

# 7

## PART

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# Domestic and Global Challenges

## 1890–1945

In a famous speech he made in 1918, amid the horrors of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson outlined his Fourteen Points for international peace. Americans, he argued, must help make the world “fit and safe to live in.” “We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose,” Wilson declared. Fifteen years later, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a similar call for solidarity during the Great Depression. “We face the arduous days that lie before us,” he said, “in the warm courage of national unity.” Soon, even more grit and determination were needed, as Americans faced another looming world war.

In these years, America’s political leaders met major challenges at home and abroad with bold responses. The exception to this pattern was the 1920s, a decade of limited government under Republican presidents who deferred to business interests and to Americans’ isolationist, consumer-oriented mood. During the crises of World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, however, American voters called for — and got — what Roosevelt called “action and action now.”

Wilson’s proposals met with failure at the end of World War I, but Roosevelt won immense popularity for his measures to combat the depression, which helped millions of Americans survive unemployment and hardship. FDR, however, had limited success in ending the depression until World War II reignited the American economy. The United States emerged from the war with unprecedented global power, and the federal government with a broad mandate for sustaining the new welfare state. Part 7 addresses these transformations.



## America's Rise to World Power

The United States became a major international power after the 1890s, first in the Western Hemisphere and by the 1940s across the world, renewing debates at home about America's global role. After defeating Spain in the War of 1898, the United States claimed overseas colonies and asserted control over the Caribbean basin. Though President Wilson attempted to maintain neutrality at the start of World War I, trade ties and old alliances drew America into the conflict on the Allied side. Wilson sought to influence the peace, but Allied leaders ignored his proposals and the Senate rejected the Treaty of Versailles. By war's end, the United States's position on the world stage remained uncertain.

The 1920s was an era of dollar diplomacy and U.S. business expansion abroad. In the 1930s, faced with isolationist sentiment at home and the rise of fascist powers in Europe and Japan, the Roosevelt administration steered a middle course. In the late 1930s, it began to send aid to its traditional ally Great Britain without committing U.S. forces, keeping the nation out of the brewing wars in Europe and the Pacific. When the United States entered World War II in 1941, it did so as part of an alliance with both England and the Soviet Union against Germany and Japan (and their ally Italy). The United States emerged from the war as the dominant global power. These events are covered in Chapters 21, 22, and 24.



## Modernity and Its Discontents

World War I had a powerful domestic impact in the United States. The Great Migration brought African Americans northward, and Mexicans across the U.S. border, to take up wartime jobs. A full-blown modern consumer culture also emerged by the 1920s as radio, cars, and Hollywood movies transformed leisure pastimes. While many Americans embraced consumer culture, others expressed deep fear and antagonism toward a new modern sensibility, especially secularism and sexual freedoms. Repressive impulses also came from above; during World War I, the federal government introduced new laws to police dissent, and the country took a sharp right turn. A Red Scare, rollback of labor and immigrant rights, and rising nativism marked the political scene. A resurgent nationwide Klan arose to target Catholics and Jews as well as African Americans. Many cultural conflicts emerged: the teaching of evolution in the schools angered religious fundamentalists, while "wets" and "drys" debated the prohibition of liquor.

Later events showed that racism took many forms: the U.S. government deported hundreds of thousands of people of Mexican descent during the Great Depression, including American citizens, and temporarily imprisoned Japanese Americans in a mass relocation policy during World War II. These, too, represented battles over what a diverse, modern nation would look like. We explore these conflicts in Chapters 21, 22, and 24.



## Creation of the Welfare State

In comparison with their progressive predecessors (Chapters 19 and 20), Republican policymakers of the 1920s believed in hands-off government. Their policies likely helped trigger the Great Depression and deepened its impact after it arrived. Starting in 1932, Americans voted for change: President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, 1933–1937, expanded federal responsibility for the welfare of ordinary citizens, sweeping away the *laissez faire* individualism of the previous decade. Though the New Deal faced considerable challenges on the political right—especially from business and corporate leaders and a hostile Supreme Court—the popularity of its programs, such as Social Security, established a broad consensus that the United States needed a modern welfare state to regulate the economy and provide a basic safety net for the nation's citizens. For an exploration of the New Deal, see Chapter 23.

Wartime measures went even further, as the government mobilized the entire economy and tens of millions of citizens to fight the Axis powers. The welfare state became a “warfare state,” and Congress gave the president broad powers to fight the war abroad and reorganize the economy at home. Under the government-directed wartime economy, business boomed and productivity grew, but other policies, such as the internment of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans, violated fragile civil liberties, leaving a mixed legacy. On America's roles in World War II, see Chapter 24.

# Domestic and Global Challenges 1890–1945

## Thematic Understanding

This timeline arranges some of the important events of this period into themes. Consider the entries under “America in the World,” “Politics and Power,” “Identity,” and “Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture.” What connections do you see between events on the world stage and developments within the United States? What impact did World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II appear to have on American politics, society, and culture? >

	AMERICA IN THE WORLD	POLITICS AND POWER	IDENTITY	IDEAS, BELIEFS, AND CULTURE	WORK, EXCHANGE, AND TECHNOLOGY
1890	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Congress funds construction of modern battleships</li> <li>• U.S.-backed planters overthrow Hawaii's queen (1892)</li> <li>• U.S. wins War of 1898 against Spain; claims Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Philippines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Republicans sweep congressional elections as Americans respond to severe depression (1894)</li> <li>• Republican William McKinley elected president (1896)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "American exceptionalism" and rise of imperialism</li> <li>• Alfred Mahan, <i>The Influence of Sea Power upon History</i> (1890)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Remember the <i>Maine</i>" campaign fuels surge in nationalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression of 1890s increases pressure for U.S. to secure foreign markets</li> </ul>
1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. war against Philippine revolutionaries</li> <li>• Roosevelt Corollary to Monroe Doctrine (1904)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William McKinley reelected on pro-imperialist platform (1900)</li> <li>• William McKinley assassinated; Theodore Roosevelt becomes president (1901)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Insular Cases</i> establish noncitizenship status for new territories (1901)</li> <li>• California, Washington, and Hawaii limit rights for Asian immigrants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rise of modernism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Root-Takahira Agreement affirms free oceanic commerce (1908)</li> </ul>
1910	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson intervenes in Mexico (1914)</li> <li>• Panama Canal opened (1914)</li> <li>• United States enters WWI (1917)</li> <li>• War ends; Wilson seeks to influence peace treaty negotiations (1918)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodrow Wilson elected president (1912)</li> <li>• Red Scare (1919)</li> <li>• Woodrow Wilson issues Fourteen Points (1919)</li> <li>• U.S. Senate rejects Treaty of Versailles (1919, 1920)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Ku Klux Klan founded (1915)</li> <li>• Post-WWI race riots</li> <li>• Wartime pressure for "100% loyalty"; dissent suppressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moviemaking industry moves to southern California</li> <li>• <i>Birth of a Nation</i> glorifies the Reconstruction-era Klan (1915)</li> <li>• Radio Corporation of America created (1919)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Migration brings African Americans to northern cities, Mexicans north to United States</li> <li>• Assembly-line production begins</li> </ul>
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heyday of "dollar diplomacy"</li> <li>• U.S. occupation of Haiti and other Caribbean and Central American nations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nineteenth Amendment grants women's suffrage (1920)</li> <li>• Prohibition (1920–1933)</li> <li>• Teapot Dome scandal (1923)</li> <li>• Republican "associated state," probusiness policies (1920–1932)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Origins Act limits immigration (1924)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rise of Hollywood</li> <li>• Harlem Renaissance</li> <li>• Popularity of jazz music</li> <li>• Scopes "monkey trial" (1925)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic prosperity (1922–1929)</li> <li>• Labor gains rolled back</li> <li>• Era of welfare capitalism</li> <li>• Rise of automobile loans and consumer credit</li> </ul>
1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rise of European fascist powers</li> <li>• Japan invades China (1937)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Franklin Roosevelt elected president (1932)</li> <li>• First New Deal (1933)</li> <li>• Second New Deal (1935)</li> <li>• Roosevelt attempts to reform Supreme Court (1937)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bonus Army (1932)</li> <li>• Indian Reorganization Act (1934)</li> <li>• Social Security created (1935)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary impulse in arts</li> <li>• WPA assists artists</li> <li>• Federal Writers' Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Depression (1929–1941)</li> <li>• Rise of CIO and organized labor</li> </ul>
1940	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States enters WWII (1941)</li> <li>• Atomic bombing of Japan and end of WWII (1945)</li> <li>• United Nations founded (1945)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roosevelt elected to fourth term (1944)</li> <li>• Roosevelt dies (1945)</li> <li>• Harry Truman becomes president (1945)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internment of Japanese Americans</li> <li>• Segregation in armed services until 1948</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film industry aids war effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War spending ends depression</li> <li>• Rationing curbs consumer spending</li> <li>• Married women take war jobs</li> </ul>

# 21

## CHAPTER

# An Emerging World Power 1890–1918

### FROM EXPANSION TO IMPERIALISM

Foundations of Empire  
The War of 1898  
Spoils of War

### A POWER AMONG POWERS

The Open Door in Asia  
The United States and Latin  
America

### THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD WAR I

From Neutrality to War  
“Over There”  
War on the Home Front

### CATASTROPHE AT VERSAILLES

The Fate of Wilson’s Ideas  
Congress Rejects the Treaty

Accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in 1900, William Jennings Bryan delivered a famous speech denouncing U.S. military occupations overseas. “God Himself,” Bryan declared, “placed in every human heart the love of liberty. . . . He never made a race of people so low in the scale of civilization or intelligence that it would welcome a foreign master.” At the time, Republican president William McKinley was leading an ambitious and popular plan of overseas expansion. The United States had asserted control over the Caribbean, claimed Hawaii, and sought to annex the Philippines. Bryan failed to convince a majority of voters that imperialism—the exercise of military, political, and economic power overseas—was the wrong direction. He lost the election by a landslide.

By the 1910s, however, American enthusiasm for overseas involvement cooled. Despite efforts to stay neutral, the United States got caught up in the global catastrophe of World War I, which killed 8 million combatants, including over 50,000 U.S. soldiers. By the war’s end, European powers’ grip on their colonial empires was weakening. The United States also ceased acquiring overseas territories and pursued a different path. It did so in part because the war brought dramatic changes at home, leaving Americans a postwar legacy of economic upheaval and political disillusionment.

President Woodrow Wilson, who in 1913 appointed Bryan as his secretary of state, tried to steer a middle course between revolutionary socialism and European-style imperialism. In Wilson’s phrase, America would “make the world safe for democracy” while unapologetically working to advance U.S. economic interests. The U.S. Senate, however, rejected the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and with it Wilson’s vision, leaving the nation’s foreign policy in doubt. Should the United States try to promote democracy abroad? If so, how? To what degree should the federal government seek to promote American business interests? Under what conditions was overseas military action justified? When, on the contrary, did it impinge on others’ sovereignty, endanger U.S. soldiers, and invite disaster? Today’s debates over foreign policy still center to a large degree on questions that Americans debated in the era of McKinley, Bryan, and Wilson, when the nation first asserted itself as a major world power.

### IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

As the United States became a major power on the world stage, what ideas and interests did policymakers seek to promote in international affairs?



**American Soldiers on a French Battlefield, 1918** As the United States asserted its power on the world stage, American soldiers found themselves fighting on foreign battlefields. This 1918 photograph shows a few of the 1 million U.S. soldiers who joined French and British troops fighting on the brutal Western Front to defeat Germany in the Great War. Over 26,000 American soldiers lost their lives on the battlefield during World War I, and 95,000 were wounded. Library of Congress.

## From Expansion to Imperialism

Historians used to describe turn-of-the-twentieth-century U.S. imperialism as something new and unprecedented. Now they stress continuities between foreign policy in this era and the nation's earlier, relentless expansion across North America. Wars against native peoples had occurred almost continuously since the country's founding; in the 1840s, the United States had annexed a third of Mexico. The United States never administered a large colonial empire, as did European powers like Spain, England, and Germany, partly because it had a plentiful supply of natural resources in the American West. But policymakers undertook a determined quest for global markets. Events in the 1890s opened opportunities to pursue this goal in new ways.

### Foundations of Empire

American empire builders around 1900 fulfilled a vision laid out earlier by William Seward, secretary of state under presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, who saw access to global markets as the key to power (Chapter 16). Seward's ideas had won only limited support at the time, but the severe economic depression of the 1890s brought Republicans into power and Seward's ideas back into vogue. Confronting high unemployment and mass protests, policymakers feared American workers would embrace socialism or Marxism. The alternative, they believed, was to create jobs and prosperity at home by selling U.S. products in overseas markets.

Intellectual trends also favored imperialism. As early as 1885, in his popular book *Our Country*, Congregationalist minister Josiah Strong urged Protestants to proselytize overseas. He predicted that the American “Anglo-Saxon race,” which represented “the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization,” would “spread itself over the earth.” Such arguments were grounded in **American exceptionalism**, the idea that the United States had a unique destiny to foster democracy and civilization.

As Strong's exhortation suggested, imperialists also drew on popular racial theories, which claimed that people of “Anglo-Saxon” descent—English and often German—were superior to all others. “Anglo-Saxon” rule

over foreign people of color made sense in an era when, at home, most American Indians and Asian immigrants were denied citizenship and most southern blacks were disenfranchised. Imperialists argued that “free land” on the western frontier was dwindling, and thus new outlets needed to be found for American energy and enterprise. Responding to critics of U.S. occupation of the Philippines, Theodore Roosevelt scoffed: if Filipinos should control their own islands, he declared, then America was “morally bound to return Arizona to the Apaches.”

Imperialists also justified their views through racialized Social Darwinism (Chapter 18). Josiah Strong, for example, predicted that with the globe fully occupied, a “competition of races” would ensue, with victory based on “survival of the fittest.” Fear of ruthless competition drove the United States, like European nations, to invest in the latest weapons. Policymakers saw that European powers were amassing steel-plated battleships and carving up Africa and Asia among themselves. In his book *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890), U.S. naval officer Alfred Mahan urged the United States to enter the fray, observing that naval power had been essential to past empires. As early as 1886, Congress ordered construction of two steel-hulled battleships, the USS *Texas* and USS *Maine*; in 1890, it appropriated funds for three more, a program that expanded over the next two decades.

During Grover Cleveland's second term (1893–1897), his secretary of state, Richard Olney, turned to direct confrontation. He warned Europe to stay away from Latin America, which he saw as the United States's rightful sphere of influence. Without consulting the nation of Venezuela, Olney suddenly demanded in 1895 that Britain resolve a long-standing border dispute between Venezuela and Britain's neighboring colony, British Guiana. Invoking the Monroe Doctrine, which stated that the Western Hemisphere was off-limits to further European colonization, Olney warned that the United States would brook no challenge to its interests. Startled, Britain agreed to arbitrate. U.S. power was on the rise.

### The War of 1898

Events in the Caribbean presented the United States with far greater opportunities. In 1895, Cuban patriots mounted a major guerrilla war against Spain, which had lost most of its other New World territories. The Spanish commander responded by rounding up Cuban civilians into concentration camps, where as many as 200,000 died of starvation, exposure,

#### TRACE CHANGE OVER TIME

How did imperialism in the 1890s reflect both continuities and changes from earlier eras?

or dysentery. In the United States, “yellow journalists” such as William Randolph Hearst turned their plight into a cause célèbre. Hearst’s coverage of Spanish atrocities fed a surge of nationalism, especially among those who feared that industrialization was causing American men to lose physical strength and valor. The government should not pass up this opportunity, said Indiana senator Albert Beveridge, to “manufacture manhood.” Congress called for Cuban independence.

President Cleveland had no interest in supporting the Cuban rebellion but worried over Spain’s failure to end it. The war disrupted trade and damaged American-owned sugar plantations on the island. Moreover, an unstable Cuba was incompatible with U.S. strategic interests, including a proposed canal whose Caribbean approaches had to be safeguarded. Taking office in 1897, President William McKinley took a tough stance. In September, a U.S. diplomat informed Spain that it must ensure an “early and certain peace” or the United States would step in. At first, this hard line seemed to work: Spain’s conservative regime fell, and a liberal government, taking office in October 1897, offered Cuba limited self-rule. But Spanish loyalists in Havana rioted against this proposal, while Cuban rebels held out for full independence.

In February 1898, Hearst’s *New York Journal* published a private letter in which a Spanish minister to the United States belittled McKinley. The minister, Dupuy de Lôme, resigned, but exposure of the de Lôme letter intensified Americans’ indignation toward Spain. The next week brought shocking news: the U.S. battle cruiser *Maine* had exploded and sunk in Havana harbor, with 260 seamen lost. “Whole Country Thrills with the War Fever,” proclaimed the *New York Journal*. “**Remember the Maine**” became a national chant. Popular passions were now a major factor in the march toward war.

McKinley assumed the sinking of the *Maine* had been accidental. Improbably, though, a naval board of inquiry blamed an underwater mine, fueling public outrage. (Later investigators disagreed: the more likely cause was a faulty ship design that placed explosive munitions too close to coal bunkers, which were prone to fire.) No evidence linked Spain to the purported mine, but if a mine sank the *Maine*, then Spain was responsible for not protecting the ship.

Business leaders became impatient, believing war was preferable to an unending Cuban crisis. On March 27, McKinley cabled an ultimatum to Madrid: an immediate ceasefire in Cuba for six months and, with the United States mediating, peace negotiations with the rebels. Spain, while desperate to avoid war, balked at the added demand that mediation must result

in Cuban independence. On April 11, McKinley asked Congress for authority to intervene in Cuba “in the name of civilization, [and] in behalf of endangered American interests.”

Historians long referred to the ensuing fight as the Spanish–American War, but because that name ignores the central role of Cuban revolutionaries, many historians now call the three-way conflict the War of 1898. Though Americans widely admired Cubans’ aspirations for freedom, the McKinley administration defeated a congressional attempt to recognize the rebel government. In response, Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado added an amendment to the war bill, disclaiming any intention by the United States to occupy Cuba. The **Teller Amendment** reassured Americans that their country would uphold democracy abroad as well as at home. McKinley’s expectations differed. He wrote privately, “We must keep all we get; when the war is over we must keep what we want.”

On April 24, 1898, Spain declared war on the United States. The news provoked full-blown war fever. Across the country, young men enlisted for the fight. Theodore Roosevelt, serving in the War Department, resigned to become lieutenant colonel of a cavalry regiment. Recruits poured into makeshift bases around Tampa, Florida, where confusion reigned. Rifles failed to arrive; food was bad, sanitation worse. No provision had been made for getting troops to Cuba, so the government hastily collected a fleet of yachts and commercial boats. Fortunately, the regular army was a disciplined, professional force; its 28,000 seasoned troops provided a nucleus for 200,000 volunteers. The navy was in better shape: Spain had nothing to match America’s seven battleships and armored cruisers. The Spanish admiral bitterly predicted that his fleet would “like Don Quixote go out to fight windmills and come back with a broken head.”

The first, decisive military engagement took place in the Pacific. This was the handiwork of Theodore Roosevelt, who, in his government post, had gotten the intrepid Commodore George Dewey appointed commander of the Pacific fleet. In the event of war, Dewey had instructions to sail immediately for the Spanish-owned Philippines. When war was declared, Roosevelt confronted his surprised superior and pressured him into validating Dewey’s instructions. On May 1, 1898, American ships cornered the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay and destroyed it. Manila, the Philippine capital, fell on August 13. “We must on no account let the [Philippines] go,” declared Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. McKinley agreed. The United States now had a major foothold in the western Pacific.





### Hawaii's Queen

Hawaiian queen Liliuokalani (1838–1917) was the great-granddaughter of Keaweaheulu, founder of the Kamehameha dynasty that had ruled the islands since the late 1700s. Liliuokalani assumed the throne after her brother's death in 1891. As an outspoken critic, however, of treaties ceding power to U.S. economic interests, she was deposed three years later by a cabal of sugar planters who established a republic. When secret plans to revolt and restore the monarchy were discovered, the queen was imprisoned for a year in Iolani Palace. She lived the remainder of her life in Hawaii but never regained power. Fluent in English and influenced from childhood by Congregational missionaries, she used this background to advocate for her people; in her book *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* (1898), she appealed for justice from fellow Christians. George Bacon Collection, Hawaii State Archives.

Dewey's victory directed policymakers' attention to Hawaii. Nominally independent, these islands had long been subject to U.S. influence, including a horde of resident American sugarcane planters. An 1876 treaty between the United States and the island's monarch gave Hawaiian sugar free access to the American

market, without tariff payments, and Hawaii pledged to sign no such agreement with any other power. When this treaty was renewed in 1887, Hawaii also granted a long-coveted lease for a

U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor. Four years later, succeeding her brother as Hawaii's monarch, Queen Liliuokalani made known her frustration with these treaties. In response, an Annexation Club of U.S.-backed planters organized secretly and in 1892, with the help of U.S. Marines, overthrew the queen and then negotiated a treaty of annexation. Grover Cleveland, however, rejected it when he entered office, declaring that it would violate America's "unbroken tradition" against acquiring territory overseas.

Dewey's victory in Manila delivered what the planters wanted: Hawaii acquired strategic value as a half-way station to the Philippines. In July 1898, Congress voted for annexation, over the protests of Hawaii's deposed queen. "Oh, honest Americans," she pleaded, "as Christians hear me for my down-trodden people! Their form of government is as dear to them as yours is precious to you. Quite as warmly as you love your country, so they love theirs." But to the great powers, Hawaii was not a country. One congressman dismissed Hawaii's monarchy as "absurd, grotesque, tottering"; the "Aryan race," he declared, would "rescue" the islands from it.



To see a longer excerpt from Queen Liliuokalani's appeal, along with other primary sources from this period, see **Sources for America's History**.

Further U.S. annexations took on their own logic. The navy pressed for another coaling base in the central Pacific; that meant Guam, a Spanish island in the Marianas. A strategic base was needed in the Caribbean; that meant Puerto Rico. By early summer, before U.S. troops had fired a shot in Cuba, McKinley's broader war aims were crystallizing.

In Cuba, Spanish forces were depleted by the long guerrilla war. Though poorly trained and equipped, American forces had the advantages of a demoralized foe and knowledgeable Cuban allies. The main battle occurred on July 1 at San Juan Hill, near Santiago, where the Spanish fleet was anchored. Roosevelt's Rough Riders took the lead, but four African American regiments bore the brunt of the fighting. Observers credited much of the victory to the "superb gallantry" of these soldiers. Spanish troops retreated to a well-fortified second line, but U.S. forces were spared the test of a second assault. On July 3, the Spanish fleet in Santiago harbor tried a desperate run through the American blockade and was destroyed. Days later, Spanish forces surrendered. American combat casualties had been few; most U.S. soldiers' deaths had resulted from malaria and yellow fever.

### IDENTIFY CAUSES

Why did the United States go to war against Spain in 1898, and what led to U.S. victory?



### The Battle of San Juan Hill

On July 1, 1898, the key battle for Cuba took place on heights overlooking Santiago. African American troops bore the brunt of the fighting. Although generally overlooked, black soldiers' role in the San Juan battle is done justice in this contemporary lithograph, without the demeaning stereotypes by which blacks were normally depicted in an age of intensifying racism. Note, however, that as in the Civil War, blacks enlisted as foot soldiers; their officers were white. Library of Congress.

### Spoils of War

The United States and Spain quickly signed a preliminary peace agreement in which Spain agreed to liberate Cuba and cede Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States. But what would happen to the Philippines, an immense archipelago that lay more than 5,000 miles from California? Initially, the United States aimed to keep only Manila, because of its fine harbor. Manila was not defensible, however, without the whole island of Luzon, on which it sat. After deliberating, McKinley found a justification for annexing all of the Philippines. He decided that “we could not leave [the Filipinos] to themselves — they were unfit for self-rule.”

This declaration provoked heated debate. Under the Constitution, as Republican senator George F. Hoar argued, “no power is given to the Federal Government to acquire territory to be held and governed permanently as colonies” or “to conquer alien people and hold them in subjugation.” Leading citizens and peace advocates, including Jane Addams and Mark Twain, enlisted in the anti-imperialist cause. Steel king Andrew Carnegie offered \$20 million to purchase Philippine independence. Labor leader Samuel Gompers warned union members about the threat of competition from low-wage Filipino immigrants. Anti-imperialists, however, were a diverse lot. Some argued that Filipinos were perfectly capable of self-rule; others warned about

the dangers of annexing eight million Filipinos of an “inferior race.” “No matter whether they are fit to govern themselves or not,” declared a Missouri congressman, “they are not fit to govern us.”

Beginning in late 1898, anti-imperialist leagues sprang up around the country, but they never sparked a mass movement. On the contrary, McKinley’s “splendid little war” proved immensely popular. Confronted with that reality, Democrats waffled. Their standard-bearer,

William Jennings Bryan, decided not to stake Democrats’ future on opposition to a policy that he believed to be irreversible. He threw his party into turmoil by declaring last-minute support for McKinley’s proposed treaty. Having met military defeat, Spanish representatives had little choice. In

the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States for \$20 million.

Annexation was not as simple as U.S. policymakers had expected. On February 4, 1899, two days before the Senate ratified the treaty, fighting broke out between American and Filipino patrols on the edge of Manila. Confronted by annexation, rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo asserted his nation’s independence and turned his guns on occupying American forces. Though Aguinaldo found it difficult to organize a mass-based resistance movement, the ensuing conflict between Filipino nationalists and U.S. troops far exceeded in length and ferocity the war just concluded with Spain. Fighting tenacious guerrillas, the U.S. Army resorted to the same tactics Spain had employed in Cuba: burning crops and villages and rounding up civilians. Atrocities became commonplace on both sides. In three years of warfare, 4,200 Americans and an estimated 200,000 Filipinos died; many of the latter were dislocated civilians, particularly children, who succumbed to malnutrition and disease.

McKinley’s convincing victory over William Jennings Bryan in 1900 suggested popular satisfaction with America’s overseas adventures, even in the face of dogged Filipino resistance to U.S. rule. The fighting ended in 1902, and William Howard Taft, appointed as governor-general of the Philippines, sought to make the territory a model of roadbuilding and sanitary engineering. Yet misgivings lingered as Americans confronted the brutality of the war. Philosopher William James noted that the United States had destroyed “these islanders by the thousands, their villages and cities. . . . Could there be any more damning indictment of that whole bloated ideal termed ‘modern civilization?’” (American Voices, p. 680).

Constitutional issues also remained unresolved. The treaty, while guaranteeing freedom of religion to inhabitants of ceded Spanish territories, withheld any promise of citizenship. It was up to Congress to decide Filipinos’ “civil rights and political status.” In 1901, the Supreme Court upheld this provision in a set of decisions known as the *Insular Cases*. The Constitution, declared the Court, did not automatically extend citizenship to people in acquired territories; Congress could decide. Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines were thus marked as colonies, not future states.

The next year, as a condition for withdrawing from Cuba, the United States forced the newly independent island to accept a proviso in its constitution called the **Platt Amendment** (1902). This blocked Cuba from making a treaty with any country except the United States and gave the United States the right to intervene in Cuban affairs if it saw fit. Cuba also granted the United States a lease on Guantánamo Bay (still in effect), where the U.S. Navy built a large base. Cubans’ hard-fought independence was limited; so was that of Filipinos. Eventually, the Jones Act of 1916 committed the United States to Philippine independence but set no date. (The Philippines at last achieved independence in 1946.) Though the war’s carnage had rubbed off some of the moralizing gloss, America’s global aspirations remained intact.

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## A Power Among Powers

No one appreciated America’s emerging influence more than the man who, after William McKinley’s assassination, became president in 1901. Theodore Roosevelt was an avid student of world affairs who called on “the civilized and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world.” He meant, in part, directing the affairs of “backward peoples.” For Roosevelt, imperialism went hand in hand with domestic progressivism (Chapter 20). He argued that a strong federal government, asserting itself both at home and abroad, would enhance economic stability and political order. Overseas, Roosevelt sought to arbitrate disputes and maintain a global balance of power, but he also asserted U.S. interests.

## The Open Door in Asia

U.S. officials and business leaders had a burning interest in East Asian markets, but they were entering a crowded field (Map 21.1). In the late 1890s, following Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, Japan, Russia, Germany, France, and Britain divided

### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

What were the long-term results of the U.S. victory over Spain, in Hawaii and in former Spanish possessions?

**MAP 21.1****The Great Powers in East Asia, 1898–1910**

European powers established dominance over China by way of “treaty ports,” where the powers based their naval forces, and through “spheres of influence” that extended from the ports into the hinterland. This map reveals why the United States had a weak hand: it lacked a presence on this colonized terrain. An uprising of Chinese nationalists in 1900 gave the United States a chance to insert itself on the Chinese mainland by sending an American expeditionary force. American diplomats made the most of the opportunity to defend U.S. commercial interests in China. As noted in the key, all place names in this map are those in use in 1910: Modern *Beijing*, for example, is shown as *Peking*.



coastal China into spheres of influence. Fearful of being shut out, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay sent these powers a note in 1899, claiming the right of equal trade access—an “open door”—for all nations seeking to do business in China. The United States lacked leverage in Asia, and Hay’s note elicited only noncommittal responses. But he chose to interpret this as acceptance of his position.

When a secret society of Chinese nationalists, known outside China as “Boxers” because of their pugnacious political stance, rebelled against foreign occupation in 1900, the United States sent 5,000 troops to join a multinational campaign to break the nationalists’ siege of European offices in Beijing. Hay took this opportunity to assert a second open door principle: China must be preserved as a “territorial and administrative entity.” As long as the legal fiction of an independent China survived, Americans could claim equal access to its market.

European and American plans were, however, unsettled by Japan’s emergence as East Asia’s dominant power. A decade after its victory over China, Japan responded to Russian bids for control of both Korea

and Manchuria, in northern China, by attacking the czar’s fleet at Russia’s leased Chinese port. In a series of brilliant victories, the Japanese smashed the Russian forces. Westerners were shocked: for the first time, a European power had been defeated by a non-Western nation. Conveying both admiration and alarm, American cartoonists sketched Japan as a martial artist knocking down the Russian giant. Roosevelt mediated a settlement to the war in 1905, receiving for his efforts the first Nobel Peace Prize awarded to an American.

Though he was contemptuous of other Asians, Roosevelt respected the Japanese, whom he called “a wonderful and civilized people.” More important, he understood Japan’s rising military might and aligned himself with the mighty. The United States approved Japan’s “protectorate” over Korea in 1905 and, six years later, its seizure of full control. With Japan asserting harsh authority over Manchuria, energetic Chinese diplomat Yüan Shih-k’ai tried to encourage the United States to intervene. But

**COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

What factors constrained and guided U.S. actions in Asia and in Latin America?



## Debating the Philippines

As President McKinley privately acknowledged in writing—“when the war is over we must keep what we want”—seizing the Philippines was an act of national self-interest. Of the alternatives, it was the one that seemed best calculated to serve America’s strategic aims in Asia. But McKinley’s geopolitical decision had unintended consequences. For one, it provoked a bloody insurrection. For another, it challenged the United States’s democratic principles. As these consequences hit home, a divided Senate set up a special committee and held closed hearings. Congressional testimony is a source much prized by historians. Though some of it is prepared, once questioning begins, testimony becomes unscripted and can be especially revealing. The following documents are taken from the 1902 testimony before the Senate Committee on the Philippines.

### Ideals

General Arthur MacArthur (1845–1912) was in on the action in the Philippines almost from the start. He commanded one of the first units to arrive there in 1898 and in 1900 was reassigned as the islands’ military governor and general commander of the troops. His standing as a military man—holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor from the Civil War—was matched later by his more famous son, Douglas MacArthur, who fought in the Pacific during World War II. Here the elder MacArthur explains in prepared testimony his vision of America’s mission to the Philippines.

At the time I returned to Manila [May 1900] to assume the supreme command it seemed to me that . . . our occupation of the island was simply one of the necessary consequences in logical sequence of our great prosperity, and to doubt the wisdom of [occupation] was simply to doubt the stability of our own institutions and in effect to declare that a self-governing nation was incapable of successfully resisting strains arising naturally from its own productive energy. It seemed to me that our conception of right, justice, freedom, and personal liberty was the precious fruit of centuries of strife . . . [and that] we must regard ourselves simply as the custodians of imperishable ideas held in trust for the general benefit of mankind. In other words, I felt that we had attained a moral and intellectual height from which we were bound to proclaim to all as the occasion arose the true message of humanity as embodied in the principles of our own institutions. . . .

All other governments that have gone to the East have simply planted trading establishments; they have not materially affected the conditions of the people. . . . There is not a single establishment, in my judgment, in Asia to-day that would survive five years if the original power which planted it was withdrawn therefrom.

The contrasting idea with our idea is this: In planting our ideas we plant something that can not be destroyed. To my mind the archipelago is a fertile soil upon which to plant republicanism. . . . We are planting the best traditions, the best characteristics of Americanism in such a way that they can never be removed from that soil. That in itself seems to me a most inspiring thought. It encouraged me during all my efforts in those lands, even when conditions seemed most disappointing, when the people themselves, not appreciating precisely what the remote consequences of our efforts were going to be, mistrusted us; but that fact was always before me—that going deep down into that fertile soil were the indispensable ideas of Americanism.

### Skepticism

At this point, the general was interrupted by Colorado senator Thomas Patterson, a Populist-Democrat and a vocal anti-imperialist.

Sen. Patterson: Do you mean that imperishable idea of which you speak is the right of self-government?

Gen. MacArthur: Precisely so; self-government regulated by law as I understand it in this Republic.

Sen. Patterson: Of course you do not mean self-government regulated by some foreign and superior power?

Gen. MacArthur: Well, that is a matter of evolution, Senator. We are putting these institutions there so they will evolve themselves just as here and everywhere else where freedom has flourished. . . .

Sen. Patterson [after the General concluded his statement]: Do I understand your claim of right and duty to retain the Philippine Islands is based upon the proposition that they have come to us upon the basis of our morals, honorable dealing, and unassailable international integrity?

Gen. MacArthur: That proposition is not questioned by anybody in the world, excepting a few people in the United States. . . . We will be benefited, and the Filipino people will be benefited, and that is what I meant by the original proposition —

Sen. Patterson: Do you mean the Filipino people that are left alive?

Gen. MacArthur: I mean the Filipino people. . . .

Sen. Patterson: You mean those left alive after they have been subjugated?

Gen. MacArthur: I do not admit that there has been any unusual destruction of life in the Philippine Islands. The destruction is simply the incident of war, and of course it embraces only a very small percentage of the total population.

. . . I doubt if any war — either international or civil, any war on earth — has been conducted with as much humanity, with as much careful consideration, with as much self-restraint, as have been the American operations in the Philippine Archipelago. . . .

## Realities

Brigadier General Robert P. Hughes, a military district commander, testified as follows.

Q: In burning towns, what would you do? Would the entire town be destroyed by fire or would only the offending portions of the town be burned?

Gen. Hughes: I do not know that we ever had a case of burning what you would call a town in this country, but probably a barrio or a sitio; probably half a dozen houses, native shacks, where the insurgents would go in and be concealed, and if they caught a detachment passing they would kill some of them.

Q: What did I understand you to say would be the consequences of that?

Gen. Hughes: They usually burned the village.

Q: All of the houses in the village?

Gen. Hughes: Yes, every one of them.

Q: What would become of the inhabitants?

Gen. Hughes: That was their lookout.

Q: If these shacks were of no consequence what was the utility of their destruction?

Gen. Hughes: The destruction was as a punishment. They permitted these people to come in there and conceal themselves. . . .

Q: The punishment in that case would fall, not upon the men, who could go elsewhere, but mainly upon the women and little children.

Gen. Hughes: The women and children are part of the family, and where you wish to inflict a punishment you

can punish the man probably worse in that way than in any other.

Q: But is that within the ordinary rules of civilized warfare? . . .

Gen. Hughes: These people are not civilized.

## Cruelties

Daniel J. Evans, Twelfth Infantry, describes the “water cure.”

Q: The committee would like to hear . . . whether you were the witness to any cruelties inflicted upon the natives of the Philippine Islands; and if so, under what circumstances.

Evans: The case I had reference to was where they gave the water cure to a native in the Ilocos Norte . . . about the month of August 1900. There were two native scouts with the American forces. They went out and brought in a couple of insurgents. . . . They tried to get from this insurgent . . . where the rest of the insurgents were at that time. . . . The first thing one of the Americans — I mean one of the scouts for the Americans — grabbed one of the men by the head and jerked his head back, and then they took a tomato can and poured water down his throat until he could hold no more. . . . Then they forced a gag into his mouth; they stood him up . . . against a post and fastened him so that he could not move. Then one man, an American soldier, who was over six feet tall, and who was very strong, too, struck this native in the pit of the stomach as hard as he could. . . . They kept that operation up for quite a time, and finally I thought the fellow was about to die, but I don't believe he was as bad as that, because finally he told them he would tell, and from that day on he was taken away, and I saw no more of him.

Source: From *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection*, edited by Henry F. Graff (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969). Reprinted by permission of the author.

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The text of this chapter offers the U.S. reasons for holding on to the Philippines. In what ways does General MacArthur's testimony confirm, add to, or contradict the text account?
2. The chapter text also describes the anti-imperialist movement. What does Senator Patterson's cross-examination of General MacArthur reveal about the anti-imperialists' beliefs?
3. Does the clash of ideas in these excerpts remain relevant to our own time? How does it compare to what you might read or hear about in a news source today?

Roosevelt reviewed America's weak position in the Pacific and declined. He conceded that Japan had "a paramount interest in what surrounds the Yellow Sea." In 1908, the United States and Japan signed the **Root-Takahira Agreement**, confirming principles of free oceanic commerce and recognizing Japan's authority over Manchuria.

William Howard Taft entered the White House in 1909 convinced that the United States had been short-changed in Asia. He pressed for a larger role for American investors, especially in Chinese railroad construction. Eager to promote U.S. business interests abroad, he hoped that infusions of American capital would offset Japanese power. When the Chinese Revolution of 1911 toppled the Manchu dynasty, Taft supported the victorious Nationalists, who wanted to modernize their country and liberate it from Japanese domination. The United States had entangled itself in China and entered a long-term rivalry with Japan for power in the Pacific, a competition that would culminate thirty years later in World War II.

## The United States and Latin America

Roosevelt famously argued that the United States should "speak softly and carry a big stick." By "big stick," he meant naval power, and rapid access to two

oceans required a canal. European powers conceded the United States's "paramount interest" in the Caribbean. Freed by Britain's surrender of canal-building rights in the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty (1901), Roosevelt persuaded Congress to authorize \$10 million, plus future payments of \$250,000 per year, to purchase from Colombia a six-mile strip of land across Panama, a Colombian province.

Furious when Colombia rejected this proposal, Roosevelt contemplated outright seizure of Panama but settled on a more roundabout solution. Panamanians, long separated from Colombia by remote jungle, chafed under Colombian rule. The United States lent covert assistance to an independence movement, triggering a bloodless revolution. On November 6, 1903, the United States recognized the new nation of Panama; two weeks later, it obtained a perpetually renewable lease on a canal zone. Roosevelt never regretted the venture, though in 1922 the United States paid Colombia \$25 million as a kind of conscience money.

To build the canal, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hired 60,000 laborers, who came from many countries to clear vast swamps, excavate 240 million cubic yards of earth, and construct a series of immense locks. The project, a major engineering feat, took eight years and cost thousands of lives among the workers who built it. Opened in 1914, the **Panama Canal** gave



**Panama Canal Workers, 1910**

The 51-mile-long Panama Canal includes seven sets of locks that can raise and lower fifty large ships in a twenty-four-hour period. Building the canal took eight years and required over 50,000 workers, including immigrants from Spain and Italy and many West Indians such as these men, who accomplished some of the worst-paid, most dangerous labor. Workers endured the horrors of rockslides, explosions, and a yellow fever epidemic that almost halted the project. But American observers hailed the canal as a triumph of modern science and engineering—especially in medical efforts to eradicate the yellow fever and malaria that had stymied earlier canal-building efforts. Theodore Roosevelt insisted on making a personal visit in November 1906. "He made the men that were building there feel like they were special people," recalled the descendant of one canal worker. "Give them pride of what they were doing for the United States." Library of Congress.

the United States a commanding position in the Western Hemisphere.

Meanwhile, arguing that instability invited European intervention, Roosevelt announced in 1904 that the United States would police all of the Caribbean (Map 21.2). This so-called **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine actually turned that doctrine upside down: instead of guaranteeing that the United States would protect its neighbors from Europe and help preserve their independence, it asserted the United States's unrestricted right to regulate Caribbean affairs. The Roosevelt Corollary was not a treaty but a unilateral declaration sanctioned only by America's military and economic might. Citing it, the United States intervened regularly in Caribbean and Central American nations over the next three decades.

Entering office in 1913, Democratic president Woodrow Wilson criticized his predecessors' foreign policy. He pledged that the United States would "never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest." This stance appealed to anti-imperialists in the Democratic base, including longtime supporters of William Jennings Bryan. But the new president soon showed that, when American interests called for it, his actions were not so different from those of Roosevelt and Taft.

Since the 1870s, Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz had created a friendly climate for American companies that

purchased Mexican plantations, mines, and oil fields. By the early 1900s, however, Díaz feared the extraordinary power of these foreign interests and began to nationalize — reclaim — key resources. American investors who faced the loss of Mexican holdings began to back Francisco Madero, an advocate of constitutional government who was friendly to U.S. interests. In 1911, Madero forced Díaz to resign and proclaimed himself president. Thousands of poor Mexicans took this opportunity to mobilize rural armies and demand more radical change. Madero's position was weak, and several strongmen sought to overthrow him; in 1913, he was deposed and murdered by a leading general. Immediately, several other military men vied for control.

Wilson, fearing that the unrest threatened U.S. interests, decided to intervene in the emerging Mexican Revolution. On the pretext of a minor insult to the navy, he ordered U.S. occupation of the port of Veracruz on April 21, 1914, at the cost of 19 American and 126 Mexican lives. Though the intervention helped Venustiano Carranza, the revolutionary leader whom Wilson most favored, Carranza protested it as illegitimate meddling in Mexican affairs. Carranza's forces, after nearly engaging the Americans themselves, entered Mexico City in triumph a few months later. Though Wilson had supported this outcome, his interference caused lasting mistrust.



### MAP 21.2

#### Policeman of the Caribbean

After the War of 1898, the United States vigorously asserted its interest in the affairs of its neighbors to the south. As the record of interventions shows, the United States truly became the “policeman” of the Caribbean and Central America.





### Pancho Villa, 1914

This photograph captures Mexican general Pancho Villa at the height of his power, at the head of Venustiano Carranza's northern army in 1914. The next year, he broke with Carranza and, among other desperate tactics, began to attack Americans. Though he had been much admired in the United States, Villa instantly became America's foremost enemy. He evaded General John J. Pershing's punitive expedition of 1916, however, demonstrating the difficulties even modern armies could have against a guerrilla foe who knows his home terrain and can melt away into a sympathetic population. Brown Brothers.

Carranza's victory did not subdue revolutionary activity in Mexico. In 1916, General Francisco "Pancho" Villa — a thug to his enemies, but a heroic Robin Hood to many poor Mexicans — crossed the U.S.-Mexico border, killing sixteen American civilians and raiding the town of Columbus, New Mexico. Wilson sent 11,000 troops to pursue Villa, a force that soon resembled an army of occupation in northern Mexico. Mexican public opinion demanded withdrawal as armed clashes broke out between U.S. and Mexican troops. At the brink of war, both governments backed off and U.S. forces departed. But policymakers in Washington had shown their intention to police not only the Caribbean and Central America but also Mexico when they deemed it necessary.

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## The United States in World War I

While the United States staked claims around the globe, a war of unprecedented scale was brewing in Europe. The military buildup of Germany, a rising power, terrified its neighbors. To the east, the disintegrating Ottoman Empire was losing its grip on the Balkans. Out of these conflicts, two rival power blocs emerged: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) and Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia). Within each alliance, national governments pursued their own interests but were bound to one another by both public and secret treaties.

Americans had no obvious stake in these developments. In 1905, when Germany suddenly challenged French control of Morocco, Theodore Roosevelt arranged an international conference to defuse the crisis. Germany got a few concessions, but France — with British backing — retained Morocco. Accomplished in the same year that Roosevelt brokered peace between Russia and Japan, the conference seemed another diplomatic triumph. One U.S. official boasted that America had kept peace by "the power of our detachment." It was not to last.

### From Neutrality to War

The spark that ignited World War I came in the Balkans, where Austria-Hungary and Russia competed for control. Austria's 1908 seizure of Ottoman provinces, including Bosnia, angered the nearby Slavic nation of Serbia and its ally, Russia. Serbian revolutionaries recruited Bosnian Slavs to resist Austrian rule. In June 1914, in the city of Sarajevo, university student Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne.

Like dominos falling, the system of European alliances pushed all the powers into war. Austria-Hungary blamed Serbia for the assassination and declared war on July 28. Russia, tied by secret treaty to Serbia, mobilized against Austria-Hungary. This prompted Germany to declare war on Russia and its ally France. As a preparation for attacking France, Germany launched a brutal invasion of the neutral country of Belgium, which caused Great Britain to declare war on Germany.

Within a week, most of Europe was at war, with the major Allies—Great Britain, France, and Russia—confronting the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Two military zones emerged. On the Western Front, Germany battled the British and French; on the Eastern Front, Germany and Austria-Hungary fought Russia. Because most of the warring nations held colonial empires, the conflict soon spread to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

The so-called Great War wreaked terrible devastation. New technology, some of it devised in the United States, made warfare deadlier than ever before. Every soldier carried a long-range, high-velocity rifle that could hit a target at 1,000 yards—a vast technical advancement over the 300-yard range of rifles used in the U.S. Civil War. The machine gun was even more deadly. Its American-born inventor, Hiram Maxim, had moved to Britain in the 1880s to follow a friend's advice: "If you want to make your fortune, invent something which will allow those fool Europeans to kill each other more quickly." New technologies helped soldiers in defensive positions; once advancing Germans ran into French fortifications, they stalled. Across a swath of Belgium and northeastern France, millions of soldiers on both sides hunkered down in fortified trenches. During 1916, repeatedly trying to break through French lines at Verdun, Germans suffered 450,000 casualties. The French fared even worse, with 550,000 dead or wounded. It was all to no avail. From 1914 to 1918, the Western Front barely moved.

At the war's outbreak, President Wilson called on Americans to be "neutral in fact as well as in name." If the United States remained out of the conflict, Wilson reasoned, he could influence the postwar settlement, much as Theodore Roosevelt had done after previous conflicts. Even if Wilson had wished to, it would have been nearly impossible in 1914 to unite Americans behind the Allies. Many Irish immigrants viewed Britain as an enemy—based on its continued occupation of Ireland—while millions of German Americans maintained ties to their homeland. Progressive-minded Republicans, such as Senator Robert La Follette of Wisconsin, vehemently opposed taking sides in a European fight, as did socialists, who condemned the war as a conflict among greedy capitalist empires. Two giants of American industry, Andrew Carnegie and Henry Ford, opposed the war. In December 1915, Ford sent a hundred men and women to Europe on a "peace ship" to urge an end to the war. "It would be folly," declared the *New York Sun*, "for the country to sacrifice itself to . . . the clash of ancient hatreds which is urging the Old World to destruction."



### Flying Aces

As millions of men suffered and died in the trenches during the Great War, a few hundred pilots did battle in the sky. America's best-known ace pilot was Eddie Rickenbacker (right) of the 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron — a pilot who was credited with shooting down twenty-six enemy aircraft. The 94th was known as the hat-in-the-ring squadron, after the American custom by which a combatant threw his hat into the ring as an invitation to fight. Note the hat insignia on the plane. © Bettmann/Corbis.

**The Struggle to Remain Neutral** The United States, wishing to trade with all the warring nations, might have remained neutral if Britain had not held commanding power at sea. In September 1914, the British imposed a naval blockade on the Central Powers to cut off vital supplies of food and military equipment. Though the Wilson administration protested this infringement of the rights of neutral carriers, commerce with the Allies more than made up for the economic loss. Trade with Britain and France grew fourfold over the next two years, to \$3.2 billion in 1916;

by 1917, U.S. banks had lent the Allies \$2.5 billion. In contrast, American trade and loans to Germany stood then at a mere \$56 million. This imbalance undercut U.S. neutrality. If Germany won and Britain and France defaulted on their debts, American companies would suffer catastrophic losses.

To challenge the British navy, Germany launched a devastating new weapon, the U-boat (short for *Unterseeboot*, “undersea boat,” or submarine). In April 1915, Germany issued a warning that all ships flying flags of Britain or its allies were liable to destruction. A few weeks later, a U-boat torpedoed the British luxury liner *Lusitania* off the coast of Ireland, killing 1,198 people, including 128 Americans. The attack on the passenger ship (which was later revealed to have been carrying munitions) incensed Americans. The following year, in an agreement known as the Sussex pledge, Germany agreed not to target passenger liners or merchant ships unless an inspection showed the latter carried weapons. But the *Lusitania* sinking prompted Wilson to reconsider his options. After quietly trying to mediate in Europe but finding neither side interested in peace, he endorsed a \$1 billion U.S. military buildup.

American public opinion still ran strongly against entering the war, a fact that shaped the election of 1916. Republicans rejected the belligerently prowar Theodore Roosevelt in favor of Supreme Court justice Charles Evans Hughes, a progressive former governor of New York. Democrats renominated Wilson, who campaigned on his domestic record and as the president who “kept us out of war.” Wilson eked out a narrow victory; winning California by a mere 4,000 votes, he secured a slim majority in the electoral college.

**America Enters the War** Despite Wilson’s campaign slogan, events pushed him toward war. In February 1917, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, a decision dictated by the impasse on the Western Front. In response, Wilson broke off diplomatic relations with Germany. A few weeks later, newspapers published an intercepted dispatch from German foreign secretary Arthur Zimmermann to his minister in

Mexico. The **Zimmermann telegram** urged Mexico to join the Central Powers, promising that if the United States entered the war, Germany would help Mexico recover “the lost territory of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.” With Pancho Villa’s border raids still fresh in Americans’ minds,

this threat jolted public opinion. Meanwhile, German U-boats attacked U.S. ships without warning, sinking three on March 18 alone.

On April 2, 1917, Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war. He argued that Germany had trampled on American rights and imperiled U.S. trade and citizens’ lives. “We desire no conquest,” Wilson declared, “no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make.” Reflecting his progressive idealism, Wilson promised that American involvement would make the world “safe for democracy.” On April 6, the United States declared war on Germany. Reflecting the nation’s divided views, the vote was far from unanimous. Six senators and fifty members of the House voted against entry, including Representative Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to Congress. “You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake,” Rankin said. “I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war.”

## “Over There”

To Americans, Europe seemed a great distance away. Many assumed the United States would simply provide munitions and economic aid. “Good Lord,” exclaimed one U.S. senator to a Wilson administration official, “you’re not going to send soldiers over there, are you?” But when General John J. Pershing asked how the United States could best support the Allies, the French commander put it bluntly: “Men, men, and more men.” Amid war fever, thousands of young men prepared to go “over there,” in the words of George M. Cohan’s popular song: “Make your Daddy glad to have had such a lad. / Tell your sweetheart not to pine, / To be proud her boy’s in line.”

**Americans Join the War** In 1917, the U.S. Army numbered fewer than 200,000 soldiers; needing more men, Congress instituted a military draft in May 1917. In contrast to the Civil War, when resistance was common, conscription went smoothly, partly because local, civilian-run draft boards played a central role in the new system. Still, draft registration demonstrated government’s increasing power over ordinary citizens. On a single day—June 5, 1917—more than 9.5 million men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty registered at local voting precincts for possible military service.

President Wilson chose General Pershing to head the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), which had to be trained, outfitted, and carried across the submarine-plagued Atlantic. This required safer shipping. When

### IDENTIFY CAUSES

What factors led the United States to enter World War I, despite the desire of so many Americans, including the president, to stay out of the war?

### Safe Sex, Vintage 1919

To teach young American men how to avoid venereal diseases, the War Department used posters, pep talks, and films. There were no effective treatments for venereal infections until 1928, when Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, and so the army urged soldiers to refrain from visiting prostitutes or to use condoms. *Fit to Win* starred handsome Ray McKee, who had already appeared in eighty films, and was directed by E. H. Griffith, who would go on to direct sixty Hollywood films between 1920 and 1946. Social Welfare History Archives Center, University of Minnesota/Picture Research Consultants & Archives.



the United States entered the war, German U-boats were sinking 900,000 tons of Allied ships each month. By sending merchant and troop ships in armed convoys, the U.S. Navy cut that monthly rate to 400,000 tons by the end of 1917. With trench warfare grinding on, Allied commanders pleaded for American soldiers to fill their depleted units, but Pershing waited until the AEF reached full strength. As late as May 1918, the brunt of the fighting fell to the French and British.

The Allies' burden increased when the Eastern Front collapsed following the Bolshevik (Communist) Revolution in Russia in November 1917. To consolidate power at home, the new Bolshevik government, led by Vladimir Lenin, sought peace with the Central Powers. In a 1918 treaty, Russia surrendered its claims over vast parts of its territories in exchange for peace. Released from war against Germany, the Bolsheviks turned their attention to a civil war at home. Terrified by communism, Japan and several Allied countries, including the United States, later sent troops to fight the Bolsheviks and aid forces loyal to the deposed tsar. But after a four-year civil war, Lenin's forces established full control over Russia and reclaimed Ukraine and other former possessions.

Peace with Russia freed Germany to launch a major offensive on the Western Front. By May 1918, German troops had advanced to within 50 miles of Paris. Pershing at last committed about 60,000 U.S. soldiers to support the French defense. With American soldiers engaged in massive numbers, Allied forces brought the Germans to a halt in July; by September, they forced a retreat. Pershing then pitted more than one million

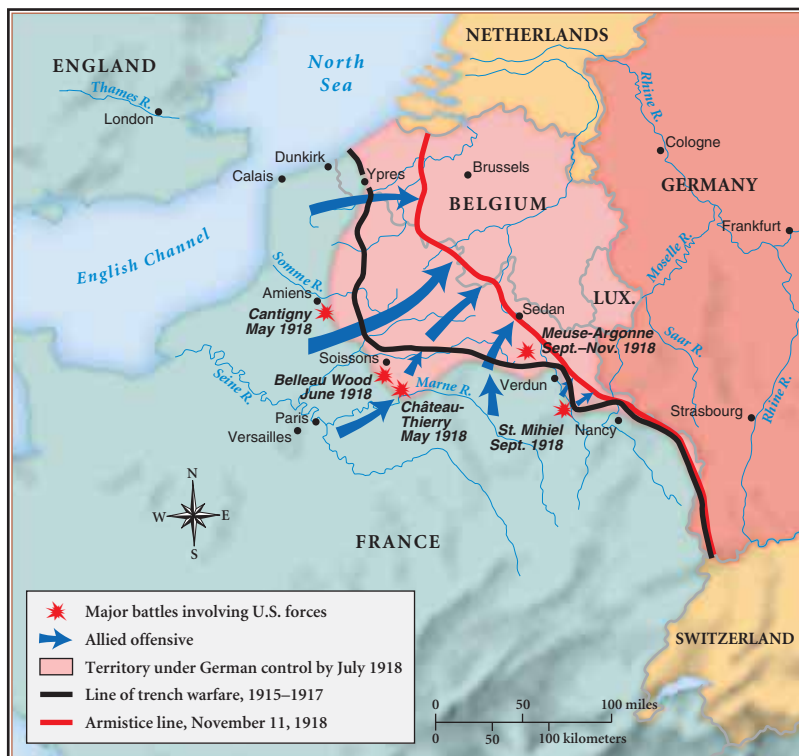
American soldiers against an outnumbered and exhausted German army in the Argonne forest. By early November, this attack broke German defenses at a crucial rail hub, Sedan. The cost was high: 26,000 Americans killed and 95,000 wounded (Map 21.3). But the flood of U.S. troops and supplies determined the outcome. Recognizing inevitable defeat and facing popular uprisings at home, Germany signed an armistice on November 11, 1918. The Great War was over.

**The American Fighting Force** By the end of World War I, almost 4 million American men—popularly known as “doughboys”—wore U.S. uniforms, as did several thousand female nurses. The recruits reflected America's heterogeneity: one-fifth had been born outside the United States, and soldiers spoke forty-nine different languages. Though ethnic diversity worried some observers, most predicted that military service would promote Americanization.

Over 400,000 African American men enlisted, accounting for 13 percent of the armed forces. Their wartime experiences were often grim: serving in segregated units, they were given the most menial tasks. Racial discrimination hampered military efficiency and provoked violence at several camps. The worst incident occurred in August 1917, when, after suffering a string of racial attacks, black members of the 24th Infantry's Third Battalion rioted in Houston, killing 15 white civilians and police officers. The army tried 118

### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

How did U.S. military entry into World War I affect the course of the war?

**MAP 21.3****U.S. Participation on the Western Front, 1918**

When American troops reached the European front in significant numbers in 1918, the Allies and Central Powers had been fighting a deadly war of attrition for almost four years. The influx of American troops and supplies helped break the stalemate. Successful offensive maneuvers by the American Expeditionary Force included those at Belleau Wood and Château-Thierry and the Meuse-Argonne campaign.

of the soldiers in military courts for mutiny and riot, hanged 19, and sentenced 63 to life in prison.

Unlike African Americans, American Indians served in integrated combat units. Racial stereotypes about Native Americans' prowess as warriors enhanced their military reputations, but it also prompted officers to assign them hazardous duties as scouts and snipers. About 13,000, or 25 percent, of the adult male American Indian population served during the war; roughly 5 percent died, compared to 2 percent for the military as a whole.

Most American soldiers escaped the horrors of sustained trench warfare. Still, during the brief period of U.S. participation, over 50,000 servicemen died in action; another 63,000 died from disease, mainly the devastating influenza pandemic that began early in 1918 and, over the next two years, killed 50 million people worldwide. The nation's military deaths, though substantial, were only a tenth as many as the 500,000 American civilians who died of this terrible epidemic—not to mention the staggering losses of Europeans in the war (America Compared, p. 689).

## War on the Home Front

In the United States, opponents of the war were a minority. Helping the Allies triggered an economic boom that benefitted farmers and working people.

Many progressives also supported the war, hoping Wilson's ideals and wartime patriotism would renew Americans' attention to reform. But the war bitterly disappointed them. Rather than enhancing democracy, it chilled the political climate as government agencies tried to enforce "100 percent loyalty."

**Mobilizing the Economy** American businesses made big bucks from World War I. As grain, weapons, and manufactured goods flowed to Britain and France, the United States became a creditor nation. Moreover, as the war drained British financial reserves, U.S. banks provided capital for investments around the globe.

Government powers expanded during wartime, with new federal agencies overseeing almost every part of the economy. The **War Industries Board (WIB)**, established in July 1917, directed military production. After a fumbling start that showed the limits of voluntarism, the Wilson administration reorganized the board and placed Bernard Baruch, a Wall Street financier and superb administrator, at its head. Under his direction, the WIB allocated scarce resources among industries, ordered factories to convert to war production, set prices, and standardized procedures. Though he could compel compliance, Baruch preferred to win voluntary cooperation. A man of immense charm, he usually succeeded—helped by the lucrative military contracts at his disposal. Despite higher taxes, corporate



## The Human Cost of World War I

The United States played a crucial role in financing World War I. In its war-related expenditures, totaling \$22.6 billion, the United States ranked fourth among all nations that participated, ranking behind only Germany (\$37.7 billion), Britain (\$35.3 billion), and France (\$24.3 billion). In human terms, however, the U.S. role was different. Note that the figures below for military casualties are rough estimates. Civilian casualties are even more uncertain: the exact number of Russians, Italians, Romanians, Serbians, and others who died will never be known.

TABLE 21.1

World War I Casualties

Country	Total Population	Military Killed or Missing	Total Civilian Deaths
Germany	67,000,000	2,037,000	700,000
Russia	167,000,000	1,800,000	2,000,000
France	39,000,000	1,385,300	40,000
Austria-Hungary	49,900,000	1,016,200	unknown
United Kingdom	46,400,000	702,410	1,386
Italy	35,000,000	462,400	unknown
Turkey	21,300,000	236,000	2,000,000*
Romania	7,510,000	219,800	265,000–500,000
Serbia	5,000,000	127,500	600,000
Bulgaria	5,500,000	77,450	275,000
India	316,000,000	62,060	negligible
Canada	7,400,000	58,990	negligible
Australia	4,872,000	53,560	negligible
United States	92,000,000	51,822	negligible

\*Mostly Armenians

### QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. What does this data suggest about the comparative role of the United States in World War I? The experience of its soldiers? The war's impact on civilians in each nation?
2. Which other countries made contributions similar to that of the United States, and why?

profits soared, as military production sustained a boom that continued until 1920.

Some federal agencies took dramatic measures. The **National War Labor Board (NWLB)**, formed in April 1918, established an eight-hour day for war workers with time-and-a-half pay for overtime, and it endorsed equal pay for women. In return for a no-strike pledge, the NWLB also supported workers' right to organize — a major achievement for the labor movement. The Fuel

Administration, meanwhile, introduced daylight saving time to conserve coal and oil. In December 1917, the Railroad Administration seized control of the nation's hodgepodge of private railroads, seeking to facilitate rapid movement of troops and equipment — an experiment that had, at best, mixed results.

Perhaps the most successful wartime agency was the Food Administration, created in August 1917 and led by engineer Herbert Hoover. With the slogan “Food



### Fighting the Flu

Influenza traversed the globe in 1918–1919, becoming a pandemic that killed as many as 50 million people. According to recent research, the flu began as a virus native to wild birds and then mutated into a form that passed easily from one human to another. In the United States, one-fifth of the population was infected and more than 500,000 civilians died—ten times the number of American soldiers who died in combat during World War I. The flu virus spread with frightening speed, and the epidemic strained the resources of a U.S. public health system already fully mobilized for the war effort. In October 1918 alone, 200,000 Americans died. This photo shows doctors, army officers, and reporters who donned surgical masks and gowns before touring hospitals that treated influenza patients. © Bettmann/Corbis.

will win the war,” Hoover convinced farmers to nearly double their acreage of grain. This increase allowed a threefold rise in food exports to Europe. Among citizens, the Food Administration mobilized a “spirit of self-denial” rather than mandatory rationing. Female volunteers went from door to door to persuade housekeepers to observe “Wheatless” Mondays and “Porkless” Thursdays. Hoover, a Republican, emerged from the war as one of the nation’s most admired public figures.

**Promoting National Unity** Suppressing wartime dissent became a near obsession for President Wilson. In April 1917, Wilson formed the **Committee on Public**

**Information** (CPI), a government propaganda agency headed by journalist George Creel. Professing lofty goals—educating citizens about democracy, assimilating immigrants, and ending the isolation of rural life—the committee set out to mold Americans into “one white-hot mass” of war patriotism. The CPI touched the lives of nearly all civilians. It distributed seventy-five million pieces of literature and enlisted thousands of volunteers—**Four-Minute Men**—to deliver short prowar speeches at movie theaters.

The CPI also pressured immigrant groups to become “One Hundred Percent Americans.” German Americans bore the brunt of this campaign (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 692). With posters exhorting



### Selling Liberty Bonds: Two Appeals

Once the United States entered the Great War, government officials sought to enlist all Americans in the battle against the Central Powers. They carefully crafted patriotic advertising campaigns that urged Americans to buy bonds, conserve food, enlist in the military, and support the war effort in many other ways. One of these posters appeals to recent immigrants, reminding them of their debt to American Liberty. The other shows the overtly anti-German prejudices of many war appeals: it depicts the “Hun,” a slur for a German soldier, with bloody hands and bayonet. Library of Congress.

citizens to root out German spies, a spirit of conformity pervaded the home front. A quasi-vigilante group, the American Protective League, mobilized about 250,000 “agents,” furnished them with badges issued by the Justice Department, and trained them to spy on neighbors and coworkers. In 1918, members of the league led violent raids against draft evaders and peace activists. Government propaganda helped rouse a nativist hysteria that lingered into the 1920s.

Congress also passed new laws to curb dissent. Among them was the **Sedition Act of 1918**, which prohibited any words or behavior that might “incite, provoke, or encourage resistance to the United States, or promote the cause of its enemies.” Because this and an earlier Espionage Act (1917) defined treason loosely, they led to the conviction of more than a thousand

people. The Justice Department prosecuted members of the Industrial Workers of the World, whose opposition to militarism threatened to disrupt war production of lumber and copper. When a Quaker pacifist teacher in New York City refused to teach a prowar curriculum, she was fired. Socialist Party leader Eugene V. Debs was sentenced to ten years in jail for the crime of arguing that wealthy capitalists had started the conflict and were forcing workers to fight.

Federal courts mostly supported the acts. In *Schenck v. United States* (1919), the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of a socialist who was jailed for circulating pamphlets that urged army draftees to resist induction. The justices followed this with a similar decision in *Abrams v. United States* (1919), ruling that authorities could prosecute speech they believed to



# THINKING LIKE A HISTORIAN



## German Americans in World War I

Before 1917, Americans expressed diverse opinions about the war in Europe. After the United States joined the Allies, however, German Americans' loyalty became suspect. German immigrant men who were not U.S. citizens were required to register as "alien enemies," and government propaganda fueled fear of alleged German spies. In April 1918 in Collinsville, Illinois, a German-born socialist named Robert Prager—who had sought U.S. citizenship and tried to enlist in the navy—was lynched by drunken miners. The documents below shed light on German Americans' wartime experiences.

1. **Advertisement, *Fatherland*, 1915.** This ad appeared in a political journal for German Americans. The translation of the songs offered on this recording are "Germany, Germany Above All" and "Precious Homeland."

Patriotic German Music on Columbia Double-Disc Records

E2039 Deutschland, Deutschland über alles. . . .

10 in. — 75¢ Teure Heimat. . . .

COLUMBIA GRAMOPHONE COMPANY . . .  
DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

2. **C. J. Hexamer, speech, Milwaukee, 1915.** This address by a German American community leader was widely cited during a 1918 investigation by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Whoever casts his Germanism from him like an old glove, is not worthy to be spit upon. . . . We have long suffered the preachment that "you Germans must allow yourselves to be assimilated, you must merge more in the American people;" but no one will ever find us prepared to step down to a lesser culture. No, we have made it our aim to elevate the others to us. . . . Be strong, and German. Remember, you German pioneers, that we are giving to this people the best the earth affords, the benefits of Germanic *kultur*.

3. **Sign in a Chicago park, 1917.**



Chicago History Museum.

4. **"Lager Uber Alles" cartoon, 1918.** This cartoon was part of an Ohio Anti-Saloon League referendum campaign to prohibit liquor sales. Ohio voters had rejected such a measure in 1915 and 1917, but in 1918 a majority voted for prohibition. Many U.S. breweries, such as Anheuser-Busch and Pabst, were owned by German Americans. "Hun" was an epithet for Germans; "Lager (Beer) Uber Alles" refers to the German national anthem cited in source 1.



Courtesy of The Ohio State University Department of History.

**5. James W. Gerard, radio address, 1917.** *Gerard was U.S. ambassador to Great Britain.*

The great majority of American citizens of German descent have, in this great crisis in our history, shown themselves splendidly loyal to our flag. Everyone has a right to sympathize with any warring nation. But now that we are in the war there are only two sides, and the time has come when every citizen must declare himself American — or traitor!

. . . The Foreign Minister of Germany once said to me “. . . we have in your country 500,000 German reservists who will rise in arms against your government if you dare to make a move against Germany.” Well, I told him that that might be so, but that we had 500,001 lampposts in this country, and that that was where the reservists would be hanging the day after they tried to rise. And if there are any German-Americans here who are so ungrateful for all the benefits they have received that they are still for the Kaiser, there is only one thing to do with them. And that is to hog-tie them, give them back the wooden shoes and the rags they landed in, and ship them back. . . . There is no animal that bites and kicks and squeals . . . equal to a fat German-American, if you commenced to tie him up and told him that he was on his way back to the Kaiser.

**6. Actions by New York *liederkranz* reported in *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 16, 1918.** *Liederkranz, or singing societies, played a vital role in German immigrant communities. Before World War I the city of Wheeling, West Virginia, counted eleven such societies, with names like Harmonie, Germania, and Mozart. By 1918 most liederkranz had vanished. New York City's was one of the few that did not.*

Members of the [New York] *Liederkranz*, an organization founded seventy-one years ago by Germans . . . met tonight and placed on record their unqualified Americanism.

. . . They declared English the official language of the organization, and for the first time in years the sound of an enemy tongue will not be heard in the club's halls. Likewise they reiterated their offer to turn the buildings over to the government as a hospital if it were necessary.

**7. Lola Gamble Clyde, 1976 interview on life in Idaho during World War I.** *In the 1970s, historians interviewed residents of rural Latah County, Idaho, about their experiences in World War I. Frank*

*Brocke, a farmer, recalled that neighbors on their joint telephone line would slam down the phone when his mother or sister spoke German. “We had to be so careful,” he said.*

I remember when they smashed out store windows at Uniontown that said [sauer]kraut. . . . Nobody would eat kraut. Throw the Kraut out, they were Germans. . . . Even the great Williamson store, he went in and gathered up everything that was made in Germany, and had a big bonfire out in the middle of the street, you know. Although he had many good German friends all over the county that had helped make him rich. . . . And if it was a German name — we'll just change our name. . . . There were some [German American] boys that got draft deferments. . . . Some of them said that their fathers were sick and dying, and their father had so much land they had to stay home and farm it for them. . . . [Local men] tarred and feathered some of them. Some of them as old men dying still resented and remembered.

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Sources: (1) Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 109; (2) *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, 65th Congress, Second Session* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1918), 300; (3) Gerard speech, transcript and recording, at Library of Congress American Memory: [memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhhtml/nforSpeakers01.html](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhhtml/nforSpeakers01.html); (4) *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 16, 1918; (5) Oral histories of Idaho residents at GMU History Matters, [historymatters.gmu.edu/d/2/](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/2/). Excerpt courtesy of Latah County Historical Society.

### ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. How did conditions change for German Americans between 1915 and 1918?
2. According to these sources, what aspects of German American culture did other Americans find threatening? What forms did anti-German hostility take?
3. Compare the sources that offer a German American perspective (sources 1, 2, 6, and 7) to those that represent a threat to German Americans' way of life (3, 4, 5). How did German Americans respond to growing anti-German sentiment in this period?

### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

World War I heightened anxieties about who was a “true” American. What groups were singled out in particular and why? What continuities do you see between these fears over “hyphenated” identities and controversies in earlier eras of U.S. history? Today?



### The Labor Agent in the South

This evocative painting from 1940 is part of the famous Great Migration series by African American painter Jacob Lawrence. It shows how many African American workers found a route to opportunity: northern manufacturers, facing severe wartime labor shortages, sent agents to the South to recruit workers. Agents often arranged loans to pay for train fare and other travel expenses; once laborers were settled and employed in the North, they repaid the loans from their wages. Here, a line of men waits for the agent to record their names in his open ledger. The bare tree in the background suggests the barrenness of economic prospects for impoverished rural blacks in the South; it also hints at the threat of lynching and racial violence. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY.

pose “a clear and present danger to the safety of the country.” In an important dissent, however, Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and Louis Brandeis objected to the *Abrams* decision. Holmes’s probing questions about the definition of “clear and present danger” helped launch twentieth-century legal battles over free speech and civil liberties.

**Great Migrations** World War I created tremendous economic opportunities at home. Jobs in war industries drew thousands of people to the cities. With so many men in uniform, jobs in heavy industry opened for the first time to African Americans, accelerating the pace of black migration from South to North. During World War I, more than 400,000 African Americans moved to such cities as St. Louis, Chicago, New York, and Detroit, in what became known as the **Great Migration**. The rewards were great, and taking war jobs could be a source of patriotic pride. “If it hadn’t been for the negro,” a Carnegie Steel manager later recalled, “we could hardly have carried on our operations.”

Blacks in the North encountered discrimination in jobs, housing, and education. But in the first flush of opportunity, most celebrated their escape from the repressive racism and poverty of the South. “It is a matter of a dollar with me and I feel that God made the path and I am walking therein,” one woman reported to her sister back home. “Tell your husband work is plentiful here.” “I just begin to feel like a man,” wrote another migrant to a friend in Mississippi. “My children are going to the same school with the whites. . . . Will vote the next election and there isn’t any ‘yes sir’ and ‘no sir’ — it’s all yes and no and Sam and Bill.”

Wartime labor shortages prompted Mexican Americans in the Southwest to leave farmwork for urban industrial jobs. Continued political instability in Mexico, combined with increased demand for farmworkers in the United States, also encouraged more Mexicans to move across the border. Between 1917 and 1920, at least 100,000 Mexicans entered the United States; despite discrimination, large numbers stayed. If asked why, many might have echoed the words of an African American man who left New Orleans for Chicago: they were going “north for a better chance.” The same was true for Puerto Ricans such as Jesús Colón, who also confronted racism. “I came to New York to poor pay, long hours, terrible working conditions, discrimination even in the slums and in the poor paying factories,” Colón recalled, “where the bosses very dexterously pitted Italians against Puerto Ricans and Puerto Ricans against American Negroes and Jews.”

Women were the largest group to take advantage of wartime job opportunities. About 1 million women joined the paid labor force for the first time, while another 8 million gave up low-wage service jobs for higher-paying industrial work. Americans soon got used to the sight of female streetcar conductors, train engineers, and defense workers. Though most people expected these jobs to return to men in peacetime, the



### Women Riveters at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, 1919

With men at the front, women took many new jobs during World War I—as mail carriers, police officers, and farm laborers who joined the Women’s Land Army. African American women, generally limited by white prejudice to jobs in domestic service and agriculture, found that the war opened up new opportunities and better wages in industry. When the war ended, women usually lost jobs deemed to be men’s work. In 1919, however, these women were still hard at work in the Puget Sound Navy Yard, near Seattle. What clues indicate their attitudes toward their work, and toward one another? National Archives.

war created a new comfort level with women’s employment outside the home—and with women’s suffrage.

**Women’s Voting Rights** The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) threw the support of its 2 million members wholeheartedly into the war effort. Its president, Carrie Chapman Catt, declared that women had to prove their patriotism to win the ballot. NAWSA members in thousands of communities promoted food conservation and distributed emergency relief through organizations such as the Red Cross.

Alice Paul and the **National Woman’s Party** (NWP) took a more confrontational approach. Paul was a Quaker who had worked in the settlement movement and earned a PhD in political science. Finding as a NAWSA lobbyist that congressmen dismissed her, Paul founded the NWP in 1916. Inspired by militant British suffragists, the group began in July 1917 to picket the

White House. Standing silently with their banners, Paul and other NWP activists faced arrest for obstructing traffic and were sentenced to seven months in jail. They protested by going on a hunger strike, which prison authorities met with forced feeding. Public shock at the women’s treatment drew attention to the suffrage cause.

Impressed by NAWSA’s patriotism and worried by the NWP’s militancy, the antisuffrage Wilson reversed his position. In January 1918, he urged support for woman suffrage as a “war measure.” The constitutional amendment quickly passed the House of Representatives; it took eighteen months to get through the Senate and another year to win ratification by the states. On August 26, 1920, when Tennessee voted for ratification, the Nineteenth

### EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

What were the different effects of African Americans’, Mexican Americans’, and women’s civilian mobilization during World War I?



**Wagon Decorated for the Labor Day Parade, San Diego, California, 1910**

As the woman suffrage movement grew stronger in the years before and during World War I, working-class women played increasingly prominent and visible roles in its leadership. This Labor Day parade float, created by the Women's Union Label League of San Diego, showed that activists championed equal pay for women in the workplace as well as women's voting rights. "Union Label Leagues" urged middle-class shoppers to purchase only clothing with a union label, certifying that the item had been manufactured under safe conditions and the workers who made it had received a fair wage. San Diego Historical Society, Title Insurance Trust Collection.

Amendment became law. The state thus joined Texas as one of two ex-Confederate states to ratify it. In most parts of the South, the measure meant that *white* women began to vote: in this Jim Crow era, African American women's voting rights remained restricted along with men's.

In explaining suffragists' victory, historians have debated the relative effectiveness of Catt's patriotic strategy and Paul's militant protests. Both played a role in persuading Wilson and Congress to act, but neither might have worked without the extraordinary impact of the Great War. Across the globe, before 1914, the only places where women had full suffrage were New Zealand, Australia, Finland, and Norway. After World War I, many nations moved to enfranchise women. The new Soviet Union acted first, in 1917, with Great Britain and Canada following in 1918; by 1920, the measure had passed in Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary as well as the United States. (Major exceptions were France and Italy, where

women did not gain voting rights until after World War II, and Switzerland, which held out until 1971.) Thus, while World War I introduced modern horrors on the battlefield—machine guns and poison gas—it brought some positive results at home: economic opportunity and women's political participation.

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## Catastrophe at Versailles

The idealistic Wilson argued that no victor should be declared after World War I: only "peace among equals" could last. Having won at an incredible price, Britain and France showed zero interest in such a plan. But the devastation wrought by the war created popular pressure for a just and enduring outcome. Wilson scored a diplomatic victory at the peace conference, held at Versailles, near Paris, in 1919, when the Allies chose to base the talks on his **Fourteen Points**, a blueprint for



### “Peace and Future Cannon Fodder”

This scathing cartoon, published in 1920, was drawn by Australian-born artist Will Dyson and published in a British magazine. It shows the “Big Four” power brokers at Versailles—from left to right, Vittorio Orlando of Italy, David Lloyd George of Britain, Georges Clemenceau of France, and Woodrow Wilson of the United States. Clemenceau, who was nicknamed “The Tiger,” turns his head and comments on the crying child. Even at the time, astute observers such as Dyson argued that the treaty might have horrific consequences, particularly in the brutal conditions it imposed on Germany. Dyson sketched “1940 Class” over the head of the child. The young children of 1920 grew up to inherit the consequences of the Versailles treaty, which contributed to the rise of fascism, Nazism, and World War II. *British Daily Herald*, May 13, 1919.

peace that he had presented a year earlier in a speech to Congress.

Wilson’s Points embodied an important strand in progressivism. They called for open diplomacy; “absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas”; arms reduction; removal of trade barriers; and national self-determination for peoples in the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and German empires. Essential to Wilson’s vision was the creation of an international regulatory body, eventually called the **League of Nations**, that would guarantee each country’s “independence and territorial integrity.” The League would mediate disputes, supervise arms reduction, and—according to its crucial Article X—curb aggressor nations through

collective military action. Wilson hoped the League would “end all wars.” But his ideals had marked limits, and in negotiations he confronted harsh realities.

## The Fate of Wilson’s Ideas

The peace conference included ten thousand representatives from around the globe, but leaders of France, Britain, and the United States dominated the proceedings. When the Japanese delegation proposed a declaration for equal treatment of all races, the Allies rejected it. Similarly, the Allies ignored a global Pan-African Congress, organized by W. E. B. Du Bois and other black leaders; they snubbed Arab representatives who had been military allies during the war. Even Italy’s prime minister—included among the influential “Big Four,” because in 1915 Italy had switched to the Allied side—withdrawn from the conference, aggrieved at the way British and French leaders marginalized him. The Allies excluded two key players: Russia, because they distrusted its communist leaders, and Germany, because they planned to dictate terms to their defeated foe. For Wilson’s “peace among equals,” it was a terrible start.

Prime Minister David Lloyd George of Britain and Premier Georges Clemenceau of France imposed harsh punishments on Germany. Unbeknownst to others at the time, they had already made secret agreements to divide up Germany’s African colonies and take them as spoils of war. At Versailles, they also forced the defeated nation to pay \$33 billion in reparations and surrender coal supplies, merchant ships, valuable patents, and even territory along the French border. These terms caused keen resentment and economic hardship in Germany, and over the following two decades they helped lead to World War II.

Given these conditions, it is remarkable that Wilson influenced the **Treaty of Versailles** as much as he did. He intervened repeatedly to soften conditions imposed on Germany. In accordance with the Fourteen Points, he worked with the other Allies to fashion nine new nations, stretching from the Baltic to the Mediterranean (Map 21.4). These were intended as a buffer to protect Western Europe from communist Russia; the plan also embodied Wilson’s principle of self-determination for European states. Elsewhere in the world, the Allies dismantled their enemies’ empires but did not create independent nations, keeping colonized people subordinate to European power. France, for example, refused to give up its long-standing occupation of Indochina; Clemenceau’s snub of future Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh, who sought representation at Versailles, had

## EXPLAIN CONSEQUENCES

In what ways did the Treaty of Versailles embody—or fail to embody—Wilson’s Fourteen Points?

grave long-term consequences for both France and the United States.

The establishment of a British mandate in Palestine (now Israel) also proved crucial. During the war, British foreign secretary Sir Arthur Balfour had stated that his country would work to establish

there a “national home for the Jewish people,” with the condition that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.” Under the British mandate, thousands of Jews moved to Palestine and purchased land, in some cases evicting Palestinian tenants. As early as 1920, riots erupted between Jews and Palestinians—a situation that, even before World War II, escalated beyond British control.

The Versailles treaty thus created conditions for horrific future bloodshed, and it must be judged one of history’s great catastrophes. Balfour astutely described Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and Wilson as “all-powerful, all-ignorant men, sitting there and carving up continents.” Wilson, however, remained optimistic as he returned home, even though his health was beginning to fail. The president hoped the new League of Nations, authorized by the treaty, would moderate the settlement and secure peaceful resolutions of other disputes. For this to occur, U.S. participation was crucial.

## Congress Rejects the Treaty

The outlook for U.S. ratification was not promising. Though major opinion makers and religious denominations supported the treaty, openly hostile Republicans



**MAP 21.4**

### Europe and the Middle East After World War I

World War I and its aftermath dramatically altered the landscape of Europe and the Middle East. In central Europe, the collapse of the German, Russian, and Austro-Hungarian empires brought the reconstitution of Poland and the creation of a string of new states based on the principle of national (ethnic) self-determination. The demise of the Ottoman Empire resulted in the appearance of the quasi-independent territories, or “mandates,” of Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. The League of Nations stipulated that their affairs would be supervised by one of the Allied powers.

held a majority in the Senate. One group, called the “irreconcilables,” consisted of western progressive Republicans such as Hiram Johnson of California and Robert La Follette of Wisconsin, who opposed U.S. involvement in European affairs. Another group, led by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, worried that Article X—the provision for collective security—would prevent the United States from pursuing an independent foreign policy. Was the nation, Lodge asked, “willing to have the youth of America ordered to war” by an international body? Wilson refused to accept any amendments, especially to placate Lodge, a hated rival. “I shall consent to nothing,” the president told the French ambassador. “The Senate must take its medicine.”

To mobilize support, Wilson embarked on an exhausting speaking tour. His impassioned defense of the League of Nations brought audiences to tears, but the strain proved too much for the president. While visiting Colorado in September 1919, Wilson collapsed. A week later, back in Washington, he suffered a stroke that left one side of his body paralyzed. Wilson still urged Democratic senators to reject all Republican amendments. When the treaty came up for a vote in November 1919, it failed to win the required two-thirds majority. A second attempt, in March 1920, fell seven votes short.

The treaty was dead, and so was Wilson’s leadership. The president never fully recovered from his stroke. During the last eighteen months of his administration, the government drifted as Wilson’s physician, his wife, and various cabinet heads secretly took charge. The United States never ratified the Versailles treaty or joined the League of Nations. In turn, the League was weak. When Wilson died in 1924, his dream of a just and peaceful international order lay in ruins.

The impact of World War I can hardly be overstated. Despite bids for power by Britain and France, Europe’s hold on its colonial empires never recovered. The United States, now a major world power, appeared to turn its back on the world when it rejected the Versailles treaty. But in laying claim to Hawaii and the Philippines, asserting power in Latin America, and intervening in Asia, the United States had entangled itself deeply in global politics. By 1918, the nation had gained too much diplomatic clout—and was too dependent on overseas trade—for isolation to be a realistic long-term option.

On the home front, the effects of World War I were no less dramatic. Wartime jobs and prosperity ushered in an era of exuberant consumerism, while the

achievements of women’s voting rights seemed to preface a new progressive era. But as peace returned, it became clear that the war had not advanced reform. Rather than embracing government activism, Americans of the 1920s proved eager to relinquish it.

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## SUMMARY

Between 1877 and 1918, the United States rose as a major economic and military power. Justifications for overseas expansion emphasized access to global markets, the importance of sea power, and the need to police international misconduct and trade. These justifications shaped U.S. policy toward European powers in Latin America, and victory in the War of 1898 enabled the United States to take control of former Spanish colonies in the Caribbean and Pacific. Victory, however, also led to bloody conflict in the Philippines as the United States struggled to suppress Filipino resistance to American rule.

After 1899, the United States aggressively asserted its interests in Asia and Latin America. In China, the United States used the so-called Boxer Rebellion to make good its claim to an “open door” to Chinese markets. Later, President Theodore Roosevelt strengthened relations with Japan, and his successor, William Howard Taft, supported U.S. business interests in China. In the Caribbean, the United States constructed the Panama Canal and regularly exercised the right, claimed under the Roosevelt Corollary, to intervene in the affairs of states in the region. President Woodrow Wilson publicly disparaged the imperialism of his predecessors but repeatedly used the U.S. military to “police” Mexico.

At the outbreak of World War I, the United States asserted neutrality, but its economic ties to the Allies rapidly undercut that claim. In 1917, German submarine attacks drew the United States into the war on the side of Britain and France. Involvement in the war profoundly transformed the economy, politics, and society of the nation, resulting in an economic boom, mass migrations of workers to industrial centers, and the achievement of national voting rights. At the Paris Peace Conference, Wilson attempted to implement his Fourteen Points. However, the designs of the Allies in Europe undermined the Treaty of Versailles, while Republican resistance at home prevented ratification of the treaty. Although Wilson’s dream of a just international order failed, the United States had taken its place as a major world power.



# CHAPTER REVIEW



**MAKE IT STICK** Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you've read.

**TERMS TO KNOW** Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

## Key Concepts and Events

American exceptionalism (p. 674)  
 “Remember the *Maine*” (p. 675)  
 Teller Amendment (p. 675)  
*Insular Cases* (p. 678)  
 Platt Amendment (p. 678)  
 open door policy (p. 679)  
 Root-Takahira Agreement  
 (p. 682)  
 Panama Canal (p. 682)  
 Roosevelt Corollary (p. 683)  
 Zimmermann telegram (p. 686)  
 War Industries Board (p. 688)

National War Labor Board  
 (p. 689)  
 Committee on Public Informa-  
 tion (p. 690)  
 Four-Minute Men (p. 690)  
 Sedition Act of 1918 (p. 691)  
 Great Migration (p. 694)  
 National Woman’s Party (p. 695)  
 Fourteen Points (p. 696)  
 League of Nations (p. 697)  
 Treaty of Versailles (p. 697)

## Key People

Theodore Roosevelt (p. 674)  
 Alfred Mahan (p. 674)  
 Queen Liliuokalani (p. 676)  
 Emilio Aguinaldo (p. 678)  
 Porfirio Díaz (p. 683)  
 Woodrow Wilson (p. 683)  
 Herbert Hoover (p. 689)  
 Alice Paul (p. 695)

**REVIEW QUESTIONS** Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter’s main ideas.

1. What factors prompted the United States to claim overseas territories in the 1890s and early 1900s?
2. What role did the United States play in World War I? On balance, do you think U.S. entry into the war was justified? Why or why not?
3. How did World War I shape America on the home front, economically and politically?
4. **THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING** Review the events listed under “America in the World” on the thematic timeline on page 671. By the end of World War I, what influence did the United States exercise in the Caribbean, Latin America, the Pacific, and China, and in European affairs? How, and to what extent, had its power in each region expanded over the previous four decades? Compare and contrast the role of the United States to the roles of other powers in each region.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

**1. ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** Read again the documents from “Representing Indians” in Chapter 16 (Thinking Like a Historian, p. 530). In what ways might ideas about Native Americans have informed attitudes toward Hawaiians, Filipinos, and other people of color overseas? How might this explain which peoples Woodrow Wilson included and excluded in his ideal of “national self-determination”? Write a short essay in which you explain how Americans’ policies and attitudes toward native peoples within North America shaped U.S. foreign policy between 1898 and 1918. You may also wish to review relevant information in Chapters 15 and 20 and consider how attitudes toward African

Americans shaped white Americans’ racial assumptions in this era.

**2. VISUAL EVIDENCE** Review the images on pages 673, 685, and 695. What do they tell us about how the 1910s, especially the experiences of World War I, changed gender expectations for men and women? At the start of the war, would you rather have been a young man or a young woman? Why? How did new opportunities vary according to a young person’s race and ethnicity? (The posters on pp. 687 and 691 may also be useful in considering this question.)

## MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

Jean H. Baker, *Votes for Women* (2002). A collection of essays on the achievement of women’s suffrage.

Frank Freidel, *Over There* (1990). A collection of American soldiers’ firsthand accounts of their experiences in World War I.

*The Great War and the Shaping of the 20th Century*. An excellent PBS documentary with accompanying documents at [pbs.org/greatwar/index.html](http://pbs.org/greatwar/index.html).

Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders* (2009). The story of the Panama Canal through the viewpoint of the diverse workers who constructed it.

James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope* (1999). A sweeping study of the Great Migration.

Walter LaFeber, *The American Search for Opportunity, 1865–1913* (1993). An excellent, up-to-date synthesis of foreign policy in this era.

**TIMELINE** Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1886	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. begins building modern battleships</li> </ul>
1892	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S.-backed planters overthrow Hawaii's Queen Liliuokalani</li> </ul>
1895	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States arbitrates border dispute between Britain and Venezuela</li> <li>• Guerrilla war against Spanish rule begins in Cuba</li> </ul>
1898	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War between United States and Spain</li> <li>• United States annexes Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Guam</li> </ul>
1899–1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S.-Philippine War, ending in U.S. occupation of Philippines</li> <li>• United States pursues open door policy in China</li> </ul>
1900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States helps suppress nationalist rebellion in China ("Boxer Rebellion")</li> </ul>
1901	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hay-Pauncefote Treaty</li> </ul>
1902	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platt Amendment gives U.S. exclusive role in Cuba</li> </ul>
1903	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. recognizes Panama's independence from Colombia</li> </ul>
1905	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Russo-Japanese War; Roosevelt mediates peace</li> </ul>
1908	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Root-Takahira Agreement</li> </ul>
1914	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panama Canal opens</li> <li>• U.S. military action in Veracruz, Mexico</li> <li>• World War I begins in Europe</li> </ul>
1916	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jones Act commits United States to future Philippine independence</li> </ul>
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United States declares war on Germany and its allies, creates new agencies to mobilize economy and promote national unity</li> <li>• Espionage Act</li> </ul>
1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sedition Act</li> <li>• World War I ends</li> <li>• Beginning of two-year influenza pandemic that kills 50 million people worldwide</li> </ul>
1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Schenck v. United States</i> and <i>Abrams v. United States</i></li> <li>• Wilson promotes Fourteen Points at Paris Peace Conference</li> <li>• Senate rejects the Treaty of Versailles</li> </ul>
1920	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nineteenth Amendment grants women suffrage</li> </ul>

**KEY TURNING POINTS:** On the timeline above, identify at least five events that demonstrated the rising global power of the United States. Compare their consequences. If you had been an observer in London or Tokyo, how might you have interpreted the United States's actions in each case?