

= Big Stick ideology =

Big Stick ideology , Big Stick diplomacy , or Big Stick policy refers to U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt 's foreign policy : " speak softly , and carry a big stick . " Roosevelt described his style of foreign policy as " the exercise of intelligent forethought and of decisive action sufficiently far in advance of any likely crisis " .

The idea of negotiating peacefully , simultaneously threatening with the " big stick " , or the military , ties in heavily with the idea of Realpolitik , which implies a pursuit of political power that resembles Machiavellian ideals . Compare to the term Gunboat diplomacy , as used in international politics by imperial powers .

= = Background = =

The first recorded use of the phrase occurs in a private letter from Roosevelt (then governor of New York) to Henry L. Sprague , dated January 26 , 1900 . Roosevelt wrote , in a bout of happiness after forcing New York 's Republican committee to pull support away from a corrupt financial adviser :

I have always been fond of the West African proverb : " Speak softly and carry a big stick ; you will go far . "

Roosevelt would go on to be elected Vice President later that year , and subsequently used the aphorism publicly in an address to the Minnesota State Fair , entitled " National Duties " , on September 2 , 1901 . :

A good many of you are probably acquainted with the old proverb : " Speak softly and carry a big stick -- you will go far . "

Four days later , President William McKinley was shot by an assassin ; his death a further eight days later elevated Roosevelt to the presidency .

Roosevelt 's attribution of the phrase to " a West African proverb " was seen at the time as evidence of Roosevelt 's " prolific " reading habits , but the claim that it originated in West Africa has been disputed . No earlier citation for the phrase has been found , and there is no record of the phrase being used in West Africa before Roosevelt 's time . It has been therefore suggested that he might have coined the phrase himself .

= = Usage = =

Although used before his presidency , Roosevelt used military muscle several times throughout his two terms with a more subtle touch to complement his diplomatic policies and enforcing the Monroe Doctrine throughout multiple interventions in Latin America . This included the Great White Fleet , 16 battleships which peacefully circumnavigated the globe as an illustration of United States ' rising yet neutral prestige under Roosevelt 's direction .

= = = In the U.S. = = =

= = = Anthracite coal strike = = =

In 1902 , 140 @, @ 000 miners went on strike , wanting higher pay , shorter work hours , and better housing . They were led by John Mitchell , a fellow miner who formed the United Mine Workers (UMW) . The mining companies refused to meet the demands of the UMW and contacted the Federal Government for support . Before Roosevelt , the government would send in military support to forcefully end the strike , but during Roosevelt 's terms , this strategy was not used . After the companies called for assistance , Roosevelt , fearful of the effects a coal shortage would have on the economy of the time , decided to host a meeting in the White House involving representatives or delegates , of the miners and the leaders of the mining companies . Mitchell , after returning from

the White House meeting , met with the miners , and drew a Consensus . The miners decided not to submit to political pressure , and continue on with the strike . Roosevelt then decided to bring in the military , but , instead of forcefully ending the strike and restoring power to the mining companies , he would use the military to run the mines in the " public interest " . The mining companies , upset that they were no longer directly making a profit , then accepted the demands of the UMW . This policy was later referred to as the " Square Deal " .

= = = Latin America = = =

= = = = Venezuelan Affair (1902) and the Roosevelt Corollary = = = =

In the early 20th century , Venezuela was receiving messages from Britain and Germany about " Acts of violence against the liberty of British subjects and the massive capture of British vessels " who were from the UK and the acts of Venezuelan initiative to pay off long @-@ standing debts . After British and German forces took naval action with a blockade on Venezuela (1902 ? 1903) , Roosevelt denounced the blockade . The blockade began the basis of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe doctrine . Though he had mentioned the basis of his idea beforehand in private letters , he officially announced the corollary in 1904 , stating that he only wanted the " other republics on this continent " to be " happy and prosperous " . For that goal to be met , the corollary required that they " maintain order within their borders and behave with a just obligation toward outsiders " .

Most historians , such as one of Roosevelt 's many biographers Howard K. Beale have summarized that the corollary was influenced by Roosevelt 's personal beliefs as well as his connections to foreign bondholders . The U.S. public was very " tense " during the two @-@ month blockade , and Roosevelt requested that Britain and Germany pull out their forces from the area . During the requests for the blockade ? s end , Roosevelt stationed naval forces in Cuba , to ensure " the respect of Monroe doctrine " and the compliance of the parties in question . The doctrine was never ratified by the senate or brought up for a vote to the American public . Roosevelt 's declaration was the first of many presidential decrees in the twentieth century that were never ratified .

= = = = Canal diplomacy = = = =

The U.S. used the " big stick " during " Canal Diplomacy " , the questionable diplomatic actions of the U.S. during the pursuit of a canal across Central America . Both Nicaragua and Panama featured canal related incidents of Big Stick Diplomacy .

= = = = = Proposed construction of the Nicaragua Canal = = = = =

In 1901 , Secretary of State John Hay pressed the Nicaraguan Government for approval of a canal . Nicaragua would receive \$ 1 @.@ 5 million in ratification , \$ 100 @,@ 000 annually , and the U.S. would " provide sovereignty , independence , and territorial integrity " . Nicaragua then returned the contract draft with a change ; they wished to receive , instead of an annual \$ 100 @,@ 000 , \$ 6 million in ratification . The U.S. accepted the deal , but after Congress approved the contract a problem of court jurisdiction came up . The U.S. did not have legal jurisdiction in the land of the future canal . An important note is that this problem was on the verge of correction , until Pro @-@ Panama representatives posed problems for Nicaragua ; the current leader (General José Santos Zelaya) did not cause problems , from the outlook of U.S. interests .

= = = = = Construction of the Panama Canal = = = = =

In 1899 , the Isthmian Canal Commission was set up to determine which site would be best for the canal (Nicaragua or Panama) and then to oversee construction of the canal . After Nicaragua was ruled out , Panama was the obvious choice . A few problems had arisen , however . With the U.S. '

solidified interests in Panama (then a small portion of Colombia) , both Colombia and the French company that was to provide the construction materials raised their prices . The U.S. , refusing to pay the higher @-@ than @-@ expected fees , " engineered a revolution " in Colombia . On November 3 , 1903 , Panama (with the support of the United States Navy) revolted against Colombia . Panama became a new republic , receiving \$ 10 million from the U.S. alone . Panama also gained an annual payment of \$ 250 @,@ 000 , and guarantees of independence . The U.S. gained the rights to the canal strip " in perpetuity " . Roosevelt later said that he " took the Canal , and let Congress debate " . After Colombia lost Panama , they tried to appeal to the U.S. by the reconsidering of treaties and even naming Panama City the capital of Colombia .

= = = = Cuba = = = =

The U.S. , after the Spanish ? American War , had many expansionists who wanted to annex Cuba . Many people felt that a foreign power (outside of the U.S.) would control a portion of Cuba , thus the U.S. could not continue with its interests in Cuba . Although many advocated annexation , this was prevented by the Teller Amendment , which states " hereby disclaims any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty , jurisdiction , or control over said island except for pacification thereof , and asserts its determination , when that is accomplished , to leave the government and control of the island to its people . " When summarized , this could mean that the U.S. would not interfere with Cuba and its peoples . The expansionists argued though , that the Teller Amendment was created " ignorant of actual conditions " and that this released the U.S. from its obligation . Following the debate surrounding the Teller Amendment , the Platt Amendment took effect . The Platt Amendment (the name is a misnomer ; the Platt Amendment is actually a rider to the Army Appropriation Act of 1901) was accepted by Cuba in late 1901 , after " strong pressure " from Washington . The Platt Amendment , summarized by Thomas A. Bailey in " Diplomatic History of the American People " :

Cuba was not to make decisions impairing her independence or to permit a foreign power [e.g. , Germany] to secure lodgment in control over the island .

Cuba pledged herself not to incur an indebtedness beyond her means [It might result in foreign intervention] .

The United States was at liberty to intervene for the purpose of preserving order and maintaining Cuban independence .

Cuba would agree to an American @-@ sponsored sanitation program [Aimed largely at yellow fever] .

Cuba would agree to sell or lease to the United States sites for naval or coaling stations [Guantánamo became the principal base] .

With Platt Amendment in place , Roosevelt pulled the troops out of Cuba . This action was met with public unrest and outcries for annexation , with reasons ranging from " U.S. interests " to " dominant white race " . The Indianapolis News said , " It is manifest destiny for a nation to own the islands which border its shores . " A year later , Roosevelt wrote ,

Just at the moment I am so angry with that infernal little Cuban republic that I would like to wipe its people off the face of the earth . All that we wanted from them was that they would behave themselves and be prosperous and happy so that we would not have to interfere .

= = = = Japan = = = =

At the conclusion of the Russo @-@ Japanese War in September 1905 , President Roosevelt leveraged his position as a strong but impartial leader in order to negotiate a peace treaty between the two nations . " Speaking softly " earned the President enough prestige to even merit a Nobel Peace Prize the following year for his efforts .