

Presidential Diplomacy

Roosevelt's "Big Stick" Diplomacy

Theodore Roosevelt believed in a strong global military presence. He thought that displaying American power to the world would make nations think twice about fighting. He expressed his beliefs with the saying "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Roosevelt used this "big stick" diplomacy in the Caribbean and Latin America.

As far back as the 1800s the United States had followed the Monroe Doctrine. This stated that the European powers should stay out of the Western Hemisphere, especially Latin America. America's growing involvement in foreign affairs caused Roosevelt to expand his "big stick" diplomacy. In a speech to Congress in 1904, Roosevelt defined what came to be known as the **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt was afraid that if Latin American countries couldn't repay their loans to European banks, European countries would gain power in Latin America. To prevent European nations from sending troops to the Caribbean or Central America, he believed that the United States should intervene in Latin American affairs when necessary. He said that the United States should act as an "international police power" in Latin America to maintain stability in the Western Hemisphere. He meant that the United States was willing to use its military power to protect business interests.

The United States would intervene often in Latin America. The U.S. first applied the Roosevelt Corollary in the Dominican Republic (also known as Santo Domingo). The Dominican Republic had fallen behind on its debt payments to European nations. Roosevelt was worried that the Europeans were getting ready to send troops. In 1905, Roosevelt sent American marines to the Dominican Republic to collect customs and tariffs to help make debt payments. He did this because he feared that European troops would hinder American trade with the Dominican Republic. His main goal was to protect U.S. interests. U.S. banks eventually paid off European loans in the Dominican Republic and then controlled the country's finances.

Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy"

When William Taft succeeded Roosevelt as President, he continued many of his policies in Latin America. However, he also believed in helping Latin American industry. He believed that if American business leaders supported Latin American development, everyone would benefit. The United States would increase its trade, American business leaders would increase their profits, countries in Latin America would rise out of poverty and social disorder, and European nations would have no reason to intervene in the region. Taft's policy became known as "dollar diplomacy".

Taft also described his policy as "substituting dollars for bullets". He thought the United States should increase investments in other countries to maintain and increase its power. The government backed loans made by U.S. businesses to foreign countries.

Dollar diplomacy in Latin America increased U.S. control in many Latin American countries. Like Roosevelt, Taft also used troops to enforce control. The country of Nicaragua was one example. In 1911, American bankers began making loans to Nicaragua to support its

government. The following year, civil unrest forced the Nicaraguan president to ask the U.S. for greater assistance. Taft sent U.S. Marines to Nicaragua. They replaced the collector of customs with a U.S. agent and formed a committee of two Americans and one Nicaraguan to control the customs commissions. American troops stayed to support the Nicaraguan government until 1925.

Wilson's "Moral Diplomacy"

When he became President, Woodrow Wilson suggested using "moral diplomacy." He believed that the U.S. should only support Latin American governments that were democratic and supported U.S. interests. However, like Roosevelt and Taft before him, Wilson was willing to use military force to protect U.S. business interests in the region. For example, he again sent U.S. Marines to intervene in Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

Wilson's moral diplomacy was tested by events in Mexico. Between 1910 and 1917, Mexico was gripped by revolution and civil war. Different groups within the country fought for power and control of the government. At first, Wilson refused to recognize the government of a general who had seized power illegally. Later, to protect U.S. business interests, the U.S. supported a military government in Mexico. In the end, Wilson sent troops to Mexico after changes in government and attacks on U.S. citizens and interests. In 1916, a revolutionary leader named Pancho Villa attacked a U.S. town near the Mexican-American border. Wilson sent troops into Mexico to try and capture him. Although they failed to capture Villa, U.S. troops remained in Mexico for over a year. After Mexico established a new constitutional government, U.S. troops were withdrawn.

Wilson's commitment to moral diplomacy continued with World War I. Although the U.S. had helped the Allies win a victory over Germany, Wilson believed in "peace without victory". He expressed these beliefs in his "Fourteen Points" speech. He believed that all nations should be treated fairly. He also believed that all nations had the right to choose their own forms of government. He called this "self-determination". He also believed that all nations should form an association where they could settle their conflict peacefully and avoid war. This organization became known as the League of Nations.

Roosevelt's "Big Stick"

1. Important Idea:
2. Important Idea:
3. Example of intervention:

Taft's "Dollar Diplomacy"

1. Important Idea:
2. Important Idea:
3. Example of intervention:

Similarities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Wilson's "Moral Diplomacy"

1. Important Idea:
2. Important Idea:
3. Example of intervention:

Directions:

1. For each President, identify two important ideas or beliefs about their foreign policy.
2. Also, identify one example of how that President used military intervention
3. Finally, identify 2-3 important similarities in the Presidents' foreign policies

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