American Imperialism

Listed below are some of the important ideas and events involving American diplomacy during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Monroe Doctrine

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

Manifest Destiny

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

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

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

### Open Door Policy

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

### Boxer Rebellion

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

### Banana Republics

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

### Roosevelt Corollary

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

### Big Stick Diplomacy

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

### Dollar Diplomacy

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

### Missionary Diplomacy

Missionary Diplomacy was a U.S. foreign policy concerning Latin America during the administration of President Woodrow Wilson. Under Missionary Diplomacy, the United States attempted to spread democracy to other nations of the Western Hemisphere. Wilson believed that a democratic system would bring as much success to Latin American nations as it had to the United States. Unfortunately, this meant that Wilson often used the U.S. military to forcibly remove Latin American governments he did not approve of. The U.S. intervened in Mexico, Haiti, Cuba, Panama, and Nicaragua during Wilson's presidency.

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