

PART FIVE: Struggling for Justice at Home and Abroad, 1901–1945

DBQ 9

The United States as World Power, 1895–1920

Directions: In this DBQ, you must compose an essay that uses both your interpretation of Documents A–H and your own outside knowledge of the period mentioned in this question.

Which factor, self-interest or idealism, was more important in driving American foreign policy in the years 1895–1920?

Use these documents and your knowledge of the period 1895–1920 to compose your answer.

Document A

Source: *Washington Post* editorial, 1896.

A new consciousness seems to have come upon us—the consciousness of strength—and with it a new appetite, the yearning to show our strength. . . . Ambition, interest, land hunger, pride, the mere joy of fighting, whatever it may be, we are animated by a new sensation. We are face to face with a strange destiny. The taste of Empire is in the mouth of the people even as the taste of blood is in the jungle. It means an Imperial policy, the Republic renascent, taking her place with the armed nations.

Document B

Source: Senator Albert J. Beveridge, speech, Indianapolis, September 16, 1898.

[T]oday we are raising more than we can consume. Today we are making more than we can use. Today our industrial society is congested; there are more workers than there is work; there is more capital than there is investment. . . . Therefore we must find new markets for our produce, new occupation for our capital, new work for our labor. . . .

The commercial supremacy of the Republic means that this Nation is to be the sovereign factor in the peace of the world. For the conflicts of the future are to be conflicts of trade—struggles for markets—commercial wars for existence. . . . We cannot fly from our world duties; it is ours to execute the purpose of a fate that has driven us to be greater than our small intentions. We cannot retreat from any soil where Providence has unfurled our banner; it is ours to save that soil for liberty and civilization.

Document C

Source: William Graham Sumner, university professor, essay in *War and Other Essays*, 1919 (first published in 1898).

There is not a civilized nation which does not talk about its civilizing mission just as grandly as we do. . . . We assume that what we like and practice, and what we think better, must come as a welcome blessing to Spanish-Americans and Filipinos. This is grossly and obviously untrue. . . . They like their own ways, and if we appear amongst them as rulers, there will be social discord. . . . [The] reason why liberty, of which we Americans talk so much, is a good thing is that it means leaving people to live out their own lives in their own way, while we do the same.

Document D

Source: American Missionary Grace Roberts Teaching in China, 1903. (See text p. 643 for full-size photograph.)



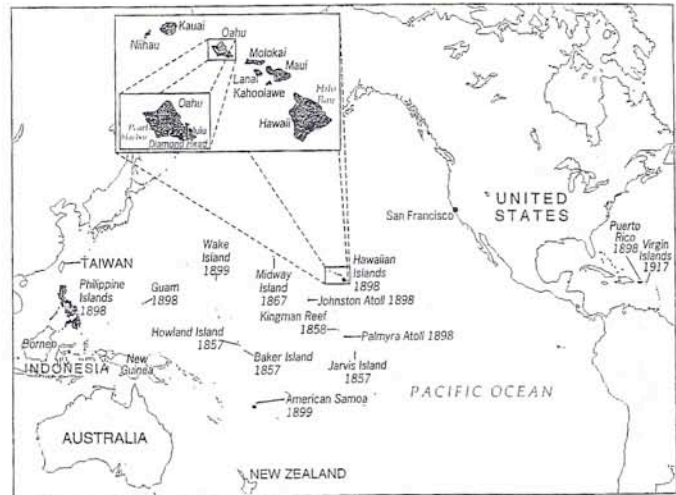
Document E

Source: President Theodore Roosevelt, annual message to Congress, December 6, 1904.

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.

Document F

Source: United States Expansion, 1857–1917. (See text p. 630 for full-size map.)



Document G

Source: President Woodrow Wilson to Congress, April 2, 1917.

I officially laid before you [in February, 1917] the extraordinary announcement of the Imperial German Government that . . . it was [Germany's] purpose to put aside all restraints of law and humanity and use its submarines to sink every vessel that sought to approach either the ports of Great Britain . . . or any of the ports controlled by the enemies of Germany. . . .

It is a war against all nations. . . . Our motive will not be revenge or the victorious assertion of the physical might of the nation, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion. . . .

It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful people into war . . . , [but] the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own Governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.

Document H

Source: Contentious Nuptials, 1918.

