

BIG STICK DIPLOMACY

Theodore Roosevelt, better known as Teddy, was president from 1901 to 1909. America was a growing power during this time and had taken possession of the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba from Spain as a result of the Spanish-American War. Roosevelt wanted to grow the United States into an international superpower and worked to achieve that goal during his presidency. Known for liking the phrase, “Speak softly and carry a big stick, and you will go far,” Roosevelt used diplomacy to increase the influence of the United States.

Roosevelt also developed what is known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine, put in place in 1823, said the United States would not let European countries create any new colonies in the Americas. The Roosevelt Corollary said the United States would be the “policeman” of the western hemisphere and could intervene in Latin American countries if they committed wrongdoings, such as not paying their debts to European governments. In 1904, he sent two ships to the Dominican Republic and persuaded the government to supervise debt repayments to France, Germany, and Italy. This would later happen again in Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Haiti. Roosevelt turned a doctrine that was designed to protect Latin American countries from European control into one that justified intervention by the United States.

The creation of the Panama Canal is one of Roosevelt’s best-known achievements. Colombia controlled Panama and refused to agree to the terms the United States offered for building the canal, so the United States supported Panama with money and a blockade to enable it to become independent from Colombia. After Panama gained independence, it agreed to let the United States build and control the canal for a price of \$10 million and a yearly payment of \$250,000. The United States transferred control of the canal to Panama in 1999.

In 1906, Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his diplomatic work with Russia and Japan. Two years prior, he had negotiated a peace treaty between the two countries to end the Russo-Japanese War. Roosevelt also helped France and Germany avoid a conflict over which country would get control of Morocco.

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DOLLAR DIPLOMACY

William Taft was president from 1909 to 1913. His diplomatic policy focused on using economic power instead of threats or military force. In a speech to Congress in 1912, he characterized his foreign policy as “substituting dollars for bullets.” Taft encouraged U.S. businesses to make investments in other countries so that they too could prosper along with the United States.

Taft recognized that U.S. factories were producing more goods than could be sold, so exports needed to be increased. Taft wanted government officials to encourage the sale of American-made products to countries overseas, specifically large machinery and military equipment. Congress was not always in favor of this idea, so Taft worked directly with businesses to encourage them to invest in and loan to foreign countries. He tried unsuccessfully to convince Japan and Russia to sell the Manchurian railroads and return them to China’s control. This defeat was considered an embarrassment to Taft’s presidency.

Because the Monroe Doctrine discouraged European investments in Latin American countries, Taft felt an obligation to prompt U.S. banks and businesses to give loans to newly independent Caribbean countries, such as Cuba, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. Often, Taft sent U.S. officials to manage these governments’ funds because he was concerned the countries had high levels of corruption.

When a rebellion in Nicaragua threatened the large investment of American dollars in the country, Taft sent thousands of troops to stop the revolt in 1912. The U.S. military remained in Nicaragua for 13 years following this event. These decisions resulted in distrust and anger from Latin American countries. Overall, Taft’s foreign policy is largely viewed as a failure.

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MISSIONARY DIPLOMACY

Woodrow Wilson was president from 1913 to 1921 and is best known as the president during World War I. Wilson viewed dollar diplomacy as a materialistic way to conduct diplomacy, and he instead wanted to use moral principles to guide his foreign policy. Wilson wanted countries around the world to embrace and implement democracy and used his diplomacy for that purpose.

During his presidency, Wilson worked with Congress to give the Philippines more independence from the United States by establishing a senate made up of people who lived in the Philippines. This paved the way for the Philippines to be a completely independent country by 1946. Wilson also made Puerto Rico a U.S. territory, which meant the people in Puerto Rico became U.S. citizens. However, this contrasts with Wilson's decision to purchase the colony of the Danish West Indies from Denmark, making it a U.S. territory called the Virgin Islands.

Wilson also intervened in Latin American countries' governments, sending troops to Haiti and the Dominican Republic to suppress rebellions. Because he wanted all countries to have democracy as their form of government, he left U.S. troops in both countries with the intent to establish democracies, but these efforts were not successful. Wilson also did not support the rule of a dictator in Mexico, General Victoriano Huerta. He clashed with Huerta on multiple occasions and, at one point, sent U.S. troops to occupy the city of Veracruz. A couple years later, Wilson sent troops into Mexico to pursue Pancho Villa after Villa killed several Americans in New Mexico. However, U.S. troops were unable to capture Villa.

When World War I started in 1914, Wilson tried to remain neutral. Although Wilson did not want to send U.S. troops to Europe, he supported Britain and France by selling weapons to them. Wilson tried to avoid going to war even after Germany had sunk multiple American ships, as well as an attack on the British ship the *Lusitania* that killed 128 Americans.

In 1917, Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany after the British intercepted a telegram that was meant for Mexican officials. Known as the Zimmermann Telegram, it was a proposal from Germany to let its troops invade the United States from Mexico. If the United States were defeated, Germany would ensure Mexico was given back the land it lost in the Mexican–American War. To explain his motivation for joining the war, Wilson told the American people he wanted to make the world safe for democracy. The addition of U.S. troops in Europe helped to defeat Germany by the end of 1918.

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