Chapter 1 War, Imperialism, Anti-Imperialism

1 Secretary of State, John Hay, Open Door Notes, 1899–1900

During the last decades of the nineteenth century politicians, missionaries, and businesspeople in Europe, Japan, and the United States looked enthusiastically to the "China market." This vast and densely populated society, teetering on the edge of collapse due to internal disunity and external pressures, offered the prospect of great riches for foreigners. By the 1890s Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and the United States, among other countries, had established "concession areas" in China where they exerted control over local events on the mainland. They had begun to carve up China, on the model of European imperialism in Africa. American Secretary of State, John Hay, recognized this dynamic. He feared that the imperial division of China would create new sources of international conflict, and also exclude the United States from full access to the society. In 1899 and 1900 he issued his two "Open Door Notes" to the other foreign powers in the hope of creating an alternative to traditional imperialism. Hay called for "equal and impartial trade" in China, shared development of Chinese infrastructure, and protections for foreign citizens under their national laws (extraterritoriality). Historians have long debated whether Hay's vision was a form of imperialism or an alternative to it. They have interrogated the ways in which Hay's advocacy of an "open door" contributed to America's rise as a dominant power in Asia at the start of the twentieth century.[1]

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[1] See William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, enlarged edn. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988); Thomas Schoonover, *Uncle Sam's War of 1898 and the Origins of Globalization* (Lexington, KT: University Press of Kentucky, 2005); Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865–1900* (New York: Harlan Davidson, 1986); Walter McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Mariner Books, 1998).

FIRST OPEN DOOR NOTE

United States Secretary of State, John Hay, to US Ambassador to Britain, Joseph Choate, September 6, 1899. Similar notes were sent to Germany, France, Italy, Japan, and Russia.

Sir: The Government of Her Britannic Majesty has declared that its policy and its very traditions precluded it from using any privileges which might be granted it in China as a weapon for excluding commercial rivals, and that freedom of trade for Great Britain in that Empire meant freedom of trade for all the world alike. While conceding by formal agreements, first with Germany and then with Russia, the possession of "spheres of influence or interest" in China in which they are to enjoy special rights and privileges, more especially in respect of railroads and mining enterprises, Her Britannic Majesty's Government has therefore sought to maintain at the same time what is called the "open-door" policy, to insure to the commerce of the world in China equality of treatment within said "spheres" for commerce and navigation. This latter policy is alike urgently demanded by the British mercantile communities and by those of the United States, as it is justly held by them to be the only one which will improve existing conditions, enable them to maintain their positions in the markets of China, and extend their operations in the future. While the Government of the United States will in no way commit itself to a recognition of exclusive rights of any power within or control over any portion of the Chinese Empire under such agreements as have within the last year been made, it can not conceal its apprehension that under existing conditions there is a possibility, even a probability, of complications arising between the treaty powers which may imperil the rights insured to the United States under our treaties with China.

This Government is animated by a sincere desire that the interests of our citizens may not be prejudiced through exclusive treatment by any of the controlling powers within their so-called "spheres of interest" in China, and hope also to retain there an open market for the commerce of the world, remove dangerous sources of international irritation, and hasten thereby united or concerted action of the powers at Pekin[g] in favor of the administrative reforms so urgently needed for strengthening the Imperial Government and maintaining the integrity of China in which the whole western world is alike concerned. It believes that such a result may be greatly assisted by a declaration by the various powers claiming "spheres of interest" in China of their intentions as regards treatment of foreign trade therein. The present moment seems a particularly opportune one for informing Her Britannic Majesty's Government of the desire of the United States to see it

make a formal declaration and to lend its support in obtaining similar declarations from the various powers claiming "spheres of influence" in China to the effect that each in its respective spheres of interest or influence –

First. Will in no wise interfere with any treaty port or any vested interest within any so-called "sphere of interest" or leased territory it may have in China.

Second. That the Chinese treaty tariff of the time being shall apply to all merchandise landed or shipped to all such ports as are within said "sphere of interest" (unless they be "free ports"), no matter to what nationality it may belong, and that duties so leviable [*sic*.] shall be collected by the Chinese Government.

Third. That it will levy no higher harbor dues on vessels of another nationality frequenting any port in such "sphere" than shall be levied on vessels of its own nationality, and no higher railroad charges over lines built, controlled, or operated within its "sphere" on merchandise belonging to citizens or subjects of other nationalities transported through such "sphere" than shall be levied on similar merchandise belonging to its own nationals transported over equal distances.

The recent ukase of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, declaring the port of Ta-lien-wan open to the merchant ships of all nations during the whole of the lease under which it is to be held by Russia, removing as it does all uncertainty as to the liberal and conciliatory policy of that power, together with the assurances given this Government by Russia, justifies the expectation that His Majesty will cooperate in such an understanding as is here proposed, and our ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg has been instructed accordingly to submit the propositions above detailed to His Imperial Majesty, and ask their early consideration. Copy of my instruction to Mr. Tower is herewith inclosed [*sic*.] for your confidential information.

The action of Germany in declaring the port of Kiaochao a "free port," and the aid the Imperial Government has given China in the establishment there of a Chinese custom-house, coupled with the oral assurance conveyed the United States by Germany that our interests within its "sphere" would in no wise be affected by its occupation of this portion of the province of Shang-tung, tend to show that little opposition may be anticipated from that power to the desired declaration.

The interests of Japan, the next most interested power in the trade of China, will be so clearly served by the proposed arrangement, and the declaration of its statesmen within the last year are so entirely in line with the views here expressed, that its hearty cooperation is confidently counted on.

You will, at as early date as practicable, submit the considerations to Her Britannic Majesty's principal secretary of state for foreign affairs and

request their immediate consideration. I inclose [*sic*.] herewith a copy of the instruction sent to our ambassador at Berlin bearing on the above subject.

I have the honor to be, etc.,

John Hay.

SECOND OPEN DOOR NOTE

Circular note of July 3, 1900, to the powers cooperating in China, defining the purposes and policy of the United States

In this critical posture of affairs in China it is deemed appropriate to define the attitude of the United States as far as present circumstances permit this to be done. We adhere to the policy initiated by us in 1857 of peace with the Chinese nation, of furtherance of lawful commerce, and of protection of lives and property of our citizens by all means guaranteed under extraterritorial treaty rights and by the law of nations. If wrong be done to our citizens we propose to hold the responsible authors to the uttermost accountability. We regard the condition at Pekin[g] as one of virtual anarchy, whereby power and responsibility are practically devolved upon the local provincial authorities. So long as they are not in overt collusion with rebellion and use their power to protect foreign life and property, we regard them as representing the Chinese people, with whom we seek to remain in peace and friendship. The purpose of the President, is as it has been heretofore, to act concurrently with the other powers; first, in opening up communication with Pekin[g] and rescuing the American officials, missionaries, and other Americans who are in danger; secondly, in affording all possible protection everywhere in China to American life and property; thirdly, in guarding and protecting all legitimate American interests; and fourthly, in aiding to prevent a spread of the disorders to the other provinces of the Empire and a recurrence of such disasters. It is of course too early to forecast the means of attaining this last result; but the policy of the Government of the United States is to seek a solution which may bring about permanent safety and peace to China, preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity, protect all rights guaranteed to friendly powers by treaty and international law, and safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese Empire.

You will communicate the purport of this instruction to the minister for foreign affairs.

John Hay.

Source: *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1899, pp. 129–30; *Ibid*., 1900, p. 299.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How did the "Open Door" reflect long-standing American ideas about freedom and commerce?
2. How could the United States convince distant and powerful states to observe an "Open Door" in China?
3. Was John Hay's "Open Door" a form of imperialism?

2 President William McKinley, Account of his Decision to Occupy the Philippines, 1898

On April 29, 1898 the United States declared war on Spain, attacking its forces in both Cuba and the Philippines. Many Americans supported this war as a necessary effort to defeat a degenerate empire and protect American economic interests. The rapid retreat of Spanish authority in the Philippines forced Commodore (later Admiral) George Dewey, President William McKinley, and others to confront the question of future governance for this strategic archipelago. In a retrospective interview, McKinley described his initial desire to avoid a long-term American occupation of the Philippines, and his subsequent change of position. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Paris, signed by American and Spanish representatives on December 10, 1898, the United States asserted dominion over the Philippines.[2]

Hold a moment longer! Not quite yet, gentlemen! Before you go I would like to say just a word about the Philippine business. I have been criticized a good deal about the Philippines, but don't deserve it. The truth is I didn't want the Philippines, and when they came to us, as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them. When the Spanish War broke out Dewey was at Hong Kong, and I ordered him to go to Manila and to capture or destroy the Spanish fleet, and he had to; because, if defeated, he had no place to refit on that side of the globe, and if the Dons were victorious they would likely cross the Pacific and ravage our Oregon and California coasts. And so he had to destroy the Spanish fleet, and did it! But that was as far as I thought then.

[2] See Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Lewis Gould, *The Presidency of William McKinley* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1981); Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899–1902* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

When I next realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps I confess I did not know what to do with them. I sought counsel from all sides – Democrats as well as Republicans – but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then other islands perhaps also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way – I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France and Germany – our commercial rivals in the Orient – that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves – they were unfit for self-government – and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office), and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!

Source: General James Rusling's account of his interview with President William McKinley, printed two years after McKinley's assassination, in *The Christian Advocate*, January 22, 1903, 17. Reprinted in Daniel Schirmer and Stephen Rosskamm Shalom (eds.), *The Philippines Reader* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1987), 22–3.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. What were President McKinley's initial aims in ordering an attack on Spanish forces in the Philippines?
2. Why did American aims change after the fall of Spanish power?
3. Did the United States become a new imperialist in the Philippines?

3 The Platt Amendment, 1901

The United States formerly occupied the island of Cuba from December 1898 through May 1902. As part of the American preparations for Cuban independence, the US Congress passed the "Platt Amendment" (named for Senator Orville Platt, a Republican from Connecticut) in March 1901. The Platt Amendment dictated terms of independence for Cuba that ensured American domination of the island. The most significant and enduring provisions included: an American right of intervention; enforced sanitation to protect health and commerce; and American possession of military bases on Cuba – particularly the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay.[3]

Platt Amendment

Whereas the Congress of the United States of America, by an Act approved March 2, 1901, provided as follows:

Provided further, That in fulfillment of the declaration contained in the joint resolution approved April twentieth, eighteen hundred and ninety-eight, entitled "For the recognition of the independence of the people of Cuba, demanding that the Government of Spain relinquish its authority and government in the island of Cuba, and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters, and directing the President of the United States to use the land and naval forces of the United States to carry these resolutions into effect," the President is hereby authorized to "leave the government and control of the island of Cuba to its people" so soon as a government shall have been established in said island under a constitution which, either as a part thereof or in an ordinance appended thereto, shall define the future relations of the United States with Cuba, substantially as follows:

I. That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgment in or control over any portion of said island.

[3] See Luis A. Pérez, *Cuba Under the Platt Amendment, 1902–1934* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986); Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate.

III. That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.

IV. That all Acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired there under shall be maintained and protected.

V. That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein.

VI. That the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty.

VII. That to enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States.

VIII. That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States.

Source: "The Platt Amendment," in *Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States of America, 1776–1949*, vol. 8, C. I. Bevans (ed.) (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 1116–17.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How did the Platt Amendment limit Cuban independence?
2. Which American interests did the Platt Amendment serve most directly?
3. How did the Platt Amendment transform American foreign policy?

4 Jane Addams, Critique of American Militarism, 1902

During the last decades of the nineteenth century an international peace movement grew across the United States and Western Europe. Its advocates called upon states to abandon war and invest their resources in education, economic development, and social welfare. International peace advocates attacked the assumptions about struggle that underpinned Social-Darwinist thought, and they embraced a vision of cooperation and mutual benefit among societies. They also shared ideas across societies on the uses of Progressive domestic reform as a model and inspiration for international peace-making. Jane Addams, the famous founder of Hull House in Chicago, was a leading voice among these "progressive internationalists."[4]

THE NEWER IDEALS OF PEACE

An Address by Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House, Chicago, in the Hall, Monday, July 7, 1902.

Miss Jane Addams addressed a large audience in the Hall yesterday afternoon. The stenographic report follows:

At the opening of the Crystal Palace in 1851 which was to house the world's first exposition, a number of speeches were made on the present state of civilization. All of them in varying degree referred to the fact that war was a thing of the past. There had been no European war for the previous thirty years, following the Napoleonic upheaval, and it was assumed that the wars of the French Revolution and of Napoleon were sporadic and would not occur again. The speakers congratulated the world upon their arrival at a warless state. Only three years after that, the Crimean war began. During the next fifty years there were twelve great wars between white peoples, not including the wars in which one of the combatants was black or yellow. These wars began with the Crimean war in 1853, and included the second Boer war in 1899.

[4] See Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Jane Addams and the Dream of American Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

One naturally is driven to speak on this changed point of view. We recall George Eliot's saying that we prepare ourselves for our deeds by our thoughts and ideals. If we look into our minds we will find that we have been preparing ourselves for this deed by allowing ourselves to think in a certain way, or perhaps by not taking care of our thoughts and expressions but allowing them to revert to a more primitive type. In someway or other the social ideal has changed between 1850 and 1900. We have lost faith in moral power. We believe moral life must be urged on by force, that only the moral issues backed by arms are the great issues. We may come to that in many ways, but let us admit that we have come to it. It was about the time that Darwin published his first book, which is the foundation for modern science and evolution. Darwin put great stress on the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, but he also emphasized mutual aid as a means of progress and survival. That solitary animal, the lion, that lives by struggling for food and destroying other life, is fast dying out, while animals that cooperate, such as the ant and the bee, are the ones that survive. All these things on the other side have been more or less ignored. Some scientists now claim that Darwin's work must be gone over again because the popular imagination seized on the things that pleased it for the moment, and emphasized that part of Darwin's teaching. It is only of late that the other side is being emphasized. We may say that this earlier idea is somewhat the result of scientific teaching and partly the result of the materialistic age. We love to talk about the great inventions of these fifty years. We have built up a mighty pedestal and on the top we have put the man with the hammer. Education and culture have come to be dependent on the man with the pedestal, and more or less he influences us all. What have we done with the higher ideals which the world seemed to have possessed fifty years ago?

You can go on and say that all the time there have been groups of people who have protested against warfare, that in nearly every civilized country there has been a small body of people who have said that warfare is a disgrace. The first line that has been worked is the appeal to pity and mercy. It is a question whether we could go on with war if we had not organized our hospitals and our Red Cross societies. Perhaps that appeal to pity has been something of an anodyne to our conscience. This voice has spoken out most clearly in two men. In Count Tolstoy, who in his picture of war almost makes one feel as if one had been through a campaign; not of waving of banners and all the rest of the trash we have associated with war, but as if one had been through a campaign with a common soldier, and dragged through all its sordidness and meanness. Then let us take [Vasily] Vereshchagin, who has portrayed war as it is, who has brought out the wretchedness and squalor of it all, and there we have two powerful appeals to pity

and mercy. If we had to see it with our own eyes, we might question whether a moral cause is subserved by it all. In the end men must settle questions by reason. All war, then, has been so much wasted force ...

We can take the second line, the appeal to the sense of prudence, the line so largely taken in the Hague conference. A great Frenchman has estimated that a war costs as much as a university; that the men in the marine have a salary as large as that of the faculty of a large university. Do not let us destroy human life – it is too precious. Every child on the face of the earth represents someone's care and thought; why do we send him forth into the unknown over the pretext of some issue which he cannot change? Prudence is insisted on more by the French; but the Emperor William has of late been manifesting an interest in this side of the question. The Hague conference said, "Walk in the paths of arbitration."

Aside from this appeal to sympathy and to prudence, there is a third which is difficult to formulate; it is the appeal to the sense of human solidarity. Aside from the worth of human life, it is our business to aid human existence. If we are equal in the sight of the Lord, how can one set of men decide to do away with another set of men? There is sustenance for all the millions on the earth, but not unless we co-operate, which we cannot do so long as one sets itself up as superior. Here, too, the Russians seem beyond us. A highly educated Russian was visiting in this country. He made the remark that he did not feel that he was superior to any human being. Someone challenged his remark and said he was so learned that he surely must feel a difference between himself and a common criminal. "Of course, I am aware that I know more mathematics than most people, more than anyone in the world except two other men; I have a better trained mind, but that," he said, "has nothing to do with human equality. You talk about the 'common criminal.' I was once in a prison in France with a number of other political prisoners. There were also within the prison walls some criminals, and one of them a thief. I was angry, and felt a certain resentment at occupying a cell with this common thief. I was willing to suffer as a martyr for my political belief, but I was not willing to be put in a cell with a common thief. But this man was wiser than I, for he was able to escape and I was not. He was more clever than the prison guards, for he got out of the prison walls and yard. He was lying flat in a ditch waiting for darkness. He was lying there with his heart in his mouth, for he knew the guards were out looking for him, when he heard a peasant woman shriek that the house was on fire and their child was there in the upper story. She was hysterical and was doing nothing to save the child, but stood and shrieked to her husband for help. The man in the ditch without a moment's hesitation sprang from his hiding, rushed into the house, and brought down the child not into the arms of its mother but of the prison guards. He was marched

back to prison and his sentence doubled. I do not believe I would have done that. With tears I apologized to him for my unkindly feeling toward him. I had blasphemed against our common nature, against the nobility which is common to all men, and to which, from time to time, men from the very lowest type arise. The one thing which I fear is this feeling of superiority and you always get it whenever you have a feeling of hatred."

Only through such feeling in regard to warfare could we get any approach to that equality which the world has dreamed of for so many years. When we look about us and see war everywhere, it seems that this feeling has been drugged. We do not speak of it, but it is there, and many of us believe it will yet assert itself.

If one goes back of these three: the appeal to the sense of pity, the appeal to prudence, and the sense of human solidarity, one will have to say that something has been the matter with the nature of the appeal or it would not have failed so completely. They are beginning to have another outlet – that of active labor and service, and all this does much to make war impossible. Let us take the civilian counterpart of the first one, the appeal to the sensibilities as related to the poor people – those who do the roughest work with their hands, wear the meanest clothes, whom we allow ourselves to feel a little differently towards. Lately there has been an attempt everywhere, in France, America and England, to appeal to the sensibilities on behalf of these people. I suppose we always think pre-eminently of Dickens as among the pioneer writers on these lines, and of Zola in France. In America we come to a long line of realistic novels dealing with life as a whole, and presenting people as they are, simply and truly. Certain words are almost dropping out of our vocabulary. When you know such a person even in literature, he has become individualized. We are dropping such hateful words as "slum," "the lower classes," because when we use them we think of fine people we have met to whom, after we know them, we could not possibly apply such terms.

There are economists who are beginning to assert very firmly that any nation that allows its people to be underfed and diseased is committing a great economic imprudence. Not only is the nation deprived of the wages and taxes of these people, but it is loading itself with a great lot of people who have to be cared for by the taxes of people more fortunate. More and more we hear that in the great world-struggle that that nation is going to go down which does not hold up a high standard of industrial labor; that the nation that allows child-labor is drawing on its capital; that the nation that allows its industrial people to go down is using up its future forces. Long and exhausting labor does this. A nation which can see that men in its working trades are used up at the age of thirty-four, and feels no responsibility about it, is a nation that is not using its forces well.

We come to the appeal to the sense of human solidarity. We talk of moral forces, and yet when we see such a force operating we are skeptical, and think there must be some self-seeking motive behind it. Under this head, of course, we might put all the educational efforts of government, and all those efforts which are trying to bring fullness of life to the humblest man. We could point to the old-age pensions in Germany, where people are taken care of after they are too old to care for themselves. We are getting rid of smallpox; and we are going to get rid of scarlet fever and many other diseases when we feel the same sense of responsibility for the community as for our own particular household. When we once surround human life with the same kind of heroism and admiration that we have surrounded war, we can say that this sense is having such an outlet that war will become impossible.

They say the temptation comes to every age to use an old moral standard and to fail to apply one to which to work up. It may be the new standard of life is at our hand, and if we fail to apply it we shall slip back to old standards, as apparently we have done in the last fifty years, which Prince Albert and his fellows thought were obsolete.

Source: *The Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, vol. 27, July 8, 1902. Reprinted in Allen F. Davis (ed.), *Jane Addams on Peace, War, and International Understanding, 1899–1932* (New York: Garland, Publishing, 1976), pp. 19–25.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. What is Jane Addams' vision for a new kind of foreign policy?
2. How does she connect this foreign policy vision with domestic reforms?
3. Why does Jane Addams believe that her ideals are also "realistic"?

5 President Theodore Roosevelt, "Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904

Theodore Roosevelt brought a sophisticated and expansive vision to the making of American foreign policy. In December 1904 he explained that the United States would play a more active and, at times, forceful role in world affairs to protect stability, trade, and "civilized mankind." In Latin America Roosevelt asserted a right of intervention to exclude other foreign powers, assure US interests, and promote good government. Later called the Roosevelt "Corollary," this aggressive posture of the United States in the Western Hemisphere transformed the Monroe Doctrine from a somewhat innocuous warning against new European colonialism in Latin America into a muscular

claim of US "police" powers in the region. The Monroe Doctrine had little force behind it; the Roosevelt Corollary built on a modernizing American navy, army, and foreign service.[5]

Excerpted from Theodore Roosevelt's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904

The steady aim of this Nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice. There are kinds of peace, which are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. Tyrants and oppressors have many times made a wilderness and called it peace. Many times peoples who were slothful or timid or shortsighted, who had been enervated by ease or by luxury, or misled by false teachings, have shrunk in unmanly fashion from doing duty that was stern and that needed self-sacrifice, and have sought to hide from their own minds their shortcomings, their ignoble motives, by calling them love of peace. The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as we shun unrighteous war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others. Generally peace tells for righteousness; but if there is conflict between the two, then our fealty is due first to the cause of righteousness. Unrighteous wars are common, and unrighteous peace is rare; but both should be shunned. The right of freedom and the responsibility for the exercise of that right can not be divorced. One of our great poets has well and finely said that freedom is not a gift that tarries long in the hands of cowards. Neither does it tarry long in the hands of those too slothful, too dishonest, or too unintelligent to exercise it. The eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty must be exercised, sometimes to guard against outside foes; although of course far more often to guard against our own selfish or thoughtless shortcomings.

If these self-evident truths are kept before us, and only if they are so kept before us, we shall have a clear idea of what our foreign policy in its larger aspects should be. It is our duty to remember that a nation has no more right to do injustice to another nation, strong or weak, than an individual has to do

[5] See John Morton Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); Kristen Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); Walter LaFeber, *The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

injustice to another individual; that the same moral law applies in one case as in the other. But we must also remember that it is as much the duty of the Nation to guard its own rights and its own interests as it is the duty of the individual so to do. Within the Nation the individual has now delegated this right to the State, that is, to the representative of all the individuals, and it is a maxim of the law that for every wrong there is a remedy. But in international law we have not advanced by any means as far as we have advanced in municipal law. There is as yet no judicial way of enforcing a right in international law. When one nation wrongs another or wrongs many others, there is no tribunal before which the wrongdoer can be brought. Either it is necessary supinely to acquiesce in the wrong, and thus put a premium upon brutality and aggression, or else it is necessary for the aggrieved nation valiantly to stand up for its rights. Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations, it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm. If the great civilized nations of the present day should completely disarm, the result would mean an immediate recrudescence of barbarism in one form or another. Under any circumstances a sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police; and until international cohesion and the sense of international duties and rights are far more advanced than at present, a nation desirous both of securing respect for itself and of doing good to others must have a force adequate for the work which it feels is allotted to it as its part of the general world duty. Therefore it follows that a self-respecting, just, and far-seeing nation should on the one hand endeavor by every means to aid in the development of the various movements which tend to provide substitutes for war, which tend to render nations in their actions toward one another, and indeed toward their own peoples, more responsive to the general sentiment of humane and civilized mankind; and on the other hand that it should keep prepared, while scrupulously avoiding wrongdoing itself, to repel any wrong, and in exceptional cases to take action which in a more advanced stage of international relations would come under the head of the exercise of the international police. A great free people owes it to itself and to all mankind not to sink into helplessness before the powers of evil.

We are in every way endeavoring to help on, with cordial good will, every movement which will tend to bring us into more friendly relations with the rest of mankind. In pursuance of this policy I shall shortly lay before the Senate treaties of arbitration with all powers which are willing to enter into these treaties with us. It is not possible at this period of the world's development to agree to arbitrate all matters, but there are many matters of

possible difference between us and other nations which can be thus arbitrated. Furthermore, at the request of the Interparliamentary Union, an eminent body composed of practical statesmen from all countries, I have asked the Powers to join with this Government in a second Hague conference, at which it is hoped that the work already so happily begun at The Hague may be carried some steps further toward completion. This carries out the desire expressed by the first Hague conference itself.

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power. If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would show the progress in stable and just civilization which with the aid of the Platt Amendment Cuba has shown since our troops left the island, and which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all question of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end. Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. They have great natural riches, and if within their borders the reign of law and justice obtains, prosperity is sure to come to them. While they thus obey the primary laws of civilized society they may rest assured that they will be treated by us in a spirit of cordial and helpful sympathy. We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations. It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence can not be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of

humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies. Ordinarily it is very much wiser and more useful for us to concern ourselves with striving for our own moral and material betterment here at home than to concern ourselves with trying to better the condition of things in other nations. We have plenty of sins of our own to war against, and under ordinary circumstances we can do more for the general uplifting of humanity by striving with heart and soul to put a stop to civic corruption, to brutal lawlessness and violent race prejudices here at home than by passing resolutions and wrongdoing elsewhere. Nevertheless there are occasional crimes committed on so vast a scale and of such peculiar horror as to make us doubt whether it is not our manifest duty to endeavor at least to show our disapproval of the deed and our sympathy with those who have suffered by it. The cases must be extreme in which such a course is justifiable. There must be no effort made to remove the mote from our brother's eye if we refuse to remove the beam from our own. But in extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it. The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few. Yet it is not to be expected that a people like ours, which in spite of certain very obvious shortcomings, nevertheless as a whole shows by its consistent practice its belief in the principles of civil and religious liberty and of orderly freedom, a people among whom even the worst crime, like the crime of lynching, is never more than sporadic, so that individuals and not classes are molested in their fundamental rights – it is inevitable that such a nation should desire eagerly to give expression to its horror on an occasion like that of the massacre of the Jews in Kishenef, or when it witnesses such systematic and long-extended cruelty and oppression as the cruelty and oppression of which the Armenians have been the victims, and which have won for them the indignant pity of the civilized world.

Source: *Congressional Record – Senate*, 58th Congress, Third Session, December 6, 1904, pp. 18–19.

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. How did Theodore Roosevelt define the aims of American foreign policy?
2. What did he define as the appropriate uses of military force?
3. What kind of relationship did he envision between the United States and the countries of Latin America?