

Unit #2: American Imperialism

American Expansionism

- Americans had always sought to expand the nation
- Imperialism- policy in which stronger nations extend their economic, political, or military control over weaker territories
- Many European nations had already established colonies around the world
 - Europeans target Africa- only Ethiopia and Liberia were independent nations at the start of the 20th century
 - European nations also controlled parts of China

American Expansionism

- Most Americans want U.S. to seek overseas colonies
- 3 factors contribute to this belief:
 - 1. Desire for military strength- led to a building up of the navy**
 - 2. Thirst for new markets- saw foreign trade as a solution to overproduction**
 - 3. Belief in cultural superiority- idea of Social Darwinism used to justify imperialism**

U.S. Acquires Alaska

- 1867 Secretary of State William Seward buys Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million
 - Approximately 2 cents/acre
- Many people referred to this action as ‘Seward’s Icebox’ or ‘Seward’s Folly’ seeing little value in the land
- However, Alaska is a land rich in oil, timber, and minerals

U.S. Acquires Hawaii

- **America used Hawaii as a staging point for trade with East Indies and China as far back as the 1790s**
- **Some Americans stayed on the islands and began growing sugar whom they sold to the United States**
- **1875 America agrees to import Hawaiian sugar duty-free**
- **This decision reversed as a part of the McKinley Tariff in 1890**
- **Many call for the U.S. to annex Hawaii to eliminate this tax**
- **1887 - U.S. builds naval base, Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii**
- **1893 - American Planters overthrew Queen Liliuokalani**
- **August 12, 1898 Hawaii is annexed by the United States**

The Spanish-American War

Cubans Rebel Against Spain

- **By 1900 Spain has only a few of its colonies left: the Philippines, Guam, Cuba, and Puerto Rico**
- **For a long time America had its eye on Cuba**
 - **Spain refused to sell Cuba to America saying they would 'rather see it sink into the ocean'.**
- **Jose Marti launches a revolution for Cuban independence against Spain in 1895**
 - **Utilizes guerilla tactics**
- **Public opinion in the United States divided over whether the US should join the conflict**

War Fever Escalates

- American newspaper reporters sent to Cuba to give accounts of the conflict
- Many exaggerate their stories to provoke US involvement and to sell more newspapers
 - Yellow Journalism- sensational style of writing which exaggerates the news to lure and enrage readers
- De Lome Letter- leaked letter from the Spanish ambassador to the US which called President McKinley 'weak' and a 'bidder for the admiration of the crowd'



- February 15, 1898 the *USS Maine* blows up in Havana harbor killing 260 men
- Newspapers describe the Spanish intentionally blowing up the ship
- In all likelihood it was a mechanical failure

War with Spain

- First fighting of the war took place in the Philippines where Spain's naval fleet was destroyed
 - US is victorious by August
- US Navy successfully completes blockade of Cuba
- 17,000 American forces land in Cuba in June 1898
 - 2 Black regiments & the Rough Riders won a victory at Kettle Hill which allowed infantry to win a battle at San Juan Hill
- After defeating the Spanish in Cuba, US forces invade Puerto Rico in late July
- Treaty of Paris- US gets Guam and Puerto Rico, buys the Philippines for \$20 million and Cuba is freed
- Domestic debate ensues over whether or not the US has the right to annex the Philippines
 - Some fear competition for American jobs, others fear potential difficulties in race relations, others feel a sovereign nation should be left to govern itself

America Acquires New Lands: Ruling Puerto Rico

- Question erupts over what to do with Puerto Rico
- Many Puerto Ricans divided- some push for local government as a US territory, others wish to become a state
- During the Spanish-American War, Puerto Rico occupied and controlled by the US military
- 1900- Foraker Act- gave US president the power to appoint governor of Puerto Rico
 - Puerto Ricans eventually granted right to elect members of their legislature and US citizenship

Cuba and the United States

- Cuba granted independence following the Spanish-American War
- Cuba ratifies a new constitution in 1903 and becomes a US protectorate for 31 years- country whose affairs are partially controlled by a stronger power
- **Platt Amendment**
 - Cuba could not make treaties that might limit freedom
 - US has the right to intervene in Cuba
 - Cuba could not go into debt that they couldn't repay
 - US could buy or lease land for military use
- Americans kept presence in Cuba to protect American business interests there- sugar, tobacco, and mining

Filipinos Rebel

- Filipinos outraged by annexation of their country by the US
- 1899 Emilio Aguinaldo leads revolt against the US
- Takes US 3 years, 4,000 lives and \$400 million dollars to put down the rebellion
- Government established in the Philippines similar to the one in Puerto Rico
- Philippines achieves independence on July 4, 1946

Foreign Influence in China

- US viewed the Philippines as a gateway to trade in Asia, specifically China
- Many nations compete for economic interests in China
- Each nation typically controlled a small region of the country along the coast where they had special trading and legal rights
- John Hay's Open Door Notes allowed for sharing of trading rights in China by a number of nations
- Western nations come to dominate most of China's large cities through trade
- Group of Chinese, known as the Boxers, lead rebellion in 1900 protesting foreign involvement in their country
- Eventually put down by a number of western nations
- US feels strength of its economy based on exports and access to open foreign markets



THE OPEN DOOR

Impact of US Territorial Gains

- Anti-Imperialism groups grew in the 20th century:
 - Prominent Americans such as Grover Cleveland, Andrew Carnegie, and Mark Twain joined the movement
 - Believed it was wrong for the US to rule other people without their consent even if the US benefitted economically

America as a World Power:

Teddy Roosevelt and International Politics

- Teddy Roosevelt ascends to the Presidency following the assassination of President McKinley in 1901
- Russia and Japan go to war in 1904 over control in Korea
- Roosevelt works as a mediator for peace negotiations in New Hampshire in 1905
- Agreement helped establish positive relationship between US and Japan

Panama Canal

- Many Americans favor a canal across Central America to reduce travel time for commercial and military ships
- Two options come to the forefront: one through Nicaragua and another through Panama
- US decides to go through Panama
- Problem: Panama was a Colombian province
- Colombia won't grant US permission to build so US influences start of a rebellion in Panama
- Rebellion succeeds and Panama gains independence
- Panama then sells canal zone to US for \$10 million and an annual rent of \$250k

Building the Canal

- Much of land around the canal zone contains swamps and mountains
- One huge problem for workers is disease- yellow fever and malaria
- Work begins in 1904
- At the height of construction 43,400 workers employed
- 5,600 workers die from accidents or disease
- Canal opens on August 15, 1914- total construction cost to the US \$380 million

Roosevelt Corollary

- US drawn further into Latin American affairs
- US government fears European involvement in Latin America
- “Speak softly and carry a big stick”
- 1904 Roosevelt adds the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine- basically stated the US would use force to protect its economic interests in Latin America

Dollar Diplomacy

- 1911 rebellion in Nicaragua left the nation bankrupt
- US bankers loan government money to pay off their debts in exchange for control of country's railroad system and national bank
- Nicaraguan citizens hear about the deal and attempt to overthrow their president
- US Marines quell the rebellion
- Dollar diplomacy- US policy of using the nation's economic power to exert influence over other countries

Wilson's Missionary Diplomacy

- 'Missionary Diplomacy'- President Wilson's view that the US had a moral responsibility to deny recognition to any LA government it viewed as oppressive, undemocratic, or hostile to US interests
- Pressured nations in the Western Hemisphere to establish democratic governments

Mexican Revolution

- Mexico long ruled by Porfirio Diaz, dictator who encouraged foreign investment in Mexico
 - Foreign investors and a few Mexicans become rich while common people are desperately poor
- 1911 Mexican peasants overthrow the government
- US Marines get involved in the conflict in 1914 and the US and Mexico nearly go to war
- Series of governments come to power at this time in Mexico
- Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata lead a revolt against Mexican government beginning in 1916
- Villa and Zapata are dedicated to land reform
- During their revolt, some of Villa's followers raid Columbus, NM killing 17 Americans

Mexican Revolution

- American public is outraged and demand Villa's capture
- General John J. Pershing and 15,000 US soldiers goes to Mexico in search of Villa
- Many Mexicans grow angry over US military presence on their land- clash ensues between US and Mexican armies
- Pershing eventually goes home as US military focuses on war in Europe

Legacy of Conflict with Mexico

- Illustrated Americans belief in the superiority of free-enterprise democracy
- Showed American government's willingness to militarily get involved to preserve American economic interests in a foreign country