

**Week 3 DBQ: Imperialism, the Spanish-American War, Dollar Diplomacy, Americans in Central America & the Caribbean, and the Mexican Revolution**

**Directions: Read and annotate the excerpts below, then answer the questions for each selection by coloring in the correct answer choice on the bubble sheet provided.**



*In this 1899 cartoon published, Uncle Sam lectures his new students: The Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and, Cuba. Past and potentially future U.S. acquisitions fill the rest of the classroom.*

**"American Empire," in *The American Yawp*, Vol. II, pp. 83-84**

The word empire might conjure images of ancient Rome, the Persian Empire, or the British Empire - powers that depended variously on military conquest, colonization, occupation, or direct resource exploitation - but empires can take many forms and imperial processes can occur in many contexts. One hundred years after the United States won its independence from the British Empire, had it become an empire of its own?

In the decades after the American Civil War, the United States exerted itself in the service of American interests around the world. In the Pacific, Latin America, and the Middle East, and most explicitly in the Spanish-American War and under the foreign policy of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, the United States expanded on a long history of exploration, trade, and cultural exchange to practice something that looked remarkably like empire. The question of American imperialism, then, seeks to understand not only direct American interventions in such places as Cuba, the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, and Puerto Rico, but also the deeper history of American engagement with the wider world and the subsequent ways in which American economic, political, and cultural power has shaped the actions, choices, and possibilities of other groups and nations.

Meanwhile, as the United States asserted itself abroad, it acquired increasingly higher numbers of foreign peoples at home. European and Asian immigrants poured into the United States. In a sense, imperialism and immigration raised similar questions about American identity: Who was an "American," and who wasn't? What were the nation's obligations to foreign powers and foreign peoples? And how accessible - and how fluid - should American identity be for newcomers? All such questions confronted late-nineteenth-century Americans with unprecedented urgency.

**1. Why was answering questions about American identity so important during the American imperial years?**

- Because the U.S. and its place in the world was changing so quickly that the country had to adapt
- Because new immigrants could not speak English
- Because administering foreign territories required a lot of money.

### ***"The Road to Imperialism," from The American Yawp, Vol. II, p. 84***

American interventions in Mexico, China, and the Middle East reflected the United States' new eagerness to intervene in foreign governments to protect American economic interests abroad.

In 1899, secretary of state John Hay articulated the Open Door Policy, which called for all Western powers to have equal access to Chinese markets. Hay feared that imperial powers - Japan, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia - planned to carve China into spheres of influence. It was in the economic interest of American business to maintain China for free trade. The following year, in 1900, American troops joined a multinational force that intervened to prevent the closing of trade by putting down the Boxer Rebellion, a movement opposed to foreign businesses and missionaries operating in China. President McKinley sent the U.S. Army without consulting Congress, setting a precedent for U.S. presidents to order American troops to action around the world under their executive powers... The United States acquired its first Pacific territories with the Guano Islands Act of 1856. Guano - collected bird excrement - was a popular fertilizer integral to industrial farming. The act authorized and encouraged Americans to venture into the seas and claim islands with guano deposits for the United States. These acquisitions were the first insular, unincorporated territories of the United States: they were neither part of a state nor a federal district, and they were not on the path to ever attain such a status. The act, though little known, offered a precedent for future American acquisitions.

#### ***2. Why did John Hay insist on an "Open Door" policy regarding China?***

- a. Because China represented a huge market for U.S. goods
- b. Because European powers would have a trade advantage if they were able to take over China
- c. Because the U.S. needed to protect its business interests and missionaries in China against Chinese aggression
- d. All of the above

#### ***3. The Boxer Rebellion tried to eject \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from China.***

- a. Soldiers and Tradesmen
- b. Businesses and Missionaries
- c. Diplomats and Inventors
- d. Blacks and Latinos

### ***"The Charge up San Juan Hill" by Richard Harding Davis, 1898***

The situation was desperate. Our troops could not retreat, as the trail for two miles behind them was wedged with men. They could not remain where they were for they were being shot to pieces. There was only one thing they could do - go forward and take the San Juan hills by assault...Colonel Roosevelt, on horseback, broke from the woods behind the line of the Ninth, and finding its men lying in his way, shouted: "If you don't wish to go forward, let my men pass, please." The junior officers of the Ninth, with their Negroes [the Ninth and Tenth were black infantry units], instantly sprang into line with the Rough Riders, and charged at the blue block-house on the right. I speak of Roosevelt first because, with General Hawkins, who led Kent's division, notably the Sixth and Sixteenth Regulars he was, without a doubt, the most conspicuous figure in the charge...Roosevelt, mounted high on horseback, and charging the rifle-pits at a gallop and quite alone, made you feel that you would like to cheer. He wore on his sombrero a blue polka-dot handkerchief, a 'la Havelock, which, as he advanced, floated out straight behind his head, like a guidon.

They had no glittering bayonets, they were not massed in regular array. There were a few men in advance, bunched together, and creeping up a steep, sunny hill, the top of which roared and flashed with flame. The men held their guns pressed across their breasts and stepped heavily as climbed. Behind these first few, spreading out like a fan, were single lines of men, slipping and scrambling in the smooth grass, moving forward with difficulty, as though they were wading waist high through water, moving slowly, carefully, with strenuous effort. It was much more wonderful than any swinging charge could have been. They walked to greet death at even step, many of them, as they advanced, sinking suddenly or pitching forward and disappearing in the high grass, but the others waded on, stubbornly, fanning a thin blue line that kept creeping higher and higher up the hill. It was as inevitable as the rising tide. It was a miracle of self-sacrifice, a triumph of bulldog courage...The fire of the Spanish riflemen, who still stuck bravely to their posts, doubled and trebled in fierceness, the crests of the hills crackled and burst in amazed roars, and rippled with waves of tiny flame. But the blue line crept steadily up and on, and then, near the top, the broken fragments gathered together with a sudden burst of speed, the Spaniards appeared for a moment outlined against the sky and poised for instant flight, fired a last volley and fled before the swift moving wave that leaped and

sprang up after them. The men of the Ninth and the Rough Riders rushed to the blockhouse together, the men of the Sixth, of the Third, of the Tenth Cavalry, of Sixth and Sixteenth Infantry, fell on their faces along the crest of the trench beyond, and opened upon the vanishing enemy. They drove the yellow silk flags of the cavalry and the Stars and Stripes of their country into soft earth of the trenches, and then sank down and looked back at the road they had climbed and swung their hats in the air. And from far overhead, from these few figures perched on the Spanish rifle-pits, with their flags planted among the empty cartridges of the enemy, and overlooking the walls of Santiago, came, faintly, the sound of a tired, broken cheer.

**4. Why was Theodore Roosevelt so noteworthy in this account of the Battle for San Juan Hill?**

- a. Because he showed conspicuous bravery in the action, leading his men from the front and charging the enemy
- b. Because he was a famous politician who probably should not have been there
- c. Because he was an arrogant leader who demanded that the fight be conducted his way or not at all

**5. Who joined Roosevelt's Rough Riders in the assault on San Juan Hill?**

- a. Mexican cavalry
- b. the Ninth Colored Infantry (Buffalo Soldiers)
- c. Spanish conquistadors

***William McKinley on American Expansionism***

**General James Rusling, "Interview with President William McKinley," *The Christian Advocate* 22 January 1903, 17**

... 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 Hongkong, 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.

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!

**6. Why was it imperative that Admiral Dewey destroy the Spanish fleet at Manila?**

- a. Because Manila was crucial to the American war plan
- b. Because the Spanish fleet was challenging American superiority
- c. Because if he lost, there was nowhere for him to retreat to where he could repair his damage and resupply

**7. Pres. McKinley claimed the United States was \_\_\_\_\_ by winning the Philippines from Spain.**

- a. vindicated
- b. embarrassed
- c. surprised

8. *McKinley decided to keep the Philippines because \_\_\_\_\_.*
- they could not give them back to Spain after Americans had fought to get them
  - they could not give them away to a European competitor/rival
  - Filipinos were unfit to rule themselves
  - all of the above

### ***"War is a Racket,"***

***Excerpt from a speech (1933) from Major General Smedley D. Butler, USMC***

War is just a racket. A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of people. Only a small inside group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses.

I believe in adequate defense at the coastline and nothing else. If a nation comes over here to fight, then we'll fight. The trouble with America is that when the dollar only earns 6 percent over here, then it gets restless and goes overseas to get 100 percent. Then the flag follows the dollar and the soldiers follow the flag.

I wouldn't go to war again as I have done to protect some lousy investment of the bankers. There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes and the other is the Bill of Rights. War for any other reason is simply a racket.

There isn't a trick in the racketeering bag that the military gang is blind to. It has its "finger men" to point out enemies, its "muscle men" to destroy enemies, its "brain men" to plan war preparations, and a "Big Boss" Super-Nationalistic-Capitalism.

It may seem odd for me, a military man to adopt such a comparison. Truthfulness compels me to. I spent thirty- three years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major-General. And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all the members of the military profession, I never had a thought of my own until I left the service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of higher-ups. This is typical with everyone in the military service.

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912 (where have I heard that name before?). I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.

During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.

9. ***Gen. Butler considers war a racket because \_\_\_\_\_.***
- The masses profit from it
  - The reasons for war are seldom what they are made out to be
  - The government sends men off to fight simply to protect big business' profits
  - Gangsters decide who fights where

10. ***What are the two reasons that Butler feels justify going to war?***

- Loot and ladies
- To protect American homes and to defend the Bill of Rights
- National expansion
- To protect overseas business interests

11. ***Why does Butler consider himself to have been a better gangster than Al Capone?***

- Because he operated on three continents, as opposed to Capone's three districts
- Because he had Marine Corps firepower at his disposal
- Because Marines just do everything better than other people
- Because Capone could not get a passport to operate overseas

***Excerpt from "Praise of the Strenuous Life" by Theodore Roosevelt, 1899***

We of this generation do not have to face a task such as our fathers faced, but we have our tasks, and woe to us if we fail to perform them! We cannot, if we would, play the part of China, and be content to rot by inches in ignoble ease within our borders, taking no interest in what goes on beyond them; sunk in a scrambling commercialism; heedless of the higher life, the life of aspiration, of toil and risk; busying ourselves only with the wants of our bodies for the day; until suddenly we should find, beyond a shadow of question, what China has already found, that in this world the nation that has trained itself to a career of unwarlike and isolated ease is bound in the end to go down before other nations which have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities. If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play a great part in the world. We cannot avoid meeting great issues. All that we can determine for ourselves is whether we shall meet them well or ill. Last year we could not help being brought face to face with the problem of war with Spain. All we could decide was whether we should shrink like cowards from the contest or enter into it as beseemed a brave and high-spirited people; and, once in, whether failure or success should crown our banners. So it is now. We cannot avoid the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. All we can decide is whether we shall meet them in a way that will redound to the national credit. or whether we shall make of our dealings with these problems a dark and shameful page in our history. To refuse to deal with them at all merely amounts to dealing with them badly. We have a given problem to solve. If we undertake the solution there is, of course, always danger that we may solve it aright, but to refuse to undertake the solution simply renders it certain that we cannot possibly solve it aright.

***12. The excerpt can be summed up as what?***

- a. Roosevelt's advice to young men to be more masculine
- b. A warning that weakness will make us look like China
- c. A justification for American imperialism abroad
- d. A guarantee that American might can win in any contest

***13. For Roosevelt, the best way to deal with the challenges faced by an America with growing prominence in the world is what?***

- a. With help from the League of Nations
- b. By shrinking from the task and letting other nations take the lead
- c. By facing the challenges of leadership head on, for good or bad
- d. By adopting a policy like that of the Chinese and becoming a hermit kingdom

***Excerpt from "A Denunciation of U.S. Policy" by the American Anti-Imperialist League, 1899***

We earnestly condemn the policy of the present National Administration in the Philippines. It seeks to extinguish the spirit of 1776 in those islands. We deplore the sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, whose bravery deserves admiration even in an unjust war. We denounce the slaughter of the Filipinos as a needless horror. We protest against the extension of American sovereignty by Spanish methods. We demand the immediate cessation of the war against liberty, begun by Spain and continued by us. We urge that Congress be promptly convened to announce to Filipinos our purpose to concede to them the independence for which they have long fought and which of right is theirs.

The United States have always protested against the doctrine of international law which permits the subjugation of the weak by the strong. A self-governing state cannot accept sovereignty over an unwilling people. The United States cannot act upon the ancient heresy that might makes right...We hold, with Abraham Lincoln, that "no man is good enough to govern any man without the other's consent. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government, but when he governs himself and also governs another man, is more than self-government - that is despotism. Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men in all lands. Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it." We cordially invite the cooperation of all men and women who remain loyal to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

***14. The American Anti-Imperialist League accuses the U.S. of doing what in the Philippines?***

- a. Behaving just like the Spanish that we had kicked out of the Philippines
- b. Not using enough American service men to take control of the country
- c. Continuing the Spirit of 1776 that birthed our own free nation