

Why did many Americans support an imperialistic foreign policy during the late 19th century?

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, 1895

From the Rio Grande to the Arctic Ocean there should be but one flag and one country. . . . In the interests of our commerce and of our fullest development we should build the Nicaragua canal, and for the protection of that canal and for the sake of our commercial supremacy in the Pacific we should control the Hawaiian Islands and maintain our influence in Samoa. . . . Whether they will or not, Americans must now look outward. The growing production of the country demands it. . . .

The tendency of modern times is toward consolidation. It is apparent in capital and labor alike, and it is also true of nations. Small States are of the past and have no future. The modern movement is all toward the concentration of people and territory and great nations are rapidly absorbing for their future expansion and their present defense all the waste places of the earth. It is a movement which makes for civilization and the advancement of the race. As one of the great nations of the world, the United States must not fall out of the line of march.

Alfred Thayer Mahan

A strong navy is useful for two reasons.

First, in peace: The government, with a strong navy can favor the natural growth of a people's industries; or it can try to develop such industries when they do not naturally exist;

Secondly, for war.

The possession of colonies allows a country the surest means of supporting abroad a strong navy. They allow for coaling stations and naval bases to be established.

Having therefore no such colonies, the ships of war of the United States, in war or peace, will be like land birds, unable to fly far from their own shores. To provide resting-places for them, where they can coal and repair, would be one of the first duties of a government proposing to itself the development of the power of the nation at sea.

Reverend Josiah Strong, "Our Country", 1895

Again, another marked characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon is what may be called an instinct or genius for colonizing.

It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world's future. There are no more new worlds. The unoccupied arable [farmable] lands of the earth are limited, and will soon be taken. The time is coming when the pressure of population on the means of subsistence will be felt here as it is now felt in Europe and Asia. Then will the world enter upon a new stage of its history--the final competition of races, for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled. This race of unequalled energy, and the greatest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization will spread itself over the earth. If I read not amiss, this powerful race will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond. And can anyone doubt that the result of this competition of races will be the "survival of the fittest"?

Nothing can save the inferior races except assimilation. Whether the weaker races are going to grow and be raised up, is already very much of a question. What if it should be God's plan to people the world with better and finer material?

There is a tremendous overbearing surge of power in the Christian nations, which, if the others are not speedily raised to some vastly higher capacity, will inevitably submerge and bury them forever.

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" 1899

Take up the White Man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness
On fluttered fold and wild
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half devil and half child.

Motives behind Late 19th century Imperialism

Document	Reason for Expansion
<p>Senator Henry Cabot Lodge</p>	
<p>Alfred Thayer Mahan</p>	
<p>Rev. Josiah Strong</p>	
<p>Rudyard Kipling “White Man’s Burden”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is a burden? What “burden” was Kipling encouraging Americans to take up? 2. How does Kipling portray colonized peoples? What words does he use to describe them?

1. Explain the relative importance of the following in the U.S. decision to seek overseas colonies during the late 19th century – economic concerns; nationalism; national security; racism and ethnocentrism.