

Chapter 27- The Path of Empire

1890-1899

Imperialist Stirrings

- Farmers, factory owners look beyond American shores (agricultural and industrial production)
- The country was bursting with a new sense of power generated by robust growth in population, wealth, and productive capacity (trembling from blows of labor violence and agrarian unrest)
- “Yellow press” of Pulitzer and Hearst described foreign exploits as manly adventures
- Pious missionaries looked overseas for new souls to harvest (Reverend Josiah Strong)
- Americans (Roosevelt and Congressman Henry Cabot Lodge) were interpreting Darwinism to mean that the earth belonged to the strong and the fit—this is, to Uncle Sam
- European powers were imperializing (Africa and Chinese Empire)
- Development of a new steel navy focused attention overseas (control of sea—dominance?)
- Mahan’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* helped stimulate the naval race
- Secretary of State James G. Blaine pushed the “Big Sister” policy
- It aimed to rally Latin American nations behind US leadership and open Latin American markets
- Blaine resided over the first Pan-American conference (economic cooperation, tariff reduction)
- Number of diplomatic crises marked the path of American diplomacy in late 1880s-90s
- American and German navies came to blows in 1889; lynching of Italians in 1891 brought American and Italy to brink of war; American demands on Chile after deaths of two sailors

Monroe’s Doctrine and the Venezuelan Squall

- America’s anti-British feeling arose in 1895-1896 over Venezuela
- Jungle boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela had been in dispute (gold found)
- President Cleveland decided on a strong protest and his secretary of state, Richard Olney, declared that the British was in effect flouting the Monroe Doctrine (submit to arbitration)
- London flatly denied the relevance of the Monroe Doctrine and spurned arbitration
- War seemed inevitable and President Cleveland wanted to run a line in Venezuela
- Britain had no urge to fight, Canada was vulnerable, and merchant marine was vulnerable
- Britain’s traditional policy of isolation was brining insecure isolation (Russia, France, Germany)

- Boers in South Africa captured British party—British anger deflected to Germany (arbitration)
- The prestige of the Monroe Doctrine was immensely enhanced
- British were now determined to cultivate Yankee friendship; Great Rapprochement, the new Anglo-American cordiality became a cornerstone of both nations' foreign policies

Spurning the Hawaiian Pear

- Enchanted Hawaii had early attracted the attention of Americans (way station, provision point)
- The State Department sternly warned other powers to keep their grasping hands off
- Commercial reciprocity agreement (1875) and naval-base rights (1887)
- Sugar cultivation, profitable, had barriers raised against it with the McKinley Tariff
- White planters concluded that the best way was to annex Hawaii to the United States
- Queen Liliuokalani insisted that native Hawaiians should control the islands
- Desperate whites organized a successful revolt in 1893 with help from American troops
- Cleveland suspected that the US had wronged deposed Queen Liliuokalani and withdrew the treat from the Senate in 1893 and a probe revealed that Hawaiians didn't want to be annexed
- The Hawaiian pear continued to ripen for five more years until 1898 after Cleveland

Cubans Rise in Revolt

- Cuba's masses again rose against their Spanish oppressor in 1895
- The roots of the revolt was partly economic, with partial origins in the United States
- Sugar production, backbone of Cuba's prosperity, was crippled by the American tariff of 1894
- Insurgents adopted a scorched-earth policy—they wanted Spain to move out or US to aid them
- Spanish misrule in Cuba menaced the shipping routes of the West Indies and Gulf of Mexico
- In 1896, Spanish general Weyler undertook to crush the rebellion by herding many civilians into barbed-wire reconcentration camps, where they could not give assistance to armed insurgents
- The American public demanded action but President Cleveland refused to budge (no gov't)

The Mystery of the Maine Explosion

- "Yellow journalism" of Hearst and Pulitzer enhanced atrocities in Cuba, sometimes invented
- "Butcher" Weyler was removed in 1897, yet conditions steadily worsened; there was some talk in Spain of granting the restive island a type of self-government (opposed by Spanish Cubans)

- In 1898 Washington sent battleship *Maine* to Cuba to protect and evacuate Americans
- In February 1898, a letter written by Spanish minister in Washington, Dupuy de Lome, described President McKinley as a politician who lacked good faith—sensationally headlined by Hearst
- Days later, the *Maine* mysteriously blew up in Havana harbor killing 260 officers and men
- Spanish commission state that the explosion had been internal and presumably accidental while the American commission reported that the blast had been caused by a submarine mine
- But Americans in 1898, now war-mad, blindly accepted the least likely explanation

McKinley Unleashes the Dogs of War

- American diplomats had gained Madrid's agreement to Washington's two basic demands: an end to reconcentration camps and an armistice with Cuban rebels (McKinley did not want hostilities)
- McKinley's private desires clashed sharply with opinions now popular with the public
- The president finally yielded and gave the people what they wanted; no faith in Spain's promises
- McKinley believed in the democratic principle that people should rule—thought it evitable
- McKinley did not want to break up the Grand Old Party and give the Democrats an upper hand
- On April 11, 1898, McKinley sent his war message to Congress, urging armed intervention
- Legislators adopted the Teller Amendment that proclaimed to the world that when the United States had overthrown Spanish misrule, it would give the Cubans their freedom

Dewey's May Day Victory at Manila

- The regular army was unprepared for a war under tropical skies (28,000 men to 200,000 troops)
- Spain's apparent superiority was illusory; its navy was in wretched condition
- The readiness of the navy owed much to navy secretary John Long and assistant Theodore Roosevelt—who cabled Commodore George Dewey to descend upon Spain's Philippines in war
- Dewey sailed in Manila on May 1, 1898 and destroyed the Spanish fleet

Unexpected Imperialistic Plums

- Dewey had to wait for troop reinforcements assembling in America; foreign warships begun to gather in the harbor, ostensibly to safeguard their nationals in Manila (British friendliness)
- Long-awaited American troops finally arriving in force, captured Manila on August 13, 1898

- They collaborated with the Filipino insurgents commanded by Emilio Aguinaldo
- Events in Philippines focused attention on Hawaii—a joint resolution of annexation was rushed through Congress and approved by McKinley on July 7, 1898 (U.S. citizenship, territorial status)

The Confused Invasion of Cuba

- Spanish government ordered a fleet of warships to Cuba under Admiral Cervera (falling apart)
- Demands for protection poured in on Washington from eastern seaboard of the US
- Sound strategy seemed to dictate that an American army could be sent in from the rear
- The ill-prepared Americans were unequipped for war in the tropics (all woolen clothing)
- “Rough Riders” commanded by Colonel Leonard Wood organized by Theodore Roosevelt
- Embarked at congested Tampa, Florida and rushed one of the transports
- Brisk fighting broke out at El Caney and San Juan Hill—both victories

Curtains for Spain in America

- The American army, fast closing in on Santiago, spelled doom for the Spanish fleet
- Spanish fleets were entirely destroyed and Santiago surrendered shortly after
- Hasty preparations were made for a descent upon Puerto Rico before the war should end
- The American army, commanded by General Nelson Miles, met little resistance
- Spain had satisfied its honor and on August 12, 1898, signed an armistice
- The American army suffered from malaria, typhoid, dysentery, and yellow fever
- One of the war’s worst scandals was the high death rate from sickness, especially typhoid fever

McKinley Heeds Duty, Destiny, and Dollars

- Spanish and American negotiators met in Paris to begin heated discussions
- Cuba was freed from its Spanish overlords, Guam was taken, and Puerto Rico picked
- Knottiest of all was the problem of the Philippines, a veritable apple of discord
- The Filipinos could not be left to govern themselves and were in danger from other countries
- Wall Street had opposed the war but now clamored for profits in the Philippines
- McKinley saw the solution as taking all the Philippines and Christianizing and civilizing them
- Americans at length agreed to pay Spain \$20 million for the Philippine Islands (imperialism)

- **America's Course (Curse?) of Empire**

- The Philippines was a nation in a distant tropical area populated by Asians of alien race, culture, tongue, religion, and government institutions (Anti-Imperialist League sprang up)
- Members included presidents of Stanford and Harvard, William James, and Mark Twain
- The anti-imperialist blanket stretched over Samuel Gompers and Andrew Carnegie
- Filipinos panted for freedom, despotism abroad might well beget despotism at home, and annexation would propel the US into the political and military cauldron of the Far East
- Imperialists appealed to patriotism and to the glory of annexation (possible trade profits)
- Rudyard Kipling urged America to uplift the underprivileged, underfed, and underclad
- The Spanish treaty run into heated opposition in the Senate (William Jennings Bryan)
- Bryan argued that the war was not over until America had ratified the pact; the sooner it accepted the document, the sooner it could give the Filipinos their independence
- The Treaty was approved on February 6, 1899 after Bryan's influence with Democrats

Perplexities in Puerto Rico and Cuba

- Many Puerto Rico's 1 million inhabitants lived in poverty; population grew faster than economy
- By the Foraker Act of 1900, Congress accorded the Puerto Ricans a limited degree of popular government and, in 1917, granted them U.S. citizenship (Did the Constitution follow the flag?)
- Beginning in 1901 with the *Insular Cases*, the Supreme Court decreed that the flag did outrun the Constitution, and that the outdistanced document did not necessarily extend with full force
- An American military government set up under General Leonard Wood in Cuba wrought miracles in government, finance, education, agriculture, and public health (yellow fever)
- The United States honoring the Teller Amendment, withdrew from Cuba in 1902
- The Cubans were forced to write constitution of 1901 called the Platt Amendment
- The Cubans bound themselves not to impair their independence by treaty or by contracting a debt beyond their resources (mutual protection by US, sell/lease coaling and naval stations)

New Horizons in Two Hemispheres

- The Spanish-American War did not cause the US to become a world power (already one)
- American prestige rose sharply and the European powers accorded more respect
- So great was America's good fortune that citizens found in the victories further support for their indifference to adequate preparedness—new spirit thrilled Americans

- National pride was touched and cockiness was increased by the “splendid little war”
- The British imperialists were pleased partly because of a newfound friendship
- By taking Philippine Islands, the United States became a full-fledged Far Eastern power
- Elihu Root took over the reins at the War Department—War College in Washington
- Further closing of the “bloody chasm” between North and South