

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on the Philippines



This picture shows Filipinos fighting U.S. soldiers after the Spanish-American War.

During the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States sought to take over the Philippines, a Spanish colony. U.S. commodore George Dewey entered into collaboration with Filipino patriot Emilio Aguinaldo, who had led an uprising against Spain in 1896. The rebellion had successfully ousted Spanish rule in all territories of the Philippines except for Manila. With the help of Aguinaldo and his rebels, the United States captured Manila on August 13, 1898.

Aguinaldo joined the U.S. effort with the belief that the United States would grant the Philippines their independence after Spain was defeated. However, after the successful takeover, Dewey denied having given any such assurances and claimed Aguinaldo was mistaken.

In the treaty ending the war, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. President William McKinley debated at first whether the United States should keep the Philippines as a colony. American public opinion helped sway his decision. Protestant missionaries were eager for new converts from Spanish Catholicism, which had been a strong influence in the Philippines. U.S. businesses saw the Philippines as a source for raw materials as well as a key to new markets for exports and imports. The islands were in a good strategic position for access to the markets of China. In addition, the United States felt the Philippine Islands were vulnerable following the war because they had no experience in governing themselves. In his final decision, President McKinley concluded that the best choice was for the United States to “take [the islands] and educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them.”

However, not only were most Filipinos Catholic, and hence already Christian, but they wanted self-government. Filipino nationalists pleaded for independence, but were refused. When resistance leader Emilio Aguinaldo refused to recognize U.S. rule of the islands, he was deported from his homeland. Filipino rebels, who had fought alongside Americans, exploded with anger in a revolt against U.S. rule. A three-year battle between Filipinos and the United States finally ended in 1901, when the United States crushed the revolt at an estimated cost of \$600 million.

The Philippines can be considered a vital link in a chain of military bases that will one day encircle the globe to protect American strategic and commercial interests.

—Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, U.S. Navy

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We are planting in those islands imperishable ideas. We are planting the best traditions, the best characteristics of Americanism in such a way that they never can be removed from that soil.

—Major General Arthur McArthur, military governor of the Philippines

When one of the great Christian countries finds a strip of land it desires to possess; it is quickly seized with a commendable desire to spread the benign influence of civilization over the natives, and what a remarkable small number of natives are left after this process had been completed.

—U.S. newspaper editor

[Imperialism is justified as] the natural and necessary expansion of the superior Anglo-Saxon people.

—Reverend Josiah Strong

There are conclusive proofs that we had asked [Americans] for a promise of eventual independence.

—Emilio Aguinaldo, Filipino resistance leader

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on Mexico



This cartoon shows unarmed President Wilson powerlessly shaking his finger at a defiant and well-armed Mexican.

U.S. interest in investment opportunities in Mexico grew throughout the 1800s. Mexican president Porfirio Díaz, who took power in 1876, invited foreign investors into the country to support the building of railroads, ports, and cities, and to improve the mining, manufacturing, and agricultural industries. By the early 1900s U.S. businesses had invested over a billion dollars in Mexico and some 50,000 American citizens had taken up residency south of the border. The profits from the new enterprises went mostly to foreign companies, and the modernization benefited the small class of wealthy Mexicans. The majority of Mexicans, most of whom lived in rural areas, grew poorer and more desperate. Their desperation erupted in the Mexican Revolution in 1910, which unseated Porfirio Díaz in 1911. In 1913 General Victoriano Huerta, a brutal dictator, seized power with the help of the U.S. Embassy and foreign investors who wanted stability in Mexico to protect their investments. The violent overthrow resulted in the assassination of Huerta's

predecessor and the deaths of 10,000 Mexicans. Businessmen, including William Randolph Hearst, who owned a Mexican ranch the size of Rhode Island, clamored for U.S. recognition (acknowledgment of legitimacy) of the Huerta government.

Refusing to bow to the pressure of business interests, U.S. president Woodrow Wilson refused to recognize Huerta's government, calling it "a government of butchers." Instead, he supported Huerta's rival, General Venustiano Carranza. Wilson hoped Carranza would replace Huerta and relieve the oppressive poverty in Mexico. "I am going to teach the South American republics to elect good men," declared Wilson. Wilson's denial of recognition to Huerta angered Huerta and frustrated U.S. and other foreign investors.

In 1914 relations between Mexico and the United States grew tense when a small group of sailors from the U.S. Navy was detained by Mexican officials in Tampico, a small Mexican port town. Although the Mexicans released and formally apologized to the sailors, the U.S. commander demanded a 21-gun salute to the U.S. flag. Wilson pressured Huerta to agree to the demand. Huerta flatly refused. Shortly thereafter, U.S. forces invaded the city of Vera Cruz to stop a shipment of German arms from reaching Huerta's troops. Nineteen Americans and 200 Mexicans were killed. War between the two countries was close at hand. An all-out war between Mexico and the United States was averted only after Argentina, Brazil, and Chile helped to negotiate an end to the crisis.

Mexico continued to be unstable as Mexicans revolted against Huerta. Carranza was soon named president of Mexico, but he refused to adhere to U.S. demands for the creation of a new government. Frustrated with Carranza, President Wilson briefly transferred U.S. support to Pancho Villa, leader of a rebel army in northern Mexico. When Villa's army failed to mount a serious threat to Carranza, Wilson withdrew his support and recognized the Carranza regime. This infuriated Villa who, in retaliation, began a series of attacks on Americans. Villa pulled 16 American engineers off a train in northern Mexico and executed them and then killed 17 Americans in a raid on Columbus, New Mexico. An outraged Wilson, with reluctant permission from Carranza, sent 6,000 U.S. soldiers into Mexico to capture Villa and his 1,500 men. Villa led U.S. troops deep into Mexican territory on an unsuccessful hunt that alarmed Mexicans and further raised tensions between the two countries. As the United States entered World War I in 1917, Wilson finally recalled U.S. troops from Mexico.

Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation.

—President Theodore Roosevelt

We hold that just government rests always upon the consent of the governed, and that there can be no freedom without order based upon law and upon public conscience and approval.... We can have no sympathy with those who seek to seize the power of government to advance their own personal interests or ambition.

—President Woodrow Wilson

If the United States intervenes in Mexico [that] intervention will deepen a profound hatred between the United States and the whole of Latin America, a hatred which will endanger the entire political future of the United States!

—General Venustiano Carranza

Poor Mexico, so far from God, so near the United States.

—President Porfirio Díaz

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dollars, not bullets—would advance U.S. authority and prosperity while promoting worldwide stability. During his presidency, he established U.S. businesses in the Dominican Republic, as well as ordered troops there, justifying the use of force as a means to teach the nation how to establish law and order.

However, encouraging the growth of business in the Dominican Republic did not stabilize the country. Although U.S. companies provided employment and sought to improve local living conditions, their presence provoked resentment and led Dominicans to turn against what they viewed as imperialism. Dominican nationalists complained that U.S. businesses unfairly profited from Dominican resources, investing little but taking away a great deal. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Dominican Republic had several short-lived dictatorships amidst years of civil war. The country fell deeper into debt and in 1916, when World War I broke out, President Woodrow Wilson sent the U.S. Marines to the island to put an end to the civil wars and to install a U.S. military government, which lasted for eight years. After the United States pulled out troops in 1924, a corrupt officer named Rafael Leonidas Trujillo rose to power, assuming the Dominican presidency in 1930.

When one of the great Christian countries finds a strip of land it desires to possess, it is quickly seized with a commendable desire to spread the benign influence of civilization over the natives, and what a remarkable small number of natives are left after this process has been completed.

—U.S. newspaper editor

The presidents' aim in the Dominican Republic was "to teach the Latin American republics to elect good men."

—President Woodrow Wilson

Latin American and Caribbean countries need not fear intervention if they know how to act with decency. But if they show brutal wrong-doing or weakness which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, they must expect intervention by a civilized nation and America would not hesitate to step in.

—Theodore Roosevelt

Latin American nations were physically unable to prevent United States intervention, and sought to find recourse against "Yankee imperialism" by appealing to world opinion and international law.

—Rufino Blanco-Fambona, leading Venezuelan intellectual

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on Panama



This cartoon shows a lecherous Uncle Sam making off with a young woman shaped like North and South America.

At the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States gained control of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. These acquisitions sparked U.S. interest in building and controlling a canal across Central America. Such a waterway would allow warships to pass between the Atlantic and Pacific without circling South America, making it easier to defend the new U.S. territories. It would also benefit the growing trade with Asia. The United States determined that a canal through Panama, then part of Colombia, was the shortest and most effective route. President Theodore Roosevelt negotiated a treaty with Colombian officials in which the United States would lease a 6-mile-wide zone in return for \$10 million and an annual payment of \$250,000 to Colombia. However, the Colombian Senate unanimously rejected the treaty. Regarding Panama as one of Colombia's most valuable natural assets, they feared losing control of the region.

President Roosevelt was infuriated at the setback. His foreign policy was to actively meet any challenge to the national interest. He advocated peaceful relations with other nations, but also wanted a strong international presence that would ensure American prosperity. Roosevelt's foreign policy is best summarized by the West African proverb that became one of his favorite sayings: "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Roosevelt's "big stick" approach manifested itself in the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserted the right of the United States to act as international police power in Latin America.

The Panamanians, who had rebelled numerous times against Colombia, looked forward to the prosperity they felt was sure to follow the construction of the canal. The owner of the Panama Canal Company, who was also disturbed at the potential loss of business, worked with the Panama revolutionists to raise an army. Fearing that rejection of the treaty meant the United States would turn to an alternative location for the canal, possibly Nicaragua, the Panamanians staged a revolution in November 1903. Colombian troops were gathered to crush the uprising, but U.S. naval forces intervened. Panama won its independence easily, and an agreement was signed allowing the United States to build a canal. Roosevelt used the Roosevelt Corollary to justify beginning construction of the Panama Canal.

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Construction of the canal was a tremendous undertaking. Up to 400,000 men participated in the construction, as well as clearing brush and draining swamps to wipe out breeding grounds for malaria and yellow fever. The canal was opened at last in 1914. While the United States benefited most from the Panama Canal, the new sea route facilitated the trade of many nations.

U.S. intervention in Colombian-Panamanian affairs marked a decline in U.S. relations with Latin American countries. These countries began to fear the power of the United States in the region. Roosevelt defended U.S. actions in overthrowing Colombian rule in Panama. However, after Roosevelt's death in 1921, the United States signed a treaty with Colombia that expressed regret on the part of the United States. The United States provided money to Colombia as payment for Panama, thus admitting to the questionable role of the United States in acquiring the canal.

A powerful Navy is essential to protect trade routes. The United States government should build a canal across Central America. The canal will allow American ships to pass quickly between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

—Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, U.S. Navy

Latin American nations were physically unable to prevent United States intervention, and sought to find recourse against "Yankee imperialism" by appealing to world opinion and international law.

—Rufino Blanco-Fambona, leading Venezuelan intellectual

I do not see why we should dig the canal if we are not to fortify it so as to insure its being used for ourselves and against our foes.

—President Theodore Roosevelt

If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing... in the Western Hemisphere... may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

—President Theodore Roosevelt

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on China



This cartoon shows a Chinese dragon that has been slain by foreign powers, including Germany, France, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States.

During the 1800s the United States had a growing interest in China. American businessmen wanted to take part in lucrative trade in China, and missionaries wanted to convert the Chinese to Christianity. In the late 1800s the ruling Manchu dynasty in China grew weak and unstable. China's military power was not enough to defend it from the imperialist interest of other nations. As a result, Russia, Japan, Britain, France, and Germany each took control of a specific region of China during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. These regions became known as "spheres of influence."

In their respective spheres, the imperialist nations demanded that China give them special trade privileges and lease them land on which to build naval bases to protect their strategic interests.

The collective spheres of influence restricted U.S. participation in China. American missionaries began losing some of their influence, and manufacturers and exporters feared that Chinese markets would be monopolized by Europeans. The United States annexed the Philippine Islands after the Spanish-American War in 1898, and Americans began to view the islands as stepping stones to China. The United States urged the nations involved in China to respect certain Chinese rights and the notion of fair competition among those engaged in trade in China. In 1899 the United States asked the foreign powers to respect the following three principles, together known as the Open Door policy:

- No power would prevent others from trading in a sphere of influence.
- All taxes on imports or exports would be collected by the Chinese government.
- No power would ask for harbor or railroad duties that discriminated against the other powers in its sphere of influence.

Most of the countries indicated they would follow the proposed policy if the other nations involved agreed to it. Without further correspondence, the United States boldly announced that all powers had agreed to the principles of the Open Door policy.

Most Chinese opposed foreign influence in their country. The Open Door policy did little to rid China of continual foreign interference in ancient customs and foreign disregard for Chinese culture and society. The Chinese were also outraged at the condition of their country

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and hoped to reestablish a strong government that could control both the Chinese and the foreigners living in China. As foreign powers encroached during the late 1800s, these sentiments led to the formation of nationalist societies in China. In 1900 one such group of nationalists known as the Boxers rose up against Europeans. Hoping to expel all foreigners from China, the Boxers killed foreigners and destroyed buildings. The uprising, known as the Boxer Rebellion, lasted for a little over a month. It was crushed by troops from European countries and the United States. Bowing to the victorious countries' demands, China agreed to allow foreign troops to be stationed on Chinese soil and to allow foreign ships to patrol the Chinese coastline and rivers.

After the Boxer Rebellion, the United States added another principle to its Open Door policy, one stressing that China should remain independent and not be carved up into a group of colonies as punishment for the rebellion. With this policy in play, China remained open to trade, but foreign powers continued to violate China's national integrity and to extend their spheres of influence. The United States made no attempt to support its policy with armed force. Thus, China continued to provide new markets and sources of raw materials for American industry.

Today we are the poorest and weakest nation in the world and occupy the lowest position in international affairs. Other men are the carving knife and serving dish; we are the fish and the meat.

—Sun Yat-sen, leader of China in the early 1900s

American policy will bring about permanent peace and safety to China, preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity... and safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese Empire.

—Secretary of State John Hay, 1900

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on Hawaii



This picture shows Queen Liliuokalani, the last monarch of Hawaii (center), seated with Sanford B. Dole (left), the first head of the provisional government after Hawaii became a U.S. territory.

During the eighteenth century, the United States became interested in the Hawaiian Islands as a way station and provisioning point for shippers, sailors, and whalers trading with Asian nations. New England missionaries preaching Protestant Christianity also settled in the islands in 1820. Many of the descendants of these missionaries became prosperous sugar growers who dominated the economy and government of Hawaii. These Americans, as well as those on the West Coast, gradually came to regard the Hawaiian Islands as an extension of the United States and sought

to gain more direct influence over the islands. During the 1840s the United States warned other powers to stay out of Hawaii. In the late 1800s the United States made a commercial trade agreement with the Hawaiian government, followed by a treaty guaranteeing the United States a naval base at Pearl Harbor.

In 1891 Queen Liliuokalani came to power. She insisted that native Hawaiians control Hawaii. She attempted to restore the power of the Hawaiian monarchy and reduce the power of foreign merchants. This alarmed the white planters, who were mostly Americans. Although the whites were a minority, they organized a successful revolt in 1893. The revolt was openly assisted by U.S. troops, who landed under the unauthorized orders of the expansionist U.S. minister to Hawaii, John L. Stevens. The whites seized power and set up a provisional government.

Following the revolt, the American whites applied to the U.S. Congress for U.S. annexation of Hawaii. However, before the Senate could act on the annexation treaty, President Grover Cleveland withdrew it from consideration. The president believed that the United States was guilty of improper actions in Hawaii. He led an investigation into the overthrow, during which he discovered that the majority of native Hawaiians did not favor annexation to the United States. President Cleveland made a formal apology to Queen Liliuokalani and sought unsuccessfully to have her restored to power. However, Cleveland's actions only slowed the imperialists and white revolutionaries who held economic control in Hawaii. Five years later, following the Spanish-American War, many Americans recognized the strategic and commercial value of Hawaii. In 1898 the islands were annexed and officially became a possession of the United States. U.S. intervention resulted in long-lasting resentment among many native Hawaiians.

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The Hawaiian pear is fully ripe and this is the golden hour for the United States to pluck it.

—John L. Stevens, U.S. minister to Hawaii

[The U.S. government must] channel the energies of Americans toward the expansion of trade abroad. Increased foreign trade will create jobs that might give ambitious people the same opportunity the frontier had once provided.

—Frederick Jackson Turner, University of Wisconsin professor of history

A powerful Navy is essential to protect trade routes... Hawaii would be an important naval base in the Pacific.

—Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, U.S. Navy

[It was necessary to confiscate all plantations and] drive foreigners from the islands.

—Queen Liliuokalani

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on Cuba



This cartoon shows a Spanish "brute" leaning on the tomb of U.S. soldiers who died in the explosion of the U.S. battleship *Maine* prior to the Spanish-American War.

In the 1800s the United States became interested in Cuba, located only 90 miles off the coast of Florida. From 1868 the Cuban people had struggled for independence from Spain. Slavery in Cuba had been abolished, but Spain denied Cubans their independence and ruled repressively on the island. Some Americans identified the Cubans' plight with their own fight for independence from England. Others had begun to see Cuba, geographically, as a natural extension of U.S. territory. And Cuba's productive sugar plantations attracted the attention of those interested in its economic potential. The U.S. connection to Cuba was strengthened when Cuban expatriate José Martí gathered arms, money, and men in New York to fight Spanish rule.

In 1898 the United States fought and won a four-month-long war against Spain that was sparked by revolution in Cuba. As a result of winning the Spanish-American War, the United States emerged as a world power, and became the dominant power in the Caribbean. When it went to war with Spain, the United States had not planned to annex Cuba. In the treaty ending the war, Spain granted independence to Cuba. However, Cuba had been left in chaos. The government was at a standstill, sanitation almost nonexistent, and disease rampant. In response, President William McKinley set up a U.S. military government to administer the island. Under the U.S. military governor, programs of public works, education, sanitation, court reform, and self-government were instituted.

In spite of the progress made, Cubans were impatient for full independence. When a constitution for a new government in Cuba was drafted in 1901, the United States insisted that it include the Platt Amendment, which severely limited Cuba's independence. It limited Cuba's right to borrow from foreign powers, gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs to protect American lives and property, and gave the United States the right to establish two naval stations on the island. Although Cubans hated the restrictions placed on them by the Platt Amendment, they were forced to accept them before the United States would agree to withdraw troops from the country.

U.S. involvement in Cuba did not end with the establishment of the new Constitution and the Platt Amendment. In 1906 Cubans unhappy with their conditions revolted against the

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government. The United States intervened to restore order, establishing a provisional government. This government reformed the election process before returning the country to Cuban control three years later. Many Cubans welcomed the presence of U.S. troops to restore stability, law, and order. Others resented U.S. intervention, which was seen as an imperialist policy motivated mainly by U.S. business interests.

The United States is seated at the table where the great game is played, and it cannot leave it.

—French diplomat

The American people now produce \$2 billion worth more than they consume, and we have met the emergency and by the providence of God, by the statesmanship of William McKinley, and the valor of Theodore Roosevelt... we have our markets in Cuba, in Puerto Rico, in the Philippines, and we stand in the presence of 800 million people with the Pacific an American lake.... The world is ours.

—Senator Chauncey M. Depew, Wall Street banker

It is my duty to prevent, through the independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading over the West Indies and falling with added weight upon other lands of Our America.

—José Martí, leader of the Cuban revolution against Spain

Information About U.S. Foreign Policy on Puerto Rico



This cartoon shows Uncle Sam holding and surrounded by screaming toddlers representing new territories acquired by the United States after the Spanish-American War.

In the 1898 treaty ending the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States. The United States soon became the dominant power in the Caribbean—a region earlier controlled by Europe. Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory. The U.S. government selected a U.S. governor and executive council to rule the island, and appointed U.S. judges to the Puerto Rico Supreme Court. In spite of U.S. rule, as residents of a U.S. territory, Puerto Ricans were not American citizens and could not travel freely to the United States. This stipulation satisfied American labor leaders and politicians who opposed Puerto Rican immigration to the United States.

The new government carried out programs in Puerto Rico to control malaria, yellow fever, and other diseases. In addition, the government sponsored workers laboring to repair harbors, build roads, and install irrigation projects. In 1917 the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act, granting Puerto Ricans U.S. citizenship. During World War I, 17,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. military, some helping guard the Panama Canal.

Looking for cheap labor, U.S. businesses invested heavily in the territory. By 1930 U.S. investors owned 60 percent of the public utilities and the banking industry, 80 percent of the tobacco plants, 60 percent of the sugar industry, and all overseas shipping. The buildup of huge American sugar plantations took place at the expense of Puerto Rican small farmers. These farmers were forced to sell their land or were paid very low prices for their sugar cane. Furthermore, they could no longer compete against cheap imported food from large and highly mechanized farms in the United States. Small plantation owners and independent farmers were destroyed and were forced to depend on seasonal, low-paying work at the plantations.

Many Puerto Ricans were unhappy with U.S. rule, which allowed the government limited freedom and established a system in which most major industries were foreign owned. After 30 years of U.S. rule, unemployment was over 30 percent. Living conditions were deplorable, with little sanitation, widespread disease, and low life expectancy.

Peace has come through the last century to large sections of the earth because the civilized races have spread over the earth's dark places. It is a good thing for the world but above all...for the people of those countries.

—President Theodore Roosevelt

[The U.S. government must] channel the energies of Americans toward the expansion of trade abroad. Increased foreign trade will create jobs that might give ambitious people the same opportunity the frontier had once provided.

—Frederick Jackson Turner, University of Wisconsin professor of history

[Imperialism is justified as] the natural and necessary expansion of the superior Anglo-Saxon people.

—Reverend Josiah Strong

To think that the Yankees are going to give us all their freedoms and all their progress for our pretty face is to think blindfolded. We could indeed have an unheard-of manufacturing and business activity; but all this would be in their hands, monopolized and exploited by them.

—Mariano Abril Otaño, Puerto Rican journalist

I don't want a colony with Spain or the United States. I want my country to be Free, Independent and Sovereign. Why don't the Puerto Ricans revolt?

—Ramón Betances, Puerto Rican nationalist