Chapter 22
Creating an Empire, 1865—1917

Chapter Summary

Chapter 22 explores late nineteenth-century American imperialism. Topics covered in this chapter include the ideological, economic, and political justifications for imperialism; the events surrounding the Spanish-American War; American forays into Asia; and the emergence of American dominance in the Western Hemisphere.

I. The Roots of Imperialism
   A. Ideological Arguments
   B. Strategic Concerns
   C. Economic Designs

II. First Steps
   A. Seward and Blaine
   B. Hawaii
   C. Chile and Venezuela

III. The Spanish-American War
   A. The Cuban Revolution
   B. Growing Tensions
   C. War and Empire
   D. The Treaty of Paris

IV. Imperial Ambitions: The United States and East Asia, 1899–1917
   A. The Filipino-American War
   B. China and the Open Door
   C. Rivalry with Japan and Russia

V. Imperial Power: The United States and Latin America, 1899–1917
   A. U.S. Rule in Puerto Rico
   B. Cuba as a U.S. Protectorate
   C. The Panama Canal
   D. The Roosevelt Corollary
   E. Dollar Diplomacy
   F. Wilsonian Interventions
      1. Caribbean interventions
      2. Interfering with Mexico

VI. Conclusion
Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 22, students should be able to do the following:

1. Outline the issues that were used to justify late nineteenth-century American imperialism.

2. Identify Alfred Thayer Mahan and describe his contribution to the promotion of American imperialism.

3. Identify William H. Seward and list the achievements in the area of American foreign policy during his tenure as Secretary of State. Identify James G. Blaine and list the American achievements in foreign policy during his tenure as Secretary of State.

4. List the reasons why Americans had an interest in the annexation of Hawaii. Describe the Cleveland administration’s handling of the annexation issue.

5. Identify Queen Liliuokalani and explain the significance of her role in the Hawaiian annexation issue.

6. Cite examples of United States intervention in the political affairs of Chile and Venezuela during the 1890s. Explain how these incidents reflected American ideas about the role of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

7. Identify the factors that promoted American support for Cuban independence during the 1890s. Identify the events that served as catalysts in pushing the United States toward war with Spain.

8. Outline the provisions of the Teller Amendment and explain why it was added to the bill declaring war on Spain.

9. Explain why so much importance was attached to the American victory in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War.

10. Separate myth from reality regarding the events surrounding the American victory in the Battle of San Juan Hill.

11. Outline the American arguments for and against ratification of the Treaty of Paris. Identify the Anti-Imperialist League and explain its role in the public debate over acquisition of the Philippines.

12. Identify Emilio Aguinaldo and explain his role in the Filipino-American War.

13. Describe the American treatment of the Filipino people during the Filipino-American War. Comment on American reaction to this treatment.

14. Define the term sphere of influence and explain its relevance to the political status of China at the turn of the century.

15. Identify Secretary of State John Hay and outline the principles of his Open Door policy. Describe the circumstances surrounding the Boxer Rebellion and explain the position of the United States on this incident.
16. Outline the provisions of the Treaty of Portsmouth and explain the impact of this treaty on Japanese-American relations.

17. Describe the role of the United States in Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War. Explain the importance of the Supreme Court decision in the Insular Cases and how that decision would impact American territorial acquisitions in the future.

18. Explain the provisions of the Platt Amendment and how they defined the role of the United States in Cuba following the Spanish-American War.

19. Discuss Theodore Roosevelt’s role in the circumstances leading to the construction of the Panama Canal. Describe the American response to Roosevelt’s approach to foreign policy.

20. Explain the intent of the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Explain the corollary’s impact on the role of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

21. Define the term dollar diplomacy and explain its pertinence to United States relations with the nations of Latin America. Describe United States intervention in Nicaraguan affairs during the Taft administration.

22. Distinguish between Theodore Roosevelt’s and Woodrow Wilson’s approaches to foreign affairs.

23. Offer three major examples of United States intervention in Latin American affairs during the Wilson administration.

**Topics for Classroom Lecture**

1. Present a contrast of the imperialist and anti-imperialist arguments that were debated in the United States at the turn of the century. In presenting the imperialist argument, stress the pragmatic motivations connected to economic, political, and military empowerment as well as the moral justification offered by Social Darwinists under the guise of Manifest Destiny. In looking at the anti-imperialist position, consider questions some Americans had regarding the distinctions between early nineteenth-century westward expansion and late nineteenth-century colonial acquisition. Also, consider American concerns about the foreign lands and populations targeted by American imperialism at the turn of the century. Finally, many anti-imperialists pointed out the historical and political inconsistencies of a nation that resisted its own colonial status and then grew up to colonize other territories itself.

2. Discuss Theodore Roosevelt’s “big stick” diplomacy and Woodrow Wilson’s missionary diplomacy. Explain to students the similarities between the two diplomatic philosophies as well as the significant differences between them. Examine foreign affairs under Roosevelt and assess the extent to which these events were reflections of Roosevelt’s philosophy. Do the same for Wilson. Which President executed his philosophy more effectively?

**Topics for Classroom Discussion and Essays**

1. Have students discuss the tie between Progressivism and imperialism. Theodore Roosevelt is an excellent example of a single person who embodied both of these causes. Consider the following questions:
a. How does imperialism represent an extension of the Social Gospel? What motivations and philosophical justifications behind the Progressive movement could also be used to justify imperialism?
b. How is Social Darwinism reflected in both Progressivism and imperialism?
c. How are paternalism and the desire to exert control and authority reflected in both Progressivism and imperialism?
d. Did all Progressives support imperialism? Why not?

2. Discuss the American relationship with Europe at the turn of the century. To what extent did Europe figure either directly or indirectly in the development of American foreign policy? Did America still fear European power at the turn of the century? How did the Open Door policy, the Roosevelt corollary, and dollar diplomacy reflect American concerns regarding Europe? Will these lingering worries about Europe impact the American role in World War I?

**Topics for Class Projects and Term Papers**

1. Prepare a paper on the Spanish governor Valeriano Butcher Weyler. Examine his style of rule, the threat he presented to Cubans and foreign interests in Cuba, and his reputation as the originator of the concentration camp.

2. Examine nationalist responses to American imperialism at the turn of the century. Have students research and present reports on examples of native resistance to American expansion. Among topics to consider, include Queen Liliuokalani and the Hawaiian nationalist movement, Emiliano Aguinaldo and the Filipino-American War, and Augusto Sandino and the Nicaraguan resistance.

**Resources for Lectures and Research Projects**


**Audio-Visual Resources**

*Crucible of Empire: The Spanish-American War*, Great Projects Film Company, Inc., 1999, 120 minutes. This series examines the Spanish-American War and includes some early footage and photography from battle sites.

Part of *The American Experience* series, this video examines the life of Queen Liliuokalani of Hawaii.