

# The Age of Imperialism



The takeover of a country or territory by a stronger nation with the intent of dominating the political, economic & social life of the people of that nation is called **IMPERIALISM**

Europeans believed that the more land you control then the greater your national power is. Therefore, as the competition for colonies intensified, each country was determined to plant its flag on as much of the world as possible.



“All great nations in the fullness of their strength have desired to set their mark upon barbarian lands & those who fail to participate in this great rivalry will play a pitiable role in time to come.”

Heinrich von Treitschke- German historian



## **Rationale for European Imperialism**

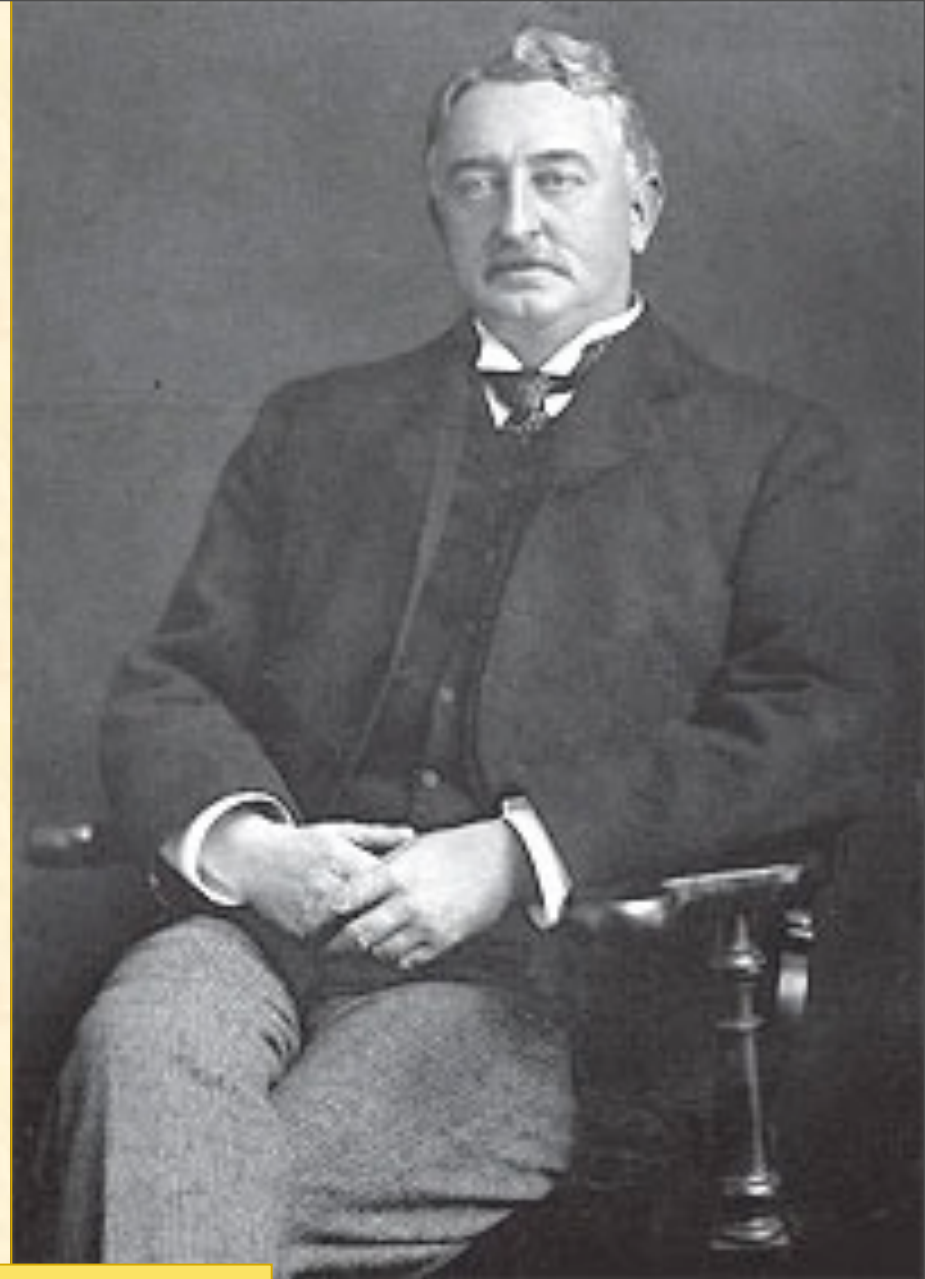
Europeans believed that those who were fittest for survival enjoyed wealth & success & were considered superior to others – **Social Darwinism** – A THEORY BY CHARLES DARWIN ABOUT EVOLUTION & “SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST”

According to the theory, non-Europeans were considered to be on a lower scale of cultural & physical development because they did not have the technology that Europeans had. They also believed that they had the right & the duty to bring the results of their progress to other countries.

### **Racism:**

“I contend that we Britons are the finest race in the world, & the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race...it is our duty to seize every opportunity of acquiring more territory & we should keep this one idea steadily before our eyes that more territory simply means more of the Anglo-Saxon race, more of the best, the most human, most honorable race the world possesses.”

Cecil Rhodes – A British Businessman



Cecil Rhodes

# Other Contributing Factors to Imperialism:

- Missionaries – who wanted to “Christianize” & “Westernize” & “Civilize” peoples Asia, Africa & the Pacific Islands
- European technological superiority – The Maxim gun, invented in 1889, the worlds first automatic machine gun.
- The steam engine – allowed easier travel upstream to establish bases of control in the African Continent.
- Railroads, cables, steamers – allowed close communications within a colony & its controlling nation.
- The drug **Quinine** – protected Europeans from the disease malaria, caused by mosquitoes.

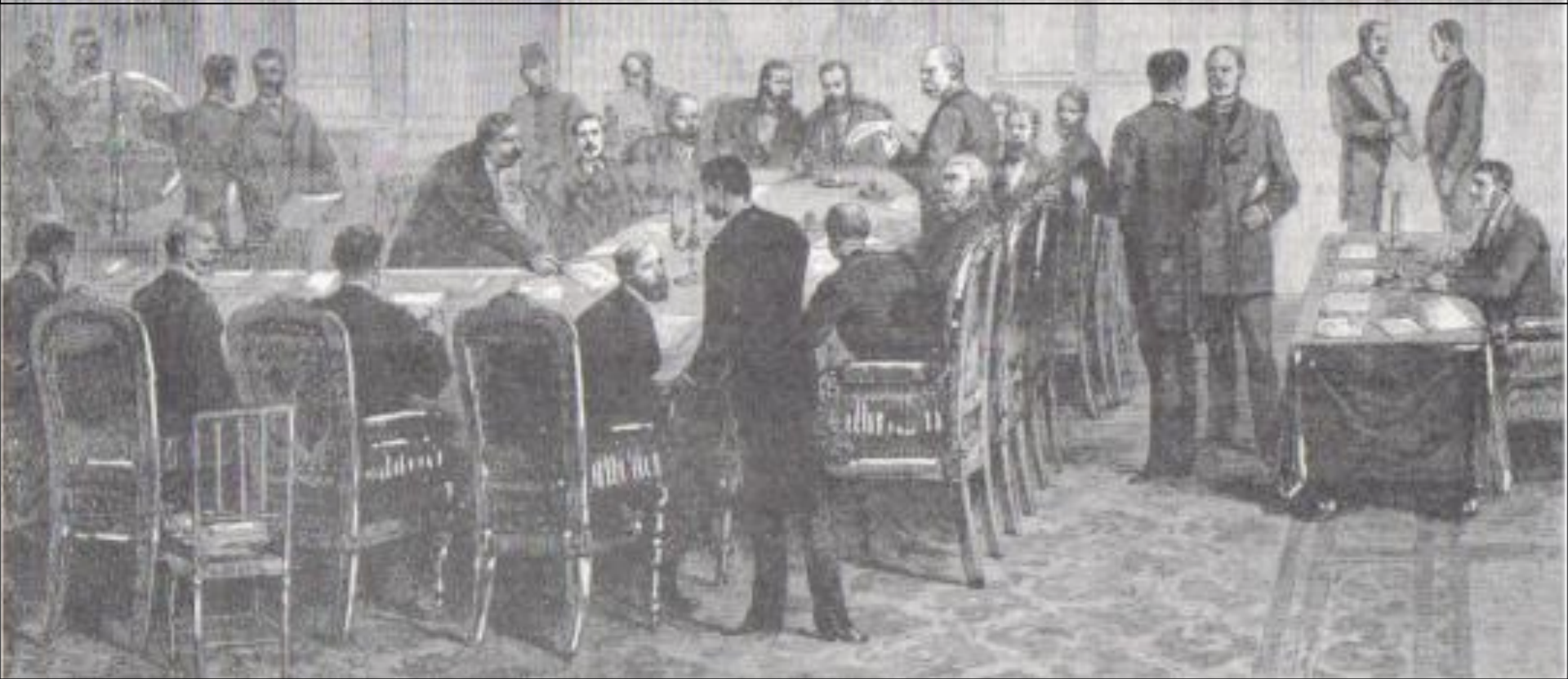
**Tribalism** – Many Africans spoke different languages & they had different cultures, which caused them to fight amongst themselves over land, water & trade rights & as a result, they never become unified.

Europeans learned to play rival groups against each other.





# The Scramble for Africa: Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 to Divide Africa



In November 1884, the imperial chancellor and architect of the German Empire, Otto von Bismarck, convened a conference of 14 states (including the United States) to settle the political partitioning of Africa. Of these fourteen nations, France, Germany, Great Britain, and Portugal were the major players in the conference, controlling most of colonial Africa at the time. They agreed that any European country could claim land in Africa by notifying other nations of their claims & showing they could control the area. The European nations divided the rest of the continent with little thought to how African peoples felt. No African ruler attended these meetings. By 1914 only Liberia & Ethiopia remained free from European control.





Across Africa, European attempts to colonize the lands were met with resistance. The contest between African states & European powers was never equal due to the European's superior arms.

Sometimes African societies tried to form alliances with the Euros so that the Euros would allow them to remain independent.

In some cases the Euros would help defeat the rivals, only to turn on their African allies.

All of these attempts ultimately failed, except for Ethiopia.



# Worldwide Views of Imperialism

The views of the Europeans themselves represented a wide range of political opinions & moral beliefs

## Pros:

Because Europeans believe themselves to be a superior race, they are morally obligated to teach their way of life to the less fortunate.

Europeans achieve great status in their world of nations by the influence they exert over others.

Europeans help less advanced societies by providing education & technology

## Cons:

Europeans fail to see what wisdom other ancient cultures can teach them.

The brutality with which Europeans rule contradicts their claim to be a “superior” culture.

Europeans destroy other societies by breaking up families & weakening ancient traditions

# The Roots of U.S. Imperialism



Henry Lodge

By the 1890's, Republican Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts boasted that Americans had “a record of conquest, colonization, & territorial expansion unequalled by any people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.” Lodge urged the country to build an overseas empire, emulating the European model of **IMPERIALISM** based on the acquisition & exploitation of colonial possessions. Other Americans favored a less formal empire, in which U.S. interests & influence would be assured through extensive trade & investments rather than through military occupation. Still others advocated a cultural expansionism in which the nation exported its ideals & institutions.



# U.S. Imperialism



The U.S. had always sought to expand the size of the nation. Policy makers had become convinced that the U.S. should join the imperialist powers of Europe & establish colonies over seas. Three Factors fueled the new imperialism:

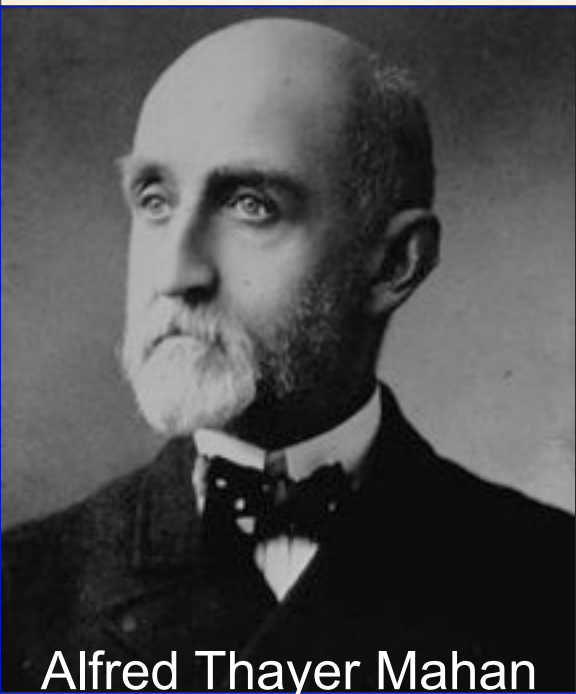
- Economic competition among industrial nations & the need for raw materials
- Political & military competition, including the creation of a strong naval force
- The belief in the racial & cultural superiority of people of Anglo-Saxon descent

In 1898, with advice from Admiral Alfred T. Mahan (president of the Naval War College in Newport Rhode Island) the U.S. began to acquire territory & they began to establish trading posts in the Pacific. To protect those trading posts, the U.S. needed a strong navy & bases where the ships could refuel.

The U.S. built 9 steel-hulled cruisers between 1883 & 1890 making the U.S. the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest naval power.

U.S. exports=\$234 million by end of Civil War; 1.5 billion by 1900, making the U.S. a leading economic power.

In his book, *The influence of Sea Power upon History*, Mahan proposed that the U.S. build a canal across the isthmus of Panama to link its coasts, acquire naval bases in the Caribbean & the Pacific to protect the canal & annex Hawaii & other Pacific islands. The U.S. must “cast aside the policy of isolation which befitted her infancy,” Mahan declared & “begin to look outward.”



Alfred Thayer Mahan

**Mahanism** found a receptive audience. Vocal advocates of Mahan’s program were a group of nationalistic Republicans, predominantly from the Northeast. They included politicians like Henry Cabot Lodge & Theodore Roosevelt.

Such men favored imperial expansion “for the sake of our destiny, our dignity, our influence, & our usefulness.”

One British observer concluded that Mahan’s influence had transformed the American spirit, serving “as oil to the flame of ‘colonial expansion’ everywhere leaping into life.”

# Rationales For U.S. Imperialism:

- Racism & Social Darwinism: Convictions that “Anglo-Saxons” were racially superior & should dominate other peoples either to ensure national success, establish international stability, or benefit the “inferior” races by imposing American ideas & institutions on them.
- Righteousness: The conviction that Christianity & supporting American culture, should be aggressively spread among the benighted peoples of other lands.
- Mahanism: The conviction, following the ideas advanced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, that U.S. security required a strong navy & economic & territorial expansion.
- Economics: A variety of arguments holding that American prosperity depended on acquiring access to foreign markets, raw materials, & investment opportunities.

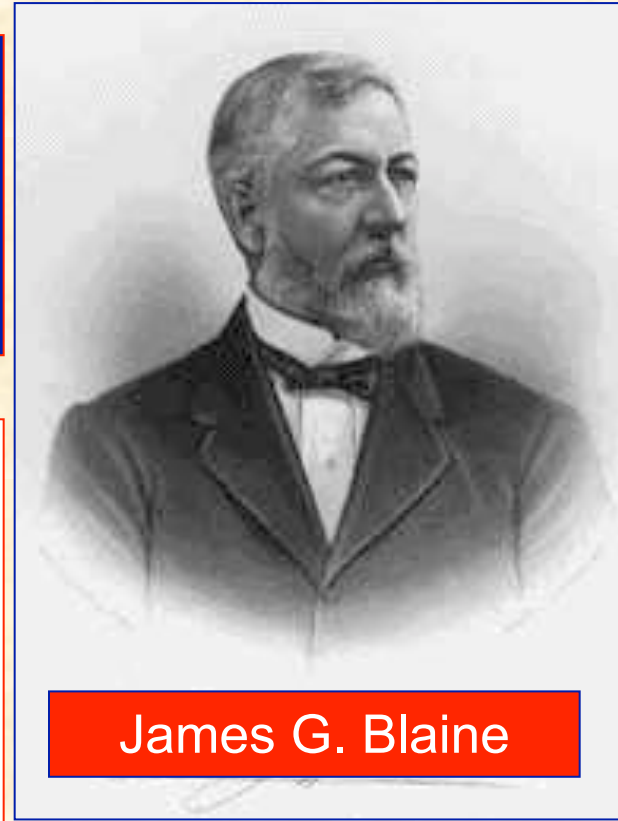


**Secretary of State James G. Blaine**, under Presidents Garfield & Harrison (1881, 1889-1892), laid the foundation for a larger & more aggressive American role in world affairs.

He worked to extend what he called America's "commercial empire" in the Pacific & he sought to ensure U.S. sovereignty over any canal in Panama, insisting that it be "a purely American waterway to be treated as part of our own coastline."

Blaine regarded Hawaii as "indispensably" part of "the American system."

As early as 1842, The U.S. had announced its opposition to European control of Hawaii, a key way station in the China trade where New England missionaries & whalers were active. Although the islands remained under native monarchs, American influence grew, particularly as other Americans arrived to establish sugar plantations and eventually dominate the economy.



James G. Blaine

# The U.S. Takes Hawaii

The Hawaiian Islands were economically important to the U.S. because since the 1790's, U.S. merchants stopped there on their way to China & East India.

Missionaries founded Christian schools & churches on the islands.

Sugar merchants changed the Hawaiian economy.



**In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, U.S. owned sugar plantations accounted for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the island's wealth. Plantation owners imported 1000's of laborers from Japan, Portugal & China. By 1900, foreigners & immigrant laborers outnumbered native Hawaiians about 3 to 1.**

An 1875 treaty allowed the sale of Hawaiian sugar in the U.S. without a duty. In 1887, white business leaders in Hawaii forced King Kalakaua to change Hawaii's constitution to grant voting rights only to wealthy white landowners. This change gave control of Hawaii's government to U.S. businessmen.

Also in 1887, the U.S. strong-armed Hawaii into signing a treaty allowing the construction of an American naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu.



King Kalakaua



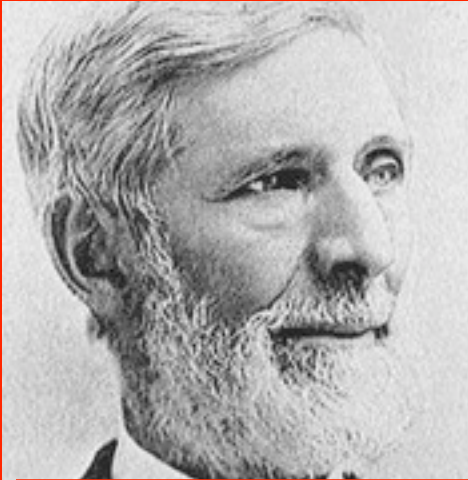
**The McKinley Tariff Act of 1890** eliminated the duty-free status of Hawaiian sugar. As a result, Hawaiian sugar growers faced competition in the U.S. from places like Cuba. The U.S. planters in Hawaii called for the U.S. to annex the islands so they would not have to pay the duty.

**Annex-** to incorporate (a country or other territory) within the domain of a state, or **to obtain or take for oneself.**





Queen Lili'uokalani



John L. Stevens

King Kalakaua dies in 1891 & his sister, Lili'uokalani becomes queen. She proposes a new constitution that would remove property qualifications for voting. This change would have restored political power over the islands to native Hawaiians.

To prevent this from happening, business groups, with the help of U.S. ambassador John L. Stevens organizes a revolution against the queen.



Sanford B. Dole

In 1883, Stevens orders the U.S.S. Boston to appear in the Honolulu harbor with U.S. marines who are told that they are protecting American lives & property. At the same time, volunteer troops take over the government building imprisoning the queen in her palace & establishing a provisional government with Sanford B. Dole as president.

After the native Hawaiians petitioned the U.S. government to reinstate Lili'uokalani as the Hawaiian queen, which was to no avail, on Aug. 12<sup>th</sup> 1898, Congress proclaimed Hawaii an American territory.

# The Spanish-American-Cuban War

By 1825, Spain had lost most of its overseas possessions. It retained only the Philippines, The Island of Guam, a few outposts of Africa, Cuba & Puerto Rico.

The U.S. had long had an interest in Cuba. In 1854, had recommended to President Franklin Pierce that the U.S. buy Cuba from Spain.

From 1868 to 1878, Cubans fought for their independence from Spain. They forced Spain to abolish slavery in 1886, but they failed to become independent.

After Cuba's slaves were emancipated from Spain, U.S. capitalists began investing millions of dollars in large sugar cane plantations on the island. Cuba's economy depended on sugar & the U.S. became Cuba's main market. In 1894, The U.S. implemented a high tariff on Cuban sugar and ruined the Cuban economy.

In 1895 a Cuban poet, Jose Marti, who was in exile in New York organized a revolution against Spain. The Cubans used guerrilla tactics & destroyed property, especially U.S. owned sugar mills.

In 1896, Spain responds to the Cuban revolt by sending General Valeriano Weyler to Cuba to restore order. He was made a governor of Cuba with full powers to suppress insurgency & restore the island to political order & its sugar production to greater profitability.



While Spanish troops marched in regulation & required supplies, their opponents practiced hit-and-run tactics, lived off the land, blending in with the non-combatant population (guerilla warfare). He came to the conclusion that to win Cuba back for Spain, he would have to separate rebels from civilians by putting the latter in safe havens, protected by Spanish troops. By the end of 1897, General Weyler relocated more than 300,000 into such "reconcentration camps," believed by many to be the origin of the name for such tactics used by 20th century regimes as Hitler & Stalin. Although he was successful moving vast numbers of people, he failed to provide for them adequately. Consequently, these areas became cesspools of hunger, disease, and starvation where many hundreds of thousands died



When U.S. President William McKinley took office in 1897, demands for U.S. intervention in Cuba were increasing. McKinley tried diplomatic means to resolve the crisis. This seemed to work because the Spanish responded by recalling Weyler, modifying the policy regarding concentration camps & offered Cuba limited self-government.

Word got out that the Spanish minister to the U.S., Enrique Dupuy de Lome published a private letter in which he referred to the president as “Weak” & “A bidder for the admiration of the crowd.” Which is what Roosevelt, who was the secretary of the navy at the time, thought as well.



President William  
McKinley

Many Americans resented the fact that a Spanish official referred to their president in such a manner.

De lome resigned from his position before he could be fired for making such a statement.



Enrique Dupuy de  
Lome

On February 15, 1898, A few days after the publication of the letter about McKinley got out, The U.S.S. Maine explodes killing more than 260 officers & crew aboard .

The U.S.S Maine was a navy cruiser that was sent to Cuba to protect U.S. lives & property. No one really knows what caused the U.S.S. Maine to explode but journalists in the U.S. wrote that it was the Spanish who were at fault.



“Remember the Maine” became the rallying cry for U.S. intervention in Cuba. It made no difference that the Spanish government agreed on April 9<sup>th</sup> to almost everything that the U.S. demanded, including a 6 month cease-fire. McKinley asked Congress for authority to use force against Spain in order to bring peace to Cuba.

After a week of debating, Congress agreed & on April 20<sup>th</sup> the U.S. went to war with Spain.

The first battle of the war took place in the Philippine Islands, which was a Spanish colony for over 300 years.

On May 1, George Dewey the U.S. naval commander in the Pacific, steamed in Manila Bay & then destroyed the Spanish fleet nearby.



Dewey's victory allowed U.S. troops to land in the Philippines & over the next 2 months, 11,000 U.S. troops joined forces with Filipino rebels.



In August, Spanish troops in Manila surrender to Americans rather than to the Filipinos, who had been fighting for freedom since 1896.



U.S. forces land in Cuba in June 1898 & begin to converge on the port city of Santiago. The army of 17,000 included four all black regiments of the regular army & the Rough Riders, a volunteer cavalry under the command of Leonard Wood & Teddy Roosevelt



The Rough Riders





**Charge of the Rough Riders at San Juan Hill**



**The Ninth & Tenth Cavalries**

The most famous land battle in Cuba took place near Santiago on July 1. The first part of the battle, on nearby Kettle Hill featured a gallant uphill charge by the Rough Riders & 2 black regiments – the Ninth & Tenth Cavalries.

Their victory cleared the way for an infantry attack on San Juan Hill.

Although Roosevelt & his units played only a minor role in the second victory, U.S. newspapers declared him the hero of San Juan Hill.

2 days later, the Spanish fleet tried to escape the American blockade of the harbor at Santiago. The naval battle that followed along the Cuban coast, ended in the destruction of the Spanish fleet.

On July 17, Santiago surrendered. On July 25, U.S. troops invaded Puerto Rico

# Treaty of Paris of 1898

On August 12, the U.S. & Spain sign an armistice ending the war.  
On December 10, 1898, the U.S. & Spain agree in a treaty that:

- Cuba would become independent
- Spain would give Puerto Rico & the Pacific island of Guam to the U.S.
- The U.S. would pay Spain \$20 million for the annexation of the Philippine Islands



# The Panama Canal



The Spanish-American-Cuban War intensified the long U.S. interest in a canal through Central America to eliminate the lengthy & dangerous ocean route around South America. Its commercial value seemed obvious, but the war emphasized its strategic importance. McKinley declared that a canal was now “demanding by the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands & the prospective expansion of our influence & commerce in the Pacific.”

Teddy Roosevelt moved quickly to implement McKinley's commitment to a canal after becoming president in 1901.



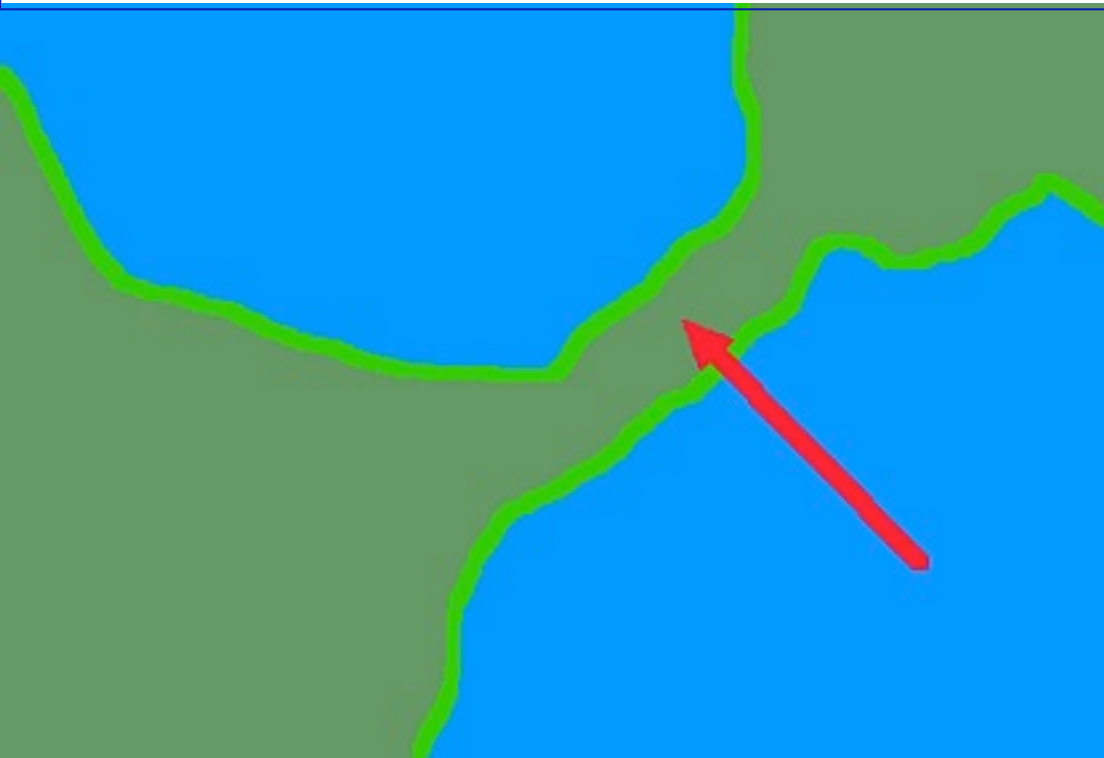
President Theodore Roosevelt (seated, center) sits at the controls of a U.S. steam shovel at the Culebra Cut site of the Panama Canal construction zone in November 1906.

The events behind the photograph are important in two respects. 1st, it was the first time in U.S. history that a President visited a foreign country while in office. 2nd, the cut itself involved the massive removal of millions of cubic yards of rock & earth 300 feet high & wide, along a nine-mile stretch, that was an incredible feat of engineering in its day.

The French owned Panama Canal Company had been unsuccessfully trying to build a canal in Panama & was now eager to sell its rights to the project before they expired in 1904. A canal through Panama would require an elaborate system of locks.

In 1902, Congress directed Roosevelt to purchase the French company's claims for \$40 million & build the canal in Panama if Colombia ceded a strip of land across the isthmus on reasonable terms.

**An ISTHMUS** is a narrow strip of land which connects two larger land structures. They are often found between lakes.



Otherwise, Roosevelt was to negotiate with Nicaragua for the alternate route.

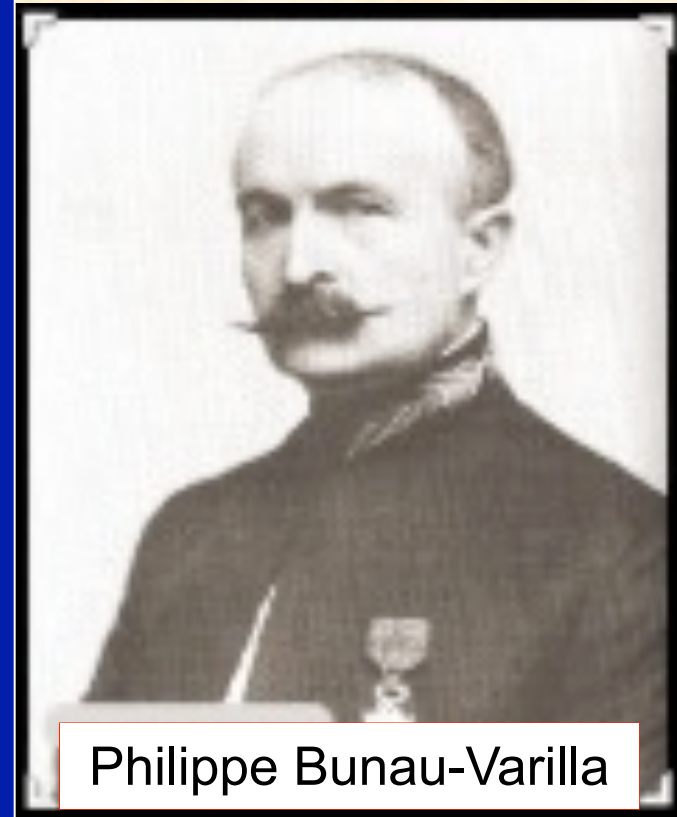
In 1903, Roosevelt pressed Columbia to sell a canal zone to the U.S. for \$10 million & an annual payment of \$250,000. Columbia rejected the proposal hoping for more \$.



Instead of using direct force, Roosevelt worked with Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a French official of the Panama Canal Company, to exploit long-smoldering Panamanian discontent with Colombia. Roosevelt's purpose was to get the canal zone. Bunau-Varilla's was to get the U.S. \$.

Roosevelt ordered U.S. naval forces to Panama. Bunau-Varilla coordinated a revolt against Colombian authority directed by officials of the Panama railroad, owned by Bunau-Varilla's canal company. The bloodless revolution succeeded when U.S. forces prevented Colombian troops from landing in Panama.

Bunau-Varilla promptly signed a treaty accepting Roosevelt's original terms for a canal zone and making Panama a U.S. protectorate. Panamanians themselves denounced the treaty for surrendering sovereignty in the zone to the U.S., which took control of the canal zone in 1904 & completed construction in 1914.



Philippe Bunau-Varilla

# The Issues of the Panama Canal

The Panama Canal had many issues during the process of it's being built. Tropical diseases & engineering problems halted the construction of the Canal. Yet Roosevelt said, "The Canal by far was the most important action I took in foreign affairs during the time I was president." Roosevelt paid 40 million for the rights of the land to work on the canal. He paid so much \$ to be able to make this canal ignoring the fact that people were being killed trying to achieve this project. Roosevelt ordered his army of engineers to start digging in malaria heat tearing down forests & cutting up mountains.

Deadly insects thrived in the mud they were trudging around in. "Mosquitoes get so thick you get a mouthful with every breath", a worker complained. The mosquitoes also carried yellow fever & many fell victim to the deadly disease before Dr. William Gorgas found a way to stop it. Some Americans looked down on Teddy's behavior saying him putting these armies into these kind of conditions was unconstitutional on his part.

Roosevelt himself boasted, "There was much accusation about my having acted in an unconstitutional manner. I took the Isthmus, started the canal & left Congress, not to debate the canal, but to debate me...While the debate goes on, the canal does too; & they are welcome to debate me as long as they wish, provided that we can go on with the canal." Roosevelt's unnecessary & arrogant actions generated resentment among Latin Americans for decades.



To protect the security of the canal, the U.S. increased its authority in the Caribbean. In other words, the U.S. placed ships in the Caribbean to protect the Canal from being taken over by any other nation. The objective was to establish conditions there that would both eliminate any pretext for European intervention & promote U.S. control over trade & investment. Roosevelt stated, “If we intend to say hands off to the powers of Europe, then sooner or later we must keep order ourselves.”