**Manifest Destiny and the Mexican War**

Directions: Use the accompanying documents as a resource in completing a chart that lists arguments for and against American expansion to the Pacific in the 1840s, even at the expense of war with Mexico.

**Arguments for American Expansion**

**Arguments Against American Expansion**

Supporters of American expansion in the 1840s argued that U.S. territorial acquisitions and the decision to go to war with Mexico…

**FQ: Compare and Contrast both the views of both contemporary Americans in the 1840s and modern historians towards American Westward Expansion and involvement in the Mexican War.**

Yet opponents at the time and historians argued that expansion and the Mexican War…

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**Arguments for American Expansion**

* (Doc. #1) It will reduce the likelihood of future wars and conflicts, makes the U.S. safer
* (Doc. #2) It was God’s will for the U.S. to spread liberty and self-government, aka “Democratic Ideals”
* (Doc. #3) Bring a superior civilization to places like Mexico that were full of tyranny and were undeveloped.
* (Doc. #4) Secured economic prosperity and growth for the nation
* (Doc. #9) each successive addition of land fueled the appetite for land

**Arguments Against American Expansion**

* (Doc. #4) Expansion was unnecessary because of the selfish economic motivations of the U.S.
* (Doc. #5) U.S. had no right to take land from other nations, rather the U.S. had a responsibility to help less developed nations
* (Doc. #6) War was simply fought to spread the institution of slavery and driven by Southerners
* (Doc. #7) Was unnecessary because Mexico was not a threat to the U.S. and was also unconstitutional
* (Doc. #8) The war created bitterness and weakened relations with Mexico and other Latin American countries
* (Doc. #9) Expansion fueled existing feelings of racial superiority

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Supporters of American expansion in the 1840s argued that U.S. territorial acquisitions and the decision to go to war with Mexico would bring about **peace** and **spread democratic ideals** and was justified through a belief in American **exceptionalism**, **God’s will** and **economic gain**.

Yet opponents at the time and historians argued that expansion and the Mexican War was driven by **economic greed**, a **desire to spread the institution of slavery** and **feelings of racial superiority** and at the same time was **unconstitutional**, went **against American ideals of self-determination** and **weakened America’s relationships** with Mexico and other neighboring Latin American countries.