

“REMEMBER THE MAINE!” THE EXPLOSION OF THE U.S.S. MAINE

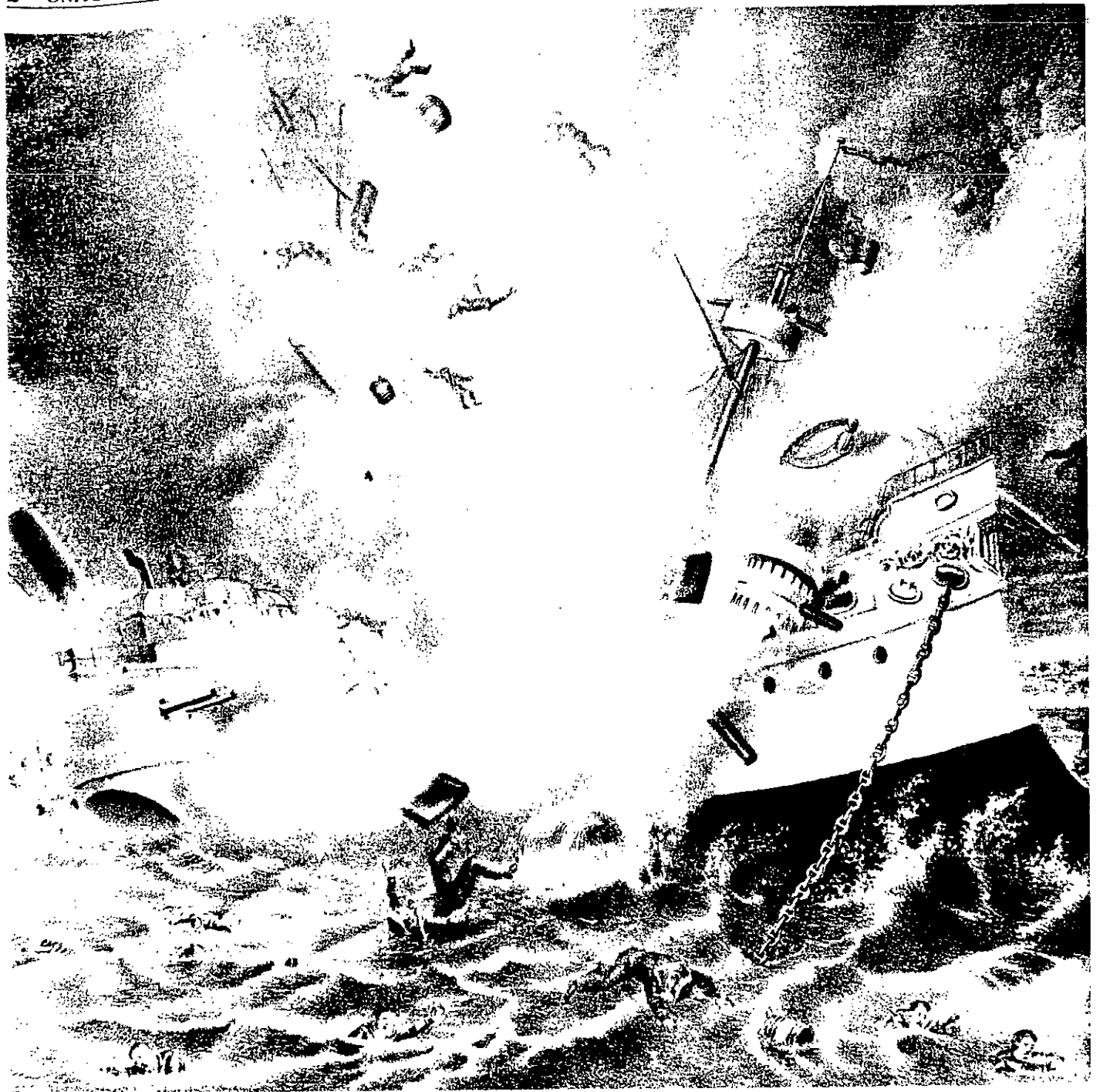
Directions: Newspapers are an important source for studying history. Shown here is the front page of the *New York Journal* for February 17, 1898. Read the selection below and study the newspaper headline. Then answer the questions that follow.

On February 17, 1898, the American battleship *Maine* was blown up in the harbor of Havana, Cuba. For several years, Cuba had been fighting for its independence from Spain. President McKinley had tried to keep the United States out of this war. He had sent the *Maine* to Havana only to protect American citizens there. Shortly after the *Maine* exploded and sunk, several American newspapers reported the event and placed all the blame on Spain. These newspapers, including the *New York Journal*, stirred up bitter feelings among Americans. As a result, members of Congress who favored Cuba were able to force President McKinley to declare war on Spain.



1. What facts about the sinking of the *Maine* are reported in this cover from the *New York Journal*?
2. What opinions about the sinking of the *Maine* are expressed in this cover from the *New York Journal*?

3. Why do you think newspapers like the *New York Journal* had so much influence in the late 1800s?



Destruction of the battleship Maine



CRITICAL THINKING

Drawing Conclusions: The Explosion of the *Maine*

CHAPTER
18

The explosion of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor touched off the Spanish-American War. Speculation as to the cause of the explosion, which was never precisely determined, became a national obsession. Possible causes of the explosion included a coal fire caused by inferior coal or improper storage; a mine planted on board by an intruder who eluded the ship's security; a mine planted by Spain at the spot where Spanish authorities instructed the *Maine* to anchor; or, a floating mine placed by Cuban insurgents.

Being able to draw conclusions from a variety of opinions will enhance your understanding of a complex issue.



Read the excerpts below, noting each commentator's conclusions about the explosion. Then answer the questions that follow on the back of this paper or on a separate sheet of paper.

"There is an intense difference of opinion as to the cause of the blowing up of the *Maine*. In this, as in everything else, the opinion of the individual is determined by his original bias. If he is a conservative, he is sure that it was an accident; if he is a jingo, he is equally sure that it was by design."
—Secretary of the Navy John Long

"I don't propose to be swept off my feet by the catastrophe. My duty is plain. We must learn the truth and endeavor, if possible, to fix the responsibility. The country can afford to withhold its judgment and not strike an avenging blow until the truth is known. The Administration will go on preparing for war, but still hoping to avert it."
—President William McKinley

"The *Maine* was sunk by an act of dirty treachery on the part of the Spaniards I believe."
—Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt

"The cause of the blowing up of the ship will not be known until divers go down and examine the wreck. If their investigation shows that the indentation of the hull is inward, the conclusion that the magazine [ammunition storage room] was exploded by a bomb or torpedo placed beneath the vessel is inevitable. If the indentation is outward, it will be indicated that the first explosion was in the magazine."
—New York World Reporter Sylvester Scovel

"I think the explosion occurred on the port side . . . under the ship. . ."
—Ensign Wilfred Powelson, Navy Investigator

"I have no knowledge as to what the findings of this court will be but I do not fear anything which will reflect on the *Maine*."
—Captain Charles Sigsbee, Captain of the *Maine*

1. Which three people seem inclined to believe that the destruction of the *Maine* was the result of sabotage? What was the basis for each man's opinion?
2. In Secretary Long's opinion, what determined each American's opinion of the cause of the explosion?
3. Why do you think President McKinley believed the country should prepare for war before finding out if war was justified?

\$50,000 REWARD.—WHO DESTROYED THE MAINE—\$50,000 REWARD.

NEW YORK JOURNAL

AND ADVERTISER.

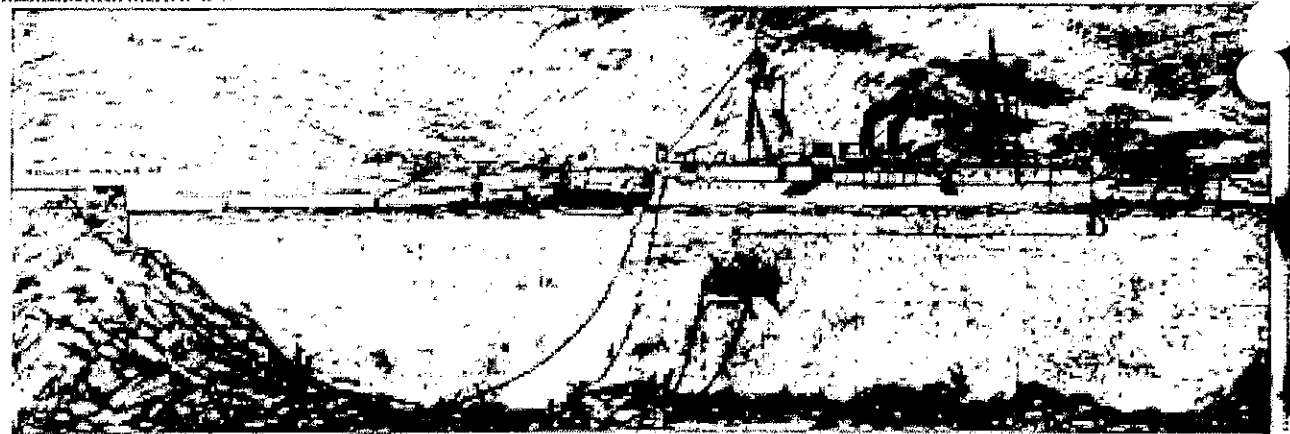
DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY.

\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
For the Detection of the
Perpetrator of
the Maine Outrage!

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt
Convinced the Explosion of
the War Ship Was Not
an Accident.

\$50,000!
\$50,000 REWARD!
For the Detection of the
Perpetrator of
the Maine Outrage!

The Journal Offers \$50,000 Reward for the
Connection of the Criminals Who Sent
258 American Sailors to Their Death.
Naval Officers Unanimous That
the Ship Was Destroyed
on Purpose.



NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE.

Washington, Feb. 15.—(Special Telegrams.)—The United States Navy Department today announced that the explosion of the Maine at Havana, Cuba, on Feb. 15, 1898, was the result of a Spanish mine. The department's report, which is the first official statement on the subject, is based on the findings of a board of inquiry which was organized by the department in 1899. The board's report, which was published in 1900, concluded that the explosion was caused by a mine which was planted by the Spanish in the harbor of Havana. The department's new report, which is based on a re-examination of the evidence, confirms the findings of the board of inquiry. It states that the mine was planted by the Spanish in the harbor of Havana, and that it was exploded by the Spanish on Feb. 15, 1898. The department's report also states that the explosion of the Maine was the result of a Spanish mine, and that the Spanish were responsible for the destruction of the ship. The department's report is the first official statement on the subject since the board of inquiry's report in 1900. It is a significant development in the investigation of the Maine disaster, and it provides a clear and definitive answer to the question of what caused the explosion. The department's report is a landmark document in the history of the investigation, and it is a testament to the thoroughness and honesty of the department's inquiry. It is a document that should be read by all who are interested in the history of the Maine disaster, and it is a document that should be read by all who are interested in the history of the United States Navy. The department's report is a landmark document in the history of the investigation, and it is a testament to the thoroughness and honesty of the department's inquiry. It is a document that should be read by all who are interested in the history of the Maine disaster, and it is a document that should be read by all who are interested in the history of the United States Navy.

THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR: THE UNITED STATES BECOMES A WORLD POWER

The Spanish-American War lasted only about ten weeks in 1898. However, the war had far-reaching effects for both the United States and Spain.



"Rough Rider Roosevelt"
<http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.php/cph.3g02471>

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Causes of the War

The conflict had complex beginnings. By the 1890s, Cuba had unsuccessfully battled Spain for independence for many years. In 1895, the Cuban revolutionary José Martí led an expedition to the island, attempting to seize power from Spain.

As a result of U.S. economic interests in Cuba, the U.S. government sought to stabilize the situation. An agreement was negotiated between the United States and Spain by which Cuba would become self-governing on January 1, 1898.

Events derailed this plan. Following a January riot in Havana, President William McKinley sent the USS Maine to Havana to protect U.S. citizens and interests. On February 15, an explosion sank the Maine, killing 266 men on board.

On April 19, Congress passed the Teller Amend-

ment, which said that the United States would not establish permanent control over Cuba. The United States declared war on Spain on April 25.

The War

Although Cuba played a key role in the start of the war, battles between the U.S. and Spain took place around the world. In fact, the first hostilities took place in the Philippines on May 1, in the Battle of Manila Bay. Fighting did not occur in Cuba until June; a key battle took place on July 1. One of the leaders of U.S. forces in this battle was Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, who led a cavalry regiment known as the Rough Riders.

In May, U.S. troops landed in Puerto Rico, where they faced little Spanish opposition. By August 2, the Spanish and the Americans began to negotiate an end to the conflict, with the Spanish accepting the peace terms laid out by President McKinley.

Hostilities formally ended on August 12, 1898.

The Treaty of Paris, ending the Spanish-American War, was signed on December 10. Spain gave up Guam, Puerto Rico, its possessions in the West Indies, and the Philippines in exchange for a U.S. payment of \$20 million. The United States occupied Cuba but, as provided for in the Teller Amendment, did not try to annex it.

Media Coverage

The war helped fuel major changes in U.S. news media. U.S. newspapers covered the war with gusto. Technological innovations changed reportage and documentation. New technology that made it easier for newspapers to publish photographs allowed the papers to publish more illustrations and less text. Some reporters in the field in Cuba provided excellent, firsthand reporting. Reporters who used telegraphs as the basis for their stories, however, typically relied on secondhand information.

Major newspaper owners—including Joseph Pulitzer of the *New York World* and William Randolph Hearst of the *New York Journal*—viewed public interest in the war as an opportunity to sell newspapers. The papers, in a circulation war, featured sensational coverage and attention-grabbing photographs of events in Cuba. Although the cause of the explosion of the USS *Maine* was unknown, for example, New York newspapers blamed Spain. Historians once held that biased coverage of the war, often referred to as yellow journalism, was a cause of the war. Today, however, historians find less evidence for that claim.

At the time of the war's outbreak, film was a new medium, and the conflict became a popular topic. Short films showed such scenes as servicemen exercising, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders on their horses, and funeral processions of dead soldiers. Motion pictures began to move from being

seen as a fad to an accepted method of documenting historical events—even though some films depicting events from the war were actually re-enactments.

Aftermath

Victory in the Spanish-American War transformed the United States, a former colony, to an imperial power. Many Americans saw this development as a natural part of the nation's "Manifest Destiny"—the belief that expansion of the United States was both right and inevitable.

Opposition to this new role also existed. In June 1898, the American Anti-Imperialist League was formed to fight annexation of the Philippines. Its members included former President Grover Cleveland, industrialist Andrew Carnegie, author Mark Twain, and labor leader Samuel Gompers.

A recognized war hero, Theodore Roosevelt instantly became credible as a political candidate. Roosevelt was elected governor of New York in 1898 and vice president of the United States in 1901. He became the youngest president to date later that year, when President McKinley was assassinated just months into his second term.

Policing the Caribbean and Central America

Resources: *History Alive—Pursuing American Ideals*

The Roosevelt Corollary and the Dominican Republic

In 1904, Germany demanded a port in Santo Domingo (now the Dominican Republic) as compensation for an unpaid loan from Santo Domingo. Theodore Roosevelt, who had become president after William McKinley's assassination, told Germany to stay out of the Western Hemisphere and said that the United States would take care of the problem. He announced the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine:

"Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the western hemisphere, the adherence of the U.S. to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of international police power."

Several recent developments led Roosevelt to declare that the United States would be the policeman of the Caribbean and Central America. Three European nations had blockaded Venezuela's ports, violating the Monroe Doctrine's declaration that Europe should not interfere in the Americas.

Meanwhile, an international court in The Hague in the Netherlands had ruled that a creditor nation that had used force would receive preference in repayment of a loan. Further, Roosevelt had recently gained the right to build the Panama Canal; he believed that any threat to the canal threatened U.S. strategic and economic interests.

To enforce order, forestall foreign intervention, and protect U.S. economic interests, the United States intervened in the Caribbean and Central America some 20 times over the next quarter century—namely, in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. Each intervention followed a common pattern: after intervening to restore order, U.S. forces became embroiled in the countries' internal political disputes. Before exiting, the United States would train and fund a police force and military to maintain order and would sponsor an election intended to put into power a strong leader supportive of American interests.

Unfortunately, the men who took power in many of these countries, such as Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Rafael Trujillo in the Dominican Republic, and Francois Duvalier in Haiti, established dictatorial rule. As a result, many Latin Americans were not happy with the United States as we were responsible for allowing these cruel leaders to come to power.

Intervention in Haiti

In July 1915, a mob murdered Haiti's seventh president in seven years. Vilbrun Guillaume Sam was dragged out of the French delegation and hacked to death. The mob then paraded his mutilated body through the streets of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

During the preceding 72 years, Haiti had experienced 102 revolts, wars, or coups; only one of the country's 22 presidents had served a complete term, and merely four died of natural causes. With the European powers engaged in World War I, President Woodrow

the United States took over the collection of customs duties. Americans also settled disputes, distributed food and medicine, censored the press, and ran military courts.

In addition, the United States helped build about a thousand miles of unpaved roads and a number of agricultural and vocational schools, and trained the Haitian army and police. It also helped to replace a government led by blacks with a government headed by mulattoes (people who have black and white ancestry).

The U.S. forced the Haitians to adopt a new constitution which gave American businessmen the right to own land in Haiti. While campaigning for vice president in 1920, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had served as assistant secretary of the Navy in the Wilson Administration, later boasted, "I wrote Haiti's Constitution myself, and if I do say it, it was a pretty good little Constitution."

Many Haitians resisted the American occupation. In the fall of 1918, Charlemagne Peralte, a former Haitian army officer, launched a guerrilla war against the U.S. Marines to protest a system of forced labor imposed by the United States to build roads in Haiti. In 1919, he was captured and killed by U.S. Marines, and his body was photographed against a door with a crucifix and a Haitian flag as a lesson to others.

During the first five years of the occupation, American forces killed about 2,250 Haitians. In December 1929, U.S. Marines fired on a crowd of protesters armed with rocks and machetes, killing 12 and wounding 23. The incident stirred international condemnation and ultimately led to the end of the American occupation.

By that time, Roosevelt had changed his mind. In 1928, he had criticized the Republican administrations for relying on the Marines and "gunboat diplomacy."

"Single-handed intervention by us in the internal affairs of other nations in this hemisphere must end," he wrote. After he became president in 1933, Roosevelt proclaimed a new policy toward Latin America. Under the **Good Neighbor** policy, he removed American Marines from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua.



Wilson feared that Germany might occupy Haiti and threaten the sea route to the Panama Canal. To protect U.S. interests and to restore order, the president sent 330 marines and sailors to Haiti.

This was not the first time that Wilson had sent marines into Latin America. Determined to "teach Latin Americans to elect good men," he had sent American naval forces into Mexico in 1913 during the Mexican Revolution. American Marines seized the city of Veracruz and imposed martial law (military rule).

The last marines did not leave Haiti until 1934. To ensure repayment of Haiti's debts,

CHAPTER 20 SKILL APPLICATION WORKSHEET 2



Analyzing Primary Sources: A New Policy Toward Latin America

Directions: In this worksheet you will review the development of the nation's policy toward Latin America. Extracts from the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine are reproduced below. Read the extracts carefully and consult your text to answer the questions that follow.

Monroe Doctrine, 1820

In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken part. . . . It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously threatened that we resent injury or make preparations for our defense.

We owe it, therefore, to . . . declare that we should consider any attempt on their part [Europe] to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety.

With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have . . . acknowledged, we could not view any interposition [interference] for the purpose of oppressing them . . . by any European power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904

Any country [in the Western Hemisphere] whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic

wrongdoing . . . may . . . ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States however reluctantly . . . to the exercise of an international police force.

1. Which document states that the United States has the right to intervene in the affairs of other countries in the Western Hemisphere? _____
2. According to that document, what conditions would make such intervention necessary? _____
3. Which document warns European countries not to intervene in the affairs of countries in the Western Hemisphere? _____

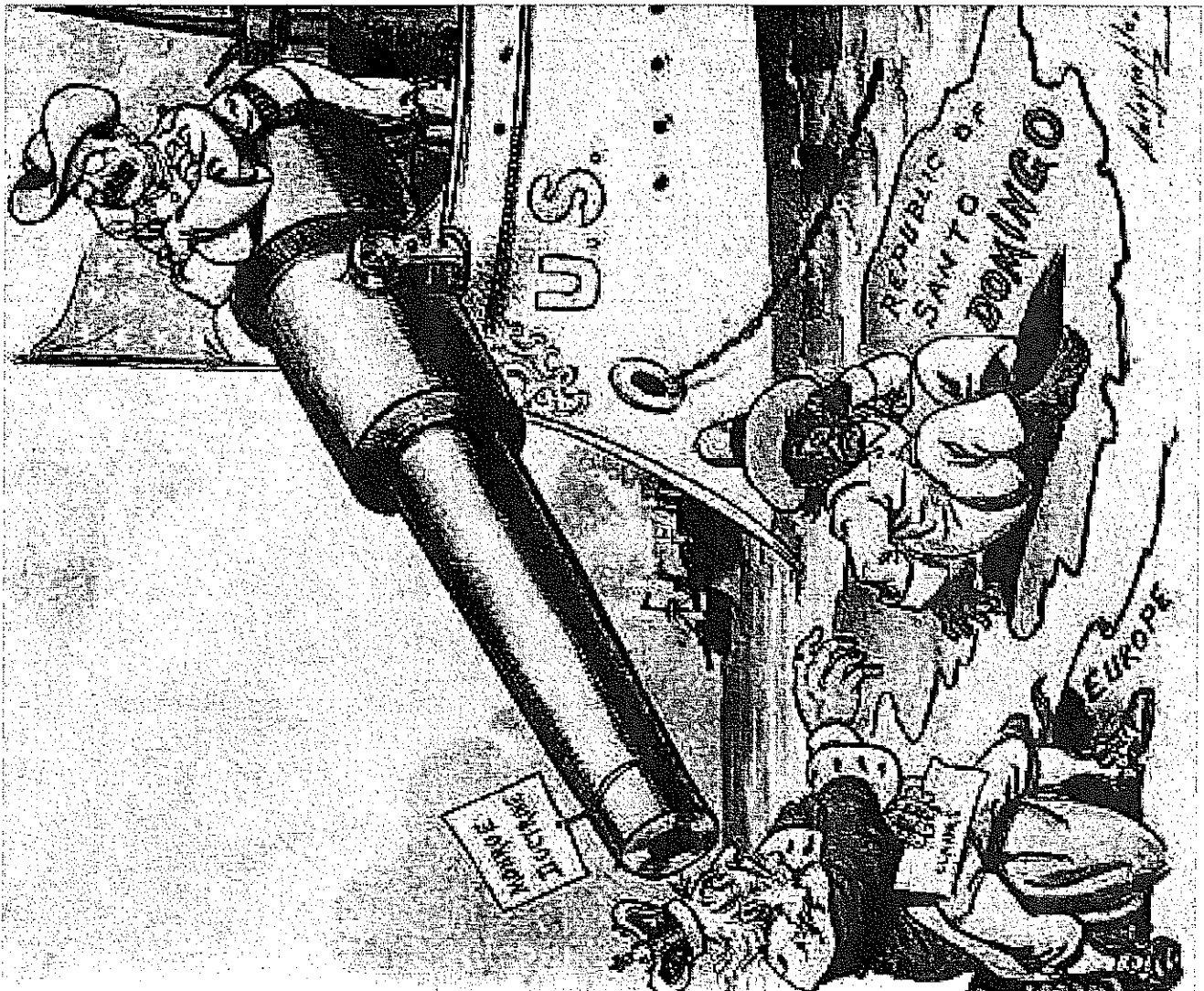
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CHAPTER 20 SKILL APPLICATION WORKSHEET 2

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4. According to the document, how would the United States view such intervention? _____

5. What is the main difference between the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary? _____

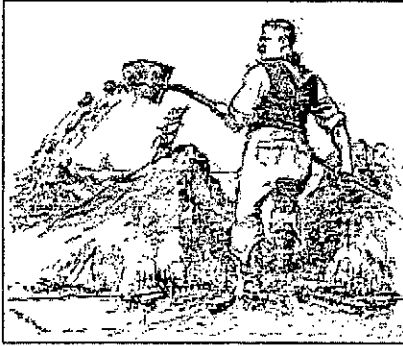


"A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama"

Resources: *History Alive—Pursuing American Ideals*

Overview

In the early 1900s, Latin America and the Caribbean were a special focus of U.S. foreign policy. The United States viewed this region as its own "backyard" and therefore a good place to exert its power and influence. In addition to Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, the United States intervened in other Latin American countries, notably Panama, Mexico, and Puerto Rico.



turned down the offer. In 1903, the United States encouraged a revolt in Panama. Roosevelt sent warships to prevent Colombian troops from intervening. The revolt succeeded, and the United States quickly recognized Panama as an independent nation.

Years later, President Roosevelt said that the people of Panama rebelled against Colombia "literally as one man." A senator quipped, "Yes, and the one man was Roosevelt." In 1911, Roosevelt said bluntly, "I took the Isthmus, started the canal and then left Congress not

to debate the canal but to debate me." In 1906, eager to see the greatest accomplishment of his presidency, he became the first president to travel overseas. He went to Panama at the height of the rainy season and took the controls of a 95-ton steam shovel.

The Panama Canal: An Engineering Feat

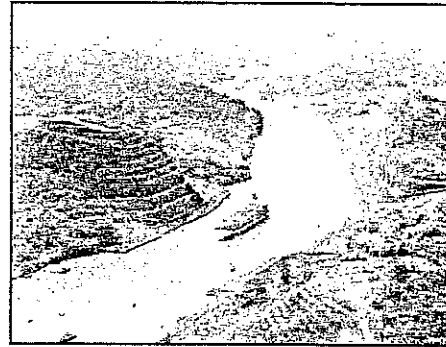
The new government soon signed a treaty allowing the United States to build the Panama Canal. The 51-mile canal was a marvel of engineering. At least 40,000 workers carved the "Big Ditch" through mountains, rainforests, and swamps. Thousands of workers fell prey to tropical diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. One worker complained that the mosquitoes were so thick "you get a mouthful with every breath."

The Canal Opens Opportunities and Controversies

After 10 years of construction, the canal opened to great fanfare on August 15, 1914. Roosevelt called it "the most important action I took in foreign affairs."

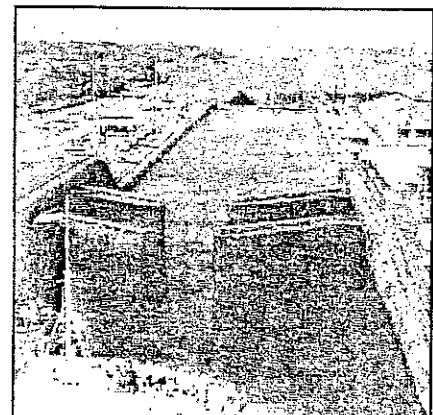
Although the canal helped to improve international trade, Roosevelt's actions in Panama angered many Latin Americans. In 1921, the United States tried to undo some of this damage by paying Colombia \$25 million. Colombia's government also had special access to the canal. For most of the 1900s, however, the United States treated the canal as its own property.

At the end of the 20th century, the canal was no longer essential to U.S. strategic or economic interests. Aircraft carriers and oil tankers were too large to pass through the canal's locks. Earlier in the century, however, the canal was regarded as a vital national interest. During World War II, the United States stationed 65,000 troops in Panama to protect the canal. A number of U.S. interventions in the Caribbean and Central America were undertaken largely to protect the canal from hostile powers.



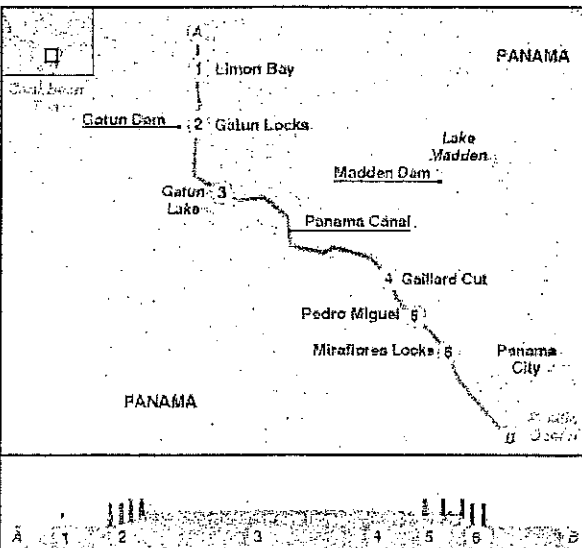
At noon on December 31, 1999, the United States voluntarily gave

up the Panama Canal, ending 85 years of control. Prior to the development of the atomic bomb and the landing of astronauts on the moon, the Panama Canal was perhaps this country's biggest engineering achievement. Fifty-one miles long, with about \$3.5 billion in bases and infrastructure, the canal links the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.



During the Spanish-American War, the battleship USS Oregon had to travel almost 14,000 miles around the tip of South America to get from California to Cuba. A canal would shorten the journey to just under 5,000 miles.

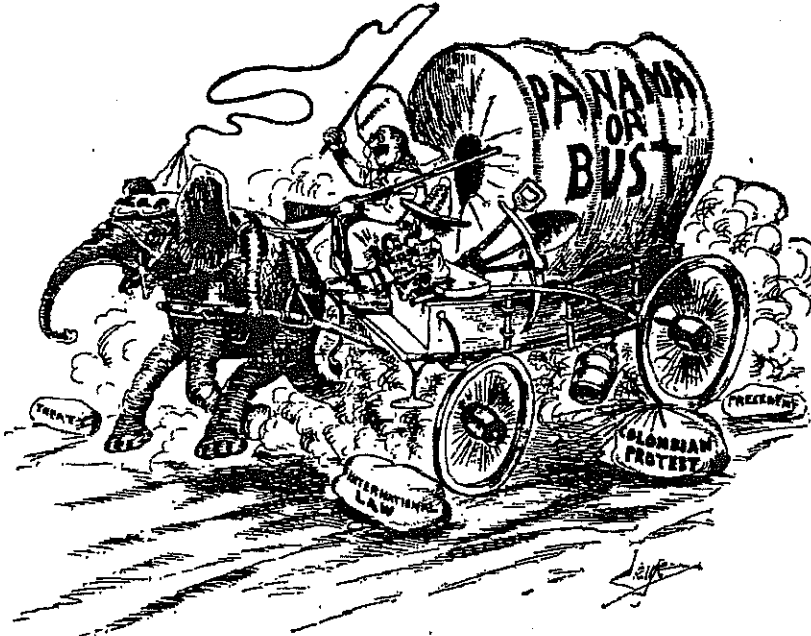
The narrow isthmus of Panama was part of Colombia. The Roosevelt administration tried to lease the land in Panama for a canal, but the Colombian government



Analyzing Political Cartoons

Stepping into Latin America

The following political cartoon appeared in an American newspaper in 1903.



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1. Who is the driver of the wagon?

What interests did this person have in Panama?

2. The figure seated next to the driver is labeled "Panama Republic." Why do you think the cartoonist chose to depict Panama as a child?

3. Explain the significance of the jug marked "\$10,000,000 for right of way."

4. What do the rocks represent? Why is the wagon shown going over them?

5. What is the cartoonist's point of view on United States relations with Panama? Explain.

Interpreting Cartoons: Panama Canal

Cartoon A



The News Reaches Bogotá

1. What does the cartoon depict?
2. Comment on the attitude of the man shovelling the dirt.
3. How would you interpret that cartoon if you were Colombian?
4. Briefly summarize the purpose of the cartoon.