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Chapter 27 - Empire and Expansion

I. America Turns Outward

1. From the end of the Civil War to the 1880s, the United States was very isolationist, but in the 1890s, due to rising exports, manufacturing capability, power, and wealth, it began to expand onto the world stage, using overseas markets to sell its goods.
    - The “yellow press” or “yellow journalism” of Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst also influenced overseas expansion, as did missionaries inspired by Reverend Josiah Strong’s Our Country: It’s Possible Future and Its Present Crisis. Strong spoke for civilizing and Christianizing savages.
    - People were interpreting Darwin’s theory of survival-of-the-fittest to mean that the United States was the fittest and needed to take over other nations to improve them.
        - Such events already were happening, as Europeans had carved up Africa and China by this time.
        - In America, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan’s 1890 book, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, argued that every successful world power once held a great navy. This book helped start a naval race among the great powers and moved the U.S. to naval supremacy. It motivated the U.S. to look to expanding overseas.
2. James G. Blaine pushed his “Big Sister” policy, which sought better relations with Latin America, and in 1889, he presided over the first Pan-American Conference, held in Washington D.C.
3. However, in other diplomatic affairs, America and Germany almost went to war over the Samoan Islands (over whom could build a naval base there), while Italy and America almost fought due to the lynching of 11 Italians in New Orleans, and the U.S. and Chile almost went to war after the deaths of two American sailors at Valparaiso in 1892.
    - The new aggressive mood was also shown by the U.S.—Canadian argument over seal hunting near the Pribilof Islands off the coast of Alaska.
4. An incident with Venezuela and Britain wound up strengthening the Monroe Doctrine.
    - British Guiana and Venezuela had been disputing their border for many years, but when gold was discovered, the situation worsened.
    - Thus, the U.S., under President Grover Cleveland, sent a note written by Secretary of State Richard Olney to Britain informing them that the British actions were trespassing the Monroe Doctrine and that

the U.S. controlled things in the Americas.
    - The British replied by stating that the affair was none of the U.S's business.
    - Cleveland angrily replied by appropriating a committee to devise a new boundary and if Great Britain would not accept it, then the U.S. implied it would fight for it.
    - Britain didn't want to fight because of the damage to its merchant trade that could result, the Dutch Boers of South Africa were about to go to war and Germany's Kaiser Wilhem was beginning to challenge Britain's power.
    - Seeing the benefits of an alliance with the "Yankees," Great Britain began a period of "patting the eagle's head," instead of America "twisting the lion's tale." This was referred to as the Great Rapprochement or reconciliation.

II. Spurning the Hawaiian Pear

1. From the 1820s, when the first U.S. missionaries came, the United States had always liked the Hawaiian Islands.
2. Treaties signed in 1875 and 1887 guaranteed commercial trade and U.S. rights to priceless Pearl Harbor, while Hawaiian sugar was very profitable. But in 1890, the McKinley Tariff raised the prices on this sugar, raising its price.
3. Americans felt that the best way to offset this was to annex Hawaii—a move opposed by its Queen Liliuokalani—but in 1893, desperate Americans in Hawaii revolted.
    - They succeeded, and Hawaii seemed ready for annexation, but Grover Cleveland became president again, investigated the coup, found it to be wrong, and delayed the annexation of Hawaii until he basically left office.
    - Cleveland was bombarded for stopping "Manifest Destiny," but his actions proved to be honorable for him and America.

III. Cubans Rise in Revolt

1. In 1895, Cuba revolted against Spain, citing years of misrule, and the Cubans torched their sugar cane fields in hopes that such destruction would either make Spain leave or America interfere (the American tariff of 1894 had raised prices on it anyway).
2. Sure enough, America supported Cuba, and the situation worsened when Spanish General Valeriano "Butcher" Weyler came to Cuba to crush the revolt and ended up putting many civilians into concentration camps that were terrible and killed many.
3. The American public clamored for action, especially when spurred on by the yellow press, but Cleveland would do nothing.
    - The Mystery of the Maine Explosion
    - The yellow presses competed against each other to come up with more sensational stories, and Hearst even sent artist Frederick Remington to draw pictures of often-fictional atrocities.
        - For example, he drew Spanish officials brutally stripping and searching an American woman, when in reality, Spanish women, not men,

        did such acts.
        - Then, suddenly, on February 9, 1898, a letter written by Spanish minister to Washington Dupuy de Lôme that ridiculed President McKinley was published by Hearst.
    - On February 15th of that year, the U.S. battleship U.S.S. Maine mysteriously exploded in Havana Harbor, killing 260 officers and men.
        - Despite an unknown cause, America was war-mad and therefore Spain received the blame.
        - Hearst called down to Cuba, “You supply the pictures, I’ll supply the story.”
        - Actually, what really happened was that an accidental explosion had basically blown up the ship—a similar conclusion to what Spanish investigators suggested—but America ignored them.
        - The American public wanted war, but McKinley privately didn’t like war or the violence, since he had been a Civil War major. In addition, Mark Hanna and Wall Street didn’t want war because it would upset business.
4. However, on April 11, 1898, the president sent his war message to Congress anyway, since: (1) war with Spain seemed inevitable, (2) America had to defend democracy, and (3) opposing a war could split the Republican party and America.
5. Congress also adopted the Teller Amendment, which proclaimed that when the U.S. had overthrown Spanish misrule, it would give the Cubans their freedom and not conquer it.

IV. Dewey’s May Day Victory at Manila

1. On paper, at least, the Spanish had the advantage over the U.S., since it had more troops and a supposedly better army, as well as younger (and seemingly more daring) generals.
2. Navy Secretary John D. Long and his assistant secretary, Theodore Roosevelt had modernized the U.S. navy, making it sleek and sharp.
    - On February 25, 1898, Roosevelt cabled Commodore George Dewey, commanding the American Asiatic Squadron at Hong Kong, and told him to take over the Philippines.
    - Dewey did so brilliantly, completely taking over the islands from the Spanish.
3. Dewey had naval control, but he could not storm the islands and its fortresses, so he had to wait for reinforcements, but meanwhile, other nations were moving their ships into Manila Harbor to protect their men.
    - The German navy defied American blockade regulations, and Dewey threatened the navy commander with war, but luckily, this episode blew over, due in part to the British assistance of America.
4. Finally, on August 13, 1898, American troops arrived and captured Manila, collaborating with Filipino insurgents, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, to overthrow the Spanish rulers.
5. On July 7, 1898, the U.S. annexed Hawaii (so that it could use the islands to support Dewey, supposedly), and Hawaii received full territorial status in 1900.

V. The Confused Invasion of Cuba

- The Spanish sent warships to Cuba, panicking Americans on the Eastern seaboard, and the fleet, commanded by Admiral Cervera, found refuge in Santiago harbor, Cuba.
    1. Then, it was promptly blockaded by a better American force.
- American ground troops, led by fat General William R. Shafter, were ill-prepared for combat in the tropical environment (i.e. they had woolen long underwear).
- The “Rough Riders,” a regiment of volunteers led by Theodore Roosevelt and Colonel Leonard Wood, rushed to Cuba and battled at El Caney stormed up San Juan Hill.
- Admiral Cervera was finally ordered to fight the American fleet, and his fleet was destroyed.
- On land, the American army, commanded by General Nelson A. Miles, met little resistance as they took over Puerto Rico.
- Soon afterwards, on August 12, 1898, Spain signed an armistice.
- Notably, if the Spaniards had held out for a few more months, they might have won, for the American army was plagued with dysentery, typhoid, and yellow fever.
    1. Finally, TR wrote a “round-robin” letter demanded that the U.S. government take the troops out before they all died.

VI. America’s Course (Curse?) of Empire

- In negotiations in Paris, America got Guam and Puerto Rico and freed Cuba, but the Philippines were a tough problem, since America couldn’t honorably give it back to Spain after decades of misrule, but the U.S. couldn’t just take it like an imperialistic nation.
- Finally, McKinley decided to keep the Philippines, even though they had been taken one day after the end of the war, but he did so because of popular public opinion and because it meshed well with business interests.
    1. The U.S. paid $20 million for the islands.
- Upon the U.S. taking of the Philippines, uproar broke out, since until now, the United States had mostly acquired territory from the American continent, and even with Alaska, Hawaii, and the other scattered islands, there weren’t many people living there.
- The Anti-Imperialist League sprang into being, firmly opposed to this new imperialism of America, and its members included Mark Twain, William James, Samuel Gompers, and Andrew Carnegie.
    1. Even the Filipinos wanted freedom, and denying that to them was un-American.
- However, expansionists cried that the Philippines could become another Hong Kong.
    1. British writer Rudyard Kipling wrote about “The White Man’s Burden,” urging America to keep the Philippines and “civilize them.”
- In the Senate, the treaty was almost not passed, but finally, William Jennings Bryan argued for its passage, saying that the sooner the treaty was passed, the sooner the U.S. could get rid of the Philippines. The treaty passed by only one vote.

VII. Perplexities in Puerto Rico and Cuba

- The Foraker Act of 1900 gave Puerto Ricans a limited degree of popular government, and in 1917, Congress granted Puerto Ricans full American citizenship.
    1. U.S. help also transformed Puerto Rico and worked wonders in sanitation, transportation, beauty, and education.
- In the Insular Cases, the Supreme Court barely ruled that the Constitution did not have full authority on how to deal with the islands (Cuba and Puerto Rico), essentially letting Congress do whatever it wanted with them. Basically, the cases said the island residents do not necessarily share the same rights as Americans.
- America could not improve Cuba that much however, other than getting rid of yellow fever with the help of General Leonard Wood and Dr. Walter Reed.
    1. In 1902, the U.S. did indeed walk away from Cuba, but it also encouraged Cuba to write and pass the Platt Amendment, which became their constitution.
    2. This amendment said that (1) the U.S. could intervene and restore order in case of anarchy, (2) that the U.S. could trade freely with Cuba, and (3) that the U.S. could get two bays for naval bases, notably Guantanamo Bay.

VIII. New Horizons in Two Hemispheres

- The Spanish-American War lasted only 113 days and affirmed America's presence as a world power.
- However, America's actions after the war made its German rival jealous and its Latin American neighbors suspicious.
- Finally, one of the happiest results of the war was the narrowing of the bloody chasm between the U.S. North and South, which had been formed in the Civil War.
    1. General Joseph Wheeler was given a command in Cuba.

IX. "Little Brown Brothers" in the Philippines

- The Filipinos had assumed that they would receive freedom after the Spanish-American War, but when they didn't they revolted against the U.S.
    1. The insurrection began on February 4, 1899, and was led by Emilio Aguinaldo, who took his troops into guerrilla warfare after open combat proved to be useless.
    2. Stories of atrocities abounded, but finally, the rebellion was broken in 1901 when U.S. soldiers invaded Aguinaldo's headquarters and captured him.
- President McKinley formed a Philippine Commission in 1899 to deal with the Filipinos, and in its second year, the organization was headed by amiable William Howard Taft, who developed a strong attachment for the Filipinos, calling them his "little brown brothers."
- The Americans tried to assimilate the Filipinos, but the islanders resisted; they finally got their independence on July 4, 1946.

X. Hinging the Open Door in China

- Following its defeat by Japan in 1894-1895, China had been carved into “spheres of influence” by the European powers.
- Americans were alarmed, as churches worried about their missionary strongholds while businesses feared that they would not be able to export their products to China.
- Finally, Secretary of State John Hay dispatched his famous Open Door note, which urged the European nations to keep fair competition open to all nations willing and wanting to participate. This became the “Open Door Policy.”
    1. All the powers already holding spots of China were squeamish, and only Italy, which had no sphere of influence of its own, accepted unconditionally.
    2. Russia didn’t accept it at all, but the others did, on certain conditions, and thus, China was “saved” from being carved up.
- In 1900, a super-patriotic group known as the “Boxers” started the Boxers’ Rebellion where they revolted and took over the capital of China, Beijing, taking all foreigners hostage, including diplomats.
- After a multi-national force broke the rebellion, the powers made China pay $333 million for damages, of which the U.S. eventually received $18 million.
- Fearing that the European powers would carve China up for good, now, John Hay officially asked that China not be carved.

XI. Imperialism or Bryanism in 1900?

- Just like four years before, it was McKinley sitting on his front porch and Bryan actively and personally campaigning, but Theodore Roosevelt’s active campaigning took a lot of the momentum away from Bryan’s.
- Bryan’s supporters concentrated on imperialism—a bad move, considering that Americans were tired of the subject, while McKinley’s supporters claimed that “Bryanism,” not imperialism, was the problem, and that if Bryan became president, he would shake up the prosperity that was in America at the time; McKinley won easily.

XII. TR: Brandisher of the Big Stick

- Six months later, a deranged murderer shot and killed William McKinley, making Theodore Roosevelt the youngest president ever at age 42.
    1. TR promised to carry out McKinley’s policies.
- Theodore Roosevelt was a barrel-chested man with a short temper, large glasses, and a stubborn mentality that always thought he was right.
    1. Born into a rich family and graduated from Harvard, he was highly energetic and spirited, and his motto was “Speak softly and carry

a big stick," or basically, "Let your actions do the talking."

- Roosevelt rapidly developed into a master politician, and a maverick uncontrollable by party machines, and he believed that a president should lead, which would explain the precedents that he would set during his term, becoming the "first modern president."

XIII. Building the Panama Canal

- TR had traveled to Europe and knew more about foreign affairs than most of his predecessors, and one foreign affair that he knew needed to be dealt with was the creation of a canal through the Central American isthmus.
    1. During the Spanish-American War, the battleship U.S.S. Oregon had been forced to steam all the way around the tip of South America to join the fleet in Cuba.
    2. Such a waterway would also make defense of the recent island acquisitions easier (i.e. Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii).
- However, the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Britain had forbade the construction by either country of a canal in the Americas without the other's consent and help, but that statement was nullified in 1901 by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty.
- A Nicaraguan route was one possible place for a canal, but it was opposed by the old French Canal Company that was eager to build in Panama and salvage something from their costly failure there.
    1. Their leader was Philippe Bunau-Varilla.
    2. The U.S. finally chose Panama after Mount Pelée erupted and killed 30,000 people.
- The U.S. negotiated a deal that would buy a 6-mile-wide strip of land in Panama for $10 million and a $250,000 annual payment, but this treaty was retracted by the Colombian government, which owned Panama.
    1. TR was furious, since he wanted construction of the canal to begin before the 1904 campaign.
- At this point, TR and the U.S. decided enough was enough and it was time for action.
    - On November 3, 1903, another revolution in Panama began with the killing of a Chinese civilian and a donkey, and when Colombia tried to stop it, the U.S., citing an 1846 treaty with Colombia, wouldn't let the Colombian fleet through.
    - Panama was thus recognized by the U.S., and fifteen days later, Bunau-Varilla, the Panamanian minister despite his French nationality, signed the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty that gave a widened (6x10 mi.) Panamanian zone to the U.S. for $15 million.
    - TR didn't actively plot to tear Panama away from Colombia, but it seemed like it to the public, and to Latin America, and his actions in this incident saw him suffer a political black eye.
- In 1904, construction began on the Panama Canal, but at first, problems with landslides and sanitation occurred.
    1. Colonel George Washington Goethals finally organized the workers while Colonel William C. Gorgas exterminated yellow fever.
    2. When TR visited Panama in 1906, he was the first U.S. president to leave

America for foreign soil.
3. The canal was finally finished and opened in 1914, at a cost of $400 million.

XIV. TR's Perversion of the Monroe Doctrine

- Latin American nations like Venezuela and the Dominican Republic were having a hard time paying their debts to their European debtors, so Britain and Germany decided to send a bit of force to South America to make the Latinos pay.
- TR feared that if European powers interfered in the Americas to collect debts, they might then stay in Latin America, a blatant violation of the Monroe Doctrine, so he issued his Roosevelt Corollary, which stated that in future cases of debt problems, the U.S. would take over and handle any intervention in Latin America on behalf of Europe, thus keeping Europe away and the Monroe Doctrine intact.
    1. It said in effect, no one could bully Latin America except the U.S.
    2. However, this corollary didn't bear too well with Latin America, whose countries once again felt that Uncle Sam was being overbearing.
        - When U.S. Marines landed in Cuba to bring back order to the island in 1906, this seemed like an extension of the "Bad Neighbor" policy.

XV. Roosevelt on the World Stage

- In 1904, Japan attacked Russia, since Russia had been in Manchuria, and proceeded to administer a series of humiliating victories until the Japanese began to run short on men.
    1. Therefore, they approached Theodore Roosevelt to facilitate a peace treaty.
    2. At Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in 1905, both sides met, and though both were stubborn (Japan wanted all of the strategic island of Sakhalin while the Russians disagreed), in the end, TR negotiated a deal in which Japan got half of Sakhalin but no indemnity for its losses.
    3. For this, and his mediation of North African disputes in 1906 through an international conference at Algeciras, Spain, TR received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.
- However, due to the Russo-Japanese incident, America lost two allies in Russia and Japan, neither of which felt that it had received its fair share of winnings.

XVI. Japanese Laborers in California

- After the war, many Japanese immigrants poured into California, and fears of a "yellow peril" arose again.
- The showdown came in 1906 after the San Francisco earthquake when the city decreed that, due to lack of space, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean children should attend a special school.
    1. Instantly, this became an international issue, but TR settled it eventually.
    2. San Francisco would not displace students while Japan would keep its laborers in Japan.

- To impress the Japanese, Roosevelt sent his entire battleship fleet, “The Great White Fleet,” around the world for a tour, and it received tremendous salutes in Latin America, New Zealand, Hawaii, Australia, and Japan, helping relieve tensions.
- The Root-Takahira Agreement pledged the U.S. and Japan to respect each other’s territorial possessions in the Pacific and to uphold the Open Door Policy in China.

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