Imperialists vs. Anti-Imperialists

The world is ours!
Or maybe it’s not.

Imperialism

• The creation and/or maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural, and territorial relationships, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination.

OK, so...

During the Spanish-American War, there were those who were in favor of imperialism and those who were opposed to imperialism.

Famous Imperialists

William McKinley
President (1897-1901)

Theodore Roosevelt
President (1901-1909)

Why Imperialism?

• If a weak country like Spain is allowed to keep colonies in Latin America, it is only a matter of time until powerful European countries like Germany, England, and France seek colonies in or near the US.

• We need to increase the size of our army and navy to intimidate European countries. This will prevent future wars.

• If we took over Spanish colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines) we could set up naval bases to protect our trading routes and allow ships to refuel.

• A war of conquest will unite the nation and create a sense of pride among all inhabitants of the US.

• Colonies would give us access to additional markets to take resources from and sell surplus products.

What are the two best reasons to support imperialism?

What are the two worst reasons to support imperialism?
Why Not Imperialism?

- The Atlantic Ocean provides lots of distance and security from European powers. Because of this isolation, no European country will ever interfere in our affairs.
- Increasing the size of our military is dangerous. Citizens of European countries with large militaries have fewer rights and freedoms than Americans. A large military is a threat to our democracy.
- European countries are constantly at war with each other over colonial possessions. Let's avoid such wars by not taking colonies.
- The United States has plenty of resources within its own borders. There is no need to go abroad.
- If we truly believe in democracy and that it is right for people to rule themselves, it would be hypocritical for us to control other people.
- Engaging in colonialism is morally repugnant and the equivalent of piracy.

What are the two best reasons to support anti-imperialism?

- Free trade
- The Monroe Doctrine

What are the two worst reasons to support anti-imperialism?

- Slavery
- The Spanish-American War

Philippine-American War

- 1899-1902
- People in the Philippines wanted independence
- America thought they should be under our control
- Between 34,000 and 1,000,000 people died
- The war officially ended in 1902, but the occupation and fighting continued for decades after
- Japanese occupied from 1941-45
- Philippines did not achieve independence until after WWII in 1946 with the Treaty of Manila
Why did America occupy the Philippines?

Emilio Aguinaldo

- A Filipino general, politician and leader of the *insurrectos* fighting Spain and the United States
- Also the first recognized president of the Philippines
- He lived to be 94 years old! (1869-1964)

Anti-Imperialist League

- Formed in 1898 to battle American annexation of the Philippines
- Prominent members included:
  - Samuel Clemens, Grover Cleveland, John Dewey, Samuel Gompers, etc.

Why were they opposed to imperialism?

Anti-Imperialists believed:

- The Atlantic Ocean provides lots of distance and security from European powers. Because of this isolation, no European country will ever interfere in our affairs.
- Increasing the size of our military is dangerous. Citizens of European countries with large militaries have fewer rights and freedoms than Americans. A large military is a threat to our democracy.
- European countries are constantly at war with each other over colonial possessions. Let’s avoid such wars by not taking colonies.
- The United States has plenty of resources within its own borders. There is no need to go abroad.
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What do you think?

But really, so what?

Why should we care about the Imperialist/Anti-Imperialist debate that took place during the times of the Spanish-American War?

Well, maybe because we can draw parallels between those debates and debates going on today about what America’s role should be in the world...

and if we understand the actions we took during the Spanish-American War, and the consequences of those actions, maybe our understanding will help us make better decisions and act more humanely today.

Let’s look at a current debate about US foreign policy.

The actions we’ve taken since 9-11, namely invading Afghanistan and Iraq, can be said to be part of what has been called, The Bush Doctrine.
What is *The Bush Doctrine*?

*The Bush Doctrine*

- Preemptive strikes against potential enemies
- Military primacy
- Promoting “democratic” regime change

People in favor of *The Bush Doctrine*

These folks would be kind of like the Imperialists during the Spanish-American War.

People who oppose *The Bush Doctrine*

But, of course, not everyone is a fan of *The Bush Doctrine*. 
These folks would be kind of like the Anti-Imperialists during the Spanish-American War.

You might be asking yourself, “why are we talking about this?”

Because this debate is happening

NOW!
What does Iran have to say about all of this?

Yellow Journalism

- Journalism that presents little or no legitimate well-researched news and instead uses eye-catching headlines to sell more newspapers.
- Exaggerations, scandal-mongering, sensationalism.

Your assignment, to be completed by the end of class tomorrow:

- With one or two other people:
  1. On the front: create a “Yellow Journalistic” magazine cover about the US’s conflict with Iran over nuclear weapons
  2. On the back: discuss and answer the following questions:
     - If Iran is developing nuclear weapons, why is it or isn’t it any of our business?
     - Would the arguments of the imperialists and/or the Bush Doctrine be good reasons for going to war with Iran? Why or why not?
     - Would attacking Iran be justified according to the Just War Criteria? Please explain why or why not.
- Please make sure all of your group members’ names are on your work.