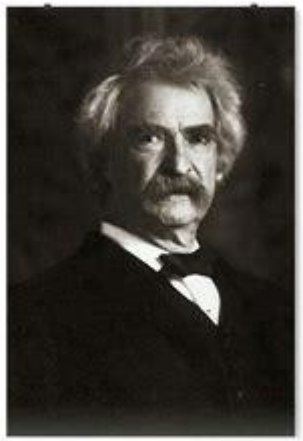
The Great American Transformation: The Gilded Age

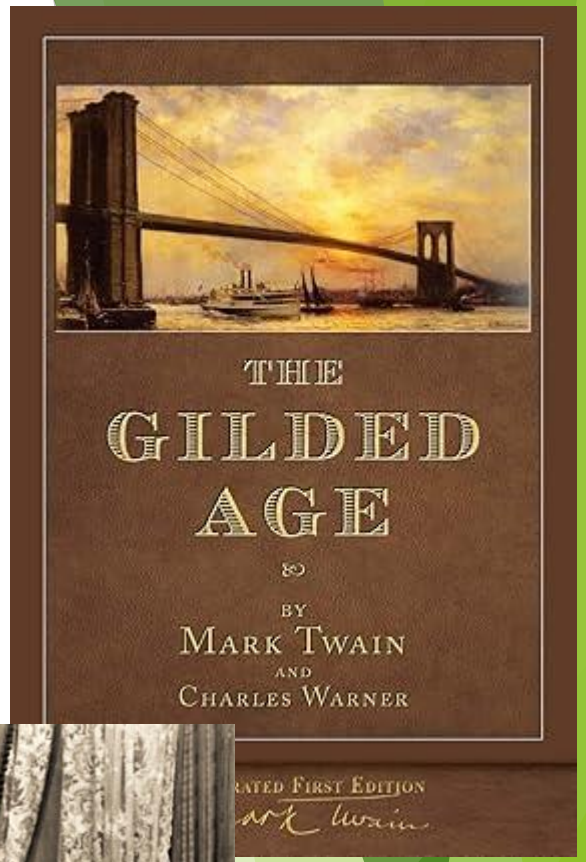
Session 8: Inadvertent Empire



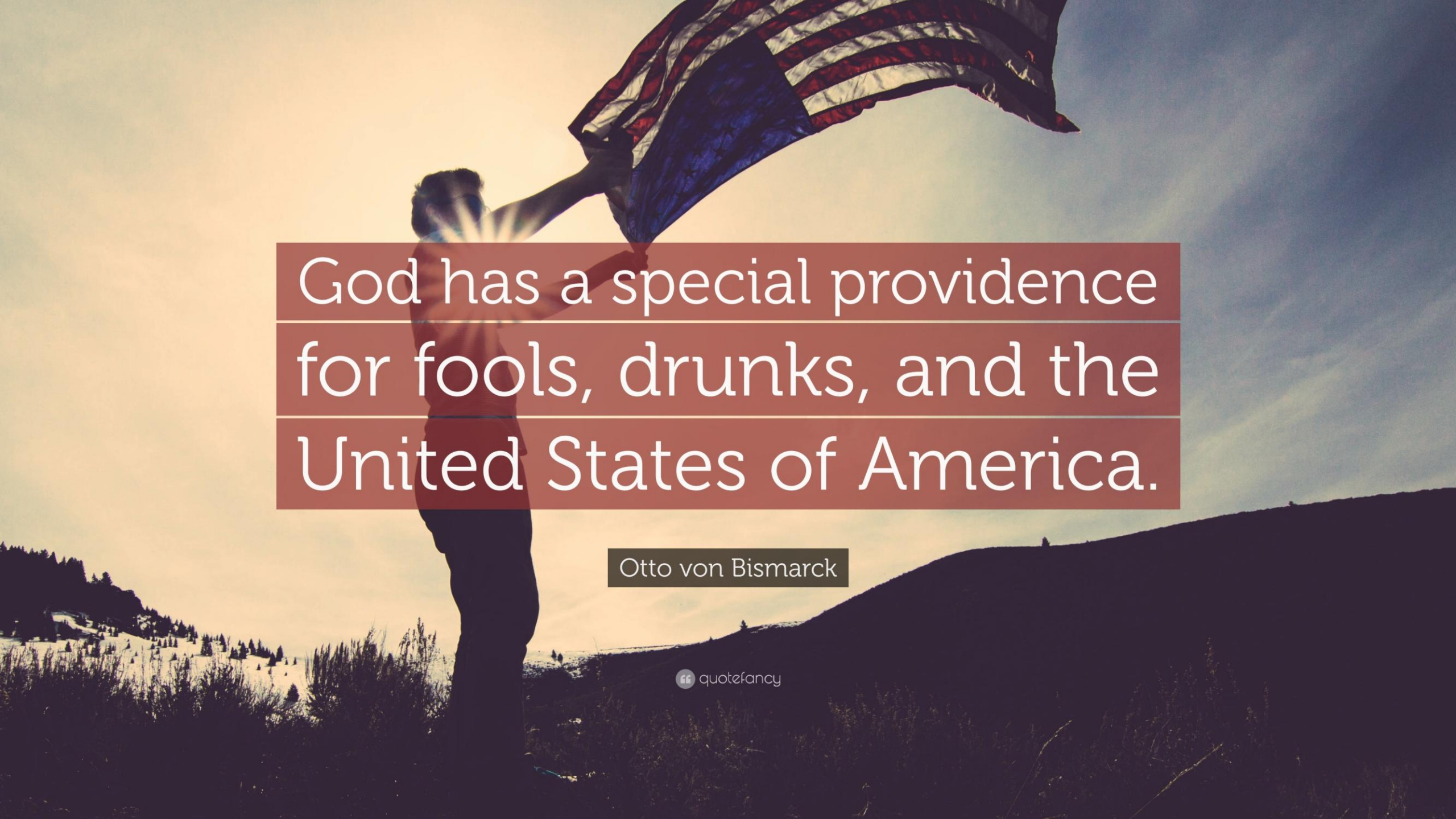
Our Session Subjects

1. Manifest Destiny and Political Economy
2. The Civil War and the Gilded Age
3. Reconstruction
4. Technology and the Second Industrial Revolution
5. The Urbanization of America
6. Gilded Age New York
7. Three "Robber Barons"
8. Inadvertent Empire





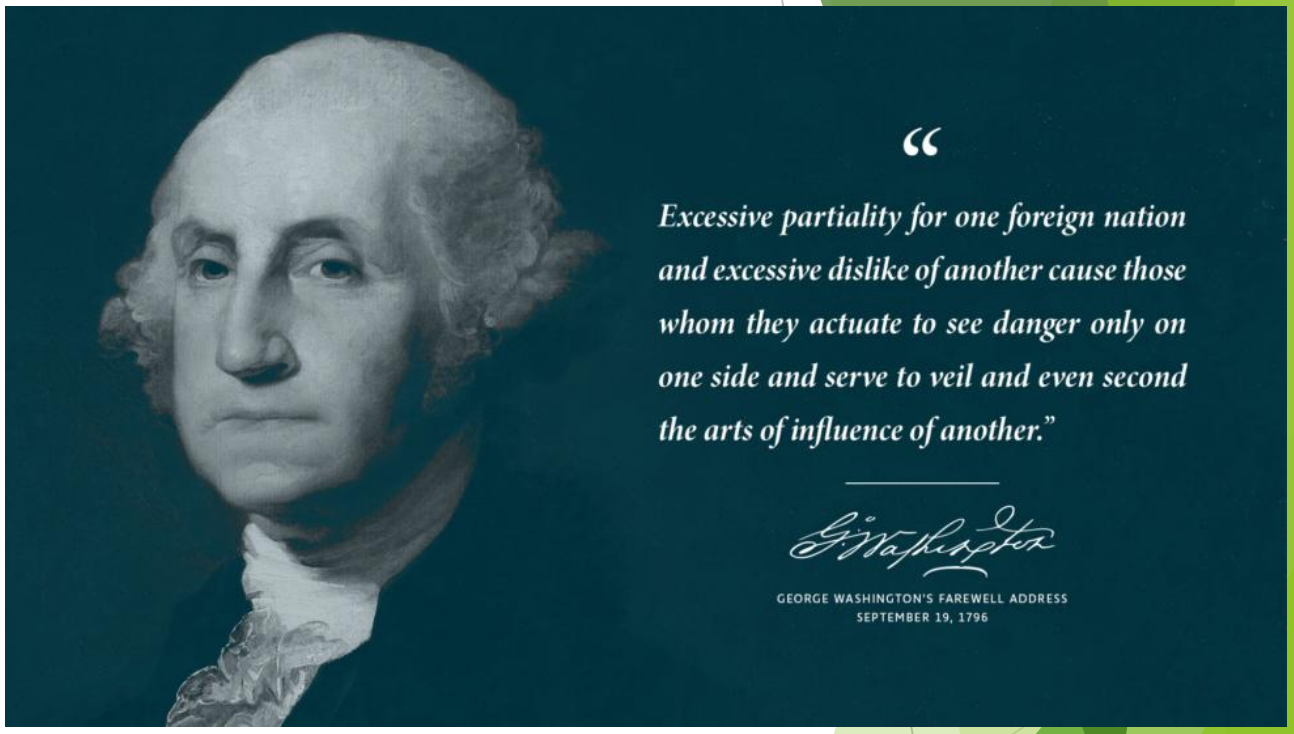



God has a special providence for fools, drunks, and the United States of America.
Otto von Bismarck
quotefancy

Foreign Entanglements

In his 1796 Farewell Address, George Washington warned against "foreign entanglements" and counseled the public to be wary of foreign influence. He argued for impartial commercial treaties, but against treaties of "permanent alliance."

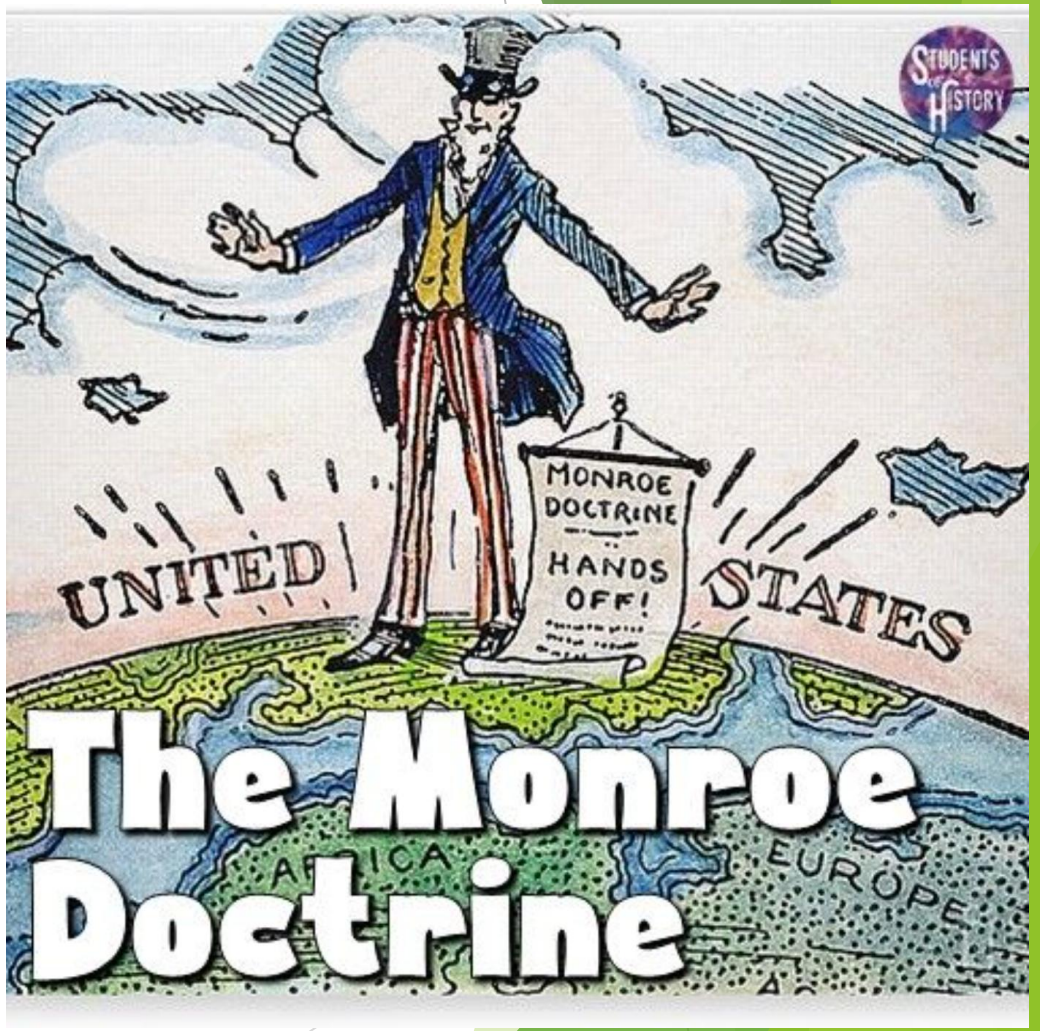
"Following" Washington's advice, in the Gilded Age, the United States was supposedly weary of international activity besides commercial activity. Until it wasn't.



Inadvertent Empire

Foreign Relations before 1870

- US avoiding "foreign entanglements" per George Washington's Farewell Address advice (except when it was not)
- Yet President Monroe declared the Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and US policed it throughout the 19th century from minor incursions by European powers in South and Latin America
- SoS John Quincy Adams negotiated acquisition of Florida from Spain in 1819; Canada was always a desired object
- Casting an eye toward Cuba as a potential slave state before 1860 and as an island to be controlled in light of plans for an Isthmian canal after 1865
- Eyeing the China market with the rest of the European Great Powers and taking some action (Perry in Japan in 1854)



Nevertheless, US effectuated an expansionist policy before 1870

- Acquiring the Louisiana territory (1803), the Mexican Territory (including California) in 1848, and the Oregon Territory (from Britain) in 1849 to have harbors for Pacific trading and access to Asia

- Acquiring Alaska from Russia in 1867 for access to Asia

- President Andrew Johnson wanted to acquire Greenland from Denmark in late 1860s.

- Attempting the acquisition of Caribbean islands in the 1860s and 1870s for stability, to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and for an Isthmian canal.
- Via the Monroe Doctrine the US asserted a "sphere of influence" in the Western Hemisphere



US policy of territorial expansion (as contemplated by the founding fathers and the Constitution) was limited to the North America continent before 1870, mostly because of

- saturation from the US west and/or
- "slavery/no slavery" offset



Stumbling into it: The Spanish-American War and the Inadvertent Empire

"The serious question for the people of this country to consider is what effect the imperial policy will have upon ourselves if we permit it to be established."



Spain had controlled sugar plantation rich Cuba since the 1600s

- Americans owned some of the Cuban plantations and wanted US protectorate or territorial status for safety from Spain and from native population; also tariff reduction.

- Spain had also controlled Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines
- Cuba and the Philippines were in rebellion against Spain in the 1890s seeking more autonomy or independence
- The US public sympathized with the Cuban people who were undergoing tremendous hardship during their war with Spain.
  - The US government warned Spain of its "barbarous" actions against the Cubans and things got tense.



- President William McKinley decided it's a good idea to send the battleship Maine to Cuba to "show the flag" and to protect US citizens in Cuba.
- In February 1898, the Maine's magazine, after one month in Havana harbor, explodes, killing 265 sailors and sending the Maine into the harbor mud. Spain is blame – "Remember the Maine, to hell with Spain!"
- US declares war on Spain blaming it for the Maine; fighting lasts from April 21 – December 10, 1898.
- As part of the war, US defeats Spain in the Philippines in the summer of 1898 and Spain cedes Cuba, the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico to the US as part of the Treaty of Paris on 1899
  - The US attacks the Philippines to damage Spain and protect US Asia trade during the War.

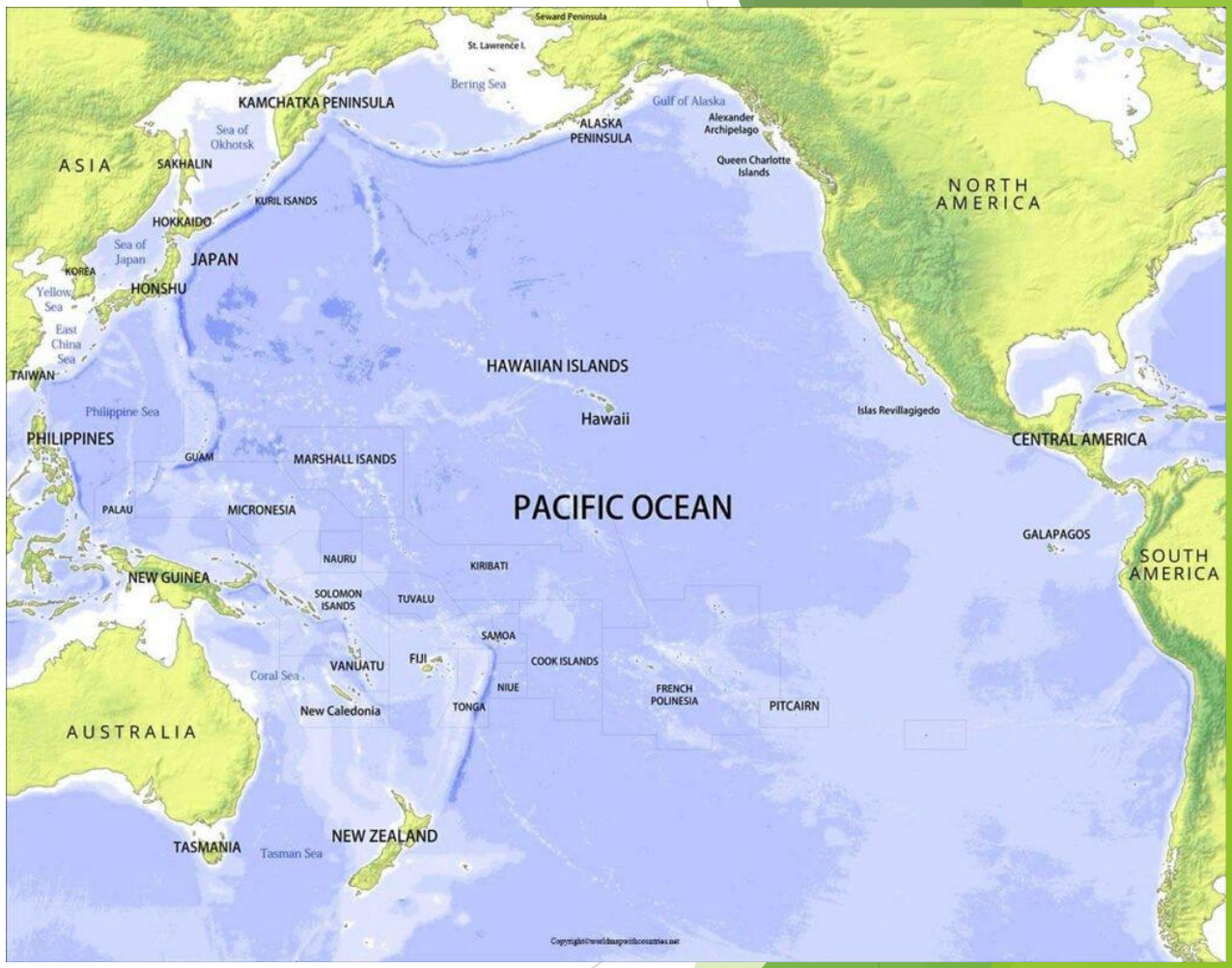


- Why did the US take the Philippines?
  - Mckinley said God told him to
  - To make sure Germany and Great Britain couldn't
  - To have a coaling station and deep-water harbor near China
  - To satisfy the US public that the Spanish American War was good and Philippines the payment
  - Neither the Cubans or Filipinos were ready for self-government but Congress with Teller Amendment provided US would not hold Cuba for long; no concern with Philippines tenure



Hawaii becomes a Territory in 1898

- Hawaii was populated by 90,000 natives, Chinese and Japanese in 1898 and by about 2,000 white Americans who owned about 60% of the islands, most of the sugar and pineapple industries. Hawaii was a valuable trade asset
- The Americans staged a coup in 1893 against the Hawaiian queen and began asking for annexation by the United States.
- The US was hesitant to annex Hawaii for moral and republican reasons, but did so after its success in the Spanish-American War to control it and keep it out of Japanese, Britain or German control.
    a. One reason for hesitancy was the US did not want amalgamation of the non-white Hawaiian population.
- US saw Hawaii as a Naval commercial coaling station, a great harbor for its fleet to protect trade, the west coast and the eventual isthmian canal.



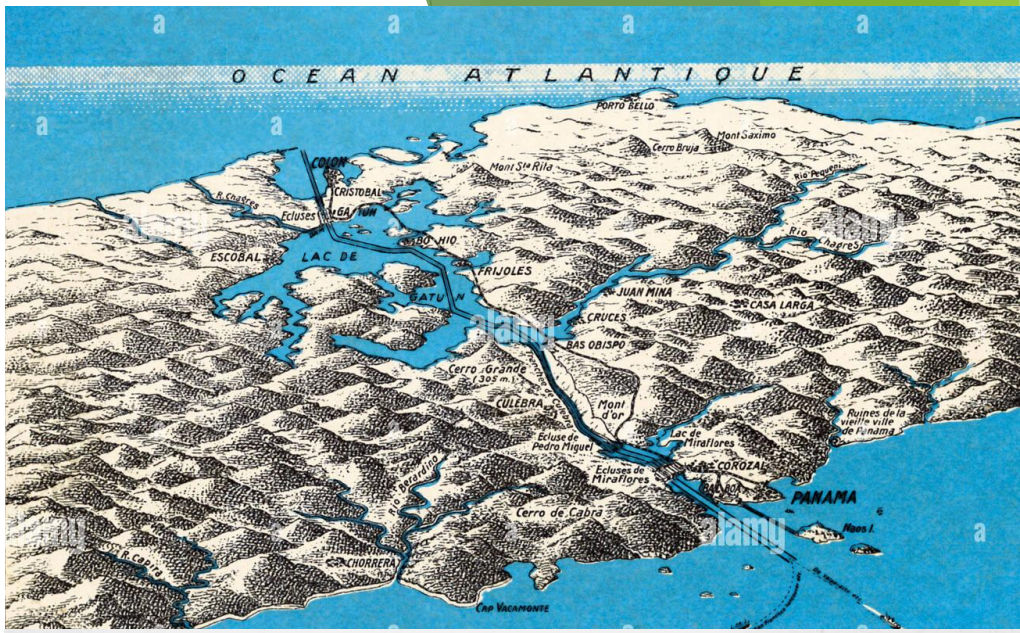
Then the Panama Canal . . .

- The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (1850) was an agreement between the United States and Great Britain, aimed at resolving competing interests over the construction of a trans-isthmian canal in Central America.

- At the time, both nations recognized the strategic and commercial importance of such a canal, but they also wanted to avoid conflict and ensure their respective interests were protected in the region.

- Treaty would be mutually abrogated by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901 allowing US to build canal finishing in 1914.

- US entered into a lease for land with Panama after offering a lease to Columbia (which controlled Panama) which as rejected, then supporting Panama's successful independence revolution against Columbia.





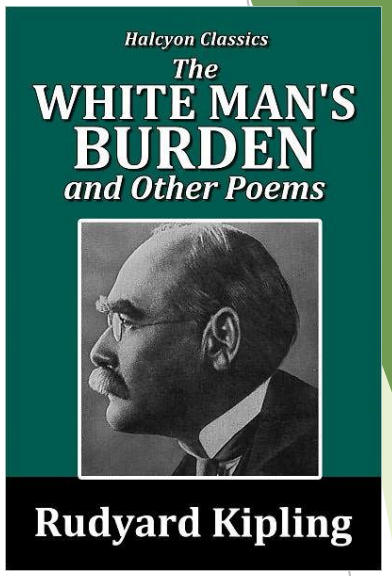
The Americans are a very lucky people. They're bordered to the north and south by weak neighbors, and to the east and west by fish.

Otto von Bismarck

quotefancy

What motivated a change in US international "policy"

Between 1870 and 1900, U.S. expansion into the Caribbean and Pacific was driven by a combination of security needs, economic desires and ideological beliefs that justified and motivated overseas "acquisitions".



Ideologies

- Manifest Destiny and the Fredrick Jackson Turner Thesis – why stop at the Pacific?
- Social Darwinism and Racial Superiority
- The "Civilizing Mission"/"White Man's Burden"



- Self Image: The Benign Hegemon

Hegemon - something (such as a political state) having dominant influence or authority over a geography area; a nation having hegemony

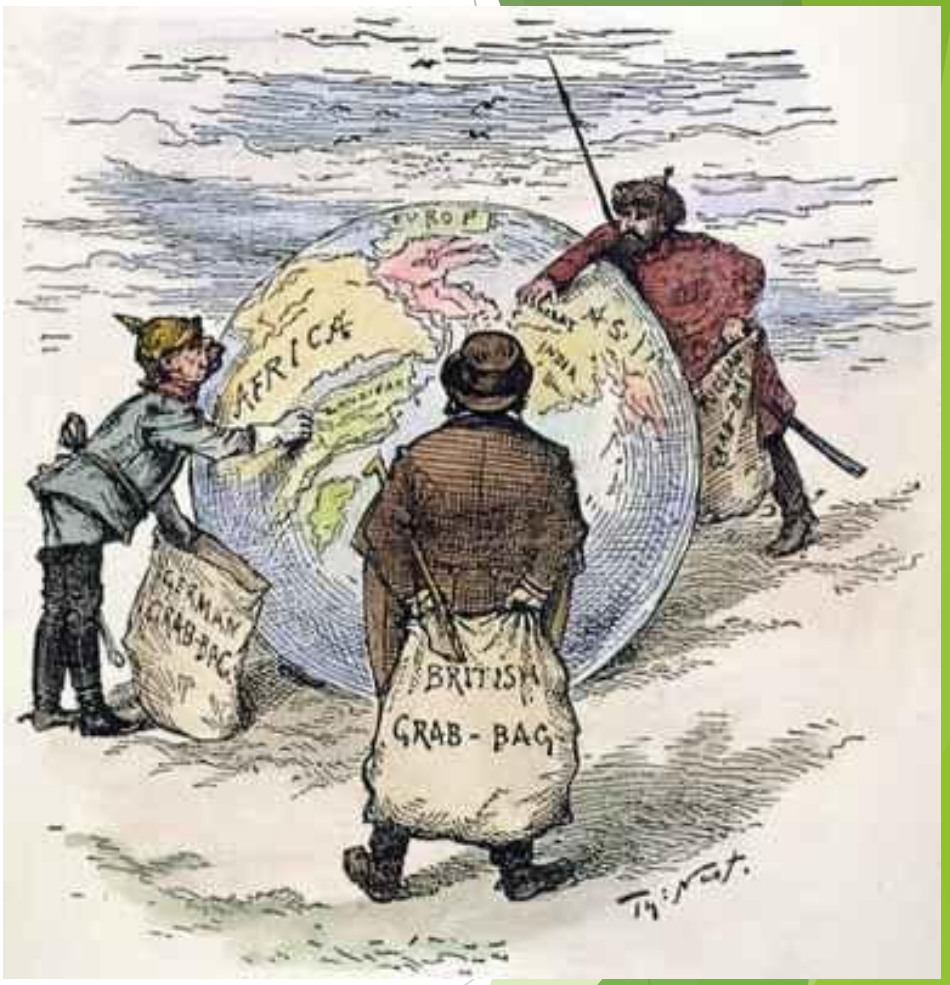
"The American self-image of a mighty power that is also a benign *hegemon*, the global custodian of democratic values and human rights, is deeply rooted."

- Allister Sparks, 20th century South African Journalist



Events driving expansion

- Required Economic Expansionism (esp. during the Great Depression of the 1890s) to solve perceived US industrial overproduction and depressions
- Navalism and Alfred Thayer Mahan's influence on government policy makers
- Imperialism and National Prestige (keeping up with the European Great Powers)

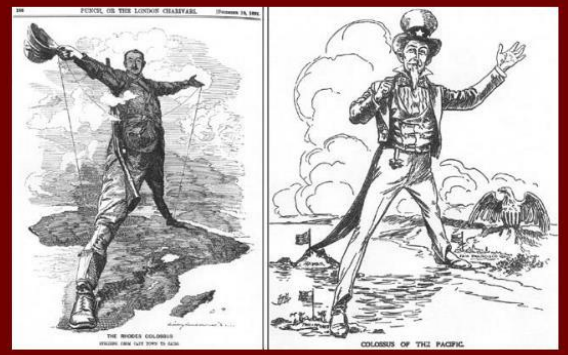


US Attitudes and Circumstances Change in the 1890s

- In the 1890s America more intently looks at the China market for its overproduction (other Great Powers are).
    - The Great Depression of 1893-1897 some say caused by overproduction (so they say, but also gold standard blamed by many as it limited currency in circulation)
- The tyranny of distance has been weakened by the Industrial Revolution in American and in Europe in the form of steam ships and long-range cannons
- America is economically a great power but militarily small and vulnerable to the other Great Powers (really); also preached by Alfred Thayer Mahan and others.

Major Imperial Powers

- Great Britain
- France
- Germany
- Russia
- The United States
- Japan



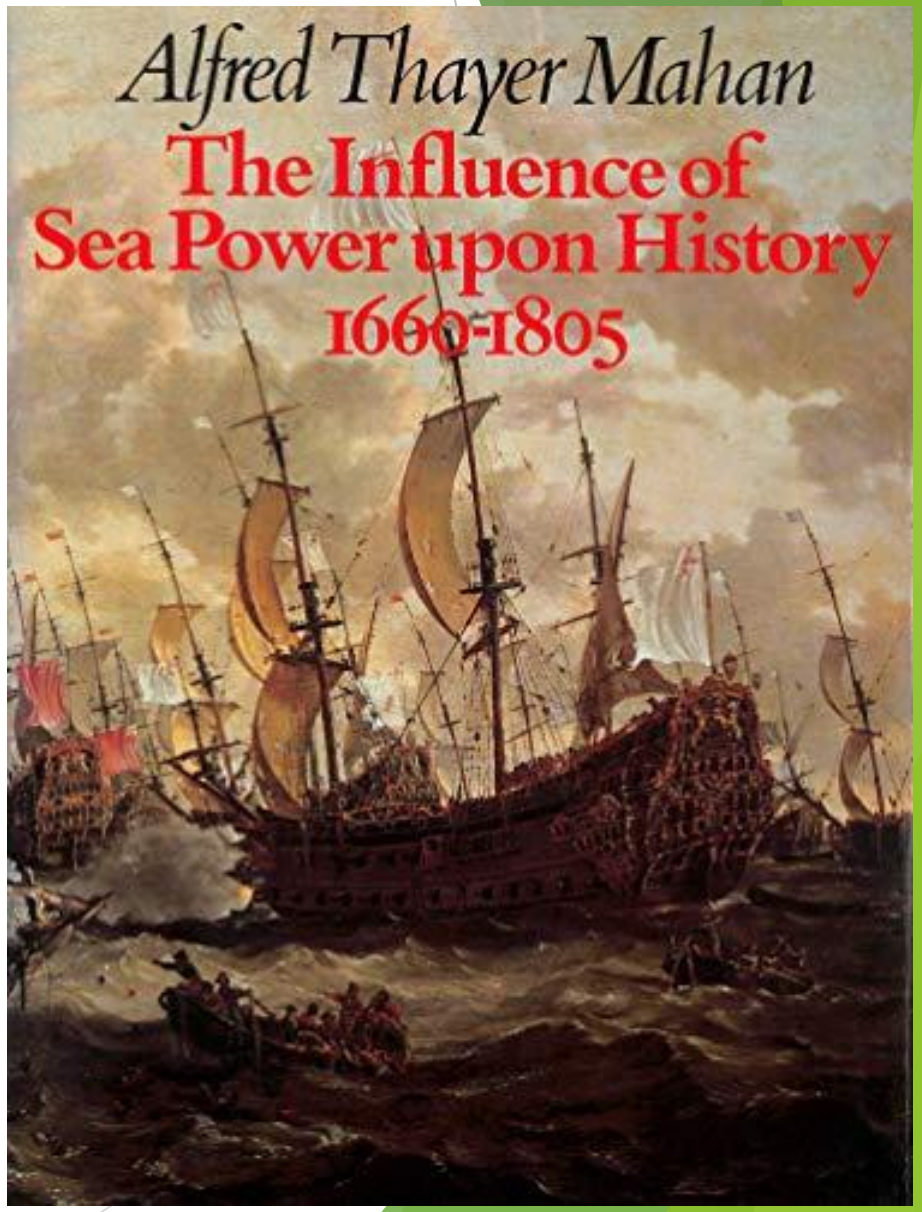
Captain A. T. Mahan, USN

Significant figure in shaping American foreign policy, through his books on naval power and its influence on global dominance. He and Theodore Roosevelt influenced each other.

1. Importance of Sea Power: Mahan emphasized that historically control of the seas was crucial for national power and prosperity. He argued that a strong navy was essential for protecting trade routes and projecting power globally. Hawaii and an isthmian canal were vital here.

2. Strategic Chokepoints: He identified strategic maritime chokepoints, such as an isthmian canal and Hawaii, which were vital for controlling global trade and military movements.

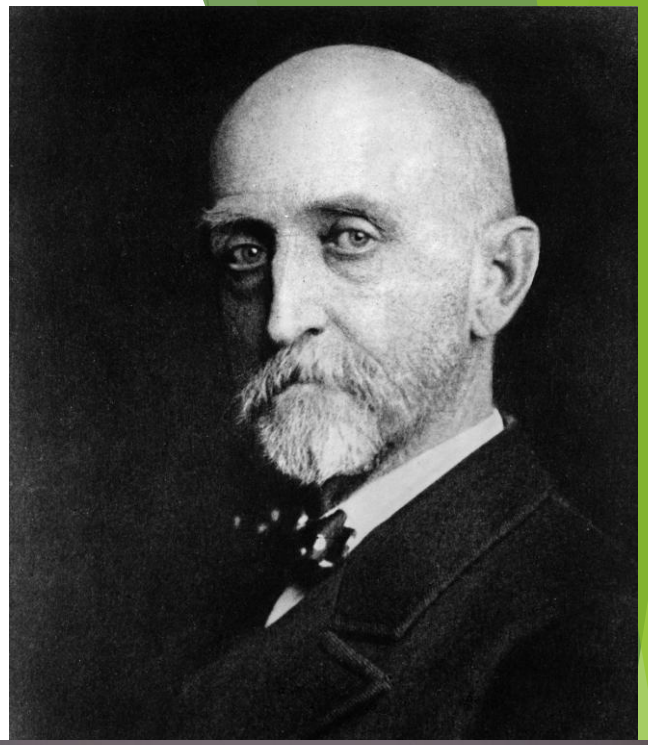
3. Expansion and Overseas Bases: Mahan advocated for the expansion of American influence through overseas bases, which would support naval operations and protect American interests abroad. Bases, but not colonies.

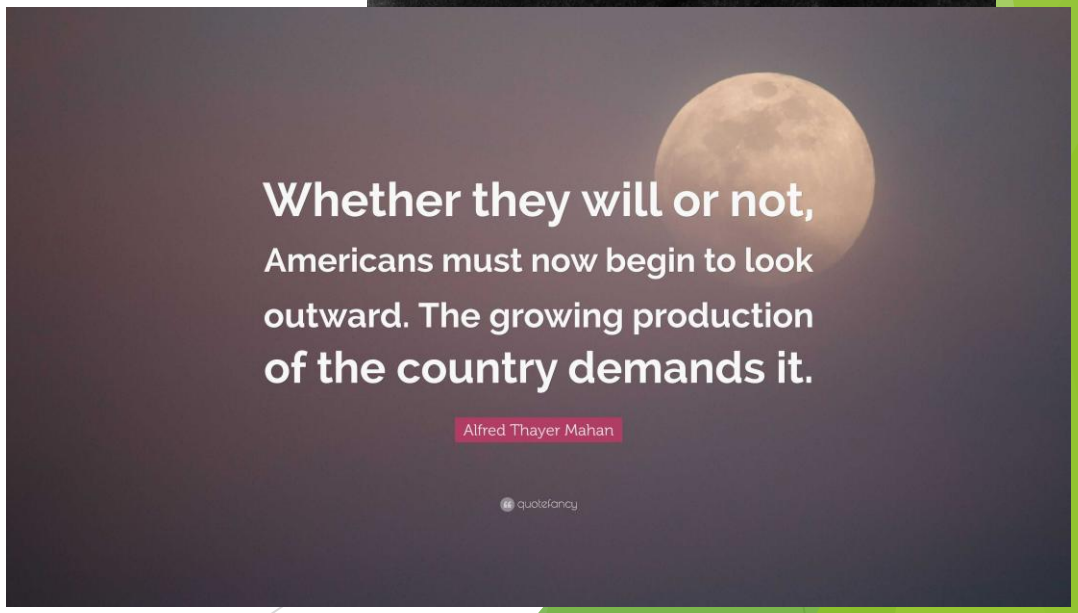


4. Economic Expansion: Mahan believed that the U.S. economy needed new markets to absorb its industrial output, and that a strong navy would facilitate this by protecting American overseas commercial interests, merchant marine and protecting the West coast.

5. Geopolitical Vision: Mahan saw the United States as the successor to the British Empire in terms of global influence, advocating for a vigorous foreign policy to secure American interests. Just like Alexander Hamilton, Mahan looked to Great Britain as a model.

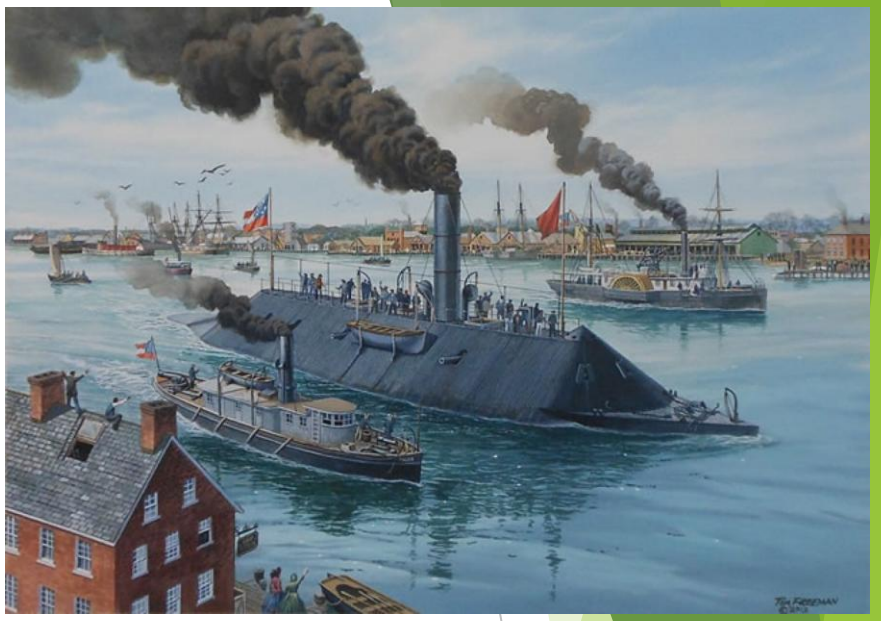
Mahan's writings influenced Germany, Japan and Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the US Navy in 1898.





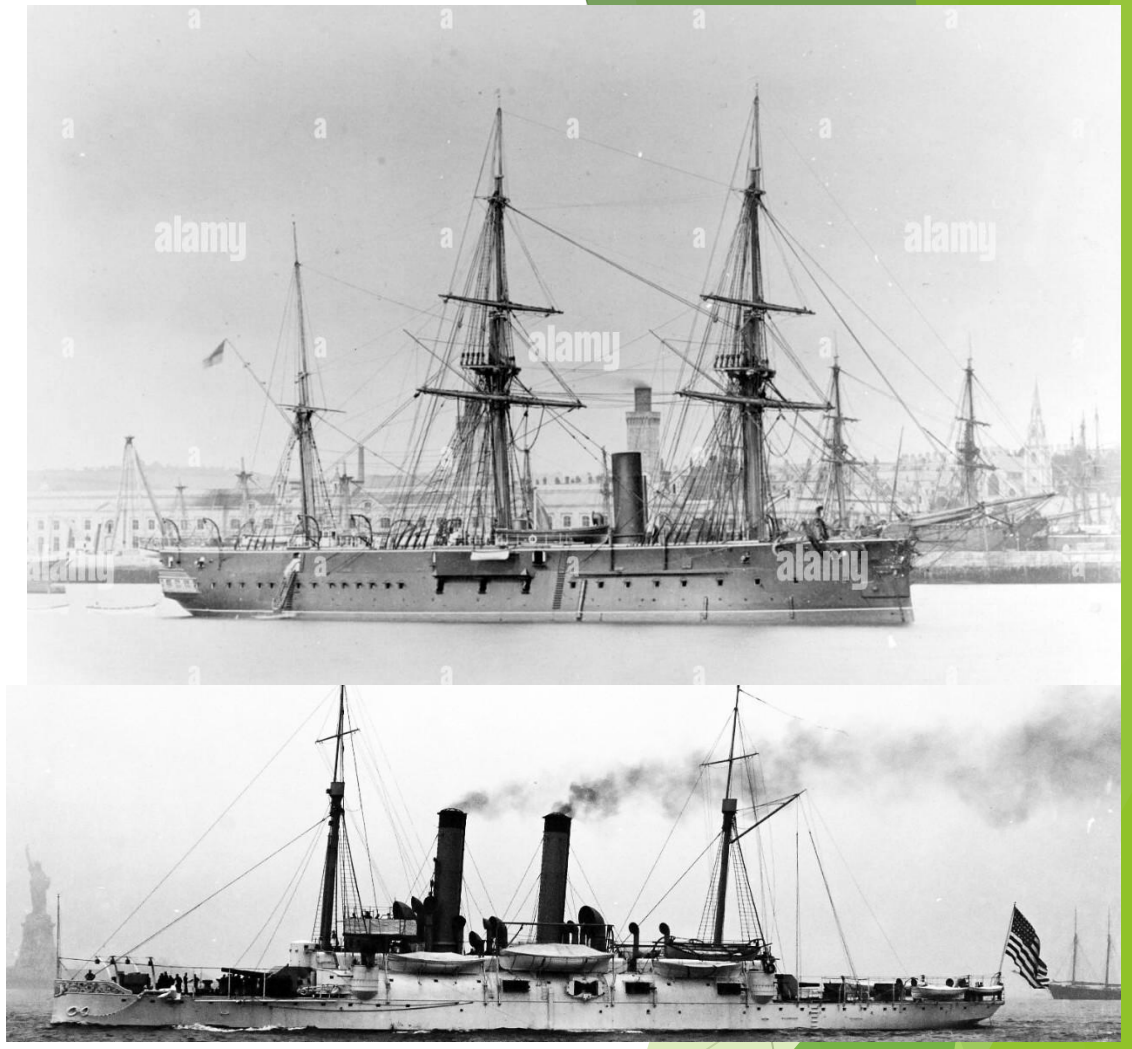
Mahan's Main Tool - The Navy

- Largest though not strongest Navy in the world in 1865
- By 1870, hundreds of the navy's ships were sold off, scrapped, abandoned, or laid up in ordinary—mothballed, if you will.
- The Navy that had numbered more than 600 warships in 1865; totaled only 52 in 1870, most of them wooden-hulled.
- The Navy was so small and comparatively weak because the US was not very active internationally until the 1890s.
  - The public's attention was on other issues: Reconstruction, the exploration—and exploitation—of the American West and Industrial growth and its social changes.
  - The US enforced the Monroe Doctrine with bluster, threats and Great Britain.





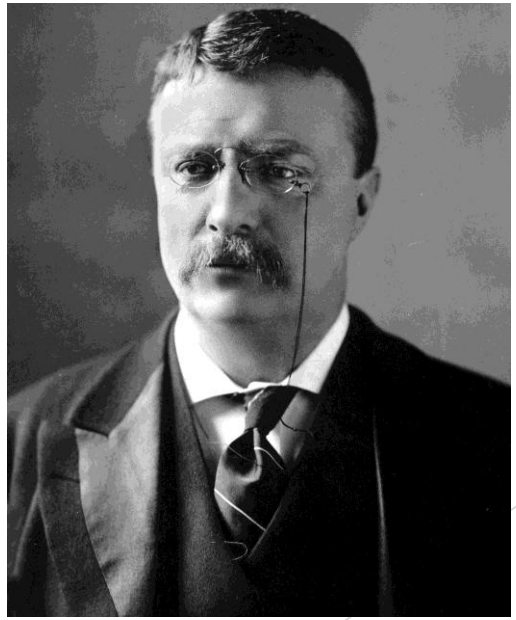
- In light of the modernization of the British, French, German, Russian and Japanese navies, the US realized it needed a larger, modern navy.
  - "Modern" meant steel hulls, improved range, all weather sailing, powerful steam engines, and larger guns. Battleships replace ships of the line.
- In 1881, Congress appropriated money for four new steam powered steel-hulled warships, the so called "ABCD" ships, named for the first letter in their names—Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, and Dolphin, the dispatch ship.
- They were a significant improvement on the ships they replaced, designed to do the usual jobs of coastal patrol and trade ship protection more efficiently.

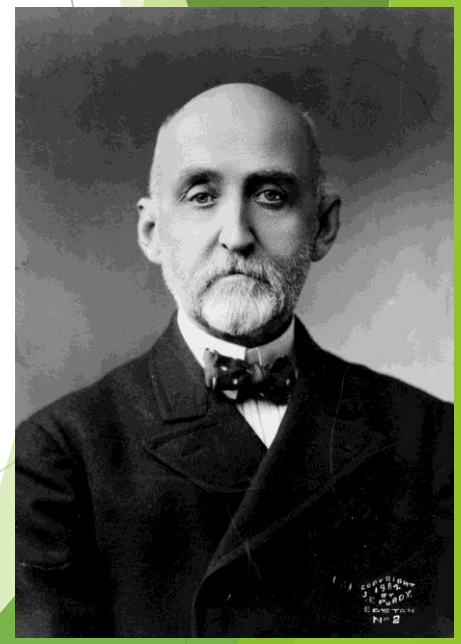


Battleship USS Atlanta

- In 1886, Congress authorized the construction of two battleships, the *Maine* and *Texas*.
- Another significant milestone in the coming naval renaissance was the founding in 1884 of the US Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island to prepare middle-grade navy officers for high command responsibility by encouraging them to think strategically—even globally—as well as tactically.
- Alfred Thayer Mahan , professor at the War College beginning in the 1880s, wrote numerous articles and books espousing the need for a strong navy to protect American global trade and American shores. Theodore Roosevelt greatly influenced and was influence by Mahan along the German Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Japanese Imperial Navy.







Exploiting the Asia Market: Economic, strategic, and ideological interests in Asia

- Economic – market for American goods and a supplier of sugar, tea, silk in light of the Great Depression of the 1890s

- Strategic – reduce power of China competitors – Russia, Germany, Japan, Great Britian (lesser concern)
  - Off China shore harbors and bases provide first line of defense for US west coast

- Ideological – area to spread democracy and Christianity – already about 1500 American missionaries in China

- Strategy –build goodwill in China (soft power cheaper) respecting China's sovereignty; act as neutral arbitrator with other powers; advocate free trade in ports and non-preferences; build off shore ports

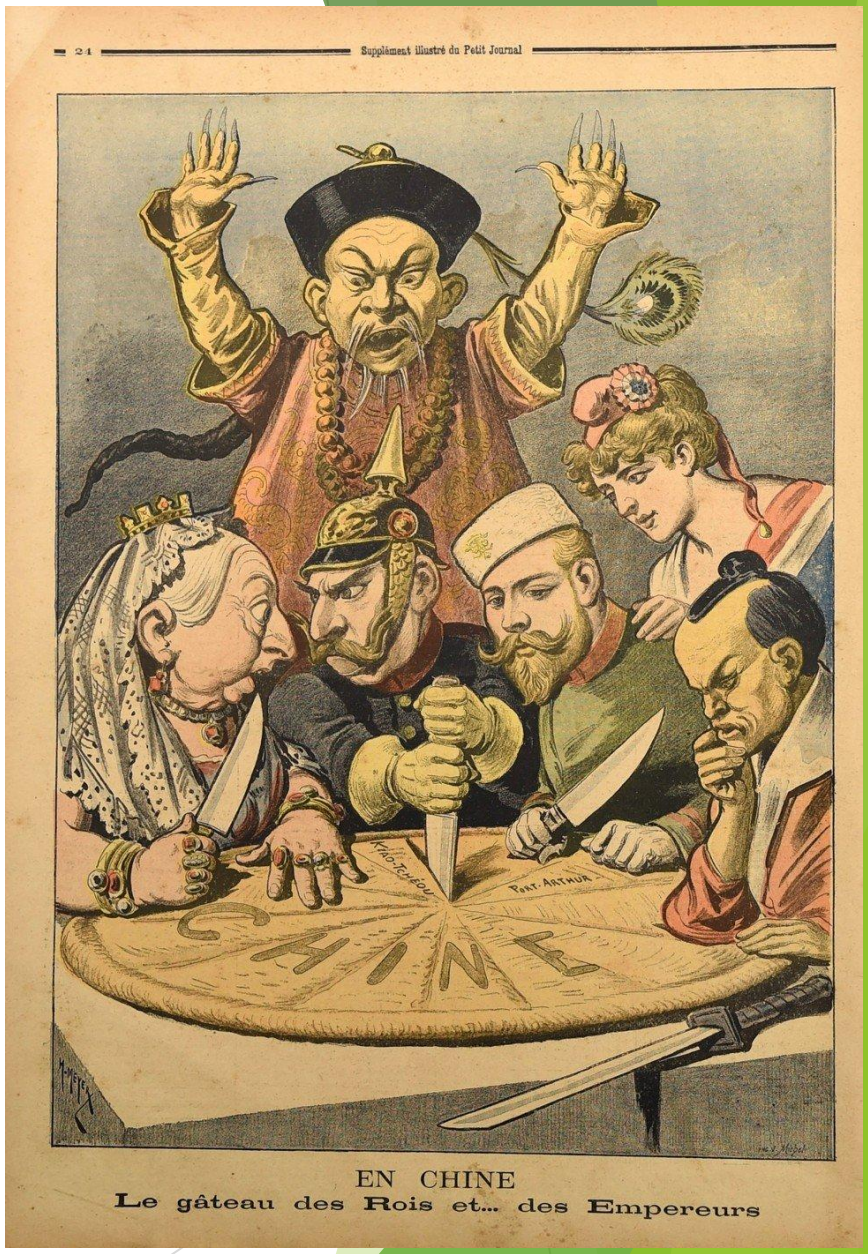


European imperialism toward China in the 19th century

- The US since the 18th century saw China as a lucrative market for US agriculture commodities, then US manufactures in the 19th century. But the US did not have the merchant marine or Navy to compete with the European powers.

- European imperialism toward China in the 19th century stemmed from a combination of economic, political, and strategic motivations.

- This imperialism intensified with the onset of the Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860).



This imperialism was rooted in several key factors:

- Economic Motives
  - Trade Imbalance: European powers, particularly Britain, faced a significant trade deficit with China. Europeans highly valued Chinese goods such as silk, porcelain, and especially tea, but China demanded payment in silver, which strained European economies.

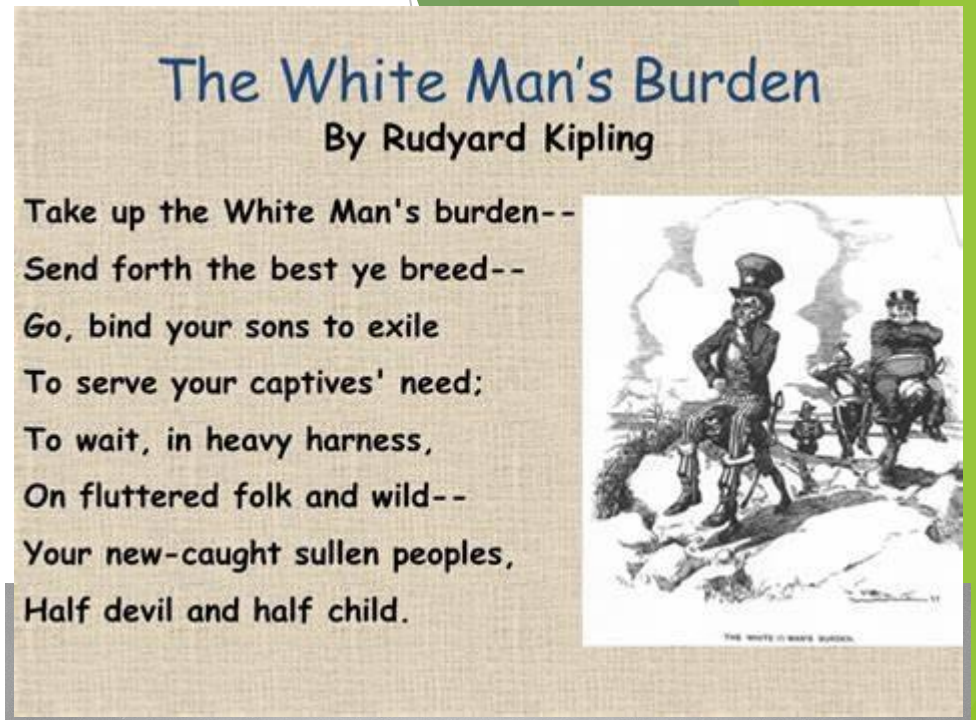
- Great Power Competition: Political and Strategic Motivations
  - Global Influence: European powers, particularly Britain, France, and later Germany and Russia, sought to expand their influence in Asia as part of their broader imperialistic goals.
  - Weakening Qing Dynasty: The internal decline of the Qing dynasty, exacerbated by corruption, rebellions (like the Taiping Rebellion), and inability to modernize, made China vulnerable to foreign exploitation; “easy pickings” target or low-cost high benefit



- Sphere of Influence: European powers competed to carve out spheres of influence in China, gaining control over trade, railways, and other resources without outright colonization and making money off China infrastructure improvements.

- Technological Superiority: European nations possessed advanced military technologies (e.g., steamships, modern firearms) that overwhelmed China's traditional defenses, enabling them to impose unequal treaties and dominate the region.

- Cultural Attitudes: Many Europeans justified imperialism through a belief in their cultural and racial superiority, claiming they were bringing "civilization" and modernity to a "backward" society, an idea often linked to the broader concept of the "White Man's Burden."





European powers used their superiority during the 19th century to exploit a weaker China.

- China was forced to make a series of concessions to foreign imperialist powers. These concessions included:
  - the cession of Hong Kong to Britain,
  - the opening of several ports for international trade, and the granting of extraterritorial rights to foreigners.
  - The foreign powers also acquired urban micro-colonies in six treaty ports, which were areas leased from the Chinese government by a foreign power



American attitudes towards European Imperialism

- Did not feel that "American Republicanism" would allow America to disregard Chinese sovereignty like European powers did.

- US officials though did want to protect the 1500 missionaries in China and build a trade relationship with China without using gun boats or having a "concessionaire (monopolizing) presence."
  - US also hoped to be an intermediary in negotiations between China and European powers.
- To these ends, United States began rebuilding a "coastal protection" (defense oriented) and "trade protection" Navy in the 1880s.
- Also debate arose regarding the annexation of Hawaii and building an isthmus canal in Nicaragua.



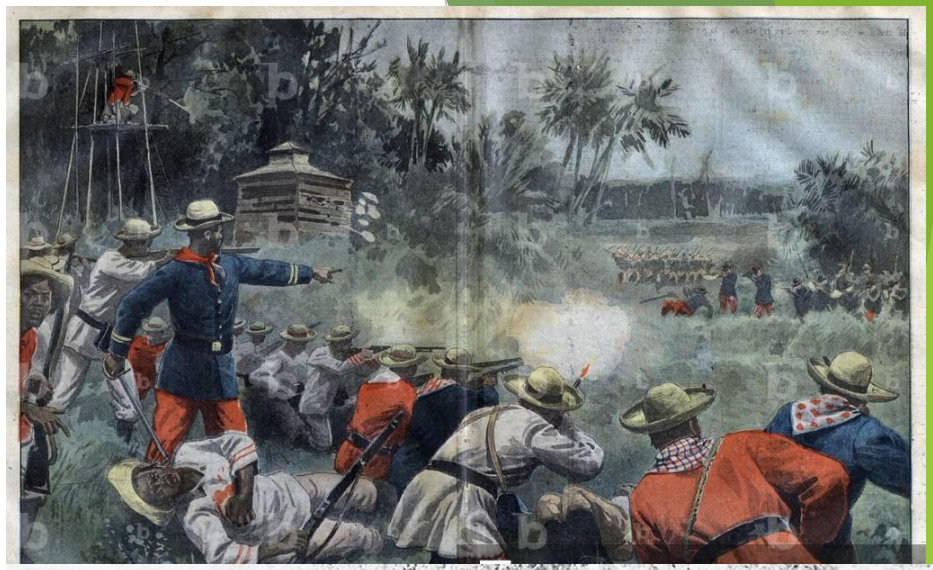
- In 10 years, the US had become a de factor world power with the 5th largest Navy in the World.
  - It controlled Cuba, the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico and would begin building the Panama Canal in 1908.

- From 1899 to 1902, the US sent troops to the Philippines to put down a rebellion with 4200 Americans dead and 215,000 to 270,000 Filipinos dead.

- The US began intervening in China and southeast Asia for a variety of reasons eventually competing with Japan for influence beginning in the 1920s.

- Cuba would be a U.S. occupied possession until 1902 and the Philippines a U.S. occupied possession until 1947.

- US "War Plan Orange", which set forth the general strategy for a war with Japan, always saw the Philippines as being indefensible and only recaptured after a 2-year island hoping campaign across the Pacific.





Thank you for your attention and enthusiasm.
Have a wonderful spring and summer break and keep being curious.

