Philippine-American War
1901	Platt Amendment passed
1904	Roosevelt Corollary announced
1909	U.S. intervenes in Nicaragua on behalf of American fruit and mining companies
1914	Panama Canal opens under American control World War I begins
1915	German submarine sinks the <i>Lusitania</i>
1916	Wilson sends U.S. troops into Mexico to capture Pancho Villa
1917	Zimmermann telegram becomes public United States enters World War I Espionage Act passed War Industries Board established Committee on Public Information established
1918	Seditious Act passed National War Labor Board established Germany surrenders, ending World War I
1919	Wilson loses battle for ratification of Treaty of Versailles



## Imperialism versus Anti-Imperialism

On January 16, 1893, the USS *Boston* sailed into Honolulu harbor, in a show of support for

American businessmen who were aligned against Queen Liliuokalani, Hawaii's ruling monarch. Liliuokalani sought to overturn the 1887 constitution that had been forced on King Kalākaua. This "Bayonet Constitution," as it came to be known, favored American and other foreign interests and limited the political power of native islanders, the poor, and the monarchy. The day after American forces landed, Liliuokalani abdicated and a provisional government, the Republic of Hawaii, was set up under the control of American sugar growers. Native Hawaiians continued to rebel against their American-dominated government, and in 1897 representatives from several political groups issued the Hawaiian Memorial (Document 20.6). This petition for self-rule failed, and Hawaii was formally annexed in 1898. In that same year, U.S. territorial acquisitions from the War of 1898 intensified the heated debate over American imperialism and the principles of self-governance and democracy.

The following documents reveal the viewpoints of imperialists, anti-imperialists, and colonized people. Those supporting imperialism could find no greater advocate than Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana, who served from 1899 to 1911. His speech entitled "The March of the Flag," compared Philippine colonization to U.S. westward expansion across North America and argued that Filipinos were a childlike and savage race incapable of self-governance (Document 20.7). A different view of the Philippine conflict came from a New Hampshire woman who in 1899 wrote to her local newspaper to scold American women for failing to speak out against the "murderous, cowardly, dastardly war" in the Philippines (Document 20.9). Throughout this period—on the Senate floor and in town meeting halls, schoolrooms, national magazines, and local newspapers—Americans deliberated the significance and implications of international expansion.

### DOCUMENT 20.6

#### The Hawaiian Memorial, 1897

Hawaiian political groups sent the following petition (also called a memorial) to the U.S. government as a formal request to remove the provisional government of the Hawaiian Islands, which they viewed as illegitimate. Although the U.S. Senate initially refused to ratify President McKinley's effort to annex Hawaii in 1897, the following year Congress adopted a joint resolution annexing Hawaii as a territory.

To the President, the Congress, and the People of the United States of America:

This Memorial respectfully represents as follows:

1. That your memorialists are residents of the Hawaiian Islands; that the majority of them are aboriginal Hawaiians; and that all of them possess the qualifications provided for electors of representatives in the Hawaiian Legislature by the Constitution and laws prevailing in the Hawaiian Islands at the date of the overthrow of the Hawaiian Constitutional Government, January 17, 1893.
2. That the supporters of the Hawaiian Constitution of 1887 have been, thence to the present time, in the year 1897, held in subjection by the armed forces of the Provisional Government of the Hawaiian Islands, and of its successor, the Republic of Hawaii, and have never yielded and do not acknowledge a spontaneous or willing allegiance or support to said Provisional Government, or to said Republic of Hawaii.
3. That the Government of the Republic of Hawaii has no warrant for its existence in the support of the people of these islands; that it was proclaimed and instituted and has hitherto existed and now exists without considering the rights and wishes of a great majority of the residents, native and foreign-born, of the Hawaiian Islands; and especially that said Government exists and maintains itself solely by force of arms, against the rights and wishes of almost the entire aboriginal population of these islands.
4. That said Republic is not and never has been founded or conducted upon a basis of popular government or republican principles; that its Constitution was adopted by a convention, a majority of whose members were self-appointed, and the balance of whose members were elected by a numerically insignificant minority of the white and aboriginal male citizens and residents of these islands. . . .
5. That the Constitution so adopted by said convention has never been submitted to a vote of the people of these islands, but was promulgated and established over the said islands, and has ever since been maintained only by force of arms, and with indifference to the will of practically the entire aboriginal population, and a vast majority of the whole population of these islands.
6. That the said Government, so existing under the title of the Republic of Hawaii, assumes and asserts the right to extinguish the Hawaiian nationality, heretofore existing, and to cede and convey all rights of sovereignty in and over the Hawaiian Islands and their dependencies to a foreign power, namely, to the United States of America.
7. That your memorialists have learned with grief and dismay that the President of the United States has entered into, and submitted for ratification by the United States Senate, a treaty with the Government of the Republic of Hawaii, whereby it is proposed to extinguish our existence as a nation, and to annex our territory to the United States. . . .
9. That your memorialists humbly but fervently protest against the consummation of this invasion of their political rights; and they earnestly appeal to the President, the Congress, and the people of the United States to refrain from further participating in the wrong so proposed; and they invoke in support of

(continued on page 646)

this memorial the spirit of that immortal instrument, the Declaration of American Independence; and especially the truth therein expressed, that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed—and here repeat that the consent of the people of the Hawaiian Islands to the forms of government imposed by the so-called Republic of Hawaii, and to said proposed treaty of annexation, has never been asked by and is not accorded, either to said government or to said project of annexation.

10. That the consummation of the project of annexation dealt with in said treaty would be subversive of the personal and political rights of these memorialists and of the Hawaiian people and nation. . . .
11. Wherefore your memorialists respectfully submit that they, no less than the citizens of any American Commonwealth, are entitled to select, ordain, and establish for themselves such forms of government as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. . . .
12. And your memorialists humbly pray the President, Congress, and the people of the United States that no further steps be taken toward the ratification of said treaty, or toward the extinguishment of the Hawaiian nationality, or toward the absorption of the Hawaiian people and territory into the body politic and territory of the United States of America, at least until the Hawaiian people, as represented by those citizens and residents of the Hawaiian Islands who, under the provisions of the Hawaiian Constitution, promulgated July 7, 1887, would be qualified to vote for representatives in the Legislature, shall have had the opportunity to express, at the ballot-box, their wishes as to whether such project of annexation shall be accepted or rejected.
13. And your memorialists, for themselves, and in behalf of the Hawaiian people and of the residents of the Hawaiian Islands, pledge their faith that if they shall be accorded the privilege of voting upon said questions, at a free and fair election to be held for that purpose, and if a fair count of the votes that shall be cast at such election shall show a majority in favor of such annexation, these memorialists and the Hawaiian people will yield a ready and cheerful acquiescence in said project.

Signed

J. Kalua Kahoookano, Samuel K. Pua, F. J. Testa, C. B. Maile,  
Samuel K. Kamakaia, Citizens' Committee

James Keauiluna Kaulia, President of the Hawaiian Patriotic League

David Kalauokalani, President of the Hawaiian Political Association

Source: "The Hawaiian Memorial," *City and State*, December 2, 1897, 143.

## DOCUMENT 20.7

## Albert Beveridge | The March of the Flag, 1898

In September 1898, Albert Beveridge, who was campaigning to become U.S. senator from Indiana, gave a rousing speech supporting the annexation of Spain's former colonies. At the time of this address, the war with Spain had ended, but American troops still occupied the Philippines. Once in office, Beveridge was an ardent supporter of American imperial policies.

**H**AWAII IS OURS; Porto Rico is to be ours; at the prayer of her people Cuba finally will be ours; in the islands of the East, even to the gates of Asia, coaling stations are to be ours at the very least; the flag of a liberal government is to float over the Philippines, and may it be the banner that [Zachary] Taylor unfurled in Texas and [John] Fremont carried to the coast.

The Opposition tells us that we ought not to govern a people without their consent. I answer, the rule of liberty that all just government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, applies only to those who are capable of self-government. We govern the Indians without their consent, we govern our territories without their consent, we govern our children without their consent. How do they know [what] our government would be without their consent? Would not the people of the Philippines prefer the just, humane, civilizing government of this Republic to the savage, bloody rule of pillage and extortion from which we have rescued them?

And, regardless of this formula of words made only for enlightened, self-governing people, do we owe no duty to the world? Shall we turn these peoples back to the reeking hands from which we have taken them? Shall we abandon them, with Germany, England, Japan, hungering for them? Shall we save them from those nations, to give them a self-rule of tragedy?

They ask us how we shall govern these new possessions. I answer: Out of local conditions and the necessities of the case, methods of government will grow. If England can govern foreign lands, so can America. If Germany can govern foreign lands, so can America. If they can supervise protectorates, so can America. Why is it more difficult to administer Hawaii than New Mexico or California? Both had a savage and an alien population; both were more remote from the seat of government when they came under our dominion than the Philippines are today.

Will you say by your vote that American ability to govern has decayed; that a century's experience in self-rule has failed of a result? Will you affirm by your vote that you are an infidel to American power and practical sense? Or will you say that ours is the blood of government; ours the heart of dominion; ours the brain and genius of administration? Will you remember that we do but what our fathers did—we but pitch the tents of liberty farther westward, farther southward—we only continue the march of the flag?

The march of the flag! In 1789 the flag of the Republic waved over 4,000,000 souls in thirteen states, and their savage territory which stretched to the Mississippi, to Canada, to the Floridas. The timid minds of that day said that no new territory was needed, and, for the hour, they were right. But Jefferson, through whose intellect the centuries marched; Jefferson, who dreamed of Cuba as an American state; Jefferson, the first Imperialist of the Republic—Jefferson acquired that imperial territory which swept from the Mississippi to the mountains, from Texas to the British possessions, and the march of the flag began!

The infidels to the gospel of liberty raved, but the flag swept on! The title to that noble land out of which Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana have been carved was uncertain; Jefferson, strict constructionist of constitutional power though he was, obeyed the Anglo-Saxon impulse within him, whose watchword then and whose watchword throughout the world today is, "Forward!": another empire was added to the Republic, and the march of the flag went on! . . .

(continued on page 648)

The ocean does not separate us from lands of our duty and desire—the oceans join us, rivers never to be dredged, canals never to be repaired. Steam joins us; electricity joins us—the very elements are in league with our destiny. Cuba not contiguous! Porto Rico not contiguous! Hawaii and the Philippines not contiguous! The oceans make them contiguous. And our navy will make them contiguous.

But the Opposition is right—there is a difference. We did not need the western Mississippi Valley when we acquired it, nor Florida, nor Texas, nor California, nor the royal provinces of the far northwest. We had no emigrants to people this imperial wilderness, no money to develop it, even no highways to cover it. No trade awaited us in its savage fastnesses [remote places]. Our productions were not greater than our trade. There was not one reason for the land-lust of our statesmen from Jefferson to Grant, other than the prophet and the Saxon within them. But, today, we are raising more than we can consume, making more than we can use. Therefore we must find new markets for our produce.

And so, while we did not need the territory taken during the past century at the time it was acquired, we do need what we have taken in 1898, and we need it now. The resources and the commerce of these immensely rich dominions will be increased as much as American energy is greater than Spanish sloth. In Cuba, alone, there are 15,000,000 acres of forest unacquainted with the ax, exhaustless mines of iron, priceless deposits of manganese, millions of dollars' worth of which we must buy, today, from the Black Sea districts. There are millions of acres yet unexplored.

The resources of Porto Rico have only been trifled with. The riches of the Philippines have hardly been touched by the fingertips of modern methods. And they produce what we consume, and consume what we produce—the very predestination of reciprocity—a reciprocity "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." They sell hemp, sugar, cocoanuts, fruits of the tropics, timber of price like mahogany; they buy flour, clothing, tools, implements, machinery, and all that we can raise and make. Their trade will be ours in time. Do you indorse that policy with your vote?

Source: Albert J. Beveridge, *The Meaning of the Times and Other Speeches* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1906), 48–50, 52–53.

## DOCUMENT 20.8

## "There's Plenty of Room at the Table," 1906

The satirical weekly magazine *Judge* was a strong supporter of President McKinley and the Republican Party. Its illustrations often depicted imperial expansion as good for the American public as well as for colonized nations.



THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM AT THE TABLE. WHY NOT ASK THE HUNGRY LITTLE FELLOW TO SIT DOWN?



## DOCUMENT 20.9

## Anti-Imperialism Letter, 1899

What began in 1898 as a conflict to free the Philippines from Spanish control quickly became a struggle to subdue Filipino rebels intent on establishing their own government. The following letter was written to the *Springfield (Massachusetts) Republican* just one month after the new Philippine Republic declared war on the United States. The brutality of the fighting caused many Americans to question the motives and methods of American imperial aspirations.

To The Editor of the Republican:

I cannot longer hold my peace, though only a woman. I am thankful to see today that the business men (some of them, I should say) have started a plan for the cessation of this murderous, cowardly, dastardly war. Also I saw yesterday that Gamaliel Bradford [an American writer and poet] has volunteered to speak in the same just and holy cause wheresoever needed. This is the thing I have longed to see done weeks and weeks ago. The "peace" treaty never would have been ratified if the nation had been waked up to the meaning of its iniquity. Speaking everywhere is needed, such as we had at the beginning of the civil war, giving light to the thousands that now do not care. "It is no business of theirs." "Congress

will take care," they say, reading the papers that hurrah for McKinley. What do they know about it? They don't feel the burden much yet. Taxes are bad enough, but those that must come with the McKinley policy long continued, they don't feel yet. It is healthy for all they see out there, none of theirs have died, and it's only the Filipinos mostly that are killed; and we are to be a "bigger country." What the whole country needs is to rouse the people, that they demand that this sin shall cease, that America's shame may be wiped out ere it is too late!

I blush for my sisters who call themselves "Colonial Dames," "Daughters of the Revolution," "Abraham Lincoln circle of the Ladies of the Grand Army," and such patriotic sounding titles, where is their

claim to such? In all these months of anxiety and anguish never one word of protest have I heard of their breathing! They have gathered for various social reasons and held good times, but the solemn duties and responsibilities that should be their first concern seem to have been utterly ignored. Cannot they be induced to begin likewise an appeal in every place where their orders exist, signed by every woman who has at heart the love of her country and its true honor. Only that something should be done! While we wait the islanders are being murdered by hundreds and a price put on the head of their brave leader!

J. W. P.

Source: Letter to the editor, *Springfield Republican*, March 16, 1899.

DOCUMENT 20.10  
"Civilization Begins at Home," 1898

Newspapers and magazines waged their own battles for and against U.S. expansion overseas. The *New York World* built its circulation through sensationalism and the extensive use of illustrations. This cartoon from the *World* questions the imperialist mission to spread the benefits of civilization to "uncivilized" parts of the world. While President McKinley contemplates a map of the Philippines, Lady Justice reveals racial problems at home.



## Interpret the Evidence

1. Why do the petitioners of the Hawaiian Memorial (Document 20.6) claim that the provisional government is illegitimate? How do they describe their government and people before annexation, and how do they characterize the United States?
2. Why does Albert Beveridge claim that it is the United States' duty to colonize the Philippines, and what does he think are the benefits to Americans and Filipinos (Document 20.7)? How does he respond to the anti-imperialist argument that America shouldn't govern a people without their consent?
3. What common arguments against American colonization connect the Hawaiian Memorial (Document 20.6), the letter from J. W. P. (Document 20.9), and the cartoon "Civilization Begins at Home" (Document 20.10)?
4. How do imperialists and anti-imperialists portray each other in these documents?
5. How are the sentiments of Rudyard Kipling (Document 20.1) and Theodore Roosevelt (Document 20.2) echoed in these imperialist arguments?
6. How did imperialists and anti-imperialists shape their arguments to appeal to either men or women?

## Put It in Context

- Why did the arguments of the imperialists prevail over those of anti-imperialists from 1898 to 1904? In what ways do you think the anti-imperialist arguments might have contributed to reshaping the imperialist cause after that time?