

Theory of Strategic Autonomy: U.S. Foreign Policy between 1823 and 1921

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ABSTRACT

Theory of Strategic Autonomy: U.S. Foreign Policy between 1823 and 1921

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Resistance to the established world order and the dominant codes of conduct by a plurality of international actors is a repeated but misunderstood occurrence in the international system. Challengers to the status quo, ostracized states in the international system, neutrals looking for peaceful pathways to prosperity, and pivotal states unwilling to commit to a side have all searched for alternative strategies to gain power or maintain stability while maintaining autonomy of action. The theory of strategic autonomy proposes an approach to understanding such behaviour. Alliances in the international system are not always a possibility or desirable. Rather than perceiving those states as problems, I propose that they perceive and respond differently to the stimuli of the international system. This thesis looks at how and why the United States spent over a hundred years avoiding the commitment to formal alliances in the international system. The particular path of the U.S. foreign policy between 1823 and 1921 offers a complex and interesting test to the theory of strategic autonomy. While the United States disposed of an advantageous geostrategic position, European powers displayed interest in intermingling in its affairs and sphere of influence. To keep the European powers at arm's length, the American administrations used a variety of strategies to deter the involvement of the European powers in its sphere of influence and most of all to avoid the necessity of an alliance to do so. Strategic autonomy bears increasing importance in the international system with the diminution of the relative power of the United States and the emergence of new hubs of powers including China and India. To understand how the United States achieved the status of great power without a formal commitment to the alliance system between the European powers before the Second World War is crucial to understand how China, India, or any other emerging power might be able to repeat a feat comparable to the rise of the United States power.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The world is full of constraints. Defiance toward the norms, rules, and laws that structure the institutions and system that oversee international relations is a challenge increasingly more difficult. Thankfully, it is harder to commit barbarous and heinous aggression, but still not impossible. Defiance is certainly not without cost. However, in light of the growth of integration and proliferation of multilateral engagements that create networking communities, strategic autonomy is a challenge. But first, what is strategic autonomy? In simple terms, strategic autonomy is foreign policy conducted with the intent of minimizing external constraints. It is the ability of a state to develop and maintain a grand strategy without committing to unnecessary formal agreements that might create constraints to that strategy; and if a commitment to other actors is necessary, it must be counterbalanced by alternatives to avoid entrapment. Strategic autonomy is the ability of an actor to develop a coherent response to any potential contingencies and avoid the restraints that could prohibit the achievement of an actor's objectives. Since constraints are inevitable, states must navigate the strategic possibilities offered to them. Strategic autonomy is somehow the quest for the loopholes of the existing balance of power. While all states aspire to a certain degree of strategic autonomy, the vast majority accept the constraints of alliances. Alliances provide an easier path to security for many states, and their role in the international system is important. But why do some states choose to engage in strategic autonomy and avoid alliances if it is harder and riskier?

I propose a theory of strategic autonomy that explains how strategic autonomy operates and develops with the support of alternative foreign policy behaviours to maintain alliance avoidance. My theory of strategic autonomy offers two types of autonomy, hegemonic and intermediary. Hegemonic autonomy occurred in cases where great and regional powers can maximize their gains while remaining autonomous. Intermediary autonomy is the ability of middle and regional power to exploit loopholes in situations of vulnerability to maintain strategic autonomy by manipulation or isolation. I argue that the states that engage in strategic autonomy yield specific behaviours because of this choice. The display of defensive brinkmanship, anti-access and area denial strategies, hedging, pivotal strategies, isolationism, neutralism, and expansionism contributed to the development and maintenance of strategic autonomy in states that would have been more vulnerable without them or would have generated fewer gains.

While not the predominant behaviour in the international system, strategic autonomy is certainly a puzzling one. The cases of strategic autonomy are limited and rarely endure the test of time. A few major exceptions exist: the United States before its involvement in the Second World War, Great Britain during the *Splendid Isolation*, India since its Independence, China after Revolution in 1949, and Iran after the 1979 revolution. The American strategic autonomy has been the most enduring and challenging one. After the Franco-American alliance of 1778 became defunct in 1784 and formally ended in 1800, Washington avoided the formation of formal alliances until the Second World War.¹ The United States had previously participated alongside allies in

¹ The ABC-1 Conference between January and March 1941, the Atlantic Charter on August 14, 1941, and the Arcadia Conference from December 24, 1941 to January 14, 1942 were building blocks of the "Special Relationship" between the United States and Great Britain and signalled the alignment of both states in their war against the Axis. The coordination between the two states had everything of an alliance except it was built on a joint declaration and not a formal treaty. The Declaration by the United Nations on January 1, 1942 expanded this alignment to twenty-four other

World War I, but without formalizing their position of ally and by maintaining operational independence during the war as an effort to preserve, in principle, its autonomy. The true beginning of the U.S. strategic autonomy, however, dates back to the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. President Monroe's Declaration in December 1823 established the essential principles of U.S. foreign policy in link to Europe. The Monroe Doctrine enounced the strategic aim of the United States to remain uncommitted to European affairs and to protect its own sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere. Accordingly, Washington had remained uncommitted to formal alliances, implemented one of the longest foreign policy doctrines for the sole purpose of protecting its sphere of influence from the European powers, and managed to grow as a nation, a regional power, and eventually a great power.

The modern manifestation of strategic autonomy can be duplicitous and play on the margins of formal engagement. India's non-alignment does not exclude participation in multilateral forums and the creation of strategic partnerships. China's strategic autonomy progressively challenges the primacy of the United States by setting anti-access and area denial measures in the South China Sea and by creating an alternative to the economic model of Western development. Both China and India have engaged in international cooperation and are members of multiple international organizations. Even Washington's strategic autonomy progressively opened to further diplomatic involvement that culminated to the U.S. involvement in the Great War and Wilson's advocacy for the League of Nations. Their diplomacy is active and has extensive involvement throughout the globe. Strategic autonomy is not synonymous with isolation. On the contrary, strategic autonomy seems to be thriving when a state is deeply engaged diplomatically in multiple initiatives. Too integrated relations and not sufficiently diversified ones are the ones that threaten strategically autonomous states. The integration between the United States and Canada or between the European Union states are at the other end of the spectrum of strategic autonomy.

Regional and localized forms of strategic autonomy are also taking place where smaller powers have actively put in place strategies designed to shield them against foreign influence. The republics of Central Asia are attempting to reduce the overbearing dominance of Russia over their development and security. Israel's own survival is dependent on its ability to maintain a high strategic autonomy. North Korea has managed to isolate itself to such a degree that it exploits very dark corners of what strategic autonomy can do for the maintenance of a tyrannical regime.

The corpus of strategic autonomy research challenges the conventional wisdom of alliance theory and the trading state. Balancing and bandwagoning behaviors provide a valid explanation for many cases but present a significant number of inadequacies that need to be addressed. The economic integration of the international system provides important insights in the tendencies of states to ally when economic interests align, but not all states select to integrate an alliance system to cultivate further economic integration. To the contrary, some states select to avoid too integrated commitments to shield their economy to the resulting dependencies and potential weaponization

states signalling what Churchill called the "Grand Alliance." See Mark A. Stoler. *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945*. (Lexington: Plunkett Lake Press. 2022 [2005]. Kindle): 88-9; William T. Johnsen. *The Origins of the Grand Alliance: Anglo-American Military Collaboration from the Panay Incident to Pearl Harbor*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 2016); David Reynolds. "A 'Special Relationship'? America, Britain and the International Order Since the Second World War." *International Affairs* 62, no. 1 (Winter 1985-1986): 1-20.

of interdependence.² While both theories explain aspects of states behavior that tend to create stability in the system, the theory of strategic autonomy explains why the system is not so stable after all and how do specific states search to exploit alternatives means of stability that align more coherently with their national interests.

Engaged Autonomy

Autonomy does not mean autarky or strict isolation. The total absence of intergroup interaction is a rarity and a disappearing one. An estimate of between 150 and 200 isolated indigenous people still live in voluntary isolation.³ Tribes in the Amazon rainforest, on the Paraguayan Gran Chaco, the Andaman Islands, and in Papua and New Guinea keep their existence completely disconnected from the external world. The rest of the planet is on the path of globalization. No state is completely isolated. Even the defiant North Korean regime of Kim dynasty has been interacting with the world when it sends ballistic missiles over Japan or makes threats to South Korea, Japan, or the United States. Isolation in world politics operates along a spectrum. Ostracized countries have a harder time integrating with the international community. Powerful states, to the opposite end of the spectrum, can sometimes take on too many responsibilities in world politics stability and become too integrated.

International relations are “by definition the study of interaction between actors across national frontiers.”⁴ Isolation is different from isolationism. Japan and Korea hermit kingdoms were isolationist since they resisted to the influence of colonial powers until diplomatic missions finally convinced them to open up to the world. The notion of choice is central to the question of autonomy. Strategically autonomous states make the conscious and logical choice of limiting external interference using specific sets of strategies while avoiding others that could potentially harm their degree of autonomy. The United States built its strategic autonomy with isolationism as part of its grand strategy during different periods in the nineteenth century. However, that path was not always linear, and Washington had to respond to the changing nature of its domestic system and of the international system multiple times. The capacity of adaptability and remodulation of U.S. strategic autonomy is among what makes it a so interesting case to study.

Plan of Dissertation

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on alliance and strategic autonomy theories to identify its lacunae in terms of explaining the large selection of strategically autonomous behaviours. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical argument in detail, identifies the hypotheses to be tested, and explains the methodology adopted to test those hypotheses. Chapter 4 presents the case of the United States between 1823 and 1921 and explains its theoretical objectives. The following chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 consist of a careful analysis of the successive periods of U.S. strategic autonomy which include: the era of *manifest destiny* that followed President Monroe’s Declaration which led to continental expansionism (Chapter 5); the isolationist period that emerged during and following the American Civil War (Chapter 6); the progressive era of the *Gilded Age* that led to the establishment of the United States as a regional

² Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman. “Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Network Shape State Coercion.” *International Security* Vol. 44, no. 1 (2019): 42-79.

³ Esteban Ortiz-Prado, Gabriel Cevallos-Sierra, Eduardo Vasconez, Alex Lister, and Eduardo Pichilingue Ramos. “Avoiding Extinction: The Importance of Protecting Isolated Indigenous Tribes.” *AlterNative* Vol. 17, No. 1 (2021): 130.

⁴ Deon Geldenhuys. *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1990): 4.

and world power with expansionist and imperialist ambitions (Chapter 7); and the period surrounding the Great War that tested the neutralism of the United States and led to the progressive demise of the U.S. strategic autonomy (Chapter 8). Finally, in Chapter 9, I summarize the results obtained from the case analysis and discuss their theoretical implications.

Chapter 2: The Puzzle of Autonomy Despite the Alliance System and the Systemic Restraint Mechanisms

Alliances help states enhance their security in the international system. Alliances provide considerable advantages including capability aggregation, burden-sharing, access to technology, and improved deterrence. The conventional wisdom on international security puts tremendous emphasis on alliances, even between nuclear-armed states. Why would a state risk the strategic choice of autonomy⁵ rather than the benefits of alliance commitments in the international system? Military unilateralism is often conceived as illogical and detrimental to the stability of the international system. However, a significant number of states make the strategic choice of avoiding formal alliances. A significant segment of the literature argues that most states under threat seek alliances⁶ or collective security.⁷ However, those strategies imply some inherent risks and limits on the decision-making spectrum of a state. I argue that strategic autonomy can be a rational and pragmatic choice under specific circumstances. Without discarding the effect of alliances on states' behaviour, I advance that it is not always the best strategy, and that strategic autonomy can serve best states' national interest in specific cases.

Alliances aggregate power, but almost always restrain autonomy by imposing aggregated objectives and obligations on participants.⁸ The formation of alliances is a common practice to improve security in the international system. However, several states seek to avoid the costs of losing autonomy in favour of more security through alliances. The preservation of autonomy of action internally and externally is of concern for any state. When feared interference occurs, interstate competition creates a security risk that precludes the full realization of national interests.

⁵ Autonomy is defined as a relative concept determined by the ability of a state to make its own decision unrestricted and free from any undue pressure and coercion. The definition of strategic autonomy will be further discussed in the theoretical chapter.

⁶ The balance of threat theory developed by Stephen M. Walt will be the main model to be challenged by the theory of strategic autonomy. Walt's theory is amongst the most important ones in regard with the formation of alliances. His theoretical framework associates balancing and bandwagoning to alliance formation which constitutes a significant challenge to the hypotheses of strategic autonomy. See Stephen M. Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca, N.J.: Cornell University Press, 1987). Levy and Thompson also insist on the aspect that "most of the balance of power literature conceives balancing in terms of counterbalancing alliances." See Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson. "Balancing on Land and at Sea: Do States Ally against the Leading Global Power?" *International Security* 35, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 23.

⁷ Two major theoretical approaches advocate for a more integrated system of collective security. First, liberal multilateralism argues that "peace is indivisible, so that a war against one state is, ipso facto, considered a war against all." See John G. Ruggie. "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institutions," *International Organization* 46, no. 3 (1992): 569. The community of states involved in such agreement must respond to aggressions with force if others peaceful means failed. See *Ibid*. Second, the constructivist approach to security communities argues for a similar transnational cooperation on the basis of shared identities, values, and meanings. Security communities are defined as "transnational region[s] comprised of sovereign states whose people maintain dependable expectations of peaceful change" and where "they have a 'mutual aid' society in which they construct collective system arrangements." See Emanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett. *Security Communities*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 30.

⁸ Michael F. Altfeld. "The Reaction of Third States Toward Wars: A Theory and Test." (PhD dissertation, University of Rochester, 1979); Michael F. Altfeld. "Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test." *The Western Political Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (Dec. 1984): 523-544; James D. Morrow. "Alliances and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances" *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 4 (Nov. 1991): 904-933; Glenn H Snyder. *Alliance Politics*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997); and Jeremy Pressman. *Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics*. (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2008).

Consequently, alternative strategies to alliance formation are of great value for many states. Autonomy strategies are as common as alliance strategies. However, most of the existing non-alliance literature is fragmented and needs to be unified. Autonomy takes different forms in international relations. Independence,⁹ self-reliance,¹⁰ non-alignment,¹¹ isolationism,¹² disengagement,¹³ and unilateralism¹⁴ have all been recurrent forms of expression of strategic autonomy. Some states have adopted the aforementioned behaviors and others have found alternative ways to maximize their autonomy while ensuring a sufficient level of security. I argue that strategic autonomy is rational and empirically common. While the literature has used multiple terms to describe those behaviours, I propose to bring them together under the umbrella of strategic autonomy. The goal of this research is to identify the determinants that motivate the adoption of strategic autonomy even when the creation of an alliance or the use of collective security measures appears to be the easier choice since it might diminish the most immediate threat in the short term.

Interdependence and interconnections are a structural reality that influences the strategic design of every country. Even an entirely autarchic state could not be fully autonomous. Other states' relative power constrains the foreign policy maneuverability and consequently, the

⁹ Ted Galen Carpenter. *Collective Defense or Strategic Independence?* (Washington: Cato Institute, 1989); Christopher Layne. "Realism Redux: Strategic Independence in a Multipolar World" *The SAIS Review* 9 no. 2 (Summer-Fall 1989): 19-44; Christopher Layne. "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Power Will Rise." *International Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 5-51.

¹⁰ J. Ann Tickner. *Self-Reliance versus Power Politics: The American and Indian Experiences in Building Nation States*. (New York: Colombia University Press, 1987).

¹¹ Guillem Monsonis. "India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the US." *Strategic Analysis* 34 no. 4 (2010): 611-624; Sunil Khilnani et al. "Nonalignment 2.0. A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century," *Centre for Policy Research India*. 2012, at <http://www.cprindia.org/research/reports/nonalignment-20-foreign-and-strategic-policy-india-twenty-first-century> (Accessed November 28, 2014).

¹² Robert Osgood. 1953. *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953); Selig Adler. *The Isolationist Impulse*. (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957); Alexander DeConde. *Isolation and Security: Ideas and Interests in Twentieth-Century American Foreign Policy*. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1957); Manfred Jonas. *Isolationism in America*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Raymond Leslie Buell. *Isolated America*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1967); Richard D. Challener. *From Isolation to Containment, 1921-1952: Three Decades of American Foreign Policy from Harding to Truman*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1970); Alan Dowty. *The Limits of American Isolation: The United States and the Crimean War*. (New York: New York University Press, 1971); Robert H. Puckett. *America Faces the World: Isolationist Ideology in American Foreign Policy*. (New York: MSS Information Corporation, 1972); Robert W. Tucker. *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* (Washington, DC: Potomac, 1973); Kaplan, Morton A. *Isolation or Interdependence?: Today's Choices for Tomorrow's World*. (New York: Free Press, 1975); Alvin Wolf. *Foreign Policy: Intervention, Involvement, or Isolation?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977); John Chalberg. *Isolationism: Opposing Viewpoints*. (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1995); Eric A. Nordlinger. *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Bear F. Braumoeller. "Isolationism in International Relations." (PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1998); Bear F. Braumoeller. 2010. "The Myth of American Isolationism." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6: 349-371; Helga Turku. "Domestic and Foreign Isolationism in an Interdependent World." (PhD diss., Florida International University, 2008); and Andrew Johnstone. "Isolationism and Internationalism in American Foreign Relations." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 7-20.

¹³ Paul F. Power. *Neutrality and Disengagement*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964); Ravenal, Earl C. "The Case for Strategic Disengagement." *Foreign Affairs* 51, no. 3 (1973): 505-521; Posen proposes a hybrid position between isolationism and selective engagement for the United States. See Barry R. Posen. *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

¹⁴ Bradley F. Podliska. *Acting Alone: A Scientific Study of American Hegemony and Unilateral Use-of-Force Decision Making*. (Toronto: Lexington Books, 2010).

autonomy of any state.¹⁵ Therefore, absolute autonomy does not exist, but strategic choices can increase the level of autonomy. Why do states make the strategic choice of maximizing autonomy? The motives and incentives for choosing autonomy are plural, and so the types and degrees of autonomy are multiple, but they have a common conceptual origin. Consequently, what are the different types of strategic autonomy? Two main courses of strategic autonomy occur in the international system. First, major powers can exert hegemonic autonomy since they have sufficient capabilities to shield their security issues and wield unilateral and even expansionist interests. Second, middle powers and balancing states that have a pivotal role during conflicts among other states can wield intermediary autonomy on the basis of their diplomatic skills, alignment options, and geographical position. Additionally, the military capabilities and organizational structure of a state have a significant effect on the ability of a state to wield further autonomy. Ultimately, some forms of strategic autonomy can be both adaptive and others maladaptive. In some cases, states that adopt a strategy of autonomy can secure greater gains while preserving latitude of action while in other cases, miscalculated risks may lead to unstable and potentially costly outcomes. I will seek to examine and explain both instances.

The diversified nature of power relations calls for a plurality of autonomy schemes. First, all great powers have engaged in expansionist behaviour unilaterally at one point in their history. Great powers have also attempted to extract themselves from taking an active role in the balance of power. Britain's "Splendid Isolation" during the better part of the nineteenth century was an attempt to avoid the cost of dealing with the European balance of power and carefully refusing any entanglement in alliances.¹⁶ This position was ultimately abandoned due to the consolidation of Europe in two power blocs demonstrating that isolation can become difficult to maintain even for a great power. Second, lesser great powers (LGPs)¹⁷ do not always rely on a stronger ally. Some of them choose to go alone and rely on their own ability for security devising specific strategies in order to do so. For example, France engaged in the 1880s in a maritime strategy designed by the *jeune école* led by Admiral Aube to preserve its autonomy from other maritime powers in an unbalanced context.¹⁸ The Chinese, in the same vein, deployed asymmetric countermeasures against the United States. China devised mechanisms to target the American communication system with their anti-satellite missiles (ASAT) and their aircraft carrier and submarine capabilities with anti-access and area denial strategies (A2/AD). Third, other states such as India have diversified their alignment options by engaging in security partnerships with different and

¹⁵ Autonomy targets a range of specific components of a state's ability to develop a foreign policy free of foreign intervention and influence. The concept differ from sovereignty as Waltz insists that "sovereign states may be hardpressed all around, constrained to act in ways they would like to avoid, and able to do hardly anything just as they would like to." (See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 96.) Those components are further developed in the theoretical section.

¹⁶ Christopher Howard. "Splendid Isolation." *History* 47(159): 32-41. Taylor argues that isolation in the case of Britain "meant aloofness from the European Balance of Power." See A.J.P. Taylor. *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 400.

¹⁷ Schweller argues that Lesser Great Power (LGPs) "possess a considerable amount of military strength," but less than half the military strength of most powerful state. In Randall L. Schweller *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 17.

¹⁸ Røksund argues that "the *jeune école* maintains that the war should be brought to the very heart of the enemy, not by attacking the enemy's navy, but by attacking the undefended foundations of its wealth." In Røksund, Arne. *The Jeune École: The Strategy of the Weak*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 227. See also Ian Speller. *Understanding Naval Warfare*. (New York: Routledge, 2014), 58-60; Geoffrey Till. *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 36-38; and Geoffrey Till. *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*. (3rd ed.) (New York: Routledge, 2013), 73-75.

even antagonistic partners such as Russia and the United States. The diversification of strategic partners has allowed India to access new military technologies while preserving its autonomy of action without having to commit formally to either state. Those behaviours contradict the conventional wisdom that argues that states under threat are more likely to seek formal alliances.

Autonomy is an important concern in the literature on military and Grand strategy, but rarely is it the focal point of those works. The puzzle of the balance of power has dominated the analyses of the pre-Cold War era. Cooperation and the dominance of coalition during the Cold War have diverted the attention of most scholars away from autonomy. However, some analysts in the post-Cold War world have preached a return of the strategic choice of autonomy.¹⁹ Why do states adopt strategic autonomy? Why do they persist or interrupt this path? Considering that not all states can access the same level of autonomy,²⁰ what are the different types of strategic autonomy? When and how does strategic autonomy occur and succeed? When does it fail and why? Alliance theories help to explain some states' motivations not to engage in alliances because of the risks of relative gains, entrapment, abandonment, or restraint. Their conception of autonomy includes non-alignment and neutralism which considers the cost of distancing from rival coalitions is lesser than the constraints from engaging. However, alliance theories insufficiently explain how great powers achieve a high level of autonomy within asymmetric alliances, how some states conserve their alliance agreement while acting unilaterally against their partner's interest, or how certain states develop strategic partnerships with states that have conflicting interests among them. Among the rare research addressing the issue of strategic autonomy since the end of the Cold War, none of them coalesces coherently the spectrum of behaviours that increase strategic autonomy. Nevertheless, the literature on strategic autonomy has made substantive progress in explaining how gain-seeking states select autonomy in order to avoid the constraints of formal alliances.

Alliance Theories

Alliances, according to most IR scholars, are the key to greater security. A large segment of the current literature on alliance formation is dominated by "capability aggregation" models which focus on state security and the probability of war.²¹ However, the increase of security through alliances generates a trade-off in autonomy. Altfed considers that "some autonomy is

¹⁹ Layne. "Realism Redux."; Monsonis. "India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the US."; Stephen P. Cohen, and Sunil Dasgupta. *Arming without Aiming: India's Military Modernization*. (Washington, DC: Brookings Inst. Press, 2010); Manjeet Singh Pardesi. 2005. "Deducing India's Grand Strategy of Regional Hegemony from Historical and Conceptual Perspectives." *Working Paper* no. 76 (April) Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies; Varun Sahni. 2006. "India and the Asian Security Architecture." *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April): 163–167; Rajiv Kumar. 2010. "Maintaining Strategic Autonomy in an Interdependent World." *Strategic Analysis* 34(4): 525-526; David Brewster. 2011. "Indian Strategic Thinking about East Asia." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34(6): 825-852; C. Raja Mohan. "India: Between 'Strategic Autonomy' and 'Geopolitical Opportunity'." *Asian Policy* 15 (January 2013): 21-25; Monish Tourangbam. "Indo-Pacific and the Practice of Strategic Autonomy." *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal* 9, no. 2 (April-June 2014): 119-124; David Brewster. *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership*. (New York: Routledge, 2014): 23; Herbert Wulf and Tobias Debiel. India's 'Strategic Autonomy' and the Club Model of Global Governance: Why the Indian BRICS Engagement Warrants a Less Ambiguous Foreign Policy Doctrine." *Strategic Analysis* 39, no. 1 (2015): 27-43. Khilnani et al. "Nonalignment 2.0. A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century."

²⁰ Relative power, alignment options, geographic position (insularity, buffer, rimland, periphery, and landlockness), and threat level influence the type of strategic autonomy and the ability of a state to achieve strategic autonomy.

²¹ Julian R. Friedman, Christopher Bladen, and Steven Rosen. *Alliance in International Politics*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970); Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan. *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: A Comparative Study*. (New York: Wiley, 1973); Morrow. "Alliances and Asymmetry."

always lost in forming a new alliance and that some wealth is always lost when armaments are increased.”²² Alliances restrict autonomy on various levels. First, according to Morrow’s definition of alliances that implies a “pledge of future coordination between the allies,”²³ the trade-off of autonomy is directly linked to that potential involvement in a coordinated action with another state or group of states. Second, according to a more flexible definition of alliance where it corresponds to “a relationship between two or more states based on shared interest, an exchange of benefits, security cooperation specific written agreements, and/or an expectation of continuing ties,”²⁴ autonomy is restrained further by the expectation of continuing ties. Continuous ties mean for some states continuous restraint which occurs as a consequence of a response to a threat that may decrease or disappear over time. Not all alliances result in permanent friendship and generate spillover effects.

In strategic terms, alliances have been formed for two main purposes: to aggregate capabilities and to restrain adversaries. Most of the studies on the phenomenon have focused on the capacity aggregation aspect often labelled as external balancing.²⁵ Autonomy is indirectly restrained by the commitments made in this type of alliance. However, other forms of alliances exist. Schroeder identifies two types of alliances: the first is, as previously mentioned, the capability-aggregation type directed against particular threats, and the second is the “pact of restraint (*pacta de contrahendo*)” to manage and conciliate an opponent.²⁶ Consequently, alliances can be conceived for the unique purpose of diminishing the autonomy of an opponent. Pressman sustains that perspective where “states form alliance with intent of restraining their new ally.”²⁷ Schroeder emphasizes that aspect by mentioning that “most of nineteenth-century alliances, both formal and informal, were designed and used more as alliances of mutual restraint and management than as weapons of power, security, and capability aggregation.”²⁸ However, Weitsman insists that alliance of restraint can harm the alliance cohesion since it might diminish the reliability of the allies. She labels this dimension of alliances as the “alliance paradox.”²⁹ In addition, Moul specifies that the “strength of the alliance of restraint (*neutrality pact, entente, no alliance*) varies with the location of the target and with the seriousness of competition at the top of the great power ranks.”³⁰ Therefore, not all alliances of restraint have the same intensity and the same effect on autonomy.

Since alliances, after interstate competition, have been among the greatest constraints on autonomy after the effect of relative power, states can consider many factors to avoid forming an alliance. First, since “the success or failure of the alliance restraint attempts depends on the willingness of the most powerful ally to mobilize its power resources,” regional power may prefer

²² Altfeld. “Decision to Ally: A Theory and Test.” 526.

²³ Morrow. “Alliances and Asymmetry.” 906.

²⁴ Pressman. *Warring Friends*, 5.

²⁵ Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*; Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*; Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

²⁶ Schroeder. “Alliances, 1815-1945.” 230-1.

²⁷ Pressman. *Warring Friends*, 15-6.

²⁸ Paul W. Schroeder. “A. J. P. Taylor’s International System.” *The International History Review*, 23, no. 1 (2001): 20.

²⁹ Patricia A. Weitsman. *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents for Peace, Weapon of War*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004):

³⁰ William B. Moul. “Great Power Nondefense Alliances and the Escalation to War or Conflicts between Unequals, 1815–1939.” *International Interactions: Empirical and Theoretical Research in International Relations*, 15, no. 1 (1988): 28.

to adopt strategic autonomy rather than creating interdependence through alliance in order to preserve limited resources.³¹ Second, “deception, leadership unity, national security priorities, and policy alternatives” are all domestic factors that can stop an alliance formation process.³² Alliances are formed in a two-level game where even though some actors can agree that alliance is the best strategy in the bargaining process with another state, at the domestic level, the win-set can be drastically different and restrain the alliance formation.³³

Glenn Snyder identifies the principal perceived risks that alliance can generate such as the “risk of having to come to the aid of the ally,” the “risk of entrapment in war by the ally,” the “risk of counteralliance,” the “foreclosure of alternative alliance options,” and the “general constraints on freedom of action.”³⁴ An additional risk is the exploitation of ally through the “risk of appropriation of quasi rents” due to alteration of the original agreement.³⁵ The risks concerning rent distribution are especially significant after an alliance has achieved its goals and even more when the allies need to decide how to separate the spoils of victory.³⁶ All those elements increase the trade-off in autonomy when forming an alliance for security. Furthermore, when the alliance is formed, the fear of abandonment creates a new restraint on autonomy because the weaker state develops a dependence on the security provided by the dominant state. Morrow argues that alliances can create different patterns of trade-offs between security and autonomy dependent on the relative power between the states.³⁷ In symmetric alliances, great power gain security and loses autonomy and in asymmetric one, great powers preserve autonomy and gain influence over others at a security risk. In consideration of those risks, certain states harbour better utility from autonomy than from alliances. Those risks give rise to the non-aligned movement during the Cold War. The non-aligned states did not want to engage in alliances mainly because of the restraints and costs to their autonomy. This phenomenon was especially increased by the colonial past of those states that needed to affirm their national identity without the constraint of any great power.³⁸ Those

³¹ Pressman. *Warring Friends*, 16.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ See Robert D. Putnam. “Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games.” *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (Summer, 1988): 427-460; and Michael Mastanduno, David A. Lake and G. John Ikenberry. “Toward a Realist Theory of State Action.” *International Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 457-474.

³⁴ Snyder. *Alliance Politics*, 44.

³⁵ Benjamin Klein, Robert G. Crawford and Armen A. Alchian. “Vertical Integration, Appropriable Rents, and the Competitive Contracting Process.” *The Journal of Law & Economics* 21, no. 2 (Oct., 1978): 299.

³⁶ Changxia Ke, Kai A. Konrad, and Florian Morath. “Alliances in the Shadow of Conflict.” *Economic Inquiry* 53, no. 2 (April 2015): 854-871. Ke and al. give as an example the two Roman triumvirates among other potential examples of situation where allies turned against each other shortly after jointly reaching power. See *ibid.*, 855. See also Lawrence W. Beilenson. *The Treaty Trap: A History of the Performance of Political Treaties by the United States and European Nations*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1969); Robert E. Bunselmeyer. *The Cost of the War 1914–1919, British Economic War Aims and the Origins of Reparation*. (Hamden: Archon Books, 1975); Eliakim Katz and Julia Tokatlidu. “Group Competition for Rents.” *European Journal of Political Economy* 12 (1996): 599-607; Joan Esteban and Josef Sakovics. “Olson VS. Coase: Coalitional Worth in Conflict.” *Theory and Decision* 55 (2003): 339-357; Changxia Ke, Kai A. Konrad, and Florian Morath. “Brothers in Arms – An Experiment on the Alliance Puzzle.” *Games and Economic Behavior* 77 (2013): 61-76.

³⁷ Morrow. “Alliances and Asymmetry.”

³⁸ Rupert Emerson. *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); Robert. L. Rothstein. *The Weak in the World of the Strong: The Developing Countries in the International System*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Robert A. Mortimer. *The Third World Coalition in International Politics* (New York: Praeger, 1980); Leften S. Stavrianos. *Global Rift: The Third World Comes of Age*. (New York: Morrow, 1981); Robert. L. Rothstein. *The Third World and U.S. Foreign Policy*.

restraining aspects associated with alliance theory underline the effect that alliances have on autonomy but do not provide a solution to preserve both autonomy and security when it is possible.

The potential gain in security from alliances has also generated alternative models of explanation where autonomy is not a consideration for alliance development. For example, the collective security theory assumes that alliances are the core method to resolve imbalance of power;³⁹ or the idea security community where states can normalize their relation to develop peaceful mean of conflict management and resolution.⁴⁰ Those approaches have been usually conceived in direct opposition with strategic autonomy. However, some particular states such as Pakistan and India have fostered external and multilateral engagement with great powers in order to stay autonomous at the national and regional level while aggregating power to deter each other. Their flexible alignment options increase the level of security such as in multilateral alliances, but without the same restraint on autonomy. As Schelling mentions, “[m]ost commitments are ultimately ambiguous in detail.”⁴¹ Coalitions and alliances are not fixed; they are a fluid behavior as much as autonomy and can, therefore, change over time, space, and context. By exploiting plural alignments that can neutralized the reliance on a single dominant partner, some states achieve a higher level of autonomy by avoiding the fear of entrapment and abandonment with a minimum reputational cost if they disaligned with one of the partners.

While, as mentioned earlier, a significant part of the literature argues that states with allies are likely to deter attacks, another part of the literature has argued that alliances may provide incentives for states to initiate and escalate disputes.⁴² Since aggregated power provides better probability of victory against an adversary than relying only on its own capabilities, states have incentives to ally. However, as stated before, not all states wish to be involved in a conflict and when they do the division of the spoils of war sometimes generate conflict among the victorious allies. Consequently, if a state possesses sufficient capabilities to conduct its war without the participation of an ally, it avoids the risk and cost of sharing the spoils. This aspect is an important incentive in the case of hegemonic autonomy.

In reaction to the shortcoming of alliances and the possibility offered by alignment strategies, my theory of strategic autonomy proposes to fulfill the lacuna of alliances theory by providing alternatives to traditional balancing and bandwagoning behaviors. Those alternatives suggest that exploiting one’s geographical position, alignment options, and diplomatic skills provide the possibility to increase security while preserving autonomy to a satisfying level in order to promote national interest.

(Boulder: Westview Press, 1981); Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. (New York: Random House, 1987), 393.

³⁹ A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler. *The War Ledger*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 18.

⁴⁰ Adler and Barnett. *Security Communities*.

⁴¹ Thomas C. Schelling *Arms and Influence*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, (1966) 2008), 67

⁴² Jack S. Levy. “Alliance Formation and War Behavior: An Analysis of the Great Powers, 1496-1975.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 24, no. 4 (1981): 581-613; Jack S. Levy. *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983); Woosang Kim. “Power, Alliance, and Major War, 1816-1975.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33, no. 2 (1989): 255-273; Alastair Smith. “Alliance Formation and War.” *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): 405-425; Glenn Palmer and R. Clifton Morgan. *A Theory of Foreign Policy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Paul D. Sense and John A. Vasquez. *The Steps to War: An Empirical Study*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Strategic Autonomy: Imperfection of a New Concept

Strategically autonomous states have a different nature than neutral states in Europe before World War II, and they oppose the multilateral linkage and interdependence advocated by collective security and security community theories. In fact, there have been historically far more cases of what Wengler calls a “collective resistance” of the neutrals “in relation to certain states unfriendly among themselves” than cases of collective security.⁴³ However, how has the literature perceived strategic autonomy so far? Most of the analyses describe potential projects of improvement of strategic autonomy for cases such as the United States. For example, Layne defines strategic independence as distinct from autarkic isolationism prioritizing self-sufficiency, allowing for “temporary and informal commitments,” and sustained by strong naval and air forces in function of applying it to the prospect of the 1990s United States.⁴⁴ In this model, strategic independence is similar to hegemonic autonomy in that it sustains a sphere of influence and protects an extended rimland. Posen argues, in a similar vein, that the United States did not face much counterbalancing since “many middle and small powers ‘cheap ride’ on U.S. security effort and underspend on defense because the United States seems very willing to carry the burden of securing them against their regional adversaries.”⁴⁵ Consequently, Posen adds that “Allies of the United States remain autonomous actors, and they contribute what they wish to U.S. security problem.”⁴⁶ On the other hand, Monsonis considers “strategic autonomy” as a “realist mutation of the traditional non-aligned posture.”⁴⁷ Avoidance of “alliance-like structure” and the preference of “selective partnerships” under a “multi-faceted diplomacy” are the core characteristic of Monsonis’ strategic autonomy.⁴⁸ Monsonis analyzes this strategic conception in the case of India foreign policy. However, most case analyses do not provide strong external validity.

The Cold War fostered a strong image of coalition building strategies because of the pressure of two blocs. Even the non-aligned movement manifested itself as a coalition. According to Riker, during the “Age of Maneuver” that structured world politics after the crystallization of the two blocs, “the price asked by neutrals or marginal members for their allegiance to one side or the other will rise steadily” and the main powers risked to waste or exhaust their resources in maintaining alliances.⁴⁹ By consolidating under the non-aligned banner, Third World states raised the cost of integrating new states into the two main power coalition systems, but also increased their level of autonomy because of the non-binding elements of the movement. They avoided the risk associated with alliances and in many cases increased their strategic manoeuvrability in regional setting. Third World states that compromised their autonomy have to omnibalance and consequently align in order to stay in power and gain advantage over their most “dangerous

⁴³ Wilhelm Wengler. “The Meaning of Neutrality in Peacetime.” *McGill Law Journal* 10, no. 4 (1964): 379. The neutrals have too often seen the conflict of others push on them and end up not being able to maintain their status.

⁴⁴ Layne. “Realism Redux.” 34-6.

⁴⁵ Posen. *Restraint*, 33.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* Posen argues that “Most states wish to achieve as much autonomy as possible.” (See *Ibid.*, 21.) Accordingly, even within the web of alliances around the United States much autonomy has been preserved since the burden of security has been weighting on the United States, but with the rise of other power, that burden will become harder to sustain and it is to be expected that the autonomy of U.S. allies will diminish accordingly.

⁴⁷ Monsonis. “India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the US.” 611.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 612.

⁴⁹ William H. Riker. *The Theory of Political Coalitions*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), 231.

(domestic) opponent.”⁵⁰ Those forms of alignment by some Third World countries have doubly restrained their strategic autonomy. It certainly explains the desire of southern countries to have plural and weak forms of alignment to resolve their security issue rather than relying on alliances. However, the end of the Cold War disentangled the strength of coalition by reducing the level of threat. Consequently, the cases of strategic autonomy should become more frequent.

Strategic autonomy did not increase drastically to the point of replacing alliances and security regimes after the Cold War. However, a perceptible number of states changed or reinforced their behaviour toward an increasing adoption of elements belonging to the development of strategic autonomy, since the end of the Cold War. The end of the rivalry between the blocs over the allegiance of the third world countries relaxed the threat level, increased the alignment options, and marked the return of the preponderance of regional actors. Following those permissive conditions, the major regional powers modified their strategy in order to increase their level of autonomy, intermediary actors exploited their pivotal role over renewed localized rivalry, and some states exploited the enthusiasm toward multilateralism to aggregate various alignments with disregard to their potential strategic contradiction in case of a major conflict. Those developments created a strategic environment favorable to autonomy.

Strategic autonomy was a more common occurrence in foreign policy before the Second World War. The broad alliance systems put in place by the United States and the Soviet Union reduced considerably the strategic benefits of autonomy for weaker states. The overwhelming reach of the superpowers and their nuclear arsenal made less practical the adoption of strategic autonomy in the areas that integrated their alliance system. A few maintained or adopted strategic autonomy during the Cold War. The end of the bipolar order after 1991 created a renewed enthusiasm toward strategic autonomy, but the risk of new competition between world powers might threaten the survival of those attempts that might rollback to alliance behavior to survive.

The utterances of strategic autonomy which pre-date the world wars offer important insights in the development of a theory of strategic autonomy. Theories of neutralism, unilateralism, and isolationism offer additional insights in the understanding of strategic autonomy. Great powers engaged in neutralism and isolationism which offer a more compelling test to the validity of strategic autonomy, especially in the context of multipolarity that existed before the world wars.

Isolationism, Unilateralism, and Long Cycles

The search for unentangled decision-making created various strategies that became emblematic of the process. Isolationism became representative of the American design toward alliance avoidance and armed neutrality. Neutralism embodied the maximization of economic gains while minimizing security risks. Unilateralism underlined the disregard for others' external pressures and the primacy of national interest. Individually, each approach responds to a specific set of conditions that create incentives to decision-makers to adopt those types of strategies. As a group, they all belong to strategic autonomy as different expressions of the same goal, the minimization of foreign influence and risk on foreign policy making. Every approach is full of

⁵⁰ Steven R. David. “Explaining Third World Alignment.” *World Politics*, 43, no. 2 (Jan. 1991): 236; and Steven R. David. *Choosing Sides: Alignment and Realignment in the Third World*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

subtleties and varies along spectrums between isolationism and internationalism, neutralism and alignment, and unilateralism and multilateralism.⁵¹

The roots of U.S. isolationism have been the source of multiple debates. Its origins have been attributed to various sources from the founding fathers, including George Washington's 1796 Farewell Address, Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address⁵², and James Monroe's 1823 Declaration. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams provided the fundamental of the American aversion to European affairs and the strong desire for non-entanglement. Adams insisted that "the business of America with Europe was commerce, not politics or War."⁵³ The Monroe Doctrine set that view as a guiding principle for U.S. foreign policy that would endure. To many, however, U.S. isolationism took form during the interwar period.⁵⁴ While not a constant, isolationism was a fundamental part of U.S. foreign policy ever since the founding fathers realized the risks and costs of alliances after allying with the French to win the Revolutionary War.

The determination of the end of U.S. isolationism has also been subject to contentions. The Spanish-American War theoretically ended isolationism for some.⁵⁵ The entry of the United States into the First World War was the end of isolationism to a few⁵⁶ while most of the researchers established the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 as the end of U.S. isolationism.⁵⁷ Despite the debates about its beginning and end, U.S. isolationism was a process. U.S. isolationism was process that evolved and experienced setbacks and changes that led ultimately to making the United States an alliance maker rather than an alliance avoider. By the time the United States voted on the Treaty of Versailles, Congress was less isolationist than following the 1812 War. The Treaty of Versailles was rejected in the Senate only by a minority.⁵⁸ A treaty including a multilateral organization was inconceivable to most U.S. policymakers in the 1800s. Isolationism endured through the policy of

⁵¹ Bear F. Braumoeller. "The Myth of American Isolationism." *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct. 2010): 354.

⁵² Lawrence S. Kaplan. *Entangling Alliances with None: American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson*. (Kent: The Kent State University Press. 1987).

⁵³ Adams to Secretary Robert R. Livingston, Paris, February 5, 1783, in Adams. *Works*, VIII, 35.

⁵⁴ Charles A. Beard. *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940*. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1946); Selig Adler. *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction*. (New York: Abelard-Schuman. 1957); Manfred Jonas. *Isolationism in America 1935-1941*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Ralph Stone. *The Irreconcilables: The Fight Against the League of Nations*. (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky. 1970); Robert W. Tucker. *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* (New York: Universe Books. 1972).

⁵⁵ Bradford Perkins. *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914*. (New York: Atheneum, 1968): 312-314. Charles A. Kupchan argues that the end of Groover Cleveland's second term ended an era of U.S. isolationism and that once McKinley engaged in expansionism, "Three main ideological camps came together to pull the nation away from its isolationist roots." See Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield from the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013): Chap. 8.

⁵⁶ Michael E. Neagle. "America's Entry into World War I: A Turning Point in U.S. Foreign Policy." *International Social Science Review* 89, no. 3 (2014): 356-367; Robert H. Ferrell. *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985); Frank Costigliola. "The United States and the First World War: New Perspective on Diplomacy and Domestic Politics." *Diplomatic History* 36, no. 1 (2012): 1-18.

⁵⁷ Jonas. *Isolationism in America 1935-1941*.; Wayne S. Cole. *An Interpretation of American Isolationism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); William Appleman Williams. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1959); Charles A. Beard. *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932-1940: A Study of Responsibilities*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1946), among others.

⁵⁸ Bear F. Braumoeller. "The Myth of American Isolationism." *Foreign Policy Analysis* Vol. 6, No. 4 (Oct. 2010): 349

some Congressmen and Senators following the Second World War and re-emerged periodically with neo-isolationist theories.⁵⁹

While an important component of U.S. foreign policy, isolationism has been often conceived as a preference of public opinion or as a cyclical trend of foreign policy embedded in a belief system inherited from the founding fathers.⁶⁰ Those limited views underlined the lack of understanding of the causal mechanisms at play. As Rieselbach argues, “isolationism is a multidimensional phenomenon.”⁶¹ While the path-dependent argument seems compelling toward explaining the U.S. tradition of non-entanglement and isolationism, Washington responded to international events logically and coherently and not in an ideologically motivated fashion. Alliances might have been the easy answer on various occasions, but isolationism yielded better outcomes in the long run. My research argues that U.S. isolationism was deeply rational and not normatively motivated as much of the literature as argued. “Fortress America” was not impermeable to foreign influence and incentives to further American involvement in world affairs tested the resolve of U.S. policymakers. As Campbell mentions, “In American historiography, ‘isolationism’ is a term used to describe a quality of domestic origins.”⁶² This thought professes a normative component of isolationism as if it had been part of U.S. strategic culture.

The geographical argument for isolationism provides important insights toward the feasibility of the policy but not of its adoption. The Midwestern isolationism generated by a large land mass added to the distance of the Atlantic Ocean created a considerable buffer to European influence.⁶³ While geography played a role as a permissive condition and incentive toward isolationism, it was not the sole determinant of American isolationism. The development of the vision that America was an impregnable fortress emerged with the consolidation of American power and the development of capabilities to truly enforce the Monroe Doctrine. Washington’s strategy might have been mislabelled as isolationist from that point on. U.S. foreign policy embedded unilateralism rather than isolationism according to Felix Gilbert.⁶⁴

Isolationism lost much of its appeal by the end of the nineteenth century. The expansionists, including Theodore Roosevelt, John Hay, Alfred Thayer Mahan, took the forefront of U.S. foreign policy and removed the predominance of isolationism. The progressive demise of U.S. isolationism became more apparent during the World Wars. Woodrow Wilson’s internationalism during the late period of the First World War and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s implicit economic and material support of the Allies before the entry of the United States into the Second World War. Maintaining an isolationist posture for the United States in those times of crisis became illogical.

⁵⁹ Justus D. Doenecke. *Not to the Swift: The Old Isolationists in the Cold War Era*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1979); Stephen D. Krasner. “Realist Praxis: Neo-Isolationism and Structural Change.” *Journal of International Affairs* 43, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 1989): 143-160; Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross. “Competing Vision for U.S. Grand Strategy.” *International Security* 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996-1997): 5-53; D. Dunn. “Isolationism Revisited: Seven Contemporary American Foreign Policy Debates.” *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 2 (2005): 237-261; among others.

⁶⁰ Braumoeller. “The Myth of American Isolationism.” 352.

⁶¹ Leroy N. Rieselbach. *The Roots of Isolationism: Congressional Voting and Presidential Leadership in Foreign Policy*. (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1966): 7.

⁶² A.E. Campbell. “The Conditions of Isolationism.” *Bulletin (British Association for American Studies)* No. 9 (Dec. 1964): 43.

⁶³ Adler. *The Isolationist Impulse*: 43

⁶⁴ Felix Gilbert. *To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961): 72.

Bear F. Braumoeller underlined well U.S. involvement in European affairs before Roosevelt entered into the war and how much it did not support the perspective of the United States being isolationist during that period.⁶⁵ In 1941, historian and diplomat David Lewis Einstein opposed the vision that U.S. isolationism was attributable to geography and rather the result of the “survival of British sea power and the old balance of power.”⁶⁶

The U.S. participation in the two world wars was in continuity with the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs and an almost “natural progression” of the evolution of U.S. power and its projection. The involvement of the United States in world politics remained cautious and prudent regarding the risk of entanglement, but the United States was an active participant in many aspects of world politics. Historians designed various approaches to explain the progression of U.S. foreign policy. Thomas A. Bailey, Bradford Perkins, Robert Ferrell, Cushing Strout, and Henry Kissinger underlined various patterns of duality that animated U.S. foreign policy.⁶⁷ Isolationism was far from clear-cut and unchanging. Various doctrines animated the evolution of U.S. isolationism, including the Monroe Doctrine, the Tyler Doctrine, the Polk Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary, Dollar Diplomacy, and Wilson’s Fourteen Points.

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. and Dexter Perkins’s argument regarding the cyclical nature of U.S. foreign policy holds the key to much of the debate surrounding the validity of the isolationist nature of the United States.⁶⁸ Both approaches focus on the domestic causality of the cyclical nature of the United States, but those cycles are also influenced by international causal processes. Frank Klingberg defined this cyclical rhythm between “extroversion” and “introversion.”⁶⁹ However, the description of those phases as “mood” constitutes a weak starting point. Klingberg, Schlesinger, and Perkins observed commonalities in U.S. foreign policy cycles but only partially succeeded in theorizing the causal logic of those cyclical patterns. The inability to identify how those cycles materialized in the U.S. political sphere underlined the lack of predictability of the cycle theory.

In conclusion, the literature on alliance and strategic autonomy shows a significant number of cases of states attempting and often succeeding in establishing strategic autonomy as their foreign policy. The strategic choices of those states registered on the neutralist, unilateralist and isolationist sides of the spectrums of the “often-conflated dimensions of foreign policy.”⁷⁰ Those choices appear to be principally motivated by the avoidance of alliance risks which include the risk of entrapment, abandonment, counteralliance, restraint, free-riding, and quasi-rent

⁶⁵ Braumoeller. “The Myth of American Isolationism”: 349-371.

⁶⁶ Alexander DeConde. *Isolation and Security*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1957): 13-14.

⁶⁷ Thoams A. Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 8th ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1969): 2; Braford Perkins. *The Cambridge History of American Foreign Relations. Vol. 1: The Creation of a Republican Empire, 1776-1865*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 6-16; Robert H. Ferrell. *Foundation of American Diplomacy, 1775-1872*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1963): 14-17; Cushing Stout. *The American Image of the Old World* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963): 1-10; and Henry Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994): 29.

⁶⁸ Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. *The Cycles of American History*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986); and Dexter Perkins. *The American Approach to Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962): Chap. 7.

⁶⁹ Frank L. Klingberg. “The Historical Alternation of Moods in American Foreign Policy.” *World Politics* Vol 4, no. 2 (Jan. 1952): 239-273

⁷⁰ Braumoeller presents three “often-conflated dimensions of foreign policy,” including the neutralist-aligned, the unilateralist-multilateralist, and isolationist-internationalist spectrums. See Braumoeller. “The Myth of American Isolationism.” 354.

appropriations. In the case of the United States, the dynamics between isolationism and unilateral expansionism before World War II implied multiple challenges to the U.S. strategic autonomy and a variety of responses to internal and external stimuli that allowed the United States to progress as a regional and world power. The study of strategic autonomy offers important insights into states' motivations and strategic choices.

Chapter 3: Theory of Strategic Autonomy

The theory of strategic autonomy is a theory of foreign policy. By its nature, strategic autonomy is a theory of alliance avoidance and manipulation which contrasts with most theories of international relations describing alliances as one of the preferred methods of power aggregation.¹ Without denying the aggregation effect of alliances, the theory of strategic autonomy explains why better alternatives to alliances exist under some circumstances. It emphasizes the importance of diplomacy as a tool that can help to overcome the limitation of material power. Lesser powers can accordingly avoid many restrictions from others' threats by adopting behaviour such as neutrality and isolation. Under optimal conditions, strategic autonomy allows for risky behaviors without support from other states such as expansion and unilateral foreign intervention. This study aimed to explain the causal process of the decision-making leading to those unilateral risky behaviours.

Strategic autonomy is not the path of less resistance in an anarchic international system and even less so in a globalized one. It requires effort and strategy to maximize self-help while preserving survival. Kenneth Waltz assumes that "While states retain their autonomy, each stands in a specifiable relation to the other."² The concept of strategic autonomy expands state autonomy in a way that can foil elements of the ordering principle of the international system. The limits and constraints imposed on each other by power differential can be manipulated. This manipulation is the basis of *strategic* autonomy. As much as neoliberals have determined that international institutions can diminish the frictions caused by the ordering principle,³ strategic autonomy argues that diplomatic strategies can diminish the incidence of other powers on one foreign policy decision-making range.

Strategic autonomy occurs under various guises depending on the threat level exposition, the relative power, the alignment options, and geostrategic factors. It is determined by the diplomatic style and skills of state leadership, the concentration of executive power, and the civil-military balance which all intercede into the decision-making process leading to the adoption, or not, of a doctrine favouring strategic autonomy. What is strategic autonomy? The baseline of strategic autonomy is the minimization of risks and uncertainties of foreign intervention in domestic politics and the maximization of the foreign policy decision-making spectrum. However, why do states want to maximize strategic autonomy? How do states improve their strategic autonomy? What are the costs and benefits of strategic autonomy? Strategic autonomy is a decision-making nexus between the systemic permissiveness of its occurrence and the domestic

¹ For discussion on the usefulness of alliances as power aggregation methods see: Stephen M. Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); George Liska. *Nation in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968): 26; Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy. "Domestic Sources of Alliance and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73." *International Organization* Vol. 45 (1991): 369-395; and James D. Morrow. "Alliance and Asymmetry: An Alternative to the Capability Aggregation Model of Alliances." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 35 (1991): 904-933.; Ole R. Holsti, P. Terrence Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan. *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973); David Lalman and David Newman. "Alliance Formation and National Security." *International Interaction* Vol. 16 (1991): 239-253

² Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1979): 100.

³ Among others: Robert O. Keohane. "International Institutions: Two Approaches." *International Studies Quarterly* Vol. 32, no. 4 (Dec. 1988): 386-7; and Lisa L. Martin. *Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanction*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992): 39-40.

preferences toward limited obligations toward the normative and regulative elements of the system. Some situations are best dealt with unilaterally, or at least with very minimal interference. However, the conventional wisdom is far more oriented toward the development of strong commitments and the building of coalitions.

What Is Strategic Autonomy?

Strategic autonomy is a consequence of grand strategies over an extended period articulated to maximize a subset of preferences defined by the geographic, material, and political arrangement of a state which are independently constrained by the changing security environment of the international system. A grand strategy is:

[T]he organizing principle or conceptual blueprint that animates all of a state's relations with the outside world, for the purpose of securing itself and maximizing its interests. It shapes the parameters of the specific foreign, military, and economic strategies states pursue toward particular states, toward specific regions, and toward other actors on the world stage.⁴

The long-term goals of strategic autonomy are intrinsically linked to the fears and consequences of formal alliances. In addition, the limitation of foreign influence is the core objective of strategic autonomy. This limitation diminishes the reliance on foreign powers to maintain status for lesser powers and develop a sphere of influence for regional and great power.

Strategically autonomous states attempt to remain inconsequential to the maintenance mechanism of the general equilibrium equation managing the international system. To increase strategic autonomy, states have to avoid or limit actors' disturbance and limit or constrain the effect of the regulator. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish if autonomy is achieved by refusal to engage with other actors and deterring their intervention, or the obtention of cooperation from the other actors to be left out of the equation. If it was only the former, only powerful actors would be able to achieve strategic autonomy. However, it is not always the case. Smaller states and lesser powers achieve strategic autonomy in the international system without being challenged by the great powers, and even, on rare occasions, if they have conflicting interests. Strategic autonomy implies that states tried to balance their national interest, their security, and the friction point with other states. Complete isolation is very rare and most often counterproductive, and even more so today with the integrated world economy. Therefore, strategic autonomy does not mean staying out of world politics, but it rather means not linking its grand strategy to other states or a coalition of states.

My argument examines two core propositions on the effect of power, threat, alignment options, and geography on the strategic choice of autonomy. The first proposition argues that regional powers and greater powers are more likely to foster and exploit their strategic autonomy to gain prestige and influence. Being a regional power implies rarer threats to vital interests and lower needs for aggregated capabilities, which create incentives to increase one's sphere of influence. In some rare cases, national elites can reach a consensus on the national preference for risky gain and seek greater regional influence and adopt a costlier, but potentially more rewarding strategy toward territorial expansion. When there is an extra-regional threat, the regional power that wants to preserve its strategic autonomy will focus on anti-access and deterrent strategies. The

⁴ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Steven E. Lobell. *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance between the World Wars*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 15.

second proposition is that middle and lesser great powers⁵ will increase their autonomy depending on their ability to manipulate risks and exploit their geographical position. When they are insulated from other states' rivalry and appear as potential balancers, their level of autonomy can be sufficient to achieve pivotal gains if they possess the diplomatic skills to do so. In other cases, some intermediary states, that are situated between the rivalries of two greater powers, can either adopt isolationist or neutrality strategies and manage the risks of becoming the theater of confrontation or manipulate their diplomatic relations with their more powerful neighbours to act as a buffer between them. Though those two strategies will provide further autonomy to intermediary states, they have a substantial risk of failure over time which could lead to a drastic loss in autonomy or even conquest with small powers.⁶ An intermediary state can exploit its rivalry with another state to foster the support of a great power or to create a variety of alignment relations when they have diplomatic skills and alignment options. Intermediary states build autonomy on their diplomatic skills to exploit their geographic position as buffer states at a greater risk than pivotal states.

All those causal processes have significance as long as autonomy is defined and operationalized. First, autonomy is a core determinant of the development of a grand strategy. Posen defines grand strategy as “a politico-military means-end chain” where a state “identif[ies] the likely threats to the state security and it must devise political, economic, military, and other remedies for those threats.”⁷ Posen’s definition is coherent with the principle that “[g]rand strategy is public policy and reflects a nation’s mechanisms for arriving at social choices.”⁸ Consequently, external constraints but also internal preferences have to be considered to predict coherently states’ strategic choices. The strategic choices available to a state are diverse and, as Tilly denotes, they should be classified along “sociological dichotomies.”⁹ Snyder and Diesing conceive the variation of strategic choices between the spectrum of the dimensions of accommodation/coercion and completeness/incompleteness.¹⁰ To those two dimensions, this proposal adds one: the autonomous-interdependent dimension. Accordingly, the core interest here is to develop a theory about strategies that score higher on the autonomous dimension with variation along the line of

⁵ Middle powers and lesser great powers are coalesced under the appellation *intermediary states or powers* for this research since I am expecting that they will adopt similar behavior in term of strategic autonomy. Middle powers have “strategic and pivotal position.” See Andrew Cooper. “Squeeze or Revitalised? Middle Powers, the G20 and the Evolution of Global Governance.” *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 34, no. 6 (July 2013): 980. Lesser great powers (LGPs) are defined as states that have the potential to “exert significant influence on the global and regional balances of power.” See Randall L. Schweller. *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 17.

⁶ Fazal insists that “buffer states are more likely to die” and that they account for over 40 percent of state deaths.” See Tanisha M. Fazal. *State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation, and Annexation*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 2. However, he recognized that under a certain set of circumstances buffer survival is more likely, especially when “rivals’ hands can be metaphorically ‘tied’” and when their “sovereignty is guaranteed by even more powerful actors.” See *ibid.* It is precisely those instances that we are interested in here.

⁷ Barry Posen. *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 13.

⁸ Rosecrance and Stein. “Beyond Realism.” 13.

⁹ Charles Tilly. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984): 7.

¹⁰ The accommodative/coercive dimension reflects a state’s willingness to make concession when threatened. The completeness/incompleteness dimension expresses the planning a state put behind its strategy, whether a state consider the numerous tactical contingencies or if it will establish the general principles of its strategy and leave the tactical details to be improvised. Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing. *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making, and System Structure in International Crises*. (Princeton: Princeton University, 1977), 38-9.

accommodation/coercion and completeness/incompleteness. Therefore, the spectrum of strategic autonomy goes beyond isolationism and neutralism. Variation along accommodation/coercion and completeness/incompleteness matrix reinforces the conception of a plurality of strategic autonomy.

Second, autonomy in international relations has been defined under different banners in the literature, e.g., independence, freedom of action, unilateralism, self-reliance, and nonalignment. Those various labels leave room for contradictions and interpretation. Therefore, a strong and unified definition of autonomy is necessary. First, the concept of autonomy implies the “general notion of autonomy as a state’s ability to determine its own policies.”¹¹ Second, the notion of autonomy needs the exclusion of any formal commitment for mutual or collective defence, i.e., most forms of alliances. The formalization occurs through the establishment of “elements of specificity, legal and moral obligations, and reciprocity.”¹² However, autonomy is permissive toward alignments which are vague estimates of support implying uncertainty and flexibility.¹³ Strategically autonomous states are not autarkic; they interact with other powers. The level of interactions is, however, developed in a manner to foster autonomy. Thus, autonomy’s goal is to avoid any restraint imposed by external partners who could limit the transformation and formulation of grand strategy.

Conflict of interest or lack of shared interest motivates the adoption of strategic autonomy. In his theory of alliance, Snyder defines an “interest relationship” with two dimensions: direction (conflict/commonality) and intensity (“degree of conflict or of sharing”).¹⁴ As much as those dimensions are pertinent to alliance formation, they are fundamental to strategic autonomy. Conflicts of interest are deeply associated with the “three types of value-currency in international relations: intrinsic, strategic, and reputational.”¹⁵ The type of interest threatened influence deeply the type of autonomy a state can yield. A state can have either vital or secondary interests threatened. Vital interests involve “self-preservation,” i.e., direct threats posed to “political and territorial integrity.”¹⁶ Secondary interests are less substantive; they are more “positional considerations” related to status, prestige, and sphere of influence.¹⁷ Threats directed at vital interests are more constraining on autonomy than the ones on secondary interests. When only secondary interests are threatened, states experienced more permissive conditions to develop strategic autonomy policy. Regional powers without extra-regional threats are more likely to be able to maximize their sphere of influence. Lesser powers, on the other hand, can exploit plural shared interests and commonalities to develop a web of alignments. Without formal commitment, abandonment is a low-cost strategy if interests start to diverge. The level of threat varies from one state to another, but the nature of the threat can also change, and it is directly related to the type of interest that is threatened.

¹¹ Morrow. “Alliances and Asymmetry.” 909.

¹² Snyder. *Alliance Politics*, 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁵ Snyder. *Alliance Politics*. 23.

¹⁶ Timothy W. Crawford. *Pivotal Deterrence: Third-Party Statecraft and the Pursuit of Peace*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 31.

¹⁷ Paul W. Schroeder. “Quantitative Studies in the Balance of Power: An Historian’s Reaction.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 21 (1) (March 1977): 15; Karen Rasler and William R. Thompson. “Explaining Rivalry Escalation to War: Space, Position, and Contiguity in Major Power Subsystem.” *International Studies Quarterly* 44 (2000): 505.

Geography can foster incentives toward strategically autonomous policy, especially for some smaller states for which even survival might depend on it. Three main geostrategic elements influence autonomy: insularity, landlockness, and buffer zone. Insular states are disconnected from the mainland and benefit from a natural buffer zone insulating them from threats associated with shared land borders. However, dependence on foreign resources leads them to increase trade partners or engage in expansionist strategies. Landlocked states, in opposition to insular ones, are surrounded by other states and need to manage threats from multiple fronts. Their survival is dependent on their ability to maintain distinctiveness and autonomy. Furthermore, they are dependent on other states for trade since they do not have direct access to the sea. Landlocked states often act as a buffer zone, but not all buffer zones are landlocked. Buffer zones are areas that exist “to lessen friction between its neighbours.”¹⁸ Buffer states act as an intermediary between great powers where they can passively separate them or link them to negotiate appeasement solutions. Nevertheless, they are vulnerable states that often get caught in the crossfire of great power conflict. Schroeder sustains that they can also multiply and complicate “the possible modes of great power interaction.”¹⁹ For example, Armenia during the Byzantine Empire acted as an autonomous intermediary state. Often considered as a buffer state between the two empires, but it was “more conflict-inducing than conflict-buffering.”²⁰ Hence, autonomy tends to flourish in states that possess those geographical properties since they have strategic imperatives to diversify their economic, political, security and diplomatic relations and avoid any direct involvement in costly and risky conflicts.

The creation of risk is a cornerstone of strategic autonomy. According to Schelling, “the world without uncertainty would discriminate in favour of passivity against initiative.”²¹ Autonomy for an intermediary state often implies playing at the brinkmanship level and manipulating shared risks for creating gains. This is even more relevant in the context where a regional power gains military nuclear capabilities which increase its willingness to increase the risks in its conflicts.²² The success of this strategy is dependent on the ability of the state to set “afoot an activity that may get out of hand” and initiate “a process that carries some risk of unintended disaster.”²³ Failure is definitely a possibility for those states. The success of those risk

¹⁸ Mary Barnes Gear. “Role of Buffer States in International Relations,” *Journal of Geography*, 40, no. 3 (1941): 83.

¹⁹ Paul W. Schroeder “The Lost Intermediaries: The Impact of 1870 in the European System.” *The International History Review*, 6, no. 1 (1984): 5.

²⁰ Edward N. Luttwak. *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire*. (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 49.

²¹ Schelling *Arms and Influence*, 100. The bargaining nature of strategic autonomy involved “a process in which bargaining is by maneuver as much as by words, in which communication is poor, legal enforcement is unavailable, and the participants make irreversible moves while they bargain, are uncertain about each other’s values, and have some power to inflict gratuitous damage on each other.” See Thomas C. Schelling. “Experimental Games and Bargaining Theory.” *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (Oct. 1961): 50.

²² This optic wants to be a hybrid between Schelling’s *Brinkmanship theory* (see Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict*, 199-201; Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 92-125; Robert Powell. *Nuclear Deterrence Theory: The Search for Credibility*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990); Matthew Kroenig. *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy: Why Strategic Superiority Matters*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 3) and Narang’s theory of *regional nuclear postures* where the catalytic and asymmetric escalation postures are significantly emphasizing on manipulating risks and perpetuate a brinkmanship crisis (see Vipin Narang. *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 8.) This combination involves the inherent brinkmanship environment that the threat of nuclear weapons involves in addition with the variable nature of the regional power nuclear strategies due to either the limitation of their arsenal or their delivery systems.

²³ *Ibid.*, 91.

situations is dependent on the diplomatic abilities of the intermediary states to make first and foremost the manipulation credible. As a condition to persist as such, strategically autonomous states learn to become more risk acceptant from bad experiences and traumatic events within alliances or due to colonialism. Reiter proposes that the “basic learning proposition is that lessons are drawn from significant foreign policy experiences: continuity of policy follows success while innovation follows failure.”²⁴ In sum, strategic autonomy is alliance-averse and risk-acceptant. Like any strategy, autonomy creates trade-offs of security and wealth.

Why Study Strategic Autonomy?

Aberrations in the international system are more frequent than expected. Isolation, neutrality, independence, non-alignment, and many other alternative strategic stances do not make much sense in terms of balance of power. States do not always maximize security or power through external or internal balancing as defensive and offensive realists argue. Nevertheless, security and power remain a core issue to all states including the ones seeking strategic autonomy. Great power politics is most often managed by balancing strategies; however, it is not always the case. Regional powers, lesser great powers, medium powers, and small powers are submitted to the hierarchy of relative power that does not provide them with the most permissive conditions when it comes to autonomy. However, external alliance and domestic resource mobilization are not the only determinants of security. While small powers often adopt outlier strategies when they do not balance or bandwagon, greater powers do not escape the balance of power logic very often. Small powers have more incentives than greater ones to adopt strategies such as neutrality and nonalignment.²⁵ The occurrence of preference toward strategic autonomy is more common in emerging regional and great powers with insularity. In order to secure their authority within their sphere of influence, they required a greater level of autonomy.

At one point or another, most states have intentionally limited their integration into the international system. “Alienation” is not uncommon either deliberate or not. Ostracism and isolationism are “multi-dimensional phenomen[a] embracing a wide spectrum of inter-state relations.”²⁶ Neutral, isolated, non-aligned, and pivotal states are numerous and required further research. Each movement is often announced as dying as soon as it started, but strategic autonomy has been able to find different strategies to reinvent itself.²⁷ The defeatist attitude of academia with those movements is not unfounded. The isolation of the United States already fragilized during the Great War died during the Second World War along with the neutrality of some European states, the end of the Cold War delegitimized the non-aligned states, and the last remaining neutrals of Europe abandoned their position due to the Russian threat. As much as alliances are not eternal, strategic autonomy can be abandoned under the pressure of systemic changes.

²⁴ Dan Reiter. “Learning, Realism, and Alliances: The Weight of the Shadow of the Past.” *World Politics*, 46 no. 4 (Jul. 1994): 490.

²⁵ Robert L. Rothstein. *Alliances and Small Powers*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968): 30.

²⁶ Deon Geldenhuys. *Isolated States: A Comparative Analysis*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 17.

²⁷ See: John W. Coogan. *The End of Neutrality: The United States, Britain, and Maritime Rights, 1899-1915*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); Raymond Dennett. “Isolationism is Dead.” *Far Eastern Survey* Vol. 13, No. 15 (Jul. 1944): 135-137; Christine Agius and Karen Devine. “Neutrality: A Really Dead Concept? A Reprise” *Cooperation and Conflict* Vol. 46, No. 3 (Sept. 2011): 265-284; Hash V. Pant. “The End of Non-Alignment.” *Orbis* Vol. 61, No. 4 (2017): 527-540; Carol Pauli. “The ‘End’ of Neutrality: Tumultuous Times Require a Deeper Value.” *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 23, No. 3 (2022): 557-572.

The bargaining and signalling games that lead to those strategies that maximize autonomy are fascinating. Coercion, deterrence, compellence, accommodation, concession or capitulation intermingle into a web of behaviour to reduce the disrupting and omnipotent role of great powers politics. Waltz argues that the “flexibility of alignment” of the smaller units makes for the “rigidity of strategy” of the alliance leader(s).²⁸ Therefore, powers of lesser importance benefit largely from strategic autonomy that prohibits them to commit to formal alliances which can entrap them into rigid strategies detrimental to their interests. In addition, the reduced diplomatic flexibility of formal alliances prevents intermediary states to intercede in major crises as mediators.²⁹

The Role of Alliances in World Politics

The definition of Alliance needs to include strict parameters to generate a clear distinction between friendship or partnership and the legal engagement to regulate the behaviour between states in case of aggression. Paul W. Schroeder offers such a definition:

[A]n alliance is a treaty binding two or more independent states to come to each other's aid with armed force under circumstances specified in the *casus foederis* article of the treaty. Whether offensive or defensive, limited or unlimited, equal or unequal, bilateral or multilateral, alliances must involve some measure of commitment to use force to achieve a common goal.³⁰

Liska expresses that “alliance merely formalizes alignments based on interests or coercion.”³¹ Snyder specifies that “[f]ormal alliances strengthen existing alignment [...] by their solemnity, specificity, legal and normative obligations and (in modern times) their public visibility.”³² The avoidance of the formalization of alignment is the core of strategic autonomy. However, the formation, cohesion, disintegration, and effect of international alliances remain a pervasive influence on state autonomy. No alliance is eternal. Power is fluid, and its fluctuations challenge the alliance system along with the autonomy of any state at one point or another. The appeal of alliances is real and logical.

While they constitute a source of security to many states and they are responsible for much of the stability in the international system, alliances have their share of issues. Alliance formation presents its risks. Alliances present real costs in security and autonomy.³³ Often, alliance formation leads to counteralliances and creates a security dilemma. In addition, depending on the level of threat involved, a state can have a high fear of abandonment. While affected by reputation costs and the respect of international norms, alliance agreements can be violated and broken due to the anarchic nature of the international system. On occasions, states have instrumentalized alliances as a bargaining tool without the intention of honouring their commitment. The Soviet decision to leave the Franco-Soviet Pact of 1935 in favour of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact showed the risk

²⁸ Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. 168-9;

²⁹ Heinz Gärtner. "Small States and Alliances." In *Small States and Alliances*. Edited by Erich Reiter and Heinz Gärtner. 1-10. (New York: Psysica-Verlag, 2001): 2-3.

³⁰ Paul W. Schroeder. "Alliances, 1915-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management." In *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*. Edited by Klaus Knorr. 227-262. (Lawrence: The University of Kansas, 1976): 227.

³¹ George Liska. *Nation in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968): 3.

³² Glenn H. Snyder. "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut." *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 44, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990): 105.

³³ Michael N. Barnett and Jack S. Levy. "Domestic Sources of Alliance and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73." *International Organization* Vol. 45 (1991): 374.

and cost of abandonment. The fear of abandonment is also amplified by the risk of dealignment, realignment, prealignment, or disalignment operationalized through wedge strategies.³⁴

The fear of entrapment, on the other hand, occurs when a state is “being dragged into a conflict over an ally’s interests that one does not share, or share only partially.”³⁵ Formal alliances can make one of the allies “emboldened to stand firmer and take more risks vis-à-vis his opponent.”³⁶ This risk can be even greater than abandonment, especially for states that are highly susceptible to being a major theatre of operation if the escalation leads to war. Reckless allies can suppress strategic autonomy by engulfing the alliance member in an undesired conflict over an issue of unshared interest. Alliances, however, can also play a restriction function against their own allies. Robert E. Osgood identifies that: “Next to accretion, the most prominent function of alliances has been to restrain and control allies, particularly in order to safeguard one ally against actions of another that might endanger its security or otherwise jeopardise its interest.”³⁷ Alliances of restraint directly target the autonomy of an ally.

Alliance management bears the potential for problems with unfair burden sharing within an alliance and free riding. Free riding problem is more likely to occur in large coalitions. The phenomenon is endemic in NATO and is more likely to occur when deterrence rather than defence is the goal of the alliance.³⁸ Nevertheless, unfair burden sharing can impose inflated demand on domestic resources when the alliance should be acting as a tool to aggregate power. The suboptimality of those alliances creates internal tension and puts further pressure on autonomy.

Whether real or not, the fear of entrapment and abandonment is often the perceived risk that will inhibit a state from committing to an alliance. However, neutrality is neither permanent nor obligatory in every situation when adopted.³⁹ Consequently, to avoid the formalization aspect of alliances, strategically autonomous states are more likely to engage in alignment strategies. Amongst other strategies, the development of strategic partnerships is valorized to preserve additional autonomy. Strategic partnerships are a “structured collaboration between states (or other ‘actors’) to take joint advantage of economic opportunities, or to respond to security challenges more effectively than could be achieved in isolation.”⁴⁰ This allows strategically autonomous states to gain benefits from designed partners with whom they exchange and support each other in specific functional areas.

Alignments Vs. Alliances

Formal alliances can give a Manichean nature to interstate relations. This catch-22 logic led to a world whereas Cicero declares “Let your word prevail, as it has hitherto done; for we heard you say, we looked upon all as enemies that were not with us; but that you looked upon all as

³⁴ Timothy W. Crawford. "Preventing Enemy Coalitions: How Wedge Strategies Shape Power Politics." *International Security* Vol. 35, No. 4 (Spring 2011): 156, 164.

³⁵ Glenn H. Snyder. "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics." *World Politics* Vol. 36, no. 4 (Jul. 1984): 467

³⁶ Snyder. "Alliance Theory.": 113; Snyder. *Alliance Politics*. 181.

³⁷ Robert E. Osgood. *Alliances and American Foreign Policy*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967): 22.

³⁸ See James D. Morrow. "Alliances: Why Write Them Down?" *Annual Review of Political Science* Vol 3 (June 2000): 78; James C. Murdoch and Todd Sandler. "A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis of NATO." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* Vol. 26, no. 2 (1982): 240; and Mancur Olson and Richard Zeckhauser. "An Economic Theory of Alliances." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* Vol. 48, No. 3 (Aug. 1966): 268-271.

³⁹ Gärtner. "Small States and Alliances." 9.

⁴⁰ Thomas Wilkins. "The Russo-Chinese Strategic Partnership: A New Form of Security Cooperation?" *Contemporary Security Policy* Vol 29, no. 2 (Aug. 2008): 363.

friends that were not against you.”⁴¹ The world is not so decisively divided. Glenn Snyder argues that gray areas exist in terms of gradation of alignment that are left unexplained by the traditional balance of power theories.⁴² Michael D. Ward specifies that:

Alignment is not signified by formal treaties, but is delineated by a variety of behavioural actions. It is a more extensive concept than alliance since it does not focus solely upon the military dimension of international politics. Degrees of alignments in political, economic, military, and cultural spheres present a multifaceted sculpture of national and supranational postures. Alignments do not, in general, have specific *casi foederis*, nor do they tend to be conceptualized as rigid and static phenomena.⁴³

A contrario, alliances provide clear expectations. Alliances introduce “precision, obligation, and reciprocity” to alignments.⁴⁴ The “reduced probability of being attacked (deterrence), greater strength in case of attack (defense) and prevention of the ally’s alliance with one’s adversary (preclusion)” are intrinsic to formal mutual defence alliance.⁴⁵ Alignments are uncertain and vulnerable to contingencies. In addition, coalitions and security communities add layers of complexity and narrow shared interest which limit autonomy even more.

States maximizing strategic autonomy have to reduce their alliance needs to a minimum. However, the goal is not the avoidance of engagement with other states. Trade, strategic partnership, and open diplomatic relations are amongst the best tools of strategic autonomy. Prioritization of autonomy does not mean exclusion from the security architecture of world politics, but rather an expression of security marked by the caution of the required flexibility to engage in autonomous decision-making in international relations.

Typology of Strategic Autonomy

Strategic autonomy implies a larger freedom of action based on self-reliance. In order to achieve a satisfying level of strategic autonomy, states must either possess the necessary capabilities to be a regional power or they have to exploit their comparative strategic advantages within their relative power. The comparative strategic advantages are linked to the geographical position (insularity and buffer zone), the alignment options and the decision-makers’ diplomatic skills. The instrumental use of those comparative strategic advantages allows lesser powers to adopt intermediary roles where they are pivotal between different states, develop a regional sphere of influence to attain the status of regional power or stay in the margin avoiding direct involvement. Their pivotal function allows to maintain flexibility and avoid formal and inflexible alignment.⁴⁶ The advantage of strategic autonomy is mainly the function of avoiding the risk of alliances and benefiting from the structural uncertainty strategically autonomous states create.

Anatomy of Strategic Autonomy

I argue that two categories of strategic autonomy exist in the international system. Hegemonic autonomy is concerned with the search or sustainability of gain for regional and great powers. Intermediary autonomy considers the creation of strategic opportunities to maintain

⁴¹ Marcus Tullius Cicero. *Cicero’s Select Orations*. New Haven: Sydney’s Press, 1811): 547.

⁴² Glenn H. Snyder. "Alliance Theory: A Neorealist First Cut." *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 44, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1990): 105.

⁴³ Michael D. Ward. *Research Haps in Alliance Dynamics*. (Denver: University of Denver, 1982): 7-8.

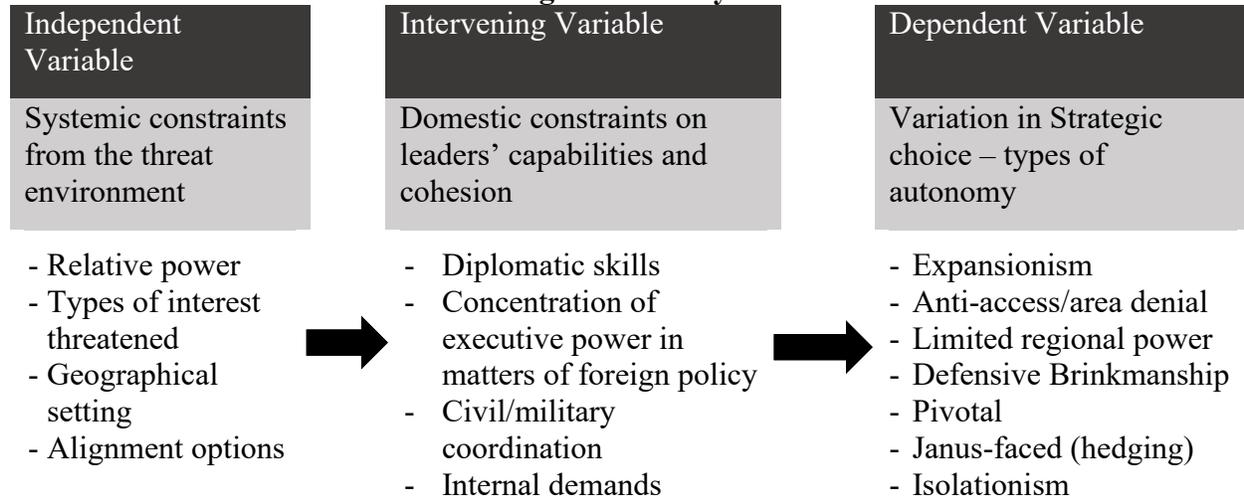
⁴⁴ Snyder. "Alliance Theory.": 109.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 110.

⁴⁶ Crawford. *Pivotal Deterrence*, 5.

autonomy and at the same time either the increase of gain or security according to the types of interest threatened. The causal process of strategic autonomy (see Table 3.1) is consequential in every type of strategic autonomy, but the relative effect of each variable differs from one type to another. Strategic choices are based on the third image – “material power, changes in its distribution, and external threat” – but also on internal considerations based on the second image including “domestic groups, social ideas, the character of constitutions, economic constraints, historical social tendencies, and domestic political pressures.”⁴⁷ This model is conceived accordingly.

Table 3.1: Causal Mechanism of Strategic Autonomy



As Thucydides eloquently wrote, “The strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”⁴⁸ Hegemonic autonomy is sustained by the first consideration of strong power. However, lesser powers suffer what they must until they do not. Strategic autonomy reduces the security necessity created by others’ relative power. Thucydides’ brilliant remark remains relevant since lesser powers remain structurally constrained, but opportunities can develop where their diplomatic skills and geographic position allow them to achieve gains rather than only seek security. Intermediary states with a pivotal/balancer role have that opportunity but also buffer states with abundant alignment options.

The systemic factors are directly related to the nature of the threat environment. The relative power of each state is measured in terms of military and economic power. The greater the level of relative power a state possesses, the better its opportunities to display greater strategic autonomy are. The types of interest threatened are measured by the existence of either a vital threat to the territory or a secondary threat to positional considerations. Threats to vital interest can be a strong incentive for less powerful states to reach out to partners to increase their aggregated capabilities when those partners are available. The geographical setting varies according to two considerations – the level of insularity/landlockness (number of shared borders and access to sea) and the status of buffer zones (satellite of great power or intermediary between the conflicting

⁴⁷ Rosecrance and Stein. “Beyond Realism.” 5.

⁴⁸ Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian war*. (Trans. by Rex. Warner with an introduction and notes by M.I. Finley. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), 402.

interests of great powers). Insularity eases the achievement of autonomy due to decrease friction with neighbours but can put pressure on the need for resources. The alignment options are measured through the number of states engaged in trade relations, the number of states that shared technologies and weapon platforms, and the number of states that exchange military-related information (intelligence, military logistical support, and joint exercises). The flexibility of choice of partner(s) can be an advantage for strategically autonomous states since they can manipulate the uncertainty regarding their alignment. The combination of the variance of each variable determines the variance between selecting a balancing strategy or an autonomous strategy, but also the variance between the types of autonomous strategies or alliance strategies. Each structural variable potentially creates incentives to select external balancing as a strategy and can create opportunities or constraints on autonomy.

Hegemonic autonomy

The necessary condition for hegemonic autonomy is the status of regional power. A regional power must have a significant sphere of influence, have strong military capabilities in the three military branches (army, air forces, and navy), and have no credible regional challenger. When those necessary conditions are met, the regional power depending on its domestic autonomy might adopt either a limited regional autonomy or an expansionist strategy. Expansionist strategies are more likely to occur when sufficient internal demands and capabilities are present to create lateral pressures.⁴⁹ In hegemonic autonomy, regional powers will often engage in asymmetric alliance(s), where the regional power cannot have its actions restrained by its partner(s). Weak regional power seeking hegemonic autonomy can also engage in anti-access/area-denial measures and in strategic partnership diversification to reduce the threat from extra-regional great powers.

Lateral pressures occur inevitably in world politics since the sphere of influence and interests of other states always end up colliding with one another. Lateral pressure is “a neutral term to express a society tendency to exert efforts ... ever farther from its natural or original borders.”⁵⁰ The rapid growth of the population, an important increase in the levels of technology, and limited access to specific resources have been core incentives to generate greater lateral pressures in high-capability states.⁵¹ One area that generates increasing lateral pressure is the oil demand, which has become a measure of autonomy when there is self-sufficiency (Iran or Brazil for example), but also creates the need for a strong navy for those who need to secure trade lanes (US, China, and India). The security of those trade lanes is difficult to establish alone which generate greater risk for autonomous state and add incentive toward forming alliances. Lateral

⁴⁹ In accordance with Choucri’s and North’s Lateral Pressure Theory, “lateral pressure is not likely to be expressed unless both demands and capabilities are above some threshold.” (See Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North. *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence*. (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1974), 17.) Consequently, lateral pressures are likely to occur in states where “advances in technology, when combined with increases in population, often contribute to the dilemma of rising demands and insufficient domestic resources” (*ibid.*, 15). The various combinations of the population/resource/technology relationship generate different types of lateral pressure ranging from “commercial activities, dispatch of troops into foreign territory, establishment of naval or military bases, acquisition of colonial territory,” and territorial conquest (*ibid.*, 17).

⁵⁰Robert C. North and Nazli Choucri. 1971. “Population, Technology, and Resources in the Future International System.” *Journal of International Affairs*. 25 (2): 231. They specified that it could range from “exploration, foreign trade, investment, conquest, acquisition of territory, domination over other societies, or even journeys to the moon.” (*Ibid.*)

⁵¹ Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North. *Nations in Conflict: National Growth and International Violence*. (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1974), 26-28.

pressure theory helps to identify the domestic incentives toward expansionist occurrence, but also its absence.

When there is an extra-regional threat creating pressure on the regional power sphere of influence or directly on its territory, it will develop an anti-access strategy accompanied by deterrence to ensure its territorial integrity and to prevent the possibility of offshore balancing by the threatening power. Anti-access or area denial strategy is a defensive measure that seeks to create an extensive buffer zone or cordon sanitaire around the sphere of influence and oceanic surroundings to prevent intrusion and deployment of power projection capabilities of extra-regional powers. Submarines capabilities, mines, and ballistic missiles have been generally classified as weapon systems to enforce this type of strategy.

In sum, three different hypotheses will be tested in consideration of hegemonic autonomy (See Table 3.4). First, a regional power with high domestic autonomy and substantial internal demands and capabilities is more likely to adopt an expansionist strategy. The expansionist strategy is not necessarily a territorial expansion but is most of the time an expansion of the sphere of influence. Second, a regional power with a fragmented authority or society is more likely to adopt a limited regional dominance posture. When there are sufficient domestic demands and capabilities, it will proceed with the consolidation of its sphere of influence; otherwise, it will be self-sufficient. Third, a regional power under the threat of an extra-regional power develops anti-access and deterrence capabilities.

Intermediary Autonomy

Intermediary autonomy includes a vast array of strategic behaviours that increase a state's level of autonomy. Schroeder mentions a variety of actions for intermediary states that foster autonomy such as to "share influence, neutralize the area, pledge mutual non-aggrandizement and non-interference, compete for dominant influence, partition the area into spheres, or seek some combination of these."⁵² Blackmail, bait and bleed, and bloodletting strategies⁵³ are other forms of behaviours that intermediary states apply with greater propensity than others. All those strategic behaviours have in common the "creation of risk or disequilibrium – usually a shared risk."⁵⁴ The brinkmanship autonomy common to those strategies occurs when a balanced power has no more than its secondary interests threatened and preferably a form of insularity to reduce risk which allows the intervention of various strategic mechanisms between others rivalry to create gains for the intermediary state. Diplomatic skills and highly cohesive domestic authority are the determining factors in the risk acceptance of brinkmanship autonomy.

When vital interests are threatened, the intermediary state is more likely to adopt an isolationist strategy if it has scarce alignment options and a fragmented society. However, if it has abundant alignment options in combination with cartelized state power or very limited alignment options the intermediary state is more likely to adopt a defensive brinkmanship autonomy in function of sufficient diplomatic skills. Defensive brinkmanship autonomy is to adopt a specific alignment (nor necessarily explicit) with a great power but with no intention of reciprocity or restriction of autonomy. Also, in a situation of abundant alignment, a state with extensive diplomatic skills to aggregate interest and a fragmented state/society dynamic are more likely to adopt a Janus-faced autonomy. Janus-faced autonomy is a hedging strategy where the goal is to

⁵² Schroeder. "The Lost Intermediaries." 5.

⁵³ Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 152-5.

⁵⁴ Schelling *Arms and Influence*, 91; Riker. *The Theory of Political Coalitions*, 189.

engage actively with as many major powers as possible, simultaneously. States need a certain level of diplomatic skills and a strong reputational outlook to perform on that matter. Janus-faced autonomous states multiply the number of “sleeping partners.”⁵⁵ Consequently, they increase their level of security with an open possibility of autonomous actions that would create the loss of a strategic partner. Thus, intermediary autonomy possesses a variety and flexibility of strategic behaviour because of the intermediary state’s ability to create risk between actors.

Domestic Constraints

The intervening effect of domestic politics is part of a double-structural effect. It aggregates with the structural effect of international politics. Ripsman specifies that the “*domestic decision-making environment* (encompassing these institutional structures, decision-making procedures, and procedural norms) and their impact on *structural autonomy*” act as a double determinant of the intervening function of domestic politics on international ones (see Table 3.2).⁵⁶ The effect of domestic politics is conceived that way here also. On the domestic level, three major requirements animate grand strategy, i.e., “commitment, extraction, and mobilization of societal resources”⁵⁷ The control of the societal resources is dependent on the leader’s autonomy on the political agenda. As Migdal advocates “The fragmentation of social control – the heterogeneity of rule-making in society – greatly restricted the growth of state capabilities.”⁵⁸ The necessity of a strongman for a strong autonomous state has a similar effect than the building of a logrolling coalition. Colaresi affirms that leaders might outbid the perception of the rivalry to increase the level of threat.⁵⁹ This outbidding of the perception is reinforced when “coalition logrolling” occurs. Logrolling happens when concentrated elite groups “hijack the state policy” and develop a “self-serving strategic argument” build in a propagandist mythmaking system to reinforce the over-commitment.⁶⁰ Ripsman adds that “leaders can conceal their aims” (hiding), “mislead the public,” (misleading) or attribute false outcomes or intentions (*blaming*).⁶¹ Those various degrees of manipulation of perception serve the parochial interests of the leaders and create biases in the logic of strategic responses to threats. If a coalition or leader hijacks the state’s national interest, external autonomy is necessary to achieve its goal with embedded external pressures.

Table 3.2: Domestic Structural Autonomy

Domestic Constraint	Structural Effect	Variation of Domestic Autonomy
Concentration of executive power	Outbid opposition	Level of autonomy of decision
Civil-military balance	Organizational constraints	Level of coherence of decision
Internal demands	Policy preferences	Level of required external resources and markets

⁵⁵ Snyder. *Alliance Politics*, 46.

⁵⁶ Norrin M. Ripsman. *Peacemaking by Democracies: The Effect of State Autonomy on the Post-World War Settlements*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 6.

⁵⁷ Rosecrance and Stein. “Beyond Realism.” 13.

⁵⁸ Joel S. Migdal. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 141.

⁵⁹ Michael P. Colaresi. *Scare Tactics: The Politics of International Rivalry*. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 20.

⁶⁰ Jack L. Snyder. *Myths of Empire Domestic Politics International Ambition*. (Ithaca, N. J.: Cornell University, 1991), 17.

⁶¹ Ripsman. *Peacemaking by Democracies*, 7.

The type of interest threatened bears influence on the concentration of power and the development of domestic security institutions which, in return, can increase a state's ability to preserve its strategic autonomy. This modulation of institutions in response to the threat environment can lead to a concentrated executive power, strict oversight over the military, and information monopoly. The resulting decision-making autonomy increases the possibility of risky manipulative behaviour since the popular and administrative support for those policies might have been too high otherwise because of their higher level of risk.

Internally weaker states are not bound to form alliances. The stimulus and process to preserve their autonomy differ, however. A domestically weaker state with a strong fragmented society may have to answer various grievances to accommodate the state heterogeneity and avoid domestic disturbances.⁶² This internal fragmentation can cause stress on a state's ability to maintain its strategic autonomy and respect its established external engagements when an internal crisis occurs. Internal fragmentation usually limits the mobilization of internal resources for external purposes which makes it way harder to meet the security requirements of existing security arrangements. Alliances become less likely, and the cost of abandoning an alliance decreases. As an alternative, fragmented states are more likely to develop multiple strategic partnerships to avoid complete loss of support or isolation if they have to renege on their remaining partners. They will also favour partners who would be more tolerant towards transgressions of their common interest.

High internal demands increase the need for external partners, a greater sphere of influence or new territory. When internal demands are low, self-reliance is possible with no or a limited amount of partners. As Choucri and North argue, to meet their demands states will "increase their capabilities by utilizing available capabilities and/or by bargaining in order to persuade others to assist or cooperate with them."⁶³ The potential economic interdependence created by high internal demands can decrease autonomy, but states can select strategies to avoid reliance on a single source to respond to those internal demands. In those cases, high internal demands are generally more of an incentive for multilateral strategic partnerships (Janus-faced autonomy) to diversify the sources to respond to those demands. In sum, the effect of domestic constraints on strategic autonomy explains additional aspects of the variance in the types of strategic autonomy a state will foster.

Hypotheses

Two forms of autonomy (hegemonic and intermediary) are the core conceptual basis of this research. Each of these brings a particular form of strategic choice motivated by gain or security. The main objective of this work is to demonstrate that external balancing behaviours are not the only way to establish a secure environment and that states can benefit from overbalancing

⁶² In addition to the societal instability it might create, the fragmentation of society can also lead to instability within the military institutions. Rosen argues that heterogeneous social structures can "create divisive loyalties within the political unit" which could "extend to military organization of that unit." (See Stephen Peter Rosen. "Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters." *International Security* 19 (4) (Spring 1995): 5.) In sum, social structures can limit the possibility of consensus within both civil and military authority due to the possibility of integration of the societal heterogeneity within those institutions which can lead to polarized positions when it comes to devising a coherent strategy. In this end, those divisions will undermine the civil-military coordination and reduce the uniformity of the message sent to potential allies and foes.

⁶³ Nazli Choucri and Robert C. North. "Lateral Pressure in International Relations: Concept and Theory." in *Handbook of War Studies*, edited by Manus I. Midlarsky, 289-326. (Boston: Unwin Hyman 1989), 289.

and underbalancing.⁶⁴ Strategic autonomy includes a plurality of behaviours unpredicted by balance of power theory. Though Waltz argues that internal balancing is preferable to external balancing,⁶⁵ alliances are paramount in explaining the bipolar order so dear to Waltz, but he neglected their significance in maintaining that order. The superpowers benefited tremendously from the alliances of restraint they formed during the Cold War without impeding their autonomy in a significant way. The theory of strategic autonomy considers the state's motivations in the process of choosing autonomy. Maximization of gains and security are the core motivations to determine the nature of the autonomy a state can foster. Powerful states with low-threat environments search to maximize their gains (revisionist) and when a rewarding system is established with different client states, their goal evolves into the protection of those gains (status quo). A major power with strong diplomatic abilities to manipulate risk can achieve autonomy and enjoy gains from buck-passing the security issue to others or by exploiting others' rivalry to create diversion or deception.

The conventional wisdom suggests that the United States would have engaged in alliance behavior early on for both security and economic prosperity (see Table 3.3). Threats from European powers should have triggered alliance formation. The emerging states in Latin America should have generated bandwagoning with the United States to provide a deterrent to European powers. Economically, the United States were ambivalent between its position as a territorial state or an oceanic state (trading state) for most of its history.⁶⁶ The United States debated between the value of expanding its own economic power at home with domestic development within its vast land mass and the possibility of exploiting the European markets with the trade of American goods and resources.

Rosecrance argues that "as long as international politics is composed of particular states with independent powers of decision, the issue of military security will continue to be extremely important."⁶⁷ However, he also specifies that power maximization is not always the best path to prosperity. The balance between trade and military power yields better outcomes than strict military power maximization. Various combinations of military and trading approaches are possible. The United States favored a marginal approach during most of the time between 1823 and 1920 combining limitations on defence spendings, declared neutrality, and high emphasis commercial relations (See table 3.4). U.S. engagement was superior to what strict isolationism implied, but Washington carefully avoided any formal alliance to avoid entanglement in European affairs and maximize trading opportunities with all of Europe rather than allied partners.

⁶⁴ Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein. "Beyond Realism: The Study of Grand Strategy." In *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy*. Edited by Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, 3-21. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 21; and Schweller. *Unanswered Threats*, 10.

⁶⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 1979), 168.

⁶⁶ Richard N. Rosecrance. *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World*. (New York: Basic Books, 1986): 16.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 211.

Table 3.3: Conventional Wisdom Hypotheses (Balance of Power, Balance of Threat, Geostrategic Insularity, and Trading State)

Hypotheses		Outcomes
Great Powers		
H _{GP1}	“The greater the threatening state’s aggregate power, the greater the tendency for others to ally against it.” ⁶⁸	Balancing
H _{GP2}	When a regional power engages in security through expansion, the threats it poses to other states make them more compliant. ⁶⁹	Paper tiger bandwagoning
H _{GP3}	Unopposed regional powers are more likely to be balanced against by extra-regional coalitions. ⁷⁰	Offshore balancer
Intermediary Powers		
H _{IP1}	Middle powers have a greater tendency to ally with the nearest powerful state. ⁷¹	Appeasement through bandwagoning
H _{IP2}	Middle powers with scarce alignment options will bandwagon with their greatest threat.	Bandwagoning
H _{IP3}	“The more unalterably aggressive a state is perceived to be, the greater the tendency for others to balance against it.” ⁷²	Coalition building
H _{IP4}	“The greater the probability of allied support, the greater the tendency to balance. When adequate allies support is certain, however, the tendency for free-riding or buck-passing increases.” ⁷³	Free-riding and buck-passing
Military Power		
H _{MP}	“The greater a state’s offensive capabilities, the greater the tendency of others to align against it. Therefore, states with offensively oriented military capabilities are likely to provoke other states to form defensive coalition.” ⁷⁴	Balancing
Geostrategic Insularity		
H _{GI}	Geographic position can foster self-reliance and shields against external threats.	Isolation
Trading State		
H _{TS}	The greater the economic development of a state, the more likely it is to create preferential relations with economic partners and create alliances.	Interdependence

⁶⁸ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*, 32.

⁶⁹ Jack L. Snyder. *Myths of Empire Domestic Politics International Ambition*. (Ithaca, N. J.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 5.

⁷⁰ John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: Norton, 2001), 42.

⁷¹ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*, 32.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Table 3.4: Alternative Explanations (Economic Prosperity and National Beliefs)

Hypotheses		Outcomes
Economic Prosperity		
H _{EP1}	Trading states signal neutrality to the international system economic openness.	Neutrality in peacetime
H _{EP2}	Impartiality in conflicts eases trade arrangements and allows continuity in commercial relations.	Neutrality in wartime
Isolationist Beliefs		
H _{IB1}	Founding leaders' aversion toward alliances created a pervasive effect that embedded isolationism as part of a state's strategic culture.	Isolationist identity
H _{IB2}	The norm of neutrality sets institutional constraints to internationalists and expansionist policymakers which are hard to overcome without fundamental changes in strategic culture.	Neutrality co-constitution

National identity and strategic culture offer additional challenge to the theory strategic autonomy. Beliefs that alliance avoidance and the added value of neutrality can become embodied in a state's national identity. As Martha Finnemore puts it:

The social nature of international politics creates normative understanding among actors that, in turn, coordinate values, expectations, and behavior. Because norms make similar behavioral claims on dissimilar actors, they can create coordinated patterns of behavior that we can study and about which we can theorize.⁷⁵

Neutrality, non-entanglement, and isolationism can become reinforced by the institutionalization of their practice. However, as Finnemore specifies, "Factors other than norms may shape interests" and in addition "Changing norms may change state interests and create new interests."⁷⁶ Therefore, if shared by enough significant veto players, the shared belief can be protected even though one major actor intent to act otherwise. The system of check and balance in the United States operated as a protector of the beliefs that neutrality, non-entanglement, and isolationism were the guiding principles of U.S. foreign policy. Military doctrine in this context would also be "about the allocation of power *within* society."⁷⁷ This approach challenges the strategic autonomy approach that argues that the main determinants of military doctrine are systemic.

Challenging the conventional wisdom that alliances provide more security than facing an external threat without any formal support from other powers may seem counter-intuitive. However, the theory of strategic autonomy is not challenging the fact that under some sets of circumstances, alliances can be an optimal strategy to ensure a satisfying level of security and

⁷⁵ Martha Finnemore. "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention." In *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. Edited by Peter J. Katzenstein. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 158.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 200.

maintain stability in the international system. The problem is that it is not always the best strategy, and it is sometimes a strategy that can reduce security and most of all compromise autonomy in significant ways.⁷⁸ Fear of provocation, abandonment and entrapment, the risks of counteralliance, and the constraint on other strategic options are sufficient incentives to find an alternative to alliance and coalition building as a source of security.⁷⁹ Table 3.3 shows what is the conventional wisdom regarding alliance formation, structural realism and the trading state theory. It helps to recognize the conditions under which strategic autonomy can be successful and where it might fail. It shows that an increase in the level of threat generates important incentives to form alliances. However, it needs to be complemented by hypotheses that explain states' behaviours when the level of threat is low or diminishing, and also, when a state's benefits from strategic autonomy are greater than the benefits of alliances and the costs of autonomy.

Table 3.5: Hegemonic Autonomy Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Outcomes
Hegemonic Autonomy	
H1 States are more likely to select strategic autonomy when they want to avoid sharing gains.	
a. Great powers and regional powers with sufficient capabilities and limited primary external threats have high incentives to create opportunities toward the expansion of their sphere of influence and/or their territory.	Expansionist
b. Great powers with regional supremacy that want to expand or protect their sphere of influence are likely to engage in anti-access and area-denial strategies to avoid the involvement of external power or coalition in support of the neighbouring states.	Anti-access/Area Denial
H2 States are more likely to choose strategic autonomy when they do not want to divert their resources to alliance goals.	
a. A great power is more likely to isolate itself if it does not want to divert resources on alliance goals with an ally at risk to get involved in a costly and protracted war where the great power does not have its primary interests threatened.	Isolationist
b. Rising great powers are more likely to adopt neutrality as a strategy to avoid entrapment in conflicts due to alliance responsibilities. Rising great powers avoid both regional and international commitments to other states to avoid the risks of escalation, entrapment, counteralliance, and quasi-rent appropriation.	Neutralist

The hypotheses formulated in Tables 3.5 and 3.6 offer a set of outcomes based on security challenges to avoid the major risks of alliances while providing maximized autonomy and security.

⁷⁸ Waltz argues that in a tripolar order stability is difficult to achieve through alliances since two will “easily gang up on the third, divide the spoil, and drive the system back to bipolarity.” See Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*: 163. He adds also that when there are more than four great powers, the plurality of combination can lead to unstable order. See *ibid.* Gilpin in the same vein argue that “almost all agree that a tripolar system is the most unstable configuration.” (See Robert Gilpin. *War and Change in World Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 235.) Schweller insists that the core issues of tripolarity are that “each member is certain that it cannot balance the other two solely by internal means and, more importantly, that any alliance forms a winning coalition. Schweller. *Deadly Imbalances*, 43-4.

⁷⁹ Snyder. *Alliance Politics*, 44.

While alliances aggregate capabilities, their main purpose is not always to do so. Formal alliances serve often as “tools to manage allies.”⁸⁰ The strategic restraint created by some alliances can be beneficial for the stability of the relations between the states involved. However, it certainly diminishes the autonomy of the state and can impede it to act against other threats or in its interest. In consideration of this risk, some states are more prone to avoid alliances and select alternative strategies to improve their gains and security in the international system.

Table 3.6: Intermediary Autonomy Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Outcomes
Intermediary Autonomy	
H3 States are more likely to avoid alliance commitment to increase the uncertainty of the outcomes of a conflict between other powers.	
a. Middle powers with advantageous geographical position (insularity or buffer) can use their diplomatic skills to make gains over the tensions and conflict of others when they play a pivotal role	Pivotal
H4 States engage in strategic autonomy not to get caught in unwanted rivalry.	
a. Intermediary states with scarce alignment options are likely to adopt an isolationist posture to preserve their autonomy when there is a low probability that they will be threatened.	Isolationist
a. Internally fragile states are more likely to adopt an isolationist posture;	
b. Expansionist initiative risk to be blocked internally;	
c. Military force level is more likely to be kept low to avoid being perceived as threatening.	
b. Intermediary states use inflated diplomatic signals and threats to deter greater powers and maintain the formers strategic autonomy regionally. The success of those signals and threats is dependent upon the middle power’s ability to make them credible by:	Defensive Brinkmanship
a. Increasing the cost/benefit calculus;	
b. Manipulating the risks of the violation of the signal/treat; or	
c. Exploiting ad hoc tensions between other powers to maximize the cost.	
c. Intermediary states with abundant alignment options have incentives to diversify their support sources if they capitalized on their diplomatic skills and reputation if they want to increase their strategic autonomy.	Janus-Faced /Hedging
H5 States may increase their relative power and autonomy by precipitating a protracted conflict between two other powers. ⁸¹	Bait-and-bleed

⁸⁰ Patricia A. Weitsman. *Dangerous Alliances: Proponents of Peace, Weapons of War*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 3; Paul W. Schroeder. “Alliances, 1815-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management.” In *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*. Ed. by Klaus Knorr, 227-262. (Lawrence: Allen Press, 1976); and Pressman. *Warring Friends*.

⁸¹ Bait-and-bleed strategy is defined by Mearsheimer as a strategy to increase the power of the state that makes the bait. In Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 153. However, in this research it is conceived as a corollary between the increase of power and an increase of autonomy since the increase of power is achieved through a decline of the other powers’ capability during their conflict. The resulting increase in autonomy serves subsequent strategies that would have been constrained by the two other states involved in the protracted conflict. This will be particularly relevant in the China case where the 1962 India-China War prompted Pakistan to attack India in 1965 and fueled the Indo-Pakistan enduring rivalry.

Military capabilities are important in the selection of strategic autonomy. Disparities of military power play an important role in the selection of a strategy. Therefore, to achieve greater autonomy, states need to have either an advantageous level of military superiority or specific measures to reduce the effect of military inferiority. The case of the Chinese asymmetric countermeasures is an example of those measures to reduce the effect of their military inferiority against the United States. The development of new technologies can sometimes provide the sufficient strategic hedge required to cancel or reduce the effect of an opponent's offensive capabilities. Table 3.6 lists hypotheses that look at the influence of military power on the development of strategic autonomy. The development of indigenous weapon systems (H6) or the diversification of weapon providers (H7) reduces also the reliance on alliances and can provide operational advantages. The civil-military relations (H8) are also of relevancy in the development of national strategy since unbalanced relations can lead to either militarized strategic design or weak military institutions that hardly prevail in case of war. Those hypotheses add the benefit of controlling for exogenous incidence on strategic autonomy to the proposed models.

Table 3.7: Military Autonomy Hypotheses

Hypotheses		Outcomes
Military autonomy		
H6	States that indigenize their weapons systems decrease their reliance on external support for their military forces and consequently increase their autonomy.	Indigenization of weapons
H7	States that diversify their sources of weapon systems avoid the potential entrapment from a unique weapons provider with too much influence.	Diversification of weapon systems
H8	Unbalanced civil-military relations can create a false impression of autonomy or restraint.	Civil-military relations

Method

The occurrence of strategic autonomy is more frequent than it seems. The British Splendid Isolation between 1885 and 1902 under Lord Salisbury, the neutral states of Europe including Switzerland, Belgium during the World Wars, Denmark (1854-1940), Netherlands (1839-1940), Norway (1814-1940), Sweden (1814-2022), Finland (1956-2022), the United States before the first World War and the interwar period, many of the non-aligned states during the Cold War all displayed forms of strategic autonomy to avoid the constraints of formal alliances and to fit in the international order dictated by the great powers of their time. Many states are constrained as isolated states to adopt strategic autonomy to maintain their status and domestic policy rather than letting other states dictate what they can and cannot do. Iran and North Korea are among the best examples of this determination to refuse the foreign pressure of the United States and its allies, and they would rather be on the margins of the international system and deploy alternative strategies to maintain their autonomy. Insular states before the mid-twenty-first century were able to create greater autonomy too (Britain and Japan). Now, nuclear-capable states can generate such autonomy to a greater degree since can deter great power intervention with their nuclear capabilities (Israel, Pakistan, North Korea, or Iran with its nuclear program).

All those cases require further research to determine whether or not strategic autonomy was indeed the guiding principle of their foreign policy throughout the period where they chose to engage in outlying behaviour. For the sake of theory development and the complexity of the case selected, this dissertation investigates the United States between 1823 and 1921. The United States

provide a large and variable spectrum of strategic autonomy behaviour throughout this long period. The length and depth of the American case allow for the development of a solid and coherent theory of strategic autonomy that illustrates the tangible difficulties and challenges of maintaining such a foreign policy.

The process tracing method used in this research allows to control for the variances on the multiple independent and intervening variables of the causal mechanisms.⁸² The process tracing method involves examining “intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how the process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest.”⁸³ If my hypotheses are correct, states with similar relative power will belong to the according type of autonomy; states that have their vital interests threatened will have more difficulty maintaining autonomy; and a strong executive will have more facility to adopt a high-risk autonomy, while fragmented states will opt for autonomy by alignment diversity or isolation depending on the alignment options.

The complexity of the causal mechanism and the small number of cases for each of the two causal processes would not provide a significant result only with a large-N study. It is also expected to observe “diachronic changes” (i.e., change over time) on the independent variables and therefore on the dependent variables also.⁸⁴ The data for each case consist mainly of archival records such as memoirs, transcripts, discourses, private correspondences, diplomatic cables, intelligence reports, and secondary sources from previous research. The potential pitfalls of transcript evidence will also be interpreted as perceptions and beliefs from specific actors which are subject to debate.⁸⁵

Relative power will be determined along different power statuses. The variable will vary along five different statuses, namely minor, middle, regional, lesser great and great power. First, minor power is the lowest order of relative power in the international system. A majority of the states are considered minor power. Second, the status of middle power required a significant amount of relative military, economic and political power, but represent a degree of concentration not dominant in any sub-systemic order. Third, regional powers are defined by major power dominant within their sub-systemic order/regional area. Fourth, lesser great powers (LGPs) “possess a considerable amount of military strength,” but less than half the military strength of most powerful states.⁸⁶ Lastly, great powers possess a sufficient amount of power to influence extra-regional dynamics in a significant way, they perceived themselves as such, and they are recognized and referred to as such by the other states. Relative power is operationalized using the national archives and with the recognition of the power status and capability build-up through the historical literature.

Diplomatic skills in IR are of the utmost importance because “agreements rarely conclude without first going through phases of (ex-ante noncontractible) actions that attempt to improve

⁸² Tannenwald argues that process tracing is useful for studying “complicated multicausality.” See Nina Tannenwald. “Process Tracing and Security Studies.” *Security Studies* 24, no. 2 (2015): 220.

⁸³ Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. *Process Tracing in the Social Sciences: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 6.

⁸⁴ Crawford. *Pivotal Deterrence*, 44-5.

⁸⁵ Peter Lorentzen, M. Taylor Fravel and Jack Paine. “Qualitative Investigation of Theoretical Models: The Value of Process Tracing.” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 29, no. 3 (2017): 480.

⁸⁶ Randall L. Schweller *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 17.

each party's bargaining position."⁸⁷ In addition, "all international relationships are based on bargain, which divides the available costs and benefits between the polities, and a contract or agreement, which enforces the bargain reached."⁸⁸ The variable of diplomatic skills has for function to assert the negotiating ability of the agents involved in the bargaining process between the various actors involved. It can be in relation to the source of the threat or with other potential allies that could offer support to the threatened state. It is also symbolic of the ability of the agent of the state to signal and project the desired image that pairs with the strategic intentions of the state.

Table 3.8: Bargaining Devices

-
-
- Tacit bargaining
 - Threat: fixed or variable
 - Side-payment
 - Blackmailing and backscratching
 - Contract
 - Cheap talk and bluffing
 - Delay
 - Concession: *ad hoc* or permanent
 - *Quid pro quo*
 - Brinkmanship
 - Appeal to third party
 - Salami tactics
-
-

Sources: John F. Nash. "Two-Person Cooperative Games." In *Bargaining: Formal Theories of Negotiation*. Edited by Oran R. Young, 61-73. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Robert L. Bishops. "Game-Theoretic Analyses of Bargaining." In *Bargaining: Formal Theories of Negotiation*. Edited by Oran R. Young, 85-128. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Joseph Farrell., "Cheap Talk, Coordination and Entry." *The RAND Journal of Economics* 18, no.1 (1987): 34-39. Allan Coddington and John G. Cross. "A Theory of the Bargaining Process." In *Bargaining: Formal Theories of Negotiation*. Edited by Oran R. Young, 219-230. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975); George Downs and David M. Roche. *Tacit Bargaining, Arms Races, and Arms Control*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1990).

Among all the bargaining strategies available a certain number will be considered as crucial in this research to determine whether or not the diplomatic skills of a state are unidimensional or multidimensional. First, the use of cheap talk or bluff appears as an essential diplomatic tool to generate further leverage on an adversary or an ally. A certain number of experimental studies have demonstrated the function of cheap talk to facilitate coordination.⁸⁹ Second, the carrot and

⁸⁷ Nejat Anbarci, Stergios Skaperdas, and Constantinos Syropoulos. "Comparing Bargaining Solutions in the Shadow of Conflict: How Norms against Threat Can Have Real Effects." *Journal of Economic Theory* 106 (2002): 3.

⁸⁸ David A. Lake. *Entangling Relations: American Foreign Policy in Its Century*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 263; James Fearon. "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation." *International Organization* 52 (1998): 269-305.

⁸⁹ Russell Cooper, Douglas V. DeJong, Robert Forsythe, and Thomas W. Ross. "Communication in Coordination Games." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 107, no. 2 (May 1992): 739-771; Gary Charness. "Self-Serving Cheap Talk: A Test of Aumann's Conjecture." *Games and Economic Behavior* 33, no. 2 (2000): 177-194. Gary Charness and Brit Grosskopf. "What Makes Cheap Talk Effective? Experimental Evidence." *Economic Letters* 83 (2004): 383-389; John Duffy and Nick Feltovich. "Do Actions Speak Louder than Words? An Experimental Comparison of Observation and Cheap Talk." *Games and Economic Behavior* 39 (2002): 1-27; John Duffy and Nick Feltovich. "Words, Deeds, and

stick strategies of a state either provide threats such as military action, economic sanctions, or any other damaging actions to the adversary or potential future partner or provide incentives such as side payment, linkage, or concession. Other strategies such as the ones listed in Table 3.7 can also be combined to demonstrate the use of multidimensional diplomatic skills. In order to distinguish between unidimensional and multidimensional diplomatic skills, two criteria must be met. First, to be multidimensional, a given state must use multiple bargaining devices (≥ 4) in a multilateral fashion. Second, the given state must not provide the same bargaining devices sequence over more than three consecutive cycles of bargaining to be considered multidimensional.

United States (1823-1921)

The United States case constitutes a puzzling case also in the measure where today “United States has been unquestionably the power with the greatest stake in alliances.”⁹⁰ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been the largest military alliance in history and persisted even after the dissolution of the USSR and its counterbalancing alliance, the Warsaw Pact. The United States took a more active part in world politics during the two world wars. Both wars broke the institutionalization of strategic autonomy in the United States doctrine by the transformation of the international security architecture leading the United States to embrace its role as great power involved in the stability of the system.

The strategic autonomy of the United States is rich and with many diachronic changes (see Chapter 4). The analysis of the United States’ strategic autonomy begins with the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. Monroe’s Declaration cemented the notion of strategic autonomy in the grand strategy of the United States for the following century and remains a vibrant aspect of U.S. foreign policy even today.

The United States before the Second World War provides the advantage of a simplified version of strategic autonomy. While the dynamic of development and maintenance of strategic autonomy is complex and sometimes non-linear, the international system at that period had fewer intervening variables. Communication had a slower pace, mobilization took longer, information was less fluid, and technological innovations evolved at a slower pace and diminished the complexity of military engagements. The government apparatus was less stratified, defined more flexibly, and showed fewer constraints. The limited number of multilateral international organizations and regulation mechanisms offered an easier exit to involvement in world politics. Strategic Autonomy was also more dependent on geography rather than nuclear capabilities as it is today. Those elements allow an understanding of strategic autonomy where manipulations are less opaque and easier to process trace which is ideal for theory development.

The United States presents a process of diachronic changes that require extensive analysis of the historical process to identify adequately the changes in the variables (see Table 3.8). The transition periods demand particular attention because of the potential extraneous causes that could create a change in strategic choices. They represent crucial tests to the hypotheses. The U.S. case will also be tested in function of the reactions related to any changes in the threat level, the variations in the relative power, or the alignment options during the selected periods. The analysis

Lies: Strategic Behaviour in Games with Multiple Signals.” *Review of Economic Studies* 73 (2006): 669-688; Timothy N. Cason, Roman M. Sheremeta, Jingjing Zhang. “Communication and Efficiency in Competitive Coordination Games.” *Games and Economic Behavior* 76 (2012): 26-46.

⁹⁰ Liska. *Nation in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence*: 3.

of the diplomatic strategies will provide insight into the ability to manipulate risk, maintain its status, and provide signals to the actors in the systems to maintain autonomy. The analysis of the civil-military relations will allow the determination of the coherence of the doctrine and if political leaders are overinflating the validity of strategic autonomy. Finally, the role of the executive in providing the baseline of the doctrine and in creating logrolling coalitions to increase the probability of success of their policy will be analyzed. Each president presented a particular foreign policy agenda with a variety of interpretations of strategic autonomy. Their decisions and their ability to implement their agenda brought either continuation or change in the expression of strategic autonomy in those cases.

Table 3.9: Summary of U.S. Strategic Autonomy Case

Case	Period	Strategic Environment	Types of Autonomy	Doctrinal Position
United States	1823-1860	Risk of European power's interference	Defensive brinkmanship and continental expansion	Monroe Doctrine and Polk Doctrine
	1860-1880	High vulnerability due to internal conflict and reconstruction	Defensive brinkmanship and isolation	Seward's Corollary and Non-intervention doctrine → isolation, and neutrality
	1890-1910	Regional supremacy (transition from continental power to sea power)	A2/AD and expansionist	Roosevelt Corollary (Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti) and Manifest Destiny (Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam, Philippines)
	1910-1921	Strategic avoidance	A2/AD, isolation, hedging, and strategic avoidance	Neutrality and Non-Belligerence → Co-Belligerence → Retraction and false isolationism

Chapter 4: Theory of Strategic Autonomy in the United States

Neutrality, independence, and the Monroe Doctrine have been the core lexicon of American decision-makers to identify the doctrinal components of their foreign policy putting forward strategic autonomy. Most of all, the fear of entanglement in formal alliances has been at the core of American strategic autonomy. The founding fathers formed a formal alliance with France to achieve their victory against the British during the Revolution, but almost instantly regretted the integration into a formal alliance with France. Washington and Jefferson set the path toward strategic autonomy by maintaining the United States out of formal alliances and by embedding this principle in U.S. foreign policy. The U.S.-French alliance did not survive. The 1778 Treaty of Alliance failed because the United States refused to meet its obligations in 1793 after the beheading of Louis XVI. Revolutionary France was losing its alliance based on Family ties with Spain and Austria at the same moment, and the support to France would have brought all the courts of Europe against France and the United States if they had met their treaty obligations.¹ The U.S.-French relations deteriorated further with the Quasi-War in 1798. As a former colony, the United States feared the involvement of European powers in their internal affairs and had little tolerance for those types of activities. The Treaty of Alliance and its aftermath created fear and a disdain for formal alliance in the United States that endured for over a hundred years.

Competing theories about the rise of the United States as a world power and now a superpower too often simplify the U.S. trajectory to the obtention of its status. While relatively rapid, the rise of the United States as the world hegemon was not a soft and easy transition. That rise to power occurred because of the strategic maneuvering of policymakers that did not commit the United States too early into world politics as an active power. Neutrality has been more often the official position of the United States in its overall history. The role that the United States plays since the 1950s only accounts for a fraction of its history and does not illustrate properly the grooming of the U.S. power and its strategic autonomy between 1823 and 1921. It took an additional thirty years for the United States to assume its role as the world hegemon, and finally, to open up to the creation of enduring formal alliances. The first time the United States realized the pertinence of limiting its strategic autonomy for the improvement of the overall stability of the international system occurred during the Great War, but Washington retracted its position during the interwar period. It took an additional world war for the United States to assume a greater role in world politics and not solely maintain its status as an autonomous region shielded from overseas conflicts.

American imperialism and manifest destiny have become the core of American Historicism. However, before the twentieth century, U.S. foreign policy was motivated more by the fear of the European powers and the threats to its vital interest than by its chauvinism and the expansionist views of some decision-makers. While the United States was able to expand its

¹ The French intention to instrumentalize the United States as a way to open a second front against the British and the possibility of re-gaining its North American colony early on left the American disillusioned about alliances. The American soon realized that an alliance with a European power was not alliance between peers. In 1793, the Americans were outraged at the execution of the King. In addition, the United States would have faced enemy from all sides which would have been disastrous for the young nation. See Harlow Giles Unger. *The French War Against America: How a Trusted Ally Betrayed Washington and the Founding Fathers*. (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons. 2005): 180-201.

Table 4.1: U.S. Territorial Annexation Since Independence

Year	Territory Annexed
1803	Louisiana Purchase from France
1810	West Florida
1819	Florida Purchase (Adams-Onis Treaty)
1842	Webster-Ashburton Treaty
1845	Texas Annexation
1846	Oregon Territory Annexation
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Mexican Cession – Upper California and New Mexico)
1853	Gadsden Purchase
1856	Baker and Jarvis Island under the Guano Islands Act
1859	Johnston Atoll
1867	Midway and Brooks
1867	Alaska Acquisition
1867	Midway Annexation
1870	Alaska boundary dispute (San Juan Islands)
1898	Hawaii Annexation
1898	Occupation of Cuba
1899-1946	Philippines
1899	Puerto Rico Annexation
1899	Guam
1899	American Samoa
1899	Wake Island
1903-1977	Canal Zone Leased in Panama
1914-1971	Corn Islands
1917	U.S. Virgin Islands Acquisition

Source: Fareed Zakaria. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 6-7; Daniel Immerwahr. "The Greater United States: Territory and Empire in U.S. History." *Diplomatic History* Vol. 40, no. 3 (June 2016): 377.

territory throughout that period more than any other (see Table 4.1), the expansion of the U.S. territory occurred without major military opposition from the European powers. Every time Washington expanded its territory, European powers tried to intercede in the process. Apart from the 1812 War, the United States has been able to expand and build a vast sphere of influence in the Western Hemisphere with limited European interference. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 from France was the first major U.S. territorial expansion of a series that continued until the Civil War. The Oregon Country was added to the U.S. territory in 1846 after two decades of negotiation with the British. The seizure of the Mexican territory of Upper California and New Mexico in 1848 occurred over twenty years after the independence of Mexico from Spain. The 1867 Alaska Purchase removed the Russian presence from the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine created a diplomatic shield over the U.S. influence in the Western Hemisphere that progressively and increasingly expanded without triggering major conflagration with the European powers before 1898. Before the 1890s, the United States had little international influence. However, Washington yielded regional influence, but before the Spanish-American War, the United States was bandwagoning the British influence in Asia and was avoiding entanglement in the affairs of

Europe. U.S. policymakers were able to maintain a high degree of strategic autonomy against the European powers and established a sphere of influence that was progressively freed of the lingering influence of colonial powers.

The Civil War was an interruption of U.S. strategic autonomy. The collapse of the Union into civil war created a window of vulnerability that limited the ability of the United States to maintain its strategic autonomy. The Confederates were a peer competitor within the Union sphere of influence. The European powers had free reigns over the rest of the Western Hemisphere. The Civil War created a gap in the Monroe Doctrine. It created tensions with Britain and France who seized the opportunity of a weakened Union putting all its resources into the war. Britain offered disguised support to the Confederate which created a lasting diplomatic entanglement that lasted until 1872. The Imperial French intervention in Mexico died partly on its own but mobilized some support from the United States to the opposition forces. After the war, Secretary Seward quickly set the United States back on the path of expansion with the Alaska Purchase which was only one of the numerous expansionist endeavours planned by Seward.

The antebellum expansionist ideals ended with Seward, however. During the next twenty years, the United States experienced important inward economic transformations. The Reconstruction era led to tremendous domestic development and unprecedented industrialization marking the *Gilded Age* of the United States. A changed America emerged with renewed expansionist ideals in the 1890s. The expansionist vision of the 1890s decision-makers was different from the generations before. The writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan influenced the strategic thinking of the era and was modifying the expansionist views. The United States was progressively making its way to become a naval power and not only the continental giant it became between the 1800s and 1850s. From a regional power, the United States entered the realm of world powers during that period. The reconstruction created a stable and economically dominant United States that had not much to envy the European powers. The sphere of influence it built with the Monroe Doctrine had yielded a high degree of strategic autonomy for the United States. The 1890s period was also marked by the last major encroachment with the European power within the U.S. regional sphere of influence. The Venezuelan Crisis of 1895 and the Spanish-American War of 1898 crowned the success of the Monroe Doctrine and American strategic autonomy.

The transition between regional power and world power proved to be less elegant than what many historians described. The Great White Fleet was not so great after all.² The U.S. victory in Cuba and the Philippines led to major insurgencies that lasted for decades. The United States still followed the British leadership when it came to trade in Asia. U.S. gunboat diplomacy in Latin America was more often the trigger of tension than the solution to the crises that Washington tried to appease. Before 1898, Europe suffered little constraint from the United States outside of the Western Hemisphere. As a great power, the United States was not a leader, and it would not be for another twenty years. As a lesser great power, the United States benefited from an important level of strategic autonomy which allowed rapid growth and accelerated the consolidation of its sphere of influence despite Washington's limited diplomatic skills.

Indecision was the trademark of the emergence of the United States as a world power. Military build-ups followed by demobilizations were the natural rhythm of Washington. Failed attempts at annexation were numerous and underlined the deep divide when it comes to the expansionist design of the United States. The learning curve of the diplomatic corps had a mild slope. The U.S. spoils system at work before the 1883 Pendleton Act diminished greatly the professionalism of the U.S. diplomatic corps. Washington had to deal with the misdeeds and missed opportunities of many diplomats before the 1900s. Fortunately for the United States, the diplomatic corps was not uniformly bad, and some competent diplomats were able to secure important gains for the United States and resolved critical crises at critical moments.

The world was torn apart by the Great War. The Civil War had cost the lives of over 620,000 men, but it was little in comparison with the Great War 8 million dead soldiers and 21 million wounded soldiers.³ The war was a meat grinder throughout its duration, but particularly

² While symbolically important as a signalling device and a display of national pride, the Great White Fleet had important design errors including "incorrectly placed armor belts and unsafe ammunition hoists" which could have led to catastrophic failure in combat situations. The Great White Fleet was more a tool of naval diplomacy than a tool of military power. See James R. Reckner. *Teddy Roosevelt's Great White Fleet*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1988): xi.

³ According to conservative estimates. See Guy Gugliotta. "New Estimates Raises Civil War Death Toll." *The New York Times*. April 2, 2012. [https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/science/civil-war-toll-up-by-20-percent-in-new-](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/science/civil-war-toll-up-by-20-percent-in-new)

during the 1914 campaign since the military high command on both sides had “a weak grasp on the precepts of modern warfare” and relied on outdated tactics in light of the lethality of novel weapons technologies.⁴ The following trench warfare and the stalemate of the war of attrition created a revolutionary moment in the study of military strategy. The trial and error of the European high command created horror on the battlefields of Europe but changed the nature of warfare. The United States observed the war from afar for almost three years. Convinced that U.S. neutrality could be maintained, President Wilson did not prepare the United States before 1917. The war machine of the United States led by Major General John J. Pershing started with a small force of 200,000 men and ended the war with a force of four million.⁵ In contrast with the concerted and unified efforts of the Allied powers, General Pershing was instructed to preserve the autonomy of the U.S. Army throughout the war. Washington had accepted its role in the war but wanted to protect a parody of autonomy.

The United States integrated the Supreme War Council under the authorities of the allied states (Britain, France, Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Serbia, and Greece). General Pershing clashed with General Ferdinand Foch. Pershing’s efforts to establish an independent U.S. Army only harmed the deployment of the growing U.S. military presence in Europe. Without a clear chain of command, the U.S. deployment could not be integrated with the other European divisions. The U.S. insistence on strategic autonomy before April 1918 was an obstacle to the efficacy of the Allied strategy. President Wilson tried to transform the U.S. foreign policy doctrine during the war and the following peace process. However, his ideas did not make unanimity internationally with its Fourteen Points and domestically with the League of Nations. Wilson “ideologically overcorrected and politically overreached.”⁶ Wilson’s failure showed that the U.S. strategic autonomy design that had emerged with the Monroe Doctrine was stronger than the international role that the United States could play to help change or stabilize the international system. While the United States returned to isolationism, it was a modified isolationism.

The U.S. rehabilitation of isolationism that followed the Great War was a temporary return to a strategic autonomy design that prioritized alliance avoidance. It took two more decades before the United States realized the benefits of alliances of constraints and coalition building. The neutrality status of the United States even at the start of the Second World War was brittle and already tainted by preferences toward the allies. The Second World War II set the stage for the alliance system leadership of the United States that perdured after the war. The bipolar order that emerged after the War sealed the process of coalition building of the United States that lasted beyond the Cold War. As a superpower during the Cold War, the United States maintained a significant level of strategic autonomy due to the power disparity between the United States and its allies. The huge power differential between the United States and its allies created maneuvering room for Washington to act without much constraint from its allies preserving a lot of its strategic autonomy promoted by the Monroe Doctrine.

The interwar period was the last two decades where the United States stubbornly insisted on alliance avoidance and isolationism. The U.S. isolationism throughout the 1920s and 1930s was

[estimate.html](#); R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present*. (New York: Harper and Row, 1986): 990.

⁴ William Philpott. *War of Attrition: Fighting the First World War*. (New York: The Overlook Press, 2014): 39-45.

⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History*: 976.

⁶ Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America’s to Shield Itself from the World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 218. Kindle.

more a rejection of collective security than a truly isolationist position. William Appleman Williams called this isolationist period a “legend.”⁷ Nichols and Kupchan calls that period “isolationist internationalism.”⁸ Consequently, the interwar period as a strategic autonomy period was misleading. The combination of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the Washington Naval Conference, the Second London Naval Treaty, and the Lend-Lease Act broke with the neutralism of the United States that existed before the Great War. The interwar period is interesting in terms of strategic autonomy, but one that required further analysis beyond the scope of this work due to the contradictions between the discourse and the behaviour of the United States. The double standard of the interwar U.S. foreign policy and its implications toward strategic autonomy requires its own monograph.

Mesmerizing Europe: The Path to U.S. Strategic Autonomy Growth

The strategic autonomy in the United States evolved and passed through different phases (see Table 4.2). It was a non-linear changing process motivated by the common objective of non-interference defined by the Monroe Doctrine. The strategic basis of U.S. autonomy in 1823 was defensive brinkmanship. With the success of the brinkmanship, a progressive process of territorial expansion occurred that led to the expansion of the United States to the west coast. In combination with the expansion process, Washington supported a settler’s migration westward that consolidated the gains made. The relative inability of the previous powers to sufficiently colonize those territories offered the opportunity to the United States to take over them. The breakdown of the Union during the Civil brought new limits to the U.S. strategic autonomy which created further vulnerabilities which brought back the emphasis on defensive brinkmanship. The defensive brinkmanship of the Civil War was less credible and generated violations by the European powers. The aftermath of the war and the reconstruction era that followed it led to a foreign policy that prioritize economic development rather than territorial expansion. That led to a more neutralist foreign policy with some episodes of isolationism focused on internal development. The defensive brinkmanship as a support of the Monroe Doctrine shifted toward an anti-access and area-denial (A2/AD) strategy during the 1890s. Following the Spanish-American War, expansionism had re-taken the center stage of American foreign policy with the increase of strategic autonomy in its sphere of influence. As an increasingly significant power on the international stage, the United States bore more and more incidence in the conduct of world politics. While strategic autonomy, as a guiding principle of foreign policy, dictated how to expand U.S. sphere of influence and increase its control over it, the instability of the international system was creating incentives for the United States to get involved in European affairs to stabilize the system and ensure the gains coming from Europe. A failed system was more damageable to a strategically autonomous United States than an engaged United States participating in the stabilization of the system. The integration of the U.S. economy with Europe and its significance into the international system as a rising power led to a temporary switch toward collective security during the Great War. The change was not unanimous and rollback to strategic autonomy prioritization occurred at the end of the war.

⁷ William Appleman Williams. "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920's." *Science & Society* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 1954): 1.

⁸ Christopher M. Nichols. *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011): 276-277; Kupchan. *Isolationism*:255-262. Kindle.

Table 4.2: U.S. Phases of Strategic Autonomy

Period	Strategic Environment	Types of Autonomy	Doctrinal Position
1823-1860	High risk of European powers interference	Defensive Brinkmanship and Continental expansion of the U.S. sphere of influence	Monroe Doctrine (1823) and Polk Doctrine (1846)
1860-1880	High vulnerability due to internal conflict and reconstruction	<u>Union</u> : Defensive Brinkmanship <u>Confederate</u> : Janus-Faced <u>Post-War Reconstruction</u> : Isolationist Consolidation	Seward's Corollary and the Doctrine of Nonintervention (1863) De-Neutralizing Diplomacy, Tropical Expansionism and <i>Guerre de Course</i> Isolation and Neutrality
1880-1910	Regional supremacy (transition from continental power to sea power)	Anti-Access/Area Denial and Expansionist	Roosevelt Corollary (Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Haiti) and Manifest Destiny (Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam, and the Philippines)
1910-1921	Strategic avoidance	<u>Before 1917</u> : Anti-access and isolation <u>1917-1919</u> : Broken-Autonomy <u>1919-1921</u> : Hedging and strategic avoidance	Neutrality Co-Belligerence Retraction and false isolationism

The main goal of the United States foreign policy between 1823 and 1917 was the preservation of its strategic autonomy. Even though the status of the United States in the international system was transformed by the Great War, the United States decision-makers still tried to bring back the predominance of strategic autonomy over international security after the war. Strategic autonomy bore an integral part of the U.S. foreign policy and often created internal debate in the two-level game of foreign policy. U.S. decision-makers are still influenced by the pervasive effect of the Monroe Doctrine. In a different fashion than the classical realist concept of “power maximization,” strategic autonomy aims at the minimization of the influence of other powers and not necessarily the maximization of its own power. The maximization of power become only one of the tools to minimize the influence of the other states. Security is important to strategic autonomy theory, but the decision to get involved in international conflicts must not be a necessity. The ability to reach a balance between security and autonomy allowed the United States to avoid the dynamic of the security dilemma.

U.S. Strategic Autonomy Phases

The United States designed the Monroe Doctrine to signal Europe against interventionism in the Western Hemisphere. The signalling of the U.S. predominance over the affairs of the Western Hemisphere served the purpose of limiting the influence of the European powers and

securing the U.S. sphere of influence and its potential aggrandizement. The success of the Monroe Doctrine was far from absolute. On multiple occasions, the European powers interfered with the conduct of politics in the Western Hemisphere. Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, and Russia had colonies in America. All their interests were bound to intersect with the United States' ones at one point or another. That is why autonomy needs a strategic component to succeed even though other powers have incentives to restrain autonomy. With insufficient capabilities in comparison with the European power and a lack of political will toward the increase of its capabilities, the United States had to be creative to achieve the level of strategic autonomy it did between 1823 and 1898. As a result, the United States established a defensive brinkmanship strategy to deter the European power to get involved in their sphere of influence. The defensive brinkmanship strategy was essentially a diplomatic strategy based on a game of chicken with the European powers (see H4b). U.S. vital interests were threatened by the potential actions of the Europeans which led the United States to create brinkmanship crises to dissuade European powers violate U.S. interests.

H4b: Intermediary states use inflated diplomatic signals and threats to deter greater powers and maintain the former strategic autonomy regionally. The success of those signals and threats is dependent upon the middle power's ability to make them credible by:

- a) Increasing the cost/benefit calculus.
- b) Manipulating the risks of the violation of the signal/threat
- c) Exploiting ad hoc tensions between other powers to maximize the cost.

With the success of the defensive brinkmanship, the United States became more comfortable and added territorial expansion (H1a) to their strategy and searched to exploit the divisions between the European powers to acquire additional territory. Most of the early U.S. territorial expansion occurred peacefully. Diplomacy was the main tool of U.S. expansionism throughout the nineteenth century. The only time U.S. expansion was not resolved through diplomacy was during the Mexican War. United States expansionism as a middle power was surprising and unique in many ways. Much of the land surrounding the United States was populated by indigenous populations who did not receive much consideration about their sovereignty and were vulnerable to conquest. The growth of the United States changed its status. The United States passed from a middle power status to a rising regional power in less than thirty years.

H1a: Rising Regional powers with sufficient capabilities and limited primary external threats have high incentives to create opportunities toward the expansion of their sphere of influence and/or their territory.

The divisions over the racial issue crippled the ability of the United States to pursue its territorial growth. The inclusion of new territories changed the balance between the free states and the slave states. The resulting political tensions put the expansion of the United States to a standstill and ultimately led to the breakdown of the Union. While the Northern forces rollback to a defensive brinkmanship strategy (H4b) to keep Europe out of the conflict, the Southern belligerents adopted two approaches to trigger further involvement of Europe. The Confederacy attempted to bait-and-bleed (H5) the British to get involved against the North which would have opened a second front to the war. Fortunately for the North, the Confederate stratagem did not work.

H5: States may increase their relative power and autonomy by precipitating a protracted conflict between two other powers.

The failed attempt at a bait-and-bleed strategy by the Confederates was combined with a Janus-faced strategy (H4c). The lack of resources led the Confederates to search for support elsewhere. Since the defensive brinkmanship of the Union was working to a certain degree, the Confederates had a hard time obtaining support, even though, Jefferson Davis was open to any support. The Confederacy's struggle to obtain recognition from the European powers was unsuccessful. The mediation proposal by the British in the fall of 1862 was the nearest it come to recognition.

H4c: Intermediary power with abundant alignment options have incentives to diversify their support sources if they capitalized on their diplomatic skills and reputation if they want to increase their strategic autonomy.

The Confederate government did not meet some of the requirements for a successful Janus-faced strategy. While the Confederacy was open to all European support, the European powers were on the fence about supporting the South. They adopted rather a position of neutrality. It met the requirement of the North without interfering with the probability of success of the South. The overall economic, demographic, and industrial superiority of the North overcame the South and the share brutality of the Union campaign led by General Sherman finally brought the war to an end.

The immediate postbellum was guided by a return to expansionism (H1a) led by Secretary William H. Seward. Under President Lincoln, Seward threatened to wage war against Britain if it had recognized the independence of the Confederacy. Under President Johnson, Seward succeeded in the purchase of Alaska but also contemplated the purchase of Greenland, Iceland, the Danish West Indies, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. President Grant attempted also to purchase the Dominican Republic and Cuba. However, the rapid demobilization of both the Army and the Navy led to a rapid contraction of the American expansionist ambitions, and any expansionist endeavours were met with opposition in Congress. The United States entered a phase of mild isolationism between the 1870s and 1880s (H4a).

H4a: Intermediary states with scarce alignment options are likely to adopt an isolationist posture to preserve their autonomy when there is a low probability that they will be threatened.

- a) Internally fragile states are more likely to adopt an isolationist posture
- b) Expansionist initiatives risk being blocked internally
- c) Military force level is more likely to be kept low to avoid being perceived as threatening.

President Grant signalled U.S. isolationism in his first annual message:

As the United States is the freest of all nations, so, too, its people sympathize with all people struggling for liberty and self-government; but while so sympathizing it is due to our honor that we should abstain from enforcing our views upon unwilling nations and from taking an

interested part, without invitation, in the quarrels between different nations or between governments and their subjects.⁹

Grant's message announced that diplomacy was the limit of Washington's involvement and that it would not be a security provider even toward its sphere of influence. That phase was purposefully designed to rebuild the Union. The U.S. isolationism deepened further after the provisional settlement of the Cuban civil war in 1878.¹⁰ The internal problems of the United States displaced the demands of foreign policy and slowed down greatly the diplomatic initiative of Washington.

The Spanish American War is often used to establish the moment at which the United States became a world power.¹¹ The United States was already a world power in the early 1890s and had the potential to deepen the expression of its strategic autonomy. However, rarely the United States was referred to as a great power before in contrast with the six recognized great power – Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Italy.¹² U.S. interventionism in world politics increased to refrain Europe from mingling in Latin American affairs and to protect American interests in Asia. However, the victory over Spain signalled to the rest of the World that the United States was a world power. The events that triggered the Spanish-American War were part of a greater scheme put in place by Washington. In an effort to escape from the defensive brinkmanship, the United States developed an anti-access and area denial strategy (A2/AD) (See H1b).

H1b: Great powers with regional supremacy that want to expand or protect their sphere of influence are likely to engage in anti-access and area-denial strategies to avoid the involvement of external power or coalition in support of the neighbouring states.

The A2/AD strategy led to additional friction with European powers. First with France in Mexico, then with Britain in Venezuela, and finally, with Spain in Cuba. Every spawn of tensions with the European powers led the United States to expect the Western Hemisphere to be their domain and to remove the role of the colonial power. The consecration of the Monroe Doctrine as enforceable by the United States alone occurred finally under President Cleveland. Cleveland resisted the urge to engage in expansionist attempts. He restrained from intervening in Cuba and protected Hawaii's sovereignty.

The Spanish-American War also brought a new era of expansionism to the United States (H1a). The rapid and successive occupation of Cuba, acquisition of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico, and the annexation of Hawaii signalled a transformed U.S. foreign policy. The impact of the ideas of Alfred Thayer Mahan and their influence on key policymakers created a movement where intervention was not a last resort, but a means to achieve status.

⁹ Ulysses S. Grant. "First Annual Message." *The American Presidency Project* December 6, 1869. Accessed February 2023. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-11>.

¹⁰ Doris A. Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy: A History of U.S. Intervention Policies and Practices*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press. 1959): 127.

¹¹ Andrew J. Bacevich. *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2002): 7.

¹² Ernest R. May. *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power*. (New York: Harper Torchbook. (1961) 1973): 6.

H1a: Great powers with sufficient capability and no primary external threat are more likely to expand their sphere of influence and their territorial possessions.

The decade and a half that followed the Spanish-American War was oriented toward the consolidation of the acquired territory, including the counterinsurgency operations in Cuba and the Philippines. The U.S. capabilities were still underdeveloped to sustain the rapid integration of multiple territorial acquisitions. The main expansion that occurred after the rapid capture of the Spanish colonies was the securitization of the Panama Canal Zone. The protectorate over Cuba in addition to the islands hopping available in the Pacific and the Philippines colony set the stage to make the United States a strong world power. The United States was still a hesitant world power. Europe was still an area where intermingling was to be avoided. The sole threat to U.S. strategic autonomy was still Europe.

The Great War stopped the expansionist impulse of the United States. The war in Europe spilled-over the rest of the world and made any foreign involvement susceptible to escalation. The United States led by President Woodrow Wilson was set on maintaining the neutrality of the United States and by the same token its strategic autonomy. The furthest engagement was Wilson's position as a peace broker during the first two years of the war. The U.S. diplomatic relations before Washington's entry into the war were oriented toward mediation and neutrality to escape the commitment of resources and men to the war efforts of European nations.

H2b: Rising great powers are more likely to adopt neutrality as a strategy to avoid entrapment in conflicts due to alliance responsibilities. Rising great powers avoid both regional and international commitments to other states to avoid the risks of escalation, entrapment, counteralliance, and quasi-rent appropriation.

The United States at the outbreak of the Great War adopted a combination of neutralism (H2b) and pivotal strategy (H3). As per its tradition, Washington declared its neutrality toward the war as it always did at the sign of escalation of tensions in Europe. However, the war took a proportion never seen before. Neutrality was difficult to maintain for any nation due to the "total nature" of the war. Economic interests, domestic politics, and diplomatic relations worked against the neutral stance of the United States and by 1917, the pressure to enter the war had become too great. The onset of the war created uncertainty that restrained Washington from taking any clear position in the war. This created the opportunity for the United States to position itself advantageously in the conflict. Without a clear commitment to any side, the United States could benefit from a pivotal strategy of the economic and strategic benefits created by the war. However, the increased uncertainty due to the length and magnitude of the war became a threat to the stability of the international system and, in consequence, to U.S. interests. Investors had also committed large sums toward the Allied powers than the Central Powers, and a victory of the Central Powers would have been too detrimental to the U.S. economy.

H3: States are more likely to avoid alliance commitment to increase the uncertainty of the outcomes of a conflict between other powers.

President Wilson had been elected in 1916 under the promise that he would not enter the war. However, the bias toward the Allied Powers led to the failure of the U.S. pivotal strategy. The German unrestricted submarine warfare threatened the viability of the neutrality strategy of the United States too greatly to be maintained. Consequently, the United States relinquished most of its strategic autonomy to enter the Great War. The limited efforts by General John J. Pershing to maintain the operational independence of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) were more

detrimental to the war effort than truly maintaining U.S. strategic autonomy in the conflict. The insistence on operational independence showed, however, how much strategic autonomy was embedded into U.S. strategic culture even when it ended up being counterproductive.

The end of the War on November 11, 1918, and the Allied victory created a series of international changes that produced an antagonistic response from the United States and a contraction of its foreign policy. While President Wilson was at the roots of some of those big international changes, the U.S. Congress and the U.S. population were not ready to adhere to those ideas yet. The punitive nature of the Treaty of Versailles, the establishment of the League of Nations, and the remodelling of the power dynamics in Europe with the apparition of new states did not remove the appeal of strategic autonomy to the United States. Even though the world would have benefited from the United States being engaged in world politics, Washington's immediate post-war response was to reject Wilson's internationalism and return to isolationism (H2a). However, the nature of the interwar isolationism that developed during those two decades was different than its precedent iterations but is beyond the scope of this research.

H2a: Great powers with insulated geography and sufficient capabilities can adopt an isolationist strategy to avoid an active military role in world politics.

The United States comfortably stable on a different continent and supported by strong capabilities oriented toward an A2/AD strategy (H1b) had the possibility of limiting its involvement in world politics. In addition, the regional supremacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere allowed the continuation of the expansion and consolidation of its sphere of influence (H1a). The influence of the weakened European powers on American politics was limited and had less incidence on the conduct of politics within the Western Hemisphere.

Beyond the U.S. reactivity to its international environment according to its power, elements of domestic politics could intercede with the efficiency and nature of strategic autonomy. The source of weaponry can be an issue since when external, it creates dependence on foreign powers. The United States quickly established its own arms industry and freed itself from foreign reliance. Any power aspiring to obtain strategic autonomy in world politics required a minimum of armament and is more likely to yield more autonomy if it has its own arms industry (H6).

H6: States that indigenize their weapons systems decrease their reliance on external support for their military forces and consequently increase their autonomy.

The indigenization process of weapon systems in the 1820s was, however, much simpler than it is today. The weapon systems were rudimentary; composed essentially of small arms, artillery, and war vessel; and required minimal industrialization. Innovation can be the key to surpassing a competitor, and U.S. innovation allowed on multiple occasions to provide the United States with a competitive edge that became more noticeable by the end of the XIXe century. However, obsolescence can create a gap in strategic goals. For example, before the 1880s, the U.S. Navy was resistant to progress and kept wooden vessels and sails for too long in their arsenal which held back U.S. aspirations to power projection. Insufficient U.S. military investment also yielded obsolescence at times due to insufficient and poor equipment. While the United States produced among the best military technologies nowadays and keep its forces ready for operations, it was not always the case. A strong peacetime demobilization tradition and reliance on state militia slowed the military development of the United States.

The nature of the fragile balance between the civil and military authorities influences a great deal the success of its grand strategy. The various phases of the development of civil-military relations in the United States bring an additional layer of complexity to the development, maintenance, and viability of strategic autonomy initiatives in U.S. foreign policy between 1823 and 1921 (H8). The politicization of the military created various controversies. Considering that eighteen presidents of the twenty-five studied here served as officers, most were equipped to understand the constraint of the military establishment. However, the structure of the War Department and its hierarchy created important problems. The inadequacies of military capabilities and civilian strategy were substantial before the Civil War. Frictions between Lincoln and his generals during the Civil required reforms to ease the civil-military relations and improve the coherence of Lincoln's war aims. Congress's incidence on the military budget made them the third wheel of the civil-military relations that directly undermined the goal of the executive.

H8: Unbalanced civil-military relations can create a false impression of autonomy or restraint.

The frictions between the civil and military authorities were often solved during the emergency of wartime and its immediate aftermath and slowly built up during peacetime. The role of the U.S. Army has been too often the conduct internal security at the frontiers and not sufficiently against external threats. This created a disequilibrium between the civil and military authorities. This disequilibrium created on some occasions a crossover between the civil and military spheres. The various reforms that occurred during and after the War of 1812, the War with Mexico, the Civil War, the Spanish-American, and the Great War allowed improved professionalism of the military forces and a more coherent chain of command.

The type of leadership of each president brought an additional dimension to the maintenance and development of the U.S. strategic autonomy. As the main diplomatic figure of the United States, they were the most relevant signalling device of each administration along with their secretary of state. The policy preference and negotiation style of the Presidents are crucial to understanding the type of reactivity to a crisis that will occur and the nature of the strategies that might be put in place to respond to the vulnerabilities or the opportunities of the system. Some presidents were better at reacting quickly and proposing solutions to complex situations, while others had the tendency to use delaying tactics and avoided confronting difficult situations and passed-the-buck to the next administration or to another power rather than getting involved. Each president had his specific lenses to interpret international politics and his own style of foreign policy.

Party politics also played a significant role in both guiding policy preferences, but also in the type of response to specific systemic situations. Democratic-Republican, Whigs, Republicans and Democrats brought sets of preferences that made some decisions more likely. While they all maintained a style of strategic autonomy, they were all displaying particularities in their expression of that strategic autonomy.

The following chapters analyze the evolution of strategic autonomy within the United States between 1823 and 1921. Almost a hundred years of strategic autonomy where Washington took risks to limit the influence of the European powers. Four important phases of the development of U.S. strategic autonomy are studied here. Each phase is studied systematically by looking at the military power of the United States, the level of threat it experienced throughout the specific period of the phase, the availability of alliances and friendship with other states, the diplomatic initiatives

taken by decision-makers, the quality of the civil-military relations, and the particularities of the leadership in place. First, the defensive brinkmanship and expansionist phase that followed the introduction of the Monroe Doctrine (Chapter 5). Second, the contraction period of the Civil War led to a rollback from expansionism to defensive brinkmanship and isolationism (Chapter 6). Third, the anti-access and area denial strategy that arose from the Gilded Age and led to a new era of expansionism under a Mahanist strategy (Chapter 7). Finally, the failure of the neutralism and pivotal strategy of the United States before Wilson decided to enter the Great War and led Washington to violate the Monroe Doctrine and break the primacy of strategic autonomy as the guiding principle of the United States foreign policy in favour of a policy of strategic avoidance that took form following Wilson's internationalist failed project (Chapter 8).

Chapter 5: The Monroe Doctrine Era (1823-1860)

A beautiful and threatening combination of events precipitated Monroe's 1823 declaration which embedded one of the most enduring principles of American diplomacy, the Monroe Doctrine. While the doctrine evolved through time, the inherent principle of strategic autonomy of the United States in its own sphere of influence, namely the Western Hemisphere, was set to remain and prosper. The expansion of the United States sphere of influence was not a direct and uninterrupted pursuit, but rather one where competition with world powers was an impending threat, the instability of a whole continent struggling for its independence from colonial powers and defining its borders would clash with U.S. interests, and internal conflicts would continuously slow down the march toward expansion and even threaten to bring the country to its collapse.

The development of the telegraph, steamboats, canals, turnpikes, and railroads changed the pace of the development of the American nation. All those technological developments increased the ability of the United States to expand its frontiers to new territories and provide more effective control over established territories. However, the embarrassments of the 1812 War where the United States saw the Capitol in Washington burned by British forces and where the U.S. Army was persistently unable to conquer Canada and push the British out of North America signalled to the U.S. strategists and decision makers that as long as the threat of colonial powers was lingering in the Western Hemisphere the United States would not be safe. With the British Empire still, in firm control of Canada, the Russians controlling Alaska and establishing trading posts on the West Coast, and the Holy Alliance mingling in the affairs of the newly independent Latin Republics, the European powers' involvement could offset the fragile and burgeoning strategic autonomy of the United States.

The British willingness to concede to the Americans their ambitions west of the Mississippi generated a growing probability of confrontation with other European interests. Russian, French, and Spanish interests quickly clashed with the American expansion. The fragile balance of interest between the United States and Britain was the key to the preservation of American strategic autonomy since only the British could deter the other European powers from interfering in American affairs at that time.

The Monroe Doctrine was formulated mainly by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and then enunciated in President Monroe's State of the Union message of December 1823.¹ The doctrine synthesized Monroe's administration concerns with Latin America, the Pacific Northwest, and Anglo-American relations.² First, the newly independent and newly recognized by the United States Republics in Latin America were afraid along with the United States that European powers would mingle in their internal affairs and possibly reverse their status back to colonies or mingle in their internal affairs to keep or grow their influence. Therefore, the newly

¹ Authorship of the Doctrine is often disputed in the literature. While Adams is often identified as the main author, Manuel Torres, David Porter, Richard Rush, George Canning, Thomas Jefferson, and the Abbé de Pradt have been credited to have either influenced or contributed to the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine. See Arthur P. Whitaker. *The United States and the Independence of Latin America 1800-1830*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1964): 466-478.

² Daniel Walker Howe. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 111.

formed Republics in Latin America welcomed a strong signal of support from the United States to protect the Western Hemisphere independence.

Second, Russia threatened the sovereignty of the Pacific Northwest by extending its claims from Alaska down to Oregon with the potential risk of seeing them attempting to bridge their control with their trading post at Fort Ross. In 1821, Tsar Alexander I issued “an imperial *ukase* (edict) warning foreign ships not to come within a hundred miles of the coast of Russian America, as Alaska was then called, north of the 51st parallel of latitude.”³ The Russian ambitions in America were threatening both American and British interests.

Third, the relationship with Great Britain remained difficult at times. Fresh out of a costly war, *postbellum* relations were uncertain and fragile. Both Great Britain and the United States were threatened by the Russian edict in the Northwest Pacific. They elected to negotiate the issue separately with the Tsar due to their difficult diplomatic relations at the time.⁴ This inability to coalesce common interests with European powers efficiently and the continuous perception of threats from European powers contributed to the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine and the reinforcement of American strategic autonomy.

The case of the United States following Monroe’s Declaration until the 1860s was the most pivotal moment of the early attempt of the United States to set strategic autonomy as its foreign policy. As a young republic out of a major war with Great Britain, the United States had not much credibility against the European monarchies. Geography was the only U.S. ally at that point and President Monroe had drawn a redline against European intervention in the Western hemisphere against U.S. interests and the newly independent republics of Latin America. The defensive brinkmanship (H4b) set by Monroe and reiterated by many of his successors was fragile and risky to the survival of the United States, but also essential to the formulation of the U.S. expansionism (H1a) of the 1840s. With potential threats from all the European powers that would not have hesitated to use the United States as an interposing force in their own struggles, the United States had few alignment options. The risks of entanglement and counteralliance were too great and would have stunted the growth of the United States. The progressive growth of the U.S. economy supported by King Cotton in the South and the rapid industrialization in the North created tension in the U.S. trade policy. A tension that was already animated by the Hamiltonian and Jeffersonian models of economic development for the United States. The duality of the U.S. trade policy between the North and the South was only part of the divide that would lead to the Civil War but was also an obstacle to the establishment of a strong trading state (HEP1) even though the United States declared their neutrality through the Monroe Doctrine.

Setting the Stage toward Isolationism: Monroe’s Declaration

The literature on the inception of the Monroe Doctrine is unanimous on the reality that it announced to European powers that any support to Spain to regain control over their former

³ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 112-3.

⁴ Anatole G. Mazour, "The Russian-American and the Anglo-Russian Conventions, 1824-1825: An Interpretation," *Pacific Historical Review* 14 (Sep. 1945): 303-10. The unilateral nature of the negotiation was beneficial to the Russo-American relations since President Monroe saw it as a sign of respect from the Tsar to not include the British in the negotiation, see: Hiroo Nakajima. "The Monroe Doctrine and Russia: American Views of Tsar Alexander I and Their Influence upon Early Russian-American Relations." *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 3 (Jun. 2007): 461.

colonies would not be tolerated, that the European monarchies would not impose their will and ideologies on the Americas, and that no more European colonization would be tolerated in the Western Hemisphere.⁵ While this warning targeted European powers, it also partially excluded Great Britain since the American threat was reliant on British support to be compelling.

Monroe's Declaration confirmed the natural tendency toward strategic autonomy that the United States displayed since its independence. President Washington declared in his 1796 Farwell Address that U.S. foreign policy had to "steer clear of permanent alliance with any portion of the foreign world."⁶ Alexander Hamilton also expressed a similar worried in the *Federalist Papers* when he wrote "Europe is at a great distance from us. Her colonies in our vicinity will be likely to continue too much disproportioned in strength to be able to give us any dangerous annoyance."⁷ To those Jefferson added "Commerce with all nations, alliance with none"⁸ to show that strategic autonomy did not mean complete isolation. Monroe's 1823 declaration presented to the world three major and pervasive implications of American foreign policy (see Table 5.1). First, it signaled to the rest of the world and more specifically the European powers that no further colonization endeavors would be tolerated by the American government. This ultimately established the United States as a regional power that would defend the sovereignty of the newly independent republics of Latin America. Second, it also signalled to the European powers that their efforts to keep manipulating their former colonies and extend their regional rivalries to the Western Hemisphere would not be tolerated also. The United States wanted to avoid the European power rivalries spilling over into the Western Hemisphere. Third, the American government announced its neutral position in world politics. President Monroe and his Secretary of State James Quincy Adams organized this part of the declaration with a dual purpose. The most obvious one was the respect for European nations' sovereignty which in this case implied non-interference in European affairs and the neutrality of the United States. The second purpose was to ask for reciprocity. The offer of non-intervention was ultimately a call for non-intervention in American affairs.

This analysis subscribes to Saxton's argument that, at this point, it should be more appropriate to talk of the Monroe Declaration rather than the Monroe Doctrine, and that only after Polk's reinterpretation can President Monroe's declaration be called a doctrine.⁹ The references and reinterpretations of Monroe's declaration made its content a doctrine through time. Beyond the original intent of the Monroe Declaration, it evolved toward a doctrine that guided the foundation of American regional dominance and provided the logic of American strategic autonomy.

⁵ Ernest R. May. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975): viii.

⁶ George Washington. "Transcript of President George Washington's Farwell Address (1796)." Sept. 19, 1796. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=15&page=transcript>.

⁷ Alexander Hamilton. *Federalist No. 8*, "The Consequences of Hostilities Between the States." November 20, 1787. *YLSAP*, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed08.asp.

⁸ Thomas Jefferson. "From Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Lomax," March 12, 1799. *Founders Online*. <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-31-02-0056>.

⁹ Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011): 102-3.

Table 5.1: The Monroe Declaration of 1823

Components	Implications
The United States proclaimed that the American continents “are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power.”	This position concerned first and foremost Russia in this declaration. Russian interests on the West Coast were jeopardizing U.S. interests and the prospect of development in the West. Allowing Russia to set foot on the West Coast was also an invitation to other European powers. The configuration of the United States could have been a lot different if the Monroe Doctrine did not demand an end to American colonization.
The United States declared it would “consider any attempt” by any European power to “extend their system” to the Western Hemisphere as “dangerous to our peace and safety.”	This recognition of European interference as a primary threat is intended to signal to European powers that any attempt would be considered an act of aggression.
As a reciprocal call toward sovereign independence, the United States reiterate their engagement “not to interfere in the internal concerns” of any European powers.	This reciprocity principle was designed to signal the neutrality of the United States.
In John Quincy Adams’s first version of the doctrine, the United States also forbade Spain to transfer any of its New World possessions to any other European power. ¹⁰	This was particularly relevant in the context of the ascension to the independence of many of the Spanish possessions in the Western Hemisphere. Those newly independent states would be easier to manage if they remain independent than if they got entangled with other European powers. The remaining Spanish colonies were in turmoil and could have been stabilized with the help of other European powers.

Source: James Monroe. “December 2, 1823: Seventh Annual Message (Monroe Doctrine).” *UVA Miller Center*. Accessed Mar. 22, 2019. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-2-1823-seventh-annual-message-monroe-doctrine>.

The ambivalence between what Gretchen Murphy describes as the “hemispheric solidarity” of the Monroe Doctrine rather than what others have often qualified as an attempt to “conceal a gesture of imperialism” and an event “crucial to the formation of an ideology of American exceptionalism” requires further understandings.¹¹ While part of the literature debates the underlining meanings of the Monroe Doctrine, this research is more focused on the process associated with this doctrine and its effect, i.e. strategic autonomy.

Power Assessment: Between Two Chairs – Avoiding Provocation vs. Minimal Security

Even under the Monroe Doctrine, some U.S. policymakers were convinced that size and distance were sufficient to protect the United States from an attack by European powers and would give them enough time to build a battle fleet in case of an attack.¹² This position that held a majority in Congress was far from unanimous and fluctuated many times depending on the level of threat from foreign powers. The debate between growing the armed forces and diminishing them during peacetime was an enduring problem to maintain a sufficient level of deterrence to the European powers and by the same token maintain a sufficient level of strategic autonomy.

¹⁰ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 115.

¹¹ Gretchen Murphy. *Hemispheric Imaginings: The Monroe Doctrine and Narratives of U.S. Empire*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 17-8, Kindle.

¹² James L. Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*. (New York: The Free Press, 1981): 21.

While most of the presidents during the period between the Monroe Declaration and the Civil War had expansionist views, Congress was more divided on this issue and too often in favour of defunding defence which had direct consequences on military capabilities (see Table 5.2). Every bump in the economy led to some defunding of the military. Many appropriation acts were defunded in the following years that followed their ratification. Already in 1821, the military budget fell under five million dollars,¹³ and it would remain so until 1831 (See table 5.2) The Army remained of reduced strength throughout 1823 to 1860 except for the expansion during the Mexican War. The military personnel was maintained around 10,000 to 12,000 men and sometimes less.

Table 5.2: United States Military Expenditures, 1823-1860

<i>Period</i>	<i>War Department Expenditures</i>	<i>Navy Department Expenditure</i>	<i>Combined Total Expenditures</i>	<i>Share of Federal Expenditures</i>
1822-1823	3096924	2593765	5690689	38.69%
1823-1824	3340940	2904582	6245522	30.73%
1824-1825	3659914	3049084	6708998	42.31%
1825-1826	3943194	4218902	8162096	47.91%
1826-1827	3938978	4263877	8202855	50.83%
1827-1828	4145645	3918786	8064431	49.19%
1828-1829	4724291	3308745	8033036	52.82%
1829-1830	4767129	3239429	8006558	52.87%
1830-1831	4841836	3855183	8697019	57.04%
1831-1832	5446035	3956370	9402405	54.38%
1832-1833	6704019	3901357	10605376	37.85%
1833-1834	5696189	3956260	9652449	51.82%
1834-1835	5759167	3864939	9624106	54.77%
1835-1836	12159227	5807718	17966945	58.21%
1836-1837	13682734	6645915	20328649	54.44%
1837-1838	12897224	6131596	19028820	56.21%
1839-1840	8916996	6182294	15099290	56.13%
1840-1841	7097070	6113897	13210967	54.33%
1841-1842	8806565	6001077	14807642	55.76%
1841-1842	6611887	8397243	15009130	59.55%
1842-1843	2957300	3727711	6685011	56.38%
1843-1844	5179220	6498199	11677419	51.13%
1844-1845	5752644	6297245	12049889	52.53%
1845-1846	10792867	6454947	17247814	62.12%
1846-1847	38305520	7900635	46206155	80.67%
1847-1848	25501063	9786706	35287769	77.77%
1848-1849	14852966	9786706	24639672	54.69%
1849-1850	9400239	7904709	17304948	43.76%

¹³ Gary Hart. *James Monroe*. (New York: Times Brooks, 2005):78. Kindle.

1850-1851	11812798	9006931	20819729	43.64%
1851-1852	8225247	8962801	17188048	38.89%
1852-1853	9947291	10919781	20867072	43.31%
1853-1854	11734629	10799586	22534215	38.82%
1854-1855	14773826	13312024	28085850	47.01%
1855-1856	16948197	14091781	31039978	44.62%
1856-1857	19261774	12747977	32009751	47.22%
1857-1858	25485383	13984551	39469934	53.20%
1858-1859	23243828	14642990	37886818	54.85%
1859-1860	16409767	11514965	27924732	40.99%

Source: The Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1949).

After the War of 1812, the Madison administration introduced major reforms to the military institutions. Generals Winfield Scott, Alexander Macomb, and Eleazar W. Ripley took the lead to reform military institutions based on the French System.¹⁴ General Winfield Scott became the embodiment of the military orientation during that period led by French strategies and tactics under American conditions through his work in the *General Regulations for the Army*. Most of all, Scott's works were an effort to uniformize the U.S. military institutions "creating a system of accountability, responsibility, division of labour, and chain of command."¹⁵

Most of the enlisted soldiers did not experience conventional action against foreign powers during that period but engaged in irregular warfare against Native tribes and became part of a development and policing infrastructure that secure the continuously expanding national territory. Unfortunately, the U.S. military doctrine already undermined by a Congress unfavourable to any increase in spending toward defence was also disconnected from its main mission by applying mainly European principles.

The Army

Military Doctrine

The United States was primarily emulating European powers to develop its military doctrine. The United States did not possess a well-defined strategic tradition and was ill-equipped to identify its own specific strategic needs with its nascent military institutions. Efforts concentrated around West Point were put in place to integrate the military institutions, organizations, and strategic principles of the European nations and the Napoleonic wars. However, most of those principles did not respond to the internal security requirements. The major obstacles continued to be the Jeffersonian opposition to military development followed by the Jacksonian populism which undermined the influence of the West Pointers.

The source of the military knowledge was ill-adapted to the strategic reality of a new republic struggling to maintain effective control of its expanding territory. Jomini and not Clausewitz became "the principal interpreted of Napoleonic Strategy to Americans" since

¹⁴ Edward M. Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 43; Allan Peskin. *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms*. (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2003): 61.

¹⁵ Peskin. *Winfield Scott and the Profession of Arms*: 68.

Clausewitz was not translated to English until 1873.¹⁶ Therefore, the U.S. military followed the simple tenets of Antoine-Henry Jomini and focused on the concentration of forces in decisive points, entrenchment, and fortifications.¹⁷ This strategy was maladapted to the small wars and asymmetric conditions under which the United States conducted campaigns against Native populations during most of the period before the Civil War. The only moment when this strategy became purposeful was during the war against Mexico. The quintessential figure of those tenets of American military doctrine was Lt. General Winfield Scott.

West Point became the center of military strategy but the focus on French strategy created a disconnect with the needs of the nation. French strategy had a prominent place in West Point's library.¹⁸ From that French influence, the American strategists developed a technicist approach with a focus on fortifications, artillery, and engineering.¹⁹ Dennis Hart Mahan was the reference to French-inspired strategy and tactics. However, this professionalization of the military forces was undermined under the Jacksonian administrations who favoured "lateral entry directly from civilian life into the higher ranks of the officer corps."²⁰ Professional competencies would remain secondary to officers' promotion after seniority and nepotism during that period.

In terms of naval strategy, little was put in place. The United States remained essentially in a defensive posture focused on coastal defence. The United States understood the significance of a world-class navy to keep an expanding merchant navy safe and to sustain greater diplomatic relations around the world. However, the whole fleet was rarely ready to deploy. The majority of ships were dry docked most of the time for maintenance and repair or simply as a peacetime measure to avoid unnecessary aging of unused wooden ships.

The era before the Civil War was relatively unfocused in doctrinal terms. The main objectives were to maintain the Union, expand it, and keep the European powers out. Those objectives were not sufficiently supported by defence investments and were mostly diplomatic efforts. Fortunately for the United States, their diplomatic threats and claims were most of the time supported by Great Britain. Without British support, the United States would have been vulnerable to French, Spanish, and Russian interference.

Army Power

The Army was highly problematic and inept in comparison with modern standards. It was too small; underfunded and often defunded; adopting inadequate strategic designs to respond to its immediate threats; poorly institutionalized; and crippled by inhumane conditions, drunkenness, corporal punishment, and desertion. Even under those awful conditions, the army managed to expand and police a territory that was growing at an impressive rate.

¹⁶ Russell F. Weigley. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 82; Samuel P. Huntington. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957): 197.

¹⁷ Antoine-Henri, Baron de Jomini. *The Art of War*. (Translated by G.H. Mendell and W.P. Craighill) (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1862): 68-70; 85-88.

¹⁸ "In 1822, more than half the books in the academy library were in French" See Coffman. *The Old Army*: 97.

¹⁹ Huntington. *The Soldier and the State*: 197. West Point's Army Corps of engineering techniques offered to an expanding territory a major force of qualified people for building roads and forts essential to the development of the territory. See Brian Balogh. *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in the Nineteenth Century America*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009): Kindle.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

Prior to the War of 1812, the American Army had suffered due to years of Jeffersonian Republicans to power who decreased the defence budget to the point where the army “shrank from 14,000 to 3,287 soldiers.”²¹ Before the 1812 War, the forces had raised back to 10000 men; in January 1812, the enlisted men were raised to 35000 men with the addition of regiments of infantry, two of artillery, and one of cavalry.²² While the Army was rebuilt and refunded during the 1812 War, defunding and demobilization occurred in the years following the war even though many policymakers from the executive had asked for an increase in the forces and its capabilities.²³ Post-war defunding and massive demobilization would become a trademark of Congress for the next hundred years creating a pattern of backwardness for the military forces.

The Jeffersonian tendency to adopt massive disarmament and demobilization policy in the aftermath of a conflict continued to affect the credibility of any foreign policy endeavours. In the 1820s, the cavalry, the one rifle regiment, and the Ordnance Department were abolished.²⁴ The cavalry war was re-established in 1832 during the Black Hawk War where the fight against the Natives was brought from the forest to the plains which made the use of horses an operational necessity.²⁵ The Army’s resources were conventionally spread thin. In 1855, thirty out of seventy-four outposts along the various trails leading to the Westcoast had less than a hundred men.²⁶ The risks were tremendous considering that many of those outposts were in newly acquired and for the moment insecure areas. Part of the Jeffersonian tradition too, the militia was the “nation’s chief defense” from the beginning of the republic and every attempt by the executive to have the military forces expended was met by usually successful opposition by Congress.²⁷ This erroneous conception that unprofessional forces could efficiently face seasoned and trained European forces was threatening the American ability to enforce efficiently the Monroe Doctrine with expeditionary forces and to deter foreign intervention.

While the officer corps, especially from West Point, was applying conventional and European tactics, the majority of the military operations during that period required different types of tactics to conduct irregular and asymmetric warfare against the Native Americans. The conventional tactics were essential to maintain a force operational against any potential invasion from European powers that were far more feared than the operations against the Native population. The congressional limits on enlisted men reinforced also a national approach focused on fortifications. The number of forts multiplied along the expansion of the territory westward.

²¹ Charles N. Edel. *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014): 100; Michael D. Pearlman, *Warmaking and American Democracy: The Struggle over Military Strategy, 1700 to the Present*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999): 73.

²² C. Joseph Bernardo and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 115.

²³ Just after the War of 1812, Secretary of State Adams asked that the Army be maintained to 40 000 men, but Congress established 10 000 as the limit within two months after the war. See Stanley S. Graham. “Life of Enlisted Soldier on the Western Frontier 1815-1845.” *Ph.D. Diss.* (North Texas State University, 1972): 1. See also Balogh. *A Government Out of Sight*: Kindle.

²⁴ Walter Millis. *Arms and Men: America’s Military History and Military Policy from the Revolution to the Present*. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1956): 84.

²⁵ Millis. *Arms and Men*: 95.

²⁶ Coffman. *The Old Army*: 58.

²⁷ Marcus Cunliffe. *Soldier and Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America 1775-1865*. (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1968): 192.

Drunkenness and disorderly conducts were common practices by servicemen and officers throughout that period. In the 1820s, duelling was still a problem in the forces. Even though the 1806 Article of War and the 1814 General Orders prohibited them, many servicemen and officers challenged others into duels.²⁸ The whiskey ration was finally abolished on December 8, 1830, after more than a decade of efforts. The War Department General Order No. 72 put an end to the practice that effectively encouraged alcoholism in the forces. Surgeon General Lovell supported the abolition of the whiskey rations since its 1818 report on its negative effects.²⁹ It took, however, thirty-two more years for the Navy to do the same.

Recruitment was also a problem due to the poor pay and conditions in the military. In 1839, Secretary of War Poinsett complained about the deplorable treatment and accommodations offered to the servicemen; in 1843, the surgeon general made a similar observation; and again in 1857, the commanding general, Winfield Scott, reiterated the lack of proper housing for the soldiers both in the frontiers and in the coastal forts.³⁰ The rejection rate was also high due to the large proportion of underage applicants and drunkards.³¹ Recruitment was difficult before 1857. The economic Panic of 1857 left a lot of unemployed men in a situation precarious enough to accept the conditions in the military.³² Contrary to the previous panics of 1819 and 1837 when Congress cut significantly the military budget, in the 1857 case, the army recruitment remain high to replenish the ranks.

Desertion was also endemic in the military forces during that period. Between 1823 to 1830, 6952 men deserted.³³ The rate of desertion between 1820 and 1860 averaged 14.8 percent.³⁴ Demoralization was addressed finally in 1833 with the Act “for the improvement of the condition of the noncommissioned officers and privates of the Army and the prevention of desertion.”³⁵ Corporal punishment remained authorized in the military service at that time including flogging.³⁶ The elimination of those practices was slow. In 1830, the death sentence for desertion in time of

²⁸ Even General Scott who wrote some of the legislations prohibiting duels challenged General Edmund P. Gaines and Henry Clay. The problem persisted throughout the 1830s. Duels became a rare occurrence in the 1840s and the last duel in the army was recorded in 1855 at Fort Laramie. See Coffman. *The Old Army*: 69-70.

²⁹ Lovell qualifies whiskey in the armed forces as a “troublesome poison” responsible for dysentery among the servicemen. See Coffman. *The Old Army*: 151. In addition, reports of casualties in New England coastal garrisons were reported by one doctor as due or related to alcohol. See *ibid*, 191.

³⁰ Coffman. *The Old Army*: 150. It is important also to note that the general recruiting service was established in 1825 and that before officers would enlist personnel only for their own regiments; See Graham. “Life of Enlisted Soldier on the Western Frontier 1815-1845.”: 22-3.

³¹ Coffman. *The Old Army*: 143-148.

³² *Ibid.*: 139-140. This was especially true in the North where the level of unemployment was high.

³³ *Ibid.*: 193.

³⁴ *Ibid.* Graham shows that between 1826 and the Mexican War the annual desertion rate was at 12.6 percent; See Stanley S. Graham. “Life of Enlisted Soldier on the Western Frontier 1815-1845.” *PhD Diss.* (North Texas State University, 1972): 193-5. Balogh defends it was between 10 to 20 percent before the Civil War, See Balogh. *A Government Out of Sight*: Kindle.

³⁵ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 164.

³⁶ Under the code of 1806 flogging was legal and under Article 45, courts-martialed offenses could result in corporal punishment even for drunkenness on duty, disobedience, neglect, sleeping on guard and desertion. See Jack D. Foner. *The United States Soldier Between Two Wars: Army Life and Reforms, 1865-1898.* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970): 40.

peace was abolished and between 1830 and 1861 many corporal punishments were progressively abolished.³⁷

The Mexican War marked an important transformation in the United States military. It brought the “effective end of the militia system” for a starter.³⁸ It also brought to the attention of the decision-makers the need for better and faster communication nationwide. For example, Andrew Jackson won the Battle of New Orleans after the peace treaty was signed.³⁹ Most of all, it brought the realization that an increase in military resources and personnel was essential to defend credibly and support the expansion of the United States nation. Ultimately, the army got away with an array of problems that should have made it inefficient and inapt to resist effectively the efforts of European powers to undermine the U.S. expanding influence. The support of the British combined with the difficulty for European powers to deal with additional independent republics in the Western Hemisphere, and the stretching of the European capabilities in first European conflicts and other colonial endeavours might have been the salvation of the American military.

Navy

The fight between *navalists* and *anti-navalists* impinged on the development of any sea-worthy navy. The dynamic between those two groups was full of intrigues and back-and-forth attempts at developing a blue-water navy that would be able to go beyond coastal defence and commerce raiding. The division was essentially marked in Congress by the anti-navy votes coming from inland representatives.⁴⁰ Annual appropriations for the navy declined steadily from 3.7 million per year during the first Monroe administration (1817-1821) to 2.9 million per year during his second administration (1821-1825).⁴¹ It would take the Civil War to create a real effort to develop the Navy even though this effort would be undermined again after the war by the anti-navalists.

The War of 1812 left a false impression of strength to the U.S. Navy. The “dozen or so victorious naval duels” including “Perry’s victory upon Lake Erie, Macdonough’s upon Lake Champlain, and the rout of the British Army at the Battle of New Orleans” created a false sentiment of security since the United States believed they defeated the world’s naval power.⁴² The resulting confidence gave a short burst to naval expansion with the establishment of the first Mediterranean Squadron in 1815, the Pacific Squadron in 1821, the West India Squadron in 1822, the South Atlantic Squadron in 1826, and the East India Squadron in 1836.⁴³ President Madison was able to put in place a strong appropriation program before leaving office and President Monroe was able to maintain it even though severe cuts in the Navy budget occurred before 1821.⁴⁴ The 1840-41 crisis with Britain led to the establishment of the Home Squadron to protect American waters.

³⁷ Those include riding a wooden horse, walking around a ring from reveille to retreat, carrying a thirty or forty-pound log or a weighted knapsack, wearing a twenty-four-pound ball and chain attach to the right ankle and a band of iron fitted with prongs around the neck, bucking, gagging, suspending a prisoner by the thumbs, or ordering him to be “spread-eagled.” See Foner. *The United States Soldier Between Two Wars*: 40.

³⁸ Millis. *Arms and Men*: 104-5.

³⁹ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 748.

⁴⁰ Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939): 97

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*: 86.

⁴³ *Ibid.*: 95; Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 166.

⁴⁴ Gary Hart. *James Monroe*. (New York: Times Brooks, 2005): 78, Kindle.

Consequently, the goal of the American Navy was principally commerce raiding and protecting its commerce with a limited and weak presence in multiple theatres.

While the establishment of regional squadrons provided a framework toward providing additional strength to the U.S. Navy, the enthusiasm toward naval development after the War of 1812 was already undermined by the economic Panic of 1819. The Navy's funds were severely cut as a result. Even though the Navy had a limited budget, the threat from the Holy Empire was sufficient to lead Congressman Joel Poinsett to instruct the Committee on Naval Affairs to explore the possibility of the expansion of the Navy. Poinsett never made direct allusion to the European threat and was in the end limited by Congress requirements and budget for a "plan for a peace establishment of the navy."⁴⁵

The Pacific Squadron gained importance with the progressive western expansion of the U.S. territory, especially considering the "whaling industry, the civil disturbance which accompanied the disintegration of Spanish sovereignty on the West Coast of North and South America, and the growth of the United States commerce with these countries."⁴⁶ However, the Pacific Squadron was accused by the British East India Company of "Jackal Diplomacy" since the American ships free-ride the British power to gain and maintain access to the Chinese market.⁴⁷ The West India Squadron was in charge of patrolling and policing the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea.

Fear, hesitation and uncertainties were recurrent components of the development of the U.S. Navy. As Hamilton declared in the early days of the republic, "a price would be set not only on our friendship but on our neutrality."⁴⁸ Before the 1812 War, the Navy was in a poor state. It consisted of eighteen ships, tea frigates, eight brigs, and 165 gunboats.⁴⁹ In addition, the infrastructure for building, repairing, and servicing the navy ships were quasi-inexistent and ill-fitted to respond to the need for a wartime navy.⁵⁰ Under the recommendations of Secretary Dobbins, the Navy grew during the 1850s, but the American forces remained vastly inferior to the British and French development during that period.

In light of a persisting underdeveloped, underfunded, and politically undermined naval development by the anti-navalists, the United States had to find a different approach to provide a minimum defence against potential foreign attacks. The American maritime defence strategy consequently developed was based on the report of the Board of Engineers of February 7, 1821, and its supplement of March 1, 1826.⁵¹ The document recommended a "unified system of seacoast fortifications" to support the navy too weak to defend efficiently the coasts. One of the most

⁴⁵ Whitaker. *The United States and the Independence of Latin America 1800-1830*. 508-9. Poinsett was not even able to get additional sloops of war to insure better coastal defense and provide a sufficient number of assignments of command to the officers available in the Navy at that time.

⁴⁶ Sprout & Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*: 95.

⁴⁷ Michael J. Green. *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017): 23-4.

⁴⁸ Millis. *Arms and Men* 57

⁴⁹ Bernardo and Bacon. 1955. *American Military Policy*: 117.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 117.

⁵¹ Russell F. Weigley. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 60; United States Congress. "System of Fortifications Recommended by the Board of Engineers." March 1, 1826. In *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, of the Congress of the United States, Part 5, Volume 3*. (Washington [D.C.]: Congress, 1860).

important goals of those fortifications was to make it difficult for an invading force to take control of ports to use them as a base of operations and consequently make a blockade on American ports way harder.

Attempt at a massive naval development occurs under President John Tyler's Secretary of the Navy, Abel Parker Upshur. Upshur propose an important modernization program which included reorganizing the naval administration including a better codification of the rules and hierarchy, tripling of the marine personnel, and creating a naval academy.⁵² The United States according to Upshur had to attain a level of naval power comparable to the European powers and should once and for all be able to provide the defence of its coasts on its own against any of the European powers.⁵³ Expansion of the navy did not occur as a result of Upshur's efforts. However, he was able to reform the Navy's organizational structure. Since 1812, the Navy was organized around the Board of Navy Commissioners, a committee of three captains appointed by the president.⁵⁴ The independence of the Board often resulted in institutional resistance toward innovation and transformation. The lack of influence from the Secretary of the Navy was a severe limitation of the civilian authority over the Navy. Upshur implemented the centralization of the power around the Secretary of the Navy through the abolition of the Board of Navy Commissioner in favour of specialized bureaus under the supervision of the Secretary of the Navy.⁵⁵

While President Jackson is not generally thought of as the greatest supporter of the Navy, his contribution increased the capabilities of the Navy and sustained the economic mission he devised for the Navy. First, Jackson asked for a "gradual increase" of the navy to provide the necessary security and support to the merchant navy.⁵⁶ The U.S. merchant fleet became second to the British fleet and was under-protected by the navy mostly relying on the security provided by the British own Navy. Second, Jackson recognized that a coastal defensive strategy was not the best strategy for a developing and expanding United States. The focus remained on defending the U.S. coasts, but the presence and diplomatic efforts of the overseas squadrons were consciously strengthened under Jackson. Overall, the Navy under Jackson did not really grow in size, but it gained in capability with the replacement of outdated vessels, the modernization of the navy, the increase of overseas visibility, and the valorization of science and discipline.

Most of the early Navy operations were against or in pursuit of pirates' activities and not against other states. Operations in Africa were conducted between 1820 and 1823 to enforce the Act of 1819 against slave traders. Between 1822 and 1825, pirates forced the U.S. Navy to land in Cuba on multiple occasions. Those operations against pirates and slave traders implemented deployment mechanisms to safeguard U.S. interests in its sphere of influence. It led to intervention in Argentina (1833), Peru (1835-36), Mexico (1836), Sumatra (1832, 1838-9), Fiji Islands (1840), Samoa (1841), and China (1843).⁵⁷ After the Mexican War, the practice became even further

⁵² Matthew Karp. *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016): 33.

⁵³ Navy Department. *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy – 1841*. December 4, 1841. <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/a/secnav-reports/annual-reports-secretary-navy-1841.html>. p. 381.

⁵⁴ Karp. *This Vast Southern Empire*: 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 47.

⁵⁶ Claude Berube. *On the Wide Seas: The US Navy in the Jacksonian Era*. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2021): Chap. 3. Kindle.

⁵⁷ Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis. "Instance of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020." *Congressional Research Service*, July 20, 2020. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R42738/31>: p. 3-4.

embedded in American grand strategy. Interventions occurred to protect U.S. economic interests in Argentina (1852-3), Nicaragua (1853-4, 1857), China (1854-5, 1859), Uruguay (1855, 1858), Fiji Islands (1855, 1858), Panama (1856), Paraguay (1859), and Angola (1860).⁵⁸

The first two steamships of the U.S. Navy, the *Mississippi* and the *Missouri*, launched in 1840 “had wooden hulls, two engine-driven side wheels, and full rigging for sails.”⁵⁹ There were no capital ships but were at least capable of sailing/steaming to the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean in accordance with the commerce raiding mission of the Navy. The rare attempts at bringing major new technological developments before the Civil War were often unsuccessful. During a demonstration of the ballistic innovation from the *Princeton*’s guns in 1844, one of the guns blew up and killed the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the Navy and others.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, some innovations, while not great technological achievements, were successful and brought additional strategic depth to the Navy. General Winfield Scott’s amphibious landing near Veracruz was a model operation and put to the test the first American military boats designed to that effect.⁶¹

One of the major re-orientations of the Navy occurred after the Paris Declaration of 1856 which made privateering illegal, making a fundamental aspect of the U.S. naval strategy during wartime illegal. Even though the United States did not sign the declaration, they agreed tacitly with the European power to comply with the declaration.⁶² Therefore, they had to reorient their strategy focused on commerce raiding. In addition to the difficulty to gain support for the construction of ships and to re-orient its naval strategy, the Navy required major institutional reforms. The issue of corporal punishment and the daily ration of whiskey were controversial and underlined the crucial need for modernization of the organization of the Navy.⁶³

On the eve of the Civil War, the Navy was in a poor state. The decision to keep sails and wooden hulls as the predominant technologies in the navy made it fall far behind the other world powers. Indecision, internal debates leading to congressional undermining of the executive attempts at expanding the Navy, and a lack of strategic flair toward the new technologies left the U.S. Navy inadequate toward enforcing the pretensions of the Monroe Doctrine in any tangible way. The forceful intention of Monroe to make the United States the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere was far from settled. The European powers were more than sufficiently involved in America’s affairs to provide credible challenges to the Monroe Doctrine. U.S. naval and military capabilities did not stop European interference entirely. However, it remained a clear signal to the European powers that their dominance in the Western Hemisphere was under threat and that the United States would use their capabilities, how limited they may be, to expand their influence and impede the interference of the Europeans. The various administrations of the

⁵⁸ Salazar Torreon and Plagakis. “Instance of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020.” 4-5.

⁵⁹ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 11.

⁶⁰ Millis. *Arms and Men*: 91.

⁶¹ Robert M. Utley. *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian 1848-1865*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967): 76.

⁶² Paul E. Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy: Politics, Economics, and the Rise of American Naval Power, 1881-1921*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016): 12.

⁶³ Geoffrey S. Smith. “An Uncertain Passage: The Bureaus Run the Navy, 1842-1861.” In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 88.

antebellum era intervened to either negotiate or intervene against European involved in American affairs.

Threat Assessment: Regional Expansion and the Fear of European Intervention

While the Monroe Doctrine displayed a desire for stability and non-interference from colonial powers, the various interpretation of the doctrine by the following presidency transformed progressively the position from a passive request of non-entanglement toward a distinctive and progressive expansionism destined to prohibit any opportunity for colonial endeavours by European powers. This position then progressively evolved under the influence of internal conflicts and the issue of slavery. The Louisiana Purchase in 1803 was the first step toward the era of American expansionism. Each venture carried a lot of economic and human costs which led to armed conflict in most cases.

The War of 1812 confirmed the tangible fear of European expansion. England could have easily taken possession of Spanish Florida and used it as a base to conduct effective naval operations against U.S. commerce.⁶⁴ The security reality after the War of 1812 was full of challenges that most of the time involved difficult negotiations with European powers. Each endeavour of territorial expansion in the Western Hemisphere by either the United States or any European powers created friction. Frictions could ultimately lead to an international crisis since most of the European powers had a vested interest in the Western Hemisphere.

While the international threat from European powers was a primary, tangible, and lingering threat, it was not as pervasive, manifest and direct as the national and regional threats that the American decision-makers had to deal with. This era of expansion presented lots of challenges to tackle to ensure security, stability and the possibility of viable and enduring state-building. The era of the “Manifest Destiny” of the United States, of the continental expansion is a defining moment in American history. The United States was expanding either through purchase, annexation, or conquest. Between 1823 and 1860, nine new states joined the Union. This is an era where the strategic value of autonomy became embedded into American decision-making for the next hundred years. The principles of autonomy were introduced to American strategy-making since the birth of the nation, but they took form following Monroe’s 1823 declaration.

Continental Expansion and Territorial Annexations

The Louisiana Purchase ended up doubling the size of the United States and set a precedent toward a clear American interest in expansion. While the constitutionality and the exact boundaries of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase were not clear, some American decision-makers believed it included Texas and part of Mexico.⁶⁵ Within a decade and a half after the Louisiana Purchase, General Jackson invaded Spanish Florida exploiting the revolutions of Latin America that weakened Spain’s control over its colonies. The 1819 Adams-Onis (Transcontinental) Treaty forced Spain out of Florida, remove Spain’s claim over the Oregon Territory, and gave additional

⁶⁴ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 2. The Secretary of State, Adams, mentioned, in 1815, that “East Florida in itself is comparatively nothing, but as a post, in the hands of Great-Britain, it is of the highest importance.” See *ibid*: 3.

⁶⁵ Amy S. Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*. (2nd ed.) (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2018): 7.

value to the protection of U.S. territory against European intervention through expansion. The removal of Florida as a geostrategic weak point for the U.S. coastal defence demonstrated that any pieces of land available to European powers could create more immediate threats to U.S. security. Continental expansion became an important feature of American politics following the Monroe Declaration. The Monroe Doctrine gave much sense to the U.S. endeavours to settle their control of the territory going from the East Coast to the West Coast. Each added piece of what would become the territory of the United States was met by local and European opposition.

The removal of the “Civilized Tribes,” including the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws and Seminoles westward of the Mississippi by Jackson’s administration in the 1830s signals once more the intention of the American nation to take possession and control all the strategic and most valuable land on the continent. While a tragedy regarding human rights, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 was a staple event of what would become the American *Manifest Destiny*. President Jackson’s design was turned westward. Jackson after taking over the Floridas without Presidential approval almost a decade earlier had made clear his intention of displacing the security issues west with the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Even though all Indian Affairs were the jurisdiction of the War Department until the creation of the Department of Interior in 1849, the Army did not spend a lot of time actually fighting the Indians.⁶⁶ Violence against the indigenous population occurred more often due to settlers’ fear and racism than offensive action by the Army. However, in the end, the greatest massacres were committed by the army. The five “civilized tribes” had experienced multiple conflicts at the state level. State governments’ hostility against the Indigenous population was among Jackson’s arguments for removal.⁶⁷ The resistance offered by tribes, especially by the Cherokee who demand full tribal sovereignty, motivated Jackson to push for a displacement of the tribes. The inhumane treatment they suffered was only one of the violent steps the United States federal government would take to secure its power over the continent and gave meaning to their expressed strategic autonomy within the Monroe Doctrine.

The American attention turned west beyond the Mississippi early on. The federal government put greater attention into developing trails across the Great Plains by establishing additional posts to create a “chain of posts” along the route.⁶⁸ Texas, the Californias, and Oregon became the next logical territories to annex to the United States in the mind of many policymakers. Not only U.S. *expansionists* had their eyes on those territories. Already Sam Houston had suggested a union between Texas, Oregon, the Californias, and parts of Northern Mexico.⁶⁹ Secretary of State Henry Clay had commissioned Joel Poinsett to renegotiate the U.S.-Mexico border to gain additional land under President Adams. President Jackson also expressed his interest

⁶⁶ Coffman. *The Old Army*: 75.

⁶⁷ Sean Wilentz. *Andrew Jackson*. (New York: Times Books, 2005): Chap 3. Kindle.

⁶⁸ Michael L. Tate. *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): 29-30.

⁶⁹ David M. Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973): 89; William Campbell Binkley. *The Expansionist Movement in Texas, 1836-1850*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1925): Chap. 2; Sam Houston to William S. Murphy. May 6, 1844, *The Writings of Sam Houston*, ed. Amelia W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker. (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1938): 320-25.

to the Mexican government to acquire the province of Coahuila y Tejas by sending Anthony Butler.⁷⁰ Though the claim was unrealistic, the intention showed a design that others shared and that colonists could help to implement in this vast and valuable practically unoccupied territory.

This expansion period led to the requirement of policing the West. The Army through that period developed forts and implemented patrols to “protect travellers and settlers from hostile Indians, to protect peaceful Indians from hostile and ignorant whites, and to perfect a scheme for managing the Indians that balanced the requirement of national expansion against those of humanity to an alien minority destined for subjugation.”⁷¹ While the military ended up focusing much more on the first task and neglecting the two others, those efforts fashioned the development of the West and were far more motivated by economic interests than humanitarian principles.

The U.S. military was essential in the development of the West. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis oversaw the endeavours to develop a railroad across the country in the mid-1850s where four main expeditions of topographical engineers were launched to determine which route would be the best.⁷² However, the American deployment in the West was understaffed, underfunded, and badly monitored. The overall reliance on static defence made the efforts at establishing a stable transit toward the West mostly ineffective. Dealing with the Plains tribes including the Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanche among others was unimpeded by external forces. While this offered the opportunity to the U.S. government to take control of those ancestral lands and expand westward, the lack of monitoring and consideration about the rights of the tribes created a human cost that still bears the stigma of this period today.

The colonization of the West was the best tool toward the stabilization and integration of the newly annexed territories. However, the task had its share of obstacles and would not create a stable region before long. The American presence in the West grew at a steady pace and progressively created a bridge between the two coasts. The Monroe Doctrine was essential in this context of slow and progressive colonization of the West to avoid any destabilization by a European power of the United States’ fragile national security over those territories. While the mid-West was of little geostrategic interest to the European powers at that point, it still represented a weak link between the two coasts and could be exploited in the case of an invasion. The colonization and development of the West in order to create a strong link between the two coasts became a race to protect the U.S. strategic autonomy. Washington was vulnerable and could lose its territorial gains in a contest with one of the European powers with vested in the region including the British, the French, the Spanish and the Russian. Unfortunately, the establishment of effective control over that region would have to wait until after the Civil War.

Texas Revolution and Annexation

Early on, the United States was interested to acquire the Texas territory. President Adams and Secretary Clay instructed Joel Poinsett to offer a million dollars to the Mexican government

⁷⁰ Sean Wilentz. *Andrew Jackson*. (New York: Times Books, 2005): Chap 8. Kindle.

⁷¹ Utley. *Frontiersmen in Blue*: 5.

⁷² The four expeditions were: “1) between the forty-seventh and forty-ninth parallels from Saint-Paul, Minnesota, to Puget Sound, Washington; 2) between the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth parallels from Saint Louis to San Francisco; 3) along the thirty-fifth parallel from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Los Angeles; and 4) along the thirty-second parallel from Vicksburg, Mississippi, to San Diego.” See Tate. *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West*. 76.

for Texas.⁷³ The offer climbed to five million in 1829.⁷⁴ However, the offer only made the Mexican government realize the value of Texas. However, it was a little too late at that point and the Texan settlers had a different plan in mind. The abolition of slavery in Mexico in 1829 played an important role in the rise of the insurrection in Texas. Even though the abolitionist law was not enforced against the American settlers in the Texas territory, the threat of this reality incentivized many slaveholding Texans to revolt.⁷⁵ In addition, on April 6, 1830, the Mexican Foreign Minister introduced a bill to build and man military posts on the Texan border and prohibited further immigration from the United States.⁷⁶ The arrival of General Antonio Lopez Santa Anna to power in 1834 and the centralization of the Mexican state under a new constitution without the support of many of the Mexican states triggered multiple rebellions throughout Mexico. Rebellions destabilized the Mexican central government in Zacatecas, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, California, New Mexico, Tabasco, Yucatan and Texas due to the conflict between Centralists and Federalists.⁷⁷

The Texan insurrection became a major irritant and a viable threat to Mexico. The small but efficient Texan warships operating from American ports were harassing the Mexican merchant ships with great efficiency.⁷⁸ The Texan militia, first led by Stephen Austin and then Sam Houston, was small, ill-equipped, poorly organized, undisciplined, and without real allegiance to the Texas government.⁷⁹ However, the rebels' resilience, Houston's opportunism at the end of his long retreat, and some luck allowed Texas to gain independence from Mexico. While small in number – the Texas Army officially established in 1835 had a total of 1210 men – the U.S. settlers who composed the Army were used to tough conditions.⁸⁰ Some had served under General Jackson during his campaign against the British during the War of 1812; and most had to deal repeatedly with the Comanche, Kiowas, and Apaches attacks against their settlements; but they had to face a well-trained, better equipped and well-organized Mexican troops.⁸¹ Fortunately for the Texans, the Mexican Army was still mostly guided by outdated Spanish tactics and strategies. Strategic and tactical innovations began to transform the Mexican Army since General Santa Anna was greatly influenced by Napoléon Bonaparte, but Santa Anna kept dispersing his forces rather than concentrating them violating the core principle that made Bonaparte so successful on the battlefield of Europe.⁸²

The Texan settlers had declared independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836; defeated and captured General Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21. After Houston's capture

⁷³ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 69.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 69.

⁷⁵ K. Jack Bauer. *The Mexican War, 1846-1848*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, 1974): 5.

⁷⁶ H. W. Brands. *Lone Star Nation: The Epic Story of the Battle for Texas Independence*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2004): 156.

⁷⁷ Stuart Reid. *The Texan Army 1835-46*. (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2003): 4. Stephen L. Hardin. *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution 1835-1836*. (Austin: University of Texas Press 1994): 30. Scribd.

⁷⁸ Jim Dan Hill. *The Texas Navy in Forgotten Battles and Shirtsleeve Diplomacy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937): 101-2.

⁷⁹ Brands. *Lone Star Nation*: 268 and 314.

⁸⁰ Hardin. *Texian Iliad*: 28. Scribd.

⁸¹ Hardin. *Texian Iliad*: chap. 1. Scribd.

⁸² *Ibid.* chap. 6. Scribd.

of Santa Anna, the Mexican Army was forced to retreat out of Texas. General Santa Anna ordered the retreat of a logistically ill-supported Mexican Army in their haste to follow Houston throughout his long retreat.⁸³ President Jackson was hesitant to annex Texas immediately.⁸⁴ Jackson wanted to avoid an annexation that would trigger an open conflict with Mexico and any other European powers. President Van Buren showed the same hesitation as Jackson and refused any formal demand of annexation until the summer of 1837 and refused the first attempt by Texas in August.⁸⁵ The prospect of annexation brought foreign powers intervention into the mix. The maintenance of constraints on the United States' expansion was advantageous to the European powers who wanted to maintain or increase their influence in the Western Hemisphere. The British and the French started to interfere in the annexation process because they wanted a buffer state between the United States and the resources rich territory of California.

Mexico's efforts to subjugate Texas after 1836 were unsuccessful and left Texas as an independent state for ten years. Mexico's political turmoil refrained the central authority to regain control of the territory beyond the Rio Grande.⁸⁶ President Jackson made official the recognition of Texas independence voted by Congress in July 1836, "when he signed on March 3, 1837, a bill providing a salary for a chargé d'affaires to the Republic of Texas."⁸⁷ However, the non-recognition from Mexico was problematic and an impending threat to Texas. Spain, France, and Great Britain were not in a haste to recognize Texas' Independence either. In addition, pressure from the British chargé, Charles Elliot, to keep Texas independent in exchange for Mexican recognition sent mixed messages to first President Sam Houston and later on President Anson Jones who were on the fence about joining the United States.⁸⁸ However, from late 1843 up until the lame-duck period of his presidency, President Tyler pursued the annexation of Texas (see Table 5.3). Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur and Texan Minister Isaac Van Zandt began the negotiation process during the summer of 1843. Due to his tragic death during the *Princeton* incident on February 28, 1844, Secretary Upshur was replaced by John C. Calhoun to complete the negotiation. On April 12, 1844, the U.S. Secretary of State Calhoun and two negotiators, Isaac Van Zandt and James Pinckney Henderson, signed the first treaty of annexation. Tyler's treaty of annexation was unfortunately rejected by the Senate due to the upcoming elections, the issue of slavery, and the risk of a war with Mexico. His second effort required a compromise with Senator Benton who had proposed another proposition to Congress, but President Tyler was able with only three days left to his

⁸³ *Ibid.* chap. 10. Scribd

⁸⁴ Carol Christensen and Tomas Christensen. *The U.S.-Mexican War*. (San Francisco: Bay Books, 1998): 26, 36.

⁸⁵ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 73-4.

⁸⁶ Santa Anna during in second presidency still managed to harass the Texan. He kept a border war against Texas alive. See John S. D. Eisenhower. *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848*. (New York: Random House, 1989): 15.

⁸⁷ Charles L. Dufour. *The Mexican War: A Compact History, 1846-1848*. (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968): 20.

⁸⁸ Richard R. Stenburg. "The Failure of Polk's Mexican War Intrigue of 1845." *Pacific Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (Mar. 1935): 45. President Jones tried to leverage the annexation to obtain formal recognition from Mexico on March 1845 when he sent a message to Mexican President José Joaquin Herrera a message offering a promise of non-annexation in exchange from a recognition from Mexico. See Eisenhower. While President Herrera accepted President Jones offer, Texas public opinion was leaning toward annexation; the Texan military supported U.S. Commodore Stockton were already mobilized and ready to begin the hostilities with Mexico; and Texas Congress accepted the U.S. annexation offer unanimously. See *So Far from God*: 24-26.

presidency to ratify the annexation of Texas.⁸⁹ In opposition to the annexation process, the Mexican government of José Joaquin de Herrera was willing to recognize Texas' independence as long as it did not annex to the United States.⁹⁰ Herrera's proposal did not change the path of Texas toward annexation which became undeniable when President Polk came to power.

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Table 5.3: Annexation of Texas Process

Date	Annexation process steps	Outcomes
March 2, 1836	Texas Declaration of Independence	Almost a decade of <i>de facto</i> independence
July 1836	U.S. Recognition of Texas Independence	Not supported by other states
August 25, 1837	Van Buren rejected Texas' suit for annexation	Texas annexation became more contentious in U.S. politics
Summer 1843	President Tyler revived the claim to annex Texas	New rounds of negotiations began with Texas
Autumn 1843	Secretary of State Upshur intensified the negotiation with Texas	Negotiation between Houston and Van Zandt resumed
February 28, 1844	Death of Secretary of State Upshur	Replacement by John C. Calhoun who kept the draft treaty essentially the same than what Upshur had negotiated
April 12, 1844	Tyler's Treaty signed by Calhoun and Houston	Opposition to the treaty began to organize (Clay, Van Buren, Webster)

⁸⁹ In the Walker-Benton compromise, the president-elect would have the choice between the two plans according to compromise. See Sam W. Haynes. *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*. (New York: Longman, 1997): 69-70.

⁹⁰ Timothy J. Henderson. *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and its War with the United States*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007): xiv.

⁹¹ In the Walker-Benton compromise, the president-elect would have the choice between the two plans according to compromise. See Sam W. Haynes. *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*. (New York: Longman, 1997): 69-70.

⁹² Timothy J. Henderson. *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and its War with the United States*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007): xiv.

April 22, 1844	Treaty submitted to the Senate for ratification	Referred to the committee on foreign relations who recommended rejecting it
June 8, 1844	Senate rejected the Treaty	Rejected by the Senate 35 to 16
December 9, 1844	Inauguration of Anson Jones as President of Texas	Jones was open to a different outcome than annexation, but public opinion was largely favourable to annexation.
Mid-December 1844	Debate on annexation in the House of Representatives	Identification of problems with the Tyler's Treaty (vagueness of the boundary, status of slavery, Texas debt, right of statehood)
January 25, 1845	Brown Resolution passed in Congress (120 to 98)	Admission of Texas as a state and postponement of the border issues
February 27, 1845	Senate passed Brown Resolution and the Benton-Walker Amendment	End of the deadlock
March 1, 1845	Congress accepted Benton-Walker Amendment and Tyler signed the joint resolution	Annexation authorized on the compromise of a new treaty (which will not be respected by Polk)
July 4, 1845	Texas convention accepted the U.S. terms of annexation	Beginning of a state constitution
December 29, 1845	Texas officially joined the Union	Triggered the process leading to the war with Mexico
February 1846	President Jones resigned and turned his power to the new state government	End of the Texas Republic

Sources: Justin H. Smith. *The Annexation of Texas*. New York: The Baker and Taylor Co. 1911; David M. Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973.

While convincing the Texan authority of the annexation was not a major issue, convincing Mexico presented a greater challenge. President Polk sent John Slidell between 1845 and 1846 to defuse the Mexican opposition to the annexation, but also to convince Mexico to sell more territory. Slidell was authorized to offer 5 million dollars to include Colorado and half of New Mexico and 15 million dollars for the entire territory of New Mexico (which included the rest of today's New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona, the southern part of Utah and Colorado) and Upper California and 5 more million dollars for the lower part of California as far as Monterey.⁹³ Slidell was not well received in Mexico. The government kept dodging his request for a meeting and made his diplomatic mission unsuccessful.

Officialized on July 4, 1845, the annexation of the Texas territory was a massive territorial gain for the United States. However, the annexation pushed the United States on the brink of war with Mexico. Mexico started by breaking its diplomatic relations with the United States and qualified the annexation as an act of war.⁹⁴ In addition, President Polk maintained Texas' claims

⁹³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 27; Bauer. *The Mexican War, 1846-1848*. 24.

⁹⁴ Carol Christensen and Tomas Christensen. *The U.S.-Mexican War*. (San Francisco: Bay Books, 1998): 46.

to the Rio Grande as a promise after the annexation of Texas.⁹⁵ In order to keep this promise, he forced the United States into a war with Mexico. The Americans made the provocation, but Polk wanted the Mexicans to make the war initiation to preserve the United States' image of neutrality.

An independent Texas would have meant a Texas willing to counterbalance the influence of the Americans by allying with Britain or even France. This would have been particularly threatening considering that the British were increasingly pushing for anti-slavery policies.⁹⁶ Pro-slavery statesmen, including President John Tyler, and his two secretaries of state, Abel Upshur and John C. Calhoun, made clear that Texas annexation was a priority to avoid any risk of slave emancipation in Texas under British pressure.⁹⁷

The annexation of Texas triggered a series of additional territorial expansions that reinforced the *Manifest Destiny* narrative and created an era of development westward that gave the power and capability to the United States to become a world power. The annexation of Texas took a long time and was dependent on the ability of the policymakers to navigate diplomatically the European powers who had a vested interest in Texas remaining independent. Tyler's decision to engage in the process of annexation and his persistence until the very last moment of his administration allowed the annexation to be a success. The exploitation of the indecision of the European powers to engage in a coherent and concerted policy toward Texas while awaiting the results of the American elections allowed Tyler and Polk to seize the opportunity and push Texas to move forward with the annexation despite the hesitations of Houston and Jones.

Canada

Canada became a reduced threat to the United States after the War of 1812. Tensions re-emerged between the United States and Canada in the 1830s and 1840s. Renewed border disputes, resource competition and jurisdiction disputes brought back the possibility of a war. First, while of little military consequences to the United States, the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838 awoke unresolved issues between the United States and Canada. While the revolts eventually brought reforms toward a responsible government in Canada, they revived anti-British sentiments among many Americans. The struggle for liberty and democracy displayed by the Patriots received much sympathy from the neighbouring states' population. The border raids that took place during the rebellion and the support received by American sympathizers, who even took part in the raids, created tension between the United States and Canada.⁹⁸ After the British authorities burnt the steamer *Caroline* that was smuggling weapons and men from Buffalo for the Patriots to Navy Island on the Niagara River which was captured a few days earlier and where the Patriots declared the Republic of Canada. The burning of the *Caroline* and its crew was badly perceived on both sides of the border. The situation escalated. State militia mobilized in Vermont and New York, and General Scott was dispatched to the Canadian Border to contain the militia to avoid further

⁹⁵ Stenburg, "The Failure of Polk's Mexican War Intrigue of 1845." 41.

⁹⁶ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 89.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 90-1.

⁹⁸ Orrin E. Tiffany. *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1905): 23-32; and David B. Read. *The Canadian Rebellion of 1837*. (Toronto: Robarts, 1896): 357-358.

escalation and maintain American neutrality.⁹⁹ President Van Buren was determined to avoid another war with England and rather asked for reparation for the *Carolina* and its victims.

Second, troubles along the border with Maine emerged due to timber resources where both Canadian and American lumbermen and speculators contested the boundary. In February 1839, the Canadian authorities arrested Maine land agents trying to remove Canadian lumbermen from the disputed area surrounding the Aroostook River Valley.¹⁰⁰ The arrest led to the mobilization of armed militia on both sides. Ultimately, the conflict escalated sufficiently that American Secretary of State John Forsyth sent General Scott to negotiate an informal truce and set up a boundary commission.¹⁰¹ Again, General Scott was able to appease the situation.

The 1842 Webster-Ashburton Treaty resolved the *Caroline* Affair, the Aroostook War and created an essential path to improve the trust and quality of the relations between Canada and the United States. The treaty resolved border issues in the East regarding the land between Lake Superior and Lake of the Wood; reaffirmed the latitude 49°23'55'' north and the longitude 95°14'38'' West as the boundary of Oregon (which did not resolve the Oregon issue); established free navigation from both states on the St. John river at the border of Maine and New Brunswick; established common efforts to patrol the coast of Africa to enforce the prohibition of the slave trade; and introduced principles of extradition for seven different crimes.¹⁰² The resolution of those issues eased the path toward the negotiation of the Oregon Treaty in 1846 by eliminating several contentious issues. It also helped toward the normalization of peaceful relations with Canada, even though some members of Congress kept asking for the annexation of Canada throughout the years.

The Oregon Territory situation brought additional risks of war between the United States and Canada. The establishment of an American fur-trading post on the south bank of the Columbia River by Winships' expedition in 1810 had led to a competition over the control of the territory. The War of 1812 led to the capitulation of the American-owned Pacific Fur Company stationed at Fort Astoria to the British North West Company.¹⁰³ The Treaty of Ghent allowed the return of the Americans to the south bank of the Columbia in the Willamette Valley. The competition over the fur trade was unfair to the Americans against the almighty Hudson Bay Company. However, the Americans were growing in number first with a wave of mountain men, then missionaries, and finally, colonists who took the Oregon trail to settle in the Willamette Valley throughout the 1830s and 1840s.¹⁰⁴ The tensions were at their apex in 1844 when President Polk came into power with the objective of annexing Oregon. The United States armed forces mobilized and increased the

⁹⁹ Tiffany. *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-1838*: 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ Alan Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*. (Washington: CQ Press, 2007): 94-96,

¹⁰¹ The conflict was informally named the *Aroostook War* and the *Pork and Beans War* by the American press. Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 15; Thomas LeDuc. "The Maine Frontier and the North-eastern Boundary Controversy." *American Historical Review*, 53, no. 1 (October 1947): 30-41; and Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*. 94-96.

¹⁰² "Webster-Ashburton Treaty: Treaty to Settle and Define the Boundaries between the Territories of the United States and the Possessions of Her Britannic Majesty in North America, for the Final Suppression of African Slave Trade, and for the Giving Up of Criminals Fugitive from Justice, in Certain Cases." October 15, 1842, London. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/br-1842.asp.

¹⁰³ Oscar O. Winther. *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation, and Travel*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1950): 86-7.

¹⁰⁴ Winther. *The Old Oregon Country*: 98-99.

pressure against Canadian defence. While the U.S. Navy was constructing iron war steamers on the Great Lakes, the Canadian defence budget was simply inadequate for tangible defence endeavours.¹⁰⁵ Even though Canada had the British armed forces for its protection, the domestic defence apparatus was inadequate to protect Canada against an American offensive. The British Navy was the main deterrent to the Americans. Prime Minister Peel knew that its forces were in a better position on the West Coast, and he sent the Pacific squadron flagship *Collingwood* into the mouth of Columbia River as a signal.¹⁰⁶ The display of military forces on each side was progressively leading to the prospect of war. In January 1846, British Admiral Lord Ellenborough started to make the plan for a war with the United States mobilizing forces on the East Coast, the Great Lakes, the Columbia River, Hawaii, and California.¹⁰⁷ Fortunately for Canada, the British managed the situation toward a peaceful resolution. Failed negotiations to settle for good the partition of the Oregon territory in 1818, 1824, 1826 and 1841-42 avoided escalation between the two states but did not resolve the central issue.

Oregon Territory

Oregon was repeatedly a contentious issue in Congress due to the joint occupation of the territory inherited from the 1818 Treaty. The border between the United States and Canada stopped at the Rockies according to that treaty. The land between the Pacific and the Rockies was shared as if the issues were put on hold until the occupation of the territory became more consequential. While the Canadians were the first to settle in the region, their number remained low and the American migration that started in the 1830s just lowered their demographic relevance in the region. The situation started to escalate when the “Great Migration” started in 1841-42. Over a thousand people and five thousand cattle crossed a vast and dangerous territory to reach the West Coast settling in Oregon and California.¹⁰⁸ In 1845, somewhere between 2000 and 5000 additional American citizens had moved West into the Oregon territory.¹⁰⁹ The American migration shifted the demographic gap between the British and the Americans in favour of the latter. While President Tyler first tried to conciliate and negotiate with the British to avoid a conflict, his successor, President Polk, adopted a more defiant position and created a crisis that brought the United States to the brink of war with Britain once again.

The fur trade toward China that expanded in the 1790s under the influence of the Boston traders made the Oregon Territory a significant trading post for the Americans, but also their only

¹⁰⁵ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 245.

¹⁰⁶ Rebecca Berens Matzke. *Deterrence Through Strength: British Naval Power and Foreign Policy Under Pax Britannica*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011): 85

¹⁰⁷ Lord Ellenborough asked 1) “to use the anti-slave-trade squadron off the African Coast to Attack American merchant ships;” 2) to send a “squadron of evolution consisting of nine ships of the line, two large frigates, and ten to twelve steamers, with instructions to practice combined operation while on station three hundred miles west of Cape Finesterre;” 3) to send “guns for steamers on the Great Lakes and made plans to increase British forces there;” and 4) to coordinate with Rear Adm. Seymour to send “the frigate *Fisgard* (forty-two guns) and the steamer *Cormoran* (six guns) to Oregon,” “the *Grampus* (fifty guns) and *Talbot* (twenty-six guns) to Hawaii,” “the *Juno* (twenty-six guns), the *Frolic* (sixteen guns), the brig *Spy* (six guns) and the *Collingwood* (eighty guns)” awaiting in California. See Matzke. *Deterrence Through Strength*: 86-87.

¹⁰⁸ James R. Gibson. *Farming the Frontier: The Agricultural opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985): 134. The Oregon territory population rose “from about 400 to 5000 between 1841 and 1845. See Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 216.

¹⁰⁹ Gibson. *Farming the Frontier*: 134.

access to the Pacific Ocean.¹¹⁰ However, the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest was as much important to the British, French, Spanish and Russian who would end up seeking control over the territory along the West Coast. This created a new area of competition between the European powers and the United States. The Hudson Bay Company had benefited from a quasi-monopoly over the Oregon territory before the arrival of American settlers except for a few American trading posts. The sea-otter skins traded for almost nothing with the indigenous populations and overhunted practically to the point of extinction were then traded to China for gold. This was a lucrative business, but most of all, an entry point to China's ports.

Three attempts had previously been engaged toward negotiating a settlement with Great Britain in 1818, 1824, and 1826. Without a clear agreement leading to a definitive division of the territory, the parties involved left the Oregon territory mostly free and open.¹¹¹ However, with the increasing importance of access to the Pacific Coast, the United States became more conscious of the relevance and added value of controlling part of the real estate on the West Coast. Since Mexico already controlled the Californian portion of the coast and Russia the Northern part, the shared Oregon Territory was a risk to American interests and security. The joint control of the Oregon Territory was a clear interference in U.S. strategic autonomy. Shared control and decision-making over a territory vast and now populated in majority by U.S. citizens was highly problematic.

The Treaty of 1819 with Spain established a clear southern border; the Treaty of 1825 between Russia and Great Britain fixed the northern border; but the shared territory between the United States and Great Britain was delimited only to the east by the Rocky Mountains and normalized by the 1818 Anglo-American Convention which stipulated a joint occupation.¹¹² The Americans became increasingly unwilling to share the Westcoast with the British and wanted to take control of Oregon to the 54° North while the British were only willing to concede the territory up to the 49°. The negotiation of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842 left out the resolution of the northern border of Oregon and simply reaffirmed the principles of the 1818 Treaty. The immigration of American citizens made the joint occupation impossible, and the annexation of Texas combined with the imminent war with Mexico made the issue pressing.

Polk, in his inaugural address, declared that "Our title to the Oregon is 'clear and unquestionable,' and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children."¹¹³ Polk's first Annual Message to Congress reiterated the legitimacy and somewhat inevitability of Oregon becoming part of the Union. More specifically, he declared that "The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for colonization by any European

¹¹⁰ Richard W. Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (Sep. 1945): 194; and Oscar O. Winther. *The Old Oregon Country: A History of Frontier Trade, Transportation, and Travel*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1950): 22.

¹¹¹ Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." 200. The American were already opposed in 1818 to a "joint-occupation" entente, See Joseph Schafer. "The British Attitude Toward the Oregon Question, 1815-1846." *The American Historical Review* 16, no. 2 (Jan. 1911): 287.

¹¹² Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." 204; and Sam W. Haynes. *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*. (New York: Longman, 1997): 116-117.

¹¹³ James Knox Polk. "Inaugural Address of James Knox Polk." *The Avalon Project* March 4, 1845. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/polok.asp.

powers.”¹¹⁴ His declaration put into effect a stronger Monroe Doctrine, one in which no colonial endeavours by European powers would be tolerated by the United States.

President Polk maneuvered well in the negotiation with Britain when considering the partition of Oregon. His repeated denial of compromise to the British before February 1845 and his good management of Congress made the partition of Oregon possible and favourable to American interests. Working on a tight schedule because of the impending war with Mexico, the president accelerated the pace of the negotiation to avoid the British getting into a stronger negotiation stance. The continuous refusal from Polk pushed the British to use coercive diplomacy. The news of thirty war vessels making their way to Canada from Britain in February 1845 increased the pressure.¹¹⁵ Considering that the United Kingdom had eyes on the Westcoast, ended the First Opium War, and was unlikely to engage in conflict with other European powers including France, the Oregon Compromise was certainly a victory for the United States. While Polk was willing to compromise on the 49° border and the cession of Vancouver Island, the main contention after February 1845 remained the right of navigation for the British on the Columbia River.¹¹⁶ The issue of the Columbia River dragged on until mid-April when Polk finally decided to let Congress decide.¹¹⁷ On April 23, the House and the Senate passed the Oregon resolution allowing shared rights on the Columbia River.

The question of the annexation of the Oregon Territory was a risky one in consideration that it could potentially lead to a war with Great Britain. President Polk patiently maneuvered the crisis to avoid engaging in a war against both the Mexicans and the British. The Democrats brought the crisis to a hazardous situation in 1846 when they proposed to end the joint occupation and raise troops against the British if the latter declined to vacate the Oregon Territory.¹¹⁸ President Polk and Secretary of State Buchanan agreed at the eleventh-hour to compromise on the 49° border including the shared right to navigate on the Columbia River. The 1846 Treaty added the states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and parts of Montana and Wyoming to the United States territory.

Mexico: California and New Mexico Territories

Mexico became a core concern to the United States after Mexico's independence. A large portion of the Mexican territory had a low-density of population and represented much value to the United States expansionist view. The migration of U.S. citizens within those vast unoccupied provinces of Mexico progressively shifted the demographic weight and created legitimacy toward U.S. claims and possible purchase to Mexico. Expansionism through the Mexican territory became a tempting opportunity for the United States. All it took was sufficient strategic autonomy both externally and internally.

The development of Mexico as a republic has certainly suffered from its inability to stabilize its political power. The competition between the Liberal and Clerical parties in addition to the foreign interference by the Holy Alliance weakened the stability and development of

¹¹⁴ James K. Polk. “December 2, 1845: First Annual Message.” *Miller Center*, Dec. 2, 1845. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-2-1845-first-annual-message>.

¹¹⁵ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 344.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 345.

¹¹⁷ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 350-1.

¹¹⁸ Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*. 104.

Mexico. Coups and revolutions destabilized and weakened the position of Mexico in the Western Hemisphere making the country vulnerable to foreign interference and ultimately leading to pieces of the country being conquered by its more stable and expanding neighbour. In addition, foreign interventions from European powers were an impending threat to Mexico for the first 30 years after its independence. First, by the Holy Alliance led by France to preserve the Spanish and Bourbon influence, and second, by the Anglo-French intervention during Santa Anna's scheme to return to power. The Monroe Doctrine helped Mexico to deal with the first threat while the own precarity of the French royalty of King Louis Philippe refrained France from collaborating with England to deal with Texas and Mexico. The domestic cost was too great for the King to risk a war over foreign territory while in cahoots with an enduring rival. London, on the other hand, was on the verge of resolving the Oregon territory contest with the United States. Support to Mexico would have become a logical option if the negotiation over Oregon had failed. Great Britain and France had to come to a different kind of agreement in light of the risks related to a joint intervention. They both agreed not to protect Mexico against the United States and offer only mediation between Mexico and Texas.¹¹⁹

Before Mexico's independence, Spain had first claimed control over the entire territory west of the Mississippi, including Louisiana, Arkansas and part of Missouri. The Onís-Adams Treaty of 1819 resolved the claim in favour of the United States. Shortly after the United States finally ratified the Onís-Adams Treaty, Mexico became independent through the Treaty of Cordova on August 23, 1821, after 10 years of fighting against Spain. The Treaty of Limits of 1831 between Mexico and the United States recognized the sovereignty of Mexico over Texas, but unresolved border delimitation incited skirmishes on the north bank of the Rio Grande after the Texas Revolution.¹²⁰ However, that recognition would be short-lived. The Treaty was amended in 1836 when Texas became a Republic and was abrogated in 1845 after the U.S. annexation of Texas and replaced by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.

Mexico soon after independence started to plant the seed of its own demise against the United States and its ability to maintain its borders as a newly independent state. The incentives put in place by the Mexican government to settle in the states of Coahuila and Texas soon brought a demographic imbalance where American settlers well outnumbered the Spanish-speaking ones. In 1825, the Texas and Coahuila legislatures voted incentives where any married male could purchase over 4 000 acres of land for less than 200\$ combined with credit and exempt from taxation for a period of seven years.¹²¹ The difficult socio-economic situation in the United States after the economic crisis of 1819 incentivized more Americans to settle in Mexico and answer the call for colonization. Between 1821 and 1835, 35,000 Americans resettled in the Mexican territories bringing with them their slaves or purchasing new ones.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation: 186-190*.

¹²⁰ Richard Griswold Del Castillo. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 10.

¹²¹ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 16.

¹²² Sean Wilentz. *Andrew Jackson*. (New York: Times Books, 2005): Chap 8. Kindle. The Mexican government tolerated the slaveholders established in those regions even though slavery was abolished in 1829 in Mexico. See *ibid*.

To protect itself from too much ethnic dilution from the settlers from the East, Mexico implemented a variety of obligations for the new settlers. First, it required them to be Catholics. Second, they were not allowed to settle within sixty miles (96,56 km) of the border. Third, they had to do all official transactions and documents in Spanish. Finally, any foreign settlers who would marry a Mexican would qualify for additional land.¹²³ Unfortunately, except for the last measure, not many followed the conditions put in place by the Mexican government. This ended up diluting further the demographic fabric of the Northern provinces of Mexico.

General Manuel Mier y Teran wrote in 1828 while investigating for the Mexican government on the conditions in Texas, that “the ratio of Mexicans to foreigners is one to ten.”¹²⁴ Many U.S. citizens were moving westward through the Santa Fe Trail and destabilizing the dominance of the Mexican population in the area along the trail. The demographic transformation of Texas more specifically caught the attention of American policymakers. The process to annex Texas and acquire New Mexico and California started in 1844 when President Tyler sent Duff Green to negotiate with the Mexican authorities.¹²⁵

President Polk’s gradual brinkmanship strategy toward the annexation of Texas, settlement of Texas’ boundary, and acquisition of California failed which prompted the war with Mexico. First, Minister General Juan N. Amonte wrote to Secretary Calhoun that the annexation “is an act of aggression.”¹²⁶ The situation escalated further in 1843 when Congress passed a new tariff bill that directly targeted essential articles to Mexico.¹²⁷ The tariff measures intensified the conflict and led Santa Anna to increase the level of violence of his actions. The threat increased a lot further in 1843 when the British, French, and Americans started to debate the control over California. With the crisis in Oregon occurring at the same time, waves of American emigrants changed the demographic of Upper California to a degree where Santa Anna felt the need to reinforce the defence of California.¹²⁸ The crisis over the control over Tahiti and the expanding interest in controlling the Pacific Islands brought the involvement of France in the lot that only increased the tensions.

Polk dispatched John Slidell to negotiate with Mexico in November 1845. President Herrera, however, had no real intention to negotiate with him and Slidell’s propositions would have been outrageous to any Mexican government. Slidell arrived in Mexico with the mission of negotiating the border with the Rio Grande and purchasing California and New Mexico. However, the Herrera government had only accepted to negotiate the annexation of Texas which Polk and Slidell considered as a *fait accompli*.¹²⁹ Delaying tactics were put in place by the Mexican government to avoid engaging in negotiation. Before any real negotiation occurred, the Herrera

¹²³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 17.

¹²⁴ Manuel Mier y Teran, “Letter to President Guadalupe Victoria,” June 30, 1828, cited in Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*: 85.

¹²⁵ Richard R. Stenburt. “The Failure of Polk’s Mexican War Intrigue of 1845.” *Pacific Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (Mar. 1935): 44.

¹²⁶ Bauer. *The Mexican War, 1846-1848*. 16.

¹²⁷ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 150.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 208

¹²⁹ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 352-5; Timothy J. Henderson. *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and its War with the United States*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007): 151-154.

government was overthrown by Paredes on January 2, 1846. Paredes brought additional risk to the situation since he wanted to establish a monarchy in Mexico and put a Spanish monarch who would bring additional influence from Spain.¹³⁰

The arrival of a new government only postponed the crisis. The Paredes' government was on the verge of bankruptcy and internal revolts. Before the Paredes' government was overthrown, the confrontation between Taylor's 3554 men and the Mexican Army at Matamoros along the Rio Grande precipitated the war.¹³¹ The Oregon question delayed the official beginning of the war, but the combination of both events brought a resolution in Oregon and freed resources toward engaging Mexico. After the resolution of the Oregon question, Congress authorized the president to mobilize fifty thousand militia and volunteers and appropriate ten million dollars for the war effort.¹³² At the beginning of the war, the American army had a severe personnel problem. Privates were under the required limits in many companies and most regiments did not have enough field officers.¹³³

On May 13, 1846, the President declared war against Mexico. The morning after, 12,000 men left Matamoros and marched into northeastern Mexico under the order of General Taylor.¹³⁴ At the same time, Admiral Sloat was landing in Monterey, California and joining forces with U.S. immigrant rebels who declared the state as independent as the "Bear Flag Republic" less than a month earlier.¹³⁵ The conquest of California was rapid and without major resistance. A slower invasion would have been threatened by potential interference from the British. New Mexico followed not long after and the U.S. militaries were occupying most of northern Mexico.

With the Mexican forces losing significant ground to the United States, the Mexican authorities decided in July 1846 to bring back General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna who was living in exile in Havana as a punishment for his excess as president.¹³⁶ British and American saw his return as a possibility for a negotiated peace.¹³⁷ However, Santa Anna's cabinet was led by "liberals and *Yankee*phobes" opposed to a negotiated peace at this point.¹³⁸ His return as commander-in-chief infused good morale to the Mexican troops, but too little, too late. Polk was free of European interference since Britain tried unsuccessfully to convince Mexico to negotiate a settlement since the war had made impossible the payment of the Mexican debts and France was unwilling to act alone. After a series of successive defeats, the Mexican government progressively lost confidence in Santa Anna's ability as a commander and a president. While Polk was certainly hoping for a shorter and more decisive war, Mexican mines and significantly increased access to the Pacific Coast were important motivators toward bringing the war to central Mexico. Overall,

¹³⁰ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 358-62

¹³¹ Robert W. Johannsen. *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 7.

¹³² Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 384-7.

¹³³ Richard B. Winters. *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War*. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1997): 50.

¹³⁴ Carol Christensen and Tomas Christensen. *The U.S.-Mexican War*. (San Francisco: Bay Books, 1998): 88.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 88.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 126.

¹³⁷ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 443-4. Polk even instructed Commodore Conner "to let Santa Anna through if he tried to return home" from Cuba defying the effective blockade of the Mexican Gulf. See *ibid.* 445.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 448.

the U.S. Army had an easy campaign with important victories at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey, El Brazito, Buena Vista, Sacramento, Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Mexico City, and Santa Cruz de Rosales.

The American Army was in position to move southward and aimed to “conquer a peace.”¹³⁹ General Taylor controlled Monterrey and was in good position to move south. However, General Scott had a different vision for the rest of the war. He engineered successfully the largest American amphibious landing of its history at that point to take over Veracruz, Mexico’s main port. He took over the city after its efficient siege. With the American push toward central Mexico, Santa Anna regrouped and directly led the defence of Mexico. He regrouped an army of 20 000 strong but was disadvantaged by the lack of resources supplied by the national government.¹⁴⁰ However, Santa Anna’s efforts to stop the Americans were severely undermined by the revolution that was taking place in Mexico City led by conservative and clerical forces. Forced to move back to Mexico City, Santa Anna put an end to the internal turmoil, set up a new cabinet, and put General Pedro Maria Anaya as substitute president to keep the peace in Mexico City while Santa Anna returned to the front.¹⁴¹

The American control of Veracruz responded to Polk and General Scott’s needs to supply their forces in Mexico. Quartermaster General Thomas S. Jesup estimated that “a 25,000-man force moving from Veracruz to Mexico City would require 2,893,950 pounds of supplies carried in 9,303 wagons and on the back of 17,413 mules.”¹⁴² The occupation of Veracruz eased considerably the logistic to bring all those required supplies to conduct the definitive campaign against Mexico. The Mexican defeat at Cerro Gordo in May 1847 finally broke Santa Anna, demoralized the Mexican Army, and generated the inevitability of a negotiated peace. The Americans captured large quantities of munitions and over 3000 prisoners.¹⁴³ The subsequent Mexican defeats at the battles of Contreras and Churubusco cleared the path to Mexico City. While the takeover of Mexico City was easier than one would think, its occupation was a different challenge.

On April 10, 1847, Polk sent Nicholas P. Trist, the chief clerk and undersecretary of the State Department as peace commissioner.¹⁴⁴ General Scott and Santa Anna agreed to a ceasefire on August 22, 1847. However, with the stagnation of the negotiation, the increase of guerilla bands, and the fortification of Mexico City, Scott unilaterally began the assault on the Capital in September which capitulated on September 14. After his defeat at the battle of Chapultepec, Santa Anna withdrew the army from the city with the hope of dislodging the U.S. forces left by Scott at Puebla, but his army broke down with the arrival of U.S. reinforcement.¹⁴⁵ His defeat and the disintegration of his army led Santa Anna to resign and flee into exile once more on the night of

¹³⁹ John S. D. Eisenhower. *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848*. (New York: Random House, 1989): 266.

¹⁴⁰ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 487.

¹⁴¹ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 491.

¹⁴² Bauer. *The Mexican War, 1846-1848*. 259.

¹⁴³ The American capture so many soldiers that they could not hold them all and released most of them on parole. See Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 496-7.

¹⁴⁴ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 499-500.

¹⁴⁵ Henderson. *A Glorious Defeat*: 171.

September 13. Santa Anna's resignation as president was followed by the self-proclamation of Manuel de la Peña y Peña as interim president on September 27. The negotiations were to a standstill. The lack of political stability and legitimacy of the Peña y Peña government meant that the peace treaty was secondary to the Mexican government. Delaying tactics became the best and only strategy of the Mexican since Scott's forces in Mexico City were hardly sufficient to keep the peace in the city that was boiling with uprising prospects.¹⁴⁶ General Scott knew well that guerrilla warfare would be far different from confronting regular Mexican troops, but the Peña y Peña government needed the Americans to withhold the revolt until it stabilized its control of the political power.

Early in the negotiation process, Polk would not concede "the Rio Grande from its mouth to El Paso, and the line of 32° from thence to the Pacific."¹⁴⁷ Even though an all-Mexico movement occupied the U.S. public sphere,¹⁴⁸ Polk remained committed to a negotiated peace that would provide manageable acquisition for the United States while leaving the unstable and widely populated Spanish-majority southern territory to the Mexican authority. The cost of controlling the rest of Mexico would have been too great. Already, the problem of guerilla bands was affecting the American forces.¹⁴⁹ The seized territory had strategic value to the United States and represented a relatively low cost of control since they were mostly unpopulated and already contained American settlers. The negotiations were dragging out and Polk was losing patience. The Mexican government could only gain from delaying tactics since the Americans were spending a lot of resources to maintain control over the corridor between Veracruz and Mexico City. The possibility of foreign intervention in the negotiation process or a government change in the United States could have benefited the Mexicans.

President Polk became tired and frustrated with Trist's lack of progress and recall him on October 8. Fortunately, when Trist received his recall notice on November 16, the Mexican president, the British Minister, and General Scott urged Trist to complete his task.¹⁵⁰ Trist disobeyed his recall notice and brought a new dynamic to the negotiations.¹⁵¹ The war officially ended with the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. The Mexican Congress was strong-armed into ratifying the treaty. Not signing the treaty would have meant continued American military occupation and possibly the loss of additional territory. Five years of military government followed the annexation of the New Mexico territory.¹⁵² The agreed border had to be formally set. However, as it occurred before with unsettled borders, the frontiers had to be redefined once more.

¹⁴⁶ In December 1847, Scott had only 8000 men to hold the city while requiring almost twice as men to conduct other operations in Mexico. Eisenhower. *So Far from God*: 349-50. His forces were not sufficient enough to occupy all of Mexico and holding Mexico City was a temporary leverage for the peace negotiation.

¹⁴⁷ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 539.

¹⁴⁸ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 552.

¹⁴⁹ Bauer. *The Mexican War, 1846-1848*. 326-343.

¹⁵⁰ Haynes. *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*: 174-75.

¹⁵¹ Due to his refusal to obey his recall notice, Polk blamed Trist for the unsatisfactory deal he bargained with Mexico where Polk believed that the United States should have obtained a larger part of the Mexican territory. After the signature of the Treaty, Polk had Trist arrested, thrown out of Mexico, and refused to pay his salary for negotiating the treaty. See *ibid.* 179.

¹⁵² Utley. *Frontiersmen in Blue*: 80.

The U.S. government added additional land from Mexico through the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. President Fillmore first tried to resolve the Mesilla Valley Mexican claim in 1852.¹⁵³ The next year, President Pierce was able to exploit the Mexican financial difficulties to purchase additional land south of the Gila River in what is now Arizona. Not long after the beginning of its negotiation with the Mexican government James Gadsden, the U.S. minister to Mexico, declared that “[t]his is a government of plunder and necessity” that needed payment to sign an agreement on boundary issues.¹⁵⁴ The Gadsden Purchase was ratified by President Pierce on June 29, 1854, formalizing the purchase for 10 million dollars of an additional 45,535 square miles of land south of the Gila River to New Mexico.¹⁵⁵ The new boundary resolved the Mesilla Valley claim and provided a satisfactory route for the construction of the transcontinental railroad which became more urgent after the discovery of gold in California in 1848.¹⁵⁶

Ultimately, the expansionist views of the United States cost Mexico almost half its territory between 1836 and 1853. The acquisition of that territory really put to the test the Monroe Doctrine and U.S. strategic autonomy. The success of the territorial expansion set the basis for the United to become a dominant regional power.

Latin America

President Monroe maintained throughout the Spanish revolution in Latin America “an impartial neutrality.”¹⁵⁷ This neutrality was not without disadvantages to the revolutionaries. John Quincy Adams argued that American neutrality was by extension British neutrality.¹⁵⁸ Any move from the United States would have created an opposite reaction from the British authorities according to Adams. Therefore, doing nothing was giving a fighting chance to the South American revolutions. The Spanish colonies had the opportunity of getting rid of the Spanish control and by association of most of the French influence in Latin America. However, independence was not the end of foreign interference. The Monroe Doctrine targeted directly the post-independence risk of foreign influence from the European powers. While the Monroe Doctrine became a staple of American foreign policy, it had only limited success in terms of ousting the European influence out of the Western Hemisphere and most of all Latin America. During the first three decades of

¹⁵³ Louis Bernard Schmidt. “Manifest Opportunity and the Gadsden Purchase.” *Arizona and the West* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Autumn, 1961): 251.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: 253. President Pierce sent five proposals to the Mexican government: 1) \$50 million for 120,000 square miles including large parts of the provinces of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Sonora, and all of Lower California; 2) \$35 million for about 50,000 square miles excluding Lower California; 3) \$30 million for another line a little further north that encompassed 68,000 square miles including Lower California; 4) \$20 million for the same proposal as the third one with the exclusion of Lower California for a total of 18,000 square miles; and 5) \$15 million for a line stretching 31 degree and 48 minutes from Rio Grande to the Gulf of California. See *Ibid.*: 254. The proposed agreement was even smaller than the last proposal offered by Pierce. Gadsden obtained around 9,000 square miles from Mexico for \$10 million.

¹⁵⁵ Edmund Janes Carpenter. *The American Advance: A Study in Territorial Expansion*. (New York: J. Lane. 1903): 264-273.

¹⁵⁶ Schmidt. “Manifest Opportunity and the Gadsden Purchase.”: 251-2; and Carpenter. *The American Advance*: 264-65.

¹⁵⁷ Whitaker. *The United States and the Independence of Latin America 1800-1830*. 195. The rights of the United States as a neutral were defined by the San Lorenzo Treaty of 1795

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 195-6.

the Doctrine, the European influence was mostly kept out of the United States and not really out of the whole continent.

The American neutrality was mostly protecting the interests of the United States. The American neutrality prevented any provocation that could lead to a concerted European intervention. A European intervention would be disruptive to the U.S. trade and could create renewed colonial endeavours that Washington wished to see disappear. To secure the independence of the Latin American Republics, the United States tried first to secure the support of Great Britain and to commit to a simultaneous recognition of the republics. In January 1819, Adams tested the waters with London, but the British authorities did not show any sign of support.¹⁵⁹ It took more than three years for the American government to finally recognized unilaterally the Latin American republics without the support of any European powers. Britain acknowledged Latin America's independence only in 1825 and France in 1830.¹⁶⁰ The process that led to the American unilateral recognition set the tone to understand the development and future of the relationship between Latin America and Europe.

The U.S. recognition of the independence of the Latin American Republics set the stage for the Monroe Doctrine. Monroe's Declaration signalled to Europe that America was no longer a land of colonialism. However, the United States did not display much bravado during the early years of the Latin American uprisings. At first, the United States did not want to antagonize Spain or any European power. Washington's neutrality during the revolutions allowed them to run their course. Furthermore, the War of 1812 diverted American attention away from Latin America. The end of the Napoleonic Wars also left much uncertainty about the behaviour of Europe at peace. The risk of further engagement in colonial endeavours was real. The United States had also obtained concession from a weakened Spain during the Napoleonic Wars who ceded Florida and agreed to set the borders between the United States and the Spanish colonies with the Adams-Onis Treaty. With the potential interference of European powers in the newly independent republics, the young Latin Republics incurred the risk of being submitted to a monarchical government supported by the royal houses of Europe. The 1822 U.S. recognition of Latin America's independence was designed to put an end to those endeavours to put in place subservient regimes. After their independence, the perception by many Latin American Republics was that the United States could be a security provider for them under the Monroe Doctrine. However, it never was the intention of any U.S. president to enforce that interpretation of the doctrine. The absence of any formal alliance left many Latin American Republics vulnerable to European influence. However, Washington did not want the obligation to come to the rescue of a neighbour under threat by a European power. Diplomacy became the best tool the U.S. policymakers to dissuade and co-opt European powers to get too deeply involved in the affairs of Latin America. That newly found role of the United States led to a momentaneous enthusiasm toward pan-Americanism from Latin American leaders.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 317.

¹⁶⁰ Helen Delpar. "Colombia: Trouble Friendship." In *United States-Latin American Relations, 1850-1903: Establishing a Relationship*. Edited by Thomas M. Leonard. 58-80. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1999): 59.

On October 1, 1825, Simón Bolívar convened all the independent states of the Western Hemisphere to meet at the Congress of Panama in June 1826. With hopes to create synergy to bring all the republics of the continents together, Bolívar invited the United States. The participation of the United States was questioned by many in both Chambers. However, President Adams was set on keeping the neutrality of the United States and agreed to participate as long as the United States would not participate in “discussions, debates, or negotiation of a belligerent or binding nature.”¹⁶¹ However, the U.S. participation in the Congress was a failure. Secretary of State Clay received the authorization from Congress to send a delegation too late to send the delegation in time. One of the representatives refused to travel to Panama due to the height of the summer disease season and only arrived too late for the Congress and the other died on his way to Panama.¹⁶² The Congress lasted from June 22 to July 15 and only four states were present at the opening, including Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.¹⁶³ While the United States maintained their neutrality in this context, the non-attendance to the Congress was a failure to build further diplomatic links and mechanisms to reinforce the Monroe Doctrine with the implicit collaboration of newly independent Latin American Republics to the satisfaction of the European powers.

By the 1830s, thirteen independent governments had been established in Latin America. Many of them were unstable regimes divided between conservative and liberal parties stealing power from each other in coups and revolutions. They were vulnerable to foreign influence and benefited from the Monroe Doctrine in some respect, but also became reliant and, in some cases, submitted to the United States power. Colombia, Brazil and Mexico were first enthusiasts to the Monroe Doctrine and recommended that it be written into an inter-American alliance.¹⁶⁴ The Spanish influence and the return to a monarchic type of governance became a risk to the stability of Monroe’s ideals. Mexico and Colombia had to deal with monarchist partisans that threatened the survival of republican institutions, in Chile, Brazil, Argentine, and Uruguay ideas about constitutional kingship were promoted by a strong oligarchy willing to secure the control of the government.¹⁶⁵ However, the monarchical plans ultimately disappeared permanently from most of Latin America by the 1840s. Only Mexico would be re-exposed to the monarchy in the 1860s.

The independence of the Latin American republics created new trade opportunities which benefited to a large degree the United States but also created attraction to other European powers for further intervention and additional competition. The Monroe Doctrine appeared as an obstacle to the European powers in that context. It remained to be seen at the time, what kind of response

¹⁶¹ Jeffrey Malanson. “The Congressional Debate over U.S. Participation in the Congress of Panama, 1825-1826: Washington’s Farewell Address, Monroe’s Doctrine, and the Fundamental Principles of U.S. Foreign Policy.” *Diplomatic History* 13, no. 5 (Nov. 2006): 813.

¹⁶² John Sergeant refused to travel, and Richard Anderson felt ill from a tropical disease during his trip and died. 836; and Theodore E. Burton, “Henry Clay.” In *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, ed. Samuel Flagg Bemis. Vol. 4 (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963). 147-48. George Dangerfield. *The Era of Good Feeling*. (New York: Harcourt. 1952): 265.

¹⁶³ Theodore E. Burton, “Henry Clay.” In *The American Secretaries of State and Their Diplomacy*, ed. Samuel Flagg Bemis. Vol. 4 (New York, Cooper Square Publishers, 1963). 147-48.

¹⁶⁴ Samuel Flagg Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951): 208; and Samuel Flagg Bemis. *John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of American Foreign Policy*. (New York: Westport, 1981): 548-549.

¹⁶⁵ Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867*: 23.

the European power would give to the Monroe Doctrine and how much they would test the U.S. resolve.

Nicaragua

After the acquisition of the Oregon Territory in 1846 and California in 1848, the issue of the Atlantic-Pacific communication became crucial especially due to the Californian Gold Rush of 1848. All the transcontinental routes were slow, unsecured, and not sufficiently developed. The maritime route was too slow and hazardous through Cape Horn. The fastest route at that point was through Nicaragua. The journey usually started by ship to San Juan, then continued on the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua, beyond that point the route would take its course by mule or train to the port of Realejo, and finally, the rest of the way was completed by ship up the west coast to the final destination. The journey was long and sometime perilous.

Discussion for the construction of an isthmian canal in Latin America emerged at the same moment. Canals had been built in different areas of the United States and each time they had a positive effect on the economic development of those areas. Naval transport was cheap and more often than not quicker than transport by land. The easiest potential routes were Tehuantepec (130 miles), Nicaragua (188 miles), and Panama (47 miles).¹⁶⁶ The requirements created to build and secure one of those potential lines of communication generated an increased interest in Central America by American policymakers.

As a silent partner in the Monroe Doctrine, the British also looked to secure their interest at some strategic points. The east coast of Nicaragua was one of those strategic points. As the most likely entry point to a canal, the Mosquito Coast had been part of the British claims in America since the middle of the seventeenth century. British buccaneers used the Mosquito Coast to obtain the required timber for their operation in the Caribbeans and over time settled a British permanent presence.¹⁶⁷ Those settlers allied with the native population of Mosquitoland and ultimately obtained, despite the protest of Nicaragua, the control over that crucial part of land at the mouth of the San Juan River that became the main obstacle to an American-led project of isthmian canal in Nicaragua.

American efforts under Polk and Taylor to secure the territorial control of Mosquitoland and Greytown for Nicaragua were unsuccessful. A U.S. alliance with Nicaragua would have been a war provocation to the British. Neither Polk nor Taylor wanted to engage in a war with the British over Nicaragua. However, Polk's chargée d'affaire in Nicaragua, Elijah Hise disobeyed his instructions and agreed to a formal treaty on June 21, 1849, with Nicaragua guaranteeing its right over the Greytown and the Mosquito Coast in exchange for U.S. right of transit and fortification of the transit route.¹⁶⁸ Article XII of the Hise-Selva Treaty stipulated that "The United States should protect and defend Nicaragua in the possession and exercise of the sovereignty and

¹⁶⁶ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 61.

¹⁶⁷ Lindley M. Keasbey. "The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* Vol. 7 (Jan., 1896): 2-4.

¹⁶⁸ Karl Bermann. *Under the Big Stick: Nicaragua and the United States Since 1848*. (Boston: South End Press. 1986): 24; Congressional Record. Accessed December 8, 2022. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1900-pt6-v33/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1900-pt6-v33-4.pdf>. p. 4989.

dominion over all the territories within her boundaries.¹⁶⁹ The Hise-Selva Treaty was never ratified and left the issue unresolved with great risk of escalation with the British.

Taylor's diplomatic agent, Ephraim G. Squier had to disentangle the situation avoiding further controversy and most of all maintaining good relations with both Nicaragua and Britain while stepping out of any entangling commitment made before. Squier worked to neutralize the issue to secure shared control over the canal route.¹⁷⁰ However, the British chargée d'affaire maneuvered to constrain further the Americans by seizing by force an old claim against Honduras, the Tigre Island, which laid on the path of the canal route in the Bay of Fonseca between Nicaragua and Honduras.¹⁷¹ Squier tried to short-circuit the British move by signing a treaty with Honduras for control over the island. With the renewed escalation between the United States and Britain in Nicaragua, Secretary of State Clayton and Great Britain's special envoy to the United States, Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer sought a resolution to the Nicaraguan Crisis. Over a few months of negotiations, both agreed on April 19, 1850, on a treaty where:

neither the one nor the other will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship canal; agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America.¹⁷²

The agreement resolved the Nicaraguan Crisis but created a bigger one over time. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty put on hold any initiative by the United States to build a naval canal in Central America. Furthermore, the treaty damaged the relations between the United States and Nicaragua. Negotiated without the participation of Nicaragua, the treaty was supposed to lead to the recognition of the sovereignty over the Mosquito Coast by Nicaragua, but the British used the distinction between Nicaragua and the Mosquito Coast in the treaty to maintain its de facto control.¹⁷³ While further colonization by the British was limited by the treaty, London used the treaty to secure its position.

Cornelius Vanderbilt's American Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company acquired the exclusive rights to steam navigation of the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua.¹⁷⁴ The travel was in high demand and sometimes the conditions of the trips were horrendous. In 1851, the British vessel the *Express* fired upon the American merchant vessel the *Prometheus* owned by Vanderbilt's company.¹⁷⁵ Based on the first article of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, Secretary of the Navy William

¹⁶⁹ Congressional Record. Accessed December 8, 2022. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-CRECB-1900-pt6-v33/pdf/GPO-CRECB-1900-pt6-v33-4.pdf>. p. 4989.

¹⁷⁰ Keasbey. "The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine.": 14.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. *OAS Peace Fund*. Accessed December 12, 2022. <https://www.oas.org/sap/peacefund/belizeandguatemala/timelinedocuments/TheClayton-BulwerTreaty-English.pdf>

¹⁷³ Bermann. *Under the Big Stick*: 30.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 31.

¹⁷⁵ Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press. 1973): 143.

A. Graham reminded the British that did not possess the right to police American vessels beyond the British territorial waters.¹⁷⁶ The isolated incident did not go further.

The increased amount of richness transiting by Central America after the conquest of California and the Gold Rush created a new enthusiasm for piracy by “filibusters.” Most of the filibusters’ activities were concentrated around Mexico, but Nicaragua became the epicentre of filibustering with the activities of William Walker. In June 1855, Tennessee-born William Walker invaded Nicaragua. Without much strategy, Walker with his fifty-eight men accompanied by Nicaraguan Liberal troops and some luck was able to take over the Nicaraguan army.¹⁷⁷ Ultimately, with some reinforcement in recruits over time, Walker held part of the country for almost two years.¹⁷⁸ Walker’s illegal occupation without any support from President Pierce, Walker was removed by the Costa Rican army and returned to the United States in May 1857. Walker’s occupation brought a lot of attention to the region and encouraged many Americans to migrate to the region. Its pro-slavery stance fostered support from the South.

Both the British and French had shown interest in Panama for the construction of an isthmian canal. Napoléon III saw the potential of Panama when he published a book, *Canal de Panama* in 1846. Again in 1856, the interest in the construction of an isthmian canal became more concrete when Félix Belly secured an exclusive concession from Nicaragua and Costa Rica to build a canal along the San Juan River.¹⁷⁹ Belly’s project died on its own due to a lack of European financing.¹⁸⁰ However, Belly’s project demonstrated the threat that a European canal would pose to U.S. interests and security. The competition over the control of the first isthmian canal in Central America would animate the great power competition in the region for the next fifty years.

Venezuela

The United States displayed strict neutrality during the struggle for independence in Latin America. The only Americans who took part during the uprisings were privateers who were prohibited from purchasing vessels and fitting them for privateering after 1817 and 1818 when Congress passed a series of laws to limit privateering.¹⁸¹ Venezuela’s rebels benefited from the unstable Caribbean Sea which can severely damage the Spanish operations. However, Adams-Onís Treaty required the United States to be in good standing with Spain and to enforce further their neutrality. Eventually, the United States stopped their silent support to Spain through neutrality and signalled the end of Spanish colonialism over the Latin Republics with the Monroe Declaration. The enthusiasm the declaration generated among the young Latin republics was short-lived. The United States set a practice of limiting the European influence in the Western Hemisphere, but not one of defensive alliances with the newly independent republics.

¹⁷⁶ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1889*. 143-4.

¹⁷⁷ Bermann. *Under the Big Stick*: 55-58.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 51-72.

¹⁷⁹ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 153; Cyril Allen. "Félix Belly: Nicaraguan Canal Promoter." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 37, No. 1 (Feb., 1957): 46-59.

¹⁸⁰ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 153.

¹⁸¹ Judith Ewell. *Venezuela and the United States: From Monroe's Hemisphere to Petroleum Empire*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press. 1996): 23-5.

While part of the Gran Colombian confederation before 1830, José Antonio Páez severed the attachment to Gran Colombia and made Venezuela an independent state. Washington was slow to recognize Venezuela as an independent nation since the United States had negotiated a trade agreement with Gran Colombia and feared an increase in tariffs from the profitable U.S.-Venezuelan trade.¹⁸² After the formalization of the separation of Venezuela from Colombia in 1834, both the United States and Britain recognized Venezuela shortly after. Spain did not recognize Venezuela until 1845.¹⁸³ To stabilize the trade situation with Venezuela, Secretary of State John Forsyth asked the U.S. chargé d'affaires to Venezuela, John G. A. Williamson to prioritize the negotiation of a trade agreement with the new Venezuelan government.¹⁸⁴ Williamson concluded the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation and Commerce Between the United States and Venezuela on May 31, 1836. The Treaty was not in any way an alliance between the two states but established friendly relations and guaranteed free trade.¹⁸⁵

The influence of Great Britain in Venezuela created a zone of friction for the United States. They both competed for the Venezuelan trade. In addition, following the Napoleonic wars, the Dutch had to transfer part of the Guianas to the British as part of the peace treaty. The Dutch settlements of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were ceded, consolidated and renamed under the authority of London as British Guiana. As so many times before, Great Britain exploited legal gaps and tested the boundaries of Venezuela. Unilaterally, the British traced new borders. London commissioned a surveyor, Robert Schomburgk to mark the colony's western border in 1841.¹⁸⁶ After a few incidents along the Schomburgk line, Caracas and London negotiated the Agreement of 1850 that left the contested areas unoccupied, leaving the issue unresolved to linger until any party could take advantage of it. Venezuela came to rely on the United States as an arbitrator of its conflict with Britain.

The relations between the United States and Venezuela remained stable until 1848. The Venezuelan Revolution of 1848 generated such atrocities that the U.S. chargé d'affaires, Benjamin G. Shields requested on two occasions military support from Washington to stabilize the situation.¹⁸⁷ The decade that followed was unstable for the Venezuelan as many others in Latin America.

Colombia

Simon Bolívar was the leading figure in the establishment of independent republics in the northern part of South America. The success of his army led to the creation of Gran Colombia in 1821 (a confederation including Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador), Peru, and Bolivia. General Bolívar was advocating early on for a grand defensive alliance between the American states. He convened all the states of America to meet in Panama in 1826 but soon realized that the

¹⁸² Ewell. *Venezuela and the United States*. 43.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.* 42.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*:43-44

¹⁸⁵ *Venezuelan-American Diplomacy - Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Navigation and Commerce Between the United States and Venezuela*; May 31, 1836. Accessed December 14, 2022. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/venez_001.asp.

¹⁸⁶ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 108.

¹⁸⁷ Ewell. *Venezuela and the United States*: 50.

United States would be one of the greatest obstacles to the unification of American interests.¹⁸⁸ Bolivar's unifying ideas, including the Andean Federation, were short-lived. Starting in 1828, the unified Colombia showed signs of weakening. First, an assassination attempt almost took the life of Bolivar in 1828; then, in 1829, Venezuela declared independence; in 1830, Bolivar chose to leave power; and he died of Tuberculosis in December not long after the assassination of his named successor Antonio José de Sucre.¹⁸⁹

Bolivar had to deal with the challenge of the Adams-Onís Treaty that blocked the rapid recognition of the independence of the Latin American Republic by the United States in exchange for Florida.¹⁹⁰ The risk of intervention by the Holy Alliance in Latin America was the primary threat to the young Latin American republics. Bolivar pursued support from the United States and Britain to limit that risk. While Britain selected to remain neutral throughout the independence process of the Latin American republics and beyond, Washington decided finally to take a stand in 1822. Monroe decided unilaterally to recognize the Independence of the Latin American states and signalled the European powers that Washington would not tolerate any attempt at reconquering their lost colonies. While that threat was a clear statement of strategic autonomy in a new area that was now considered part of the U.S. sphere of influence, the credibility of the threat was questionable. The reaction of Europe would determine the extent of the U.S. sphere of influence and the credibility of its strategic autonomy. The support of Britain was not a guarantee, and the Holy Alliance had the capability to make a stand to retake the Latin American republics.

The fear of the Holy Alliance reached Colombia too. The restoration of Ferdinand VII to the throne of Spain and the involvement of the French in Mexico generated much concern in Colombia. The Monroe Declaration reached Colombia at about the same time. Both President Bolivar and Vice-President Santander received the Monroe Declaration with optimism, especially considering that Great Britain concurred on the end of new colonial endeavours in Latin America.¹⁹¹ In 1824, the Holy Alliance wanted to rollback the independence of the Latin American republics. The same year, José María Salazar, the Colombian minister to the United States asked Washington:

[...] the government of Colombia desires to know in what manner the government of the United States intends to resist any interference of the Holy Alliance for the purpose of subjugating the new republics or of interfering with their form of government: Colombia desire to know if the United States will enter into a treaty of alliance with her to save America from the calamities of a despotic system; and finally, Colombia desires to know if the government of Washington interprets foreign intervention to mean the employment of Spanish forces against America at a juncture when Spain is occupied by a French Army, and when the government of Spain is under the influence of France and her Allies.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ John Charles Chasteen. *Americanos: Latin America's Struggle for Independence*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 165.

¹⁸⁹ Chasteen. *Americanos*: 168-170.

¹⁹⁰ E. Taylor Parks. *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1935): 94.

¹⁹¹ William Spence Robertson. "South America and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Mar., 1915): 85-86.

¹⁹² Quoted in Robertson. "South America and the Monroe Doctrine, 1824-1828.": 89-90.

Salazar's requests were taken very seriously. However, President Monroe and Secretary Adams knew that military action against European powers to protect Colombia would not hold in Congress and that a defensive alliance was out of the question.¹⁹³ The intervention of the Holy Alliance in the Latin American republics would have been a real test of the Monroe Declaration. Fortunately for the United States, the Holy Alliance had other priorities in Europe and had few resources to divert to America. Russia, Austria, and Prussia refused to recognize the independence of the Latin American republics as long as Spain would not and preferred to install Bourbon monarchs at the head of those states if possible.¹⁹⁴ The recognition of the independence of the Latin American republics by London in late 1824 ended much of the worries of a reconquest by the Holy Alliance. The newly independent republics however came to understand that a United States intervention in case of attack by a European power had little to no chance of occurring.

Following the departure of Bolivar, the Gran Colombia was dissolved. Ecuador and Venezuela declared and obtained independence. The remains of the Gran Colombia were renamed New Granada which included the territory of modern Colombia and Panama. The territory of Panama generated the most attention to U.S. interests. Early on, the possibility of the construction of an isthmian canal or a railroad through Colombia was of interest to American policymakers. While the route through Nicaragua was the preferred option for a long time, the success of a route through Panama did not require dealing with the British presence on its coasts. The negotiations over the building of a canal started in 1833 under the government of Santander.¹⁹⁵ Charles Biddle was mandated by Secretary Forsyth to negotiate with the government of New Granada to obtain a concession. Biddle arrived in Bogota in 1836 and negotiated for himself more than for the American government. He negotiated the rights for his own company, the Atlantic and Pacific Transportation Company for exclusive right of navigation on the Chagres River and the Trinidad River along with the operation of the road between the two rivers as long as ships were in operation within two years.¹⁹⁶ While his negotiations were somehow a success, his unexpected death and the Panic of 1837 stopped his project.¹⁹⁷ The failure to meet the requirements of the Biddle agreement opened the door to French and British interest to negotiate an agreement of their own.

Washington revived the negotiation process in light of European involvement. Secretary Buchanan send Benjamin A. Bidlack to make sure that "no other nation should obtain either an exclusive privilege or advantage" in the matter of a route between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.¹⁹⁸ The Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty of 1846 set the basis for the eventual control over the Panama Canal. In accordance with the general behaviour of great powers in the newly independent Central American republics, the United States was trying to secure an advantageous position for the advent of the construction of a canal in Central America. According to the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty, the United States had the guarantee of a "free and open transit of the Isthmus" in Panama

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*: 91-2.

¹⁹⁴ Ulrike Schmieder. "Spain and Spanish America in the System of the Holy Alliance: The Importance of Interconnected Historical Events on the Congresses of the Holy Alliance." *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center), Vol. 38, No. 1-2 (2015): 160.

¹⁹⁵ Parks. *Colombia and the United States*: 183-5

¹⁹⁶ John M. Belohlavek. "A Philadelphian and the Canal: The Charles Biddle Mission to Panama, 1835-1836." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 104, no. 4 (Oct. 1980): 456-7.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 460.

¹⁹⁸ Parks. *Colombia and the United States*: 201.

as long as they kept it neutral.¹⁹⁹ New Granada agreed to a similar treaty with both Britain and France.²⁰⁰

The 1848 Gold Rush created an afflux of U.S. citizens transiting by the isthmus to get to the west coast and set on prospecting for Californian gold. The Panama railroad was completed in 1855 which increased even more the flow of people through the isthmus. On 15 April 1856, the tensions between the local Panamanian population and the American travellers conflagrated and led to four days of violence. The triggering event occurred when an American bound for New York refused to pay a slice of watermelon to a black vendor.²⁰¹ The event created a brawl that quickly escalated leading to the destruction of American-held shops and violence against travellers. The Watermelon War was later leveraged in negotiation with the Colombian government to extend further the control of the United States over Panama. Most of all, the Watermelon War set a pattern of tensions between the local Panamanian population and American travellers. The Watermelon War became the first intervention of American troops in Panama. Fourteen additional armed interventions would follow in the next fifty years.²⁰²

Colombia also became a land of revolts as most of the rest of Latin America after independence. Revolts tore apart the country in 1851, 1854, and 1859-61 before the American Civil War. The instability of the region stimulated on multiple occasions the desire to make Panama a U.S. protectorate. The instability of New Granada (1831-1858) created incentives for foreign intervention which threatened the Monroe Doctrine interest. While most Colombian policymakers saw the United States as a source of strategic autonomy toward Europe, they soon came to realize that Washington would become a greater threat to their own strategic autonomy.

Europe

After the Napoleonic wars, Europe was essentially governed by Tsar Alexander, Chancellor Metternich and Lord Castlereagh who established the Concert of Europe to stabilize its relations and avoid escalation. All three agreed on a simple structure for European stability which included a twenty-year alliance to defend the territorial provision of the Congress of Vienna and prevent the restoration of the Napoleonic dynasty to France.²⁰³ Far from being indifferent to Monroe's declaration, the European powers while not receiving direct threats to their national security were still experiencing threats to their overseas interests and were threatened to be excluded from further and future American ventures. Post-Napoleonic Europe also saw the emergence of the Holy Alliance, the Christian and conservative alliance between the monarchies

¹⁹⁹ Article 35 of the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty. See Delpar. "Colombia: Trouble Friendship.": 59-60. Art. 35 created some controversy especially in the Senate since it could be interpreted as a commitment to defend the areas of the isthmus if any invasion by foreign forces would occur which was going against the U.S. posture of "friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none." See Parks. *Colombia and the United States*: 206-208.

²⁰⁰ Delpar. "Colombia: Trouble Friendship.": 59.

²⁰¹ Michael L. Conniff. *Panama and the United States: The End of Alliance*. 3rd ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2012 (1992)): 60.

²⁰² Conniff. *Panama and the United States: The End of Alliance*. 55; Parks. *Colombia and the United States*: 285 (thirteen times between 1856 and 1903).

²⁰³ Harold W.V. Temperley. *The Foreign Policy of Canning 1822-1827*. (Hamden: Archon Books, 1966): 4.

of Russia, Austria, Prussia, France, and Spain.²⁰⁴ The lingering fear of intervention by the Holy Alliance against newly independent American states was a tangible threat to the United States security. While the threat was not imminent since the Holy Alliance's armed interventions occurred principally in Europe and only showed limited signs of spillover to the Western Hemisphere. In addition, the Westcoast and the Pacific Islands would become a new area of competition for the European powers against the United States as new players in great power competition. Even after 1821, the territory north of San Francisco was still open to competition.²⁰⁵

The intrinsic system of the Concert of Europe was in direct opposition to the Monroe Doctrine and its underlying strategic autonomy. Foreign policy was the realm of great powers under the Concert of Europe, and small powers had to obey its rulings. Consequently, the European great powers, and by extension their colonies, were to follow negotiated principles and strategies between themselves that directly impacted the rest of the world since their influence was worldwide. Other states were to be consulted only if intersectionality with the Concert of Europe existed.²⁰⁶ The strategic autonomy of smaller states was severely limited in this system since their participation in the diplomatic process was optional and ignored in most situations.

The divisions in Europe broke down the Holy Alliance and the Concert of Europe between 1848 and 1853. The Crimean War reshuffled the power distribution once more in Europe. France, Britain, and Austria became allies against Russia. The war left Russia isolated. It ultimately eased a rapprochement between the United States and Russia. The Friendship that was slowly growing would yield important security backing during the Civil War. Nevertheless, the "volatile pattern of European alliance politics from 1848 to 1871"²⁰⁷ became a source of threat for the United States and made it more challenging to maintain neutrality.

Russia

Saint Petersburg was the first colonial power to make contact on the Northwest Coast. The relations between Russia and the United States had been limited, cordial and stable after the American independence. The wars in Europe restrained Russia's access to China, and American vessels became the best alternative to reach Canton. In addition, Tsar Alexander I offered to the United States to join the Holy Alliance.²⁰⁸ However, Russia's policy in America progressively triggered a defensive response from the United States. While Russian hunters were trading with

²⁰⁴ William Spence Robertson. "The Holy Alliance; Its Origins and Influence." *History Teacher's Magazine* Vol. 8, No. 10 (Dec. 1917): 337-341. The Holy Alliance had also the purpose of restraining the ambition of those power against each other. Metternich used the alliance to limit the Russian ambition during the Greek, Italian, and Spanish revolutions. See Paul W. Schroeder. "Alliances, 1915-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management." In *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*. Edited by Klaus Knorr. 227-262. (Lawrence: The University of Kansas, 1976): 232.

²⁰⁵ Richard W. Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (Sep. 1945): 198.

²⁰⁶ Richard B. Elrod. "The Concert of Europe: A Fresh Look at an International System." *World Politics* Vol. 28, No. 2 (1976): 163.

²⁰⁷ Paul W. Schroeder. "Alliances, 1915-1945: Weapons of Power and Tools of Management." In *Historical Dimensions of National Security Problems*. Edited by Klaus Knorr. 227-262. (Lawrence: The University of Kansas, 1976): 241.

²⁰⁸ Samuel Flagg Bemis. *John Quincy Adams and the Foundation of American Foreign Policy*. (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1949): 365-366.

Boston traders to send their pelts to China, the increase in demand from Canton's market brought increased Russian migration to the Pacific Northwest. The establishment of the Russian-American Company (RAC) in 1799 and the Russian bases at Kodiak (1783), Sitka (1799), and Fort Ross (1812) were perceived rightfully as the beginning of Russian colonization in the North Pacific region. The construction of Fort Ross broke the "Russian-American contract system" since the Russians started to trade with the Spanish and progressively built their own merchant ships.²⁰⁹ The competition between the traders soon became a competition between nations.

In September 1821, Tsar Alexander I renewed the charter of the Russian American Company, order its monopoly on the Russian Pacific Coast, and issued the *mare clausum ukase* (edict) that established a Russian claim over the Pacific Northwest above the 51° longitude.²¹⁰ That specific document became one of the root causes that prompted Monroe's declaration. The ukase was considered by some as an act of aggression.²¹¹ It officially stipulated that:

(1) ... The whole of the north-west coast of America, beginning from Behring Straits to the 51° of northern latitude, also from the Aleutian Islands to the eastern coast of Siberia, as well as long the Kurile Islands... to the south cape of the Island of Urup, viz., to the 45° 50' north latitude, is exclusively granted to Russian subjects.

(2) It is therefore prohibited to all foreign vessels not only to land on the coasts and islands belonging to Russia as stated above but also, to approach them within less than 100 Italian miles. The transgressor's vessel is subject to confiscation along with the whole cargo.²¹²

To enforce his threat, Alexander I send the frigates *Apollo*, *Kreisser*, and *Ladoga* to the North Pacific Coast.²¹³ The edict was officially communicated to the United States on February 11, 1822. Secretary of State Adams then exchanged a series of letters with the Russian minister to the United States, Pyotr Ivanovich Poletika without much immediate success.²¹⁴ Tsar Alexander I decided in July 1822 to open negotiations with the United States.²¹⁵ The replacement of Poletika by Baron Diderick Tuyll van Serooskerken delayed the negotiations by almost a year. In the meantime, Henry Middleton was conducting negotiations in St. Petersburg with specific instruction from Adams to communicate the absolute refusal from Washington to accept the ukase.²¹⁶ In this context, the Monroe Declaration would experience its first test. While the crisis in itself was short-lived, it generated the need for a negotiated agreement with the Russians to stop definitively the

²⁰⁹ Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." 196

²¹⁰ John C. Hildt. *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1906): 159; and Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 49.

²¹¹ Van Alstyne. "International Rivalries in Pacific Northwest." 195-6.

²¹² Ukase of September 4 [O.S.], 1821, Alaskan Boundary Tribunal, *Proceedings* (Washington, 1904), II, 25 quoted in Nichols Jr., Irby C. "The Russian Ukase and the Monroe Doctrine: A Re-Evaluation." *Pacific Historical Review* 36, no. 1 (Feb. 1967): 13. One Italian mile equals 1,620 yards. See *ibid*.

²¹³ Hildt. *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia*: 160.

²¹⁴ The Russian claim on the northwestern coast started as early as 1808 and 1810. Hildt. *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia*: 50, 158-160.

²¹⁵ Harold E. Bergquist. "The Russian Ukase of September 15, 1821, the Noncolonization Principle, and the Russo-American Convention of 1824." *Canadian Journal of History* 10, no. 2 (1975): 168.

²¹⁶ Hildt. *Early Diplomatic Negotiations of the United States with Russia*: 165.

risk of repetition of similar claims over the territory that many American expansionists and annexationists had their eyes on.

Virginia Senator John Floyd and Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton criticized the expansionist view of Russia as an international threat by referring to the Russian offensive against Turkey, Persia, and Japan.²¹⁷ However, the Russian presence was a minor threat and threatened American ambitions rather than its vital interests. The Russian Tsar withdrew the 1821 edict and recognized the American border at the 54° 40' latitude.²¹⁸ The Russian-American Convention of April 17, 1824, finally put an end to the crisis. The “embargo on foreign commerce” for those two years had brought economic despair to all shareholders of the pelt trade in the region including the Russians, Americans, and Indians.²¹⁹ The presence of a clear framework stabilized the relations between Russia and the United States. Russia, in this context, became a potential strategic partner to manipulate against the British in the Pacific Northwest.

Russia’s population at the time was more than four times the population of the United States and it had an army more than seven times the size of any army in the world.²²⁰ However, it lacked the crucial naval capabilities to sustain such an effort to invade and colonize part of the Western Hemisphere. Furthermore, the Russian army demobilized 335,000 men between 1821 and 1823.²²¹ Therefore, the probability of an open conflict on the west coast against the British or the United States was very low.

Following the 1824 Convention, the RAC lost its competitive position, and the pelt trade became dominated by U.S. traders and the Hudson Bay Company (HBC).²²² The Russian pelt markets were only the shadow of what they were a decade before. Saint Petersburg did not devise a new strategy for the development of its American colony after the failure of the 1821 *ukase*. By 1838, the HBC had a quasi-monopoly over the pelt trade in the Northwest since the American shifted their interest toward whaling and hide and tallowing in California.²²³ Changes in fashion ultimately made the fur trade less lucrative and led to its decline. The Russian interest in its colonial endeavours in America declined with the international interest in pelt trade.

Spain

Most of the bilateral tensions and conflicts with Spain occurred before 1823. Afterward, tensions began to emerge in the American periphery and its sphere of influence that Monroe’s Declaration had the intention of expanding to the whole Western Hemisphere. To the American and the other great powers, Spain was a falling power. While wars of independence ended most of the Spanish presence in America, President Polk attempted to purchase Cuba from Spain during

²¹⁷ Report to the Congress, 45:16-2, January 25, 1821, cited in James Morton Callahan. *American Relations in the Pacific and the Far East, 1784-1900*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1901): 32; and Charles E. Ziegler. “Russian-American Relations: From Tsarism to Putin.” *International Politics* Vol. 51, no. 6. (Nov. 2014): 683.

²¹⁸ Kori Schake. *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2017): 54.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 25.

²²⁰ May. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. 66.

²²¹ Nichols Jr. “The Russian Ukase and the Monroe Doctrine: A Re-Evaluation.” 22.

²²² James R. Gibson. *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast 1785-1841*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1992): 62-83.

²²³ Gibson. *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods*: 82.

his presidency to remove the remaining colonies. To Polk, the main purpose of this purchase attempt was to make sure that slavery would not be abolished from the island.

Before 1823, Spain lost its position as a great power. Its hold on its American colonies was slipping away. On the other hand, the United States was gaining influence and expanding its borders. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase opened the door to a new vision toward expansion for the United States. France ceded the territory to Spain in 1762. Napoléon retook it in 1800. The United States purchased the Louisiana territory for 15 million dollars from France, but Spain was still an irritant in Florida and Texas where the borders were poorly defined.²²⁴ The United States began by progressively chipping away the Florida territory. Andrew Jackson gained much of his national fame during his expeditions in Florida during the Seminole Wars. After a decade of failed negotiation attempts to transfer Florida to the United States, Washington forced the hand of Spain to cede the territory since Madrid was unable to maintain order in Florida. The demise of Napoléon in 1815 weakened further the Spanish ability to respond to the U.S. threat. Ferdinand VII was more concerned with the revolt in Latin America than with the U.S. occupancy of Florida. Furthermore, Spain was worried about the support that the United States could provide to the Latin American rebels. Luis de Onís, the Spanish minister to the United States had to compromise with Secretary of State Adams and the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty transferred “all the territories which belong to him [the king of Spain], situated east of the Mississippi, known by the name of East of West Florida.”²²⁵

The recognition of the independence of the Spanish colonies in Latin America was a difficult diplomatic situation for Washington. While it was consequent with the United States own history to recognize the legitimacy of a war of liberation from colonial oppressors, many of the U.S. interests could be affected by strong support for the rebellions in Latin America. First, it could trigger an armed conflict with one or many European powers. Second, it would possibly harm the U.S. trade with the European powers. Third, it would go against the Adams-Onís Treaty and diminish drastically the reputation of the United States as a neutral state. On January 30, 1822, President Monroe demanded the support of Congress to recognize officially the Spanish provinces of Latin America as independent.²²⁶ The independence of the Spanish provinces was already in existence except for international recognition at the time of the official U.S. recognition in March 1822. However, the U.S. recognition was a first step toward the abnegation of the possibility of the Spanish government retaking what was considered rightfully its own in regard to international law.²²⁷ The recognition by Britain in 1825 stopped the uncertainty regarding the status of the Latin American Republics. The cost of a Spanish invasion had significantly increased.

The French invasion of Spain in 1823 was perceived as a threat by the United States. First, the return of the Monarchy included a greater risk of an armed intervention to recapture its Spanish

²²⁴ French Ensor Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909): 60; Meg Green. *The Transcontinental Treaty, 1819*. (New York: Rosen Central Primary Source, 2006): 19-21.

²²⁵ Green. *The Transcontinental Treaty, 1819*: 42.

²²⁶ Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain*. 152.

²²⁷ After the U.S. recognition, the Spanish Minister in the United States protested against the recognition since Spain had the intention of reunite those provinces under its dominion. See Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain*: 153.

American colonies. In addition, Secretary Adams thought that Spanish rule in Cuba would be permanent under a Spanish monarch.²²⁸ The British recognition of the Spanish colonies' independence quieted down most of the U.S. concerns in link with Spanish intervention in Latin America. In addition, it helped to legitimize and accelerate the relations between the United States and the Latin American republics. The continued presence of Spain in Cuba and Puerto Rico generated almost eighty years of worries for the United States because of the potential capture of the islands by the British, the French, or any other American states since Spain was vulnerable.²²⁹ The United States played on different occasions with the idea of purchasing the islands to resolve the issue. Presidents Polk, Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan expressed their willingness to annex Cuba.²³⁰

Great Britain

Great Britain was at the peak of its power. The British control over India, the settler colonies in Canada and Australia, the strategic stations at the Cape, Singapore, and Hong Kong, a financial and economic system favourable to British interests, and a navy dominating the sea, all combined and made Britain a considerable threat to any nation. The end of the Napoleonic war and the relative peace in Europe help to make Britain the master of the seas and consequently a hegemon. While Washington wanted to keep the British influence to a minimum, the Americans were also reliant on the British naval power to restrain the other European powers' influence. The impact of the 1812 War left many U.S. decision-makers unwilling to polarize London but motivated them to find alternative paths to overcome the constraint the British tried to impose on the United States. Breaking the economic and strategic subordination to the British was a priority for the United States more than ever.

When President Monroe made his declaration, British cooperation was essential to ensure that the other European powers would follow. The Americans worked with George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary, to secure British cooperation toward non-intervention in the newly independent Spanish colonies. The British support was uncertain, but the consequences of colonial intervention represented a greater risk. The United States was the first to recognize the independence of the Spanish colonies, and Britain took one more year before doing the same. The Americans were consequently committed to supporting the new republics but lacked the capabilities to credibly do so. Washington took a risk that ultimately paid off well and positioned the United States as the leader of the Western Hemisphere.

Foreign Secretary George Canning proposed to the U.S. British Ministry Richard Rush to "join with Britain in a manifesto designed to prevent possible intervention by the European powers in the New World."²³¹ Rush did not accept the offer of an informal alliance since he did not have to authority to do so, but the interest of the United States and Britain were aligned. The establishment of a "*cordon sanitaire*" by the Royal Navy created a separation between the New

²²⁸ E. Taylor Parks. *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1935): 134.

²²⁹ Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain*: 219-220; Samuel Flagg Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1950).

²³⁰ Polk was willing to offer a hundred million dollars to obtain Cuba. See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 313. Pierce and Buchanan rose the amount to 130 million. See *ibid.* 320-3.

²³¹ Thomas A. Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1969): 181.

and the Old Worlds that sustained the core ambition of the Monroe Declaration.²³² The French intervention in Spain to restore the monarchy created a unified Bourbon domination which could threaten British sea power. Consequently, the British supported the Monroe Doctrine to balance the alliance between France and Spain. As Canning said, “if France had Spain, it should at least be Spain without her colonies.”²³³ Both Jefferson and Madison thought that Monroe should accept Canning’s proposal, but Adams disagreed since it would by consequence set a precedent that would restrain U.S. expansions.²³⁴

The Adams administration had major difficulties to reconnect with the British for commercial gains. While Adams’s foreign policy was mainly focused on developing good and prosperous economic relations with other powers, the British were in a deadlock situation with the Americans ever since Adams failed to cooperate with Canning who left the door open to deepening the relations with the United States at the time of the Monroe Doctrine.²³⁵ Adams’s strict neutrality set the standard for the Monroe Doctrine but also signalled to the British their unwillingness to commit and avoid entanglement at all costs.

Foreign Secretary Palmerston deliberately inflated the *Caroline* crisis in 1838. He took more than three years to respond to the United States’ formal demand of reparation and instead increased drastically the number of troops and vessels deployed in Canada.²³⁶ Palmerston’s hard position inflamed the U.S. public opinion, but he was right in evaluating President Van Buren’s disposition to favour a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Therefore, Palmerston knew that he could force the hand of the United States to lower their expectations in preparation for the negotiations to resolve the bigger issues concerning the border conflict and possibly the Oregon Territory. When Palmerston finally answered the U.S. claim in 1841, he bluntly rejected the merit of the claim.²³⁷ This rejection maintained the tension and the stronger diplomatic stance of the British government.

In 1840-41, the United States experienced another crisis with the British. The crisis began with the arrest of Alexander McLeod, a British subject charged with murder which President Van Buren refused to release to the British authorities.²³⁸ However, the crisis escalated for a different reason. It became a melting pot of the border dispute over the Maine-New Brunswick frontier, the abolition of the African slave trade, the annexation of Texas by the United States, and the territorial dispute over the Oregon territory.²³⁹ The Webster-Ashburton Treaty resolved some of the tensions. However, the Oregon question remained unresolved, and the confrontation over that issue was only postponed.

²³² Paul Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*. (New York: Random House, 1987): 178.

²³³ Herbert Richmond. *Statesmen and Sea Power*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946): 259.

²³⁴ Charles N. Edel. *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014): 173. Kindle.

²³⁵ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 259; Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 182.

²³⁶ Wilbur Devereux Jones. *The American Problem in British Diplomacy, 1841-1861*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974): 3.

²³⁷ Jones. *The American Problem in British Diplomacy*: 7.

²³⁸ Sprout & Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*: 116.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

Britain became a threat too in the competition to secure the right to establish an isthmian canal in Central America. President Zachary Taylor was ultimately able to secure the right by promising a canal “open to the commerce of all nations on equal terms.”²⁴⁰ The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of April 19, 1850, stipulated that both states would refrain to “occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion [in] any part of Central America.”²⁴¹ However, the hasty establishment of a protectorate by the British on the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua in 1848 was legitimized by the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and was *de facto* an intentional violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

France

Years of wars and political turmoil had destabilized France as a world power. The United States had been mostly supportive of France during the post-Napoleonic transition and the re-establishment of the Bourbons. However, the United States spent the 1820s and 1830s trying to claim lost property as a result of the various Napoleonic decrees that created spoliation. Even weakened, the French threat was considered tangible by some in the Monroe administration, notably Calhoun. Fortunately, French reassurances were provided before Monroe’s declaration and the British emitted a “warning against a policy of coercion – a warning, it is true, directed to France alone, but before many weeks communicated to the other Continental powers by Chateaubriand himself.”²⁴²

The French involvement in Spain became a considerable source of threat to the United States. The potential of a French intervention in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Cuba was of concern to the United States throughout the 1820s. With the independence of the Spanish colonies in the Americas, the French government became one of the main targeted states by Monroe’s declaration. The project of “independent Bourbon monarchies in the New World” resonated among some elements of the French administration.²⁴³ Baron Hyde De Neuville, the French minister to Washington “urged” the establishment of two constitutional monarchies in Mexico and La Plata to the Duc of Richelieu.²⁴⁴ The project was dully considered by Richelieu who presented outlined details at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in the fall of 1818.²⁴⁵ The project was brought forward again in the spring of 1823 when the French Prime Minister, Jean de Villèle asked his Foreign Minister, Chateaubriand. While the Premier was ill-informed and ignorant regarding the forces necessary to accomplish such a transatlantic feat, the rumours of French ambitions in the Americas were sufficient to threaten the United States and their ideals of unimpeded Americas free from colonial foes.

France was out of the Napoleonic Wars and was still paying the consequences. Damages were done to the American economy during the Napoleonic Wars and Washington asked for

²⁴⁰ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 116.

²⁴¹ “The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty: British-American Diplomacy Convention Between the United States of America and Her Britannic Majesty.” April 19, 1850.

www.oas.org/sap/peacefund/belizeandguatemala/timelinedocuments/TheClayton-BulwerTreaty-English.pdf.

²⁴² See Paris. Aff. Étr. Corr. Pol. Autriche, Nov. 3, 1823. Cited in Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 118.

²⁴³ Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 106.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 106.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 107.

spoliation claims which totalled seven million dollars.²⁴⁶ Albert Gallatin, the U.S. minister to France spent seven years (1816-1823) negotiating with first Richelieu, who replaced Talleyrand, and four of his successors who all delayed the resolution of the spoliation claims.²⁴⁷ James Brown, Gallatin's successor, did not obtain much more success. William Cabell Rives was mandated by President Jackson to continue the negotiations. While he received the same treatment as his predecessors at first, the decision by President Jackson to make the spoliation claims a priority by including it in his 1829 Annual Message changed the dynamic and showed France that delaying tactics would not be allowed anymore. President Jackson stated:

The claims of our citizens for depredations upon their property, long since committed under the authority, and in many instances by the express direction, of the then existing Government of France, remain unsatisfied, and must therefore continue to furnish a subject of unpleasant discussion and possible collision between the two Governments. I cherish, however, a lively hope, founded as well on the validity of those claims and the established policy of all enlightened governments as on the known integrity of the French Monarch, that the injurious delays of the past will find redress in the equity of the future. Our minister has been instructed to press these demands on the French Government with all the earnestness which is called for by their importance and irrefutable justice, and in a spirit that will evince the respect which is due to the feelings of those from whom the satisfaction is required.²⁴⁸

This position accelerated the pace of negotiation between Rives and Prince de Polignac, the minister of foreign affairs. On July 4, 1831, Rives obtained 1) the abandonment of French claims under the Louisiana Treaty; 2) an offer for damages of twenty-five million francs.²⁴⁹ The amount was equivalent to 4.6 million dollars.²⁵⁰ France's noncompliance with the installments agreed and the ultimate refusal to make any of the payments triggered a response from Jackson. Jackson discussed with Congress the possibility of retaliatory measures and suggested that the United States was entitled to seize French property and broke diplomatic relations with France if the crisis was to prolong.²⁵¹ President Jackson almost went to war with France in 1834. Ultimately, Britain stepped in to mediate the situation and France agreed to pay its installments in time.

²⁴⁶ Richard Aubrey McLemore. "The French Spoliation Claims, 1816-1836: A Study in Jacksonian Diplomacy." *Tennessee Historical Magazine*. Vol. 2, no. 4 (July 1932): 235; Richard Aubrey McLemore. *Franco-American Diplomatic Relations 1816-1836*. (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1972).

²⁴⁷ McLemore. *Franco-American Diplomatic Relations 1816-1836*.

²⁴⁸ Andrew Jackson. "First Annual Message." *The American Presidency Project*. December 8, 1829. Accessed January 2, 2023. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/first-annual-message-3>.

²⁴⁹ McLemore. "The French Spoliation Claims, 1816-1836:" 240.

²⁵⁰ David S. Reynolds. *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*. (New York: HarperCollins e-books, 2009): Chap 3. Scribd. The French claimed covered a period from 1803 to 1815 and comprised complex technical cases of "appropriations and condemnations of property in violation of the Convention 1800, irregular condemnations or confiscations, retroactive condemnations, condemnations under the 'retaliatory' Berlin and Milan decrees, both before and after their pretended revocation on November 1, 1810, and other arbitrary procedures." See Samuel Flagg Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1950): 287.

²⁵¹ Reynolds. *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson*: Chap. 3; McLemore. *Franco-American Diplomatic Relations 1816-1836*: 131. President Jackson in his Annual Message of 1834 and 1835 mentioned his disappointment with France behavior and included veiled threats of sanction and war. See Andrew Jackson. "Sixth Annual Message." *The American Presidency Project*. December 1, 1834, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/sixth-annual-message-2>; and Andrew Jackson. "Seventh Annual Message." *The American Presidency Project*. December 8, 1835, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/seventh-annual-message-2>.

In 1838, the French raised tensions in the Western Hemisphere due to the Mexican unfair treatment of French citizens and their interests in Mexico. The government of Louis-Philippe ended up declaring a blockade of the Mexican Gulf Coast at the end of 1837. The blockade was unsuccessful at first, but the 26 French ships and 4300 men reinforcement that arrived in October certainly challenged the Monroe Doctrine.²⁵² British pressures finally brought the Mexican and French governments to negotiate a peace treaty on March 9, 1838.²⁵³ The lack of involvement of the American government showed the difficulty to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. However, the United States benefited from this involvement to a certain degree since it eased the efforts of Texas to gain independence. First, by diverting resources toward the war effort against the Texan rebels. Second, by giving legitimacy to Texas by formally recognizing Texas with a commercial treaty on September 25, 1839.²⁵⁴ Therefore, while the United States did not have sufficient capabilities to stop the French interference without the support of the British, the U.S. interests benefited from the double fronts that the Mexican government had to deal with during that crisis.

Guizot insisted that “France has a lasting interest in the maintenance of independent states in America, and in the balance of force which exists in that part of the world.”²⁵⁵ According to Guizot, France had to help the balance between Great Britain, the United States, and Latin America even if it meant using force. However, the French efforts to undermine the U.S. annexation of territories persistently failed and never escalated to armed interference or intervention.

Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoléon 1st, gained power after the 1848 revolution. While first president, then president-prince, and finally Emperor Napoléon III, Louis Napoléon worked patiently to restore the lost influence of France. When most of his diplomatic attempts to regain France’s lost prestige failed, he turned his eye to America. He would become the source of the final blow to the U.S.-France relations. Once the first ally of the United States, the French would become an irritant to many U.S. presidents. The ambitions of Napoleon III would lead to the French intervention in Mexico between 1861 and 1867 and constitute the most important violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

Alignment Options: Support from Any Source with Absolute Avoidance of Commitment

The United States was committed not to engage in any formal alliance. After Washington’s Neutrality Proclamation broke the Treaty of Alliance with France, American policymakers became devoted to avoiding the entanglement and entrapment of alliances. Already, President Jefferson and Madison engaged in strict neutrality. President Monroe made neutrality an integral part of his 1823 declaration. Neutrality was becoming a tradition in American foreign policy. However,

²⁵² Due to alleged looting of a Patisserie by Mexican citizen, the Pastry War disturbed the fragile state of Mexico. The presence of the Prince de Joinville spread the rumor that France wanted to impose a monarch upon Mexico. Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 58-59; Timothy J. Henderson. *A Glorious Defeat: Mexico and its War with the United States*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007): 116.

²⁵³ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 59-60.

²⁵⁴ Jim Dan Hill. *The Texas Navy in Forgotten Battles and Shirtsleeve Diplomacy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937): 80.

²⁵⁵ *Histoire Parlementaire de France. Recueil Complet des Discours Prononcés dans les Chambres de 1819 à 1848 par M. Guizot* (5 vols., Paris, 1864) IV, 562, cited in Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867*. 71.

neutrality does not mean the absence of a relation. The United States tried to exploit the benefits they could get without committing to the constraint of an alliance treaty.

Systemic

To the despair of many American strategists, François Guizot's idea that "no single power should dominate North America" announced the intention of European powers to meddle in American affairs to the level of implementing a balance of power logic similar to the European one.²⁵⁶ Therefore, the Americans would have to deal on multiple occasions with the interference of European powers without having a negotiated mechanism that would ensure the cooperation of other states. The United States benefited tremendously from the support of Great Britain. While the American governments never put in place any credible effort to secure British support, the British after 1815 protected the U.S. interest on many occasions. London did not do so altruistically, but in the end, it helped the rise of what would become the world's greatest power.

While Britain was a source of support when it comes to the Monroe Doctrine since the Royal Navy was the first barrier to foreign intervention, the U.S. Navy, U.S.-British relations were still polluted by unresolved issues including the Northwest, the Maine-New Brunswick border, Texas, and the British protectorate in Central America. U.S. policymakers were still suspicious of the British intentions in this process since the British commitment came a year after the United States recognized the independence of the Latin American republics.

Regional

The United States showed little interest in forming alliances with its neighbours. As early as the Panama Congress, the American lack of interest in multilateralism was obvious. However, it did not mean the states of the Western Hemisphere did not share common interests. All the independent republics of the Western Hemisphere shared the common interest of removing European influence from their territory. Many insurgents in the remaining colonies saw positively Monroe's Declaration. In addition, all those states shared economic interests that they could more freely exploit without the overbearing influence of the colonial powers.

Both Colombia and Brazil approached the United States after gaining their independence to enter a defensive alliance.²⁵⁷ Secretary of State Adams declined on the basis that U.S. foreign policy was uncommitted to protect formally any of the newly born Latin American republics. The resistance from Adams was in direct opposition to Henry Clay's hemispheric "American system."²⁵⁸ The American system was a combination of "anticolonialism, unionism, and nascent imperialism."²⁵⁹ While the United States could have benefited from taking the leadership of this system, the white Anglo-Saxon identity of the United States created many frictions with its southern neighbours. The Panama Conference demonstrated the internal division in the United States. Racism and pro-slavery elements within the government led to strong resistance toward the U.S. participation to the Conference. The fear of recognition of Haiti as a legitimate black state threaten the fabric of what the United States was at the time.

While Monroe's declaration took a strong stand against colonial interventionism, American capabilities to enforce this declaration were lacking. The French partly called the

²⁵⁶ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 106.

²⁵⁷ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 68.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 74.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 75.

American bluff in Colombia. The Colombian Vice-President Santander and the minister at Washington, José Salazar urged the American Secretary of State to provide support against European intervention. The French had strong intentions to exercise their influence to establish a monarchical institution in Colombia. Salazar wrote to the Adams on July 2, 1824, asking about the

[M]anner the Government of the United States intends to resist on its part any interference of the Holy Alliance for the purpose of subjugating the new Republics or interfering in their political forms: if it will enter into a Treaty of Alliance with the Republic of Colombia to save America in general from the calamities of despotic system; and finally if the Government of Washington understands by foreign interference the employment of Spanish forces against America at the time when Spain is occupied by a French Army, and its Government under the influence of France and her Allies.²⁶⁰

The Colombian concerns were legitimate and resonated with the American administration, but a firm commitment was out of the question. Monroe was clear on that issue when he wrote to Madison: “the Executive has no right to compromit the nation in any question of war, nor ought we to presume that the people of Columbia will hesitate as to the answer to be given to any proposition which touches so vitally their liberties.”²⁶¹ Monroe’s unwillingness to compromise American diplomatic principles of neutrality was communicated to Colombia by Secretary Adams. Adams wrote to Salazar:

The employment of Spanish forces in America, while Spain is occupied by a French army and its Government under the influence of France and her allies, does not constitute a case upon which the United States would feel themselves justified in departing from the neutrality which they have hitherto observed.²⁶²

Similar concerns emerged also in Brazil after the American recognition in May 1824. The potential risk of European involvement in Brazilian politics pushed the government to ask for American support and a formal alliance. However, the new Secretary of State, Henry Clay, again, in a similar fashion that his predecessor answered that “such a treaty would be inconsistent with the policy that the United States have heretofore prescribed to themselves; that policy is whilst the war is confined to the parent Country and its former Colony, the United States remain neutral, extending their friendship and doing equal justice to both parties.”²⁶³ While the United States was acquiring a regional power status in the Western Hemisphere, the fear of entrapment in conflict with European powers was due to their commitment of support to any ex-colonies.

Diplomatic Uncertainties: Why No One to Call U.S. Bluff

While the Monroe Declaration was a bold diplomatic move, the aftermath was full of uncertainties, risks, mismanaged situations, and uncarefully planned diplomatic moves. The American diplomats had to manage situations where they were at a clear strategic and military disadvantage, and they had little leverage over their counterparts. James Monroe and John Quincy

²⁶⁰ Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 188.

²⁶¹ Monroe, *Writings*, viii, 30, cited in Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 189.

²⁶² From Washington, State Dept., Notes to Ministers, Colombia, vol. I, cited in Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 191.

²⁶³ Washington. State Dept., Notes to Foreign Legation, vol. 3, cited in Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1823-1826*. 198.

Adams had served as ambassadors in the European courts and understood the difficulty of managing the expectations of the Monroe Doctrine. However, when Andrew Jackson came to power, his understanding of diplomacy was limited. Jackson, in his formative years, fought the Europeans but did not learn how to negotiate with them. Therefore, the Jacksonian years saw an increase in diplomatic crises and a decrease in skillful diplomacy to bring the European powers to follow the U.S. lead when it comes to the politics of the Western Hemisphere.

Managing the British Support

Richard Rush, the United States minister in London, and George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary recognized that cooperation was in the best interest of both states, but never officially committed to a clear position or an alliance. While Canning was skeptical regarding the ability of the United States to remain neutral as the main power in the Western Hemisphere,²⁶⁴ the British government, in an era prior to mass media and modern communication had additional time to take a position toward the United States. The possibility to delay a hasty decision allowed both states to agree on a compromise rather than adopting an alliance quickly or giving priority to domestic interests without sufficient consideration to international interests and stability.

Canning was instrumental in the British support to the American foreign policy development to achieve Monroe's and Adams' goals. Canning favoured an approach opposing the intervention of any other power than Spain in Latin America and he supported a British diplomatic recognition of the states who were organized and able to sustain an effective government regardless of whether Spain or the Holy Allies agreed.²⁶⁵ Those positions clashed with the traditional approach of the British government and Wellington's own position. Wellington and the King believed that recognition by Spain had to occur for the British government to follow and that they should at least delay the recognition as much as possible.²⁶⁶

The Canadian tensions in the 1830s became problematic to U.S.-British relations. The crises were regional at first and escalated at the international level because of the regional anger along the border. The Maine, New York, and Vermont militia were mobilized, and the risk of escalation was real. President Van Buren had to intervene to remember its citizens and governors along the border that the United States had to "observe their own neutrality law."²⁶⁷ General Scott's intervention avoided the escalation of the conflict and allowed the preservation of U.S.-British relations. However, the *Carolina* affair, the McLeod arrest, and the tensions over slavery with the extradition of the slaves aboard the U.S. vessel *Creole* in the Bahamas continued to worsen U.S.-British relations. The mitigation of the crisis by Van Buren and Scott kept the peace at the border until the ratification of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty which resolved most of the issues except for the Oregon Territory.

British support became more uncertain under President Polk. Polk's jingoism toward getting "all of Oregon or none" was bringing Britain and the United States to the brink of war. The growing tensions over the Oregon Territory were already damaging the relations between both

²⁶⁴ May. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*. 7.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 125.

²⁶⁶ Harold Temperley. *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822-1827: England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World*. (London: Archon Books, 1966): 246-7.

²⁶⁷ Thomas A. Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1969): 200.

countries significantly, but in addition, the risk of war with Mexico combined with the almost unveiled U.S. ambitions over California pushed British diplomats to cooperate with the French against the United States. Guizot abandon France's policy of support to the United States.²⁶⁸ Aberdeen proposed a joint policy to France to protect California from the Americans.

The Franco-British rapprochement pushed Polk to take a more defiant and risky position toward Europe. The intention of the United States to not let any further European colonization endeavours in the Western Hemisphere and the re-affirmation of the Monroe Doctrine were at the forefront of Polk's annual message.²⁶⁹ From Polk's message emerged the Polk Doctrine which established that "no future European colony or dominion shall with our consent be planted or established in any part of the North American continent."²⁷⁰ However, the 1846 repeal of the Corn Law was creating important agitations within the British islands at the same moment and generated an atmosphere favourable to a compromise at the 49th Parallel.²⁷¹

Britain served many times as a stabilizing agent in the Western Hemisphere, much more than many U.S. policymakers would have admitted at the time. Encroachments between the United States and Britain would logically happen. The establishment of a strategically autonomous United States within the Western Hemisphere was bound to create friction with the great powers and the greatest among them, Britain. While Britain was rarely too great an obstacle to allow the United States to achieve their expansionist objectives, Britain purposefully impinged on the overall U.S. influence in its immediate neighbourhood. The British support provided to Texas to keep the latter's independence which could have ruined the expansionist ambitions of the United States. Then the enthusiasm toward an isthmian canal between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans created additional frictions that led to the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer treaty which was unfavourable to the Monroe Doctrine and slowed down the expansion of the U.S. influence in Latin America.

Territorial Acquisitions, Regional Friendships and British Manipulation: U.S. Negotiated Agreements

The lack of adequate diplomatic culture to use mindful strategies to protect U.S. interests led to multiple failures in the diplomatic arena. From the many missteps of the U.S. diplomatic corps before the Civil War, the United States was fortunate to not end up in a tragic situation impossible to defuse. From the clumsiness of chargés d'affaires motivated by their own parochial interests to the foreign minister who took initiatives beyond what Washington mandated them, the misfortunes of U.S. diplomacy were the trademark of the early Monroe Doctrine. The negotiation process leading to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was a succession of diplomatic failures which epitomized the lack of professionalism within the U.S. diplomatic corps and underlined its vulnerability to better strategies by better foreign diplomats. The United States ended up being outplayed by the British who made any endeavour to build an isthmian canal in central America a partnership with them.

²⁶⁸ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 295.

²⁶⁹ James K. Polk. "December 2, 1845: First Annual Message." *Miller Center*, Dec. 2, 1845. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-2-1845-first-annual-message>.

²⁷⁰ Polk's annual message cited in Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 229.

²⁷¹ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 230; Frederick Merk. "The British Corn Crisis of 1845-46 and the Oregon Treaty." *Agricultural History* Vol. 8, no. 3 (Jul., 1934): 95-123.

While the United States had often to learn diplomatic lessons the hard way, U.S. policymakers were sometimes able to manage well the strategic autonomy of the United States and make significant gains and obtain concessions from European powers. The Adam-Onís Treaty of 1819 with Spain allowed de-escalation of the tension with Spain and served as an excuse to remain neutral toward Latin America. Spain traded Florida and stopped its claims on Oregon in return for the recognition of the Texas and Louisiana borders and monetary compensation.²⁷² The borders of Louisiana were set at the Sabine River. The absence of contention between the United States and Spain eased the process for the former to keep its strategic autonomy during the Latin American revolutions without too much risk of losing its neutrality status. It also permitted a more flexible stance regarding the recognition of the Latin Republics.

Details of significance have been overlooked by some policymakers and sometimes to a great cost. While the early recognition of Mexico in 1823 as an independent nation by the United States bought some sympathy and goodwill from Mexico, the inability to assign a resident minister created early missed opportunities to secure the diplomatic complicity between the two nations.²⁷³ During the Mexican War, the Americans tried to develop their secret diplomacy. Nicholas Trist was appointed U.S. peace commissioner in April 1847 and sought different backchannels to obtain the territorial concessions wanted over the Mexican government.²⁷⁴ He was unsuccessful and only generated additional mistrust in the U.S. government by Mexican officials. Those diplomatic mistakes set the difficult nature of the relations between Mexico and the United States that would endure for the next hundred years and lead to multiple military confrontations.

The U.S. internal division that emerged in link with the participation in the Panama City Conference in 1826 showed the difficulty of the United States to deal with its role as a regional power versus its role as a minor world power afraid of any entanglement in international affairs. The objectives of the conference were to “discuss the prospects for cooperation among American Republics and map out their relationships with Spain and other European powers.”²⁷⁵ The tensions that built up between President Adams, Congress and the Senate showed a lack of ability to deal with diplomatic issues and take control of their own regional political and strategic agenda.

Throughout the period ranging from Monroe Declaration to Civil War, the United States signed many important treaties in which they often either gained territory or resolved territorial conflict (see Table 5.4). Only one of those treaties was problematic in terms of maintaining the Monroe Doctrine and the U.S. strategic autonomy. The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 was a violation of the Monroe Doctrine.²⁷⁶ Article I recognized that both the United States and Great Britain will:

[...] ever obtain and maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship canal; agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same or in the vicinity

²⁷² Richard Griswold Del Castillo. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 8.

²⁷³ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 39.

²⁷⁴ Griswold Del Castillo. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo*: 16-7.

²⁷⁵ Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020): 116. Kindle.

²⁷⁶ Discussed by Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867*: 207.

thereof, or occupy, or fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito coast, or any part of Central America [...]”²⁷⁷

Table 5.4: International Treaties ratified by the United States Between 1823 and 1860

Treaty Name	Date	Main Purpose
Russo-American Treaty	April 17, 1824	Resolve the ukase of 1821
Anderson-Gual Treaty	October 3, 1824	Most-favoured-nation status with Colombia
Treaty of Joint Occupation	August 6, 1827	Joint Occupation of Oregon with the British
Siamese-American Treaty of Amity and Commerce	March 20, 1833	Most-favoured-nation status with Siam
Webster-Ashburton Treaty	August 9, 1842	Settle Canadian-Maine Border
Treaty of Wangxia	July 3, 1844	Most-favoured-nation status with China
Texas Annexation	February 19, 1846	Annexation of Texas into the Union
Bidlack-Mallarino Treaty	December 12, 1846	Guaranteed right of transit through Panama
Oregon Treaty	June 15, 1846	Settlement of Oregon boundary dispute
Treaty of Cahuenga	January 13, 1847	Capitulation of the Mexican military
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	February 2, 1848	Peace treaty with Mexico and ownership of California and New Mexico.
Clayton-Bulwer Treaty	April 19, 1850	Joint venture for the Nicaraguan Canal
Gadsden Purchase Treaty	December 30, 1853	Acquisition of the Southern part of Arizona and New Mexico.
Convention of Kanagawa	March 31, 1854	Port access to Japan (end of national seclusion)
Reciprocity Treaty of 1854	June 5, 1854	Fishing privileges and reciprocity for commodities with Canada
Treaty of Tianjin	June 26, 1858	Normalization of relations with China after the Second Opium War
Harris Treaty	July 29, 1858	Coaling rights in Japan
McLane-Ocampo Treaty	December 14, 1859	Transit rights across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec

The future shared control of an isthmus in Central America was implying European involvement in the Western Hemisphere. The British were already violating the Monroe Declaration in three areas of Central America, and London exploited this pre-existing presence to obtain American concessions in the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. First, the British presence in Belize under the treaties with Spain which transformed into an actual possession after 1823 violates the Monroe Doctrine. Second, the possession of the Bay Islands acquired in 1838 only reinforced the increasingly defiant British presence in Central America. Finally, the treatment of the Mosquito Coast as a protectorate was as much another British move toward a reinforced presence in Central America.²⁷⁸ The Polk administration made sure that Great Britain did not engage in a unilateral effort to construct a canal but compromised the Monroe Doctrine in the process by creating the obligation of a joint project.

The domestic discontent created by the violation of the Monroe Doctrine was well expressed in Congress and public opinion. The fear that the maintenance of the authority over Belize, the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Coast was an invitation to other European powers to interfere in American affairs. Consequently, the American and British convene a new negotiation.

²⁷⁷ The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty: British-American Diplomacy Convention Between the United States of America and Her Britannic Majesty.” April 19, 1850.

www.oas.org/sap/peacefund/belizeandguatemala/timelinedocuments/TheClayton-BulwerTreaty-English.pdf.

²⁷⁸ Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1826-1867*: 208-9.

The Dallas-Clarendon Convention was signed on October 17, 1856. The Mosquito territory was integrated into Nicaragua according to Art. II; Greytown/San Juan was to become a free port according to Art. IV (1); and the Bay Islands (Ruatan, Bonaca, Utila, Barbaretta, Helena, and Morat) were ceded to Honduras according to the Separate Art. II.²⁷⁹

In the two decades before the Civil War, slavery came to play a significant role in U.S. diplomacy. First, the British ban on slavery was a source of constant threat to the Southern United States and created a bias in the perception of the British diplomatic intentions. Second, any attempt at further integration or annexation with Southern America or Pacific Islands met fierce opposition from the Southern states when their majority were non-Caucasian and when slavery was already abolished. Third, attempts at annexation after the Mexican War became problematic since the addition of a new state could offset the fragile balance between the North and the South over the issue of slavery.

Many U.S. presidents pressed Spain to sell Cuba. However, not only the United States coveted Cuba. Foreign Secretary Canning proposed joint control between France, Britain and the United States.²⁸⁰ Polk authorized Romulus M. Saunders, the U.S. minister to Spain to open the negotiation for the purchase of Cuba, and Saunders had to authority to offer as much as a hundred million dollars for the Island.²⁸¹ Saunders was unsuccessful. In 1854, three U.S. diplomats under President Franklin Pierce – Pierre Soulé (Minister in Spain), John Y. Mason (Minister in France), and James Buchanan (Minister in Great Britain) – sent the Ostend Manifesto to President Pierce (at that time only a memo) in which they discussed the future and options regarding Cuba.²⁸² When the Ostend Manifesto became public it created a severe backlash. The European powers protested leading to the dismissal of Soulé and the end of Pierce’s expansionist ambitions.

Asia

The progressive increase in access to Asian markets was symbolic of the American expansion to the West and would ultimately become part of the American presence on the West Coast. The American ginseng, sea-otter pelts, and furs became coveted by the Chinese at the turn of the seventeenth century leading to a progressive increase of the American presence in Canton. Under President Jackson, Edmund Roberts was named for the first official diplomatic mission to Asia in 1832 with the tasks of negotiating treaties with Cochin-China, Siam, Muscat, and Japan. Roberts was able to sign treaties with Siam and Muscat in 1833 but was denied an audience in Cochin-China and died at Macao in 1836 before completing his trip to Japan.²⁸³ International events accelerated the process of opening China to the United States.

²⁷⁹ “Treaty between Her Majesty and the United States of America, respecting Central America; with three Separate Articles thereunto annexed.” London. October 17, 1856.

<https://www.oas.org/sap/peacefund/belizeandguatemala/historicDocs/Dallas-ClarendonTreaty%201856.pdf>.

²⁸⁰ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 286.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* 288.

²⁸² Amy S. Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*. (2nd ed.) (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2018): 127-8; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 322-3.

²⁸³ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*.: 344; Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 301-2.

Britain opened forcefully the China market to free trade with the Opium War of 1839-42 and its subsequent 1842 Treaty of Nanking.²⁸⁴ President Tyler mandated Caleb Cushing, a member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, to Macau in June 1844 to negotiate with the Chinese to establish formal relations distinct from the British agreement. From this negotiation emerged the Treaty of Wangxia of 1844 which secured access to ports, improved tariffs and extraterritoriality, and provided access to Protestant missionaries to learn Chinese and build churches.²⁸⁵ Its goals were essentially to maintain American neutrality and secure access to China which become labelled as the “open-door” policy. However, ten years later, the agreement was still not implemented and was mainly ignored by the Qing dynasty. While distinct from the Treaty of Nanking, the fundamentals were the same and China had so many internal problems to comply with the specifics of the Wangxia Treaty. The problem of non-compliance was reviewed by Peter Parker, the U.S. commissioner to China (1855-57) and informed the President of the need to imitate the European powers and increase the American military presence to enforce the conditions of the treaty.²⁸⁶ However, the United States had no interest in engaging in European military operations in Asia.

Parker’s successor, William B. Reed negotiated the 1858 Treaty of Tientsin (Tianjin) with the Chinese government after the end of the Second Opium War. France and Britain forced additional trade concessions on China including diplomatic representation in Peking and the United States followed suit.²⁸⁷ In the end, during that period, the role of the United States in Asia was limited. The region was dominated by European competition and the embedded avoidance of involvement in European affairs limited the ability of the United States to develop a strategy that would increase the American influence in Asia. In this logic, Washington remained consistent with the Monroe Doctrine and remained more neutral than the other powers involved in China. Every U.S. action in Asia became dependent on the accord of the European powers and more specifically Britain.

As a result of the trade with China, increased transit through Hawaii created additional interest toward maintaining its independence. President Tyler signalled in 1842 to the other powers with vested interests in Hawaii that attempts at taking “possession of the islands, coloniz[ing] them, or subvert[ing] the native government” would not be tolerated by the United States.²⁸⁸ Tyler’s doctrine came to the appropriate moment to dissuade the British and French to capture the islands. President Fillmore was willing to enter a tripartite agreement with France and Britain not to capture Hawaii and Cuba, but with Perry’s Convention of Kanagawa, President Pierce (who succeeded Fillmore) switched U.S. position and negotiated a treaty of annexation in 1854.²⁸⁹ The opening of Japan created a new and interesting market to the United States where Hawaii was an

²⁸⁴ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 115.

²⁸⁵ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 38; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 345-6; and Ping Chia Kuo. “Caleb Cushing and the Treaty of Wanghia, 1844.” *The Journal of Modern History*. 5, no. 1 (Mar., 1933): 34-54.

²⁸⁶ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 45-6.

²⁸⁷ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*:306.

²⁸⁸ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*.: 348.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 349

essential component for its development. Pierce ended up rejecting the treaty since it was admitting Hawaii as a state in the Union.²⁹⁰

Brinkmanship Diplomacy

President Monroe pushed the Europeans into a brinkmanship situation by bluffing the exclusion of America as an area for further colonial endeavours by the Europeans. However, he was not the only president to use brinkmanship as a strategy to protect and expand American interests. Brinkmanship was used on multiple occasions to maintain strategic autonomy.

President Jackson created a brinkmanship crisis with the French over the spoliation claims of 4.6 million dollars dating back to the Napoleonic era. Andrew Jackson declared that the United States was bound not to ask for anything “that is not clearly right and to submit to nothing that is wrong.”²⁹¹ Jackson held his position in the 1834-1836 crisis with France and let the prospect of war go on to make sure that the French would cave to his demands. France did not want a war with the United States over unpaid debt. An armed conflict between the United States and France was threatening severely the already fragile Orleans monarchy.²⁹²

Polk’s action toward both Mexico and Great Britain created a double brinkmanship situation. First, President Polk pushed the British to the brink of war by refusing to pursue the negotiation over Oregon between Aberdeen and Richard Pakenham and sending a withdrawal of Polk’s previous offer to Pakenham.²⁹³ Second, with the dispatch of reinforcements to the border with Texas and the claim that the Rio Grande represented the redline toward war with Mexico, Polk created a tangible risk of war with Mexico and tried to push the blame for the war onto Mexico.²⁹⁴

When the French Foreign Minister, François Guizot declared the necessity to maintain “the equilibrium of forces between the great masses which divide America,”²⁹⁵ the Polk administration perceived Guizot’s declaration as a direct attempt to deny the primacy of the United States over the Western Hemisphere. However, Guizot’s remark was not credible since the French were not in any position to affect the expansionist view of the United States. Nevertheless, the potential of European involvement in American affairs was enough of a threat to some American policymakers to influence the willingness to compromise and negotiate the two impending crises.

Civil-Military Relations: Jeffersonian Vs. Hamiltonian

Civil and military relations in the United States were somewhat problematic since the inception of the republic. The existence and maintenance of a simple and limited standing army were problematic right from the start. Pressure emerged toward the dismantlement of the Army during peacetime. Anti-federalists were opposed to a standing army and basic centralized authority in favour of the Federal Government. James Monroe advocated early on for a standing national

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 349.

²⁹¹ Quoted in R. A. McLemore. “The French Spoliation Claims, 1816-1836: A Study in Jacksonian Diplomacy.” *Tennessee Historical Magazine*. Vol. 2, no. 4 (July 1932): 234.

²⁹² McLemore. “The French Spoliation Claims, 1816-1836.” 246.

²⁹³ Pletcher. *The Diplomacy of Annexation*: 261.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 261.

²⁹⁵ From Frederick Merk’s translation of the report that appeared in *Le Moniteur*, June 11, 1845. In Frederick Merk. *Monroe Doctrine and American Expansionism 1843-49*. (New York: Random House, 1966): 50-1.

force rather than the perilous state militia which represented a poor match in the eventuality of a stand-off against the European standing armies.²⁹⁶

As Huntington identified, the liberal military policy of the Jeffersonian was devoted to “a small standing army” because large military forces were a threat to liberty, democracy, economic prosperity, and peace.²⁹⁷ Therefore, continuously before the Civil War, the United States Army and Navy have been defunded and reduced to inefficient forces and forces crippled by their lack of resources to even provide sufficient human decency to keep their recruits and accomplish their missions adequately. The militia system provided a safety net in case of war, but an inadequate one. Citizen soldiers were not competent enough in military science and military leadership. It rather created a military force guided by “technicism” focused on “fortifications, artillery, and engineering.”²⁹⁸ In addition, without a uniform training process for militia since decentralized to the state level, the militia companies became more social organizations without the required military skills and discipline to defend the nation.²⁹⁹ This approach remained a pervasive problem even though multiple decision-makers including President Monroe worked to implement a strong standing army able to respond to the internal challenges first and foremost, but also to tackle the threat of a conflict against one of the European powers.

The line of command was sometimes problematic during that period. While officially, the Secretary of War had authority, the General Commanding the United States Army “had come to occupy, through a long-standing custom aided by Congressional action, a position which was in some respects coordinated with that of the Secretary of War.”³⁰⁰ The crux of that relation was rarely between the Secretary of War and the Commander in Chief of the Army, but rather between their subordinates. Without a clear path of hierarchy between them, some bureaus claimed at times that they were under the strict command of one or the other making room for divisions, competition, and dissension in the military establishment.³⁰¹

Political divisions between the Democratic party and the Whigs were also influencing the pace and the nature of the development of civil-military relations. While the Democratic party was in favour of expansionism and military adventurism against native populations and other former colonies and colonial powers, the Whigs were in favour of the consolidation and development of a strong basis within the existing borders. The politicization of the military became quite apparent during the Mexican War. Both General Taylor and General Scott were Whigs with ambitions for higher office. As the leading Generals during the War, they created tensions with President Polk who as a countermeasure appointed thirteen volunteer generals throughout the war.³⁰²

Military education was already embedded at West Point founded in 1802. The United States military academy was primarily focused on engineering and technical skills and not sufficiently on strategy and tactics. The Department of Tactics was created only in 1858.³⁰³ Before

²⁹⁶ Gary Hart. *James Monroe*. (New York: Times Books, 2005): 17. Kindle.

²⁹⁷ Huntington. *The Soldier and the State*: 155-6.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*: 197.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.* 203.

³⁰⁰ Otto L. Nelson (Maj. Gen.). *National Security and the General Staff*. (Washington [D.C.]: Infantry Journal Press, 1946): 14-5; Huntington. *The Soldier and the State*: 208.

³⁰¹ Nelson. *National Security and the General Staff*: 15.

³⁰² Richard Bruce Winders. *Mr. Polk's Army: The American Experience in the Mexican War*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001): 36-7.

³⁰³ Huntington. *The Soldier and the State*: 199.

1845, naval education was practical and did not rely on any formalized education. The establishment of the Naval Academy in 1845 created another technical-focused curriculum which still allowed the improvement of the U.S. Navy officers but did not create the much-required changes in doctrine, strategy, and tactics.³⁰⁴ The valuation of military education was undermined under the Jacksonian era and favoured populist measures of recruitment integrated into his spoil system rather than technical abilities. During the Jacksonian era, a congressional committee was appointed to determine whether or not West Point should be abolished.³⁰⁵ Fortunately, West Point survived the recommendations of the committee. However, the patronage system that nominated officers by Congressional appointment and lateral entry directly from civilian life made officer nomination a political choice rather than a professional one.³⁰⁶

The politicization of the Army command was problematic. On multiple occasions, General Scott displayed unprofessional and political positions against the civilian authorities. Scott went as far as moving his headquarters to New York “because he could not get along with the Taylor administration.”³⁰⁷ While the civil-military relations structure was imperfect, the antebellum era was fundamental to the development of the profession of the military in the United States. Skelton argues in *American Profession of Arms* that “the emergence of a stable profession of arms occurred between the War of 1812 and the Civil War.”³⁰⁸

Therefore, throughout the period ranging from 1823 to 1860, the civil-military relations were inadequately structured to create stability and strength, and, as a result, the lack of proper communication and concertation between the two branches led to repeated ill-advised strategies and ill-conceived development policies and programs. Rather than being able to create a strong and stable military force, the United States continuously mobilized *ad hoc* military forces with high politicization, limited esprit de corps and low discipline. The lack of structure and professionalism in civil-military relations was an obstacle to the full expression of American strategic autonomy. The lack of coordination and cooperation between the civilian policymakers and the military leaders distorted what the United States was actually able to do and what they wanted to do.

Fighting the Legacy of the Revolutionary War

Political power in the United States has a complicated and intricate nature that required additional attention and particular attention to detail especially when it comes to the relations between the legislative and the executive branches of the government. The influence of Congress and the Senate over the decision-making process can undermine many endeavours put in place by Presidents or other members of the executive. Eleven presidents took office during the period covered in this chapter (see Table 5.5). They had different agendas in terms of strategic autonomy and influenced developments or setbacks of strategic autonomy. Congress had also a deep and pervasive influence in more often than not slowing down the progress of strategic autonomy, but also in being the gatekeeper of strategic autonomy. The delicate balance between sufficient power

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 200.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 205.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 205-7.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 210.

³⁰⁸ William B. Skelton. *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps: 1784-1861*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993): xv.

to maintain strategic autonomy and sufficient restraint to avoid dangerous provocation was often reached due to the American system of checks and balances.

Table 5.5: Presidents and their Main Role in Foreign Policy, 1823-1860

President	Years in Office	Main Role in Foreign Policy
James Monroe	1817-1825	Introduced the Monroe Doctrine which defended the strict autonomy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. However, his ambitions were faced with important cuts in the Navy allocations from Congress.
John Quincy Adams	1825-1829	Adams tried to integrate his foreign policy with his domestic policy to promote commercial expansion. ³⁰⁹ He ratified nine trade agreements with multiple foreign powers. He wanted also to expand the powers and role of the central government. Expanded the Monroe Doctrine to the Pacific Northwest.
Andrew Jackson	1829-1837	Elected with the promise to remove Indians from valuable areas for development east of the Mississippi. Jackson was able to re-establish trade with Britain. Anti-navalist and difficult position toward military development with its position made clear in its Inaugural Address in 1829 where he denounced standing armies as “dangerous to free government in time of peace.” ³¹⁰ Signed the Indian Removal Bill to move the Indian living in the East to lands west of the Mississippi River.
Martin Van Buren	1837-1841	Often dubbed as President Jackson’s third term. Carried out Jackson’s Indian Removal which led to important fighting against Indian tribes. Cut massively in military investment especially for the navy due to the 1837 financial crisis.
William Henry Harrison	1841-1841	Died of pneumonia not long after his inauguration.
John Tyler	1841-1845	Work hard to get Texas annexed and to expand the Monroe Doctrine to include Hawaii and the Pacific (Tyler Doctrine).
James K. Polk	1845-1849	The United States reached the status of continental power under his administration with the annexation of Texas, New Mexico and California.
Zachary Taylor	1849-1850	As a Whig president, he should have represented a greater interruption of the expansionist tendency of the United States, but he precipitately died soon after he took office.
Millard Fillmore	1850-1853	As a Whig, he “believed that America’s future prosperity lay in the control of world trade, not the annexation of new territories.” ³¹¹ - Mandated Perry’s Expedition leading to the opening of Japan. - Had to intervene against the French attempt to annex Hawaii
Franklin Pierce	1853-1857	He made territorial expansion an explicit goal of his campaign and his presidency. - Completed the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 which added 117935 square kilometers to the Southwest for 10 million dollars. - He engaged actively with Spain to purchase Cuba but was unsuccessful. - He negotiated a draft agreement for the annexation of Hawaii with King Kamehameha, but the process stalled. ³¹² - Express his intention to trade with all of Asia in his first State of the Union address.

³⁰⁹ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 257.

³¹⁰ Quoted in Sprout & Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*: 105.

³¹¹ Amy S. Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion: A Brief History with Documents*. (2nd ed.) (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2018): 29.

³¹² Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*: 30.

James Buchanan	1857-1861	Try to purchase Cuba but had to deal with the internal divisions that would ultimately lead to the Civil War. Gunboat diplomacy against Paraguay.
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William Appleman Williams argues that the “Monroe Doctrine was only the continuation and maturation of an attitude held by the Revolutionary generation.”³¹³ The Founding Fathers embedded some fundamental principles of American policy and diplomacy that persisted and were the precursor of decisions such as the Monroe Doctrine. The desire to build a “single union to secure American independence against the inroads of European powers, whether in the form of foreign invasion or undue influence.”³¹⁴ While the intention took form soon after independence, Monroe’s declaration embedded the principle of U.S. strategic autonomy in the Western Hemisphere as a core U.S. foreign policy principle.

Before becoming the father of the most enduring doctrine of American history, James Monroe had the difficult task of filling both the role of State Secretary and War Secretary under President Madison.³¹⁵ He also had to undertake difficult diplomatic missions under both President Washington and Jefferson. Monroe had the wit and the understanding of the conundrum that could emerge from world politics and most of all, from U.S.-European relations. Monroe’s passage at the head of the War and State departments made him among the first national security-conscious presidents since independence not relying primarily on individual states and their militias.³¹⁶ His own Secretary of State, James Quincy Adams would succeed him. Both were determined in protecting the integrity of American interests and setting the bases for the expansion of those interests. While the foreign policy of Madison, Monroe, and Adams seemed unified, divisions became more salient in Congress after the War of 1812. After the War of 1812, the antinavalists maintained the majority in Congress and restrained the use of battleships to wartime missions.³¹⁷ Therefore, most battleships remained unmanned and unused since the United States was at peace. Congress was responsible for the poor state of the American Navy. Then in the 1840s, expansionists and anti-expansionists created additional political division in the nation. The bipartisan divisions were vivid around the issue of the expansion of the territory and the military. Those divisions remained and became even more significant during the Jacksonian era.

John Quincy Adams represented a specific vision of the Monroe Doctrine. His approach was more in line with Monroe – not to forget that he is often attributed the authorship of the Monroe Declaration. Adams’s approach to the Monroe Doctrine emphasized the concept of neutrality. The United States was to remain neutral. This position was often in conflict with early expansionists westward wanted by many policymakers. However, Adams argued that “by overcommitting itself to foreign war,” “the country would pervert its mission of promoting liberty.”³¹⁸ Restraint and diplomatic flair were the key components of John Quincy Adams foreign policy. However, his approach served a double function. First, it signalled to the European powers

³¹³ William Appleman Williams. *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009 [1959]): 21.

³¹⁴ James E. Lewis Jr. *The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998): Kindle.

³¹⁵ Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 67.

³¹⁶ Gary Hart. *James Monroe*. (New York: Times Brooks, 2005): 17.

³¹⁷ Craig L. Symonds. *Navalists and Antinavalists: The Naval Policy Debate in the United States 1785-1827*. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1980): 230.

³¹⁸ Charles N. Edel. *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014): 163.

that the United States would not interfere in their internal affairs, and as a counterpart, the European powers would not interfere in the affairs of the United States. Second, by signalling to the European powers that the Western Hemisphere was part of the United States sphere of interest, Adams was setting the field for the decades of expansion that would follow. Monroe and Adams knew that the United States did not have the required military capabilities to back their claim, but they expected their policy to carry an anticipated effect that would benefit the United States in the long run. Adams's goal was to reduce foreign threats in order to focus on domestic development, including the expansion westward.³¹⁹

The presidencies of Monroe and Adams carried a new form of nationalism for the United States. A nationalism that required unity. This unity combined with expansion would make the United States the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere. Henry Clay, among the most important political figure of his era, was convinced that if the United States remain united, the nation would be "too powerful for the mightiest nation in Europe, or all Europe united."³²⁰ This was an overstatement at the time for sure, but it showed the intention and vision that Clay had for the United States. To make sure his vision occurs, he advocated for the annexation not only of Texas and the Floridas but also of Canada. Ultimately, Clay and other expansionist wanted the entire territory of North America to themselves.

Andrew Jackson was among the most defining presidents of that era, but also among the most controversial. Martin Van Buren and William Henry Harrison were both considered the direct successors of Jackson. Even James K. Polk was nicknamed "Young Hickory" in link with his predecessor "Old Hickory".³²¹ Jackson defined the meaning of a nationalist president for the Union. His uncompromising views, his populism, his past as a military hero, his adversarial position against the abolitionists, and his campaign to remove the native communities from their ancestral lands east of the Mississippi contributed to the beginning of a new era of American policy that would make the United States the absolute continental power in the Western Hemisphere.

Andrew Jackson increased the role and power of the president beyond any of his predecessors. He broadened the use of the veto power and exploited its popular support to strengthen his position as president.³²² Most of all, Jackson created a legacy that included both Martin Van Buren and James K. Polk. While both struggled to distinguish themselves from their mentor, they both aligned with his view of the United States national destiny. On the other hand, they both ended up cutting ties with Jackson to avoid having their presidency overtaken by the spectre of Jackson. Van Buren broke his ties over the issues of the annexation of Texas, which cost him his nomination for a second mandate.

Martin Van Buren helped President Jackson to implement the Jacksonian Democracy and expand voting right to all white men. Often perceived as the mastermind behind many of Jackson's policies, Van Buren got his opportunity to the presidency and to put forward his own ideas. Van Buren lost Jackson's support because he did not pursue the annexation of Texas after his election. Van Buren foresaw the divide between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists and how much the annexation of Texas would enflame that debate.³²³ However, his plans were severely disturbed by

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 218.

³²⁰ Speech of Dec. 28, 1810 in James F. Hopkins, ed. Cited in May. *The Making of the Monroe Doctrine*: 55.

³²¹ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 97-8.

³²² Howe. *What Hath God Wrought*: 483.

³²³ Ted Widmer. *Martin Van Buren*. New York: Times Books. 2005Chap. 6. Kindle.

the Panic of 1837. In addition, his poor management of the U.S.-British relations during the Canadian revolt of 1837 that reanimated border issues did not improve the diplomatic standing of the United States during that period. With a bad economic and diplomatic track record, President Van Buren was not able to accomplish much and did not get a second chance. Van Buren's defeat against Harrison transformed the Democrats. The failure of Van Buren's integration of the "locofoco economic doctrine" transformed the Democrats into advocates of territorial expansion for the following decades.³²⁴

The 1830s saw the emergence of a second party system opposing the Democrats to the Whigs. The Whigs opposed principally over questions relating to the "extent to which the power of the federal government should be used to direct or control regional and national development" which included "disputes over banking, currency, land policy, credit, and internal improvements."³²⁵ This created a new set of internal disputes including tensions over the development and maintenance of naval and military forces, the accomplishment of development through expansionism or by consolidation of the already acquired territories, and how to deal with the slavery issues.

William Henry Harrison, in the shortest presidency of the United States, did not realize much. Harrison was the first Whig president. However, John Tyler succeeded Harrison and laid the foundation of several foreign initiatives that ultimately resulted in territorial expansion. The Tyler Doctrine stated that the Hawaiian Islands were to be free of any European colonization attempts.³²⁶ While the doctrine was extending further than before the logic of the Monroe Doctrine, the enforcement mechanisms were only diplomatic and had little probability of really deterring European nations to mingle in Hawaiian affairs. President Tyler's legislative measures which "ordered the reduction of the number of privates in dragoon, infantry, and artillery companies" in 1842 were symbolic of this disconnect between threat and their credibility.³²⁷ Tyler retracted some of his measures with the tension building with Mexico and his attempt at annexing Texas. Luckily also for Tyler, the British were making sure that the American interests remained protected by their "cordon sanitaire" between the New and the Old World. President Tyler was in a difficult position with the Whigs who opposed his presidency after he signalled his intention to not follow their agenda, and they offered no support for a second term. He, however, put in place a strategy to ease the annexation before the end of his term. President Tyler, as a lame duck, introduced the annexation as a joint resolution, "which would require only a simple majority of both houses rather than the two-thirds majority needed for Senate ratification."³²⁸

President James K. Polk was probably one of the most influential presidents of that period and has been often misjudged. His ability to take difficult decisions was possible because of his independence from internal and party politics. Unlike Henry Clay, James Calhoun and Daniel Webster, Polk had been an underdog untied to party politics before his rise as a candidate, and he

³²⁴ Hietala. *Manifest Design*: 5.

³²⁵ Thomas R. Hietala. *Manifest Design: Anxious Aggrandizement in Late Jacksonian America*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985): 3.

³²⁶ Hietala. *Manifest Design*: 112.

³²⁷ Graham. "Life of Enlisted Soldier on the Western Frontier 1815-1845." 14.

³²⁸ Sam W. Haynes. *James K. Polk and the Expansionist Impulse*. (New York: Longman, 1997): 62.

maintained independence throughout his presidency.³²⁹ His expansionist position was motivated by strategic autonomy motives but was very risky. He provoked Mexico at the same time he was denying any compromise on the control of Oregon to the world's greatest power at the time, Great Britain.

President Polk's policy program was clear. He announced soon after his inauguration the "four great measures of his administration: reduction of the tariff, re-establishment of the independent treasury, settlement of the Oregon dispute, and annexation of New Mexico and California."³³⁰ He was successful on the latter two at the foreign policy level and extended the territory of the United States to the West Coast. While his position on slavery has been criticized often and for good reasons and some of his methods and motives were morally questionable, he seized important opportunities at a pivotal moment that certainly change the face of the United States. President Polk took his role as commander-in-chief more seriously than many presidents and directed the Army's operations from the White House.³³¹ His involvement can also be imputed to his mistrust of the two commanding generals of the Army leading the charge against Mexico, namely General Taylor and Scott.

The Polk Doctrine was fairly a restatement of the Monroe Doctrine. In his address to Congress in 1845, he restated the Monroe Doctrine where he "forbade any European interference, but he spoke only of the North American continent."³³² He made sure that the European powers could not extend their control to the Pacific coast before the United States. However, some including John C. Calhoun feared that his position regarding the American continent would lead to a "never-ending series of interventions in the unstable politics of Latin America."³³³ Polk set an important precedent. Many of Polk's successors decided, in the same vein, to expand the circumference of the Monroe Doctrine and to include more restrictive measures to European powers in order to diminish their influence in the U.S. sphere of interest. The cumulation of those additions to the Monroe Doctrine had for objective to increase the U.S. strategic autonomy by limiting European influence and signalling the reach of the U.S. power.

Even before the Texas annexation and the Mexican War, President Anson Jones of the Texas Republic accused President Polk of working toward taking away territory from Mexico by instigating hostilities over the disputed border between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande.³³⁴ Polk's secret plans to piece out Mexico's territory left the public and many of the opposition in the dark. Polk's intrigue in 1846 was even described as not to get "peace with Mexico, but a piece of Mexico."³³⁵ In the end, Polk succeeded in his endeavour if his goal was truly to expand the territory of the United States. Beyond his intention, the result of the war with Mexico modified the status of the United States in America one step further toward becoming the regional hegemon and world power.

³²⁹ James J. Horn. "Trends in Historical Interpretation: James K. Polk." *The North Carolina Historical Review* 42, no. 4 (Oct. 1965): 454. Polk's independence served him throughout the Mexican War when his unattachment to party politics allowed him to give command to two Whig generals. See *ibid*: 460.

³³⁰ Horn. "Trends in Historical Interpretation: James K. Polk." 457.

³³¹ Winders. *Mr. Polk's Army*: 187.

³³² Horn. "Trends in Historical Interpretation: James K. Polk." 458.

³³³ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 95.

³³⁴ Richard R. Stenborg. "The Failure of Polk's Mexican War Intrigue of 1845." *Pacific Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (Mar. 1935): 40.

³³⁵ Hietala. *Manifest Design*: ix.

As a hero of the Mexican War, Zachary Taylor was another general ascending to the highest office of the land in 1849. As a soldier, Taylor had little experience in diplomacy, but he was determined to emulate his hero, George Washington, and to focus on avoiding entanglement into alliances.³³⁶ During the short period, he was in power before his precipitated death, he had to tackle controversies regarding slavery and foreign policy from the get-go. The addition of Oregon, New Mexico, Deseret (Utah) and California triggered new tensions over slavery leading to the Compromise of 1850; the disorderly interferences of the French Minister, Guillaume Tell Lavallée Poussin that led to its dismissal, but still damaged U.S.-French relations; the invasion of Cuba attempts by the filibuster Narciso Lopez in 1849 and 1850; and the competition with the British over the control of the isthmus in Nicaragua leading to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.³³⁷ Taylor's abrupt death on July 9, 1850, only sixteen months into his presidency, led to a cabinet crisis and created a situation similar to the one when Tyler succeeded Harrison. Fillmore was already at odds with Taylor and his cabinet, and he accepted the resignation of the cabinet by courtesy after Taylor's death.³³⁸

President Millard Fillmore decided to do something easy in a difficult period. Fillmore decided to make a weak compromise by signing the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act and leaving the decision of slavery to popular sovereignty for the admission of new states while only prohibiting the slave trade in the District of Columbia.³³⁹ It was a small token for the abolitionist at a time when the Wilmot Proviso and the Missouri Compromise were not effective tools to keep the union together. The 1850 Compromise set off the balance between "free" and "slave" states. The main threat did not come from the abolitionist. Southerners' talks of insurrection and secession motivated Fillmore. The compromise made by Fillmore somehow "miraculously" defused the threat of disunion, but only for a short period.³⁴⁰ However, Fillmore's compromise and its enforcement became the highlight of his presidency. He became the first of the "doughface" presidents before the Civil War.³⁴¹

Fillmore's greatest success on the international stage was to devise the strategy to open Japan. Fillmore used the return of shipwrecked Japanese sailors to make contact with the closed kingdom of Japan.³⁴² Commodore Matthew C. Perry was mandated to be "courteous and conciliatory" to open the door to establishing "friendship, commerce, a supply of coal, and protection for our shipwrecked people" with Japan.³⁴³ Unfortunately for Fillmore, Perry did not reach Japan before 1853 after Fillmore left office and the credit went to President Pierce. Fillmore's vision toward the development toward the Pacific was coherent and led to impressive

³³⁶ John S. D. Eisenhower. *Zachary Taylor*. (New York: Times Books, 2008): Chap 11. Kindle.

³³⁷ Elbert B. Smith. *The Presidencies of Zachary Taylor & Millard Fillmore*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas. 1988): Chap. 6. The issues of slavery in the territories rose additional problems including: "1) demands for immediate statehood for California since the gold rush had brought a flood of people into that far western territory; 2) increasing threats from the state of Texas to invade the New Mexico Territory; 3) growing northern opposition to the public sale of slaves in Washington, D.C.; and 4) southern dissatisfaction with the existing Fugitive Slave Act of 1793." See Paul Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*. (New York: Times Books, 2011): 58. Kindle.

³³⁸ Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*: 73. Kindle.

³³⁹ Smith. *The Presidencies of Zachary Taylor & Millard Fillmore*: 211; Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*: 85. Kindle.

³⁴⁰ Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*: 101. Kindle; Robert J. Rayback. *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President*. (New York: Henry Stewart, 1959): 273-4.

³⁴¹ Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*: 124. Kindle. The term "doughface" designed a northerner that had southern sympathies. See Michael F. Holt. *Franklin Pierce*. (New York: Times Books, 2010): 23. Kindle

³⁴² Smith. *The Presidencies of Zachary Taylor & Millard Fillmore*: 225.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*; and Rayback. *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President*: 316.

progress that would set the path toward increasing the U.S. sphere of influence drastically. While not an expansionist president, Fillmore expanded U.S. economic influence which opened new markets and set a good basis for growing relationships with key partners. He protected Hawaii's independence when Napoleon III tried to make the islands a French protectorate in 1853.³⁴⁴

Even though it was not the highlight of his presidency, President Fillmore focused on development and diplomacy. He initiated the construction of the transcontinental railroad. He prioritized diplomacy over force in three major instances in Latin America. First, with Mexico, Taylor and Fillmore tried to establish an agreement to build a transcontinental railway or canal through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Second, with Peru, when the "Guano Islands Crisis" emerged. The nitrogen-rich excrements of the seabirds accumulated in large quantities in a small, inhabited archipelago of Chinca near the Peruvian Coast and were excavated in large quantities to be used as fertilizer across America. Peru decided to enforce its claim over the archipelago in 1850, especially after the intention of New York traders to send a hundred ships to import as much guano as possible, but with the Peruvian intention to enforce its claim, Fillmore chose restraint and acknowledged Peru's ownership.³⁴⁵ Third, Fillmore signed the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty with Britain to appease the situation in Nicaragua. While the treaty was intended to accelerate the building of an isthmian canal in Central America, the British manipulation toward keeping the Mosquito territory under protectorate damaged the possibility of a U.S.-British endeavour toward the construction of a Canal. The treaty would slow down the realization of a viable project by the United States.

Democrat, Franklin Pierce became president in 1853 with a vast and potentially dangerous foreign policy agenda. First, Pierce received much of the reward from Fillmore initiatives (Perry's mission to Japan). Second, he had his own agenda set toward expansionism. The tense climate in Europe with the prospect of a war between Turkey and Russia and the upcoming Crimean War created an opportunity for the United States to take more place in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba and Hawaii were not far on Pierce's mind.

President Pierce started with Mexico. As a part of the development of the transcontinental railroad, the Gadsden Purchase of 1854 was in the end a small addition to the U.S. territory and a practical one rather than a strategic one. However, Pierce set his gaze on a larger part of the Mexican territory that included Lower California and a large part of Northern Mexico when the negotiation began. He ended up settling for what was needed for the realization of the railroad. Nevertheless, the Pierce administration was able to exploit the need for liquidity by the Santa Anna government to obtain additional territory from Mexico even though the United States already robbed such a vast part of Northern Mexico in 1848.

President Pierce sent Pierre Soulé to Spain to negotiate the acquisition of Cuba in a similar fashion to what he was on the way to succeeding with Mexico. Spain's economy was nearly

³⁴⁴ Finkelman. *Millard Fillmore*: 98. Kindle.

³⁴⁵ Rayback. *Millard Fillmore: Biography of a President*: 318-321. However, the frenzy over the guano islands led to the Guano Island Act of 1856 which allowed American citizen to declare sovereignty over inhabited islands that contained guano "for the purpose of preserving, disposing of, and taking away the said deposits and productions." See Christina Duffy Burnett. "The Edges of Empire and the Limits of Sovereignty: American Guano Islands." *American Quarterly* Vol. 57, No. 3 (Sep., 2005): 784. By 1903, the United States had taken the control of 94 of such islands. See Jimmy M. Skaggs. *The Great Guano Rush: Entrepreneurs and American Overseas Expansion*. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1994): 199.

bankrupt³⁴⁶ and could have used the generous offer for Cuba. However, Spain would not budge. Soulé's appointment was difficult. He duelled with the French minister during the first months of his posting; Spain seized the cargo of the *Black Warrior* which triggered tensions with the United States and damaged their relation; and the leaking of the Ostend Manifesto closed the possibility of Spain agreeing to cede control of Cuba to the United States.³⁴⁷ The contentious element of the Ostend Manifesto was that the three signatories (Buchanan, Mason, and Soulé) "gave their opinion that *if the Spanish government really freed the slaves and Africanized the island*, then the United States government would need to consider whether the law of self preservation did not require the seizure of Cuba by force."³⁴⁸ The Ostend Manifesto triggered negative responses from Spain, France, and Britain that made the purchase improbable if not impossible.

Pierce worked to settle the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty problem. Washington had been cheated by Britain during the negotiation and London played on the interpretation to hold on to its Central American dominions. Pierce dispatched James Buchanan to Britain to negotiate another agreement.³⁴⁹ While the negotiation yielded little result in London, the filibustering venture of William Walker motivated a renewal of negotiation. By the end of the Pierce presidency, Britain agreed to relinquish its rights regarding the Mosquito territory, Greytown, and the Bay Islands in Honduras. They agreed with Nicaragua and Costa Rica that the Mosquito Coast should "be either an independent state under Nicaraguan protection or a part of the Nicaraguan Republic," and that "Greytown was to be a free city under the sovereign authority of Nicaragua."³⁵⁰ A similar agreement was concluded with the Bay Islands and Honduras. This removed many of the obstacles to a U.S. canal in Nicaragua.

Pierce was the second "doughface" president. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 tried to replicate the popular sovereignty provisions of the Utah and New Mexico territorial legislation of 1850. However, it created a wave of migration of slaveholders from the South and abolitionists from the North to determine the fate of those two territories. To ensure that Kansas would become a slave state, pro-slavery voters crossed illegally from Missouri in 1855.³⁵¹ As a response, free-state settlers put in place a different constitution and another state government. President Pierce chose to ignore the fraud and support the pro-slavery legislature. The competition to obtain popular support escalated to a violent clash during the summer of 1856 and doomed Pierce's re-election.³⁵²

Democrat James Buchanan came to power in 1857. Buchanan had an impressive background in politics and was a fervent expansionist. He had been a Representative and Senator for Pennsylvania; President Jackson named him minister to Russia, President Pierce named him as minister to London; President Tyler offered him a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court; and he was President Polk's secretary of state from 1845 to 1849.³⁵³ While America was on the verge of civil war, Buchanan revived expansionist plans from the time he was Polk's secretary of state. When

³⁴⁶ Holt. *Franklin Pierce*: 47. Kindle.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 47-48. Kindle.

³⁴⁸ Roy Franklin Nichols. *Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills*. (Newtown: American Political Biography Press, 1998): 367.

³⁴⁹ Holt. *Franklin Pierce*: 44-45. Kindle

³⁵⁰ Nichols. *Franklin Pierce*: 493.

³⁵¹ Kenneth M. Stampp. *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990): 5.

³⁵² Holt. *Franklin Pierce*: 63-64.

³⁵³ Jean H. Baker. *James Buchanan*. (New York: Times Books, 2004): 1; Stampp. *America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink*: 46.

he was secretary of state he wrote to his successor: “Cuba is already ours, I feel it in my finger ends.”³⁵⁴ Consequently, he actively championed the acquisition of Cuba. His efforts were supported by Southerners who believed that as the only territory that could be added to the Union where slavery would be *de facto*. The acquisition of Cuba could foster much needed support for pro-slavery constituents. In 1859, Senators Jefferson Davis and John Slidell actively worked to acquire 30 million dollars from Congress as an immediate down payment for Cuba to Spain.³⁵⁵ However, the efforts to acquire Cuba by pro-slavery representatives were met with equal or stronger opposition by abolitionists. Ultimately, the domestic conflict over slavery put a stop to Buchanan’s endeavours to acquire Cuba and led to the escalation of racial tension and the Civil War. In the end, the last of the doughface presidents had a rough presidency. Crippled by corruption, Buchanan mishandled the Panic of 1857, inherited Pierce’s mess in Kansas in addition to the awful and damaging Supreme Court decision of the Dred Scott case and ended up being the president who transitioned the country into Civil War.³⁵⁶

Most presidents had ambitious international agendas. The division was primarily in whether they wanted to foster growth within the actual border of the United States or by territorial acquisition. President Monroe shook the world by setting clear limits to the European powers; President Jackson made the U.S. national identity a force of expansion; and President Polk expanded the U.S. territory that set the United States to become a world power. The Jacksonian era was marked by the birth of the manifest destiny but was stalled by the tensions over slavery and anti-militarism. King Cotton was often responsible for the U.S. restraint regarding annexation. During the three *doughface* presidents, King Cotton saw the annexation of Cuba as an additional slave state, but any other annexation was problematic since it decreased the balance with the North. Most of the time, expansionist efforts were limited not by the European powers but by internal tensions. While expansionists occupied a large part of the political scene, they were not without opposition. Whigs were more convinced of the United States’ ability to develop within its own frontiers and that the key to American success was to maximize the development of resources. Rather than stretching their resources toward greater territories, Whigs believed that the maximization of the utility and the development of the existing resources within the existing boundaries would generate better results for the American nation.³⁵⁷

Defensive Brinkmanship: Restraining from Building U.S. Regional Power

Access to the Adams family’s archives has shown that the Monroe Doctrine was mainly a collaborative initiative between President Monroe and his Secretary of State John Quincy Adams. Adams was crucial to the formation and establishment of the Monroe Doctrine. Adams believed that at some point “the remainder of the continent should ultimately be ours.”³⁵⁸ While territorial expansion had its limits, the expansion of the United States’ influence would go beyond the Western Hemisphere at one point, but not for a few more decades. Even under severe limitation, the United States demonstrated their determination to maximize its strategic autonomy by limiting

³⁵⁴ Buchanan to Clayton, 17 April 1849, *Works of James Buchanan*, vol. 8, p. 361, cited in Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 55-6. Buchanan was one of the co-author of the Ostend Manifesto too.

³⁵⁵ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 56.

³⁵⁶ Holt. *Franklin Pierce*: 78.

³⁵⁷ Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*: 20.

³⁵⁸ John Quincy Adams, *Diary Entry*, November 16, 1819, quoted in Greenberg. *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*: 61.

the influence of more powerful actors that could have derailed its plans of expansion and development of its territory and sphere of influence. The ability of the United States to inflate the diplomatic signals and threats to deter the European powers and maintain its strategic autonomy regionally was a success. The unsolicited support from the British Navy was among the key to this success, but the United States went beyond and were able to agree with all the European powers without violence and was able to keep the European powers out of its war against Mexico. The success of the defensive brinkmanship strategy (H_{4b}) of the United States kept at bay the European powers' involvement to a minimum and allowed the United States to set an expansionist strategy (H_{1a}) to increase the size of its territory from coast to coast.

The isolationist belief attributed to the Founding Fathers appears to have played a role in the formulation of the Monroe Doctrine narrative (H_{1B1}) but does not explain the reinterpretation of the Monroe Doctrine under President Tyler and Polk that led to expansionism. The Annexation of Texas, the Oregon Territory, and the conquest of California were important provocations to the European powers and could have easily triggered European intervention in the Western Hemisphere. The Founding Fathers did not instigate the tradition of diplomatic manipulation embedded in the defensive brinkmanship policy that facilitated U.S. expansionism without open conflict with the European powers. While the aversion toward alliance had its roots in the writings and discourses of the key historical figures who were essential to the creation and development of the United States, their foreign policy preferences were hardly the sole motivator of the U.S. foreign policy.

Internal politics influenced the development of the Monroe Doctrine and created restraints on the pace of development of the United States. The competition between Secretary of State Adams, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, and Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford defined some of the decisions regarding the development of U.S. foreign policy.³⁵⁹ Domestic politics and the development of the federal authority of the Union played a significant role in the expansionist nature of the United States during that period. While the state and local governments could convince the population more easily of their legitimacy, the federal government had difficulty justifying certain demands upon the need to develop the United States as a strategically autonomous state. The federal government had to integrate more subtly its role in the life of Americans by using the “language of the law, the courts, trade policy, fiscal subsidies, and partnerships with non-governmental partners”³⁶⁰ to embed their influence throughout the Union. The 1820 Missouri Compromise also influenced the nature of the expansion. Getting into the business of expansion solidified the Union by giving the federal government a clear and specific purpose. However, it also contributed to amplifying some of the divisions of the Union. The South would not lose its relative power in the Union by admitting additional states that were abolitionists. Before the Civil War, the decision to annex new territories was dependent a lot on the debate between pro and anti-slavery actors. In addition, Whigs fervently opposed the annexationist position of Polk. Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and others wanted to focus U.S. resources on internal development, not external accession.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Harry Ammon. “The Monroe Doctrine: Domestic Politics or National Decision?” *Diplomatic History* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1981): 55.

³⁶⁰ Balogh. *A Government Out of Sight*: Kindle.

³⁶¹ Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine*: 101.

One clear element of American foreign policy that emerged after the introduction of the Monroe Doctrine was that international crises would be dealt with diplomatically and that regional crises could be more easily resolved economically or militarily. The severe limits put on military capabilities, both for the Army and the Navy, created a necessity to deal with international crises diplomatically, but it also prohibited the presidents from getting entangled in foreign affairs since they had no credible resources to commit to extraterritorial endeavours in Europe or other territories than the United States' near vicinity.

Chapter 6: The Civil War Disturbances and Its Aftermath (1860-1880)

The Civil War and the Reconstruction present a set of interesting challenges in terms of strategic autonomy. While the threat to national security was overwhelmingly internal, a set of external challenges and opportunities generated a restrained but growing affirmation as a regional power. The consolidation of that status was importantly shaken by the Civil War that invited the European powers to mingle in the Western Hemisphere while the United States was preoccupied with their internal struggle. However, the end of the Civil War left the United States more powerful even though it was scorched by the destruction and violence of the Civil War. The Army and the Navy were at a level never reached before. The technological and military innovations developed during the Civil War would influence the evolution of warfare for the next decades. Economic industrialization reinforced international trade opportunities. The prospects for a consolidated regional hegemony during the postwar period were good and promising.

The stability and security of the United States were compromised by the Civil War and were difficult to re-establish. Strategic, economic, and political innovations increased the amplitude of turmoil that erupted throughout this period. The Civil War embedded a narrative of division that would endure well beyond the war's duration. The Union victory destabilized the social institutions of the South for the better but generated a renewed form of racial inequality and violence. The Reconstruction created a dynamic of reforms and counter-reforms between Republicans and Democrats and between the President and Congress that generated new forms of political polarization. The 1873 economic crisis reminded the American population of the limits and risks of rapid growth and speculation. The economic slumber that resulted from the crisis broke the sustainability of the Reconstruction efforts as advocated by the Republicans. The international magnitude of the "Great Depression" before the 1929's Great Depression generated much protectionism. The cumulated effect of those events created a much-needed restraint toward foreign policy and expansion. Aggressive positioning in world politics would have been an invitation card for European powers to exploit those unstable features of American political life between 1860 and 1880. Therefore, the United States maintained their strategic autonomy through discretion during that period.

A set of interesting issues emerged from that era that represented a discontinuity in the expansion of the United States' influence in world politics. The Civil War severely threatened the existence of the United States and could have changed drastically the geopolitics of the Western Hemisphere. The Union under Lincoln ended the inhuman practice of slavery, but not the race issue that still divided America profoundly. The disenfranchisement of the black population denatured what the United States could have really achieved after the Civil War. The intent was more limited than the possibility, but even those intents toward the empowerment of a disenfranchised population were not met. However, beyond counterfactual implications, the racism of the United States prevented occurrences of expansion and integration of additional territories in the Union. The fear of a non-white majority in new territories pervasively divided the expansionists before and even after the Civil War. It contained the United States northward and contributed to stopping the annexation of territories with non-Caucasian majorities.

The Reconstruction era did not bear the same meaning for the military and the navy as it did for the rest of the country. While impressive military innovation and development occurred

during the Civil War, they were not oriented toward power projection. Those innovations were intended for internal security. Even when looking at the armed conflict with Native Americans, the military did not fight a lot and was more involved in a “larger, holistic role in the development of the West.”¹ Peacetime policing and garrison life were still the preferred approach by the War Department. The incredibly imposing military establishment and capabilities that emerged from the Civil War were clashing with the traditional peacetime military policy of the United States. Rather than re-orienting the military forces toward power projection and playing a more active role both regionally and internationally, the United States chose to disarm and demobilize massively. The U.S. adopted an isolationist foreign policy in the aftermath of the Civil War (H_{4a}) This process was quick and embedded within the political tradition of peacetime demobilization that existed since the Revolution.

Richard White wrote, “In 1865 an older American nation had died, a casualty of the Civil War.”² But, what had really changed and what did it mean for the U.S. foreign policy? While famously and universally labelled the *Gilded Age*, the era following the Civil War marked an era mostly dominated by strategic restraint and missed opportunity on the international stage. This period can be divided into two clear stages. First, the shock of the Civil War broke the established order and reversed the strategic ambitions and some of the progress made. However, it resolved the aberration of slavery. Second, the aftermath of the war was met by a heightened dynamism and enthusiasm toward development and industrialization which would transform the United States and pave the path toward the expansion and manifest destiny narrative that emerged at the turn of the century.

The United States saw its regional interest threatened during the Civil War. Spain retook control of Spanish-speaking parts of Hispaniola (Santo Domingo), and the French intervened in Mexico and placed a puppet leader at the head of the state.³ Emperor Napoleon III established a European imperial venture in Mexico between 1861 and 1867. The previously cordial relations with the British became more complex. The frustration of the Union toward the British “neutrality” and the support it ended up providing to the Confederacy created a schism after the war that took years to repair. Nascent rivalries in Asia and new emerging world powers placed Washington as a pivotal power in colonial competition over the remaining territories available including Samoa and Korea. The weakening of the United States stance in the world created breaches in the defensive brinkmanship approach to foreign policy (H_{4b}). The isolationist period that followed the war allowed the United States to stabilize within its frontiers and reach the necessary economic development level to emerge as a truly competitive power on the world stage. The re-emerging turmoil in Europe since the Crimean War diminished the ability of European states to destabilize the United States as much as it would have before. Without the trouble with Prussia, France would have probably maintained its presence in Mexico.

With the progressive re-establishment of American primacy in the Western Hemisphere after the Civil War, some policymakers played with the ideas of annexing multiple territories including Alaska, Canada, Cuba, Hawaii, Santo Domingo, Haiti, the Danish West Indies, Culebra,

¹ Michael L. Tate. *The Frontier Army in the Settlement of the West*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999): x.

² Richard White. *The Republic for Which it Stands: The United States during the Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017): 1.

³ Bruce Gudmundsson. “The first Banana Wars: US Marines in Nicaragua 1909-12.” In *Counterinsurgency in Modern Warfare*. Edited by Daniel Martson and Carter Malkasian. (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2008): p. 56.

Martinique, French Guiana, and San Bartholomew.⁴ The integration of those territories was also supported by the no-transfer principles that became the emphasis in the 1860s and 1870s of the Monroe Doctrine. The no-transfer principle prohibited the transfer of European colonies or former colonies to other European powers.⁵ Once more, the capabilities of the United States to enforce this policy were dubious, especially in consideration of the remaining dominance of the British Navy and the rapid U.S. demobilization after the Civil War. However, the European powers were surprisingly compliant with that principle. The United States repeated their defensive brinkmanship strategy (H_{4b}) in this context.

Washington's application of strategic autonomy was failing during the Civil War, and the internal instabilities that followed undermined some of the core principles of the Monroe Doctrine due to the inability of the United States to respond adequately to the crises that emerged within its sphere of influence. The U.S. sphere of influence contracted, and new initiatives were stopped by a recalcitrant Congress. The leadership in matters of foreign policy was not as much in control of the executive. U.S. strategic autonomy essentially retrenched to defensive brinkmanship. However, the diplomatic finesse of some antebellum decision-makers had lost some of its panache and fortunately for Washington, Europe's attention was caught by the emergence of new conflicts on their own side of the Atlantic slowing down their involvement in American affairs.

The clash between the North and the South brought an additional player on the world stage for the duration of the war. The Confederacy was more inclined toward accepting alliances. The Confederate diplomacy was motivated by the necessity of war that required foreign aid. The Confederate diplomats obtained money and military equipment by secretive channels from the European governments but failed to secure the explicit support of any of them. Richmond was more pragmatic than Washington when it came to neutrality. Lincoln did not wish to see the European powers intermingled into the war while it could have changed the outcome of the war for Davis. The Civil War remained free of alliances, but it is legitimate to question the risk of alliance formation throughout the most important crisis of U.S. history.

The U.S. national narrative experienced a major crisis. The Civil War brought a fracture into the manifest destiny. A fracture that would endure and left a major unresolved issue. The end of slavery did not resolve the race issues. Racism was to remain a problem. A problem that would still affect foreign policy. American chauvinism was not intended by the Founding Fathers, but the social construct in America facilitated its integration. The United States would remain divided on the issue of race, but the South had to change. The end of the institution of slavery appeased the internal division and allowed the emergence of a renewed form of manifest destiny after the 1880s.

Power Assessment: Weakened and Contested Regional Power

One thing is certain. In 1861, both the Army and Navy were far from ready to engage in a major conflict. The Army was dispersed along the frontiers to police the expansion Westward and army appropriations were at their lowest since 1855.⁶ The U.S. Navy suffered a decade of inertia due to Congressional infighting regarding its role. Political tensions had crippled the military

⁴ Fareed Zakaria. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998): 59-63.

⁵ Dexter Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1966): 9-11.

⁶ C. Joseph Bernado and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 201.

apparatus, and unfortunately, the Civil War would be the jolt to set it straight. Inconsistencies in tactics, strategies, and development of the military before the beginning of the war would become part of the costliness of the war and the inability of the Federal Government to deal efficiently with the rebels. The decentralization of the recruitment, the preponderance of the states' militias, and the local resistance to Federal authority led to a fractionalized national identity hard to hold together as a single unity. The divisions along slavery were already deep enough to truly segment the nation in two, and the armed forces mobilized at the time did not have the capability to stop the fracture.

Prior to the Civil War, much of the military intelligentsia was from the South. Between 1847 and 1861, secretary of war and navy positions, House and Senate Military and Naval Affairs Committees, and many other positions crucial in the determination of military policy were predominantly appointed and occupied by Southerners and future Confederates.⁷ In addition, 313 officers (29%) resigned to join the Confederacy.⁸ This Southern dominance of the military intelligentsia became a net disadvantage at the beginning of the Civil War. The diminished military brain trust, since most Southerners followed their state rather than the Union, created room for change in military strategies and doctrine. However, this room for change created uncertainty that diminished the probability of a quick set of strategies against the South. This created a new era of strategic thinking that broke with the European traditions and more specifically the French military traditions from Jomini and Clausewitz that dominated the education at Westpoint.

After the Civil War, the peacetime demobilization tradition quickly dismantled a big part of the military forces that won the war. The reconstruction endeavours which required military occupation maintained military mobilization to a higher degree than before the war. However, Congress scaled back the military budget and consequently the War Department reorganized the military. From a small force of a little more than 16,000 men in 1860, the United States Army rose to about one million troops by the end of the Civil War to go quickly down to around 40,000 men in the 1870s. The integration of segregated regiments in the Army raised the potential of the army by accessing a larger demographic for recruitment. Blacks were authorized to join the army on July 17, 1862, and constituted a hundred and twenty regiments of infantry, twelve regiments of heavy artillery, one regiment of light artillery, and seven regiments of cavalry by the end of the war.⁹ In 1865, the Union Army numbered 186,017 black soldiers, and over 134,000 were from former slave states.¹⁰ However, their importance shrunk after the war, and only four regiments comprised of two of infantry and two of cavalry remained.¹¹ It would take almost another hundred years before the black population was fully integrated into the U.S. Army.

The post-Civil War military tactics were framed by frontier combat. It was messy and often ill-organized. Since it was an unconventional type of warfare, the military elite neglected planning and strategizing against the Indians. The military leaders never prepared a formal analysis of the

⁷ Matthew Karp. *This Vast Southern Empire: Slaveholders at the Helm of American Foreign Policy*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016): 199-201. All the Secretaries of War between the War with Mexico and the Civil War were southerners. See Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army 1775-1945*. (Washington: Department of the Army, 1955): 84.

⁸ Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 89.

⁹ *Ibid.*: 113-114.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 144; John H. Franklin. *Reconstruction after the Civil War*. (Ithaca: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 24.

¹¹ Jack D. Foner. *The United States Soldier Between Two Wars: Army Life and Reforms, 1865-1898*. (New York: Humanities Press, 1970): 2.

Indian-fighting doctrine, nor did they pay much attention to the development of strategy and tactic theories targeting the long-running police action against insurgent forces.¹² However, important figures within the Army and Navy, most prominently General Sherman and Rear Admiral Luce, were advocating for the integration of new technologies, the importance of education for the professionalization of the armed forces, and the value of research. The works of Emory Upton and Alfred Thayer Mahan, both supported by Sherman and Luce, marked the strategic thinking of the United States for the decades to come.

Table 6.1: United States Military Expenditures, 1860-1880

<i>Period</i>	<i>War Department Expenditures</i>	<i>Navy Department Expenditure</i>	<i>Total Defense Expenditure</i>	<i>Total Share of the Federal Expenditures</i>
1859-1860	16409767	11514965	27924732	40.99%
1860-1861	22981159	12429888	35411047	53.12%
1861-1862	394368407	42668277	437036684	92.05%
1862-1863	599298691	63221984	662520675	92.69%
1863-1864	690791848	85726995	776518843	89.74%
1864-1865	1031838861	122612945	1154451806	88.97%
1865-1866	284449702	48324118	332773820	53.59%
1866-1867	95224415	31034011	126258426	35.31%
1867-1868	123246648	25775503	149022151	39.49%
1868-1869	78501991	20000758	98502749	30.51%
1869-1870	57655676	21780230	79435906	25.65%
1870-1871	35799992	19431927	55231919	18.90%
1871-1872	35799992	19431027	55231019	19.90%
1872-1873	35799992	23526257	59326249	20.30%
1873-1874	42313927	30932587	73246514	24.20%
1874-1875	41120646	21497626	62618272	22.80%
1875-1876	33070889	18968310	52039199	19.63%
1876-1877	37082736	14959935	52042671	21.56%
1877-1878	32154148	17363301	49517449	20.90%
1878-1879	40425661	15125127	55550788	21.62%
1879-1880	38116916	13536935	51653851	19.30%

Source: The Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1949).

Washington's military expenditures plummeted after the Civil War (see Table 6.1). The effervescence of the war requirements had brought many innovations in the military, but they were draining too many resources from the federal budget. Congress, as per tradition at this point, cut the military budget severely after the Civil War and maintained it low throughout the 1870s and

¹² Perry D. Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground: United States Army Tactics, 1865-1899*. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994): 36. Two officers (Edward S. Farrow and Randolph B. Marcy) wrote unofficial military manuals and accounts of their experience to deal with the frontier warfare, but the literature on the topic was severely limited at the time. A limited number of manuals on winter warfare were useful since the Indians were the most vulnerable during the winter. See *ibid.*: 37-8.

1880s. The consequences of Congressional peacetime military budgets made the United States shift from a world-class army and navy at the end of the Civil War to a force behind most powers by 1880. Congress embodied the opposition to the U.S. involvement in world politics with its budgetary policy.

Army

Army Doctrine

The United States Army was in a poor state at the beginning of the Civil War. General Winfield Scott was at the head of the Army since 1841. He was 74 years old and invalid when the war began. His strategy, labelled the Anaconda Plan, recommended that the Union could subjugate the South by “enveloping them all (nearly) at once by a cordon of post on the Mississippi to its mouth from its junction with the Ohio, and by blockading ships of war on the sea-board.”¹³ Scott’s goal was to suffocate the Southern economy and shorten the span of the war. His plan required only 85,000 men and would avoid the conquest of the South.¹⁴ His attempt to concentrate the Union forces in key points was to defeat quickly the Confederates, but the military reality of the United States in 1861 was different. The territory was too vast to effectively control, too extensive to occupy, and had too many strategically decisive objectives.¹⁵ In addition, the intense focus on field fortifications developed at West Point created a bias in favour of French strategies and engineering which made the acquisition of strategically decisive sites difficult and costly. The entrenchment around Washington and Richmond became massive throughout the war and the conception of capturing locations rather than defeating the Confederate army would be the most important mistake made by the generals during the first two years of the conflict.

President Lincoln pushed for a different strategy that aimed at stretching the Confederate forces to exploit the important imbalance in forces with the Union. Therefore, simultaneous pressure was applied along the Confederate frontiers.¹⁶ Lincoln proposed a quick offensive during the summer of 1861 led by General Irvin McDowell even though the Union Army was not sufficiently ready. However, after the first battle of Bull Run, President Lincoln reinstated the value of General Winfield Scott’s Anaconda Plan. Scott’s strategy planned operations to encircle the South with the occupation of the Mississippi line from Cairo to the Gulf and the surrounding of the coasts with a naval blockade that would strangle the Confederacy into submission without invading the South.¹⁷ The Anaconda Plan underestimated the manpower required to implement it and the resilience of the Confederates. President Lincoln quickly realized that an offensive was necessary for the Union to break the independence of the Confederacy.

President Lincoln was confronted with the reality that except for General Scott and General John E. Wool (two years older than Scott), none of his commanding officers had conducted

¹³ Quoted in William Whyte. “The Brooklyn Navy Yard: The Heart of the Union Anaconda.” *The Northern Mariner/le marin du nord*, 22, no. 4 (Oct. 2012): 397.

¹⁴ 25,000 regulars and 60,000 volunteers. See Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 92.

¹⁵ Russell F. Weigley. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 92.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 95.

¹⁷ Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 90-1; and Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 16.

operations with a unit as large as a brigade.¹⁸ With no other choice but to take matters into their own hands, President Lincoln performed most of the tasks that would have been the responsibility of the joint chiefs of staff during the first two years of the war.¹⁹ Lincoln replaced General McDowell with General George B. McClellan after the Bull Run debacle. Tensions between General Scott and McClellan in addition to the insubordination of the latter led General Scott to quit and retire. General McClellan was appointed supreme commander by President Lincoln. Probably one of the most obnoxious generals in U.S. history, McClellan was unable to conduct successful offensive operations and was paralyzed due to his own indecisiveness and bad intelligence on Confederate forces, but he was building a strong force for his successor. Lincoln had to force McClellan out of his lethargy with General War Order Number 1 to signal him that he could not stay on the defensive anymore.²⁰ When McClellan finally set out to conduct an important offensive against the South, Lincoln judged his plan too risky leading him to lose trust in him.²¹ Lincoln relieved McClellan as general in chief on March 11, 1862.

President Lincoln named General Henry W. Halleck general in chief. General Halleck had gained notoriety due to General Ulysses S. Grant's victories in the West. In addition, General Scott had also recommended Halleck as general-in-chief.²² General Halleck held the general-in-chief position until early 1864, but after the defeat at the second battle of Bull Run, he lost his confidence.²³ General Halleck's writings emphasized fortification and defensive tactics which contrasted negatively with many of the realities of the Civil War.²⁴ After that, he was mainly a place filler allowing Lincoln to lead without a strong commander-in-chief contesting his decisions. Halleck was an authority on the theory of war but had a poor strategic mind.²⁵ He ended up being a good technical source of information to Lincoln, but he was a poor provider of strategies and tactics to win the war. President Lincoln had to reshuffle the general in the various theatres of operation due to the inertia that set in during the Lincoln role in the development of the U.S. doctrine between October and December 1862. General Buell, McClellan, Burnside and Butler lost their command to allow President Lincoln to execute his strategy without generals who contest

¹⁸ T. Harry Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952): 4. General Scott's ideas remained pervasive throughout the Civil War since *Infantry Tactics* (in three volumes) was among the rare training and instructional manual available along with William H. Hardee's *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* (in two volumes). See Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 121.

¹⁹ Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 8.

²⁰ Abraham Lincoln. "Executive Order -- General War Order No. 1." *The American Presidency Project*. January 27, 1862. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/executive-order-general-war-order-no-1>.

²¹ McClellan's Urbana plan consisted of an amphibious landing of the Army of the Potomac in Urbana, Virginia, to place the Union forces behind the Confederate stationed at Manassas and in reach of Richmond. McClellan was convinced his plan would end the war if Richmond was captured. After Lincoln first refusal, McClellan tried forcefully to convince the President that his plan was better than a direct assault on Manassas and even got the support of a council of subordinate generals, but the president still had doubts. The movement of the Confederate troops behind the Rappahannock ruined his plan and ended Lincoln trust into his capabilities as general in chief. See Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 63-70.

²² Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 135.

²³ *Ibid.*: 139.

²⁴ Russell F. Weigley. "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World." In *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. Edited by Peter Paret. 408-443. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994): 417-418.

²⁵ Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 138. General Halleck authored *Elements of Military Art and Science* in 1846. His manual was influenced by Jomini and the Archduke Charles. His strategic thinking focused on "concentration of forces, possession of key strategic points, and fortifications." See Robert Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988): 57.

his orders and lack tactical wit to surprise the South.²⁶ Lincoln realized as the war went on that managing untested generals was a difficult task, even though they seemed competent on paper. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and Schofield would be those generals. President Lincoln throughout the Civil War would create a modern command system able to manage the concerted actions of a million soldiers.

General Grant knew success from the beginning of the war with the capture of Fort Henry and Donelson which opened the Tennessee and the Cumberland Rivers to Union penetration into Confederate territory. However, his drinking habits before the war were a liability and impeded his promotion. Even after the important dismissal at the end of 1862, Grant was left in west Tennessee and north Mississippi to guard railroads and communications along the river.²⁷ Finally, in 1863, the capture of Vicksburg gave Lincoln confidence in Grant. Grant's consistency and strategic mind led President Lincoln to reform the command structure with the decision-making centralized around the commander in chief (Lincoln), general in chief (Grant), and the chief of staff (Halleck). General Grant was behind the strategies and tactics that progressively broke the Confederate Army. Grant hunted down General Lee to fight a decisive engagement against the Confederate Army, but General Lee kept retreating and positioning himself behind field fortifications refusing direct engagement. This led General Grant to target southern supply lines and progressively exhaust the means of General Lee.²⁸ Grant's strategy became more effective with Sherman's March to the Sea. Sherman could have directly reached Grant by sea to Virginia, but Grant agreed with Sherman that destroying the Carolina railroads that supplied Lee's forces was the way to go.²⁹ The resilience of the Confederates led Grant and Sherman to increase the pressure even more by bringing the war to the Southern population. They planned to conduct a strategy of annihilation on the Confederacy.

The scorched earth policy of the Civil War certainly set the tone for the military actions of the following decade. The ability to supply a large army by railroads over a long period of time gave increased mobility and the ability to conduct intensified campaigns to the U.S. military making continental defence more plausible. General Grant's strategy aimed at exterminating the Confederate army and destroying the South's resources. Grant's strategy effect was supplemented by General Sherman's strategy of terror. Sherman brought the war to the Southern population and not only its army. That combination led to the conquest of the West beyond the control of its territory but with the occupation of the territory and the destruction of its ancestral populations.

The Indians paid the price for the scorch-earth attitude of the American military. After the Oregon settlement and the Mexican War, the Indian Country was not, anymore, the effective frontier of the United States. It became an area of transit for a growing population travelling to the West Coast at first and then a portion of that population became interested in settling in that territory. Annihilation of these interposing forces to U.S. interest was consequential to the strategies and tactics applied during the Civil War. However, those skills transferred poorly to the insurrectionist and guerrilla warfare that was occurring in the West. President Johnson allowed major operations against the Indians after the Civil War. General Hancock's 1867 Plains offensive, Sheridan's winter campaign of 1868-69, and General Crooks's campaign against the Paiutes

²⁶ Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals*: 179-209.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 220.

²⁸ Williams. *Lincoln and his Generals.*: 317-320

²⁹ *Ibid.*: 346.

between 1866 and 1868 were led aggressively to repress Indian insurrection without coherent pacification measures.³⁰ President Grant tried to limit military involvement during the first years of his presidency.³¹ However, Grant's Peace Policy was short-lived. After 1872, the military conducted major operations against the Indians in Texas, the Indian Territory, Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Arizona.³² California's gold rush brought a trail of blood to the Indian population and destroyed a millennial way of living with the elimination of the buffalo herds.

The line of communication between the East and West Coast became a strategic priority over the two decades that followed the Civil War. Strategically located forts remained the core of the securitization of the West. However, the construction of the railroads and the telegraph lines created additional weak points susceptible to sabotage. General Sherman, who became general in chief in 1869 after Grant's election, believed that the indigenous population "should be moved to reservations far from emigrant routes or lines of communication."³³ The railroad surveys of 1871, 1872, and 1873 required large escorts.³⁴ General Sherman and General Sheridan applied many concepts acquired during the Civil War and conducted terror tactics against the Indians between 1866 and 1875, especially during their winter raids.

The Indian Wars and the Reconstruction did not bring many of the needed changes that the U.S. Army doctrine needed. Policing operations to stabilize the West and the South gave a political role to the military that was detrimental to the military organization since its responsibilities were oriented against its original purpose. Military power and civilian political power became intertwined to a degree too great to create an efficient transition toward a cohabitation between the settlers and the indigenous population of the West and between the newly freed slave of the South and their former masters. Rather than being part of the solution, the military became often part of the problem. While essential to maintain order to a minimum, the military intermingling in the political and social response to the conflict was often perceived as a provocation to the adversarial groups. The emergence of the Klu Klux Klan in the South and the alliances between the Sioux tribes emerged partly in response to the military overwhelming presence in political affairs.

William T. Sherman struggled as a general in command during the reconstruction period. As the commanding general between 1869 to 1883, he quickly became frustrated with the interference of the Secretary of War over the responsibilities of the line and the staff.³⁵ General Sherman attempted to implement reforms. His goal was to foster the growth of military professionalism and to create an "American System" of war.³⁶ Sherman proposed to create a clear peacetime mission for the United States oriented toward the development of "military skill and experience" to build an officer corps prepared to lead in wartime.³⁷ He failed on many points due to the resistance to the changes he proposed. Secretary of War William W. Belknap frequent overrules of Sherman's decisions and contentment with the traditional structure that favoured him;

³⁰ Robert Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1988): 44.

³¹ *Ibid.*: 29. Grant tried to "prevent Indian extinction, he favored land severalty programs, a special territorial government for Indians, and reforms among their agents." See *ibid.* 45.

³² *Ibid.*: 29.

³³ Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. 47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*: 160.

³⁵ Mark R. Grandstaff. "Preserving the "Habits and Usage of War": William Tecumseh Sherman, Professional Reform, and the U.S. Army Officer Corps, 1865-1881, Revisited." *Journal of Military History* Vol. 62, No. 3 (Jul. 1998): 536.

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 542.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 542.

the confusion over the reorganization of the departments with President Grant in 1872; and the Congressional reorganizing and reducing of the staff made his position difficult.³⁸ However, inspired by the Prussian model, he was able after Belknap's resignation in 1876 to introduce reforms of the military education by modifying the curriculum and expanding new institutions.³⁹ He founded the Leavenworth Schools in 1881 which improved the preparedness of the various services and encouraged postgraduate education for military officers.

Leadership in the Army had become consistently embedded with West Point graduates. Following the war with Mexico with the exception of during the first years of the Civil War that required more officers than what West Point was able to provide.⁴⁰ Reconstruction however transformed the type of officers required by the Army. Officers occupied, administered and policed the South and all this in a context of fundamental social reforms attempt. This differed from the warfighting and conquering army that emerged throughout the Civil War and also different from the garrison duties and the occasional Indian wars from before the war.

Professionalism in the military forces experienced some interesting reforms that emerged throughout the period of Reconstruction. While West Point was providing a baseline and hub for the development of military thoughts, the dispersion of a small force throughout a large territory fighting irregular warfare and occupying small garrisons was a poor environment for the development of new strategic and doctrinal thoughts.⁴¹ The Civil War changed that dynamic and its aftermath brought a population of officers not interested to return to the old patterns. War preparedness and professionalism emerged as a core principle for American military development.

West Point experienced relevant changes that helped the development and implementation of the American military doctrine. First, in 1866, Congress removed the control of the academy from the Corps of Engineers and put it in the hands of the infantry.⁴² It had for effect to remove the fascination toward French strategy advocated by some West Point alumni. Dennis Hart Mahan consolidated much of the engineering focus of West Point with his 41 years of teaching focused on fortifications and French tactics.⁴³ However, changes of this nature take time to implement. Most of the commissioned officers in the Army received their training focused on engineering and French strategies.

The knowledge source of many of the changes in the postbellum period came in large part from Emory Upton's works. His research and writing on military governance, organization, education, and theories of battlefield tactics generated much-required and beneficial reforms to the American military. Most of Upton's innovations were implemented only after his tragic suicide in 1881 by General Sherman, General John M. Schofield and later on by Secretary of War Elihu Root.⁴⁴ His plan toward "a large expansible Army" failed especially under the eyes of the Burnside

³⁸ Richard A. Andrews. "Years of Frustration: William T. Sherman, the Army, and Reform, 1869-1883." *Doctoral Dissertation*. (Northwestern University. June 1968) 89-98.

³⁹ Andrews. "Years of Frustration: William T. Sherman, the Army, and Reform, 1869-1883." 247.

⁴⁰ Edward M. Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986): 222-3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 269-70.

⁴² *Ibid.* 271.

⁴³ Father of the more well-known Alfred T. Mahan, Dennis H. Mahan left his strategic and tactical thoughts in two important works: *A Complete Treatise on Field Fortification* (1836); and *An Elementary Treatise of Advanced-Guard, Out-Post, and Detachment Service of Troops* (1847).

⁴⁴ Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. 274.

Committee of 1878.⁴⁵ Upton knew from the start that the major obstacle to military reforms was “the opposition to spending more money on an army which most politicians thought was already doing a satisfactory job and to meet the prejudice which glorified the minuteman tradition.”⁴⁶ As a too often unsung hero of the progression and evolution of the military his work led to reforms in tactical practices, the creation of a reservist force outside of state political influence, and the requirement of a professional national army over the “civilian-soldier” provided by the state militias.

Army Power

Split in two, the U.S. Army problems became exacerbated by the Civil War. Lack of preparation, uniformity, training, and supplies rendered the war effort ineffective and unachievable. Major reforms had to be put in place to flip the situation if any chance of victory was to be expected. The state of the army was grim, but Washington was able to shift the situation. The strength of the Regular Army was meagre in 1861. 15,259 enlisted men were led by 1,108 officers organized in nineteen regiments.⁴⁷ Over 90% of the companies were dispersed through the seventy-nine posts along the frontiers.⁴⁸ The Militia constituted the bulk of the reserve forces at the beginning of the war. According to the official numbers at the beginning of the war, 3,163,711 men were reported as belonging to the Militia.⁴⁹ Seventy-eight percent of those militiamen were from the northern states.⁵⁰ Lincoln only mobilized 75,000 militiamen on April 15, 1861. That first mobilization, only two days after the beginning of the war was supplemented by another call for 500,000 volunteers with the Act of July 22, 1861.⁵¹ The Civil War Union volunteer regiments were established by an executive order by Lincoln that issued quotas to states of troops to be brought into the federal service.⁵² The size of the army grew considerably throughout the war (see Table 6.2) to the point where the United States had one of the largest armies in the world.

In 1861, mobilization was decentralized to the state level. Governors put in place recruitment campaigns in their respective states. In less than a year in 1861, the military personnel passed from 28,000 to 660,000.⁵³ The initial recruitment yielded great results. In the following years, the president proclaimed drafts to keep the military forces at the necessary level to conduct the war effort. The Enrollment Act of 1863 removed the limitations on the size of the Army and brought the notion that “every citizen owes the Nation the obligation to defend it and that the Federal Government can impose that obligation directly on the citizen without mediation of the states.”⁵⁴ It also ended the reliance on state governors and allowed the federal government to draft men directly into the Union Army.⁵⁵ Overall, fewer than 50,000 men were drafted into the Union

⁴⁵ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 420, Scribd

⁴⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose. *Upton and the Army*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993): 101.

⁴⁷ Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 88.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 88.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 90

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 93.

⁵² Gian Gentile, Michael E. Linick, and Michael Shurkin. *The Evolution of U.S. Military Policy from the Constitution to the Present*. (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. 2017): 22.

⁵³ Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 102.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 108-9.

⁵⁵ Gentile et al. *The Evolution of U.S. Military Policy from the Constitution to the Present.*: 25.

Army.⁵⁶ The Enrolment Act was the first national conscription of the United States. Even though not many were drafted since the states met their quotas, civil unrest grew leading to the New York riots of 1863.

Table 6.2: U.S. Army Mobilization during the Civil War

<i>Date</i>	Number Called For	Number Obtained
<i>April 15, 1861</i>	75000	93326
<i>May 3, 1861(Volunteers)</i>	42034	714231
<i>May 3, 1861(Regulars)</i>	22714	
<i>May 3, 1861(Seamen)</i>	18000	
<i>July 22 and 25, 1861</i>	500000	
<i>May and June 1862</i>	0	15007
<i>July 2, 1862</i>	300000	431958
<i>August 4, 1862</i>	300000	87588
<i>June 15, 1863</i>	100000	16361
<i>October 17, 1863</i>	300000	374807
<i>February 1, 1864</i>	200000	
<i>March 14, 1864</i>	200000	284021
<i>April 23, 1864</i>	85000	83652
<i>July 18, 1864</i>	500000	384882
<i>December 18, 1864</i>	300000	204568
TOTAL	2942748	2690401

Source: Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army 1775-1945*. (Washington: Department of the Army. 1955): 94.

Training was quickly identified as a problem in the context of the Civil War. The War Department did not provide a specific and uniform training program; officers able to conduct training programs were a scarce resource; and training literature was quasi-inexistent among the troops.⁵⁷ After the defeat of the first Bull Run, General McClellan started to train his forces with drills; General Sherman followed suit and ordered the distribution of manuals to teach the proper instruction for the use of the soldier's weapons; and General Meade ordered the procured additional rounds of ammunition for target practice and weapon-handling.⁵⁸

Resources shortage crippled the war effort in the early period of the war. Equipment and clothing were scarce since the War Department had no reserve supplies.⁵⁹ Ordnances were insufficient to support the war effort. Most aspects of the logistics were broken from the start. However, the war industry eventually caught up with the war necessity. The standardization of the Union uniform in 1862 set the pace toward the uniformization of essential logistical practices. The combination of importation, domestic contracts, and increased governmental manufacturing capacity solve much of the ordnance problem.⁶⁰ The railroad system became the lifeline of the troops. Control, maintenance, and building of railroads became one of the key elements of the victory of the North. General Sherman wrote in his memoirs: "The value of the railways is also fully recognized in war as much as, if not more so than, in peace. The Atlanta campaign would

⁵⁶ Eugene C. Murdock. *Patriotism Limited, 1862-1865: The Civil War Draft and the Bounty System*. (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1967): 16.

⁵⁷ Kreidberg and Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army*: 122.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: 121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*:124.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*:127.

simply have been impossible without the use of railroads.”⁶¹ In addition, the Signal Corps integration of the telegraph to the front led to a continuous line of communication with the high command and a faster relaying of orders.

As it is often the case with major conflicts, weapon systems made great strides in technological innovations during the Civil War. Small arms and artillery innovations changed the reality on the battlefield and made the Napoleonic-era style of warfare. Repeating fire, breechloading, rifled canons, rapid-fire weapons, entrenchment, field fortifications, and grenades increased the deadliness of the war. The transition to new technologies was accelerated by the pace and magnitude of the war. The Civil War was the last major war fought with standard-issued single-shot, muzzle-loading firearms.⁶² By 1863, both sides were fighting with rifle muskets which expanded the killing zone.⁶³ In addition, while not standard issued to regular infantry, many soldiers purchased repeating fire weapons throughout the war. Breechloading rifles became standard in most modern armies by the time of the Franco-Prussian War.⁶⁴ The rapidity, precision, and expanded range of those weapons required changes in tactics to decrease their lethality.

Desertion in the Confederacy advantaged the Union. Massive and rapid enrollment in the Confederate army did not yield support among all Southerners. Conscripted Southern citizens of Northern birth or foreign origin; uneducated and ill-informed Southerners; and substitutes who failed to volunteer had lower desertion costs.⁶⁵ The problems of the U.S. Army were only amplified in the Confederacy. The lack of food, clothing, equipment and pay crippled the Confederate army throughout the war. The horrid conditions undermined the morale of the troops and even led to the propagation of cholera, measles, and smallpox among the troops.⁶⁶ By the end of the war, over 100 000 Southerners had deserted.⁶⁷

After the Civil War, War Secretary Edwin M. Stanton and General Ulysses S. Grant separated the army in two. The first segment of the army engaged in traditional duties including the security of the Mexican and Canadian borders, the suppression of indigenous rebellions, the formation of new troops, and ceremonial duties.⁶⁸ The second army was in charge of the occupation administration in the South. This occupation forced became problematic at different levels. First, the combined role of policing and supervising the reconstruction generated disparity between southern states and denatured the traditional role of the military. Second, divergences between the War Department and the Presidency created a deadlock situation with the evolution of the reconstruction responsibilities of the military that ultimately led to the impeachment process

⁶¹ William T. Sherman. *Personal Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman*. Volume II, (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1890): 398.

⁶² Earl J. Hess. *The Rifle Musket in Civil War Combat: Reality and Myth*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006): 9.

⁶³ *Ibid.*: 32.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: 221.

⁶⁵ Ella Lonn. “Causes of Confederate Desertion.” in *The Military in America: From the Colonial Era to the Present*. Edited by Peter Karsten. (New York: The Free Press, 1986).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*: 291.

⁶⁷ Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. (Toronto: Harper Perennial, (1988) 2014): 15.

⁶⁸ Harold M. Hyman. “Johnson, Stanton, and Grant: A Reconsideration of the Army’s Role in the Events Leading to Impeachment.” in *The Military in America: From the Colonial Era to the Present*. Edited by Peter Karsten. (New York: The Free Press, 1986): 303.

against Johnson.⁶⁹ Finally, the tension between Johnson and the radicals in Congress exacerbated the divisions of the authority over the army occupying the South. In the end, the breakdown of the government was avoided by a single vote. Civil-military issues were problematic due to the unconventional nature of the responsibilities of the military throughout the reconstruction.

The introduction of segregated black units in 1865 and the 1866 Reorganization Act by Congress increased the number of blacks in the military to six regiments representing one-tenth of the army.⁷⁰ “The Union also bulked up. Conscription swelled the army from 16,000 to millions. Public officials found during the war that they could assert themselves and national power as never before. Elected officials used the political opportunity provided by one-party rule to push through a series of internal improvements.”⁷¹

Drunkenness and desertion remained important problems in the military. While the conditions improved during the Civil War and lowered the desertion rate, the end of the war and the important cuts by Congress changed the dynamic of desertion quickly. In 1866, from the 54,138 regulars, 14,068 deserted.⁷² The rate did not diminish significantly in comparison with the previous antebellum period. From 1867 to 1891, 88475 men deserted for an average of 14.8 percent per year.⁷³ Between 1871 and 1872, nearly a third of the Army deserted.⁷⁴ The desertion rate started to lower after the end of the Indian wars which generated an improvement in the living conditions of the soldiers and eased the implementation of the previously proposed reforms.

Cruel treatment within the military remained prevalent throughout the reconstruction. Flogging was abolished in 1861, but many other cases of abuses were still occurring as corporal punishment including wearing a ball of chain, hanging soldiers by their thumbs, carrying heavy weights while marching, tying them down as spread-eagle, and submitting them to many other deprivations such as sleep, food, water, or adequate accommodations.⁷⁵

By the end of the Civil War, in May 1865, a little over a million soldiers were enlisted (see Table 6.3). A year later, 800963 of those men were back to civilian life.⁷⁶ This rapid and drastic reduction was, first, illustrative of the tradition of peacetime demobilization of the U.S. War Department, and second, required by the strain the Civil War had put on the economy by the amplitude of the requirements to end the war by the conquest of the South in a timely manner to avoid dragging the conflict further. However, the requirements of reconstruction were under-evaluated. Much more resources were required to achieve what Lincoln, and Johnson after Lincoln’s assassination, had conceived.

⁶⁹ Hyman. “Johnson, Stanton, and Grant: A Reconsideration of the Army’s Role in the Events Leading to Impeachment.”

⁷⁰ Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. 331.

⁷¹ Brian Balogh. *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in the Nineteenth Century America*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009): Kindle.

⁷² Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars*: 6.

⁷³ Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. 371

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 371. It’s a total of 8,800 soldiers who deserted in 1871. See Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars*: 6.

⁷⁵ Coffman. *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898*. 373 and 376 .

⁷⁶ C. Joseph Bernado and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 235.

Table 6.3: U.S. Army Strength 1860-1880

<i>Date</i>	<i>Number of Soldiers</i>
<i>January 1, 1860</i>	16435
<i>January 1, 1861</i>	16367
<i>July 1, 1861</i>	186751
<i>January 1, 1862</i>	575917
<i>March 31, 1862</i>	637126
<i>January 1, 1863</i>	918191
<i>January 1, 1864</i>	860737
<i>January 1, 1865</i>	959460
<i>March 31, 1865</i>	980086
<i>May 1, 1865</i>	1000516
<i>1866</i>	57072
<i>1867</i>	57194
<i>1868</i>	51066
<i>1869</i>	36953
<i>1870</i>	37240
<i>1871</i>	29115
<i>1872</i>	28322
<i>1873</i>	28812
<i>1874</i>	28640
<i>1875</i>	25513
<i>1876</i>	28565
<i>1877</i>	24140
<i>1878</i>	26023
<i>1879</i>	26601
<i>1880</i>	26594

Source: From 1860 to 1865, see: Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry. *History of the Military Mobilization in the United States Army 1775-1945*. (Washington: Department of the Army. 1955): 95. From 1866 to 1870, see U.S. Bureau of Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*. Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce 1975): p. 1142. https://ia800401.us.archive.org/5/items/historicalstatis00unit_0/historicalstatis00unit_0.pdf.

General Grant faced severe restrictions on the armed forces available for the Reconstruction. The conservatives in Congress lowered the maximum for a permanent force to 50000 while Grant was requiring at least 80000. By July 28, 1866, Congress had reorganized the armed force to a “peacetime strength at 54302 expandable to a maximum of 75282 men.”⁷⁷ With those forces, the Reconstruction, the policing of the colonial expansion westward, the threat from a French-occupied Mexico, and the counterinsurgency against the indigenous would suffer from inadequate resources leading to ill-conceived and more detrimental than helpful measures in the long run, to contain those situations.

The postbellum demobilization also led to a return of the influence of the militias, now referred to as the National Guards. Still ruled by the 1792 Uniform Militia Act, the National Guards continued to be under no tutelage from the federal government.⁷⁸ In the 1870s and 1880s, the National Guards became a substitute for the Army to deal with civil disturbances and enforce the law. The National Guards intervened on multiple occasions during the labour conflicts of the industrialization period, to enforce state laws, contain lynchings and racial tensions, and suppress anti-Chinese riots.⁷⁹ National Guard leaders established the Nation Guard Association in 1878 to lobby for changes in the militia system and seek “legislative recognition as the volunteer reserve for the nation.”⁸⁰ However, that recognition would have meant a requirement for appropriations from the federal government, and Congress was not willing to commit taxpayers’ money to an organization of decentralized militia.

Congress reduced the forces to 30,000 enlisted men in 1870 to be “scattered throughout 203 military posts and stations in forty-two States and

⁷⁷ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 236.

⁷⁸ Gian Gentile, et al. “The Evolution of U.S. Military Policy from the Constitution to the Present Volume I.” *RAND*, (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2019): 59. By 1896, only three states did not use the term National Guard to describe their organized militia. See John K. Mahon. *History of the Militia and the National Guard*. New York: Macmillan, 1983): 110.

⁷⁹ Mahon. *History of the Militia and the National Guard*: 110

⁸⁰ Gentile, et al. “The Evolution of U.S. Military Policy from the Constitution to the Present Volume I.” 53.

territories.”⁸¹ The tenuousness of the military forces led them to conduct misguided operations during the Indian Wars and to perpetrate atrocities. The 1874 economic crisis brought further strains on the military which were lowered to 25,000.⁸² Things got even worse for the army. In 1877, Congress ended its session without even appropriating funds for the Army. President Rutherford B. Hayes had to pass an emergency appropriation bill on November 21, 1877.⁸³ In the end, the Army was in a better state than before the Civil War standing at 10,000 more men than before the war who were better equipped, organized, and trained. Lincoln’s army brought important changes to the U.S. Army. However, the rapid military improvement made during the Civil War were 1) not sustainable due to the economic burden of the war effort; 2) quickly scaled down by Congress; 3) re-organized to respond to asymmetric conflicts; and 4) kept in line with the tradition of peacetime demobilization.

Navy

Naval Doctrine

The Civil War created many interesting things in terms of naval strategies for the United States. Before the war, the navy was quite inadequate for an aspiring regional power. The focus on coastal fortifications yielded little power projection and could become a liability in case of capture by adversary forces. The Confederate captures of Fort Sumter, Pulaski, Morgan, Jackson, and St. Philip exemplified the risk of captured strongholds. The destruction of the Norfolk Navy Yard on April 21, 1861 crippled the Union Navy at the beginning of the war. On the other hand, the ability of the North to hold to Fort Monroe in Virginia, Fort Zachary Taylor, Fort Pickens and Fort Jefferson in Florida became key in the maintenance and efficiency of the Union blockade off the Confederate’s coast.⁸⁴ All four helped to enforce the blockade by providing support, early warning systems, and bases of operation.

Lincoln did not implement Scott’s Anaconda Plan as intended. Conscious of the risks and potential long duration of the Anaconda Plan, Lincoln attempted to declare a naval blockade of the Southern ports on 19 April 1861. The international law regarding blockade required a fifteen-day notice to departing and incoming vessels. The blockade had also to be “effective” according to the definition contained in the 1856 Declaration of Paris.⁸⁵ However, the main issue with the blockade was that according to international law, since the blockade was an act of war between two belligerents, it created a diplomatic puzzle in regard to the prevention of the recognition of the Confederacy.⁸⁶ To resolve the issues, Lincoln implemented a *domestic* blockade. However, the British warned Washington that the seizure of vessels on high seas under that measure would not be in accordance with international law.⁸⁷ In addition, the effective blockade of the lengthy southern coastline was in itself a difficult challenge to effectively blockade the south considering the insufficient number of vessels operated by the Union to conduct the blockade. To truly choke

⁸¹ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*: 239.

⁸² *Ibid.*; Jack D. Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars: Army Life and Reforms, 1865-1898*. (New York: Humanities Press, 1970): 1.

⁸³ Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars*: 1.

⁸⁴ Angus Konstam. *American Civil War Fortification (1): Coastal Brick and Stone Forts*. (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003): 90.

⁸⁵ “Declaration Respecting Maritime Law.” Paris, 16 April 1856. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/paris-decl-1856/declaration?activeTab=undefined>.

⁸⁶ Edwin B. Coddington. "The Civil War Blockade Reconsidered." In *Essays in History and International Relations*. Edited by Dwight E. Lee and George E. McReynold. 284-305. (Worcester: Clark University Publication, 1949): 284.

⁸⁷ Coddington. "The Civil War Blockade Reconsidered." 284-5.

the Confederate trade, Lincoln accepted to implement an effective blockade and as a consequence have the belligerency status of the Confederacy recognized. The blockade was implemented and recognized, but its effectiveness was compromised due to the limits of the Union Navy.

Lincoln relied on his secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and his assistant secretary, Gustavus Fox to develop and implement the Union naval strategy. Lincoln knew little a first about the Navy. He, however, became fascinated by the new technologies of warfare, and his interest eased the introduction of “heavy-calibre naval guns, armored warships, floating mortar platforms, and other elements of the revolution in naval ordnance.”⁸⁸ The president surrounded himself with brilliant naval strategists including David G. Farragut, David D. Porter, Samuel F. DuPont, Samuel P. Lee, and John A. Dahlgren.⁸⁹

The approximately 3,500 miles of coastline to blockade between the Rio Grande and the Potomac Rivers was improbable at first, especially with only a fleet of ninety vessels available for service.⁹⁰ Secretary of Navy Gideon Welles was put in charge of implementing the blockade. With limited resources, Welles and his assistant Gustavus V. Fox had the heavy task of plugging the multiple holes in the blockade. The formation of a four-member Blockade Board headed by Captain Samuel F. DuPont started to plan the navy’s strategy.⁹¹ First, most of the Navy vessels were overseas and had to come back to the Eastern shores of the United States to conduct the patrols to enforce the blockade. Of the 12 vessels of the Home Squadron, only four were in Northern ports and available for service.⁹² Additional methods to improve the blockade were ingenious. Even before the return of the foreign squadron vessels, Welles commissions all types of crafts at his disposal to grow the fleet exponentially during the first years of the war, including “excursion boats, ferryboats, freighters, yachts, passenger vessels, and tugboats.”⁹³ Wells deployed a “Stone Boat Fleet” to be sunk into the Charleston harbour.⁹⁴ The barges filled with rocks were designed to be sunk into the harbour to make navigation impractical and easier to intercept.

The impracticality of the extent of the blockade required additional measures. Quickly, Welles realized that the capture of Southern ports would be essential to increase the efficacy of the blockade. The capture of Fort Hatteras and Clark on the coast of North Carolina in September 1861, and the capture of Fort Walker and Beauregard in South Carolina in November 1861 bolstered the efficiency of the blockade.⁹⁵ However, the Southern blockade runners were creative and managed to find alternate routes and keep the supply line of the Confederacy open. With the growth of the Union Navy, the enforcement of the blockade improved. The Union put additional efforts toward rapid vessels for the pursuit of the Confederate privateers. The Union’s blockading squadrons achieve an effective interruption of the flow of intelligence, dispatches, and instructions from its European agents.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Craig L. Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Navy, and the Civil War*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2008): xii.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* xiii.

⁹⁰ Nathan Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*. (3rd ed.) (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press. 1997): Chap. 5. Kindle.

⁹¹ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*.: Chap. 5. Kindle.

⁹² David D. Porter. *The Naval History of the Civil War*. (Secaucus: Caster, 1984): 36.

⁹³ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*.: Chap. 5. Kindle; Porter. *The Naval History of the Civil War*. 36-7.

⁹⁴ Coddington. "The Civil War Blockade Reconsidered." 287.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 80.

River operations became the third component of the Union's naval strategy. David Porter advocated earlier on for the seizure of New Orleans rather than blockading the mouth of the Mississippi. Porter proposed the use of mortar boats "to reduce the rebel forts from long range."⁹⁷ The early success of the *Monitor* in brown waters led the U.S. Navy to capitalize on that type of vessel. Admiral Porter went as far as to argue that "Had our Navy at that time consisted of some thirty small gun-boats, or a dozen monitors, the rebellion would have been unable to raise its head."⁹⁸ After Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Secretary Welles ordered the construction of twenty light-draft monitors.⁹⁹ While doing wonders on the Southern coasts, monitors were poor seagoing vessels and were a poor investment for the navy in the long run. However, the coordination of the different river operations was challenging. Those operations required coordination between the Army and the Navy on the Mississippi River and its affluents which involved infantry actions combined with naval bombardment and amphibious assault. This component of the Union naval strategy was essential since it "contributed to the slow strangulation of the Confederacy from without, while the army pounded it to death from within"¹⁰⁰

The fortification system (or Third System) was abandoned in the two decades following the Civil War. The attacks on coastal fortifications with rifled artillery demonstrated the obsolescence of the masonry forts of the post-War of 1812.¹⁰¹ This created a re-engineering of U.S. coastal defence. Large offensives against the American forts during the Civil War with new technologies made the fortification system obsolete. However, both sides realized the need to modernize the fortification system. During the attack on Fort Fisher, "[f]ive ironclads and over forty other vessels, mounting more than six hundred guns between them, delivered two shots a second at the fort."¹⁰² Farragut bombarded Fort Fisher three times. The Confederates had learned from the Crimean War and emulated the design of the Tower of Malakoff.¹⁰³

Three important figures marked the period following the Civil War and before the naval expansion that occurs prior to the Spanish-American War. The advocacy of David Dixon Porter, Stephen B. Luce and Robert W. Shufeldt to influence U.S. maritime strategy toward bringing professionalism, modernity and making the navy a "pioneer of commerce."¹⁰⁴ However, their demands were largely ignored. The period between 1865 and 1880 was essentially, as Harold and

⁹⁷ Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*: 111.

⁹⁸ David D. Porter. *The Naval History of the Civil War*. (Secaucus: Caster, 1984): 22.

⁹⁹ C. Joseph Bernado and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 225.

¹⁰⁰ John F. Dillon. "The Role of Riverine Warfare in the Civil War." *Naval War College Review*. Vol. 25, no. 4 (March-April 1973): 78.

¹⁰¹ Weigley. "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World." 437.

¹⁰² Stephen Howarth. *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1991*. (New York: Random House, 1991): 210.

¹⁰³ For two and half years, Maj. Gen. William Henry Chase Whiting and Col. William Lamb worked to strengthen and expand the defense of Fort Fisher. See Gary J. Ohls. "Fort Fisher: Amphibious Victory in the American Civil War." *Naval War College Review* Vol. 59, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 84. Rear Admiral Porter reported about Fort Fisher that "The work, as I said before, is really stronger than the Malakoff tower, which defied so long the combined power of France and England." Quoted in James Parker. *Rear-Admirals Schley, Sampson and Cervera*. New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1910): 12.

¹⁰⁴ Lance C. Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." In *Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. 2nd edition. (Westport: Prager, 2008):

Margaret Sprout interpreted, a period of “material decline and intellectual stagnation.”¹⁰⁵ The United States aimed to grow its international trade and merchant navy without the consequential military support to secure sea lanes. The U.S. Navy progressively decline during the two decades that followed the Civil War. The combination of a strong Congress and a weakened presidency undermined the foreign policy of the United States and relegated the development of the navy to the bottom of the U.S. priorities where the Congressional majority saw the American Navy as “small and modest.”¹⁰⁶

The European powers took a different path than the Americans. They engaged in the construction of small ironclads after the civil war. In the 1870s, the construction of battleships created a new arms race in Europe. Ironclads were integrated into most European navies. Improvements in firepower, armour, barbets and turrets, propulsion, and hull design brought a new phase of naval development and renewed maritime strategic thinking.¹⁰⁷ The French and British engineers challenged the evolution of naval armaments throughout the 1860s and 1870s. The introduction of capital ships without masts and equipped with big guns would mark the beginning of the era of battleships. The British construction of armored battleships including the 9,330-ton mastless battleships *Devastation* (1873) and *Thunderer* (1872), the 12,000-ton *Inflexible* (1874) and the 8,540-ton *Temeraire* (1876); the French construction of the 7,775-ton *Océan* (1870), the 8,980-ton *Richelieu* (1873), and the 8,800-ton *Redoutable* (1876); the Prussian construction of the 10,591-ton *König Wilhelm* (1869); and the Italian 11,000-ton *Duilio* and *Dandolo* (1873) brought new technological development and set the progression toward the dreadnought era.¹⁰⁸ The inadequacy of some technologies due to the accelerated integration of innovations led to the rapid obsolescence of the vessels built during the 1870s.

Admiral Porter advocated early on the necessity of seagoing ironclads comparable to the British and French vessels.¹⁰⁹ This was in sharp contrast with the adversarial position of Congress against the development of a strong blue-water navy and the era of the monitors and coastal defence ironclads that were developed during the Civil War. His proposed plan for the navy for the following two decades was of 20 battleships, 20 coastal defence monitors, 10 flagships, 40 fast cruisers, 40 gunboats, 50 torpedoes boats, and numerous smaller vessels.¹¹⁰

Naval Power

The U.S. Navy had little to desire before the Civil War. Most ships were rotting in shipyards, maintenance was inadequate, and equipment was outdated. However, as it was the case with the War of 1812, the war forced the navy to innovate, develop, and rise its capabilities to a contending level to claim the role of regional power. As it occurred following the previous wars, the issue was with peacetime maintenance and development. Technological improvements made the vessels more performant and destructive. Amor, shells, breach loading, and steam navigation

¹⁰⁵ Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946): 175.

¹⁰⁶ Buhl. “Maintaining ‘An American Navy,’ 1865-1889.” 117-118.

¹⁰⁷ Jeremy Black. *Naval Power*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 130-136; Elmer B. Potter. *Sea Power: A Naval History*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1981): Chap. 18.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Padfield. *The Battleship Era*. (New York: David McKay, 1972): 60-61; 77-80; James L. George. *History of Warships: From Ancient Times to the Twenty-First Century*. (London: Constable, 1999): 72-7

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 20.

¹¹⁰ Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 21.

took longer to become an integrated part of the U.S. Navy than all the other major navies. The Navy resources were also sprayed thin across the globe. The Civil War and the Blockade Proclamations of April 17 and 27, 1861 required a rapid return of the majority of the fleet and the equipment of civilian vessels to enforce them. In the span of a year over “three hundred vessels (blockaders) of varying design from hoary frigates and converted merchant steamers to Ericsson’s Monitor.”¹¹¹

At the opening of the war, only ninety listed vessels but only forty-two were in commission, including thirty steamers.¹¹² The Navy was led by officers who extended their stay in the service too long. 1,300 officers and 7,600 sailors composed the entire Navy.¹¹³ Most ships in the navy were old and ill-fitted for the shallow water operations required by the brown water operations. Secretary Welles had to bring the U.S. Navy to a war-ready level and develop a strategic doctrine to transform the Navy’s role in the war. He came up to the challenge. From the forty-two commissioned vessels, Welles brought the American Navy second to Great Britain within five years.¹¹⁴ 671 ships were on active duty after the war. However, only 179 were new construction.¹¹⁵ At the beginning of the blockade, the Navy Department armed many civilian vessels to achieve an efficient blockade. By 4 July 1861, eighty-two vessels were fitted to enforce the blockade.¹¹⁶ The number rose to 264 in December 1861, 427 in December 1862, 588 in December 1863, and 671 in December 1864.¹¹⁷ In 1864, the 671 vessels of the Navy were supported by 51,500 men.¹¹⁸

The Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory was able to work wonders with little resources and implement a *guerre de course* doctrine that efficiently humiliated and undermined the Union. Mallory was able to exploit the asymmetry of resources favourably for the South. During the Civil War, the actions of the Confederate Navy underlined some of the weaknesses of the Union Navy. The Confederate privateer *Shenandoah* harassed effectively the Pacific coast by capturing thirty-eight Union vessels.¹¹⁹ The *Alabama* managed to capture over 65 U.S. ships and eluded the Union Navy until June 19, 1864.¹²⁰ Still, the South’s strategy of *guerre de course* engendered important costs to the North. Shippers in the North had to pay increased insurance premiums for their cargo, and many of them transfer their vessels to neutral foreign registries which had enduring effects until World War I.¹²¹ The Civil War had disastrous consequences for the merchant navy. The U.S. merchant navy held an impressive 2,379,396 tons

¹¹¹ C. Joseph Bernado and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 222-3.

¹¹² Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 5. Kindle.

¹¹³ William Whyte. “The Brooklyn Navy Yard: The Heart of the Union Anaconda.” *The Northern Mariner/le marin du nord*, 22, no. 4 (Oct. 2012): 398.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 55.

¹¹⁶ Whyte. “The Brooklyn Navy Yard: The Heart of the Union Anaconda.” 400.

¹¹⁷ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 5. Kindle.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ David E. Shi. “Seward’s Attempt to Annex British Columbia, 1865-1869.” *Pacific Historical Review*. 47, no. 2 (May, 1978): 219.

¹²⁰ Charles M. Robinson III. *Shark of the Confederacy: The Story of the CSS Alabama*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995): 172.

¹²¹ Frank J. Merli. “The Confederate Navy, 1861-1865.” In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 131.

of private shipping carried by American vessels at 66.5% in 1860 which failed to 1,518,350 tons carried by 27.7% by American vessels in 1865.¹²²

The Union Navy was focused on coastal defence and blockading the South. By 1862, the North was able to deny the Southern privateers and commerce raiders to bring back their prizes to the South while northern cruisers were dispatched to destroy the privateers at sea.¹²³ John Ericsson's *Monitor* was launched on January 30, 1862. The engineering feat of the monitor class introduced many innovations and was specifically designed to conduct coastal defence. Its revolving turret mounted on a low-lying iron deck and equipped with 11-inch Dahlgrens, and its submerged hull protecting the engine and crew offered the perfect maneuverability in brown water to conduct prolonged offensive in the southern coasts and rivers.¹²⁴ However, the *Monitor* was not a sea-worthy vessel. During a storm, "heavy seas rolled over her, washed out turret caulking, and poured into her berth deck like a waterfall. Sea water also entered her air-inlet pipes and disabled her blowers, nearly putting out her boiler fires."¹²⁵ The ironclad gunboats were ideal for brown-water operations, but their role dwindled with the end of the Civil War. By 1864, the Union had built sixty-four *Monitors*.¹²⁶

After the Civil War, the Navy Department took a series of regretful decisions toward the reduction of naval capabilities. First, the Navy restored the sail power to its fleet to maximize efficiency over speed under coal power.¹²⁷ The lack of coaling stations led to the development of a hybrid fleet powered by both coal and sail. In the 1870s, most ships were equipped with full sail powers with a few exceptions including ironclads and side-wheel steamers.¹²⁸ Second, the U.S. government sold more than half of its warships, including the auxiliary warships improvised from merchant vessels.¹²⁹ In 1864, the Navy included nearly 700 vessels, and only by 1870, the total was down to less than 200 vessels.¹³⁰ In 1867, already 433 ships were decommissioned.¹³¹ By 1869, the Navy enlisted personnel were fixed to 8500 men and the Marine Corps to 2500 men.¹³² The force was almost back to the level of before the war. The postbellum demobilization crippled the navy in a significant way. By 1875, the U.S. Navy had only 147 vessels among which many rotting wooden ships.¹³³ In 1876, Great Britain published a world survey of "Naval Power and their Policy" that did not include the United States.¹³⁴ London analyzed what it perceived as the

¹²² Winthrop L. Marvin. *The American Merchant Marine: Its History and Romance from 1620 to 1902*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902): 284, 353. Quoted in Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 381.

¹²³ Dana M. Wegner. "The Union Navy, 1861-1865." In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 115.

¹²⁴ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*.: Chap. 5. Kindle.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ George. *History of Warships: From Ancient Times to the Twenty-First Century*: 70.

¹²⁷ Walter Millis. *Arms and Men: America's Military History and Military Policy from the Revolution to the Present*. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1956): 134.

¹²⁸ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 258.

¹²⁹ Paul E. Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy: Politics, Economics, and the Rise of American Naval Power, 1881-1921*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016): 12; and Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939): 165.

¹³⁰ Sprout & Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*: 165; Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 257-58.

¹³¹ Howarth. *To Shining Sea*: 218.

¹³² Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 270-1.

¹³³ Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." 113.

¹³⁴ Howarth. *To Shining Sea*: 216.

fifteen strongest navies in the world which included Austria, Brazil, Peru, and Turkey, but not the United States. Third, the Navy went back to muzzle-loaded guns rather than equipping all the ships with high-power breech-loading rifles like the rest of the European powers.¹³⁵ Leaving most of its progress behind, the U.S. Navy experienced an even worse setback than the military after the Civil War. Rather than following the stream of progress made during the Civil War, the Navy Department and Congress reverse the march toward naval progress.

The Civil War had bolstered the innovation within the U.S. Navy. The engineers had brought the U.S. Navy along with the other great power. The U.S. Navy was a strong brown water fleet with its ironclads and small coastal vessels. However, the engineering put in place the development of the *Wampanoag*, a fast cruiser designed by Benjamin F. Isherwood, which was able to reach 17.7 knots and an average of 16.6 knots during its 1868 trials.¹³⁶ Unfortunately, the Navy leadership was still governed by officers too focused on the navigation and maneuver implied by sails. The *Wampanoag* never cruised beyond its trials. It took twenty-two years before a vessel of its speed became part of the U.S. Navy.¹³⁷

The decision to scale down the Navy occurred while the French were still occupying Mexico, Haiti and Santo Domingo were experiencing severe insurgencies; and wars were raging in South America where Spain was at war with Peru and Chile and Paraguay fought against Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina.¹³⁸ The lack of consideration for the troubles of its immediate neighbour shows both the exhaustion of the years of the Civil War and the rapid return to the peacetime tradition of restraints. The misconception of ambitions versus capabilities was a recurrent theme in peacetime America before the 1890s. The navy reduced its capabilities substantially during the 1870s and 1880s to reach an unenviable forty-eight outdated vessels ranking the U.S. Navy twelfth in the world (behind Holland, Italy, Turkey, China, Norway-Sweden, and Chile)¹³⁹

Threat Assessment: National Division and Pervasive Threat from Colonial Powers

Survival became the priority of the United States between April 12, 1861, and May 26, 1865. Torn apart over irreconcilable positions that had poisoned American political life for over two decades, the federation broke apart. The struggle between the Union and the Confederacy instigated a fundamental transformation of the United States. Instability endured after the war and weakened the confidence of the United States as a world player. The diplomacy of the United States in the decades that followed the Civil War was timid and contained. The Civil War had an impact beyond the United States. The war signalled the transformation of the conduct of warfare and the lethality of modern warfare. The Crimean War had provided a foretaste of the violence of modern weaponry, but the Civil War showed how modern warfare could drag resources, reach high-intensity levels, and cost lives beyond anything experienced before. The 620,000 lives it cost among which 205,215 lives were lost in the ten biggest battles of the war showcased the brutality of the Civil War.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ Sprout & Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*: 170.

¹³⁶ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 6. Kindle.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 258.

¹³⁹ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*.: Chap. 6. Kindle; Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." 114.

¹⁴⁰ "Civil War Casualties" *American Battlefield Trust*. November 16, 2012 (updated January 26, 2023) <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-casualties>.

The priority of Washington's grand strategy turned inward during and after the war. The reconstruction of the Union to build unity through economic development would become the road out of internal fragility. Secretary of State Seward identified "the rapid construction of the transcontinental railroad, a coast-to-coast telegraph line, government subsidies to shipping companies, a policy of cheap public lands, and liberal immigration and naturalization laws" as the motor of the reconstruction.¹⁴¹ A prosperous America would mean a unified America in the mind of many policymakers. Seward wished to combine the internal strengthening of the nation with territorial expansion. His expansionist goals met much opposition, and his failure was followed by a true contraction of U.S. foreign policy to the point of isolationism. The path of U.S. strategic autonomy was damaged by Civil War. A contradiction emerged from the Civil War. While the United States had developed a world-class military force, the trauma of the Civil War generated restraint and limited ambitions.

Internal Troubles

The Civil War was the apex of American internal troubles. The decades of tensions and polarization that grew around slavery finally imploded. The years of war that followed transformed America. While it unleashed some of the U.S. military potentials that were unexplored before, it also generated an era of restraint. The crippling effect of diversified internal troubles kept the army and the National Guards involved in maintaining internal stability. The issues ranged from the reconstruction efforts, policing the West, the Indian Wars, and intervention in labour disputes. The militarized United States that survived its own internal struggle emerged from the Civil War with many opportunities to expand its power and influence, possessed greater leverage against European power than ever before, and was equipped to be a credible deterrent. However, the Reconstruction era was rather marked by a contraction of the military capabilities. Divisions in the political system, especially between Congress and the Executive, paralyzed most expansionist initiatives and created multiple missed opportunities to expand U.S. influence and power. Nevertheless, the strategic autonomy of the United States became increasingly shielded against foreign influence. The resilience of the United States showed the Europeans that Washington had the capabilities to maintain the security of its sphere of influence even after four years of bloody civil war and the adversity of internal disturbances.

Civil War

The Civil War brought the realization that the greatest threat to American "Manifest Destiny" could be Americans themselves. The growing tensions and dissensions between the American States that polarized the Northern and the Southern states finally reached a tipping point. Eleven Southern states declared successively secession between December 1860 and May 1861. More than 620 000 men died during the war. The clash between the North and the South interrupted the rise of the United States as a regional power and opened the door to European involvement in the Western Hemisphere. This fear was also present in the United States. Foreign intervention in the Civil War was an important threat to both the Union and the Confederacy.

While the Southern states had spent the majority of three previous decades before the Civil War protecting, expanding, and shielding the institution of slavery, the Civil War erupted due to the inevitable destitution and end of this inhumane institution. The decades of international restrictions against the slave trade and the abolition of slavery by the British Empire in 1833 finally

¹⁴¹ Ernest N. Paolino. *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 1973): 5.

caught up to the United States and forced Washington to address the institutionalization of slavery in the southern states. The triumphalism of the Southern states reached a critical point. Many alternatives were possible before reaching the armed contest between the North and the South. However, the polarization in the South reached a point where discussion and negotiation toward the progressive emancipation of the slaves in the South was not conceivable. King Cotton's political and diplomatic capital and the embeddedness of slavery within the economic model of the South allowed the dismemberment of the Union.

The war began with the election of the Republican Abraham Lincoln in November 1860 which provoked the secession of eleven Southern States between December 1860 and May 1861 (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina). The outbreak of the war occurred a month after Lincoln's inauguration on April 12, 1861. The Southern states organized as the Confederacy were successful in the first year of the war cumulating important victories against the larger forces of the Union. However, the tide turned in favour of the Union during the early summer of 1862 with the victory at Shiloh and the capture of New Orleans. After the Union victory at Gettysburg in July 1863, the Confederacy's downfall was a question of time. Without getting into the fascinating details that constitute the various campaigns and battles of the Civil War, the destruction created by the conflict weakened the United States which make its strategic autonomy vulnerable to foreign influence.¹⁴²

The Confederacy exploited already existing fears of European powers' involvement. The demands for assistance from Britain and France reminded U.S. strategists that Europe was able to destabilize and undermine the United States in significant ways. The military might of General Robert E. Lee and Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson put in check the defensive northern generals for the first two years of the war. They seized the initiative and concentrated their forces at specific advantageous points allowing a succession of important victories.¹⁴³ The Confederate strategic offensive worked until the battle of Gettysburg after which General Lee had lost too many men to pursue this strategy.

Tensions between the Secretary of State Seward and the British envoy in Washington Lyons generated a difficult situation to manage between the two states. While Adams, the American envoy in London was softening the relations with the British government to secure non-intervention and neutrality in the conflict, Seward was making threats and Lyons was inflating them.¹⁴⁴ Canada was vulnerable to an American declaration of war against Great Britain. The role

¹⁴² The Civil War is a fascinating conflict that continues to amaze the psyche of many generations and foster a tremendous amount of research, academic papers, and books. The vastness of the field of historical study of the Civil War is overwhelming to any academic who engaged with it. I got caught in it and developed a clear passion for it. Needless to say, that I would have included additional information about the battles of the Civil War, but it would be a disservice to the dissertation since it aimed at understanding the external threat the Civil War generated and the signals the internal instability sent to foreign powers and how they tried to affect the U.S. strategic autonomy. I had to tone down my enthusiasm since many significant events had great incidence on the conduct of the war, but not many extrapolated to the international system. The same goes for the reconstruction and the Indians Wars. They destabilized the internal security of the United States and made them more vulnerable to external threat but did not involve direct threat from foreign powers. Their effect is more insidious on the development of the threat level of the United States. It weakened the strategic autonomy of the United States.

¹⁴³ Weigley. "American Strategy from Its Beginnings through the First World." 422-426.

¹⁴⁴ Ephraim Douglass Adams. *Great Britain and the American Civil War (Civil War Classics)*. (New York: Diversion Books. 2014): 147-176.

of London in the Civil War created a schism that would take years to repair. The delivery of warships to the South and the use of British privateers to smuggle munition through the Union blockade were not to be soon forgotten.¹⁴⁵ Seward's willingness to push the British out of the Western Hemisphere was the main motivator for his efforts to annex Canada during and after the war.¹⁴⁶

The Confederate Secretary of the Navy, Stephen R. Mallory, did well with his limited resources. His strategy integrated, first, the use of advanced ironclads to break the Union blockade and attack the Union ports and commerce, and second, extensive commerce raiding against the Union merchant vessels.¹⁴⁷ Most of all, Mallory's willingness to integrate modern warfare techniques and innovations diminished the asymmetry of the Confederate Navy against the Union. The limited capabilities of the Confederates were more than sufficient to drive the Union trade insurance rates up and an exodus of shipowners toward neutral flags.¹⁴⁸ The *guerre de course* endeavours by the Confederates were limited by the inability to bring their capture to prize courts in British or French ports which incentivized most Confederate privateers to sink the Union ships rather than capture them.¹⁴⁹

To resolve the Confederate lack of vessels, Mallory purchased steamers for conversion. However, the lack of facilities for construction and conversion forced him to ask for help overseas.¹⁵⁰ While gunboats and ironclads could be built domestically, any cruisers required international support. Mallory secured, via the actions of his dispatched agents, contracts with British shipbuilders that would eventually build eight cruisers for the Confederate: *Alabama*, *Alexandra*, *Florida*, *Shenandoah*, *Chickamauga*, *Georgia*, *Rappahannock*, and *Tallahassee*.¹⁵¹ In addition, Mallory contracted the construction of four additional cruisers and two ironclads by France.¹⁵² The success was less about the number of ships captured, but how it destabilized the Union trade enough to skyrocket the insurance and created doubt in the market. The Confederates raiders captured 257 U.S. merchant ships, which might seem like a lot, but only represented five percent of the total Union naval commerce.¹⁵³

In the end, wars are a number game. The 5.5 million white Southerners theoretically were not a match to the 21 million Northerners.¹⁵⁴ The industrial North had additional advantages over

¹⁴⁵ Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Kindle): 129.

¹⁴⁶ William Seaward. "Remarks of Mr. Seward." *Boston Herald*, June 24, 1867: 2. Accessed via Readex: America's Historical Newspapers; Cited in Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Kindle): 130.

¹⁴⁷ Spencer C. Tucker. "CSS *Alabama* and Confederate Commerce Raiders during the U.S. Civil War." In *Commerce Raiding: Historical Case Studies, 1755-2009*. Edited by Bruce A. Elleman and S. C. M. Paine. 73-88. (Newport, Naval War College, 2013): 73.

¹⁴⁸ Raimondo Luraghi. *A History of the Confederate Navy*. (London: Chatham Pub. 1996): 232; R. Thomas Campbell. *Southern Thunder: Exploits of the Confederate States Navy*. (Shippensburg: Burd Street Press, 1996): 31; John M. Taylor. *Confederate Raider: Raphael Semmes of the Alabama*. (Washington: Brassey's, 1994): 97

¹⁴⁹ Tucker. "CSS *Alabama* and Confederate Commerce Raiders during the U.S. Civil War.": 75.

¹⁵⁰ Only the Tredegar Iron Works of Richmond in Virginia had the installations to build steam-propulsion systems. See Tucker. "CSS *Alabama* and Confederate Commerce Raiders during the U.S. Civil War": 74.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* 74.

¹⁵² Jay W. Simson. *Naval Strategy of the Civil War: Confederate Innovations and Federal Opportunism*. (Nashville: Cumberland House, 2001): 162.

¹⁵³ Tucker. "CSS *Alabama* and Confederate Commerce Raiders during the U.S. Civil War.": 86.

¹⁵⁴ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*: 228.

the agrarian South. The South was certainly creative in its conduct of the war to palliate the imbalance of force. The North had the advantage in number and resources, but the South had the military might and the bravado to surprise during the first year and a half of the war. While the Confederacy was able to obtain early victories during the war starting with the first battle of the Bull Run, the Union, after the capture of New Orleans (May 1862) and the victory at Antietam (September 1862), ended the probability of Confederate independence. The Emancipation Proclamation, on January 1, 1863, shocked the rhythm of the war. 3.5 million slaves were bound to be freed from servitude. It established an absolute moral upper hand on the South diplomatically. Henry Adams reported from London:

The Emancipation Proclamation has done more for us here than all our former victories and all our diplomacy. It is creating an almost convulsive reaction in our favour all over this country.¹⁵⁵

The Union benefited in a small way from the insurgencies occurring in the South. Guerilla movements in the South led by Newt Knight, Warren Collins, and Bill Owens destabilized the Confederacy in Mississippi, Texas, and North Carolina.¹⁵⁶ The destabilizing effect of the small insurgencies of Southern Unionists showed the fragility of the drastic vision of a slave-holding South guided by King Cotton. Dissent on the home front undermined an already fragile Confederate authority.¹⁵⁷ In *The Political Economy of Slavery*, Eugene Genovese argues that the intrinsic self-defence of the Southern slaveholding elites was rooted in their desire to protect at all costs the roots of their own way of life, slavocracy.¹⁵⁸ This vision was not shared by all Southerners and created diverse forms of resistance including the Southern Unionist insurgencies and the high desertion rate in the Confederate Army.

The Confederacy's and Union's main military leaders almost set themselves a negotiation table for peace without the approval of their respective presidents in April 1865. General Lee offered General Grant an opening for peace negotiation at Appomattox. While Lee was overstepping his authority, Grant stayed within the bound of his responsibilities and asked for a surrender.¹⁵⁹ The surrender and the following occupation of the South created a different end result than what a peace agreement would. However, the end of the Civil War created a new set of opportunities, broke an everlasting and polarizing debate regarding slavery, and released the focus of the nation toward other tasks.

The end of the war did not result in the end of a "state of war."¹⁶⁰ The mindset that took control over the South rarely resulted in peaceful coexistence. The military had, in practice, the power to "replace, vacate, or overrule existing civil officials."¹⁶¹ The occupation of the South

¹⁵⁵ Cited in Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 342; from W.C. Ford (Ed.) *A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861-1865*. (Boston, 1920), I, 243.

¹⁵⁶ Victoria E. Bynum. *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacy*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 37.

¹⁵⁷ Daniel E. Sutherland. "Introduction: The Desperate Side of War." In *Guerrillas, Unionists and Violence on the Confederate Home Front*. Edited by Daniel E. Sutherland. (Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press, 1999): 8.

¹⁵⁸ Eugene D. Genovese. *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965): 3, 270.

¹⁵⁹ Gregory P. Downs. *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015): 1-2.

¹⁶⁰ Downs. *After Appomattox*: 2.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* 14.

officially labelled the Reconstruction endured for another decade after the end of the war. With the end of the Civil War, the United States had also come to the realization that its place on the international stage was tarnished and weakened. European powers had exploited the Civil War to intervene in the Western Hemisphere. The war also had created exhaustion toward military endeavours for many decision-makers and the next twenty-five years would be difficult for those who hoped to expand the United States sphere of influence to the same pace it did in the 1830s and 1840s. Strategic restraint and isolation from world politics were U.S. policy guiding principles until the 1880s.

Reconstruction and Counterrevolution

Internal violence did not end immediately after Appomattox. Former Confederates and Union soldiers collided on diverse occasions; Southerners remained attached to the Confederate leaders and feared black insurrection; and their fear created political and racial violence that would transform the slavery relations into a segregated one that would disfranchise the emancipation of the black population. Rable and Genovese defended that this violent attitude from the Southerners was part of their culture and deeply embedded in their society.¹⁶² Sherman's march to the sea and Sheridan's campaign through the Shenandoah Valley created additional destruction to an already costly four years of war. Two-third of the South's railroad was destroyed or severely damaged; the major Southern cities were in ruins; many major infrastructures were damaged; all Confederate currency became worthless; and most of all, the economic motor of the South, slavery, came to an end.¹⁶³

Sherman and other northern generals wanted to adopt a minimalist approach to the Southern military occupation. The political influence and interventionism in Washington weighed heavily on the South, but the military kept its role for the most part to a minimum. Much like the Roman imperial model, the northern military leadership adopted a minimal occupation "holding provincial capitals and strategic sites, along waterways and roads, and extracting nothing more than loyalty, taxes, trade, and men for warfare."¹⁶⁴ It was not minimal in terms of consequences, but in terms of managing the risk of insurgency, those efforts went a long way to stabilize progressively the south. With over 800 county governments under the authority of the Northern military,¹⁶⁵ careful management and cautious policy implementation were key. However, as with many divisive issues, Reconstruction polarized America once more.

The occupation proceeded in different phases. First, not all territories were conquered at the same time. Key sites and cities were first occupied. The countryside took longer and kept alive patches of rebellions and banditism. Militia units, county patrols, irregular bands, and criminals attacked freedmen regularly going as far as "mutilations, burning at stake, drownings, and display of limbs and skulls as 'trophies' of battle."¹⁶⁶ Those extremely violent instances of white terror

¹⁶² George C. Rable. *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1984); Genovese. *The Political Economy of Slavery*.

¹⁶³ E. Merton Coulter. *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1947): 2-5.

¹⁶⁴ Downs. *After Appomattox*: 17.

¹⁶⁵ Downs. *After Appomattox*: 14.

¹⁶⁶ George C. Rable. *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press. 1984): 28. Though Rable argues that it is difficult to measure effectively the propensity and proportion of those action due to the lack of clear and well documented dataset, he defends that the large number of testimonies to those types of behavior is sufficient to demonstrate that they were problematic throughout the South after Civil War. See *ibid.* 29.

against the black population undermined drastically the efforts of the Freedmen's Bureau to desegregate the South and bring social changes. In addition, many areas were still out of reach of the military. Texas was never conquered and was more complicated to occupy due to the troubles with the Comanches and the French-backed Mexican Emperor threatening the integrity of the state.¹⁶⁷ Mississippi was only partly occupied for a long period due to bureaucratic neglect. South Carolina and parts of Georgia were left without government and under the threat of armed bands. As the occupation set, ex-rebels and bandits moved westward perpetuating internal instability and high insecurity.

The establishment of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) in March 1865 provided extensive authority to the War Department in matters of economy, politics, legal, and social welfare in the South, but most of all for the protection of black interests. The responsibilities of the Freedmen's Bureau were extensive and entered in collision with the core of the WASP culture that dominated and still exercised much influence in the South. The Bureau provided rations to the refugees; supervised the attribution of employment to many freedmen; provided free transportation; distributed lands; approved and supervised wages; and developed healthcare and education for the freedmen.¹⁶⁸ The transition for the five million former slaves required structure and support. The demands of the Bureau of Freedmen held the military involvement high to provide a peaceful transition.

The "duplex authority" of the provisional governors and the military leaders slowed down the process of reconstruction since both could act as veto players in the process of pacification and transition.¹⁶⁹ However, it created an insurance policy to implement progressively a return to civilian rule with a military presence able to intervene in case of trouble. The military presence was set to diminish progressively with the transition to civil authority.¹⁷⁰ Stability was the key to an efficient reconstruction. The events that unfolded tell a different story, however. The progressive apparition of a black voice in southern politics triggered a violent response by white supremacists. The New Orleans and Memphis massacres of 1866 catalyzed a Congressional response to Johnson's laxism and led the reconstruction into its radical Republican phase.¹⁷¹ The intended progress did not occur, but the polarization escalated, and racial violence became a daily burden for many.

The racist response to black suffrage perpetuated furthermore the climate of insecurity in the South. The emergence of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) in 1866 and its rapid gain in popularity contributed to the Southern disturbances post-Civil War. In 1868, recruitment by the KKK created chapters in all former Confederate states and Kentucky.¹⁷² Their campaign of fear of black insurrection mobilized former Confederates soldiers. The Klan was not the only terrorist organization to disturb the reconstruction process as planned by the North. The Knights of the

¹⁶⁷ Downs. *After Appomattox*: 27.

¹⁶⁸ Coulter. *The South During Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. 71-91

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 81.

¹⁷⁰ The diminution of the military presence in the South was fast. Soldiers in the south went from one million in April 1865 to 300 000 in June, to 190 000 in September, to 125 000 in November, and to 90 000 by January 1866. See Downs. *After Appomattox*: 89-90. The rapid demobilization was more motivated by economic imperatives than by the efficiency of the transition.

¹⁷¹ Eric Foner. *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005): 121.

¹⁷² Rable. *But There Was No Peace*: 70-1.

White Camelia, the White Brotherhood, the Pale Faces, and the '76 Association all participated in the efforts to maintain the Republican control in check.¹⁷³ The numerous episodes of violence that followed the formation of those groups terrorized the South and harmed irreparably the efforts of the Reconstruction.

The campaign of 1866 re-established the pre-War tradition of bullying political opponents. The Klan proved to be an essential part of that systematized effort to terrorize Republican supporters and disrupt any events potentially in their favour. Democratic clubs disrupted Republican meetings, burned schools and churches, and killed blacks.¹⁷⁴ With the strengthening of the Klan throughout the South, a campaign of terror against Republican officials and leaders led to a progressive abandonment and disillusionment about the potential of reforming Southern politics.¹⁷⁵ The legal disenfranchisement of the blacks embedded in the Black Codes that resulted from those campaigns broke the ability of the Reconstruction policy to emancipate the black population from the yoke of oppression from the white southerners.

The Shoffner Act of 1870 in response to the increasing violence by the clan led to the imposition of martial law on Alamance and Caswell Counties in North Carolina. After the crash of September 1873, racial tension escalated once more in the Southern states. The five years of economic decline that followed the crisis triggered a decline in the price of cotton and consequently of the economic backbone of the South which led to the emergence of the White Leagues.¹⁷⁶ The White Leagues appeared in the Gulf states where blacks constituted often a near majority of the population; and through violence, intimidation, and illegal actions, the Leaguers rollbacked white supremacy in the South. The 1874 victory of the Democratic Party in Congress appeased some of the tensions and led to the realization that racism was not contained to the South.¹⁷⁷ The loss of coherence in the reconstruction effort ultimately led to its end in 1877 after the election of Rutherford B. Hayes.

The military presence in the South was decreasing progressively with both the demobilization of the Civil War Army and the displacement of forces toward other conflicts. Between 1867 and 1876, the ratio of soldiers per civilian passed from 1:708 to 1:3160.¹⁷⁸ The onerous cost of policing the South was bearing a burden on every side and yield no satisfying outcomes. The opportunity to truly transform the South failed and the racial relations would remain a stain on the U.S. political life that continues to be problematic to this day. The effect of the Reconstruction on the strategic autonomy of the United States created instability that drained resources, exacerbated internal divisions and diverted the national attention from foreign issues as with the Civil War and the Indians Wars. The internal preoccupations of the 1860s and 1870s left

¹⁷³ Kenneth M. Stampp. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. (New York. Vintage Books, 1967): 199; Martin E. Mantell. *Johnson, Grant, and the Politics of Reconstruction*. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1973): 93; Foner. *Forever Free*: 171.

¹⁷⁴ Rable. *But There Was No Peace*: 77.

¹⁷⁵ Klansmen forced Republican officials to resign during 1871 in North Florida, others assassinated local and states officials in Georgia. See Rable. *But There Was No Peace*: 96.

¹⁷⁶ Michael W. Fitzgerald. *Splendid Failure: Postwar Reconstruction in the American South*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007): 178-180; Foner. *Forever Free*: 190.

¹⁷⁷ Foner. *Forever Free*: 190-191; and see more in Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2014): Chap. 11.

¹⁷⁸ Rable. *But There Was No Peace*: 109.

little resources and energy toward the development of a grand diplomatic project aimed at projecting U.S. foreign influence.

Indians Wars

The reconstruction disturbances did not stop at the Southern insurrection. The Indian Wars jeopardized the expansionist push westward. As an answer, the Federal government engaged in a genocidal campaign against the Indians. The Congressional strains on the military effective available to police the Indian frontiers precipitated the decision to engage in an extermination policy rather than comprehensive measures to stop the insurgents while protecting the civilian population. Indiscriminate killing became the trade of the military over the Indian population.

A population of over 300,000 indigenous were occupying the land leading to the resources-rich West Coast. Many had already been pushed westward by the massive deportations of the 1830s. The Sioux composed the main foe against the U.S. Army along with the Apaches in the Southwest; the Utes, Bannocks, Sheepeaters, Paiutes, Shoshones, Modocs, and Nez Perce in the Rocky Mountains and the Northwest; and the Comanches, Cheyennes, Arapahos, Kiowas in the Plains. The Sioux were the most elusive throughout the Indian War. Their nomadic lifestyle and the inoculation against smallpox by the government in 1832 helped the Sioux in their resistance against the U.S. Army.¹⁷⁹

Already in 1862, the Santee Sioux (Dakota) of Minnesota mobilized against the white settlers due to a combination of downsizing of their territory, bad crops, and failure to provide promised federal funds and money.¹⁸⁰ The condemnation to death of 303 Santees warriors found guilty of killing settlers triggered the escalation of the uprising.¹⁸¹ The conflict spread rapidly to Dakota and Montana Territories. All the Sioux tribes were now opposing the United States and the settlers were eager to expand the might of the American nation westward. As a response, Congress passed a “forcible removal of all Sioux from Minnesota” and moved them to present-day South Dakota.¹⁸² Forced removals of Native American were disastrous to their traditions and culture but were often the lesser evil of the other strategies of the U.S. government. Occurrences of massacres and the use of biowarfare against indigenous settlements quickly became common practices by the Army dispatched in the western territories. Indiscriminate killing only inflamed the conflict and led to greater organization among the indigenous forces to face the U.S. army.

Raids were still common along the trails leading to the west coast. In 1864 and 1865, the Cheyenne-Arapaho conducted retaliatory raids along the Oregon Trail near Fort Mitchell and Laramie after the Third Colorado Cavalry attacked the peaceful Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek. General Pope’s offensive during the spring of 1865 only worsened the situation with the Indigenous populations. The five thousand troops composed mainly of volunteers were costly and inefficient against the mobile Plains tribes.¹⁸³ The large cavalry forces deployed did not deter the Native Americans. The securitization of the Santa Fe, Oregon and Bozeman Trails and the Missouri River became a challenge for the next fifteen years. Ultimately, multiple treaties were signed with the various tribes which often followed a horrendous massacre committed by the U.S.

¹⁷⁹ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press. 2012): 388, Scribd.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 381; and Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*. 169.

¹⁸¹ Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*: 185.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* 185-6.

¹⁸³ Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. 112-113.

Army. The Treaties of Medicine Lodge of 1867 established reservations for the Kiowa and Comanche Tribes, the Kiowa-Apaches, and the Cheyennes and Arapahos.¹⁸⁴ The following year, the Fort Laramie Treaty resolved the ongoing war with Red Cloud and secured the land adjacent to the Bozeman Trail for the Sioux bands and included the abandonment of the Bozeman Trail forts by the U.S. Army.¹⁸⁵

The transcontinental railroad created renewed points of friction. In 1866, General Sherman proposed in his annual report, the establishment of a “Indian-free railroad belt” in the West.¹⁸⁶ In October 1867, Kiowa, Comanche, Kiowa-Apache, Cheyenne, and Arapaho chiefs signed treaties at Medicine Lodge Creek in Kansas where they agreed to resettle in reservations.¹⁸⁷ The Peace Commission also secured treaties and resettlements for the Sioux and the other Northern Tribes in mid-1868.¹⁸⁸ The treaties were short-lived and the violence between white and Indians started over. As a response, General Sheridan ordered Lt. Col. Luther P. Bradley to conduct winter raids on the tribes and “kill all the buffalo we find.”¹⁸⁹ His strategy allowed him to concentrate the remaining population in specific areas and leave them vulnerable to total warfare. It still took almost ten years for the U.S. Army to remove the essential of the Indian threat in the West.

The discovery of gold in Deadwood Gulch on Sioux Land in 1875 triggered a renewal of armed engagement against the Native Americans. Gold-seeking whites destabilized the already fragile peace. The ill-equipped and ill-prepared regulars dispatched to contain the indigenous troubles adopted tactics of indiscriminate violence in an attempt to terrorize the tribes that were apt and trained to fight under the conditions found in the western territories. The tribes were sometimes better equipped than the regulars who carried a single-shot, breechloading, black-powder Springfield rifle until 1892.¹⁹⁰ While some Indians were still fighting with bows and arrows, many Indians purchased repeaters well before the Indian Wars were over, providing them with an advantage over the single-shot rifles issued by the U.S. Army. Elusive guerrilla fighters and unwilling to engage in pitched battles, the Indians had the upper hand often during the summer campaign, but the U.S. Army exploited their encampment during the winter to exterminate many tribes where exposure and starvation would often eliminate the ones who escape the assault. The Apache War and the Sioux War for the Black Hills started in 1876 and showed again that the U.S. policy was more designed to please the interest of the settlers than to protect the ancestral interests of the first nations. The 1877 Nez Percé’s insurrection revived the grievances of many other tribes including the Bannock, the Sheepeater, and the Ute that had entered treaties and led to another twenty-five years of instability.

The system of reservation exacerbated many of the indigenous grievances and created new ones. Institutional problems also created further problems in the implementation of the reservation system. The Bureau of Indian Affairs administered the reservation system, but the War Department enforced it.¹⁹¹ Rather than providing an area of self-governance, the military presence created an unsustainable environment for the indigenous population. The Indian Wars drained most of the

¹⁸⁴ Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*: 241.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. 116-117.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 129.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 130.

¹⁹⁰ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 385, Scribd.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.* 383.

military resources after the Civil War. Treated as an internal issue, the Indian Wars did not receive international attention and the European powers stayed neutral with the situation as they expected other powers to be with their colonial insurrections across the globe. Humanitarian rights were of little consequence when it comes to indigenous populations, and this indiscriminately among all the major powers of that period. The U.S. internal struggles became particularly important during that period since they threatened the ability of Washington to adequately maintain a sufficient level of credibility to the Monroe Doctrine. In addition, the internal fragility of the United States diverted most of the federal government resources which limited those devoted to foreign policy.

North American Territorial Control

The era following the Civil War was marked by numerous obstacles against territorial expansion. Most of this opposition crystallized in Congress and the Senate. The main motivator for this opposition was often race. The proposed annexations were often in majority non-white in the majority which was problematic for a freshly reunified union still deeply divided by racial issues and post-slavery prejudices. However, the annexation of Alaska occurred *in extremis* before all other annexations were blocked by Congress or the Senate even though that had multiple occasions. Canada also experienced its last major attempt to be annexed to the United States. Canada had also to suffer the aftereffects of London's veiled support to the Confederates during the Civil War.

Internal expansion took an accelerated pace after the Civil War with the introduction of the 1862 Homestead Act and the development of the transcontinental railroad. The Homestead Act allowed any settlers in the western territories to own 160 acres of surveyed government land after occupying it for five years and also allow the claimant to own land for \$1.25 per acre after 6 months.¹⁹² In combination with the transcontinental railroad, this measure was an important incentive for the expansion of the population westward. The completion of the transcontinental railroad had also the benefit of reducing considerably the strategic importance of the Panama and Nicaragua railroads. Domestic railroad development eased the transit to the west coast and reduced the dependence on foreign infrastructures vulnerable to national trouble and foreign interventions.

Alaska

Alaska had been a colossal burden to Russia. Unprofitable, it diverted much-needed resources from Europe. In addition, the settlements were undermanned and presented a security risk.¹⁹³ Russia was interested to sell before the Civil War, but the events leading to the Civil War and the war itself postponed their efforts.¹⁹⁴ The sale price was 7.2 million dollars. The 586000 square miles were sold for 2 cents an acre.¹⁹⁵ It was a bargain, but an unpopular one at the time. However, Seward was not the only one to perceive Alaska as a strategic asset. Secretary Seward and Charles Sumner, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, were essential in the realization of the purchase.

¹⁹² Transcript of Homestead Act (1862). Accessed March 12, 2023.

<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=31&page=transcript>.

¹⁹³ James R. Gibson. "Why the Russians Sold Alaska." *The Wilson Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (Summer, 1979): 184; Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 365.

¹⁹⁴ The Russian diplomats approached their American counterparts in the 1850s and 1860s in order to sell the Russian American colony. Frank A. Golder. "The Purchase of Alaska." *The American Historical Review* 25, no. 4 (Apr. 1920): 411-425.

¹⁹⁵ Gibson. "Why the Russians Sold Alaska.": 179.

Édouard de Stoeckl, the Russian Minister made known his intention to propose the sale of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. The agreement concluded between Stoeckl and Seward showed the difficulty of ratifying international treaties during that period. While many doors opened to the United States for extraterritorial acquisitions, the House and the Senate would ultimately deny most of them even if they were advantageous, cheap, and well negotiated. The Seward-Stoeckl treaty was submitted for ratification on March 30, and the Senate approved it on April 9 and ratified it on May 28, but Congress took more than a year to appropriate the 7.2 million dollars in gold.¹⁹⁶ This is even though Art. VI of the treaty gave ten months after the exchange of ratifications.¹⁹⁷

Secretary Seward became the main polarizing element of this Treaty. Rather than being directly opposed to the annexation of the territory, the congressman, senators, and editorialists became vociferously against Seward.¹⁹⁸ Charles Sumner was able to underline the importance of the natural resources of Alaska and that the acquisition would only reinforce the Monroe Doctrine by removing Imperialist Russia from the continent. The purchase under the advocacy of Sumner was approved on April 9, 1867, by a vote of 37 to 2.¹⁹⁹ The last difficulty of the purchase came from Congress which was reluctant to appropriate the funds. The appropriation of funds for “Seward Icebox” was the last obstacle to completing the purchase. After tergiversation in Congress, the appropriation of funds was finally approved on July 14, 1868.

Canada

Many times, throughout the Americano-Canadian relationship, discourses regarding the inevitability of the annexation of Canada to the United States would disturb both the relations with the Canadian colony and with the British authorities. The end of the 1854 Reciprocity Treaty in 1866 cut the trade incentives to leave Canada independent. A racist United States was more at ease with annexing a British colony than former Spanish colonies in the South. Ultimately, the British recognition of the federal dominion of Canada in the British North America Act in March 1867 would create an institutional precedent that posed an additional obstacle to the annexation of Canada.

Confederate raids across the Canadian border during the Civil War spurred a series of negative measures against Canada. The Union ended the Rush-Bagot Treaty and the Reciprocity (Marcy-Elgin) Treaty and implemented new passport restrictions.²⁰⁰ Canada became perceived by the Palmerston government as vulnerable to a Union assault and put in place measures to garrison the border and reinforce the Atlantic Coast.²⁰¹ This occurred even though Canada adopted a stance

¹⁹⁶ Gibson. “Why the Russians Sold Alaska.”: 180; Petty politics and dubious claims of malversation were made against Russia to delay the payment. The role of Congress was quite disappointing for the Russian relations to the point where Stoeckl was worrying about the fact that Russia would cede the territory without being paid. See Golder. “The Purchase of Alaska.”: 422-3.

¹⁹⁷ “Transcript of Check for the Purchase of Alaska (1868).” *Our Documents*, accessed January 26, 2021. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=41&page=transcript>.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas A. Bailey “Why the United States Purchased Alaska.” *Pacific Historical Review*. 3, no. 1 (Mar., 1934): 39-49.

¹⁹⁹ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 368. Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 398.

²⁰⁰ Brian Schoen. “The Fates of Republics and Empires Hang in the Balance: The United States and Europe during the Civil War.” *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 2 (April, 2013): 44-5. The Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 had guaranteed Newfoundland fisheries availability to American fishermen. However, the end of the 1854 treaty during the Civil War broke this privilege.

²⁰¹ Kori Schake. *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017): 107.

of strict neutrality early on. Canada was more vulnerable than ever whatever the issue of the war was. An independent Confederacy would offset the balance of power in America and prompt the Union to invade Canada to restore the hegemony of the United States; and, on the other hand, a victorious Union could spur an annexationist movement to catch all of North America.²⁰²

Secretary of State William H. Seward put more effort than anybody during that period to annex the Canadian territory. In 1860, Seward was already claiming that the “Canadian West from St. Boniface (Manitoba) to Victoria (British Columbia) would inevitably gravitate to the United States.”²⁰³ His position displayed his misunderstanding of Canadian politics and the process that was occurring toward self-government in 1867. The Dominion of Canada composed of the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick was now an unlikely target for American annexation.

In 1866, Irish-American rebels organized under the name of the Fenian Brotherhood planned to take control of Canada. The Irish veterans of the Civil War of the Fenian Brotherhood coordinated an offensive on Campobello Island in New Brunswick on St-Patrick’s Day to establish a base of operation in America for the Irish Republic.²⁰⁴ The objective of the Fenian raids in Canada was to pressure London to withdraw from Ireland. President Johnson accepted to cooperate with the Canadian authorities to stop the invasion and send General Meade to repress the invasion on April 19. Other attempts occurred in May and June 1866 into the Niagara Peninsula, and near the border of Quebec in June 1866 and May 1870.²⁰⁵

British Colombia was a different story. With a small and highly indebted colony of 10000 inhabitants in 1866,²⁰⁶ the province was vulnerable to conquest, but also to be co-opted toward annexation. Still not a part of the British North American Act, the western territories were more vulnerable to annexation. The dominance of the Hudson’s Bay Company ended, and the grievances of the settlers, many of them of American origin, opened a door to the United States.²⁰⁷ Seward searched to take advantage of this situation. The role that played Great Britain in supporting Confederate Navy was a legitimate ground for reparation, and part of that reparation could be part

²⁰² David P. Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*. (New York: Wiley. 1975): 30.

²⁰³ David E. Shi. “Seward’s Attempt to Annex British Columbia, 1865-1869.” *Pacific Historical Review*. 47, no. 2 (May, 1978): 218.

²⁰⁴ Hereward Senior. *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*. (Toronto: Dundurn Press. 1991): 48; Robert L. Dallison. *Turning Back the Fenians: New Brunswick’s Last Colonial Campaign*. (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions. 2006): 10. The large Irish population in New Brunswick and Maine provided a strong entry point to destabilize the British hold on Canada. On the other hand, it created tension between the United States and Canada because of the American root of the problem.

²⁰⁵ Senior. *The Last Invasion of Canada: The Fenian Raids, 1866-1870*.

²⁰⁶ Shi. “Seward’s Attempt to Annex British Columbia, 1865-1869.”: 220. Before the discovery of gold in the Fraser in 1858, British Colombia was mainly a Hudson’s Bay Company’s post. The discovery of gold brought many Californians who would ultimately be in favor of annexation. The discovery of the Cariboo mines in 1860 rebalanced the demographic pressure toward staying in the confederation by bringing more people from Eastern Canada and England in the 1860s. See F. W. Howay. “British Columbia’s Entry into Confederation.” *Report of the Annual Meeting/Rapport annuels de la Société historique du Canada*. 6, no. 1 (1927): 67; Hugh Keenleyside. “How B.C. Was Almost Annexed by the U.S.A.” *Canadian Dimension* 8, no. 3 (1971): 26. Robson underlines that American settlers in British Colombia represented around 75 percent of the population of British Colombia. See Maureen M. Robson. “The Alabama Claims and the Anglo-American Reconciliation, 1865-71.” *The Canadian Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (Mar. 1961): 5.

²⁰⁷ Reginald G. Trotter. “Canada as a Factor in Anglo-American Relations of the 1860’s.” *The Canadian Historical Review* 16, no. 1 (Mar. 1935): 19-20.

of Canada's territory. He proposed to include British Columbia in the resolution of the *Alabama* dispute. In addition, not much opposition emerged from the British officials in Canada against the idea of annexation. The main opposition came from the colonists themselves.²⁰⁸

Trouble in Canada and temptation for American annexation re-emerged again in 1869. The revolt of the Metis of Rupert's Land led by Louis Riel tempted the Americans to move forward with the annexation of the Western provinces of Canada. President Grant and his Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish, received positively the renewal of sympathies from British Columbia and Manitoba to annex and the need for help from the Metis.²⁰⁹ However, Canadian Premier, John A. Macdonald resolved both the national and the international crises. First, the rapid dispatch of troops which stopped the insurrection and executed the leaders put an end to the violence. The Red River Settlement in July 1870 led to the integration of Manitoba into the Canadian Confederation and Louis Riel was exiled to the United States.²¹⁰

The possibility of annexation re-emerged under President Grant. With the settlement of the *Alabama* issue, the British Minister guaranteed to Secretary of State Fish that London would not oppose the annexation of Canada "if Canadians wanted annexation."²¹¹ The 1871 Treaty of Washington ended the unresolved issues between the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. This put an end to the discussion about the annexation of Canada during that period.

Latin America

Secretary Seward and President Grant attempted to acquire additional territories in Latin America during their tenure. Seward sought to acquire Panama and the Virgin Islands. Grant played with the possibility of acquiring Cuba, the Dominican Republic. The prospect of a naval base in the Caribbean was increasingly burgeoning as a strategic asset demanded by some strategists and policymakers. The protection of the trade coming out of the Mississippi Valley and the Gulf ports in addition to the increasing U.S. interest in the Caribbean created sufficient strategic pressure to consider the addition of a naval base in the Caribbean.

The intrusion by European powers in Central America during the Civil War threatened the Monroe Doctrine. The Civil War broke the ability of the United States to pose a credible threat to the European powers. The uncertainty of the issue of the Civil War provoked an opening to reshuffle the geostrategic distribution of power and allowed France and Spain to acquire strategic assets. The Spanish return to Santo Domingo maintained the weakening strategic presence in the Caribbean. The French presence in Mexico meant at worst the possibility of a Tropical Empire that would take over Latin America, at best the return of Mexico into civil war to remove the European despot. The inevitability of the Union victory after 1863 made the maintenance of Emperor Maximilian unlikely. Bismarck's move on Austria required France's full attention and left Maximilian to its own devices.

Even though Washington was rather focused on internal issues throughout the 1860s and 1870s, *ad hoc* interventions in Latin America to protect U.S. citizens and interests occurred. In

²⁰⁸ Hugh Keenleyside. "How B.C. Was Almost Annexed by the U.S.A." *Canadian Dimension* 8, no. 3 (1971): 27.

²⁰⁹ Alvin C. Gluek Jr. "The Riel Rebellion and Canadian-American Relations." *The Canadian Historical Review* 36, no. 3 (Sept. 1955): 199.

²¹⁰ Laurence Armand French and Magdaleno Manzanarez. *North American Border Conflicts: Race, Politics, and Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 2017): 77-78.

²¹¹ Walter LaFeber. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963): 34.

March 1865, U.S. forces landed in Panama to protect U.S. citizens and their property during the revolution.²¹² Twice in February 1866 American forces landed in Montevideo, Uruguay, after local threats to American interests.²¹³ In 1867, U.S. Marines occupied Managua and Leon.²¹⁴ Twice in May 1873, American forces landed in Panama City at the demand of the American consul.²¹⁵ In 1873 and 1875, U.S. troops intervened in Remolino against the Kickapoos and Las Cuevas against Mexican bandits.²¹⁶ Again in 1874, Marines were sent to Matamoros to protect American citizens.²¹⁷ Washington could not entirely deny its role as a security provider in the Western Hemisphere.

Mexico

Mexico was not indifferent to the troubles generated by Civil War in the United States. Since the 1850s, Mexicans experienced successive episodes of internal disturbance and violence. The state came close to collapse. Struggles between Liberals and Conservatives fostered a civil war that incited the European powers to intervene. After the Liberal Benito Juarez took control of Mexico City, was elected president, and suspended the payment of Mexico's interest on foreign debt.²¹⁸ In July 1861, the French Minister in Mexico encouraged that his government along with Spain and England to take over the Mexican customhouse to retrieve their unpaid interests.²¹⁹ The three states agreed to intervene in October 1861 and captured Veracruz in early 1862. The French decided unilaterally and against the Treaty of London to move to Mexico City and removed President Juarez. Unfortunately, this meant a return to colonial rule in Mexico since Napoleon III placed the Archduke Maximilian of Austria as the Emperor of Mexico in 1864.

The Juarez resistance organized against the French invader and was able to defeat the French Army at Puebla on May 5, 1862. With the coming of French reinforcement, Juarez vacated the power and organized a guerilla resistance which was forced up north.²²⁰ The 28,000 French soldiers and their additional foreign legion of 8,000 Belgians and Austrians held the country by a thread.²²¹ At the time, Secretary Seward was in an awkward situation. He was opposed to the recognition of Maximilian, but he did not even bother to invoke the Monroe Doctrine and was also unwilling to overtly support Juarez since it could create a French-Confederate alliance. However, he anticipated that a "person alien to Mexico" would fall without active support from the European powers.²²² The end of the Civil War and the European turmoil of a rising Prussian power pressured Napoleon III to leave Maximilian to his own devices in 1866. Seward asked France to set a definitive date for French evacuation on February 12, 1866, which was almost convenient to

²¹² Barbara Torreon Salazar and Sofia Plagakis. "Instances of Use of the United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2022." *CRS Report*. Updated March 8, 2022. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42738.pdf>: 5.

²¹³ Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." 128.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ *Ibid.* 6.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ William Spence Robertson. "The Tripartite Treaty of London." *The Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 20, no. 2 (May, 1940): 167-168.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* 169.

²²⁰ Howard F. Cline. *The United States and Mexico*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963): 48.

²²¹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 391.

²²² Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*. 159.

Napoleon who required more troops to manage Bismarck.²²³ The timing was convenient for both France and the United States.

In light of the French occupation of Mexico that violated the Monroe Doctrine to its core, the U.S. government launched a compellence initiative to force the French out of Mexico. First, General Schofield was dispatched to Paris to demand the withdrawal of the French forces and its puppet Emperor.²²⁴ General Grant kept the 52 000 troops mobilized in Texas to the Mexican border combined with formal diplomatic warning from Secretary Seward to put an end to the French opportunism.²²⁵ Napoleon III withdrew his support to the government of Maximilian. President Benito Juarez and General Porfirio Diaz campaigned against the forces of Emperor Maximilian leading to his defeat and execution in 1867. After the death of Juarez in 1872, his Vice-President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada took over. Diaz launched a rebellion against Lerdo in January 1876 and defeated Lerdo in November. Diaz brought a semblance of stability to Mexico that lasted until 1911. His government was able to bring Mexico into modernity. The previous government had been unable to remain in power to implement any meaningful policy. The Porfirian ideology was based on the *Cientificos* movement. The *Cientificos* constituted a philosophy based on French Positivism that focused on the “scientific allocation of scarce skills and scanty resources by an appointed élite, drawn exclusively from the ‘rational’ (science-minded) and productive Mexicans.”²²⁶

While the Mexican central government was more stable than ever, banditism and indigenous insurrections still fostered border tensions between Mexico and the United States. Instability at the Mexican far southwest border in the late 1870s led to a series of interventions without the approval of Mexico City to purchase bandits and insurrectionists. Lieutenant Colonel Shafter and Lieutenant Bullis crossed on multiple occasions in Mexican territory during expeditions against Indian forces.²²⁷ President Hayes announced a policy of “hot pursuit” across the border on June 1, 1877, which undermined further U.S.-Mexican relations.²²⁸ From 1877 to 1880, a state of permanent instability in New Mexico and Arizona drained valuable military resources away from the Reconstruction efforts and led to incursion in the Mexican territory destabilizing the already fragile relations between the two states.

Santo Domingo

The Spanish opportunism was obvious and provocative to the United States when Madrid decided to re-occupied once more Santo Domingo a month after the outbreak of the Civil War. Spain violated the Monroe Doctrine with their action in Santo Domingo. However, Madrid, even with 28,000 men stationed on the island, was unable to hold the island.²²⁹ In early 1865, Santo Domingo was once more independent. The violent Dominican revolt with the complicity of the

²²³ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 393.

²²⁴ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 380, Scribd.

²²⁵ Charles A. Kupchan. *Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself from the World*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. Kindle): 131; and Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 380, Scribd; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 393-4.

²²⁶ Cline. *The United States and Mexico*. 54.

²²⁷ Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. 185.

²²⁸ *Ibid.* 186.

²²⁹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 395.

yellow fever disseminated the Spanish ranks and freed once more the island from the yoke of Spain. Instability followed suit until 1882.

The case of the Dominican Republic represents a puzzling situation since the authorities of Santo Domingo were offering themselves to integrate the United States. Santo Domingo was available for annexation after the departure of Spain in 1865. Seward visited Santo Domingo in 1866 to discuss annexation. In 1866, Secretary Sewal and President Cabral opened negotiations for the sale of Samana Bay.²³⁰ The discussion about Samana Bay progressively evolved toward talks about annexation when General Báez came to power. While Seward agreed that Santo Domingo would be easily absorbed into the Union, he did not sign any formal agreement before the end of his tenure in March 1869.²³¹ During President Johnson's lame duck period, Nathaniel P. Banks, the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, tried to pass a resolution that would allow the president to "extend a protectorate over Santo Domingo and Haiti" which was defeated 63-110.²³² President Grant hoped to resolve the issue of Santo Domingo and bring the island as a protectorate. The project leapfrogged into two treaties, one for the lease of Samana Bay and the other for the annexation of the republic. The treaty of annexation was signed in September 1869 between President Buenaventura Baez and the President's Grant special envoy, General Orville E. Babcock.²³³ While not formally authorized to sign any diplomatic document, Babcock signed both treaties without even discussing with the President and the President himself discovered after the fact the opposition that this annexation would face from, first, Secretary of State Fish, and second, from the Senate.²³⁴

Following the backlash of his unauthorized move, Babcock was first reattributed the task of negotiating a lease on Samana Bay. However, Grant changed his mind and wanted complete annexation. In March 1870, the Committee on Foreign Relations recommended the rejection of the treaty based mainly on racial issues which according to the Committee would lead to an impossible continuous jurisdiction by the United States over the Island.²³⁵ Ultimately, the Senate rejected the treaty in June 1870 with a vote of 28 to 28.

President Grant favoured the annexation since it was low cost and yield high benefits. Since Santo Domingo was proposing annexation, no military intervention was necessary. The strategic position of Santo Domingo would have provided a base of operation near the transit routes in the Caribbean and would have challenged the British naval dominance in the region. The annexation was more favourable than Cuba since it was not requiring a direct confrontation with Spain. Grant was defeated in his effort by the Senate. Sumner lobbied to defeat the annexation in the Senate.

Danish West Indies and St. Bartholomew

During the Civil War, the lack of American military presence in the West Indies was perceived as a strategic problem that needed to be solved.²³⁶ It had ramifications for the security

²³⁰ Theodore C. Smith. "Expansion after the Civil War, 1865-71." *Political Science Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (Sep., 1901): 414.

²³¹ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 81.

²³² Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 402.

²³³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 81-82.

²³⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 404.

²³⁵ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 82.

²³⁶ W. Stull Holt. *Treaties Defeated by the Senate: A Study of the Struggle Between President and Senate Over the Conduct of Foreign Relations*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933): 105.

of the region, the maintenance of naval presence in proximity of the transcontinental isthmus, and the efficiency of the blockade during the civil war. The Danish West Indies (Virgin Islands) represented a geostrategic asset that could greatly benefit the United States.

Seward obtained a deal to purchase the Islands of St. Thomas and St. John in 1867 for 7.5 million dollars.²³⁷ Denmark and the United States agreed to a treaty on October 24, 1867. Unfortunately, an earthquake, a hurricane, and a tidal wave ravaged the islands almost at the same time.²³⁸ In addition to the natural disaster that diminished the appeal of the islands, opposition to the annexation was also organized in the United States. The Committee on Foreign Relations submitted a recommendation to reject the treaty.²³⁹ Even though the Danish ratified the treaty and the local population voted in majority to annex, the treaty was left unratified to die in the Senate.²⁴⁰

Secretary Seward approached also Sweden to purchase the island of St. Bartholomew. Congress had let the Senate know that it would not provide the financial means to acquire additional territory the month after the signature of the treaty for the Danish West Indies.²⁴¹ Congress was particularly hostile to both President Johnson whom they tried to impeach in 1868 and to Secretary Seward. Therefore, Seward's efforts with Sweden were destined to fail from the start. The proponents of expansion that hoped that the inauguration of President Grant would calm down Congress against expansionist projects were disappointed. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations recommended against the annexation in 1870.²⁴²

This situation became threatening for the United States because of the possibility that Denmark could decide to offer the Islands to European powers. The French took an option on the Island of St. Croix, but never followed through.²⁴³ In 1873, the rumour that the Danish offered St. Thomas to Germany in exchange for the portion of Schleswig taken by Prussia in 1864 preoccupied the Secretary of State Fish.²⁴⁴ The opportunity to acquire the Islands emerged again in 1873-74 under President Grant and Secretary of State Fish, but again Congress blocked the possibility of acquiring the Island from Denmark.

Cuba

The interest to annex Cuba declined sharply after the Civil War. Cuba was problematic for two main reasons. First, Cuba remained a slave state until 1880. The addition of a slave state would generate a potentially difficult situation for the Southern states to manage already. Second, the economic and strategic relevance of the island had declined due to the railroad system connecting the east coast to the west coast.²⁴⁵ President Grant showed interest in the fate of Cuba. He was willing early on during the 1868-1878 insurrection to recognize the belligerency status of the Cuban nationals.²⁴⁶ Secretary of State Fish refrained Grant from doing so since it would have

²³⁷ Kupchan. *Isolationism*: 137.

²³⁸ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 362.

²³⁹ Holt. *Treaties Defeated by the Senate*: 107. In addition, not long after the treaty was signed an earthquake and a tornado visited the Islands providing additional munitions to Congress against the ratification. See *ibid.* 109.

²⁴⁰ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 362.

²⁴¹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 402.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 403.

²⁴³ Dexter Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1966): 31.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 27.

²⁴⁵ Doris A. Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy: A History of U.S. Intervention Policies and Practices*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1959): 71.

²⁴⁶ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 71; Fish. *American Diplomacy*. 366.

probably meant war with Spain. Ironically, Grant was ready to do what President Lincoln and Secretary Seward had worked to avoid during the Civil War: the recognition of belligerency.

President Grant ended up not intervening in Cuba and not recognizing the belligerency of the rebels since it might have triggered an open conflict with Spain. Even though Secretary of War John A. Rawlings advocated fervently for an intervention, President Grant sided with Secretary of State Fish and denied the possibility of intervention. Fish proposed an approach oriented toward “informal control” over the island based on the obtention of Cuban independence and emancipation from Spain “in exchange for an indemnity payment guaranteed by the United States.”²⁴⁷ Fish apprehended that an independent Cuba would integrate economically with the United States to such a degree that Washington would control its finances and be able to limit European interference.²⁴⁸

The diplomatic risk of Cubans in exile intermingling with rebels triggered a crisis with Spain in 1873. A Spanish gunboat seized the ship *Virginus* suspected rightfully of trafficking arms for the rebels.²⁴⁹ The *Virginus* was flying the American flag illegally.²⁵⁰ All the fifty-three crew members were executed by the Spanish authorities in Santiago. However, among the crew members were American and British citizens. The violence of the *Virginus* events triggered outrage but did not generate the political will to intervene. The “jingo press” caught the story and created a “war hysteria.”²⁵¹ The illegality of the actions of the *Virginus* did not constitute sufficient grounds for armed intervention against Spain to Secretary Fish.

With the Civil War still ongoing in Cuba, President Grant and Secretary Fish decided to adopt a multilateral approach to solve the situation. Fish proposed to the six major European powers to pressure diplomatically Spain to stop the war in Cuba in 1875. Written on November 5, 1875, Dispatch No. 266 to Caleb Cushing was a departure from the Monroe Doctrine but was in line with Fish’s foreign policy.²⁵² The multilateral approach proposed to the Cuban civil war was a cheap solution that contravened to the Monroe Doctrine. In an effort to minimize U.S. foreign involvement, Fish proposed:

In the absence of any prospect of a termination of the war, or of any change in the manner in which it has been conducted on either side, he [the President] feels that the time is at hand when it may be the duty of other governments to intervene, solely with a view of bringing to an end a disastrous and destructive conflict and of restoring peace in the island of Cuba.²⁵³

While vague on which “other governments” should intervene, Fish “initially planned to send the despatch only to Spain and Britain,” but was willing to send it to France, Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy and Portugal if Spain would not budge.²⁵⁴ His plan failed since miscommunication led to the

²⁴⁷ Jay Sexton. “The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875.” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 30, No. 3 (June 2006): 346.

²⁴⁸ Sexton. “The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875.” 346.

²⁴⁹ Kupchan. *Isolationism*: 142.

²⁵⁰ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 380-1

²⁵¹ Sexton. “The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875.” 348.

²⁵² Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 389.

²⁵³ “Correspondence between the United States Government and Spain in Relation to the Island of Cuba.” Accessed March 24, 2023. <https://www.latinamericanstudies.org/book/US-Spain-Cuba-1875.pdf>, p. 11.

²⁵⁴ Sexton. “The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875.” 357.

involvement of all the U.S. ministers concerned in Europe. Fish's failure to preserve trilateral negotiation with Britain and Spain was not an option anymore. Fortunately for the Monroe Doctrine, the European powers were more preoccupied with the situation in the Balkans than with a minor crisis in the Western Hemisphere. Otherwise, Fish's efforts could have created a precedent of multilateral conflict resolution in the U.S. sphere of influence which would have broken the U.S. strategic autonomy. As a near failure of U.S. strategic autonomy, Fish's dispatch No. 266 was illustrative of the grand strategy crisis following the Civil War.

The irony of the grand military hero of the Civil War unable to maintain an army and a navy able and ready to respond to the strategic ambitions of the United States and demonstrate the regional superiority of the United States must have been disappointing for President Grant. While the annexation of Cuba would have been logical to most expansionists, the status of the U.S. capabilities demanded a diplomatic solution and one that required the support of stronger powers. Secretary Fish's policy toward Cuba violated the Monroe Doctrine and signalled to the European powers that crises in the Western Hemisphere could be resolved multilaterally. Washington would react very differently to a crisis similar to the *Virginius* in 1898 with the *Maine*.

Colombia

After the Civil War, Seward's attempt to purchase Tigre Island in the Gulf of Fonseca at the end of the Nicaraguan route triggered some inquietude from Colombia. Acting President Garrido was concerned about the risk of the end of the Treaty of 1846 which triggered openness toward the conclusion of other agreements with Britain and France.²⁵⁵ The failure to renew the Treaty of 1846 under both Johnson and Grant and the conclusions of the Canal Commission in 1876 that favoured the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal led to a renewed competition for the exploitation of the Canal.²⁵⁶ Both the Cushing Treaty of 1869 and the Hulburt Treaty of 1870 were not ratified by the Senate.

In 1878, the French endeavoured to build a canal in Panama headed by Lucien Wyse and Ferdinand de Lesseps threaten one of the core principles of the Monroe Doctrine. Lucien Wyse, a French Navy officer, mapped a safe plan for the isthmus and secured the concession from the Colombian government to build and operate the Canal. In 1879, Ferdinand de Lesseps, the famous engineer who built the Suez Canal, purchased with his associates of the *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interoceanique de Panama* purchased Wyse's concession and began the construction of the Panama Canal. President Hayes put in place the American efforts to stop the French concession. Hayes recognized that the control of the isthmian canal was "essential for national defense" and ordered the Secretary of the Navy to send warships to both coasts of Panama to negotiate and set up coaling stations.²⁵⁷ President Hayes then formulated a clear policy toward the construction of a canal under the control of the United States. He specified that: "It is the right and duty of the United States to assert and maintain such supervision and authority over any interoceanic canal across the Isthmus... as will protect our national interests."²⁵⁸

The combination of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and Lesseps' Canal created further insecurity in the U.S. sphere of influence. The remaining British influence in Nicaragua due to the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty restrained the alternatives for a trans-isthmian canal in Central America.

²⁵⁵ E. Taylor Parks. *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1935): 340.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 350-354.

²⁵⁷ Parks. *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. 362; and Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 155-6.

²⁵⁸ Cited in Parks. *Colombia and the United States, 1765-1934*. 363.

President Hayes attempted to introduce preliminary control via naval presence and coaling stations to set American influence at the terminals of a potential canal in Panama.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua was still perceived as the best route for a canal. However, the foreign influence embedded in the Calyton-Bulwer Treaty made this option costly in terms of strategic autonomy. The canal was already a venture on a foreign territory with its set of risks, but the involvement of other major maritime powers would forfeit part of the control of a crucial line of communication into the hands of foreign powers. However, the economic advantage of an isthmian canal in the region remained enough to justify the diplomatic endeavours to secure the rights to a canal in Nicaragua.

The post-Walker affair led to a certain political stability under the auspice of the Conservatives. It also implemented a certain anti-Americanism within Nicaraguan society which fortunately did not last for too long.²⁵⁹ The realization by Nicaraguan elites of the value of the American model of development and the plus-value of a potential construction of an isthmian canal on their territory was enough to not equate the filibustering of Walker with the foreign policy of Washington, at least for the Nicaraguan elite.²⁶⁰

Seward made sure to secure the transit rights of any canal route in Nicaragua with the Treaty of 1867.²⁶¹ However, some of the appeals of Nicaragua diminished with the completion of the transcontinental railroad and the Panama Railway in 1969. Many Americans had transited by Nicaragua to reach the West Coast during the previous decades. The remaining incentive for a canal was the lower cost of the freight by sea.

President Grant came to power with the determination that an isthmian canal was desirable and feasible. He understood the strategic importance of such a canal and its advantages when it comes to securing the West Coast. After he failed to secure a passage in Colombia, Grant appointed an Interoceanic Canal Commission in March 1872 to determine the set the ideal course for a canal.²⁶² With the 1873 Crash, plans toward investment in an isthmian canal died and would have to wait for better times.

Venezuela

In the 1850s and 1860s, Venezuela had an avid taste for revolution and coups. Twelve years of intermittent civil wars ensued from the struggle of regional *caudillos* against the centralized power in Caracas between 1858 and 1863 (Federalist War).²⁶³ In 1867, Minister Thomas Stilwell described it as “a republic in name only.”²⁶⁴ Venezuela became self-aware of the possible advantages of the Monroe Doctrine. Caught against European colonies and eager to remove their influence, Venezuela thought that the United States could provide some help for that. In 1876, Venezuela filed a claim for all the territory west of the Essequibo River which included

²⁵⁹ Michel Gobat. *Confronting the American Dream: Nicaragua under U.S. Imperial Rule*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 43.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 45.

²⁶¹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 397.

²⁶² Lindley M. Keasbey. *The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine*. (New York: Putnam, 1896): 319.

²⁶³ H. Micheal Tarver and Julia C. Frederick. *The History of Venezuela*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006): 65-66.

²⁶⁴ Quoted in Judith Ewell. *Venezuela and the United States: From Monroe's Hemisphere to Petroleum's Empire*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996): 65.

more than two-thirds of the British Guyana.²⁶⁵ The memorandum remained unanswered by the British.

The revolution in Venezuela in 1870 disturbed European interests. Germany among others was willing to intervene to stabilize the political situation. However, the United States informed Germany that it would intervene unilaterally and secure German interests.²⁶⁶ Antonio Guzman Blanco took the reign of the Venezuelan presidency from 1870 to 1888. His alliance with the *caudillos* stabilized the country, but his position as a strongman allowed him to inflate Venezuela's foreign debt which brought considerable modernization to the country but created vulnerability toward its debtors.²⁶⁷ The irresponsible fiscal policy during and after the Federalist War would eventually create tensions with European powers.

Peru

In 1864, Spain seized the Chincha guano islands "as a reprisal for attacks on Spaniards working on Peruvian plantations."²⁶⁸ Spain had never formally recognized the independence of Peru.²⁶⁹ The Spanish objective was larger than the capture of Chincha. It aimed at re-capture the Peruvian territory. The end of the Civil War threatened the Spanish advance in Peru. In July 1866, Secretary Seward signalled Spain that "the United States cannot yield their assent to the position thus assumed in the name of Spain, or regard with indifference an attempt to reduce Peru by conquest, and reannex its territory to the Kingdom of Spain."²⁷⁰ Ultimately, Peru allied with Chile and declared war on Spain. In 1866, Spain bombarded Valparaiso (March 31) and Callao (May 2).²⁷¹ The Spanish admiral Castro Mendez Nunez withdrew from Callao after his ships hit torpedoes rigged up by former U.S. naval officers months earlier.²⁷² While this was the last clash with Spain, the war did not end officially before 1871.

Guano was still an important part of the trade between the United States and Peru. Peru's export of guano doubled between 1861 and 1871.²⁷³ The exhaustion of the guano supply ended the economic benefits for Peru in the 1870s. Peru, in an effort to capture the remnant of the guano in the Atacama Desert region, entered a war to control the resources (nitrate and silver in addition to the guano) at its borders. The War of the Pacific (1879-1883) opposing Peru, Bolivia, and Chile put Washington in a difficult situation due to the investment made a decade earlier to support the modernization effort of Peru toward industrialization and the construction of railroads throughout the country.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁵ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 108.

²⁶⁶ LaFeber. *The New Empire*. 37.

²⁶⁷ Harry Bernstein. *Venezuela & Colombia*. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964): 46-48.

²⁶⁸ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 100.

²⁶⁹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 396.

²⁷⁰ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 100.

²⁷¹ Lawrence A. Clayton. *Peru and the United States*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999): 46

²⁷² *Ibid.*

²⁷³ *Ibid.* 36.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 54.

Asia-Pacific

The Civil War slowed down most of the American ambitions in the Pacific. Secretary of State Seward was nominated with a set of projects looking westward. From the actions of Perry, Marshall, and Cushing before him, Seward perceived three strategic options for Asia:

(1) cooperate with Europeans to maintain the balance of power and to increase pressure on China to open up to international trade and norms; (2) build up China as a regional counterweight *against* European encroachment; or (3) build up Japan as an example for China to counterweight to the Europeans, and a bastion of offshore balancing.²⁷⁵

With the Civil War, Seward elected the first option to avoid provoking furthermore the European powers already presenting a threat to the situation in America. The conservative and restrained approach of Seward during the Civil War changed after 1865. His position shifted toward territorial acquisition to improve the strategic presence of the United States in Asia and potentially provide the United States with the means to achieve options two and three. Too ambitious for the postbellum United States and generally opposed by other powers, Seward's efforts in Asia and the Pacific did not yield the desired results. His efforts to bring Hawaii into the U.S. sphere of influence were blocked in Congress; and his policy in China, Japan and Korea secured the relative influence of Washington in Asia as a commercial power.

Midway

The United States secured possession of the Midway Atoll on September 30, 1867. The acquisition was quite an interesting and expeditious process. Captain William Reynold of the sloop of war *Lackwanna* formally took possession of the atoll under the "Guano Law."²⁷⁶ The Guano Island Act of 1856 allowed since the seabird and bat droppings were an exceptional fertilizer valued to increase crop yield by three times.²⁷⁷ Under the Guano Island Act:

Whenever any citizen of the United States discovers a deposit of guano on any island, rock, or key, not within the lawful jurisdiction of any other government, and not occupied by the citizens of any other government, and takes peaceable possession thereof, and occupies the same, such island, rock, or key may, at the discretion of the President, be considered as appertaining to the United States.²⁷⁸

This acquisition would become a geostrategic asset in the transpacific transit, especially at a time when coaling stations were becoming essential to international trade. Following the occupation of Midway, the Pacific Mail Steamship Company started a monthly service between San Francisco and Hong Kong and solicited support for the construction of a coaling station at Midway.²⁷⁹ In March 1869, Congress appropriated 50,000\$ to blast a channel through the reef at Midway and allow the military and commercial operations of a safe harbour on the island, but the funds were

²⁷⁵ Michael J. Green. *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017): 59.

²⁷⁶ Green. *By More Than Providence*. 62.

²⁷⁷ The Guano Islands Act of 1856. Accessed March 10, 2023. <https://americanhistory.si.edu/norie-atlas/guano-islands-act>. By 1863, Washington had annexed fifty-nine islands. See Daniel Immerwahr. *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*. (New York: Picador. 2019): 71, Scribd.

²⁷⁸ 48 U.S. Code § 1411- Guano districts; claim by United States. Accessed April 12, 2023. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/48/1411>

²⁷⁹ Howarth. *To Shining Sea*: 222.

insufficient for the task and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company was never able to exploit a coaling station at Midway.²⁸⁰ It would take another decade before Midway was exploited as a coaling station.

Hawaii

Discussions over the status of Hawaii were already catching a lot of attention and fostered a lot of interest among high-ranking naval officers. The beginning of the steady decline of the whaling activities in the late 1850s and the progressive growth of the U.S. operated plantations and owned plantations after the act of 1850 allowing foreigners to own land on the island.²⁸¹ The sugar plantations went from a dozen in 1860 to thirty-two in 1866.²⁸² This transformation of the islands' economy was creating a strong dependency with the United States. In addition, Hawaii was considered a necessity in consideration of the chain of naval stations to ensure the supply chain of coal throughout the Pacific.²⁸³ Secretary Seward, like other expansionists, aimed at eventually annexing the islands. After the seizure of Midway in 1867, he pushed for the ratification of a reciprocity treaty with Hawaii in September 1867, but the Senate denied Seward's request.²⁸⁴ The combination of the Alaska Purchase and the reciprocity treaty with Hawaii was a coherent and logical path toward increasing U.S. influence offshore of the Westcoast. Further along, the idea of including a lease on "Pearl Harbor to the United States for fifty years in return for duty free access to the American sugar market."²⁸⁵ On March 18, 1875, the Senate finally agreed to a revised treaty and ratified the Reciprocity Treaty. The agreement did not include the rights over Pearl Harbor at that point. However, the free-trade agreement with Hawaii was a preamble to the establishment of a naval base at Pearl Harbor and the annexation of Hawaii.

Samoa

Samoa attracted increasingly the attention of major powers. The United States managed to get influence without much guarantee to offer. In 1869, Wakeman's report underlined the "desirability of Pago Pago harbor."²⁸⁶ In March 1872, the Samoans offered to lease land on the Pago Pago Harbor to Commander Richard W. Meade of the *Narrangansett* who had no authority to do so and who did so only with the unformal guarantee of "friendship and protection of the great government of the United States."²⁸⁷ President Grant submitted the agreement to the Senate, and as they did with Hawaii, they denied the ratification of the treaty.

The access to the Pago Pago harbour was secured on January 17, 1878, with a treaty of friendship with Samoa which gave the United States consular jurisdiction and most-favoured-

²⁸⁰ Mark J. Rauzon. *Isles of Refuge: Wildlife and History of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001): 149-150.

²⁸¹ Gavan Daws. *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands*. (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii. 1968): 171-173; Julia Flynn Siler. *Lost Kingdom: Hawaii's Last Queen, the Sugar Kings, and America's First Imperial Adventure*. (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press. 2012): 61.

²⁸² Siler. *Lost Kingdom*. 77; Daws. *Shoal of Time*. 175.

²⁸³ Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 25.

²⁸⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 399.

²⁸⁵ Daws. *Shoal of Time*. 191.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 454.

²⁸⁷ Michael J. Green. *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Colombia University Press. 2017): 72-3; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 455; Paul M. Kennedy. *Samoa Tangle: A Study in Anglo-German-American Relations 1878-1900*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974): 14.

nation privileges.²⁸⁸ The Samoans sent a representative to Washington to negotiate with Secretary Evarts a treaty of “amity, most-favoured-nation, commerce, extraterritoriality, and quasi-protection.”²⁸⁹ This meant the securitization of a coaling station essential to the commerce bound for Asia. It was an important piece of the securitization of the sea lanes of communication essential to help the American economy to prosper. However, Samoa also offered commercial rights to Britain and Germany (in Salufata). The tripartite coexistence led to “three-headed control for the municipality of Apia, the principal foreign settlement.”²⁹⁰ The tripartite control was extended to the rest of the islands in collaboration with King Malietoa. However, that agreement was never even submitted to be formalized by the Senate. The informal agreement lasted until Bismarck decided to create a German colonial empire in 1884.

Japan

Japan closed its doors to the outside world in 1620 with only Nagasaki as a port opened to specifically restricted trade until the expedition of Commodore Perry.²⁹¹ Perry’s strategic feat of strength broke the seal of isolation of the Japanese. The port of Shimoda and Hakodate were opened to American trade. The U.S. consul to Shimoda, Townsend Harris “won the respect of the Japanese” after a difficult beginning due to the resistance of Japan to open and was able to sign a new agreement with Japan on July 30, 1858.²⁹² The Harris Treaty opened Japan (not without resistance) to a greater degree and allow the transition from the Shogunate to a modernized Japan in the 1860s and 1870s.

Japan received a lot of attention from Seward even though the Civil War was raging. Seward was afraid that the efforts of Perry and Harris would reverse back if the appropriate amount of attention was not invested in keeping Japan open.²⁹³ This would prove to be a challenge early on. In 1861, Secretary Seward proposed a joint U.S.-French-British-Russian-Prussian assault on Japan to compel the Emperor of Japan to ratify the Treaties.²⁹⁴ In addition to failing, Seward’s proposition signalled to Japan that it could not trust the United States. Robert H. Pruyn succeeded Harris in April 1862. With the increase in tension between the government in Tokyo and the anti-foreign forces, Pruyn recommended to Seward a joint naval demonstration of the treaty powers in June 1863.²⁹⁵ The British foreign secretary, Lord John Russell did not favour this type of action contrary to Seward who supported the idea.

Things escalated throughout 1863. After the burning of the U.S. legation in May 1863, the *Prembroke* was fired upon in the Strait of Shimonoseki in June, a French and a Dutch vessel were targeted a few days later, and the *Wyoming* got caught in the Strait later in July.²⁹⁶ After the attack on the *Wyoming*, the French admiral Jaurés landed in Shimonoseki, destroyed one of the batteries and burned a village and Admiral Kuper who bombarded Kagoshima.²⁹⁷ In 1864, the European powers and the United States coordinated an offensive to stop the daimyos (feudal lords) in control

²⁸⁸ Kennedy. *Samoan Tangle*: 14.

²⁸⁹ The son of William H. Seward, Frederick W. Seward oversaw the negotiation as the Assistant Secretary of State. See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 455.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 456.

²⁹¹ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 308.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 392.

²⁹⁴ Green. *By More Than Providence*. 59.

²⁹⁵ Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 397-98.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 398-399.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*: 399.

of the Straits of Shimonoseki.²⁹⁸ The European intervention ended the daimyos' interdiction to foreign vessels and restored order which led to further centralization of the authority in Japan. The intervention, during the Civil War, removed the prevalence of the United States when it came to Japan and allowed Britain to take the lead.

Civil War broke out in Japan at the beginning of 1868. To protect the U.S. interests, Robert B. Van Valkenburg, the new U.S. minister to Japan agreed to the "joint occupation of the approaches to Yokohama by the combined naval forces."²⁹⁹ The joint occupation was a signal of armed neutrality into the Japanese civil war since the United States and the European powers were only protecting their interests and not taking an active part in the conflict. The Restoration in January 1869 brought an end to the occupation and a normalization of relations with Tokyo.³⁰⁰

The strategy of the United States switched from diplomatic compellence to deterrence in the span of ten years. Furthermore, while Perry's expedition allowed the United States to get the initiative with the opening of Japan to foreign influence, Washington was quickly displaced by the British and the other European powers. The Civil War made them lose the initiative. Seward kept Japan as a foreign policy objective but did not have the appropriate resources at his disposal. The Japanese resistance to American cooperation led Washington to side with the European and imposed coercive measures against Japan to maintain its market open. Gunboat diplomacy became the rule rather than the exception.

China

Anson Burlingame was the U.S. minister in Peking between 1861 and 1867. He was an oddball among the world diplomats of his era and helped to set the tone for American politics in Asia. He advocated for the protection of Chinese independence during his posting. He was designed imperial envoy for the international relations of China and went back to Washington accompanied by thirty Chinese dignitaries with the mandate to negotiate a new treaty with China.³⁰¹ Seward and Burlingame negotiated the first most favoured nation (MFN) status with China in 1868. This position was an anomaly at the time. However, it shows a generation of policymakers who were in favour of cordial and equitable relations with Asia. Most of all, it gave a renewed impulse that would lead to the "Open Door" policy toward China.

Burlingame was able to create a climate of cooperation with China at a time when the United States was vulnerable internationally. The majority of his posting in China occurred during the Civil War. Without peaceful mechanisms to preserve peace in Asia, Burlingame proposed to the European powers to act as a united front to the Imperial Government to ensure the fulfilment of the treaty obligations.³⁰² Burlingame gave the United States a pivotal role in the affairs of Asia. While the weakest link among the European powers, he was able to foster cooperation among rival powers. However, Seward came to realize that Burlingame was the key to the policy of cooperation in Asia and that it would probably not survive him.³⁰³ His mandate as a Chinese emissary after his

²⁹⁸ The American vessel which participated to the offensive was a rented merchant steamer equipped with a few guns. *Ibid.* 400.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: 404.

³⁰⁰ Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 404.

³⁰¹ Howarth. *To Shining Sea*: 307; Tyler Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia: A Critical Study of United States' Policy in the Far East in the Ninethenth Century*. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1963): 368.

³⁰² Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 372.

³⁰³ *Ibid.* 377.

resignation in 1867 was the key that secured some of his efforts to create peaceful mechanisms of conflict resolution in Asia. His goal was essentially to avoid the repetition of the violence of the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion. The treaties of 1858 had left unbearable conditions for China economically and required reforms internally that the central government had not the authority to achieve.³⁰⁴ The supplementary articles to the Treaty of Tientsin (or the Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868) provided limited but essential representation to China. Article 3 guaranteed the appointment of a Chinese consul in the United States, Articles 6 and 7 extended the reciprocity of important rights to Chinese nationals in the United States, and Article 8 recognized the Chinese sovereignty over its internal affairs.³⁰⁵ As such the Burlingame treaty was a clear position against the gunboat policy against China that was common practice at the time at every sign of internal disturbance. Burlingame was able to extend the core principles of the American treaty with London by the end of 1868. He was less fortunate with the rest of Europe where France, Germany and Russia received his ideas coldly before he died in St. Petersburg in 1870.³⁰⁶

The evolution of the strategy in China was different from the one in Japan. The leadership of Burlingame kept the United States in a pivotal role where the diplomatic skill of a diplomat made the United States an important factor in the development of peaceful relations between all the powers involved and a fragile China. Rather than experiencing a setback in U.S.-China relations during the Civil War, Burlingame created important advancements and rapprochement with China.

Korea

The second hermit kingdom of Asia had a reputation for executing the crews of the ships that wrecked off its coast.³⁰⁷ An attempt to open Korea by missionaries in 1871 ended tragically.³⁰⁸ In 1878, rear admiral and commander of the Asiatic Squadron, John Rodgers, tried to secure unsuccessfully a treaty to protect shipwrecked foreigners. When its mission was fired upon, Admiral Rodgers launched an amphibious assault on the five forts guarding the approaches to Seoul.³⁰⁹ The Koreans resisted Rodgers' offensive and forced him back to sea with the typhoon season coming. American attempts at opening Korea the same way it happened with Japan were a failure. It took another four years before Commodore Shufeldt was able to breach the firm autarkic stance of Korea.

Europe

The Civil War certainly put to the test the European powers toward the Monroe Doctrine. Except for Russia and Prussia, they all engaged in renewed colonial policy or interceded in the Civil War in limited ways. A divided United States was far less likely to become a threat to European powers and could be more easily manipulated and influenced. The North and the South could be leveraged against each other and the likeliness of the persistence of the Monroe Doctrine

³⁰⁴ Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 379.

³⁰⁵ Andrew Johnson. "Additional articles to the treaty between the United States of America and the Ta-Tsing empire, of June 18, 1858. Concluded at Washington, July 28, 1868," 1868. <https://iowaculture.gov/history/education/educator-resources/primary-source-sets/immigration-regulation-response-and/burlingame-treaty>

³⁰⁶ Dennett. *Americans in Eastern Asia*: 387.

³⁰⁷ Nathan Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*. (3rd ed.) (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997): Chap. 6. Kindle.

³⁰⁸ A squadron of five ships fired back to three Korean forts killing several hundred of Koreans. See Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 314.

³⁰⁹ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 6. Kindle.

was unlikely. The debt crisis in Mexico became worrying enough to push Spain, France, and Britain to intervene to ensure the effective reimbursement of their loans to Mexico.

The inability of Britain, France, Spain and Russia to agree on a common accord to mediate the war gave the Union the necessary time to gain the upper hand and deter Europe from getting involved. The Confederacy did everything it could to bring the European powers into the Civil War. In April 1862, the Confederate Senate authorized President Davis to offer Britain, France, and Spain “special trade privileges and other inducements to break the blockade.”³¹⁰ Fortunately for the unity of the United States, none of the European powers succumbed to the Confederate offer.

After the Civil War, the no-transfer principle became the principal dictum to European powers when it comes to mingling in the American sphere of influence.³¹¹ The principle stated that no colonies or dominion could be transferred to another European power. The reshuffling of the balance of power in Europe created opportunities for trading colonial possessions and many of them became confronted with the limitation posed by the no-transfer principle. President Grant reiterated this principle of the Monroe Doctrine in his annual message of December 6, 1869. Grant declared:

These dependencies are no longer regarded as subject to transfer from one European power to another. When the present relation of colonies ceases, they are to become independent powers, exercising the right of choice and of self-control in the determination of their future condition and relations with other powers.³¹²

The affairs of Europe were troubled too. The Concert of Europe was not an effective mechanism anymore to prevent war on the continent. The Crimean War (1853-1856) brought France and Britain against Russia. The unification of Italy brought a new player into the European balance of power which created resistance from Austria which led ultimately to the Franco-Austrian War of 1859. France was still restless under the authority of Napoleon III who took advantage of the Civil War to plan a return to America via Mexico and try to repair the relations with Austria. Spain returned to Santo Domingo. Britain appeared weakened in Europe during the Civil War since some of its resources needed to stay in Canada to avoid the contagion of the conflict. The emergence of Frederick the Great led to the Austro-Prussia War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 which transformed the alliance system in Europe once more. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877 led to a revival of the Concert of Europe for a brief moment during the Congress of Berlin. As a result, the troubles during the 1860s and 1870s reduced the pressure on Washington to deter European involvement in the Western Hemisphere.

Great Britain

U.S. officials perceived the British actions throughout the Civil War as duplicitous. While advocating against slavery across the globe, London supported insidiously the South to protect their trade interests. The Queen’s Proclamation of Neutrality in May 1861 recognized *de facto* the belligerency of the Confederacy. Even though the Proclamation of Neutrality was the result of

³¹⁰ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 80.

³¹¹ E. Taylor Parks. “European Possessions in Americas.” *Journal of Inter-American Studies* Vol. 4, no, 3 (Jul. 1962): 400.

³¹² December 6, 1869: First Annual Message. *Miller Center*. Accessed March 8, 2023. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/december-6-1869-first-annual-message>.

Lincoln's blockade proclamation, the automatism of England to declare neutrality in this situation created a complex situation. The recognition of Confederate belligerency upset Lincoln's efforts to maintain the crisis as an internal issue. The combination of the proclamation of the blockade and British neutrality triggered a succession of consequences that exacerbated the intensity of the war at sea. This legitimized the launch of Confederate privateering and commerce destroyers, the deployment of Confederate diplomats in the capitals of the European great powers, and the first step toward the recognition of the independence of the Southern states.

The duplicitous behaviour of the British continued throughout the Civil War and took a decade to fix afterward. The veiled threat to Canada by Seward mitigated the situation. Britain remained more prudent than some of the propositions made in London. Otherwise, the common interest between the South and the British would have probably prevailed.

The British interests were more aligned with the South even though the European opinion was unfavourable to the slavery issue. The British manufactures required southern cotton. On the other hand, northern industrialization was in direct competition with the British economic model. Unluckily for the South, reserves and good harvests in Europe diminished substantially the British reliance on Southern cotton in the first years of the war.³¹³ Those good years of harvest diminished substantially the incentive to provide support to the Confederacy and maintain a more neutral stance. The limits on British engagement were also set by the troubles in Europe and the British Empire. The War of Unification in Italy, the Russian counter-insurrection in Poland, and trouble between Germany and Denmark were posing a significant threat to European stability. The Sepoy Mutiny that took place in 1857 diverted British resources to India, the occupation of Canton and Peking due to the Second Opium War, and the French invasion of Lebanon were diverting British resources. Nevertheless, with the intensification of the conflict, London sent additional troops to Canada to protect its interest.

Britain purchased seventy-five percent of the southern raw cotton between 1820 and 1860.³¹⁴ The Confederacy capitalized on the success of its diplomacy on this reliance on American raw cotton for the British mills which were among the most important employers and constituted about half of British exports. The South was also a favourable market for British goods. After the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1863, France and Britain opened their economy to free trade and were more open than ever to expanding their trade partners. Fortunately for the Union, the British minister to Washington, Richard Lyons was fervently against slavery and expressed his worries to the home office that "intimate relations with a Confederation formed on the avowed principle of perpetuating, if not extending, Slavery" should be avoided.³¹⁵ Furthermore, the British cotton industry was resilient. In 1861, the English factories and warehouses were stacked with cotton bales.³¹⁶

The tension and frustration with Great Britain emerged when the British issued a proclamation that recognized the Confederate States as a belligerent power on May 14, 1861, and only escalated from that point. The 1861 *Trent* affair brought many fears and the threat of British involvement against the Union. The event that precipitated the crisis with the British was fortunate

³¹³ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*. 73-4.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* 9.

³¹⁵ Quoted in Howard Jones. *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 50. Scribd.

³¹⁶ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 73.

for the Union at first. In order to consolidate the diplomatic ties between European states and the Confederacy, Richmond was dispatching two emissaries. James M. Mason and John Slidell, commissioners from the Confederate States to Great Britain and France were intercepted after their departure from Cuba aboard the British steamer *Trent* by the American man-of-war *San Jacinto*.³¹⁷ Both men were taken prisoner on November 8. At first, the capture of two diplomats on their way to attempt to secure foreign support was an important victory. However, when the news reached England on November 27, London reacted severely and saw the capture of the diplomats as a violation of international law and the actions taken against the *Trent* as an affront to the British flag.³¹⁸ As a consequence, the British mobilized 8000 men in Canada and the fleet in American waters.³¹⁹ Those events were happening at a time when the Union army was weak and far from being the deterrent it would come to be when it won the war in 1865. What would have seemed as an apparent legitimate move from the Union perspective to prevent Confederate diplomatic emissaries to reach the world's greatest powers backfired and soared the relations between the Union and Great Britain at a moment when Lincoln could not afford the risk of the involvement of the British in the conflict. Fortunately, Captain Charles Wilkes who commanded the *San Jacinto* acted without order from the government which gave deniability to Lincoln and Seward. Slidell and Mason were liberated.

After the *Trent* affair, Great Britain's involvement became an issue again in 1862. The increase in unemployment in the textile districts triggered discussions about intervention in the Civil War. Cotton from India, Egypt, Brazil and the West Indies provided a fair compromise to the cotton from the south.³²⁰ The irritation with Great Britain continued with the construction and outfitting of the *Oreto* in 1862, which became the *CSS Florida*. The outfitting of the *CSS Alabama*, the construction of the gunboat *Alexandra*, and the construction of two ironclads created an important precedent in international relations by playing on the legality of building and selling ships without violating their neutrality and offering the possibility to a belligerent power to build ships in their shipyards.³²¹ The building and outfitting of vessels for the Confederate privateers in England was an issue that outraged Seward and Lincoln. Captain James D. Bulloch was the Confederate Agent sent to Europe to contract cruiser construction.³²² Bulloch managed to circumvent the legal restriction of British neutrality by splitting the construction and the equipment of the southern cruisers in different states. Consequently, Confederate cruisers were built in England and then equipped elsewhere. Charles F. Adams, the Minister to London took too long to realize the subterfuge between the Bulloch and the British shipbuilders. His protestation in 1864 led to additional cautions from the British government, but still, some vessels escaped the control

³¹⁷ James F. Rhodes. *History of the Civil War: 1861-1865*. New York: MacMillan, 2016 (1917). Kindle. Mason was the author of Fugitive Slave Law and was bounded to negotiate with London, and Slidell was an important figure of the gag rule in Congress and was dispatched to negotiate with Paris. See *Ibid*.

³¹⁸ The news takes longer to reach England since there was no Atlantic cable at the time. See Rhodes. *History of the Civil War*.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*.

³²⁰ The 1.5 million bales obtained from those alternative sources increased the prices and offset a decrease in production leading to a minor contraction of the textile industry, but not a major crisis as expected. See Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 74.

³²¹ Charles S. Kennedy. *The American Consul: A History of the United States Consular Services, 1776-1924*. 2nd Ed. (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2015 (1990)): 234; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 378-379.

³²² Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 377; and James D. Bulloch. *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe, or, How the Confederate Cruisers Were Equipped*. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1884, 2 Vols.)

of London. The *Alexandra* was seized in Nassau in December 1863; the *Georgiana* and *Georgia* ended into Confederate hands; and the C.S.S. *Shenandoah* depredated the Union Navy for the remainder of the war before being surrendered to British authority after the war.³²³

In addition, the British were part of the intervention in Mexico along with France and Spain. To mitigate the United States' outrage at the intervention, the British invited Lincoln to take part in the intervention.³²⁴

In light of the support to the Confederacy offered by the British, the Union had to adopt a defensive diplomatic strategy. The Union was able to grow its trade with the British. The grain shortage in Britain allowed the exchange of British munitions for Yankee "corn."³²⁵ While the Union benefited from the situation, Great Britain did not have a dependence on northern grains contrary to the dependency it had on southern cotton. Ultimately, London became more preoccupied with the Franco-Prussian War and the advances of Russia in the Black Sea to delay or invest in the resolution of the frictions with the United States.³²⁶ However, the United States had a list of grievances against Great Britain in the postbellum. First, the raids conducted by the Confederates from Canada had revived some of the frustration regarding the northern border. Second, the British built vessels that served during the Civil War including the *Alabama*, the *Florida*, the *Shenandoah*, the *Lark*, and the *Tallahassee* had violated Britain's neutrality and Washington was asking for apologies and reparations.

The table had turned for the British after the war. Indignation regarding the depredation of the cruiser *Alabama* led Washington to make an international claim against Britain. The claims epitomized by the sixty captures of the *Alabama* found their legitimacy in the violation of neutrality made by Lord Palmerston and Russell when they allowed the construction of five warships intended for the Confederacy. The *Alabama* claims escalated to a crisis in 1869 when the Senate led by Charles Sumner rejected the Johnson-Clarendon convention.³²⁷ At the beginning of the Grant administration, Hamilton Fish was determined to bring the crisis to a resolution. The establishment of a Joint High Commission to formulate adequate reparations was convened in Washington between February and May 1871.³²⁸ The Commission led Britain and the United States to agree to:

- (1) An expression of regret "for the escape, under whatever circumstances, of the *Alabama* and other vessels from British ports, and for the depredations committed by those vessels." [...]

³²³ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 380.

³²⁴ Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011): 143.

³²⁵ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 334.

³²⁶ Maureen M. Robson. "The *Alabama* Claims and the Anglo-American Reconciliation, 1865-71." *The Canadian Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (Mar. 1961): 17.

³²⁷ Joseph V. Fuller. "Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State, March 11, 1869, to March 11, 1877." In *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*. Volume VII and VIII, Edited by Samuel Flagg Bemis. 125-217. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963): 132.

³²⁸ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 408.

- (2) To Submit all other claims of British subjects and American citizens to a mixed commission for adjudication and payment.³²⁹

Along with various additional agreements regarding U.S. fishing rights and the navigation rights between the United States and Canada, the Washington Treaty was finally ratified by the Senate in May 1871. The Washington Treaty only establish the creation of a commission of adjudication. The arbitration to establish the reparation payment due by the British was established in Geneva composed of five jurists.³³⁰ The commission agreed to the amount of 15.5 million dollars in gold for the depredation of the *Alabama* and the other British-built vessels. The Geneva Arbitration of 1872 closed the *Alabama* claim.

France

As with all European powers during the Civil War, the main threat to the Union was their involvement in the conflict. This fear ranged from the simple financial support to the South to their direct military involvement. In the French case, the threat became more multifaceted than the other European powers even if Great Britain was a greater threat. Emperor Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte (Napoleon III) was taking a public stance that was accommodating toward the British and was “expected to concur with, or follow, them in whatever measure they adopt on the subject of recognition.”³³¹ However, Napoleon III privately perceived the American Civil War as an opportunity to resurrect the French influence in the Western Hemisphere. The potential diplomatic recognition of the independence of the South could break the Union in a definitive manner. The benefits of being a recognized nation would have given status and agency to the Confederacy. The French made their proclamation of neutrality public on June 10, 1861, a whole month after the publication of the British proclamation of neutrality.³³² However, France was favourable to a partition of the United States, especially since Napoleon III coveted a French return to America.

Economic ties with the South were also strong in the case of France. French cotton manufacturing located in the North of France depended on southern raw cotton.³³³ Twice in the first year of the war, France presented the possibility of joint action with Britain. Riots in Lyons and the suburbs of Paris occurred due to the unemployment caused by the cotton supply shortage.³³⁴ With the rising distress of the cotton industry in France and a duplicitous intention toward restoring France’s prestige in Europe, the Emperor saw the opportunity of the intervention in Mexico as a blessing. The tripartite expedition involving France, Spain and Britain was designed to prevent the collapse of the Mexican government. However, the Emperor saw the opportunity for the expansion of its empire fully conscious of his violation of the Monroe Doctrine. From that point, Napoleon III plotted to install the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian as monarch of Mexico. Napoleon III was leveraging the “gift of the Mexican throne to a Habsburg prince” to

³²⁹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 409-410.

³³⁰ One chosen by the Great Britain, one by the United States, one by the President of Switzerland, one by the Emperor of Brazil, and the president of the tribunal (the Italian Frederic Scolpis). See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 412.

³³¹ Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931): 204.

³³² Stève Sainlaude. *France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History*. (Translated by Jessica Edwards) (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019): 44; Jordan and Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 204.

³³³ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 12-13.

³³⁴ Jordan and Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 206.

Austria in addition to a “Franco-Austrian alliance (giving the Austrians protection against their German rival Prussia)” in exchange for the Austrian secession of Venetia to the Italian.³³⁵

Already concerned about the expansionist attitude of the United States that emerged during the Mexican War with the Annexation of Texas and of the Northern provinces of Mexico that made the United States a continental power, the French Monarch believed that combined with the Mexican lack of strong political and military institutions the Civil War would result in further conquest.³³⁶ Either the Confederates would expand into Mexico if they obtained recognition, or the Union would expand further after its victory. The Treaty of London (October 1861) gave Napoleon III the opening he needed to set foot in America. President Benito Juarez suspended the payment of interest on the Mexican foreign debt and triggered an intervention by France, Spain and Great Britain to obtain reparation for the unpaid interests. The treaty prohibited “forcible interference in the internal affairs of an independent nation.”³³⁷ While this disposition was designed to prohibit Spain to reconquer Mexico, it was ultimately France who violated the treaty and took control of Mexico after the Spanish and British vacated.

France suggested mediation by European powers in late 1862 and early 1863. Édouard Drouyn de Lhuys, Napoleon III’s minister of foreign affairs wanted to end the uncertainty generated by the war and proposed a six-month truce in America on land and sea secured by France, Britain and Russia.³³⁸ Drouyn’s proposal failed. His second proposition in 1863 ended precipitously after the revolution in Poland had begun. The repeated French efforts to mediate the Civil War would have provided further international legitimacy to the Confederacy. The recognition of the Confederacy would have benefited the European powers and especially France during its efforts to impose a ruler on Mexico.

France’s support to the Confederacy went further. Bulloch turned to France after the shipbuilding in England brought too much negative attention. By July 1863, six warships including two ironclads were under construction in Bordeaux, and Nantes.³³⁹ Washington learned about it and started to pressure Napoleon III. In the end, only one ironclad, the *Stonewall* reached the Confederacy.³⁴⁰ France’s support to Bulloch occurred at a favourable moment for the Confederacy since Adams had been able to block most of Bulloch’s shipbuilding contracts in England.

By 1863, the effect of the cotton shortage had subdued in France due to the success of the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty which offset its effect.³⁴¹ Napoleon III decided to formally invade and take control of Mexico just before the fall of Vicksburg. Napoleon had hoped to convince Texas to support his power grab of Mexico in exchange for recognition of Texas independence.³⁴² Supported by the Mexican conservatives who wanted the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico for decades, the French “installed the Austrian archduke Maximilian on the throne of Mexico in

³³⁵ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 157.

³³⁶ Sainlaude. *France and the American Civil War*: 26-7; Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 160-161.

³³⁷ Robertson. “The Tripartite Treaty of London.” 171-8.

³³⁸ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 100.

³³⁹ *Ibid.* 167.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁴¹ Jordan and Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 214.

³⁴² Stephen Howarth. *To Shining Sea: A History of the United States Navy, 1775-1991*. (New York: Random House, 1991): 205.

early 1864.”³⁴³ This made Mexico a protectorate of France. However, the outbreak of the Polish rebellion diverted Napoleon III’s attention and triggered the need for an alternative strategy to maintain the strategic advantage in Mexico. Confederate privateers were guaranteed access to French shipyards to outfit their vessel to break through the Union blockade.³⁴⁴ The Emperor pledged privately to “indirect approval of the sale of cotton-based loans and construction of armed naval vessels.”³⁴⁵

By 1864, Napoleon III was unwilling to offer much support to the Confederates. His support to Emperor Maximilian was waning also. Maximilian’s Black decree that ordered the summary killing of armed Mexicans signalled the progressive decline of French support. In 1867, Napoleon withdrew his forces from Mexico. His endeavour in Mexico collapsed with the death of Maximilian on May 19, 1867, whom Napoleon abandoned the year before.

The Second Empire perished in the Franco-Prussian War with the removal of Napoleon III forced into exile. Napoleon’s adventurism and outdated diplomatic intrigues led to the exasperation of his citizens. The departure of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte did not mean the end of French interference in the Western Hemisphere. The prospect of a French-built isthmian canal in Central America offered the possibility of making France a strategic asset in the Western Hemisphere.

While Ferdinand de Lesseps was probably more interested in the engineering feat of building a second isthmian canal, the United States perceived Lesseps’ enterprise as a threat over the Monroe Doctrine and the control of strategic assets by the European powers in the Western Hemisphere. As a response, President Rutherford B. Hayes dispatched warships to the Pacific Coast to secure the other routes possible in Panama and Nicaragua.³⁴⁶

The French increased their presence by purchasing the island of St. Barthélemy from Sweden in 1874.³⁴⁷ Sweden had attempted to sell the islands earlier in 1869 to the United States and Italy. The Senate was still an obstacle to foreign purchases at that moment. Hamilton Fish asked Sweden “to postpone for the present any definite disposition of the subject.”³⁴⁸ While Sweden waited, France was able to acquire the island officially by the treaty of August 10, 1877. The sale violated the no-transfer principle and triggered a reinforcement of the principle afterward. The principle was invoked to block the sale or transfer of Dutch Curaçao, Spanish Puerto Rico, and the Bay Islands of Honduras.³⁴⁹

Spain

Spain’s position was no less exploitative of the Civil War than Britain and France. Spain declared its neutrality not long after France on June 17, 1861. The government of Leopoldo O’Donnell (1856-1863) had a spell of expansionist endeavours around the beginning of the Civil

³⁴³ Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011): 141.

³⁴⁴ Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 214.

³⁴⁵ Brian Schoen. “The Fates of Republics and Empires Hang in the Balance: The United States and Europe during the Civil War.” *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 2 (April, 2013): 42.

³⁴⁶ LaFeber. *The New Empire*. 43.

³⁴⁷ Dexter Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1966): 31-2; and Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 247.

³⁴⁸ Quoted in J. Fred Rippy. *The Caribbean Danger Zone*. (Kahle: Austin Foundation, 1940): 20.

³⁴⁹ Rippy. *The Caribbean Danger Zone*. 22-23.

War. It initiated an expedition in Morocco and captured Tétouan in 1858. It brought back Santo Domingo as one of its protectorates in 1861. The failed and corrupt government of Santo Domingo had asked for foreign help on multiple occasions, including the United States. However, Spain ended up back in control of the island. After a negotiation with Spain, “the Dominican President Santana announced on March 18 the island’s wish to be ruled by Madrid.”³⁵⁰ Party to the intervention in Mexico in 1861 along with France and Britain, Spain rapidly left in March 1862. However, Spain remained engaged in supporting the Confederacy. Spanish conservatives offered Cuba as “a commercial lifeline and safe haven for Confederate raiders.”³⁵¹ Havana became “an *entrepôt* for foreign munition and a refuge for Confederate vessels.”³⁵² Cuba was still a slave colony and benefited way more from a partnership with the Confederacy than the threat of abolition from the Union. In addition to Santo Domingo, Spain also seized the guano-rich Chinchas Islands near the Peruvian Coast in 1864.³⁵³

The postbellum situation was not ideal for Spain. The abolition of slavery put Cuba in a difficult position. While annexation seemed enviable to the Cuban elite before the war, now it would mean the abolition of slavery in Cuba also. The insurrection that set in between 1868 and 1873 posed a credible threat to Spanish control, and the horror and intensity of the counterinsurgency measures brought sufficient attention to require diplomatic pressure from Washington. President Grant warned Spain in his first annual message in 1869; in mid-1869, Secretary of State Fish proposed to Spain to grant independence to Cuba and abolish slavery in both Cuba and Puerto Rico; a joint resolution, granting the insurgents belligerent rights was introduced in Congress by the end of January 1870; and in the Senate on February 11, 1870.³⁵⁴ Secretary Fish and President Grant ended up de-escalating the situation since the recognition of belligerency was a major threat to Spain, especially if France and Britain were following the same path. The recognition of belligerency would have meant that Spain could not purchase armaments from the states that declared neutrality.³⁵⁵ A recognition of the belligerency of the Cuban insurgents might have triggered a war between the United States and Spain.

The 1873 *Virginius* incident could have triggered a rapid escalation of the tension between the United States and Spain. However, Secretary Fish allowed Spain to shed some light on the legality and legitimacy of the seizure and summary execution of part of the *Virginius*’ crew before taking action. After recognizing its wrongdoing and buying the peace, Spain agreed to pay indemnities to the families of executed Americans.³⁵⁶ However, the insurrection did not slow down, and to change the dynamic, Fish’s No. 266 dispatch demanded support from the other European powers to broker peace with the nationalists and Spain. Fish’s initiative went against the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. However, Fish’s call for intervention did not materialize. Fish,

³⁵⁰ Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*: 22.

³⁵¹ Brian Schoen. “The Fates of Republics and Empires Hang in the Balance: The United States and Europe during the Civil War.” *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 2 (April 2013): 43.

³⁵² Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. 247.

³⁵³ Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011): 148.

³⁵⁴ French Ensor Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain, Diplomacy*. (New York: C. Scribner’s and Sons, 1909): 307; James W. Cortada. *Two Nations over Time: Spain and the United States, 1776-1977*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1978): 92.

³⁵⁵ Cortada. *Two Nations over Time*. 93.

³⁵⁶ Spain gave the sum of 80,000\$. See Cortada. *Two Nations over Time*. 95-96; Chadwick. *The Relations of the United States and Spain, Diplomacy*. 349.

who was generally an isolationist, wanted to gradually increase the international pressure on Spain by first getting the support of Great Britain and adding the support of other powers if the initial pressure along Britain was not successful. However, the diplomatic mismanagement of the dispatch and the simultaneous diplomatic overture from Spain killed the No. 266 dispatch intention.³⁵⁷

Spain's war with Peru and Chile between 1864 and 1871 was of low intensity but it created a complex diplomatic crisis. Chile joined Peru against Spain out of fear of a Spanish attempt to recapture its former colonies. In 1866, Spain did a timid attempt with a naval offensive against Chile in Valparaiso and Peru in Callao. While both were unproductive toward a credible effort to gain control over former colonies, the naval bombardment of Valparaiso and Callao brought international pressure from Britain, France and the United States.³⁵⁸ Seward concerned about escalation and an eventual gruesome violation of the Monroe Doctrine convened Spain, Chile and Peru to mediate the situation. Though Seward was able to negotiate a cease-fire in 1868, the crisis got stuck in a deadlock until 1871.³⁵⁹ The inability to solve quickly the war with Chile and Peru and the inability to contain the Cuban insurgency were both signs of the decline of Spain's influence in the Western Hemisphere. Spain's decline was symptomatic of its difficult internal politics where the crown was unable to satisfy the various political factions.³⁶⁰

Germany

The unification of Germany could have introduced a new threat to the stability of American interests both in the Western Hemisphere and overseas. However, the relations were positive at first since German was focused on expanding its sphere of influence in Europe and that the United States wanted to avoid any involvement in European politics. Bismarck aimed at creating a German Empire within the confine of Europe at first. In addition, between 1850 and 1870, German-born U.S. residents increased from "less than six hundred thousand to nearly 1.7 million—three times as fast as the population as a whole."³⁶¹ The demographic weight of the U.S. citizens of German origin was considerable enough to create a favourable bias toward German unification.

During the Civil War, Prussia made favourable gestures toward the Union. Prussia purchased a lot of United States bonds which helped the war efforts in addition to the tens of thousands of German-born soldiers who served in the Union Army.³⁶² Bismarck refused to declare neutrality and instructed his minister in Washington, Baron Friedrich von Gerolt, not to engage diplomatically with the representatives of the Confederacy.³⁶³ The gesture was a clear signal of support to the Union and went against the general approach of Europe.

Even though Prussia was supportive during the Civil War, Washington declared neutrality during the Franco-Prussian War. Bismarck remained committed to a positive relationship with the United States. In 1871, troubles in Venezuela, Peru, and Brazil endangered German nationals, and

³⁵⁷ Jay Sexton. "The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875." *Diplomatic History* Vol. 30, no. 3 (June 2006): 357-358.

³⁵⁸ Cortada. *Two Nations over Time*: 88.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 91.

³⁶¹ Manfred Jonas. *The United States and Germany: A Diplomatic History*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984): 20.

³⁶² Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 359.

³⁶³ Jonas. *The United States and Germany*: 22.

Bismarck informed the State Department before exploring the options for joint action.³⁶⁴ The attempt by the Germans to acquire the Island of St-Thomas in 1873 from Denmark and Puerto Rico from Spain in 1874 introduced a new risk to the stability of the Monroe Doctrine from a newly formed European power.³⁶⁵ While Germany had some interesting opportunities to get involved in the Western Hemisphere, Berlin decided to respect the no-transfer principle and declined those offers and stayed out of the American sphere of influence in the Caribbean.³⁶⁶

Russia

The relations between the United States and Russia were cordial during that period. Alexander ended serfdom in 1860, a few years before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. The European problems of Russia, especially regarding Alexander II's harsh treatment of Polish and Lithuanian groups, were threatening its influence on the continent. A coalition against the Russians formed. Washington, as per tradition, stayed away from European trouble.

At the beginning of the War, Russia decided to side with England and France and to grant the "Confederate merchantmen a status similar to that of the merchant ships of the still unrecognized Kingdom of Italy."³⁶⁷ However, Russia was mainly following the rest of Europe on that issue. Russia sided with the North from that point more than any other powers. Minister Stoeckl refused the French proposal to join Henri Mercier, the French Minister, to Richmond.³⁶⁸ The similar social transformation and the mutual feeling of being isolated strategically brought Washington and St. Petersburg closer together.

Mutual support between the United States and Russia emerged during the second half of the Civil War. While not actively engaging in armed support, they offered important and favourable diplomatic gestures to each other. France had asked the United States to join the other European powers in dictating to Russia how to deal with Poland.³⁶⁹ Washington had refused. Then, France asked Russia to intervene in the Civil War.³⁷⁰ Russia refused. With the rising threat against Russia in Europe, the Russian Atlantic and Pacific fleets wintered in New York and San Francisco.³⁷¹ The arrangement was mutually beneficial. The Russian vessels were shielded from European skirmishes. The Union had an important deterrence element against any attack on New York or San Francisco by Confederate raiders. The situation triggered rumours of a political alliance between the two states all over Europe.³⁷²

After the war, the sale of Russian America (Alaska) consolidated the U.S.-Russian friendship. The territory administered by the Russian American Company was not profitable and vulnerable to the British.³⁷³ The Tsar's minister in Washington, Édouard de Stoeckl negotiated

³⁶⁴ Jonas. *The United States and Germany*: 31.

³⁶⁵ Dexter Perkins. *The Monroe Doctrine 1867-1907*. (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1966): 27-30.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 32-33.

³⁶⁷ Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt. *Europe and the American Civil War*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1931): 199.

³⁶⁸ Norman E. Saul. *Distant Friends: The United States and Russia, 1763-1867*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991): 334.

³⁶⁹ Frank A. Golder. "The Russian Fleet and Civil War." *The American Historical Review*, 20, no. 4 (Jul. 1915): 805.

³⁷⁰ Golder. "The Russian Fleet and Civil War." 805.

³⁷¹ Brian Schoen. "The Fates of Republics and Empires Hang in the Balance: The United States and Europe during the Civil War." *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 2 (April, 2013): 42.

³⁷² Saul. *Distant Friends*: 344.

³⁷³ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 365.

with Seward in March 1867, and after some haggling, they agreed to a price of “7.2 million, or 2.2 million more than the minimum price set by the Russian minister’s superiors.”³⁷⁴ Seward had a hard time selling his deal to Congress. Alaska was an unknown territory to most with not much incentive to offer. However, in the end, the purchase was an important strategic move that extended the strategic control of the West Coast by the United States and removed one European colonial power from the Western Hemisphere.

The 1870s presented several challenges to U.S.-Russian relations. The religious discrimination and the restriction on the Jewish population, the conquest of Central Asia, Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 put to the test their friendship.³⁷⁵ Arms trade during the Russo-Turkish War included four commerce-raiding cruisers (unarmed) and over 2 million dollars of military purchases.³⁷⁶ The arms trade with Russia created a challenge to U.S. neutrality, but Washington carefully maneuvered to avoid any reprehensible violation of its neutrality.

Alignment Options: Intensified Isolationism

The role played by the European powers during the Civil War created a strong resentment and reinforced the fear of involvement in European affairs. Prussia and Russia were the exception. Bismarck offered a tacit support to the Union during the Civil War by keeping friendly relations and refusing to engage diplomatically with the Confederacy. However, Russia went further. St. Petersburg experienced its own crisis in Europe at the same time and to protect its navy sent its fleet to New York. When the Russian vessels *Alexander Nevskii*, *Peresviet*, *Variag*, *Vitiaz*, and *Almaz* entered New York Harbor throughout September 1863, London and France were surprised and puzzled.³⁷⁷ The Americans gave the Russians a warm welcome. The Russian presence in New York was a credible deterrent toward Europe’s intervention in the Civil War. On the other hand, the Russians were satisfied with safe harbour for their own fleet during their own crisis in Europe. The Russians hid the real purpose of their visit and let the Americans believe that their presence was to support their war effort.³⁷⁸

Rear-Admiral Popov wanted to dispatch Russian Vessels to San Francisco to protect the unprotected city against Confederate cruisers *Sumter* and *Alabama* during the winter of 1863-4.³⁷⁹ St. Petersburg gave a clear directive of neutrality which prevented Popov from doing so.³⁸⁰ However, naval support from Russia came close. In the end, the support was only moral. In any case, the display of friendship from Russia was the closest the United States had come to an alliance with a European power in decades.

The possibility of the United States forming an alliance dissipated after the Civil War. Even if the U.S.-Russian relations were still good after the war, Washington adopted a strict neutrality policy and turned more toward isolationism than before. The challenges of reconstruction and of the internal turbulences that followed were better answered, in the mind of the decision makers,

³⁷⁴ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 366.

³⁷⁵ Normand E. Saul. *Concord and Conflict: The United States and Russia, 1867-1914*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996): 87.

³⁷⁶ The *State of California* (1,992 tons), *Colombus* (1,401 tons), *Saratoga* (1,745 tons), and *Zabiaka* (668 tons). See *ibid.* 125-126.

³⁷⁷ Golder. “The Russian Fleet and Civil War.” 807.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 808.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: 809.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 809-810.

with less involvement in world politics to maintain high strategic autonomy at home and focus most resources on internal stability.

Weakened Regional Power and the Risks of Internal Disturbance

The Civil War era was an exceptional phase of U.S. diplomacy. Most of the diplomatic efforts of that period were unsuccessful. As Bemis underlines, “Domestic strife invites foreign difficulties.”³⁸¹ The failure of diplomacy led to a contraction of the United States on themselves that favour domestic stabilization and development. During the Civil War, Washington had to compromise in order to maintain the Europeans at bay from the conflict and from providing support to the Confederacy. The war created vulnerabilities that were exploited by the European powers. The United States had to compromise their position on various occasions to maintain a semblance of autonomy in the Western Hemisphere.

The House and the Senate became important obstacles to many international treaties. Multiple treaties died in the Senate. Congress almost blocked the purchase of Alaska. The annexation of Santo Domingo and the Danish West Indies died in the Senate. The division between the executive and the legislative made the ratification of treaties less likely. The tensions that built up between the Radical Republicans and President Johnson reduced the latitude of the President toward foreign policy. Nevertheless, Washington ratified a few international treaties (see Table 6.4).

Table 6.4: International Treaties Ratified by the United States Between 1861 and 1880

<i>Treaty</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Main Purpose</i>
<i>Paris Declaration Respecting Maritime Law of 1856</i>	1861	Made illegal the privateering activities of the Confederacy.
<i>Corwin-Doblado Treaty</i>	1862	Loan to Mexico to appease European creditors (11 million dollars)
<i>First Geneva Convention</i>	1864	Rules of conduct in war
<i>Alaska Purchase</i>	1867	Purchase of Alaska to Russia
<i>Dickinson-Ayon Convention</i>	1867	Treaty between the U.S. and Nicaragua for transit rights
<i>Burlingame-Seward Treaty</i>	1868	Most-favoured Nation with China
<i>Johnson-Clarendon Treaty</i>	1869	Settle San Juan Island dispute with Britain
<i>Treaty of Washington</i>	1871	Settle grievances with Canada and the <i>Alabama</i> affair.

Source: Carl R. Fish. *American Diplomacy*. (New York: H. Holt and Company. 1919): 304-369.

Several diplomatic issues erupted during and after the Civil War. The weakening of the international deterrence of the United States during the Civil War diminished its ability to keep the European powers at bay. In addition, the actions of the Confederates designed a specific set of opportunities to weaken the Union’s influence and standing. After the Civil War, some of those transgressions of the Monroe Doctrine and other interests of the United States had to be corrected and remediated by Washington. The U.S. control of its sphere of influence remained fragilized in the postbellum period by the combination of internal troubles, peace-time demobilization, maritime strategy obsolescence, and the limited control of foreign policy by the office of the president. The U.S. foreign policy had to deal with internal division over its conduct and tended to be less cohesive which led to fifteen years of hazardous application of defensive brinkmanship that yield meagre results.

³⁸¹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 364.

The Civil War Dilemma

During the Civil War, “Lincoln was the commander-in-chief. He charted the basic course and left diplomatic details to Seward.”³⁸² Secretary of State Seward became the face of U.S. diplomacy for almost eight years and during one of the most difficult periods of U.S. foreign policy. Despite Seward’s early efforts to discourage the recognition of the Confederacy with the application of the blockade, he was informed by Lyons that the Union had only put in place a “paper blockade” and that any nation trading with the Confederacy would have no other “choice of either submitting commercial violations or extending recognition to the Confederacy.”³⁸³ Seward was also warned of the consequence of any interference with British commerce.

Lincoln and Seward decided to adhere to the 1856 Declaration of Paris to prevent the Confederates from engaging in commerce raiding. The British warned Seward that “even if the United States joined the protocol, its strictures would not apply to the conflict already under way.”³⁸⁴ The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord John Russell, underlined that all the European powers would not be willing to ratify a treaty automatically binding them to take action against the Confederates.³⁸⁵ Consequently, the Union’s blockade received a cold shoulder from England that required additional negotiation to give the Union the strategic advantage of a blockade that does not create conflicts with other powers.

To be legal, a blockade must be recognized as effective. The British recognized the blockade as such in May 1861. However, even before the recognition of the blockade, the deterrent effect of the Union patrols on Confederate commerce had an important effect. Confederate ports’ activities decline to “roughly a third of prewar levels, and this reduction in trade contributed to matériel shortage, personal hardship and monetary inflation in the Confederacy.”³⁸⁶ Lincoln’s challenge was to convince the European power that the blockade was not a “paper blockade.” Paper blockades are, according to the Declaration of Paris, a blockade that is not “maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy.”³⁸⁷

The *Trent* crisis tested the autonomy of the United States. Cpt. Wilkes’ seizure of Slidell and Mason was first perceived as a victory since it kept the Confederacy isolated and was complementary to the blockade, but it was also illegal under international law. The *Trent* was under the British flag. Seward insisted that the capture of the two diplomats was part of “a clear right to suppress insurrection.”³⁸⁸ Seward’s bellicose diplomacy toward England who contested the capture was in line with a clear assertion of the Monroe Doctrine. However, Lincoln chose to wait and see how the European powers would react. The issue might have died by itself without the aggressive stance of Seward. The recognition of the Confederacy as a belligerent was one thing but coming to the help of a slave-holding republic was a different story. In December 1861, the British formulated an ultimatum to Washington asking for “full reparation” and the “liberation of

³⁸² Perry. *Bluff, Bluster, Lies and Spies*: 51.

³⁸³ Howard Jones. *Blue & Gray Diplomacy: A History of Union and Confederate Foreign Relations*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010): 57. Scribd.

³⁸⁴ Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*: 42.

³⁸⁵ U.S. Senate Document No. 332, 64th Cong., Sess. 1, serial No. 6952, p. 19. Quoted in Spencer C. Tucker. “CSS *Alabama* and Confederate Commerce Raiders during the U.S. Civil War.” In *Commerce Raiding: Historical Case Studies, 1755-2009*. Edited by Bruce A. Elleman and S. C. M. Paine. 73-88. (Newport, Naval War College, 2013): 75.

³⁸⁶ Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*: 48.

³⁸⁷ Declaration Respecting Maritime Law. Paris, 16 April 1856. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/paris-decl-1856/declaration?activeTab=undefined>.

³⁸⁸ Cited in Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*: 78.

the four gentlemen” which included Slidell and Mason.³⁸⁹ The demand finally led to the liberation of Slidell and Mason.

Violations of neutral rights and duties by the British during the Civil War created grievances among Washington authorities. Among the various grievances, the *Alabama* claims were the ones that materialized the most. Under Art. 7 of the Jay Treaty of 1794, the United States sued Great Britain for damages caused by the violation of their neutral duties “to prevent Confederate cruisers from outfitting in British ports.”³⁹⁰ The British paid fifteen million dollars in damages.

King Cotton Diplomacy

The Confederacy diplomacy went against all the fibres of the Monroe Doctrine. It was in the best interest of the Southerners to appeal to European powers to undermine the Union. The first objective of the South was “to secure diplomatic recognition from Great Britain first and then other European powers. Jefferson Davis had the firm belief that Great Britain and France would contribute to the Confederate war effort since their economy needed cotton.”³⁹¹ An alliance with a European power could have flipped the probability of success of a recognized independent Confederacy.

The diplomacy of the Confederacy started almost half a decade before the beginning of the Civil War. The South had created favourable relations with Great Britain and France which depended on the South to maintain its textile industry while the North had adopted a protectionist trade policy. At the beginning of the Civil War, many Southerners were well-positioned to develop strong diplomatic relations. Secessionists expected a “quick recognition, or judicious intervention.”³⁹² Robert Campbell from South Carolina was the consul in London; Beverly Tucker, a Virginian, was stationed in Liverpool; Charles Helm of Kentucky was the consul in Havana; the consul in Marseilles was from Louisiana; Edwin DeLeon of South Carolina was in Alexandria, Egypt; and John Pickett from Kentucky was in Vera Cruz, Mexico.³⁹³ While the Confederates did not have a consular service, those agents already in place offered important opportunities to build diplomatic relations with great powers and strategic assets.

The South also wanted to exploit its economic strength to foster support from Europe. Since France and Britain were dependent on American cotton to run their mills, the South decided to retain the cotton crops of 1859 and impose an embargo to pressure Europe to break the Union blockade.³⁹⁴ However, the high yield of the 1859-1860’s crops in Europe created a surplus. The attempt at leveraging economic dependence was a failure to both obtain the recognition of the

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 90.

³⁹⁰ Philip C. Jessup. *Neutrality: Its History, Economics and Law: Volume IV: Today and Tomorrow*. (New York: Octagon Books, 1976): 149. *Jay’s Treaty*, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-gb-ust000012-0013.pdf>.

³⁹¹ David Perry. *Bluff, Bluster, Lies and Spies: The Lincoln Foreign Policy, 1861-1865*. (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2016): 60. Scribd.

³⁹² David P. Crook. *Diplomacy During the American Civil War*. (New York: Wiley, 1975): 8.

³⁹³ Charles S. Kennedy. *The American Consul: A History of the United States Consular Services, 1776-1924*. 2nd Ed. (Washington: New Academia Publishing, 2015 (1990)): 220.

³⁹⁴ Dale Anderson. *Civil War at Sea*. (Milwaukee: World Almanac Library, 2004): 11; Coddington. "The Civil War Blockade Reconsidered.": 291.

Confederacy and to end the blockade. With the abandonment of the embargo, blockade running became the priority. Confederates required “machinery for industry, equipment for railroads, and heavy tools for agriculture.”³⁹⁵ Blockade running became the lifeline of the Confederacy.

President Davis emitted letters of marque for commissioning privateers.³⁹⁶ Lincoln refused to recognize the validity of those letters. When the crew of the *Savannah* was captured by the *Perry*, they were delivered to New York to be tried as pirates and not as prisoners of war.³⁹⁷ Lincoln, with pragmatism, attempted to establish a hard line against foreign intervention in the Civil War but offered a compromise to European powers by not contesting access to Latin America. Anyway, Lincoln did not have the resources or credibility to deter the European powers beyond the Union’s borders. His policy worked to the degree enough to avoid the involvement of European powers in the Civil War. However, their indirect participation and their interference in Latin American affairs was an annoyance that led to postbellum issues.

Postbellum Regional Stabilization

Some of the strategic outlines of the upcoming expansionist era of American foreign policy that started in the 1890s were already taking place not long after the end of the Civil War. While massive expansion was occurring in the West, new vested interests were beginning to take place abroad. Expansionism in the Caribbeans and the Pacific was blocked in Congress, but it did not stop U.S. diplomats to set strategic assets and build friendly relations with diverse nations with the objective of expanding the U.S. sphere of influence. Washington’s approach toward Asia allowed a low-cost pivotal policy where the United States gained (rightfully or not) the trust of China and Korea. However, the Civil War weakened the international standing of the United States since the credibility of the Monroe Doctrine was diminished by the U.S. internal troubles.

The European intervention in Mexico generated an obvious incentive for the United States to accommodate Mexico to deny the legitimacy of the European intervention. The Corwin-Doblado Treaty of April 6, 1862, served that purpose and was an attempt to maintain the Monroe Doctrine during the Civil War. However, it only postponed the European intervention. The French take-over of Mexico did not require the participation of the United States to be reversed. The Mexican insurrection combined with the European troubles crumbled the French-installed Bourbon Emperor. Washington dispatched 50,000 troops at the borders and Seward warned Paris against the continuation of its support, but the American troops did not fight against the French to defend the Mexican and the Monroe Doctrine. However, to help Juarez’s forces, General Sheridan supplied 60,000 rifles to oust Emperor Maximilian.³⁹⁸

With the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, the U.S. government became more interested in the construction of a canal in Central America to ease the connection between the East and the West Coasts. Surveys of the potential canal routes were conducted in the early 1870s by the Interoceanic Canal Commission (ICC).³⁹⁹ The ICC concluded that Nicaragua presented the best route but identified Panama as the best alternative route. The ICC also established that the

³⁹⁵ Coddington. "The Civil War Blockade Reconsidered.": 300.

³⁹⁶ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 368.

³⁹⁷ Symonds. *Lincoln and His Admirals*: 43.

³⁹⁸ Jean Edward Smith. *Grant*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001): 415.

³⁹⁹ Conniff. *Panama and the United States: The End of Alliance*. 68.

canal would be best operated by a consortium of maritime powers.⁴⁰⁰ However, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 blocked the possibility of a strictly U.S. canal. Even though, Grant insisted that the United States had to be the sole state in control of a Canal in Central America,⁴⁰¹ Washington had to negotiate a new agreement with London.

African Venture

Liberia constitutes an unusual case of diplomatic involvement for Washington. Abolitionists took a particular interest in the social experiment that took place on that small portion of the west coast of Africa. Born out of a project from the American Colonization Society (ACS) under President Monroe, Liberia was conceived as a resettlement space for former slaves. The 1862 Liberia-American Treaty recognized and stood to maintain Liberia's independence since it included a responsibility to protect close where the United States had to deploy ships to Liberia should the government call for assistance.⁴⁰² Washington had supported Liberia since its foundation in 1819. By 1867, 11,909 emigrants had crossed the Atlantic to reach the coast of Liberia.⁴⁰³ However, the fate of Liberia was threatened by the European colonization of Africa.

The responsibility to protect measures of the 1862 Treaty were never formally applied. However, in 1872, the United States at the demand of the British dispatched an arbitrator to settle the dispute between Sierra Leone and Liberia over a small strip of land on the north-western boundary.⁴⁰⁴ To foster the U.S. interest in the region and to deter any envy to capture Liberia by the same occasion, Thompson and Shufeldt dispatched the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga* to the coast of Liberia. The *Tionderoga* reached Sierra Leone on January 15, 1879, but without more diplomatic support from Washington, Liberia ceded the contested territory to Sierra Leone.⁴⁰⁵ On April 28, 1879, the Secretary of the Navy, Thompson, was informed by Commodore Shufeldt that the French had the intention of making Liberia one of its protectorates.⁴⁰⁶ Shufeldt's dispatch triggered an inquiry and diplomatic pressure from Secretary Evarts. Fortunately, Liberia's independence remained.

Civil-Military Relations: Enlightenment of Unbalanced Relations

From the beginning of the Civil War, all the inadequacies and problems of the War Department and the civil-military relations, in general, were exacerbated by the urgency and the severity of the war. Secretary of War Simon Cameron resigned not even a year after the war outbreak. His successor, Edwin M. Stanton reorganized the War Department to attempt to eliminate some of the pre-war inefficiencies, bring coherence to its organization and centralize the decision-making.⁴⁰⁷ This triggered the beginning of the second reflection on the

⁴⁰⁰ Conniff. *Panama and the United States: The End of Alliance*. 68.

⁴⁰¹ Howard Jones. *Crucible of power: A History of American Foreign Relations to 1913*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009): 247.

⁴⁰² Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 60.

⁴⁰³ John Hanson Thomas McPherson. *History of Liberia*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1891): 44.

⁴⁰⁴ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*: 61; McPherson. *History of Liberia*. 49.

⁴⁰⁵ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy 1877-1889*: 63-64.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: 68.

⁴⁰⁷ Stanton Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman. *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962).

professionalization of the military. President Lincoln introduced additional reforms to respond to the demand of the war.

Traditions dictate that “policy is the master and strategy the servant” in the United States.⁴⁰⁸ Striking a balance between those two in a civil war is more an art than a science. Lincoln faced much hardship while trying to impose his authority and mitigate The Enrollment Act of 1863. Lincoln had to gain authority over the state governors to ensure clear order and efficiency in the conduct of the military.⁴⁰⁹ Even though the Enrollment Act secured the authority of the Federal Government in military affairs, Lincoln had to compose with the governors to maintain the effective operation of the organization, training, and equipment of the military forces throughout the war.⁴¹⁰ The massive influx of untrained recruits diminished the overall professionalism of the Army during the Civil War. However, the war was formative to many, and the armed forces reached a new degree of professionalism by the end of the war.

The realization of the limits and shortfalls of civil-military relations became more apparent during the Civil War. Lincoln had to face multiple oversights of his authority by reluctant generals. General Winfield Scott left Washington to set his headquarters in New York; General McClellan resisted Lincoln’s order to switch to the offensive against the South; McClellan and Frémont, among others, fought frequently with Secretary Stanton. Due to the lack of decorum regarding the centralization of the military authority where commanding generals exploited their congressional support to disregard directives from the president or the Secretary of War Stanton. To obtain a clear distinction between the authority of the Secretary of War and the Commanding General, General Grant insisted and received “a proper recognition of his prerogatives as General in Chief.”⁴¹¹ However, Grant did not extend this courtesy to General Sherman when he succeeded him.

The transition from military life to a political career has never been uncommon in American politics. Most presidents had served in the military. Only John Adams, his son John Quincy Adams, and Martin Van Buren did not serve. However, all three had important diplomatic careers before getting the highest office of the land. The postbellum era was no exception and all presidents had military experience. The military conservatism of those presidents led to an important evolution in the U.S. use of threat and force during that period. Samuel Huntington defines military conservatism as “composed of requirements budgeting, strategic pluralism, and passive diplomacy.”⁴¹² The three components are illustrative of U.S. military policy during the reconstruction. The lowering of the defence budget made difficult the improvement of U.S. first line of defence already assaulted by internal threats. The plurality of the internal threat combined with a lack of design toward foreign policy led to a weak and difficult reassertion of the United States as a regional power. Except for some individual diplomatic initiatives, the U.S. diplomatic initiatives were rare and limited by Congress.

⁴⁰⁸ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 214.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 191.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.* 253; Thomas S. Langston. *Uneasy Balance: Civil-Military Relations in Peacetime America since 1783*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003): 72.

⁴¹² Samuel P. Huntington. “Radicalism and Conservatism in National Defense Policy.” *Journal of International Affairs* Vol. 8, No. 2 (1954): 209.

The post-Civil War service brought multiple problems. While most of the officers were decommissioned, many of the remaining officers had either to return to the frontier works which included mostly policing operations or to conduct peacekeeping operations in the South as part of the Reconstruction. The vast majority of the officers after the war “detested service below the Mason-Dixon Line.”⁴¹³ The unpleasantness of the experience emerged from the political division regarding the reconstruction policy. The adversity between Congress and Johnson combined with the massive cuts in military spending that reached an uncomfortable level after the crisis of 1873 made the military reconstruction effort hazardous, underfunded, and not supported.⁴¹⁴

President Johnson ended martial law at the end of 1866. It should have ended the intermingling of the military in domestic affairs, or at least have limited it. However, Congress came into interposition with the president and progressively attempted to transfer the civilian authority over the military from the president to Congress. Congress decided to pass the Military Reconstruction Act in March 1867 which gave the army the responsibility of governing ten southern states divided into five military districts until they ratified a constitution approved by Congress.⁴¹⁵ In addition, Congress added to the restriction on Johnson by passing the Command of the Army Act which protected General Grant from being replaced.

The bureau chief system was promoting nepotism, jealousy over authority, competition rather than collaboration and cooperation, and a tendency to overlook the authority of both the commanding general and the Secretary of War.⁴¹⁶ In 1867, General Sherman, Sheridan and Auger proposed a redesigned system of Army Regulations which would have placed the military establishment “under the orders of the Commanding General” and put the staff corps under the general in chief.⁴¹⁷ While President Grant approved the new regulation, the legislature never promulgated it, and consequently, General Orders No. 28, 1869 proposed later on established the duties of the General as such:

All orders and instructions relating to the military operations or affecting the military control and discipline of the Army, issued by the President or the Secretary of War will be promulgated through the General of the Army.⁴¹⁸

This delimited the authority of the Commanding General and reasserted the rule of the President as commander in chief. The conception of a professional armed corps apolitical and designed to implement the Executive strategic views were at least crystallized by law and shielded from Congressional control as it occurred under the Radical with President Johnson. Unsatisfied with those constraints, the role of Commanding General was stripped of all its influence and prestige in the Army Appropriation Act of July 15, 1870, leaving the functions of commander in chief, in the end, to the Secretary of War under the purview of the President.⁴¹⁹ From that point, the authority

⁴¹³ George C. Rable. *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1984): 109. General George G. Meade, Winfield Scott Hancock, and John M. Schofield were opposed to military interference in civilian affairs.

⁴¹⁴ Langston. *Uneasy Balance*: 75-76.

⁴¹⁵ Charles A. Byler. *Civil-Military Relations on the Frontier and Beyond, 1865-1917*. (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2006): 127.

⁴¹⁶ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*. 253.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

of the Commanding General did not mean much since it could always be interceded at every level by the Secretary of War. This became a tremendous source of frustration for General Sherman since all its decision could be bypassed by Secretary of War William W. Belknap. Sherman expressed his frustration with the lack of significance of his position in his memoirs:

The Regular Army has set the highest example of obedience to law and authority; but for the very reason that our army is comparatively so very small, I hold that it should be the best possible, organized and governed on true military principles, and that in time of peace, we should preserve the “habits and usages of war,” so that, when war does come, we may not again be compelled to suffer the disgrace, confusion, and disorder of 1861.⁴²⁰

When President Hayes ordered the military to intervene against the railroad strike in 1877, he interposed once more the military against an internal issue. The continuous interposition of the military forces as pacification agents was, overall, detrimental to the development of healthy civil-military relations.

From Presidential Control to Congressional Limits

The Civil War and its aftermath brought changes in the decision-making aspect of foreign policy. While the leadership of the president was the main determinant of foreign policy during the Jacksonian era, after Lincoln, the dynamic changed. Congress started to play a key check and balance role against the executive. The evolution of U.S. foreign policy suffered from that division between the office of the president and Congress. While presidents and foreign secretaries brought in new ideas to re-assert the United States’ regional dominance and engaged toward the expansion of the U.S. sphere of influence, Congress short-circuited those projects in vast majority to the point where the risk of not obtaining Congressional approval simply discouraged further engagement (See Table 6.5). This put several international projects on hold.

Table 6.5: Presidents and their Main Role on Foreign Policy, 1860-1880

President	Years in Office	Main Role on Foreign Policy
Abraham Lincoln	1861-1865	Dealt with the belligerency status of the Confederacy Implemented the largest blockade in American history Rapprochement with Russia
Andrew Johnson	1865-1869	Alaska Purchase (Seward)
Ulysses S. Grant	1869-1877	Neutrality with Cuba Failure with the Dominican Republic Expansion of influence in Asia <i>Alabama</i> Claims
Rutherford B. Hayes	1877-1881	Trouble with Mexico Advocated the establishment of Samoa as a Protectorate. Attempted to annex Hawaii. Order the construction of the first U.S. battleship.

There was a concrete transformation of the leadership of the foreign policy agenda that operated after Lincoln. President Johnson received so much opposition from Congress that he was impeached by it. Johnson stayed in power; one vote short of being convicted by a two-thirds majority in the Senate. However, this incident changed the dynamic of power in Washington. Ulysses S. Grant and Rutherford B. Hayes led isolationist presidencies focused primarily on

⁴²⁰ William T. Sherman. *Personal Memoirs of Gen. W.T. Sherman*. Volume II (New York: Charles L. Webster & Co.): 406.

internal issues. Issue avoidance and strict neutralism were the trademarks of their presidencies, and when they tried to get involved their endeavours died in Congress or the Senate.

The Strategist in Command: Abraham Lincoln

Tension and violence were not new to the House and the Senate. Decades before the Civil War, elected officials engaged in bullying, shoving, punching, canning, and duelling.⁴²¹ The threat of duel in the 1830s, morphed into bullying and turning to silence any effort to challenge the southerner on slavery in the 1840s, and finally, escalated to the threat of disunion and civil war in the 1850s. The gag rule in the 1830s had silenced the debate on slavery in Congress, but only let the issue be ignored and inflated to the point of war.⁴²² The election of Abraham Lincoln was the last straw that broke the Union.

The implosion of the Union was signalled by many factors. However, the election of President Abraham Lincoln epitomized the division surrounding the issue of slavery. All abolitionist states voted for Lincoln; he lost in all the slave-holding states; and he was even absent on the ballot in ten states where he was also burned in effigy in public squares.⁴²³ The promise of prohibiting slavery in federal territories was perceived as a stepping stone toward a progressive disenfranchisement of Southern interests and a way toward abolition. The election of Lincoln sealed the decade of growing tensions between the abolitionists and anti-abolitionists. The danger posed to the slavery system triggered the Secession and the Civil War. The Republican Party was created after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the *Dred Scott* decision. Lincoln obtained a minority of the popular vote. 1,866,452 popular ballots against 2,815,617 for the two Democratic candidates (Stephen A. Douglas for the northern faction and John C. Breckenridge for the southern faction).⁴²⁴ Following Lincoln's election, South Carolina issued a Secession Declaration on December 20, 1860, and was followed in order by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas and Tennessee.

Lincoln's presidency would be one of the most defining ones in United States history. His words still resonate with many Americans, and he is often ranked as the best president in U.S. history along with Franklin D. Roosevelt and George Washington.⁴²⁵ However, the challenges he faced in 1861 were not announcing an easy presidency. Lincoln would display the aptitudes of a

⁴²¹ Joanne B. Freeman. *The Field of Blood: Violence in Congress and the Road to Civil War*. (New York: Picador, 2018). Freeman reported more than seventy violent incidents between congressmen and between senators, See *ibid.* 5.

⁴²² While the gag rule on slavery petitions was prevalent up to the Civil War, some actors, most notably, former president John Quincy Adams devoted a lot of his time as congressman to circumvent the gag rule and bring the issue of slavery to a debate. His efforts were creative and fearless considering the violent climate in Congress. See Freeman. *The Field of Blood*: 114.

⁴²³ Ronald C. White. *A. Lincoln: A Biography*. (New York: Random House, 2009): 350; Stephen B. Oates. *With Malice toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1977): 202.

⁴²⁴ Alan Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*. (Washington: CQ Press, 2007): 203.

⁴²⁵ In 1948 and 1962, the famous historian Arthur M. Schlesinger asked panels of historians and political scientists to rank the U.S. presidents in order of greatness, and in both polls, President Lincoln ranked first. See Gary M. Maranell. "The Evaluation of Presidents: An Extension of the Schlesinger Polls." *The Journal of American History* Vol. 57, no. 1 (Jun. 1970): 105. President Lincoln was ranked best president in 2000, 2009, 2017, and 2021 survey from C-Span. See "Presidential Historians Survey 2021." *C-SPAN*. Accessed March 3, 2023. <https://www.c-span.org/presidentsurvey2021/?page=overall>. The Siena College Research Institute ranked Lincoln the second-best president in history after Franklin D. Roosevelt. See "Siena College Research Institute 2022 Survey of U.S. Presidents" *Siena College Research Institute*. Accessed March 3, 2023. <https://scri.siena.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/PDF-Ranking-FINAL-REAL.pdf>.

fine strategist throughout the Civil War. He understood early on that inaction would cost the unity of the United States, and that a Union offensive was urgent and necessary to save the country. To force the Union out of inaction, Lincoln issued his General War Order No. 1, establishing February 22, 1862, as “the day for a general movement of the Land and Naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces.”⁴²⁶ While unorthodox, Lincoln’s War Order was designed toward forcing his own generals to take action. As Stanton argued, “That will be the last time General McClellan will give either myself or the President the waiting snub.”⁴²⁷ McClellan, the American Napoleon, pushed Lincoln’s patience to the limit. He built an army for Lincoln’s war, but he was not its leader. McClellan’s insubordinations, defensive deadlocks, perpetual preparations, bad intelligence, and ultimately its defeats cost him his position as General of the Army. He cost a lot to the Northern morale. However, Lincoln bounced back and devised a new strategy. He started by shocking the world and announcing the Declaration of Emancipation. By doing so, he legitimized his position toward “a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion.”⁴²⁸

Lincoln had limited knowledge or experience with war or foreign policy. President Lincoln never appealed to the Monroe Doctrine throughout the Civil War.⁴²⁹ However, his actions were consequent with its application. He deferred often to his Secretary of State William H. Seward when it came to the conduct of diplomacy. However, Lincoln had many good intuitions when it came to the war against the Confederacy. His determination to keep the United States as a single nation under one flag was impressive. The realization that defeating Lee’s army was more important than capturing the Confederate territory was a turning point in the war. Even after the Union victory at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Lee was able to elude General Grant and Meade and keep the Confederate Army alive.

During his re-election campaign of 1864, Lincoln was opposed to the former Union general-in-chief George B. McClellan. McClellan represented the “Peace Democrats” who campaign to end the hostilities with the South.⁴³⁰ The timing was not in favour of McClellan since the Union had made significant victories including the capture of Atlanta. The divisions within his own party were a challenge throughout Lincoln’s presidency. However, Lincoln was able to surround himself with the best elements of those factions and to create a united front against the Confederacy that generated an efficient and focused government in Washington.

Lincoln was assassinated on April 14, 1865. His successor, Andrew Johnson had the difficult task to bring back the Union together. However, he was not the leader who won the war. The coalition of rivals who supported Lincoln was not so lenient as to do the same courtesy to Johnson. Opposition fused from every direction during his presidency, and he had the displeasure of becoming one of the most hated presidents.

⁴²⁶ Cited in Doris Kearns Goodwin. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005): 426.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.* 427.

⁴²⁸ Quoted in James M. McPherson. *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief*. (New York: Penguin Press, 2008): 158.

⁴²⁹ Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth-Century America*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011): 139.

⁴³⁰ Goodwin. *Team of Rivals*: 654.

The Broken President: Andrew Johnson

Andrew Johnson had big shoes to fill and did not have the biggest crowd of supporters to help him. He came to power after the tragic death of Lincoln. As with his predecessors who obtained the higher office of the land without being elected as such, his presidency would be challenging. Johnson's vision of the Reconstruction was different from Lincoln's. President Johnson issued the Proclamation of Amnesty and Pardon for the Confederate states on May 29, 1865. His goal was a rapid reconstruction that would bring the southern states quickly into the Union. Johnson's restoration program shocked the Radical Republicans who wanted justice for the Confederates.

After his inauguration, President Johnson appeared first as inflexible about the rebels' fate. Lincoln had planned a rapid reconstruction with minimum federal government involvement and massive pardons and amnesty of the Southerners with a few exceptions.⁴³¹ Treason and punishment toward the South were front and center of Johnson's discourses in the aftermath of Lincoln's assassination.⁴³² However, his position weakened drastically a little over a month after his inauguration. His Proclamations of Amnesty and Pardon injured his relations with Congress irreparably. His turn toward a less punitive position for reconstruction ultimately led the Republican Radicals in the House of Representatives in March 1867 to impeach Johnson for a "high misdemeanor."⁴³³ He was almost convicted short of one vote in the Senate later in 1868. His impeachment was in response to his administration of the Reconstruction. Johnson mismanaged the Reconstruction and gave up on the opportunity to rebuild a more inclusive and reformed South that could have stabilized the country further. He opted rather for the simple solution of massive amnesties and pardons for many rebels.⁴³⁴ This empowered the traditional leadership and created a reversal in race empowerment and created a segregated South. Johnson's silent approval of Black Codes in 1865 sealed the fate of the Reconstruction.

The Reconstruction was failing. The rapid removal of Martial Law by Johnson only gave the incentive to challenge the military occupation of the South. Blacks returned to quasi-slavery with the implementation of Black Codes; hatred toward white unionists and army personnel was escalating. Secretary of War Stanton and General Grant turned toward Congress for help.⁴³⁵ Congress passed the First Reconstruction Act legalizing the Army occupation, re-establishing martial law, and splitting the South into five military districts.⁴³⁶ Political competition and the displacement of the control over the Reconstruction from the office of the President to Congress re-established the order that the Army was so carefully trying to maintain with a diminishing force and lack of authority to enforce the drastically changing order of social relations in the South.

⁴³¹ Kenneth M. Stampp. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. (New York. Vintage Books, 1967): 48.

⁴³² Johnson declared at the end of an interview with Senator Wade that "Treason must be made infamous and traitors must be impoverished." Quoted in Kenneth M. Stampp. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. (New York. Vintage Books, 1967): 52. Johnson also declared that leaders of the South "must be conquered and a new set of men brought forward who are to vitalize and develop the Union feeling in the South." See *ibid*, 65.

⁴³³ Kenneth M. Stampp. *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877*. (New York. Vintage Books, 1967): 53.

⁴³⁴ Following the proclamations, the presidential Reconstruction restored civilian government to the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Texas. See Trefousse. *Andrew Johnson*: 217.

⁴³⁵ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press. 2012): 394, Scribd.

⁴³⁶ *United States Statutes at Large*, XIV, 428-29; XV, 2-4, 14-16, 41, reprinted in Robert W. Johannsen, *Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York: Free Press, 1970): 89-92.

President Johnson kept Secretary of State Seward in charge of the U.S. foreign policy. Seward was more determined than ever to pursue his commercial expansionism while shielding the United States against another war.⁴³⁷ Throughout Johnson's presidency, it was Seward who championed the foreign policy agenda. Seward managed the response to the French intervention in Mexico; obtained the annexation of Alaska in 1867; consolidated much of the foundations of what would become the Open-Door policy in Asia; attempted to lease or acquire depots and territories in the Caribbeans; worked toward the construction of the canal in Panama. With the exception of the Annexation of Alaska, his initiatives generated meagre results. Due to the severe hatred from Congress toward Johnson, Seward and Johnson had a hard time developing new foreign policy initiatives.

The War Hero in Command: Ulysses S. Grant

Even though, "Like Lincoln, Grant believed it was important to heal the wounds of war quickly,"⁴³⁸ the Reconstruction was to endure throughout his presidency. President Ulysses S. Grant was not predestined for political life, but in the postbellum period with all its internal instabilities festering the country, Grant seemed like a perfect candidate. After all, he was the leading general who ended the Civil War. However, his presidency had to deal with the racial violence of the Reconstruction, the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and the White Leagues, the ongoing Indians Wars, and the Panic of 1873. While a war hero, Grant was not the best president and experienced first-hand the corruption and opulence of the Gilded Age.

Grant had to deal with two major foreign policy issues. First, he had to contain his desire to intervene in the insurrection against the Spanish in Cuba. Spain was an occupying force in the mind of many Americans. Public opinion oscillated between annexation and independence, but Grant had the popular support to intervene.⁴³⁹ Secretary of State Fish thought otherwise. The timing was terrible. Since the second foreign policy issue Grant wanted to pursue was the *Alabama* claims against Great Britain. Washington could find itself in the awkward position of pursuing claims against a country that supported a rebellion while attempting to do the same thing.⁴⁴⁰ The *Alabama* claims would lose their legitimacy. In addition, Fish doubted the insurgent had sufficient standing and control over Cuba to be recognized as belligerent. Grant's cabinet was divided over the Cuban issue.⁴⁴¹ Grant decided to maintain neutrality and sided with Fish. For once, Congress was willing to go further than the presidency. The situation in the United States became a preamble to the Spanish-American War. With the intensification of the insurrection, Grant was willing to recognize the Cuban belligerency, but Spain made an overture toward mediation at the same moment defusing the crisis.⁴⁴²

President Grant declared in 1870 to the Senate that "The doctrine promulgated by President Monroe has been adhered to by all political parties, and I now deem it proper to assert the equally important principle that hereafter no territory on this continent shall be regarded as subject of

⁴³⁷ Hans L. Trefousse. *Andrew Johnson: A Biography*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997): 207.

⁴³⁸ Jean Edward Smith. *Grant*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001): 408.

⁴³⁹ Smith. *Grant*. 492.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴¹ Boutwell, Hoar and Borie supported Fish while Rawlins, Cox and Creswell wanted immediate action. See *ibid*. 493.

⁴⁴² Smith. *Grant*. 496.

transfer to European power.”⁴⁴³ This claim was made in an effort to convince the Senate to annex Santo Domingo. While unsuccessful toward annexing Santo Domingo, this statement was a strong reminder of the expansion of the role of security provider in the Western Hemisphere. A shared conception of a foreign policy emerged between all political parties at the effect that the Western Hemisphere was the United States sphere of interest and none other.

The End of the Reconstruction: Rutherford B. Hayes

Rutherford B. Hayes marked the end of the Reconstruction era. Elected in one of the most contentious elections of the United States where none of the candidates had enough electoral votes, Hayes started his presidency with the condition of ending the reconstruction. The so-called Compromise of 1877 tarnished the beginning of his presidency. His presidency started with the admission that the Reconstruction was a failure, and that segregation would become the norm in the South until it would be outlawed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Nearly another century of black oppression would ensue Hayes’s election. The violence and terror imposed by the Southern Democrats had already broken the Reconstruction system with the re-establishment of white supremacy, but the official termination of the Reconstruction was the final admission of defeat. From the beginning of his presidency, Hayes maintained Washington’s “traditional rule of noninterference in the affairs of foreign nations” in his inaugural address.⁴⁴⁴

Rutherford B. Hayes came into power with pragmatism and a series of important reforms in mind. First, Hayes attempted to break the overbearing oversight of cabinet members. Lincoln had deferred to Congress for some of its appointments and left them free reign over their department; Johnson was constrained by the Tenure of Office Act that “increased congressional power over cabinet members and executive departments; Grant had been able to impose some of its choices but was still submitted to the rules of Congress.”⁴⁴⁵ Hayes refused categorically to let Congress dictate his appointment and selected his own unified cabinet. This was his first attack against the patronage system that polluted Washington.

The summer of 1877 was a difficult one for Hayes since a series of internal troubles slowed down his political agenda. Hayes had to deal with the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. The strike was the result of the depression that followed the Panic of 1873. The wage cuts from the railroad companies triggered a series of strikes throughout the country. The clash between the strikers and the strike-breakers led to one of the deadliest and most violent strikes in American history. With the destruction of locomotives, railroad cars, and buildings,⁴⁴⁶ Hayes had to dispatch troops to tame the tensions. In addition, troubles at the Mexican borders with the Nez Percé nation and the cattle rustlers who took refuge on the Mexican side required intervention.

Hayes benefited from the end of the Reconstruction. It eased the pressure from the Democrats on the military budget eventually and freed resources toward the resolution of the other internal instabilities that threatened Washington’s ability to focus on foreign policy.

⁴⁴³ Ulysses S. Grant. “May 31, 1870: Message Regarding Dominican Republic Annexation.” *Presidential Speeches*, Miller Center. May 31, 1870. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/may-31-1870-message-regarding-dominican-republic-annexation>.

⁴⁴⁴ Ari Arthur Hoogenboom. *Rutherford B. Hayes: Warrior and President*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995): 299.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 303.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 329.

The Voices of Foreign Policy: The Secretaries of States

Political leadership in the 1870s and 1880s lacked in foreign policy competencies. Grant was a great military leader, but not the best political leader, however. His Secretary of State, Hamilton Fish was fully aware of the constraints on Washington's foreign policy both due to its means and to the fact that the president was not fully in control of the agenda. This made Hamilton Fish an isolationist secretary of state who engaged in risky overture toward the European powers to avoid direct involvement of Washington. He was also a voice of temperance toward any initiatives by President Grant to expand the U.S. sphere of influence. President Rutherford B. Hayes and his Secretary of State, William M. Evarts were a good match, but the U.S. foreign policy under their leadership did not yield great projects as if they were a transition before the important changes that would occur in the following decades.

Many secretaries of state have been celebrated figures of the United States' foreign policy and tried to shape the future of American position in world Politics. John Quincy Adams marked deeply American foreign policy by establishing the founding principles of the Monroe Doctrine. Secretary of State William Henry Seward (1861-1969) registered as the advocate of expansionism. He engaged in diverse expansion projects and advocated for the annexation of various territories. He had to compose with a difficult setting to conduct foreign policy. During the Civil War, Seward was able to keep the European powers' involvement in the Civil War to a minimum. Seward remained the central figure of foreign policy under President Johnson. His successor, Elihu B. Washburne (1869) was only in function as secretary of state for eleven days before being named Minister to France (1869-1877). Hamilton Fish (1869-1877) became the figure of diplomatic moderation under President Grant. He appeased the relations with Britain during the *Alabama* crisis, convinced Grant to stay out of Cuba, and opposed the annexation of Santo Domingo. William M. Evarts (1877-1881) was amongst the first to advocate for international arbitration.⁴⁴⁷ His career as a jurist predisposed him to do so, but the notion that Washington should be the arbitrator of the conflict in its sphere of influence was a conception that would increase in popularity during the Gilded Age.

William H. Seward, the Secretary of State under Lincoln and Johnson was probably the most prominent expansionist figure of that period and one of the most controversial. Seward was a polarizing figure in American domestic politics as much as in foreign policy. Lord Lyons, the British Minister at Washington, was already extremely worried when he heard that Seward was the Secretary of State to be. The latter had told the former that "if European governments interfered to protect their commerce, he could unite America by a foreign war in order to resist such interference."⁴⁴⁸ Seward's stance against Britain during the Civil War would balance Lincoln's more compromising attitude.

Seward was left in charge of most of foreign policy under Johnson who had to deal with the criticisms and challenges of the Reconstruction. Secretary of State William Seward outplayed his intention of annexing various territories on multiple occasions. His expansionism was not one of conquest, but one motivated by dollar diplomacy. Seward succeeded to annex only Alaska, but he proposed the annexation of Canada, part of Mexico, Santo Domingo, Hawaii, and the Danish

⁴⁴⁷ Claude G. Bowers and Helen Dwight Reid. "William M. Evarts: Secretary of State, March 12, 1877, to March 3, 1881." In *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*. Volume VII and VIII, Edited by Samuel Flag Bemis. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963): 232-233.

⁴⁴⁸ Lyons to Russel (February 4, 1861) quoted in Ephraim Douglass Adams. *Great Britain and the American Civil War (Civil War Classics)*. (New York: Diversion Books, 2014): 74.

West Indies. Seward's desire to control the West Coast from Alaska to Nicaragua was consistent with his willingness to expand the U.S. interest in the Pacific. However, Seward never proposed an armed intervention to capture Canada during his tenure as Secretary of State.⁴⁴⁹ The annexation of Alaska was approved by the Senate on the widespread erroneous belief that Russia had mobilized its fleet into the American waters to deter Great Britain and France.⁴⁵⁰

Seward's plan to consolidate American power recommended that the United States, first, impose a higher tariff to protect small industries and attract foreign labourers.⁴⁵¹ Second, the rapid and cheap distribution of land throughout the West would create an additional incentive for the incoming foreign labourers to settle into the large space of inhabited land and to provide a stable and growing agricultural sector.⁴⁵² Third, the construction of a network system connecting both coasts through railroads and canals would consolidate the American influence over the Western hemisphere to a point where eventually both Canada and Latin America would join the United States.⁴⁵³ While his plan was an idealized version not shared by many in Washington, Seward was able to realize the core component of his idea for American development for the most part and achieved the expansion of the American territory with the Annexation of Alaska, and the Midway Islands. He was unable to achieve his goals of annexing Hawaii, the Danish West Indies, Santo Domingo, Greenland, Iceland, and Canada.

Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, who succeeded to Washburne's eleven days in office, spent more time appeasing the ambitions and managing the expectations of President Grant than developing his own foreign policy agenda. Grant and Fish attempted to expand U.S. interests in the Caribbean. According to LaFeber, Grant's attention toward the Caribbean was an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine sphere.⁴⁵⁴ However, Secretary Fish contributed to moderating most of Grant's "forward policy" initiatives in the Caribbean to the point of failure. The attempt to annex Santo Domingo and purchase Samana Bay was problematic. Expansion westward under Grant knew a little more success. Commander Richard W. Meade secured the American use of the Pago Pago harbour in Samoa in 1872, and Senate ratified the agreement in 1878. Fish negotiated the 1875 Treaty with Hawaii which laid much of the basis for the integration into the Union.

Fish contrasted sharply with all the previous secretaries of state due to his policy. He was conscious of the limitation of the postbellum United States, fragilized by the Civil War, weakened by persisting internal disturbance, and amputated of its military might by Congress at the first sign of stability. He decided to compromise some of the Monroe Doctrine principles by advocating the United States as a mediator. The pivotal approach of Secretary Fish led him to propose an

⁴⁴⁹ Ernest N. Paolino. *The Foundations of the American Empire: William Henry Seward and U.S. Foreign Policy*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973): 14.

⁴⁵⁰ W. Stull Holt. *Treaties Defeated by the Senate: A Study of the Struggle Between President and Senate Over the Conduct of Foreign Relations*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1933): 102. Ironically, the Russian fleet was sent to America to avoid being trapped. The weak Russian fleet was sent to America to avoid any confrontation with the other European powers in reaction to the Russian treatment of the Polish crisis. The Russian strategy against the European power was to conduct a *guerre de course* strategy away from the European coast. See Frank A. Golder. "The Russian Fleet and Civil War." *The American Historical Review*, 20, no. 4 (Jul. 1915): 802-3.

⁴⁵¹ Walter LaFeber. *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963): 27.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.* 27.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.* 27-8.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 39.

American mediation during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.⁴⁵⁵ Germany protested, and the suggestion was quickly forgotten. This was a direct involvement in European affairs. While Fish could not go as far as getting involved in European politics, he, however, invited the European powers to take part in the policy of Latin America. Rather than increasing pressure on Spain to stop its involvement in Latin American politics, Fish convened a negotiation table between Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Spain to end the war and signed a peace treaty in 1872.⁴⁵⁶ He tried to repeat the experience with Cuba in 1875. Secretary Fish contrasted sharply with the traditional American foreign policy and created a bias during his tenure.

William M. Evarts had an uneventful tenure as secretary of state. He would have been more than competent to tackle multiple crises, but his four years under President Hayes did not lead to important changes in U.S. foreign policy. He had to deal with tensions with Britain due to the participation of an American in the Fenian rebellion in Ireland. Secretary Evarts dealt with the British government with finesse and repatriated the Fenian sympathizer to the United States.⁴⁵⁷ The second crisis Evarts had to deal with was the Halifax fishery commission of 1877 established under the Treaty of Washington of 1871 which asked for 5.5 million dollars in compensation from the United States to Great Britain in return for the fishing privileges in the Canadian waters.⁴⁵⁸ The problem with the Halifax fishery award was more with the internal protest in Washington that emerged after the commission's decision.

Power Under Turmoil: Defensive Brinkmanship or Reconstructing Regional Power?

The evolution of the U.S. foreign policy during the Civil War and the Reconstruction was a step backward when it came to the international recognition of the United States as a regional power. The weakening of its regional involvement and the difficult situation of its internal stability permitted the European powers to violate the Monroe Doctrine principles to a certain degree. Washington attempted to maintain its defensive brinkmanship policy, but the threats were less credible. Washington was able to maintain the non-transfer principle as a defensive brinkmanship strategy, but only after the war. France and Spain exploited the turmoil of the Civil War to gain control over territory in the Western Hemisphere. Two marking violations of the Monroe Doctrine occurred throughout that period.

The demands of internal politics crippled the ability of the successive presidencies of Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant to engage in active development of the U.S. sphere of influence. They were only able to limit the damages by deterring further European involvement and stopping the transfer of colonial possession between European powers (H_{4b}). The rare initiatives of expansion of the U.S. sphere of influence were either not sustained by sufficient commitment or simply crushed into the Legislative in opposition to diverting resources toward external policies when crises required attention internally. President Hayes did not have the same constraints since his election ended the Reconstruction. However, the restrictions of the previous administration had pervasive effects that endured during his presidency. The United States did not have the means to conduct important expansionist policy at that time (H_{1a}). Even in the light of the potential violation

⁴⁵⁵ Sexton. "The United States, the Cuban Rebellion, and the Multilateral Initiative of 1875." 349.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 349-350

⁴⁵⁷ Claude G. Bowers and Helen Dwight Reid. "William M. Evarts: Secretary of State, March 12, 1877 to March 3, 1881." In *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*. Volume VII and VIII, Edited by Samuel Flagg Bemis. 125-216. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963): 228-230.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

of the Monroe Doctrine did not generate an intervention. The establishment of a French concession to build a canal in Panama was received as a risk and created concerns, but no intervention.

The United States maintained a foreign policy oriented toward strategic autonomy but as an isolationist (H_{4a}) and no longer an expansionist state. The Civil War broke the expansionist era that started with the Texas and Oregon annexation and the Mexican War. The internal troubles of the United States delayed any pending external and overseas projects. The resistance of the United States toward alliance formation before the Civil War acted favourably for the Union in the Civil War in two important ways. First, an alliance with a European power prior to the Civil War could have eased the process for the Confederates to recruit an ally against the Union. Second, the low independence on foreign trade in the Union territory gave an advantage over the Confederacy which was dependent on the cotton trade. The Union was able to rely on its own industrial base to conduct the war making it less vulnerable to foreign pressures while the Confederacy had to build it and rely on foreign sources.

Washington experienced the fragility of neutrality during wartime. Great Britain and France declared themselves as neutral soon after Lincoln declared the blockade of the Confederacy. Confederates exploited the neutral status of Great Britain and France to obtain resources and financial support to help their war effort. The acquisition of ships by the Confederates both in Great Britain and France was particularly problematic. The Alabama Claims soured the relations with Great Britain after the war. The actions of Great Britain and France as neutral damaged the function of neutrals during wartime and ultimately undermined the possibility of impartiality in conflict to ease continuous trade with rivals (H_{EP2}).

The Reconstruction was not only to stabilize the South but also to remove the instability and the threat westward. The internal stabilization of the United States was the first step toward building an anti-access and area-denial system to protect the United States (H_{1B}) and eventually the rest of America from the European threat. The protection of the coast had been a necessity of the Civil War for both belligerents, and it created a fleet of brown water vessels and an important system of fortification that made the United States less vulnerable. However, to become a truly efficient A2/AD system, the United States had to develop blue-water capability to stop the threat before it reached the U.S. coasts. The United States maintained an intermediary autonomy for the decade and a half that followed the end of the Civil War.

U.S. isolationist identity survived the test of the Civil War and was reinforced during the Reconstruction era (H_{IB1}). The French coup in Mexico and the Alabama claims reinforced the U.S. aversion toward alliances. Those events added to the narrative of the untrustworthiness of the European powers. Both events violated the Monroe Doctrine and contributed to the expansion of the Monroe Doctrine in the 1890s and 1900s. However, following the war, the institutionalization of the isolationist belief (H_{IB2}) developed a greater aversion toward expansionism. While Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant had expansionist aims they were blocked systematically by either the Congress or the Senate. The only exception was Alaska which was too good a deal to let go.

Lincoln's economic agenda was already protectionist and brought back the tariffs back to pre-1845 levels.⁴⁵⁹ The decade and a half that followed the war did not improve things either. The robber barons that led the Gilded Age emerged out of the protectionist era that consolidated many

⁴⁵⁹ C. Donald Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation: A History of Trade Politics in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 92. Kindle.

of U.S. powerhouse industries. Endemic corruption became part of the reconstruction era. Therefore, the trading state hypothesis (HTS) was hardly supported since the tariffs acted as a barrier to the improvement of trade relations with foreign states. The situation became dire under President Grant. President Arthur marked the beginning of the end for the “unequal” system of tariffs that benefited the robber barons with his Tariff Commission in 1882.⁴⁶⁰ However, it would not be before the Progressive Era that tariff reforms would truly transform U.S. economic policy.

⁴⁶⁰ Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation*. 105.

Chapter 7: U.S. Imperialism, Manifest Destiny, and Roosevelt's Corollary (1880-1910)

Manifest destiny had been part of the U.S. political discourse since 1845 when coined by the editor John L. O'Sullivan and epitomized the U.S. expansionism of the nineteenth century.¹ The nationalism impulse at the root of continental manifest destiny was first expressed by "the economics of land hunger response to a largely empty continent inviting to be filled."² However, the full expression of extracontinental manifest destiny really occurred at the turn of the twentieth century. The debate over slavery had become the shackle of expansionism, ultimately tearing the United States apart. The Union victory brought an interim to repair some of the fractures of the Civil War that lasted up until the 1880s. The renewed enthusiasm toward territorial expansion brought back the manifest destiny discourse. Manifest destiny became a complement of the imperialist discourse led by central political figures of that period including Theodore Roosevelt, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Alfred Thayer Mahan.

With the second phase of manifest destiny, resistance toward a more Puritan and restrained version of manifest destiny emerged to counterbalance the jingoist version. The tension between imperialism and manifest destiny as the guiding political forces at play in American foreign policy was a complex interplay of contradicting ideas with no clear-cut boundaries. The paradox of U.S. manifest destiny is rooted in the division between an expansionist vision of a democratic and morally just America and the incarnation of American power. According to Frederick Merk, imperialism "was the antithesis of Manifest Destiny."³ However, after 1898, both discourses merged into one with all their contractions. The extraterritorial ambitions of the United States fused with manifest destiny to support an imaginary virtuous colonial policy.

The manifest destiny discourse became a moral justification to expand the U.S. sphere of influence without the remorse of contradicting its democratic institutions. Beyond the rhetoric that animated the territorial ambitions of the United States throughout that period, Washington became animated by the desire to build a big navy which required a long and hazardous process of change in Congress to remove the anti-navalist prevalence. The strategic reality that emerged after the Spanish-American could not allow anymore the contraction to a "Peace Navy." With the territorial acquisitions and conquest in the Caribbeans and the Pacific, Washington required a "Big Navy" to maintain its influence over those islands. In addition to the expansionism eased by the naval expansion (H_{1a}) the United States engaged in an anti-access and area denial strategy (H_{1b}) to reinforce the credibility of the Monroe Doctrine and its corollaries.

The United States began to yield the credibility of a great power during that period. At the very least, it displayed hegemonic autonomy. The expansion of the U.S. territory in the Pacific and the control over the Caribbean and Central America showed a strong display of expansionism (H_{1a}). The establishment of naval bases in the Caribbean and the Pacific improved the A2/AD capabilities of the United States over the Western Hemisphere (H_{1b}). The construction of the

¹ David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler. *Manifest Destiny*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974): xv; Anders Stephanson. *Manifest Destiny: American Expansionism and the Empire of Right*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995): xii; Charles L. Stanford. *Manifest Destiny and the Imperialism Question*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1974): 2.

² Stanford. *Manifest Destiny and the Imperialism Question*. 6.

³ Frederick Merk. *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1963): 256.

Panama Canal along with the securitization of the rights over the canal provided the means to the United States to be in control of the Western Hemisphere.

Neutrality and alliance avoidance was still the norm in the United States. Washington progressively shifted from a defensive position in the Western Hemisphere to a position of dominance as a regional power and ultimately as an emerging world power. This change was also a shift in the dominance of the leading coalition in U.S. policy. A majority in favour of expansionism and power projection emerged which displaced the isolationist and defensive coalition that had prevailed for the most part until the 1890s. The neutrality aspect of the U.S. strategic culture was showing signs of weaknesses (H_{IB2}). The ideas of Mahan, Roosevelt, and Clay had modified the prevalent nationalist narrative and fostered a new generation of expansionism. The renewed version of expansionism looked beyond the continental landmass of North America. The Caribbean and the islands of the Pacific were essential to the development of strategic outposts.⁴ The extensive defensive system served as anti-access and area denial bases for its hemispheric defence (H_{1b}). A ruling majority in Washington was set to extend the U.S. sphere of influence beyond its coasts on the Pacific and the Atlantic.

The transformations at play during the Gilded Age fostered a renewed vision for the development of the United States. The consolidation of the means of production inside the United States combined with a stabilized political climate allowed a more active role in international trade. The growing and overbearing economic weight of the United States in the Western Hemisphere created a network with the United States as its central hub. President Cleveland progressively established an economic agenda to rectify the “indefensible extortion of the inequitable tariff system.”⁵ However, Washington was not ready to let go of its protectionist policy yet. With President Harrison’s election, the McKinley Tariff of 1890 was a major setback bringing back “the overall average duties to nearly 50 percent.”⁶ The negative consequences of the McKinley Tariff put a light on the unequal system at work that favoured the robber barons, but their influence on the political system was strong. The Panic of 1893 and its following depression were blamed on Cleveland’s reforms.⁷ The United States was among the most protectionist states in the world at that point. Foreign markets were starting to retaliate to the U.S. protectionist measures which was a bad sign for a growing economy. As a solution, President McKinley started to negotiate bilateral trade agreements. The Progressive Era slowly built a majority in favour of tariff reduction. The negotiation of reciprocity treaties along with tariff reforms and the effort to break the trusts and monopolies of the robber barons were serious attempts to transform the model of economic development of the United States, but internal resistance to those changes was important and did not yield satisfying results for another decade after the Panic of 1907 to really see changes.

A New World of Possibilities: Imperialist Endeavors and Continental Prevalence

A consensus emerged by the mid-1880s and 1890s. The United States had become a major power. That consensus became part of an era of economic prosperity, military modernization, and

⁴ Nicholas J. Spykman. *America’s Strategy in World Politics: The United States and the Balance of Power*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publisher, 2008): 414.

⁵ C. Donald Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation: A History of Trade Politics in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 114. Kindle.

⁶ *Ibid.* 123. Kindle.

⁷ Some Republicans blamed the Panic of 1893 on Cleveland’s reforms even though they did not take place until 1894. *Ibid.* 132. Kindle.

territorial expansion. The United States was perceived, and most of all started to perceive itself as a great power. The ascension to a great power status came with some misfortune. The end of the self-imposed restrictions on the military power of the United States led Washington to get involved systematically in every trouble and disturbance of the Americas. Washington's involvement in the 1879 War of the Pacific, the Venezuelan Crisis, the Cuban independence, the independence of Panama, the multiple debt crises of Latin America, and the persistent threat of coups and insurgency created as many windows of opportunity to the European powers as they trained the United States to become an efficient regional power. The United States intervened in Latin America ten times between 1880 and 1898 alone.⁸ The consensus was also brought forward by *yellow journalism* which increased the bias toward building an American Empire.

The imperialist venture of the United States between the end of Reconstruction and World War I unleashed the risks and rewards of the end of self-containment. Colonial acquisitions, direct confrontation with European powers, international display of military might, expansion of commerce, and hardening of diplomatic style marked this shift to an unrestrained era for the United States foreign policy. The acquisition of Guam, Wake, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, and the virtual control over Cuba and Panama set the stage for the U.S. introduction as a world power, and, not only, a regional one. The establishment of the United States as a regional power was confirmed by Britain who yielded the arbitration of conflicts in the Western Hemisphere to Washington after the Venezuelan Crisis and by the defeat Spain experienced against the American forces in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines.

Discourse about Manifest Destiny, Social Darwinism, and the glorification of war⁹ fostered the expansionist and colonial ambitions of certain elements of the American decision-making sphere. Most of all, it brought a new interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, a more assertive and broader view of the U.S. role as a regional security provider and to exclude the intervention of the European powers. This represented an expansion of the United States' sphere of strategic autonomy. However, the range of the U.S. ambitions was still limited by its capabilities. Beyond the Western Hemisphere, the United States had little influence.

President Benjamin Harrison, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy, Secretary of State James G. Blaine, and Theodore Roosevelt set the stage to secure foreign territories for the United States. During the Harrison administration, they sought to secure "the Danish West Indies, a lease on Samana Bay in Santo Domingo, a concession of the Mole St. Nicholas in Haiti, a naval base at Chimbote, Peru, all of Canada – including sole jurisdiction over the Bering Sea and sole property rights in its fur seal – and a naval base in Samoa."¹⁰

Since Independence, the naval development of the United States Navy had been slow and constantly delayed by Congress. Since the eighteenth century, commerce raiding and passive coastal defence were the essence of the U.S. naval strategy.¹¹ The writing of Alfred Thayer Mahan

⁸ Colombia (1885, 1895), Haiti (1888, 1891), Argentina (1890), Chile 1891, Brazil (1894), and Nicaragua (1894, 1896, 1898). See Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis. "Instances of Use of the United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2022." *CRS Report*. Updated March 8, 2022. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42738.pdf>.

⁹ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 405, Scribd.

¹⁰ A. T. Volwiler. "Harrison, Blaine, and American Foreign Policy, 1889-1893." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 4 (Nov. 15, 1938): 639.

¹¹ Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939): 5.

would revolutionize the way decision-makers think about the American Navy. In addition, the building of battleships was progressively bringing the U.S. Navy along with the European powers as a naval power able to operate across the globe.

The diplomatic involvement of the United States also expanded significantly. While uncompromising in its refusal to gain allies, the United States had a growing number of potential partners and rivals. The fundamental principles of the diplomacy of the United States remained the same but expanded further and benefited from more agreement on certain occasions between the executive and the legislative. While the United States had displayed a restrained foreign policy since its independence, rapid industrialization, the progressive expansion and modernization of the navy, and the emergence of a strong national identity brought up more pressure toward expansionism. However, the U.S. diplomatic corps lacked the finesse of many European powers and was in reaction to crisis most of the time. U.S. diplomats mismanaged crises between the 1880s and 1890s creating blowback to the American interests and foreign image. The realization that diplomacy was a powerful tool to gather friends and obtain concessions from them was progressively making its way into Washington and the American foreign offices.

Power Assessment: Strengthening Regional Power and Achieving Regional Dominance

General Schofield warned the public in his autobiography that unless Americans were “willing to prepare in advance for putting into the field at a moment’s notice a very large and effective army, as well as to fortify all important seaports, they may as well make up their minds to submit, at least for a time, to whatever indignity any considerable naval power may see fit to inflict upon them.”¹² Fortunately for the United States, the competition between the European powers made the British Navy’s presence in the Atlantic a deterrent, and while London might have thought a few times about taking action against the United States, the costs that would be incurred never outweigh the benefits.

The American successive military expansions and contractions have been part of the American political and military culture since its independence. The belief that the military should be kept to a minimum during peacetime endured one conflict after another. The U.S. military had a defensive policing role much more than it was a tool of expansion and power projection. The previous chapter demonstrated how the U.S. army could become among the greatest ones in the world with a large navy and in the span of less than two years become so small that it became vulnerable to all European powers. The polarization of Congress over the expansion of the U.S. military kept the United States from becoming a great power, but it also signalled to the other powers the non-belligerent intents of the United States. This would change, however. The military strategy of the United States finally caught up with its expansionist ambitions and the work of a few Secretaries set the stage toward making the United States a great power.

¹² Cited in James L. Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*. (New York: The Free Press, 1981): 40.

Table 7.1: United States Military Expenditures, 1880-1910

Period	War Department Expenditures	Navy Department Expenditures	Total Military Expenditures	Share of the Federal Budget
1880-1881	40455461	15685672	56141133	21.53%
1881-1882	43570494	15032046	58602540	22.72%
1882-1883	48911388	15288437	64199825	24.19%
1883-1884	42670578	17292501	59963079	24.56%
1884-1885	42670578	16021080	58691658	22.55%
1885-1886	34324153	13907888	48232041	19.89%
1886-1887	38561026	15141127	53702153	20.04%
1887-1888	38522436	16926438	55448874	21.50%
1888-1889	44435271	21378809	65814080	21.99%
1889-1890	44582838	22006206	66589044	20.94%
1890-1891	48720055	26113896	74833951	20.46%
1891-1892	46895456	29174139	76069595	22.05%
1892-1893	49641773	30136084	79777857	20.80%
1893-1894	54567930	31701294	86269224	23.47%
1894-1895	51804759	28797795	80602554	22.63%
1895-1896	50830921	27147732	77978653	22.14%
1896-1897	48950268	34561545	83511813	23.47%
1897-1898	91992000	58823985	150815985	34.02%
1898-1899	229841254	63942104	293783358	48.55%
1899-1900	134774768	55953078	190727846	36.62%
1900-1901	144615697	60505978	205121675	39.10%
1901-1902	112272216	67803127	180075343	37.11%
1902-1903	118629505	82618128	201247633	38.93%
1903-1904	155199911	102956102	258156013	44.23%
1904-1905	126093894	117559308	243653202	42.95%
1905-1906	137326056	110474264	247800320	43.46%
1906-1907	149775084	97127469	246902553	42.63%
1907-1908	175840453	118037097	293877550	45.98%
1908-1909	192486904	115546011	308032915	44.08%
1909-1910	189823379	123173717	312997096	45.13%

Source: The Bureau of the Census. Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1949): 299-300.

This new era of military development begged the question of how the United States would develop their military hardware. The U.S. government had to select between private manufactures, government initiatives, or a combination of both. The industrialization of the 1870s and 1880s had given the means to develop a strong arms industry. Consequently, the private sector obtained the

lion's share of the contracts.¹³ The navy received the bulk of the consideration since the era of increasingly bigger battleships that was beginning required much of the defence resources.

Both a growing economy and a growing defence budget gave the military the necessary means to bring the U.S. military to level the capabilities of the European powers (see Table 7.1). The closing gap between the power differential with most European powers gave the United States a more comfortable position to manage the security in the Western Hemisphere. The progressive expansion of the U.S. sphere of influence required deterrent and compellent capabilities to avoid military pressure from the European powers and manage the disturbances in Caribbeans and South America.

Army

Army Doctrine

From the development of a genuine American military doctrine during the Civil War to its disintegration during the Reconstruction period, the United States started to develop a colonial-style doctrine with the consolidation of its westward expansion on the continent and its colonial acquisition throughout the 1890s. More specifically, the Spanish-American War moved the confidence of the United States as a colonial and world power a step forward. The army size more than doubled and reached a world power status during the 1890s.

The campaigns against the indigenous population during the 1870s and 1880s provided much experience to a small "peacetime" military force to conduct a type of war that would not fit any conventional conflict against a European power. The small war tactics and strategies against the Indians were not oriented toward concentration of force against matching forces, but rather small groups patrol against illusive opponents with ambush and surprise attack tactics. Fortunately, for the U.S. Army and unfortunately for many tribes including the Apache, Arapahoe, Bannock, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Comanche, Creek, Crow, Kiowa, Piutes, Nez Percé, Sheep-eater, Sioux, and the Utes, the construction of the railways throughout the West accelerated the mobilization of the army across the land and led to an improved concentration of force where the insurgents could not avoid direct confrontation with the U.S. military. The First Nations armed resistance ended symbolically at the Wounded Knee Massacre on December 29, 1890. The massacre epitomized the exhaustion on both sides. The First Nations had exhausted their resources and the increasing loss of civilian life sapped their morale. The U.S. Army increasing barbarity and targeting of civilians demonstrated the dehumanization of their opponents required to bring the conflict to an end. The integration of Hotchkiss guns in the Indian Wars proved to be devastating to the Plain Tribes. The decades of small war operations, counterinsurgency, and control of the civilian population ultimately became useful in the colonization of the Philippines. Like all colonial powers, the United States did not keep the best record on human rights violations. The U.S. army was no exception during its operations in the Philippines, but at least, a concerted effort was made toward providing socio-economic improvement.

Field fortification and entrenchment started to grow in importance with the increase in range, fire rate, and precision of breechloading and magazine rifles, the invention of the Maxim machine gun in 1883, and the recoil mechanism in breechloading cannon. Junius Brutus Wheeler's *The Elements of Field Fortifications* became mandatory reading in most of the U.S. military

¹³ Abrahamson argues that officers "recommended primary reliance upon private industry" in light of their assessment of "contemporary industrial and political realities." See Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 141.

schools including West Point.¹⁴ The engineering corps became, more than ever, an essential asset in the conduct of warfare. Those innovations that might seem simple today revolutionized the conduct of warfare. Like many before them, world strategists enunciated new strategic and tactical principles to respond to the new challenges faced by the innovations in military technologies. The Endicott Board of 1885 recommended the restoration of the coastal fortifications. Congress voted for an initial appropriation and established the Board of Ordnance and Fortification in 1888, but the restoration work was never completed.¹⁵ The old forts were impractical for the implementation of the new technologies of fortification. In the 1890s, new fortifications with “earthworks, armor-plated concrete pits, and great 19-inch and 12-inch disappearing rifles” were built to update the coastal fortification.¹⁶ While engineering and technical knowledge were gaining importance in the U.S. Army, the necessary funds to allow dynamism and the rapid implementation of new technologies were not there.

The Civil War had already provided some important lessons in light of the new weaponry. Some of those lessons were confirmed by the Russo-Japanese War. Fire and movement were to become the core component of military tactics.¹⁷ Some of those concepts were progressively making their way into the military schools. However, some lessons took longer to be assimilated. While the artillery corps realized the advantage of indirect fire over direct fire during the Civil War, the U.S. Army entered the Spanish-American War guided by direct-fire theory relying on visual control.¹⁸

The Napoleonic tactics could not support the deadliness of the innovation in weaponry. The Franco-Prussian War inspired new tactics. Part of the military apparatus and tactics were becoming outdated and created wasteful casualties. Cavalry armed with spears, shock actions in open fields, and closed-ordered line assaults were all becoming illogical against entrenched defenders. Troop cohesion became a serious challenge in reaction to the deadliness and efficiency of entrenched defenders armed with modern weapons.¹⁹ Less concentrated formations were more mobile and maneuvered in waves to diminish the efficiency of entrenched defenders.

Interest in strategic thinking started to grow in the 1880s and 1890s. Capt. John Bigelow’s *Principles of Strategy* published in 1891 proposed strategic tactics based on the experiences of the Civil War. The analysis of Bigelow shows that the doctrine of total war deployed during the Indian Wars aimed at chasing, surprising, and wearing out the Indians.²⁰ Bigelow’s strategy was guided by active defense which proposed a strategic conception truly based on the American experience.²¹ General Philip H. Sheridan, who was the commanding general from November 1, 1883, until his premature death on August 5, 1888, was attached to those principles. With his experience before

¹⁴ Perry D. Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground: United States Army Tactics, 1865-1899*. (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994): 71.

¹⁵ Maurice Matloff. *American Military History*. (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969): 294; Donald B. Connelly. *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 291.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present*. (2nd ed.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1986): 917.

¹⁸ Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground*: 83.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 72.

²⁰ John Bigelow. *The Principle of Strategy: Illustrated Mainly from American Campaign*. 2nd Ed. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1894): 149-151.

²¹ Bigelow. *The Principle of Strategy*: 20; 66-67

and after the Civil War against the Indians, Sheridan attributed most of the violence along the U.S. frontiers to “illegal white encroachment,” but he was convinced that total warfare was the adequate response to suppress the Indian Wars including winter offensives.²²

The army before the Spanish-American War focused much of its doctrinal efforts toward fostering a proper *esprit de corps*.²³ Once more from European inspiration, Emory Upton insisted on the development of an integrated training system that would maintain a combat-ready force with sufficient reservists and officers uniformly formed in a war academy.²⁴ The Franco-Prussian campaign showed the world the added value of military professionalism. General John M. Schofield succeeded General Sheridan in 1888 as the commanding general. Influenced by his visit to Europe and Emory Upton’s *Military Policy*.²⁵ General Schofield implemented many reforms between 1889 and 1891 to professionalize the army further which included alteration to the army personnel systems to provide lineal promotion; improvement of the military justice system with the intention to reduce desertion; and expansion of the post-school system for the military.²⁶

Emory Upton’s three manuals adopted in 1874 guided the U.S. military tactics until the end of the 1880s. In January 1888, Secretary of War William C. Endicott authorized the formal review of the services’ tactics.²⁷ Multiple drafts of reformed tactical manuals would circulate around the War Department until the panel in charge of the reforms convened to Fort Leavenworth to finally send the final drafts of tactical manuals for infantry, cavalry, and artillery in January 1891.²⁸ In 1891, the Leavenworth manuals were the only official tactical documents that would guide the U.S. Army throughout the Spanish-American War.

General Nelson A. Miles succeeded General Schofield as the head of the Army in 1895. General Miles led the Spanish-American War; however, his aggressive policy lacked strategy.²⁹ The army was unprepared for a major conflict. Nonetheless, General Miles obtained major gratifying victories throughout the war. Unfortunately, those victories did nothing to improve the “old army’s outmoded bureaucracy and absence of strategy.”³⁰ The nomination of Elihu Root in 1899 as Secretary of War led to much-required reforms of the Army. The establishment of the colonial system led to a reorganization of the army.³¹ General Samuel Baldwin Marks Young became the first Chief of Staff on August 15, 1903. He supervised the first iteration of the concept of the General Staff implemented by Secretary Root. Root’s reform inspired by Prussian militarism

²² Robert Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy, 1865-1903*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988): 48, 59, 141, 152. Paul Andrew Hutton. *Phil Sheridan and his Army*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985): 111-112.

²³ C. Joseph Bernado and Eugene H. Bacon. *American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1955): 244.

²⁴ Emory Upton. *The Armies of Asia and Europe, Embracing Official Report on the Armies of Japan, China, India, Persia, Italy, Russia, Austria, Germany, France, and England*. (London: Griffin & Co., 1878): 318-9.

²⁵ Donald B. Connelly. *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 296-297.

²⁶ Connelly. *John M. Schofield and the Politics of Generalship*. 306-321.

²⁷ Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground*: 99.

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 99-100.

²⁹ Virginia Weisel Johnson. *The Unregimented General: A Biography of Nelson A. Miles*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962): 331.

³⁰ Robert Wooster. *Nelson A. Miles and the Twilight of the Frontier Army*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993): 238.

³¹ Richard William Leopold. *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition*. (Boston: Little Brown, 1954): 38.

was designed to stop the duality of the Department of War that led to recurrent conflict between the commanding general and the secretary of war.

The Dodge Commission on the War Department in 1898 underlined the lack of “efficiency, organization, or plan” of the department.³² The misallocation of resources combined with a tradition of disregard for the condition of the troops had finally reached a point to catch the attention of President McKinley. The decades of inadequate food, clothing and lodging combined with the obsolescence when not a shortage of crucial equipment.

Army Power

The burden put on the military during the 1870s due to the Congressional cuts on both resources and personnel led to an all-time high in desertion. The tremendous workload, brutality and inhumane conditions of the Indian Wars led to a desertion rate of thirty percent.³³ William Addleman Ganoe called this period “The Army’s Dark Ages.”³⁴ A more exhaustive selection process and higher wages ultimately led to the decline of the desertion rate through the 1880s. The economic crisis of 1893 led to a sharp increase in recruits which helped selective recruitment even more.³⁵ The military appropriations were seriously insufficient up until the 1890s. The average appropriations between 1870 and the end of the 1880s were at a similar level than they were in 1808.³⁶

The Army capabilities to expand was crippled by the constraints imposed by Congress over the maximum effectives of the Army. Emphasis was put on the militia now labelled the “National Guard” to grow the reserve forces. The term was designed to undermine the States affiliation and the identity associated with each State militia. While providing a reserve force that provided a safety net in case of quick mobilization, the National Guards were not a substitute for a professional army. Before the Spanish-American War, the U.S. military effectives were set around 26,000 men.³⁷ At the outbreak of the war, the army effectives were scattered across the country; had little to no experience in operations larger than a regiment; did not grow an esprit de corps; and were not experienced in joint operations with the Navy.³⁸ The status of the force could have led to a disaster during the war. In addition to the 26,000 men of the Army, the National Guard totalled another 100,000 men.³⁹ The National Guards, in addition, had less training, bad equipment, and were undisciplined. While enthusiast, the U.S. military forces who entered the Spanish-American War were in a poor state. The War Department mobilized once more toward a hasty war preparation. The Act of April 22 allowed for 125,000 volunteers; Congress allowed an addition of 75,000 more volunteers; Congress also allowed the regular forces to reach 65,000 men.⁴⁰ Ultimately, the forces reached 275,000 regulars and volunteers during the Spanish-American War.⁴¹ The War Department had to experience the shock of getting back into war mode. The War

³² Edward Ranson. “The Investigation of the War Department, 1898-99.” *The Historian* 34, 1 (1971): 79.

³³ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 241.

³⁴ Quoted in Maurice Matloff. *American Military History*. (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1969): 288.

³⁵ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 241.

³⁶ The annual appropriation in 1808 were of 200000 dollars with a population of 8 million and remained more or less the same with a population over 40 million. Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 248.

³⁷ Matloff. *American Military History*. 301.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 323.

³⁹ Matloff. *American Military History*. 323.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Leopold. *Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition*. 38.

Department was understaffed, unprepared, and short of supplies, uniforms, modern arms, and ammunition.⁴²

While the technology was available, the equipment of the army was outdated. The Army adopted the single-shot Model 1873 Springfield breechloader remained in service until the 1890s.⁴³ In 1892, the Danish .30-caliber, bolt-action Krag-Jorgensen rifle was adopted by the Army but was only issued throughout the regular Army in 1897 due to Congressional delay.⁴⁴ The same delays applied to the artillery.

The army lacked training. While the Leavenworth Manuals provided the necessary guidance toward the proper training of the military forces, little was done to make large enough training exercises to prepare adequately the forces in the art of combat. The U.S. military forces were spread so thin over the U.S. territory that large-scale infantry maneuver and artillery practices rarely occurred, and, as a result, the army entered the Spanish-American war ill-prepared and poorly trained. When it comes to the National Guard things were even worst. Some Guard Units were trained according to Civil War tactics, those of German descent trained according to Prussian traditions, and others simply used drills of their own making not in line with the Army's manuals.⁴⁵

According to Upton, "[a]s a rule" the size of the peacetime army should be no less than half the size of the wartime army.⁴⁶ The army was far from that level. Congress finally doubled the War Department appropriation on February 12, 1887.⁴⁷ However, 400,000 dollars were still insufficient to bring to a decent level the military forces. Negotiation regarding the expansion of the army emerged during the Spanish-American War. While the negotiation with Congress to establish a more than 60,000 men regular army was unsuccessful, public opinion and war frenzy created a large offer of volunteers. Progressively, the volunteer force was growing with Congress authorizing regiments and brigades of volunteers throughout the services. First, an additional 3,000 federal volunteers were authorized on April 22; 3,500 Volunteer Engineers subsequently; 10,000 more Volunteer Infantrymen officially immunized to tropical disease came along; and, by the end of the Spanish-American War, the Army was composed of 263,609 men.⁴⁸ However, after the war, the regular forces were reduced to 28,000 men despite the policing of the newly conquered territories required, especially with a raging insurgency in the Philippines. While the wartime requirements were exceeding by far the requirement of the conflict, the peacetime forces were still insufficient and improper to provide the bare requirement of the peacetime missions.

Desertion levels had come down by the end of the 1870s. However, it started to rise again in the 1880s. The desertion rate reached its highest in the 1880s in 1884 with 3,072 desertions.⁴⁹ The desertion rate kept under 2,000 desertions per year between 1891 and 1897.⁵⁰ The desertion rate was higher according to General Schofield where "the poor housing, the limited clothing allowance for recruits, the inferior meat, and the absence of vegetables at some posts."⁵¹ A

⁴² R. Ernest Dupuy. *The Compact History of the United States Army*. (New York: Hawthorn, 1961): 168.

⁴³ Matloff. *American Military History*. 292-293.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 293.

⁴⁵ Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground*: 125.

⁴⁶ Upton. *The Armies of Asia and Europe*: 317-8.

⁴⁷ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 250.

⁴⁸ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 439, Scribd.

⁴⁹ Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars*: 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* 8.

comprehensive statistical study conducted by Adjutant-General J.C. Kelton in 1889 demonstrated that desertion was a direct consequence of the “physical condition from post to post.”⁵²

While the army was improving in size and capabilities, it was put to the test on different levels. Foreign interventions created new challenges. Only 379 deaths in the army resulted from combat in 1898, while the total death toll was 5462.⁵³ Tropical sicknesses including malaria, dysentery and typhoid crippled the forces to a greater degree than expected. The lack of proper lodging, facilities, food, and medications only exacerbated this problem throughout the overseas campaigns.

The Spanish-American War changed the War Department and the U.S. Army. The Army was authorized to new levels in 1901 to 3,820 officers and 84,799 enlisted men, but Congress cut those levels again in 1903 to 60,000.⁵⁴ By 1904, the U.S. military forces stand around 50,000 men with 3,000 officers. In an attempt to reorganize the military forces toward another peacetime force, Congress passed the “Dick Bill” on January 21, 1903, which divided the citizenry between the “Organized Militia (The National Guard) and the Reserve Militia which included all other male citizens between ages of eighteen and forty-five.”⁵⁵ The National Guard reform normalized the armament and discipline to the same degree as the Regular Army.⁵⁶ This era was set toward the maintenance of a small professional army and a big navy.

The New Navy

Political resistance had been the core obstacle to the development of a seaworthy navy. Additional pressure was coming from the development of new technologies that made the U.S. Navy lag behind the European ones and progressively behind other smaller states who were more active to integrate new technologies such as steel armour, heavy guns, rifled cannon, explosive shells, self-propelled torpedoes, compound engines, and barbets (turret mounted guns). Before the 1890s, the United States was not a maritime power. Even after the Civil War, the U.S. Navy was essentially a brown water navy, the monitor, while a marvellous innovation, was only useful for shallow waters and coastal defence. The Navy during the Civil War was an “emergency navy.”⁵⁷ Big ships able to compete with the European powers had never been adequately considered to make the U.S. Navy competitive. As a rising power, the United States had to realize that the Navy is the main tool of power projection.

Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin R. Tracy has been one of the most vociferous advocates of the modernization of the U.S. Navy. Early on, he acknowledged that the “sea will be the future seat of empire. And we shall rule it as certainly as the sun doth rise!”⁵⁸ While most of Secretary Tracy’s plans to expand the naval power of the United States failed during his tenure, his efforts to do so will be a recurrent theme that would eventually rise the United States to the status of great naval power in the following decade. Secretary Tracy had to deal with Admiral David D. Porter. Admiral Porter succeeded Admiral Farragut after his death in 1870 and stay at the head of the

⁵² Foner. *The United States Soldier between Two Wars*: 8..

⁵³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 458, Scribd.

⁵⁴ Dupuy. *The Compact History of the United States Army*. 177-178.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 178-179.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 179.

⁵⁷ Scott Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues: Maritime Strategy, American Empire, and the Transformation of U.S. Naval Identity, 1873-1898*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018): 51.

⁵⁸ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 409, Scribd.

Admiralship until his death in 1891. Adm. Porter did not yield much power, but he tended to polarize the Navy Department and the Navy Secretary and to antagonize the bureau chiefs.⁵⁹ Admiral Porter personified the conservatism present in the Navy at a time of great changes. However, Porter understood well the significance of steam in the development of the navy. He required that the equipment of the Naval Academy be modernized but was fully aware of the United States' lack of access to coaling stations, and consequently advocated that every steam vessel be also rigged with sails.⁶⁰ Eventually, the navy realized the disadvantage of maintaining sail on modern vessels. First, Secretary William E. Chandler advocated the development of a network of coaling stations in light of reports underlining the reduced speed and maneuverability in combat of sail-rigged vessels.⁶¹ Second, the Navy Advisory Board started to recommend the construction of cruisers only operated by steam.⁶² Admiral Porter cautioned the Navy Department that the United States did not have any colony and he neither "anticipated nor advocated their acquisition."⁶³ The modernization of the navy led indirectly to a transformation of the United States' strategic autonomy. The requirement of coaling stations for steamships created an opening toward the acquisition either by negotiation or force of overseas concessions. Fortunately for Secretary Tracy, Admiral Porter agreed with Tracy's plan to expand the navy with the exception that Porter wanted sails on all capital ships.⁶⁴

The economic growth of the Gilded Age era brought new requirements toward U.S. maritime capabilities. The industrial growth of the United States demanded a greater merchant fleet to access foreign markets, but also better security for that fleet. Robert W. Shufeldt became the best advocate of the U.S. merchant navy. He correctly assessed that the merchant fleet was a correlate of "national greatness" and the best way to make sure that "foreign markets could absorb surplus industrial and agricultural production."⁶⁵ To Shufeldt, the U.S. Navy was a pioneer of commerce. The gunboat diplomacy of the United States became essential to the expansion of U.S. trade and the establishment of new economic relations with the "semi-civilized world." The British were not providing the same security they once did. The arms race with Germany diverted much of the British resources back to Europe. The United States had to fill some of the gaps left by the absence of the British Navy over the Western Hemisphere that left security gaps. The world naval power was more diffused than before, and it created uncertainties that required an active response which resulted in greater involvement of the United States in world affairs than ever before.

Naval Doctrine

The American naval doctrine was nearly as outdated as its ships. Comparisons between the American Navy and the navies of European power and other minor powers such as Chile, Brazil, China, and Japan were presented to Congress annually, and at that stage, many minor powers were outclassing the United States.⁶⁶ Representative Long described the U.S. fleet as "an alphabet of

⁵⁹ Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 15-17.

⁶⁰ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 18-19.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 19.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 19.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 21.

⁶⁵ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*. 36.

⁶⁶ John A. S. Greenville and George Berkeley Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy: Studies in Foreign Policy, 1837-1917*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966): 10. In 1889, eleven states had larger navies than the

floating wash-tubs.”⁶⁷ Two decades of neglect made the Navy unable to provide credible security. Much emphasis was put on the economic development of the United States and not enough on its security. Traditionally, the U.S. armed forces were inherently more focused on the continental component of its security. Most strategists believed that European powers could not sustain an invasion of the United States and that a minimal naval force was sufficient to protect the American coasts and be sufficient in times of war to operate commerce raiding against the enemy force.⁶⁸ Isolation had been the main strategic design of the United State Navy. That position was harder to sustain as the United States started to play a more active role in the Western Hemisphere’s security as their own sphere of influence, started to expand their interest westward in the Pacific, and began to challenge the European powers on different issues. Commerce protection was becoming the central element of the U.S. Navy strategy, but it had its own limits to what it could do to the status of the United States as a world power. The reality was also that the growing merchant marine of the United States required a credible navy to provide protection.

New sets of ideas emerged regarding the American Naval Doctrine. The commercial-diplomatic role of the peacetime navy did not meet the challenges of the crowded seas with the European powers competing for the remaining space. As a commercial nation, the United States had to rely on the support of a strong navy able to secure trade routes and protect them. Coal-powered vessels necessitated coaling stations to maintain their operations which required further influence and agreements for operating those stations in overseas territories. The mechanization of the navy across the globe also led to an international parade to display the newest and deadliest innovations added by each major power. The United States did not participate in those naval extravaganzas until 1902. That year, President Roosevelt invited the Kaiser’s newest battleships to New York.⁶⁹ In 1903, the United States Navy was invited to Marseille for a British and French joint demonstration. Those displays of naval might left a feeling of inadequacy to the U.S. Navy. Pretending to be a world-class navy was one thing but realizing that the European states were still ahead was less encouraging. The one battleship and four cruisers displayed in 1903 did not impress Europe. The next year, Roosevelt sent six battleships and eight cruisers in the Mediterranean Sea expecting to be taken more seriously.⁷⁰ While Roosevelt wanted to change the image of the U.S. Navy worldwide, the maintenance of a world-class navy was still not sufficiently embedded in the mind of most policymakers.

New ideas regarding the strategic orientation of the U.S. Navy were also emerging and becoming part of the discourse of many policymakers. In the early 1880s, Chambers and Bainbridge-Hoff added purpose and rigour to the concepts of “force concentration, movement,

United States. See George W. Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994): 9. Nathan Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*. (3rd ed.) (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997): Chap. 6. Kindle.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 10.

⁶⁸ Secretary of the Navy George M. Robeson adequately illustrated that thought when he mentioned that the postwar Navy was sufficient for the “defensive purpose of a peaceful people, without colonies, with a dangerous coast, and shallow harbors, separated from warlike naval powers.” Quoted in Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 378, Scribd.

⁶⁹ Robert A. Hart. *The Great White Fleet: Its Voyage Around the World 1907-1909*. (Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1965): 19.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: 20.

command and geography to achieve specific military objectives.”⁷¹ Alfred Thayer Mahan⁷² helped to organize the new set of ideas about the strategic nature of the U.S. Navy. Most of all, he became the beacon of an expansionist vision of American foreign policy where its navy had to look beyond its coasts. The strategic value attributed to specific locations at sea including choke points, canals, and coaling stations became primordial. First, President Garfield and his Secretary of the Navy, William Hunt, began the modernization of the fleet to make the Navy credible. Second, President Benjamin Harrison and his Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy mobilized Congressmen and Senators to untie the Navy budget purse and helped make Mahan’s annual reports into legislative action. Finally, Secretary of the Navy, Hilary Herbert embedded Mahan’s concepts into the Navy’s doctrine.⁷³

The first signs of a successful attempt to the development of a “big navy” aimed at the development and protection of American overseas interests came with Secretary of Navy, Benjamin F. Tracy. Finally, the outdated wooden hull ships were to be replaced by modern steel armoured ships. The coastal-defence monitors were now insufficient since their speed, range and sea-going capabilities were unable to compete with the new European battleships.⁷⁴ Secretary of State Blaine under President Garfield developed a new vision for the Monroe Doctrine where the mission of the Navy was to provide further involvement in the Western Hemisphere to enforce the Monroe Doctrine. Two main areas became of crucial importance to keep under American influence: the Caribbean and the Pacific. As the project of a transoceanic isthmian canal was taken form, the control of both sides of the canal was of paramount strategic value.

Sea control would progressively become the main objective of the United States. As with the Monroe Doctrine, the commitment toward sea control was real, but not credible. The U.S. Navy required a fleet more powerful than most European powers, and Congress had been remarkably efficient at creating delays and blocking bills toward the expansion of the Navy even though many Secretaries of the Navy proposed bills to modernize and bring in the rank of the great the U.S. Navy. The main tenets of *sea control* required 1) offshore defence and offence; 2) a concentrated fleet; 3) control of strategic forward locations; and 4) a fleet of battleships.⁷⁵

Mahan was himself more aligned with the *brown water* strategy of the United States at first, but as he mentioned: “I was up to 1885 traditionally an anti-imperialist; but by 1890 the study of the influence of sea power and its kindred expansive activities upon the destiny of nations converted me.”⁷⁶ Mahan became the voice of naval strategic awareness in the United States. His writings, his teaching, and the echoes of his argument sank into the minds of many decision-makers

⁷¹ Scott Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues: Maritime Strategy, American Empire, and the Transformation of U.S. Naval Identity, 1873-1898*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018): 171. William D. Bainbridge-Hoff. *Examples, Conclusions, and Maxims of Modern Naval Tactics*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884.); Washington I. Chambers. “The Reconstruction and Increase of the Navy.” *Proceedings* Vol. 11. January 1885. <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1885/january/reconstruction-and-increase-navy>.

⁷² Often compared to the Jomini, Mahan organized a “new science of naval strategy” applying many of Jomini’s principles to the naval field. See Russell F. Weigley. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 173-74.

⁷³ Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 79-80

⁷⁴ Walter Millis. *Arms and Men: America’s Military History and Military Policy from the Revolution to the Present*. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1956): 159.

⁷⁵ Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*: 14.

⁷⁶ Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Retrospect and Prospect: Studies in International Relations, Naval and Political*. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1902): 18

helped to forge a new strategic orientation for the U.S. Navy. It stopped the perpetual cuts and setbacks that occurred in peacetimes since the Revolution.

Between 1877 and 1884, Admiral Stephen B. Luce campaigned the Navy Department and Congress to reform the Naval Academy curriculum and the establishment of higher education for officers. This initiative was less costly than the building of a fleet and could have a more pervasive effect than any ship that would become outdated with the evolution of technologies. Better-trained officers would do better with less. The creation of a naval academy brought together the hard-gained quarterdeck traditions of the Navy along with the institutional space to foster innovations and creative thinking to transition the *Old Navy* to the *New Navy*. While “seamanship and shiphandling” had been the “cardinal competencies” of the U.S. Navy before the 1880s, the New Navy put forward the “mariner-warrior.”⁷⁷ Leadership, gunnery, and tactics become progressively more important with the diminishing influence of sail and the quarterdeck culture. Luce, in addition, wanted to put forward science, technology, engineering and mathematics to provide additional capabilities toward innovations.

The quarterdeck approach to strategy relied on improvisation and experience which made little anticipation of the potential threat and was mostly reactive to direct threat. Little to no innovation emerged from the quarterdeck approach. Coastal defence, commerce raiding, and the use of naval militia had been mostly the same since independence.⁷⁸ However, the incremental importance of steam-powered mechanization gave engineering specialists a greater place in the Navy command. Admiral Luce believed rightfully that the steam-driven vessels would “perform military movements” and that naval battles would become “military operations conducted at sea.”⁷⁹ The effective control that steamships had over their maneuverability revolutionized the way warfare was conducted at sea. Ships did not have to rely on wind to operate.

While the ambition of most secretaries of the Navy was to expand the capabilities of the Navy with new ships, all their propositions were ultimately watered down by Congress to a number of vessels that were insufficient to respond to the planning of the Navy Department or to lesser ships unable to adequately conduct the original missions the expansion was demanding. In 1883, after several months of Congressional debate, Secretary of Navy Chandler saw his request for four cruisers reduced to three smaller cruisers and a gunboat.⁸⁰ This is only one simple example of a recurring pattern where navalists and antinavalists disputes created diminished capacities for the U.S. Navy. Since neither the Secretary of the Navy nor the president controlled the budget, congress had the last word when it comes to the development of an offensive maritime strategy requiring additional ships.

Secretary William H. Hunt established the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in 1882. The ONI served two main purposes. First, the ONI institutionalized the gathering of information and foster the “capacity to manage the vast amounts of technical specifications, empirical data, and qualitative information needed to design and build a new fleet of modern steel warships.”⁸¹ Second, as the hub of naval information, the ONI also became a platform of strategic analysis

⁷⁷ Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 43.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 51.

⁷⁹ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 30.

⁸⁰ Paul E. Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy: Politics, Economics, and the Rise of American Naval Power, 1881-1921*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016): 37.

⁸¹ Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 179.

which foster greater strategic planning for the navy.⁸² The systematization of the collection of information allowed the formulation of up-to-date strategic planning and reduced the preponderance of old-fashioned admirals tributaries of the strategic knowledge of the previous conflict. Strategic innovation had finally the platform necessary for its development. Many blueprints for naval operations emerged from the ONI.

Most of the 1890s were without war. It took a while before the new navy and its strategy could be put to the test. Contingency plans were put in place to deal with European powers and local crises. Naval strategists, including Mahan, carefully envisioned courses of action to face more powerful navies and to protect both U.S. coasts that integrated war gaming at the Naval War College.⁸³ In 1897, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt increased the emphasis that the United States should not prepare “for war but avert fighting.”⁸⁴ With the growth and improvement of the U.S. fleet, the American naval doctrine switched from a coastal defence strategy; to an area denial one under Harrison; and ultimately to a power projection one under Roosevelt.

Naval Power

By 1880, the Navy had only forty-eight outdated vessels.⁸⁵ The Navy was lagging due mainly to political resistance to navy expansion and technological innovations. The technology was available and appropriation sufficient to implement at least partly some of it. The 1876 Congressional investigation underlined the inefficiency of the current fleets, the cost of its maintenance, the obsolescence of its vessels, and the lack of consideration for the external threat. The U.S. fleet before the 1880s was principally composed of cruisers most of them still had wooden hulls and monitors designed for coastal defence. The resistance of the Navy Department to allocate some of its resources toward the progressive integration of new technologies was problematic. In 1881, the British published a survey of the world’s navies titled “Warships and Navies of the World” which did not include the United States, but smaller states such as China, Egypt, Greece, Japan, and Portugal.⁸⁶ the Naval Advisory Board recommended that “all new ships be built of steel.”⁸⁷ However, manning steam-powered steel ships on long-distance cruises without enough coaling stations was an important logistical problem for the United States which motivated the persistence of wooden-hull vessels.

The maintenance of the wooden fleet was costly and inefficient. Nine naval yards were conducting maintenance on many dried-docked vessels.⁸⁸ The employment created by those yards created political pressure for their maintenance even though they were keeping the U.S. Navy behind. The governmental resistance to steel ships paralyzed the naval industry. Even private builders were reluctant to invest in new equipment and installations since there was no guarantee

⁸² Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 179.

⁸³ The plans were more thoughtful than anything before. Beyond the basic strategic plan, details for “mobilization, and campaign preparation; movement timetables; command, control, and information management arrangement; comprehensive orders of battles; and careful evaluation of basing and logistic options.” See *ibid.* 395.

⁸⁴ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 266.

⁸⁵ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 6. Kindle.

⁸⁶ Cited in Howarth. *To Shining Sea*: 217.

⁸⁷ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 261.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* 262. In 1881, one third of the vessels were inoperable due to obsolescence or major damage, and half of the fleet required repairs and could not operate. See Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 232. In 1886, the maintenance of the fleet cost ten percent of the Navy’s annual budget. That large amount was wasted on a fleet that dated from the Civil War. See *Ibid.*: 216.

of government contracts afterwards. The absence of incentives for the transition from wooden hulls to steel ships delayed the development of the American Navy artificially. Secretary of the Navy William H. Hunt tried to change the dynamic of the appropriations by reconciling the ill-fated and stubborn navy's senior officer and convening a Naval Advisory Board that would formulate a clear plan of appropriation.⁸⁹ However, the divisions persisted in the Advisory board to the point where it submitted a majority and a minority report. The nomination of William E. Chandler after the death of President Garfield laid the basis for the transformation of the Navy. He unilaterally moved ahead with a modernization plan. Congressional resistance would require ten more years to bring up a world-class navy, but Chandler brought the necessary push finally tilt the scale toward modernization and stop the glorification of an outdated navy which was the ridicule of other powers.

The rise of the U.S. Navy beyond coastal defence is a fascinating story (See Table 7.2). Debates, reports, projections, new policies, and setbacks animated the rivalries between decision-makers involving all of Washington's institutions. It came to be due to the work of smart strategists that perceived the changes in power dynamics and were able to advocate toward the proper changes. The improvement of the fleet required first an important change in the military-industrial complex to integrate the expertise to integrate new technologies and new ship designs.

The New Navy began on March 3, 1883, when Congress authorized the Naval Appropriation Act of 1883 for the building of the ABCD ships – the *Atlanta*, the *Boston*, the *Chicago*, and the *Dolphin*. Two events expedited the decision toward the authorization for those four ships. First, the steam sloop *Lancaster* reported the destruction the British fleet brought during their bombardment of Alexandria in July 1882.⁹⁰ Second, the laying down of the protected cruiser *Esmeralda* in a British yard for the Chilean Navy meant that another power in the Western Hemisphere would outclass the United States as a Navy since the United States had not a single ship comparable to the *Esmeralda* at the time.⁹¹ The realization of the obsolescence of the U.S. Navy finally came to light and actions were taken to catch up. However, the 1883 naval appropriations were still limited and stuck between the old and the new navy. The dual use of sail and steam and the persistence in the use of wood in the construction of new vessels did not make the ABCD ships competitive.

In 1885, two more protected cruisers were authorized, the *Charleston* and the *Newark*. The next year, the *Texas* and *Maine*, two second-class battleships, were authorized by Congress. The steel industry and shipyards adapted to respond to the growing demand for capital ships. Congress and the Navy Department were finally able to converge toward the expansion of the Navy. The work of Alfred T. Mahan had made its way to most policymakers and his ideas were making a dent into the old navy and making room for the development of the new navy. The chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, Democrat Hilary A. Herbert of Alabama warned Congress that the European threat was signification, that “their navies have grown in strength, now their fleets have increased, now they use steam and high-power guns, and an enemy's fleet could appear on our coasts within twenty-five days after the declaration of war.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 6. Kindle.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 255.

Secretary of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy certainly assimilated Mahan's concepts. President Benjamin Harrison submitted a legislative program to Congress calling for eight battleships of 7 500 and 10 000 tons, two armoured monitors, three cruisers and five torpedo boats.⁹³ Harrison's demands set the path toward making the U.S. Navy competitive.⁹⁴ To bring the United States as an overseas power, President Harrison negotiated reciprocity treaties to strengthen U.S. commercial links across the world and opened the discussion toward building overseas coaling stations. Secretary Tracy and President Harrison changed the nature of U.S. naval foreign policy fundamentally toward an outward-looking. Still, Tracy's strategy kept some of the old ways in his plan. Tracy asked for twenty heavy coast defence vessels that looked like fortress-like monitors and a fleet of fast torpedo boats.⁹⁵ This coastal defence orientation got the approval of the old guard since in line with a hundred years of naval strategy. However, it increased the price tag on the building of the new navy, and battleships were more important to make the U.S. Navy competitive. Tracy's ambitions were limited by Congressional oversight. Navy Secretary William C. Whitney attempted to develop "a real navy" rather than a "peace navy" with an "emergency navy" in case of conflict.⁹⁶

The naval construction debates of 1889 and 1890 marked the beginning of the United States as a credible contender for sea power. Secretary Tracy's Annual reports for 1889 and 1890 recommended two fleets, "with twelve ships in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico and eight in the Pacific" with a cruiser-battleship ratio of 3:1.⁹⁷ Tracy's plan would ensure readiness and concentration of forces. Congress was still focused on defence. Therefore, Tracy's plan would not move forward. In 1890, Congress authorized the construction of three battleships (*Indiana*, *Oregon*, and *Massachusetts*), one protected cruiser, one torpedo cruiser, and one light torpedo boat.⁹⁸ This was progress, but far from what was recommended by most naval strategists. In addition, Congress labelled the three battleships as "coastline battleships" to signal the rest of the world that the U.S. Navy had no international ambitions.⁹⁹

The battleship *Iowa* received approval from Congress in 1892. The *Iowa* sent the message that the United States was finally ready to begin a blue-water navy. The *Baltimore* incident in Chile helped bolster the pro-blue-water navy since the Chilean navy was still powerful enough to bring doubt about the ability of the United States to respond militarily to defend its interest when they clashed against the Chilean. Between 1893 and 1897, Congress authorized thirty-two new ships including five battleships, nineteen torpedo boats, six light gunboats, and two submarines (which were later cancelled).¹⁰⁰ Congress voted for two additional battleships in 1895 (the *Kearsarge* and the *Kentucky*) and three more in 1896 (the *Alabama*, *Illinois*, and *Wisconsin*).¹⁰¹ In

⁹³ Lance C. Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 158.

⁹⁴ Miller. *The U.S. Navy: A History*: Chap. 6. Kindle.

⁹⁵ Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 269.

⁹⁶ Scott Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues: Maritime Strategy, American Empire, and the Transformation of U.S. Naval Identity, 1873-1898*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018): 416. Scribd.

⁹⁷ Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*: 19.

⁹⁸ Buhl. "Maintaining 'An American Navy,' 1865-1889." 158.

⁹⁹ Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*: 21.

¹⁰⁰ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 105.

¹⁰¹ Russell F. Weigley. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997): 183; Henry J. Hendrix. *Theodore Roosevelt's Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009): 135.

addition, Congress doubled the size of the navy between 1898 and 1907 with the construction of nineteen battleships and ten armoured cruisers (See table 7.2).¹⁰²

Along with the development of a battleship fleet, the U.S. Navy started to integrate torpedo boats in the 1890s. While European powers had already made torpedo boats a large part of their fleet, the United States commissioned its first torpedo boat in 1890.¹⁰³ Just a few days after the beginning of the War with Spain, Congress passed the largest appropriations act for the Navy since the Civil War. At the outbreak of the war, the U.S. Navy had seventy-seven vessels (not including twenty-two torpedo boats) among which “thirteen were undergoing repairs, nine were in ordinary, and seven were in the service of [the] several militia organizations, leaving only forty-eight war ships at the immediate disposal of the Navy Department.”¹⁰⁴ Secretary Long and Assistant Secretary Roosevelt were able to efficiently mobilize every available vessel to strategic points to ensure preparedness for the hostilities and rapid concentration of forces.¹⁰⁵

The aftermath of the Spanish-American War marked a fundamental shift in the Congressional position regarding the development of the Navy. The pace of the expansion, the improvement of the sophistication, and the role of the Navy changed. The initial changes implemented by Secretary Tracy supported the war efforts but showed how the United States remained vulnerable. Spain was a declining power with a weak navy. The United States Navy did not have the capability to withstand most European Navies. Three new strategic realities motivated the transformation of the U.S. naval policy. First, the acquisition of a network of insular possessions and oversea harbours required a navy to ensure their security. The extent of the United States’ interests overseas could not be supported by a minimal size navy composed of cruisers as it was before. The development of larger naval forces by European powers, but also new emerging powers such as Japan was threatening the ability of the United States to maintain its status. Second, the advocacy of Roosevelt toward the improvement of the U.S. Navy toward the construction of a world-class navy was pervasive and supported by sufficient people in Congress to operate the required changes and appropriate the necessary funds.¹⁰⁶

The Naval Appropriation Act of June 1900 provided the necessary funds for two battleships, two cruisers, three small cruisers, and five submarines.¹⁰⁷ The steady increase of the U.S. naval forces brought Washington progressively among the world power. In 1901, Washington with ten battleships and twenty cruisers was getting closer to France (nine battleships and thirty-seven cruisers) and Germany (fifteen battleships and twenty-six cruisers) but was still far from the twenty-eight battleships and the one hundred and twenty cruisers of the British.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the quality of the French and German vessels was still superior to the U.S. ones. William Moody succeeded Long as Secretary of the Navy in 1902. The Naval Act of July 1902 authorized two battleships, two cruisers and two gunboats. This was only a tiny fraction of what Secretary Long

¹⁰² Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 66.

¹⁰³ France had 210 torpedo boats in 1890; England, 206; Germany, 180; Italy, 152; and Russia, 143. See

¹⁰⁴ Edgar Stanton Maclay. *A History of the United States Navy from 1775 to 1902. Volume III.* (New York: D. Appleton, 1907): 63.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* 65-66.

¹⁰⁶ George Ramsey Clark. *A Short History of the United States Navy.* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1927): 477.

¹⁰⁷ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 131.

¹⁰⁸ Henry J. Hendrix. *Theodore Roosevelt’s Naval Diplomacy: The U.S. Navy and the Birth of the American Century.* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009): 30.

had recommended in December the year before.¹⁰⁹ The naval race between Britain, Germany, France, and Japan that continuously grew their navy with bigger battleships did push President Roosevelt to ask for increased funding to level the United States' capabilities to maintain enough dissuasion to maintain the Monroe Doctrine.

In 1903, the Navy's General Board recommended 48 battleships. However, the *Missouri* explosion in 1904 that cost the lives of twenty-four men slowed down the naval appropriation from Congress until the issue that led to the explosion was fixed.¹¹⁰ The launch of the British *Dreadnought* in 1906 led to a drastic change in the naval policies of most powers. The *Dreadnought* outclassed all previous battleships which accelerated the naval arms race in Europe. To keep its status, Washington had to pick up the pace too. The deployment of a two-ocean navy took form during 1907 with the Atlantic Fleet consisting of sixteen capital ships and the Pacific Fleet with eight armoured cruisers and eight light cruisers.¹¹¹ The fleet of sixteen pre-dreadnoughts battleships would become the symbol of the United States' inducement as a naval power.

The image of the United States changed on December 16, 1907. The sixteen white-hulled battleships, the Great White Fleet, that started their grand cruise around the globe signalled to the world that the United States was a great power. The battleship was the ultimate weapon at the time. As a rising power, the United States had to display their capacity. A world tour with an entire fleet of battleships was thought to be a credible way to signal the United States' transition from a regional power to a world power. Publicity for the *Great Fleet* tour was unprecedented for such an event. The aftermath of the Great Fleet parade across the world became a naval period dominated by battleships. This dominance of ever bigger vessels and ordnance would continue up until the end of World War II when the realization of the vulnerability of those vessels reduced considerably their usefulness and credibility as an efficient weapon system. However, the quality of the Great White Fleet was dubious. While the symbolism of the inception of the Great Fleet was meaningful to the introduction of the United States as a world power, the battleships had many technical deficiencies. The armour was placed too low, the turrets were not sufficiently protected, the engineering of the hull and freeboard impeded the maneuverability of the turrets and the ability to aim the guns in heavy seas, and the absence of efficient baffles on the turrets led to burning debris frequently reaching the powder magazines below.¹¹² Like most of the battleships of this era, U.S. battleships were unreliable. The technology operating them was new and lacked reliability. Any prolonged trip was a risk. Before the Great Fleet trip around the world, the voyage of the battleship *Oregon* across South America in 1898 was considered an engineering and mechanical miracle.¹¹³ President Roosevelt was set on showing the rest of the world that the United States was a naval power to be reckoned with.

¹⁰⁹ Long recommended a combination of forty warships and auxiliaries. See Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 142.

¹¹⁰ Edward L. Beach. *The United States Navy: A 200-year History*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987): 402-3.

¹¹¹ Richard W. Turk. "Defending the Empire, 1900-1914." In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 187.

¹¹² Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*:: Chap. 7. Kindle.

¹¹³ Hart. *The Great White Fleet*: 18.

Table 7.2: Navy Growth (1880-1910)

Administration Position	Congress Position	Ships Commissioned
The Garfield administration (1881) marked the renewal of interest in naval development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress was less prone to important investment, but slowly allowed the conversion toward steel ships rather than wooden hulls. • Isolation over an offensive fleet. 	Two steel cruisers were authorized by Congress but finally failed to appropriate the necessary funds. ¹¹⁴
The Arthur administration (1881-1885) supported the expansion of the navy and moved toward building vessels better designed for offensive, but still oriented toward hit-and-run commerce-raiding tactics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position remained focused on the defensive nature of the navy. • Vessels remain hybrid between sail and coal operated. • Newer versions of old ships • Authorized the ABCD ships. • Democrats demanded Navy Department reforms to stop corruption and malversation 	Three steel-armoured cruisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Atlanta</i> (1884) • <i>Boston</i> (1884) • <i>Chicago</i> (1885) Dispatch vessel <i>Dolphin</i> Progressively shrinking merchant marine
The first Cleveland administration (1885-1889) put additional pressure on Congress since Argentina, Brazil, and Chile acquired modern warships better than the American ones. Secretary of Navy Whitney advocated for a permanent war navy with a rapid program of modernization both of the navy and its industrial basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorization of second-class battleships • Anticorruption campaign against the Navy Department (mainly advocated by Cleveland and Whitney) • Acceptance that the U.S. Navy is not war ready 	Two battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Texas</i> (1886) • <i>Maine</i> (1886) Two cruisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charleston</i> (1889) • <i>Newark</i> (1891)
The Harrison administration (1889-1893) marked the first successful attempt to develop a big navy with the specific purpose of expanding U.S. interests overseas. Secretary of the Navy Tracy recommended two fleets with twelve capital ships in the Atlantic and eight in the Pacific. Harrison pushed to secure overseas coaling stations and naval bases.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress maintained the rejection of the initiative toward developing long-range capital vessels. • Limited authorization of battleships under a defensive orientation (coastline battleships and seagoing coastline battleships) aimed against European operations in the Western Hemisphere • Big gap between Congress and Secretary of Navy Tracy 	Cruisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New York</i> (1888) • <i>Baltimore</i> (1890) • <i>Philadelphia</i> (1890) • <i>San Francisco</i> (1890) First-line battleships (<i>Indiana</i> -class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Indiana</i> (1895) • <i>Oregon</i> (1896) • <i>Massachusetts</i> (1896)
The second Cleveland administration (1893-1897) with Navy Secretary Herbert who was a follower of Mahan's ideas had great ambitions for the navy but had to deal with the 1893 Financial Panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress suspended new capital ship building until 1895 due to the Financial Panic 	Battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Iowa</i> (1897) Two Kearsarge-class battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Kearsarge</i> • <i>Kentucky</i> • <i>New Hampshire</i> Illinois-class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Illinois</i> (1901) • <i>Alabama</i> (1900) • <i>Wisconsin</i> (1901) Cruisers

¹¹⁴ Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: 261-2.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cincinnati</i> (1894) • <i>Raleigh</i> (1894) • <i>Colombia</i> (1894) • <i>Minneapolis</i> (1894) • <i>Olympia</i> (1895) • <i>Brooklyn</i> (1896)
<p>The McKinley administration (1897-1901) with Navy Secretary John D. Long (1898-1902) expanded the overseas territory of the United States further than any other administration creating by the same token the requirement for an improved navy. Long had to deal with the interference of Roosevelt (the assistant secretary) before he resigned in May 1898.</p>	<p>The Spanish-American War unleashed the requirement for a big Navy. Roosevelt contributed to the war preparation as assistant secretary of the Navy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1898, Congress authorized the construction of fourteen battleships and heavy cruisers • Establishment of an auxiliary naval force (May 1898) • Authorized the construction of three new battleships (March 1901) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New Orleans</i> (1898) • <i>Albany</i> (1899)
<p>The Roosevelt administration (1901-1909) with Navy Secretary William Moody (1902-) first advocated a “big gun” navy but revised his position after the Russian defeat to Japan toward a more balanced force with both battleships and cruisers which led to the formation of the Great White Fleet. Roosevelt’s goal was for the United States to become second to Britain in terms of naval power.</p>	<p>At least one battleship a year was authorized during the Roosevelt years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the Navy’s General Board • Venezuelan crisis led to the authorization of three 16,000-ton battleships and two 13,000-ton battleships • After 1905, Congress was less lenient to appropriate funds for additional battleships. • 	<p>Great White Fleet <u>16 battleships</u> <i>Maine</i>-class battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maine</i> (1902) • <i>Missouri</i> (1903) • <i>Ohio</i> (1904) <i>Virginia</i>-class battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Virginia</i> (1906) • <i>Nebraska</i> (1907) • <i>Georgia</i> (1906) • <i>New Jersey</i> (1906) • <i>Rhode Island</i> (1906) <i>Connecticut</i>-class battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Connecticut</i> (1906) • <i>Louisiana</i> (1906) • <i>Vermont</i> (1907) • <i>Kansas</i> (1907) • <i>Minnesota</i> (1907) • <i>New Hampshire</i> (1908) <i>Mississippi</i>-class Battleships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mississippi</i> (1908) • <i>Idaho</i> (1908) Six <i>Denver</i>-class, three <i>St. Louis</i>-class, seven <i>Pennsylvania</i>-class, four <i>Tennessee</i>-class, and three <i>Chester</i>-class cruisers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cleveland</i> (1903) • <i>Tacoma</i> (1904) • <i>Denver</i> (1904) • <i>Des Moines</i> (1904) • <i>Chattanooga</i> (1904) • <i>Galveston</i> (1905) • <i>Pennsylvania</i> (1905) • <i>West Virginia</i> (1905) </p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •California (1907) •Colorado (1905) •Maryland (1905) •St. Louis (1906) •South Dakota (1908) •Tennessee (1906) •Washington (1906) •North Carolina (1908) •Montana (1908) •Chester (1908) •Birmingham (1908) •Salem (1908)
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Sources: George W. Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press. 1994); Kenneth J. Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1889*. (Westport: Greenwood Press. 1973); Edgar Stanton Maclay. *A History of the United States Navy from 1775 to 1902. Volume III*. (New York: D. Appleton, 1907); Scott Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues: Maritime Strategy, American Empire, and the Transformation of U.S. Naval Identity, 1873-1898*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press. 2018).

Roosevelt obtained support from Congress for two dreadnoughts classes in 1908 and two more in 1909. The “New Navy” that emerged in the 1880s and 1890s marked a shift in the U.S. strategic thinking and the power status of the United States. The ability to deploy greater capability overseas was in clear line with the imperial outlook that was taking place by the end of the 1890s. The U.S. victory in Spanish-American War brought additional overseas territories and additional responsibilities to Washington. Those responsibilities required a strong navy to be maintained. The 1902-1903 Venezuelan Crisis brought even more pressure since Washington realized how vulnerable it could be against aligned European powers.

Intelligence Services

The Navy in 1882 and the Army in 1885 formed permanent intelligence bureaus.¹¹⁵ The roles of those bureaus were purely defensive and in line with the Monroe Doctrine. They had the task to gather data “on the armed forces and military strength of foreign powers and on their capacity to deploy troops, ships, and war matériel to the Western Hemisphere.”¹¹⁶ The Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) assumed a strategic planning mission after 1885 and integrated the study of “worldwide progress in naval science” and conveyed the information for the “development and employment of ships and weapons.”¹¹⁷ On the Army side, the Military Intelligence Division was first dedicated to the collection of information and only became a combined operational and intelligence staff after 1892.¹¹⁸

Threat Assessment: The End of the Frontiers and the Re-Discovery of Extra-Continental Frictions

American ability to assess the source of threats to its national security improved during the last half of the nineteenth century. Planned and logical efforts to assess adequately the various sources of threat to American national security were conducted by analysts such as Emory Upton

¹¹⁵ Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 47.

¹¹⁶ Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 47; Lieutenant William L. Sachse. USNR. “Our Naval Attaché System: Its Origin and Development to 1917,” PUSNI, LXXII (May1946), 661-72; Elizabeth Bethel. “The Military Information Division: Origin of the Intelligence Division.” *Military Affairs*, 11 (Spring 1947): 17-24.

¹¹⁷ Wyman H. Packard. *A Century of U.S. Naval Intelligence*. (Washington: Department of Navy, 1996): 5

¹¹⁸ John Patrick Finnegan. *Military Intelligence*. (Washington: Center of Military History, 1998): 12-13.

and Alfred T. Mahan among others.¹¹⁹ Those efforts were taken seriously and, in many cases, helped the development of a more coherent and credible strategy to deal with overseas issues. The careful examination of the foreign military forces also contributed in a significant way to reforming the U.S. military and designing a military force adequately equipped and manned to address U.S. primary threats.

The expansionist ambitions of the United States were sustained by many political and military leaders. Rear Admiral George W. Melville recommended “the purchase of all European holdings in the West Indies” and Admiral Dewey asked in a similar fashion to Secretary Long to buy the Danish-owned Islands since the acquisition of additional naval bases in the Caribbean meant additional lines of defence against potential European aggression.¹²⁰ Additional naval leaders, including Commander Charles H. Stockton and Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, recommended additional stepping stones across the Pacific to protect sea lanes to Asia and provide coaling stations along the road.¹²¹ The United States really started to express their naval ambitions throughout the 1880s and 1890s with the goal of becoming a force second only to Britain. With the new competition that was growing between the European powers, the successive presidents of the 1880s and 1890s knew that they could not avoid indefinitely European interference without the necessary means to deter the European powers.

The Continuous Advance to the West

The westward expansion accelerated pace during the Gold Rush. However, this expansion was a long-term process that would create challenges and internal troubles that endured until the end of the 1880s.¹²² Confrontation with the indigenous population pushed the implementation of a genocidal policy by the federal government. The actions of the U.S. Army against the multiple Indian nations standing between the settlers and the west coast would be considered gross human rights violations by any modern standards. The fight against the Indians occurred mainly between 1865 and 1875. Encroachment still occurred throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The Apache War (1876-1886) and the campaign against Geronimo were particularly violent. The U.S. military implement the policy of “cautious readiness” in 1885.¹²³

General Sherman in his Final Report (1883) evaluated that: “I now regard the Indians as substantially eliminated from the problem of the Army. There may be spasmodic and temporary alarms, but such Indian wars as have hitherto disturbed the public peace and tranquillity are not probable.”¹²⁴ Though the end was near, Sherman was not entirely right. The campaign against Geronimo was not over yet, and the Sioux War (1890-1891) had not broken the last pocket of organized resistance. By the end of the Apache War, nearly 250,000 Native Americans had been confined to reservations.¹²⁵ The spread of the Ghost Dance movement led by Big Foot and the botched attempt to arrest Sitting Bull which led to his death at the Standing Rock Reservation on

¹¹⁹ Upton. *The Armies of Asia and Europe* and Alfred Thayer Mahan. *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1987 [1894]).

¹²⁰ Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 72.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 73.

¹²² Between 1768 and 1889, over “12 separates campaigns and numerous local incidents” against the Indians occurred. See Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History*: 905; and Kori Schake. *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017): 126.

¹²³ Wooster. *The Military and United States Indian Policy 1865-1903*. 193.

¹²⁴ Quoted from Francis Paul Prucha. Ed. *Documents of United States Indian Policy*, 2nd Ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1990): 159.

¹²⁵ Alan Axelrod. *Political History of America's Wars*. (Washington: CQ Press, 2007): 292.

December 15, 1890, triggered a new uprising. Fourteen days later, the Battle of Wounded Knee put an end to the insurrection in a brutal way. The Seventh Cavalry forces, under the authority of Colonel James W. Forsyth, surrounded the insurgents' camp, and when they encountered resistance, Forsyth ordered his force to open fire with Hotchkiss guns which killed in less than an hour Big Foot and officially 153 Miniconjous (including women and children).¹²⁶ The Sioux organized a last standing against General Miles's forces after that horrendous war crime, but by January 15, 1891, the Sioux had surrendered ending the Indian Wars.

The colonization of the west of the continent was not the end of the colonial ambition of the United States. The Pacific was full of opportunities and the U.S. Navy was in a better position than Europe to make a play in that vast area full of archipelagos vulnerable to foreign dominance. With the end of the Indian Wars, the expansionist ambitions of the United States unleashed a new series of territorial acquisitions overseas. The end of the Reconstruction in 1877 and the end of the Indian War in 1891 displaced the mission of the army back to international involvement.

Normalization with Canada

After the 1867 British North America Act, relations with Canada became less tense and removed much of the American ambitions to annex Canada.¹²⁷ However, border issues were not over yet, and some strategists still played with the idea of an invasion of Canada. Charles C. Rogers, an intelligence officer with the ONI prepared a detailed plan in 1887 in which he proposed to "divide and conquer" Canada by capturing "a geographic triangle demarcated by Montreal, Ottawa, and Kingston."¹²⁸ Rogers' plans to capture the heartland of Canada were only theoretical but showed the seriousness of the readiness of the United States to protect its interest and even wage a war against the British Crown once more if need be.

Diplomatic encroachments occurred during that period whatsoever. In the 1880s, the United States contended over their control over the Bering Sea. The competition was essentially over the control of seal hunting off the Alaskan coast. Starting in 1881, the United States claimed that the Bering Sea was a *mare clausum* (a closed sea), and, consequently under American Jurisdiction.¹²⁹ The claim was mostly ignored by the British and Canadian authorities until the United States started to seize Canadian fishing vessels hunting for seals in the Bering Sea. A diplomatic joust erupted between Secretary of State Blaine and the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury after Congress made legal the seizure of vessels violating the American rights in the Bering Sea in 1889. The rapid decline of the seal herd finally led to an arbitration treaty between the United States and Britain in 1892 which ensuing the international tribunal it created in Paris in 1893 1) re-established the Bering Sea as part of the high sea and consequently not under the authority of the United States; 2) prohibited seal hunting around the Pribilof Islands during the breeding season; and 3) offered reparation to the British 474,151\$ for the illegal seizure of fishing

¹²⁶ However, different accounts believed that the final count was more between 300 and 350 deaths. *Ibid.* 293-294.

¹²⁷ With a few exceptions, including Theodore Roosevelt who suggested the conquest of Canada during the Venezuelan Crisis. See Bradford Perkins. *The Great Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1895-1914*. (New York: Atheneum, 1968): 16.

¹²⁸ Mobley. *Progressives in Navy Blues*: 209; Charles C. Rogers. "Intelligence Report of the General War Resources of the Dominion of Canada." (*USS Galena*, 1887). <http://2k8r3p1401as2e1q7k14dguu-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/RG8-B5- Intel-Tech-Archives F5- Rogers-Canada-Plan-1887.pdf>. Accessed 20 July 2022.

¹²⁹ Thomas A. Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*. (8th ed.) (New York: Apple-Century-Crofts, 1969): 410-11.

vessels by the United States.¹³⁰ The arbitration process did not yield many positive results for the United States with the exception of the prohibition of hunting for a brief period to avoid the extermination of the seals in the Bering Sea.

Expansion in the Pacific and the Uncertain Balance in Asia

Asia became the epicentre of colonial powers' competition during the late 19th century. The addition of Germany, Russia, and, to a lesser degree, the United States in the mix brought a second life to colonialism in the Pacific region. The rise of a unified Germany intensified the colonial competition in the Pacific. Russia expanded its influence and would ultimately collide with the growing power of a reforming and industrializing Japan. France secured its influence in Southeast Asia by establishing the *Union Indochinoise*. In addition, the rise of Japan as a regional power brought a new wildcard into the mix. Only the British acted to preserve a semblance of status quo in Asia. As long as the British conserved their naval supremacy and diplomatic channels remained open between the colonial powers, the spoils of Asia could be shared without too much infighting.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and the prospect of the isthmian canal in Central America brought Washington to the realization that Asia was nearer than before, and U.S. decision-makers started to scheme to bring Asia within their sphere of influence. The United States progressively gained more influence in Asia. First, Washington advocated their neutrality and opened reciprocal diplomatic channels and not just with the European powers. The Tyler Doctrine of 1842 allowed the development of reciprocal trade agreements with most of the areas of interest for the United States. Second, the United States progressively went beyond the Tyler Doctrine and gained control over the stepping stones on the way to Asia in the Pacific. The United States first secured access to coaling stations with the local governments and gained control over Guam, the Philippines, Samoa, and Hawaii. The annexation of Hawaii and the conquest of the Philippines led to the acquisition of additional stepping stones in the transit. The navy seized Guam in June 1898; it also took control of Wake Island in January 1899; and established a coaling station on the Island of Tutuila in what is today American Samoa in February 1900.

With the Germans creating problems in Samoa, the Cleveland administration started to perceive an increased threat from the European powers in the Pacific. Diplomatic and consular reports relayed to the State Department in the 1880s included many preoccupying "similar stories of the growth of European influence, and the loss of opportunities."¹³¹ The intensive competition between the European powers in Asia led to a delicate balance in the region often broken by attempts at gaining more power, influence, and territory by one of the powers with a vested interest in the region. To contain the tensions to Asia, Washington secured permanent control of multiple islands in the Pacific Ocean including Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam, and ultimately the Philippines.

The Boxer Rebellion, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 were all symptomatic of the changing nature of the balance of power in Asia. Great Britain, France and Russia joined efforts to exploit the local instabilities to gain more control and gain more concessions. New competitors such as Japan, Germany and the United States were destabilizing the fragile balance that existed between the established European powers. While

¹³⁰ Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*. 412-13.

¹³¹ Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 77.

Japan became a serious competitor in the mix with the clear aim of territorial aggrandizement, the United States tried to play the neutrality card and appeased the other powers.

Hawaii

Hawaii became a center of interest and a strategic point for many reasons. First, as a coaling station, it was essential to any vessel cruising between the United States and Asia. Second, the strategic value from a military standpoint represented a pivotal post for operations in the Pacific. Third, the interest of the European powers in the islands created a credible threat to the United States' interests. Fourth, U.S. sugar planters integrated the economy of Hawaii with the support of Washington who after the 1875 treaty allowed Hawaiian sugar to enter the United States marked duty-free.¹³² Consequently, the United States developed a complex relationship with Hawaii that attempted for a long time to preserve its independence. However, Washington accepted to preserve Hawaii's independence as long as it did not mean it would fall into the hands of another power.

The Reciprocity Treaty was renewed in 1884.¹³³ An important addition was included in the treaty. It allowed the United States to fortify a naval base at Pearl Harbor.¹³⁴ Pearl Harbor as a U.S. naval base was established by 1887. However, to many, Pearl Harbor was not enough. It left too much room for the European powers to seize control of the islands or part of it, and it left the permanence of the base in the hands of an independent nation. Hawaii could be what Singapore or Hong Kong was to the British. An invaluable stepping stone to the markets of Asia.

In the early 1890s, the political situation shifted more in favour of annexation. Queen Liliuokalani was opposed to the U.S. control of Pearl Harbor and wished to limit the influence of foreign powers over the policy of the islands.¹³⁵ The 1890 McKinley Act raised tariffs on all imported sugar. The tariffs directly affected the plantation owners in Hawaii and created additional pressure toward annexation. Sanford Dole and other plantation owners "orchestrated a coup against Queen Liliuokalani."¹³⁶ The coup was unsupported by the United States, but John L. Stevens, the United States Minister in Honolulu seized the opportunity to declare Hawaii a U.S. protectorate. President Harrison negotiated the annexation of Hawaii in 1893 along with the planters responsible for the revolution that overthrow Queen Liliuokalani, but his treaty could not

¹³² As a result, the planters became ambivalent toward annexation since they feared the U.S. labor laws would deprive them of exploiting the Asian workforce. See Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 429-430. The increasing demographic pressure from the West and the East was undermining the aboriginal influence over the islands. In 1890, the aboriginal population reached a low of 34,436. The cheap labor from Asia made the aboriginal a minority in their own country. See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 452-3.

¹³³ For a duration of seven years until abrogated by one of the signatories pending a twelve-month notice. This was the same procedure as the 1875 Treaty. See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 451.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* 452.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 459.

¹³⁶ Michael J. Green. *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Colombia University Press, 2017): 71-73. For additional information, see: William Adam Russ. *The Hawaiian Republic, 1894-98, and Its Struggle to Win Annexation*. (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1961); Thomas J. Osborne. "Empire Can Wait": *American Opposition to Hawaiian Annexation, 1893-1808*. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979); William Reynold Braisted. *The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909*. (New York: Greenwood, 1958); Akira Iriye, *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897-1911*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Sylvester K. Stevens, *American Expansion in Hawaii, 1842-1898*. (Harrisburg: Archive Publishing, 1945); Allan Lee Hamilton. "Military Strategists and the Annexation of Hawaii." *Journal of the West* 15 (1976): 81-91; Hugh B. Hammett. "The Cleveland Administration and Anglo-American Naval Friction in Hawaii, 1893-1894." *Military Affairs* 40 (1976): 27-37.

be ratified by President Harrison before President Cleveland came to power. Cleveland withdrew the treaty from the Senate, but it would only delay the annexation for a few years.

The coup against the Queen mobilized the Japanese and British fleets. Not only Washington had vested interests in Hawaii. The confrontation was averted by Cleveland's removal of the treaty from the Senate. The annexation required more than the support of the American interests present on the islands, but also the implicit consent of the other powers with interests in Hawaii. An independent Hawaii remained more interesting to the British, Japanese, and German. While Cleveland was willing to restore the deposed Queen after the special commissioner James H. Blount reported on the coup.¹³⁷ However, the planters guild responsible for the coup was unwilling to cede their newly acquired authority and the American public would never sanction an armed intervention against American settlers to restore a monarchy. Cleveland's anti-imperialism finally got in the way of the annexation of the island at that moment.

During the next four years, the partially Americanized government of Hawaii waited patiently for a government more lenient toward annexation than Cleveland. The Japanese were opposed more than ever to the annexation of Hawaii by the United States. The growing population of Japanese origin in Hawaii (by then around 25,000) constituted an additional threat to the American influence in Hawaii. However, with President McKinley's inauguration, the United States moved quickly enough to gain total control over the islands. McKinley sent a new treaty of annexation on June 16, 1897. Hawaii became officially part of the United States on August 12, 1898.

Samoa

The U.S. claim over Samoa was prompted by the German claim in 1885.¹³⁸ While Washington first tried to maintain that Samoa deserved an independent government, the British advocated for a reinforcement of the tripartite administration to avoid the escalation of the German claim. The threat of a U.S.-British alignment against the Germans made them agree to the continuation of the tripartite supervision of the island.

Bismarck started to engage in colonial expansionist policy after 1884 after the Berlin Conference. In November 1884, Germany attempted to force King Malietoa Laupepa to sign a treaty that would have led to the islands becoming a German protectorate.¹³⁹ Malietoa and 48 other chiefs asked Britain to annex the islands to block the German protectorate.¹⁴⁰ Without U.S. involvement, the first attempt at the German takeover of Samoa was successfully blocked by the British. However, Bismarck was not about to give up. Germany, then, supported the insurrectionist forces of Tamesese against Malietoa.¹⁴¹

The tensions with Germany over Samoa were at their peak in the mid-1880s. Germany had declared war on the Samoan king. President Cleveland despised the colonial European intrigues and maintained that Samoa was to remain independent.¹⁴² Secretary of State Bayard presented formal protestation to the German government in June 1885 and recommended a "*permanent tri-*

¹³⁷ Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 432-33

¹³⁸ Michael J. Green. *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Colombia University Press. 2017): 73.

¹³⁹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 457.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Henry F. Graff. *Grover Cleveland*. (The American Presidents Series). (New York: Times Books, 2002): 70.

partite Government of the powers.”¹⁴³ President Harrison continued Bayard’s policy and accepted the implementation of a tripartite protectorate between the United States, Britain and Germany to maintain relative peace. The British gained the upper hand in the negotiation when a massive typhoon damaged most of the U.S. and German fleet deployed in Samoa.¹⁴⁴

During the Berlin Conference of April 29, 1889, the Americans were opposed to the division of the islands between the three powers. As a compromise, the Germans reluctantly agreed to a tripartite protectorate as an alternative. This agreement was a violation of the non-entanglement principle. The United States had entered a mutual agreement with two other great powers to manage the faith of the Samoan population to protect its interest and strategic assets. The compromise did not work for long proving once more that the United States had little to gain from formal agreement with foreign powers. Unable to govern Samoa together, the islands were split between Germany and the United States in 1899.

The two emerging great powers were on a streak of acquisition of new territories. The death of King Malietoa Laupepa triggered the political change necessary to partition the Samoan islands.¹⁴⁵ The treaty of December 2, 1899, split the islands in two. The Germans got the two largest islands of Savaii and Upolu. The United States gained control of the islands of Manua and the rest of Tutuila which secured the harbour of Pago Pago and the islands east of that longitude.¹⁴⁶ The British sought compensation from Germany and obtained the Tongas, parts of the Solomon Islands, and concessions in West Africa.¹⁴⁷ The United States finally annexed Samoa in 1904.

The Philippines

The acquisition of the Philippines by the United States was swift and decisive. President McKinley declared war on Spain on April 25. Admiral Dewey departed Hong Kong on April 27. Dewey reached Manila undetected on April 30 and defeated the Spanish squadron in Manila Bay the next day. The Spanish fleet was destroyed, but the battle was not won. Dewey had to wait for reinforcement to capture Manila. Germany dispatched five men of war at Manila during the interim of the American land conquest. While the Germans did not intervene against the Americans, the German vessels were there to pick up anything the United States would leave them.¹⁴⁸ The German vessels were superior to Dewey’s forces and could have easily removed the Americans from the Philippines. As a precaution and a show of good faith to the United States, the British commander at Manila, Captain Chichester, moved his own vessels between the German and American ships as a buffer to avoid any escalation before the arrival of the American reinforcement.

Beyond the swift naval victory of Dewey over the Spanish Navy in Manila, the American occupation in the Philippines evolved quickly toward a counterinsurgency operation that cost a lot of resources and underlined the limits and failures of the American colonial endeavour. The mission of the Army was unclear at first. The directive was to avoid an entangling alliance with

¹⁴³ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 457.

¹⁴⁴ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 73,

¹⁴⁵ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 474.

¹⁴⁶ “Convention of 1889.” *American Samoa Bar Association*. Accessed March 28, 2023. <https://asbar.org/convention-of-1899/>.

¹⁴⁷ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 474.

¹⁴⁸ Bailey. 1969. *Diplomatic History of the American*: 470.

the insurgents that had organized into a Filipino Army by the time the Spanish were dislodged.¹⁴⁹ The confrontation against the Spanish on the ground showed the gap in experience between the two armies. The Spanish were well entrenched and used modern equipment to fortify their defensive positions with spiderwebs of barbed wire.¹⁵⁰

The victory in the Philippines over the Spanish forces came as a surprise. The original order to General Merritt shows well how unprepared the Americans were to take possession of a territory composed of over 7,000 islands across the Pacific and inhabited by seven million people. McKinley simply and vaguely order Merritt to “completing the reduction of the Spanish Power.”¹⁵¹ However the challenge to the American forces was not the Spanish forces, but the Filipino nationalist led by Emilio Aguinaldo. The Filipinos declared independence on June 12 and named Aguinaldo as president, but the Treaty of Paris ceded the Philippines to the United States. The first contingent of 5,000 volunteers was quickly expanded to 20,000 men including regulars under the request of Major General Merritt and the approval of the War Department.¹⁵²

The independence of the Philippines was formally rejected in a narrow vote in Senate on February 6, 1899. The vote of Vice President Garret A. Hobart was necessary to deny the independence of the Philippines.¹⁵³ The support for American involvement in the Philippines was far from unanimous. The New England Anti-Imperialist League led the charge against annexation. However, the expansionist supporters were now a match to the anti-imperialists. The declaration of war by Aguinaldo two days before the vote tilted the balance in favour of rejecting the independence and ratifying the Paris Treaty.¹⁵⁴

Between the Indian Wars and World War I, no other theatre tested more the American military forces than the insurrection led by Filipinos. The quick mobilization of the insurrection led to a significant increase in American troop deployment in the Philippines. McKinley rapidly increased the troops from 2,500 to 10,000.¹⁵⁵ By 1899, over sixty thousand men were deployed over the Philippines to maintain order and stop Aguinaldo’s stand against a new colonizer.¹⁵⁶ Aguinaldo’s influence was pervasive and deeply transform the dynamic of liberation toward one of annexation. Due to the armed opposition, the Americans progressively reinforced Manila as a strong base of operation where the military took control of the government and progressively developed a colonial government.¹⁵⁷

Without much domestic support, the Army engaged in civic action programs embedding the manifest destiny beyond the United States’ territory and implementing chauvinistic policies.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁹ Major General Merritt wrote to McKinley, “I do not yet know whether it is your desire to subdue and hold all of the Spanish territory in the islands, or merely seize and hold the capital.” See Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 454, Scribd.

¹⁵⁰ Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground*: 143-146.

¹⁵¹ John Morgan Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973): 6.

¹⁵² Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 453, Scribd.

¹⁵³ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 473.

¹⁵⁴ H.W. Brands. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 49.

¹⁵⁵ Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags*: 20.

¹⁵⁶ Allan Reed Millett. *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968): 8.

¹⁵⁷ Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags*: 70.

¹⁵⁸ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 291.

The Filipino response was well organized at first, but under the recommendation of the European-educated Antonio Luna, Aguinaldo switched his guerrilla warfare to more conventional warfare.¹⁵⁹ This decision severely disadvantaged the Filipino insurgents. The Eighth Corps, though untested for colonial wars of conquest, was at an advantage. Trained in conventional warfare and experienced against rapid and mobile small groups of insurgents due to the Indian War, the Eighth Corps had to acquire the balance between coercion and benevolence to deal with the Filipinos on a more permanent basis. War of quasi-extirpation as in the Indian Wars was not an option in this case.

General Elwell S. Otis, in charge of the counterinsurgency and occupation mission, successfully gained control of the Philippines to ensure a permanent occupation, but not a stable one. The insurgency led by Aguinaldo had much support from the population, the Filipinos had better fighting skills than Otis expected, and the archipelago nature of the Philippines made it difficult to proficiently control the entirety of its territory by the Americans, but favoured the insurgents.¹⁶⁰ Dependent mostly on volunteer regiments, Otis defeated Aguinaldo in November 1899 in Luzon which in consequence moved the conflict toward guerrilla warfare in the Filipino wilderness.

To impinge local support, President McKinley implemented reforms and built major infrastructures throughout the islands to “civilize” the Filipinos and, hopefully as a result, obtain the support of the population in favour of the American occupation. This provided further targets to the insurgents and stigmatized the infrastructural development efforts negatively. Public health and education efforts were certainly beneficial to the Filipino population on the other hand. The military’s public health campaign quasi eliminated smallpox and the plague throughout the archipelago.¹⁶¹

In May 1900, Arthur MacArthur succeeded Otis. The shift to guerrilla warfare proved costly to the U.S. troops since by June 1900, MacArthur was already requesting additional troops.¹⁶² The guerrilla warfare tactics of the Filipinos were successful enough to decrease the appeal of the “winning hearts and minds” approach previously devised to win against the insurgents. MacArthur had to deal with a temporary troop shortage due to the Boxer Rebellion in China which diverted some of the resources that would have been much needed in the Philippines. Much of the resources diverted toward China were reallocated to the Philippines after the Rebellion. MacArthur use those resources to devise a harder position toward the insurgents.

Two commissions were mandated by President McKinley to assess the possibility of a transfer of authority to civilian authority in the Philippines. The First one was the Schurman Commission. Jacob Gould Schurman was, at first, convinced by Aguinaldo’s quest for self-government and was critical of the behaviour of the American troops.¹⁶³ The second commission, the Taft Commission aimed specifically at establishing an effective civilian rule.¹⁶⁴ The Taft Commission had the power to “implement limited local self-government, independent of the

¹⁵⁹ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 289.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 290.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* 291.

¹⁶² Miller. *Benevolent Assimilation*: 100-101.

¹⁶³ Stuart Creighton Miller. *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982): 131-132.

¹⁶⁴ Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags*: 141.

military.”¹⁶⁵ In September 1900, a civil government was established in the Philippines. This civil authority mandated by William Howard Taft created tensions with the military authority that still had to deal with an active insurgency.

With the increase in guerrilla fighting, the 70,000 men deployed at the end of 1900 in the Philippines were in an advantageous position to pacify the islands.¹⁶⁶ 125,000 servicemen saw action in the Philippines and 4,200 of them died.¹⁶⁷ With the war termination in 1902, the Americans were able to maintain security in the Philippines with less than 15 000 troops.¹⁶⁸ On July 4, 1902, President Roosevelt signed the Proclamation Ending the Philippine-American War. After Luzon become stable enough, the main internal disturbance stayed in the Moro islands of Mindanao and the Jolo archipelago. The American authorities had to deal with Moro’s insurrections during the campaigns of Lake Lanao and Jolo in 1903, the Catabato Valley in 1905, and the Bud Dajo Mountain in 1906.¹⁶⁹

The control over the Philippines influenced the U.S. foreign policy in Asia in a significant way. While still engaged in the Open Door policy, Washington had the possibility of conducting a more engaged policy in the region with a better base of operation. However, the control of the Philippines came to a cost and drained some of the U.S. resources toward counterinsurgency operations.

Wake Island and Guam

The first contingent of Major General Merritt and Captain Glass, which departed on May 25, 1898, capture Guam on June 21 on their way to the Philippines. Guam was captured as a potential naval base and cable station.¹⁷⁰ The U.S. forces caught the Spanish garrison by surprise, unaware that Spain was at war with the United States.¹⁷¹ The annexation of Guam was a mere formality. The peace treaty with Spain formalized the annexation on February 17, 1899. Art. VIII of the Treaty of Paris stipulated that Spain was ceding to the United States “in the island of Guam, and in the Philippine Archipelago, all the buildings, wharves, barracks, forts, structures, public highways and other immovable property which in the conformity of law belong to the public domain, and as such belong to the Crown of Spain.”¹⁷² Guam was the most strategic of the Marianas. The coast was favourable to a deep-water port, and it was an ideal stepping stone in the transit to Asia.

Wake Island was formally annexed on January 17, 1899. The Navy was hoping the island would serve as a cable relay station. However, as Midway, Wake Island required too much investment to make it practical for naval exploitation.¹⁷³ Wake Island would become more interesting when aviation became a factor in the security of the Pacific territories.

¹⁶⁵ Miller. *Benevolent Assimilation*: 133-134.

¹⁶⁶ Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags*: 205.

¹⁶⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 296.

¹⁶⁸ Gates. *Schoolbooks and Krags*: 270.

¹⁶⁹ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 321.

¹⁷⁰ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 462.

¹⁷¹ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 89.

¹⁷² Don A. Farrell. *The Pictorial History of Guam. The Americanization, 1898-1918*. Tamuning: Mocronesian Production, 1986): 41.

¹⁷³ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 89.

Japan

Japan became a concern to American interest in Asia early. While Washington had displayed diplomatic openness to Japan, the Meiji authority leaned toward the British to develop their navy and toward Germany to modernize its economy, political institutions and military forces.¹⁷⁴ After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. control over the Philippines made the Japanese threat more tangible and obviously proximate. The rapidly growing modern Japanese navy was worrisome enough to require reinforcement of the U.S. position in the Pacific.

First after the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the victory of Japan over China was quite overwhelming. The European powers interceded to mitigate the gains made by Japan, but it was already clear that Japan had an expansionist design over Asia and that it would keep interfering with the European and American plans in Asia. The control of the Liaotung Peninsula set the path of Japan as an emerging power to be reckoned with.

Second, the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War signalled the reality of a non-Western threat to American Interests. After the Russian interference in the aftermath of the war to take away the gains of the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, Tokyo planned an invasion of Korea and Manchuria that finally took place in 1904. The assault on Port Arthur, the landing at Chemulpo in Korea, and the landing on the Liaodung Peninsula were humiliating to Russia.¹⁷⁵ The Japanese victories in Manchuria, the effective blockade and capture of Port Arthur, and the naval victory of Tsushima broke the Russian fleet and left the Japanese in control of the sea. Overall, the Russians had greater forces but scattered. The Japanese aimed at a rapid victory before reinforcement came in. However, soon the infantry reinforcements made difficult the possibility of a decisive victory by Japan. While Japan dominated the sea and secure some gain in Korea and Manchuria, the conflict was in a stalemate costly to both states.

Both Russia's and Japan's finances were getting depleted by the war, and even if the Japanese had mastery of the sea, long attrition on the mainland would stretch the little resources they had left. President Roosevelt proposed to arbitrate peace negotiations between Russia and Japan. Washington's intervention as a mediator in the war to preserve the operative balance of power sealed the end of Russian expansionism in Asia but left many uncertainties regarding Japan. The Portsmouth peace negotiation secured the Japanese gain in the Liadong Peninsula including Port Arthur, the South Manchurian Railway, half of Sakhalin Island, and the recognition of its control over Korea. Roosevelt was able to convince the Japanese to forgo the payment of indemnity and to leave the northern half of the Sakhalin to the Russians. This compromise created much discontent in Japan and precipitated the downfall of Prime Minister Katsura Taro.¹⁷⁶ The military gained additional influence and control over Japanese politics as a result.

President Roosevelt established a combined strategic approach of conciliation and deterrence with Japan. The building up of the Great White Fleet and its subsequent voyage that started toward the Pacific signalled to Japan that the United States had the capabilities to defend its strategic interests. However, Roosevelt wanted to leave a legacy of friendship with Japan.

¹⁷⁴ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 67.

¹⁷⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History*: 920-5.

¹⁷⁶ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 98.

China

China became the main victim of the interplay of the competing powers. The earlier efforts of the United States to preserve China's independence were forgotten. The colonial powers carved out pieces of China for themselves. China lost the Liaotung Peninsula to Japanese forces in 1895; France forced a lease on Kwang-Chou and extended its control in Hainan and the provinces of Yunnan, Kwangsi, and Kwangtung; Germany took control of Tsingtao and Shantung; and Britain held Hong Kong and the Yangtze valley.¹⁷⁷ Traditional Confucian rulers had left China backward and unable to resist the waves of colonial powers who progressively gained more control over China. The Chinese military forces were backward, ill-equipped, and unprepared to conduct modern warfare. While the United States had worked to preserve China's independence, the European powers deployed resources to increase progressively their control over first the Chinese resources, second its trade routes, and lastly parts of its territory in strategic areas.

U.S. China policy had remained the same since the end of the Civil War. Commodore Shufeldt, motivated by commercialism and navalism, provided the four guidelines of the China policy. First and foremost, the protection of American interests and citizens was the Asiatic Squadron's core mission.¹⁷⁸ Second, the Asiatic Squadron periodically made its presence known in Asia by visiting the various ports of the region.¹⁷⁹ Third, the United States Asiatic Squadron had a conventional patrol and protection role of the U.S. merchant vessels. Fourth, the Asiatic Squadron worked to control the migrant workers trade. Secretary Thompson put additional emphasis on the control of migrant workers in 1878.¹⁸⁰ While the United States diplomats had worked hard to build good relations with China, the intolerance against Chinese migrant workers was building up on the West Coast and becoming a major issue. Racism and hate crimes became a problem to the point where a ban on Chinese migrant workers became part of many decision-makers discourses.

While the United States showed on multiple occasions their willingness to treat China as an equal, the U.S. domestic politics were telling a different story. The progressive ban on Chinese immigration damaged U.S.-China relations. Racism toward Chinese living on the West Coast was a major problem. By 1880, 75,000 Chinese were in California representing nine percent of the state population.¹⁸¹ The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 opened the door to unrestricted Chinese immigration, but laws were put in place to slow down and ultimately stopped Chinese immigration. First, Congress passed a law in 1879 "forbidding any ship to import more than fifteen Chinese on any one trip;" and second, a special commission was sent to Beijing to negotiate a new treaty.¹⁸² The Treaty of 1880 retook the right to regulate and suspend Chinese immigration which it did in 1882 by suspending Chinese immigration for ten years.

With pragmatism, Secretary of State Hay advocated an "Open Door" to China. He, however, was not willing to risk war to defend China's territorial integrity, unlike Humphrey Marshall.¹⁸³ He rather sought to create a consensus that the Chinese authority had the merit to offer a buffer between all competing powers. Hay's first Open Door Note was supported by the British

¹⁷⁷ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 470.

¹⁷⁸ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 112.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 112.

¹⁸¹ Bailey. 1969. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 393.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*: 394-95.

¹⁸³ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 94.

and unopposed by the other European powers. Unfortunately, after the outbreak of the Boxer Rebellion, Hay's Open Door policy lost the little support it had from the great powers in the region and even the United States ended up sending a contingent of 6,000 men to China as part of the British-led multinational force.¹⁸⁴ While the intervention violated American neutrality, the objective was to counterbalance the potential greed of Japan, Germany, and Russia were willing to carve up China between themselves. Furthermore, the U.S. troops vacated China after the rebellion ended.

The Sino-French War of 1884-1885 led to the establishment of the *Union Indochinoise* under France in 1887. The French were able to take control over the Mekong Delta, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the large Tonkin region. Washington attempted to mediate the Sino-French conflict. The position of the United States in Asia was unique in the sense that even though Washington was a Western power, its strategic autonomy made it an ideal pivotal power in the region. Its respect for the Treaty of Tientsin of 1858, the avoidance of gunboat diplomacy, and the trust displayed to the U.S. diplomats by China favoured Washington as a mediator.¹⁸⁵ The U.S. mediation was unsuccessful due to the polarizing situation and the lack of sufficient bargaining range to satisfy the minimal requirements of both powers.

After their defeat to the Japanese during the 1894-1895 Sino-Japanese War, the Qing were forced into the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The treaty ended China's suzerainty over Korea and transferred control over the southern portion of the province of Fengtian, Formosa and the Pescadores Group to Japan along with access to the ports and cities of Shashi, Chongqing, Suzhou, and Hangzhou.¹⁸⁶ However, Russia, France and Germany came to the rescue of China to protect their own interest and force Japan to vacate its newly acquired Chinese concessions. The Triple Intervention showed that to vanquish the European powers any challenging power would have to divide them over the issue at hand. Japan's humiliation accelerated even further its militarization and led to a transformation of its strategy.¹⁸⁷ Korea and China would remain Japan's main target, but Japan would maneuver the European powers in such a way as to avoid the possibility of a common front against its efforts. China had to rely on European powers to prevent Japan from piecing out its territory one excursion after the other.

The British advocated first the Open Door Policy. In 1898, British authorities started to discuss the possibility of a cooperative arrangement with the United States toward equal commercial opportunities in China.¹⁸⁸ Washington opposed the idea as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. However, when the initiative came from the United States, the policy was more than acceptable to expansionists and anti-expansionists alike. Secretary of State Hay sent his first Open Door notes on September 1899 to Berlin, London, St Petersburg, Rome, Paris, and Tokyo.¹⁸⁹ Secretary Hay wanted to protect the fragile stability of an overcrowded China with too many great

¹⁸⁴ Green. *By More Than Providence*: r95.

¹⁸⁵ Lewis M. Chere. *The Diplomacy of the Sino-French War (1883-1885): Global Complications of an Undeclared War*. (Notre Dame: Cross Cultural Publications, 1988): 144-161.

¹⁸⁶ "Treaty of Shimonoseki, 1895." *USC US-China Institute*. April 17, 1895. <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-shimonoseki-1895>.

¹⁸⁷ Frank W. Iklé. "The Triple Intervention. Japan's Lesson in the Diplomacy of Imperialism." *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 22, no. 1/2 (1967): 122-130; Xu B. "The Triple Intervention: A Forgotten Memory in the Discourse of the Nineteenth Century's International Law." *Journal of East Asia and International Law* 11, no. 2 (2018): 375-392; Green. *By More Than Providence*: 69-70.

¹⁸⁸ Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 479.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* 480.

powers. Apart from Italy, all others had a sphere of influence in China. That nest of great power competition created many frictions and the mutual respect of each other sphere of influence was a guarantee toward greater economic prosperity and exploitation of the Chinese resources. As far as the narrative behind the Open Door Policy stood, the United States had their economic interests in mind and not the well-being of the Chinese government.

When the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 became a real threat to the efficient colonial control of Beijing, the United States committed troops as an international relief expedition to appease the situation. A small naval squadron of 10,000 men under the command of Adna R. Chaffee was integrated into the multinational relief force.¹⁹⁰ Following the Boxer Rebellion, U.S. policymakers debated the idea of establishing a naval base on the islands near the coast of China or on China's mainland. The Navy proposed to take control of the Zhoushan Islands near the mouth of the Yangtze River.¹⁹¹ However, Secretary Hay was adamant about not making any "territorial aggrandizement at China's expense."¹⁹² The American neutrality with China was safe.

The 1900 Boxer Rebellion tested the American restraint in Asia. The European powers coalesced together to repress the rebellion. The British, French, German, Russian, Japanese, and American all contributed to the expedition to stop the insurgency. Secretary Hay managed, however, to mitigate the risk of overexpansion by the other powers and to restrain them from an intervention in the disturbed area. Hay's corollary to his Open Door Policy stood to "preserve the Chinese territorial and administrative entity."¹⁹³ Great Britain, France and Germany responded positively to Hay's corollary, but Hay contradicted his own principle by asking for the establishment of a coaling station at Samsah Bay.¹⁹⁴ In a context where the interests of all the European powers intersected and required collaboration to share the exploitation of the Chinese resources, Washington adopted a neutral posture to avoid the risk of confrontation with another power that could escalate. As a neutral, the United States committed to the maintenance of peaceful relations between the various states involved in Asian politics. The United States became the proponent of mediation in the various crises that emerged in Asia as a direct consequence of its pivotal role.

Korea

Korea had resisted the herds of colonists. The Hermit Kingdom of Kojong resisted foreign influence and colonization longer than most Asian states. However, the European powers were moving closer. As the European powers were testing the coastal defence of Korea, the United States throw their hat into the mix and sent a diplomatic mission to the Korean peninsula. Commodore Robert N. Shufeldt was charged with the negotiation with the Koreans. The process was difficult and manipulations by other powers denatured Shufeldt's actions. Shufeldt successfully signed a treaty granting extraterritoriality and the most-favoured-nation status to Americans in Korea.¹⁹⁵ Consequently, on May 22, 1882, the Shufeldt Treaty made the United States an influential power in Asia. Both Japan and China had tried for hundreds of years to gain influence over Korea. Finally, the United States opened the door of the hermit kingdom. The

¹⁹⁰ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 400.

¹⁹¹ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 92.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*: 92.

¹⁹³ Quoted in Bailey. 1969. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 482; and Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 487.

¹⁹⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 487.

¹⁹⁵ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 68-9.

Shufeldt Treaty was followed by treaties between Korea and England (1883), Germany (1883), Russia (1884), and France (1886).¹⁹⁶

In 1880, Shufeldt started by approaching Korea through Japan. However, Japan manipulated its efforts to make Korea a *de facto* Japanese protectorate.¹⁹⁷ As with most political overtures to Japan during that period, the Japanese intention was in sharp contrast with the American ones. Shufeldt turned to China to avoid the Japanese machinations only to find that China had the same objective since it considered itself the suzerain of Korea.¹⁹⁸ Both Japan's and China's attitude was explicative of the closed nature of Korea. In the end, Shufeldt used the Chinese connection with precaution and was able to sign a treaty with Korea. He cautiously avoided giving any legitimacy to China's claims. The treaty of May 22, 1882, opened the flow of trade agreements between Western states and Korea. However, the competition between China and Japan for the control of Korea would eventually escalate in the 1894-1895 war.

U.S. involvement in Korea was a sincere attempt at maintaining American armed neutrality in Asia. While the acquisition of the Philippines transformed the United States into a colonial power in Asia, American diplomacy was designed to maintain neutrality with the European powers, Japan, China, and Korea. Shufeldt's Treaty made concessions in regard to most-favoured-nation treatment which included reciprocity, the prohibition of the importation of certain goods (breadstuffs and red ginseng), and authorized arms trade.¹⁹⁹ The United States demonstrated to the Asian country an alternative to the European powers before 1898, but the tone changed after the conquest of the Philippines.

Latin America

The 1880s marked the start of the United States taking a more active role in the security and stability of South America. As an emerging power, the United States was finally in the right position to implement some of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine and to expand the protection of its sphere of influence. The protection of the merchant marine was at the origin of this extended oversight of the security in Latin America, but a vested interest in regional stability and the protection against foreign involvement increased the necessity to further American presence. Policing Latin America at the time was a great challenge. The young republics were unstable, often at war with each other, and constituted many opportunities for European powers.

The War of the Pacific (1879-1883) opposing Chile against Peru and Bolivia motivated Washington toward the improvement of its policing measures in Caribbean and Latin America. Washington declared neutrality even though it had already closer relations with Peru. However, Peru was not up to the task in this conflict even with its Bolivian ally. Washington offered to mediate the peace between the three states with the increasing pressure from Chile which threatened Lima. Under the Treaty of Ancon, Peru lost the Tarapacá Province and Chile gained

¹⁹⁶ Edward H. Zabriskie. *American-Russian rivalry in the Far East*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946): 24.

¹⁹⁷ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 481.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ "Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation." International treaty between the United States and Korea. May 22, 1882. <https://web.archive.org/web/20161226152011/https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-korea-ust000009-0470.pdf>.

the right to occupy Tacna and Arica for the following next ten years, and a twenty million dollars indemnity.²⁰⁰ Bolivia lost all of its coast and the province of Antofagasta.²⁰¹

The United States deployed diplomatic envoys intending to supplant the European powers as commercial partners of the Latin American states. The diplomatic endeavours of the United States' unqualified diplomatic corps often created more problems due to their parochial interests and lack of direction. The opposition in Washington against interventionism in Latin America would progressively disappear during the 1880s. Between 1980 and 1910, the United States intervened militarily twenty-one times in Latin American countries.²⁰²

The construction of a transoceanic isthmian canal brought additional tension with both the Latin American republics, most of all, with European powers. The Colombians had granted a concession to Lucien Napoléon Bonaparte Wyse to build a canal across Panama in 1878. Wyse had sold his concession to Ferdinand de Lesseps in 1879. Lesseps who overcame the engineering feat of a grand isthmian canal by building the Suez Canal between 1859 and 1869 posed a threat to American ambition to do so in Central America. U.S. policymakers struggled to stop and take over the project of the isthmian canal joining the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. The first attempt at building a canal by the French Canal Company in 1880 in Colombia was worrisome to Hayes's Administration and perceived as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine.

Competing forces over the dominance in Latin America did not vanish, however. Great Britain was still dominating the seas. This included its enormous merchant navy. In the mid-1880s, half of Latin America commerce was with Britain.²⁰³ In addition, The British merchant marine was four times the size of the American one and better equipped and designed.²⁰⁴ The European creditors over many Latin American republics also provided threats to the stability and security of the region.

The diplomatic intermingling of the European powers became more difficult after the 1890s and especially even more after the Spanish-American War. Roosevelt's "cowboy diplomacy" which made U.S. intervention systematic at the sign of disturbances in Latin America denied much of the opportunity to intervene to the European powers. The United States was particularly active in stopping European intervention when Latin American republics were not able to pay their creditors. The equity that had been part of the friendship agreements ratified by the United States was not a principle guiding U.S. foreign policy.

The canal policy finally reached a turning point. The 1901 Hay-Pauncefote Treaty removed the obligations of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty (1850). This allowed the development of a U.S. project unrestricted by British partnership and signalled the predominancy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere since it was now able to build a fortified and unilaterally controlled isthmian canal with the diplomatic support of Britain. Washington had already secured transit

²⁰⁰ William F. Sater. *Andean Tragedy: Fighting the War of the Pacific, 1879-1884*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007) 343-344.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis. "Instances of Use of the United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2022." (*CRS Report*. Updated March 8, 2022.) <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42738.pdf>.

²⁰³ Lars Schoultz. *Beneath the United States: A History of U.S. Policy toward Latin America*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 85.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 85

rights in Colombia (1846) and Nicaragua (1867) but did not hold the construction rights.²⁰⁵ The Nicaraguan approach was first privileged by the Walker Commission. However, the estimation of the cost of taking over de Lesseps' project in Panama ended up being lower than a new Nicaraguan project. After Washington committed to a Panama project, the greed of Colombia led Roosevelt to support a sovereign Panama Republic. Roosevelt's move established the predominance of the United States over its sphere influence to the scale of imperialism and supremacy over Latin America. The ten armed interventions in Latin America between 1900 and 1910 signalled U.S. supremacy.²⁰⁶

Peru and Chile

The war between Chile and Peru (War of the Pacific) caught the attention of American strategists and diplomats, and it led to an effort to mediate the peace between the belligerents. The conflict started in 1879 when Chile seized the Bolivian province of Antofagasta for its guano and nitrate-rich Atacama Desert region. Since Bolivia and Peru were allies, Chile asked the latter to remain neutral, which it refused. Bolivia's army was reduced to a little by November, and the Peruvian forces progressively weakened against the Chilean army.²⁰⁷ Chile's rapid advance led to the occupation of the provinces of Tarapacá, Arica and Tacna, and ultimately the takeover of the city of Lima in January 1881. The war was technically over, but the type of peace that would follow remain to be negotiated.

U.S. arms dealers appeared in the conflict and supplied the Peruvian fighters.²⁰⁸ Americans also helped the Peruvian Navy acquire new American naval technologies developed during the Civil War.²⁰⁹ During the war, Chile threatened to sink the American Pacific Squadron if Washington kept supporting Peru. The threat was credible at the time. The U.S. Pacific Squadron had aged wooden cruisers that would have been no match to Chile's British-built armoured cruisers.²¹⁰ Washington offered the warring states to mediate the dispute officially in September 1880 and would do so five more times with three different Secretaries of State trying to deal with the conflict.²¹¹

The peace process that ensued had to deal with the American perception that Great Britain was behind the success of Chile.²¹² While the Americans declared their neutrality at the beginning of the conflict, their position in the peace process was in support of Peru. However, Secretary Blaine managed the mediation process poorly. His envoy to Peru, Stephen Hurlbut spent his time negotiating a U.S. coaling station at Chimbote creating a scandal and diminishing U.S. credibility

²⁰⁵ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 512.

²⁰⁶ Cuba (1898-1902; 1906-1909); Colombia (1901, 1902); Honduras (1903, 1907); Dominican Republic (1903, 1904); Panama (1903-1914); Nicaragua (1910). See Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis. "Instances of Use of the United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2022." *CRS Report*. Updated March 8, 2022. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/natsec/R42738.pdf>.

²⁰⁷ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 91; Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 417; Sater. *Andean Tragedy*: 343.

²⁰⁸ Lawrence A. Clayton. *Peru and the United States*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999): 62.

²⁰⁹ Charles Flynt and William Grace helped Peru to get new equipment including torpedoes and mines. Confederate and Union veterans also served under the Peruvian flag during the war. See *ibid.* 63.

²¹⁰ Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 417-18; Clayton. *Peru and the United States*. 65.

²¹¹ William F. Sater. *Chile and the War of the Pacific*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986): 200; Clayton. *Peru and the United States*. 61.

²¹² Secretary of State James G. Blaine was convinced of a "British complicity" in the conflict. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 93.

as a mediator.²¹³ Hulburt's behaviour was not uncommon for any American foreign policy representative at the time. The patronage politics endemic at the time created a herd of diplomats working as financial speculators.

After the death of President Garfield, Secretary Blaine was replaced by Frederick Frelinghuysen. To re-establish U.S. neutrality in the conflict, Frelinghuysen promised to silence the opinion of the United States on how to resolve the conflict, encouraged the Chilean minister to formulate his demand with moderation, and notified both sides that the territorial losses would not be prevented by American intervention.²¹⁴ Frelinghuysen's reversal from Blaine's support to Peru helped the loss of three Peruvian provinces to Chile and created more difficulties forward with U.S.-Peru relations. Blaine's initial support to Peru created tensions in U.S.-Chile relations as well. The diplomatic endeavours of the United States in the conflict did not yield much support regionally and signalled to the rest of Latin America that U.S. intermingling would often be erratic and misguided.

A little over ten years after the mishandling of the 1879 War of the Pacific, Washington intermingled again into Chile and created another crisis. The internal turmoil that erupted in 1891 opposing the Congressionalists to the fading authority of President Balmaceda set in motion events that would once again reflect poorly on U.S. diplomatic skills. As the violence escalated into a civil war, at the request of the U.S. minister in Chile, Patrick Egan, President Benjamin Harrison dispatched U.S. war vessels including the *U.S.S. Baltimore*. A series of events led to Chile's exasperation with American interventionism.

At the beginning of the civil war, the rebel Congressionalists purchased five thousand rifles and two million rounds of ammunition in New York to be shipped to California, then be smuggled by schooner *Robert & Minnie*, and exchanged on the Chilean vessel, the *Itata* bound for Iquique.²¹⁵ However, President Balmaceda's minister in Washington, with the help of John W. Foster, a well-connected lobbyist who would eventually become secretary of state, stopped the exchange by exploiting the *Alabama* incident during the Civil War as a precedent to underline the importance of U.S. neutrality.²¹⁶ While the arms sale was technically legal, the Harrison administration ceded to the pressure deployed by Foster. Nevertheless, the *Itata* managed to get his cargo which led to its pursuit by the U.S. Navy. While the *Itata* eluded the U.S. vessels, the Congressionalists agreed to return the cargo to the U.S. authority for the sake of good relations. The *Itata* incident created doubt and skepticism toward the United States.

The Chilean skepticism progressively moved toward hostility toward the United States. The Congressionalists were disappointed once again when the U.S.-based Central and South American Telegraph Company cut their international telegraph line near Iquique.²¹⁷ The action was motivated by economic interest linked to the telegraph company's fear of losing its investment. Again, near the end of the civil war, the United States managed to jeopardize the Congressionalist war effort by revealing the Congressionalist troop movement. The U.S.S. *San Francisco* was investigating a report that "Congressionalists were landing troops about 20 miles

²¹³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 97; Sater. *Chile and the War of the Pacific*. 209.

²¹⁴ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 97.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 99; Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 415-416; Joyce S. Goldberg. *The "Baltimore" Affair*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1986): 43.

²¹⁶ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 99-100.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 100; Goldberg. *The "Baltimore" Affair*. 47-48.

north at Quinteros Bay.”²¹⁸ Admiral Brown discovered that 8,000 troops had landed and quickly returned to Valparaiso to communicate the information to Washington. However, Admiral Brown mismanaged his communication, and the information was leaked to the Balmaceda administration. Finally, after the victory of the Congressionalists, Balmaceda’s supporters were fleeing, and eighty among them found refuge in the U.S. legation. Unfortunately, one officer aboard the *Baltimore* sent information that President Balmaceda was among the refugee that left the country with the help of the U.S. Navy.²¹⁹ However, the defeated president committed suicide not long after taking refuge in the Argentinian embassy. This false information damaged further again the relationship between Chile and the United States. The misplaced preference toward Balmaceda’s presidency was due to the belief that Congressionalists were aligned with the British. This belief created enduring tension and mistrust between Chile and the United States after the Chilean civil war.

The situation became even worse when the Chilean government had to deal with the unfortunate killing of two men from the USS *Baltimore*. During a shore leave in Valparaiso on October 16, 1891, the crew of the *Baltimore* clashed with Chilean citizens. While the motives of the clash remain unclear, the reaction of the authorities on both sides epitomized the tension that had been building up since the War of the Pacific. President Harrison asked for formal apologies and compensation from the Chilean government for *Baltimore*’s men killings. As the issue lingered, President Harrison threatened Chile with punitive measures during his annual message in December.²²⁰ The diplomatic joust that ensued led to a formal apology by Chile and permission to let the Supreme Court arbitrate the issue of reparation.²²¹ The 75,000 dollars distributed to the sailors’ families ended the crisis and shifted the foreign policy toward Latin America toward assertiveness.²²² The United States had gained the confidence to impose its hegemonic vision toward Latin America and enforce the Monroe Doctrine and bent the ability of European powers to efficiently manipulate Western Hemisphere politics.

Venezuela

As the confidence of the United States regarding the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine increased, those capabilities were put to the test inadvertently twice in Venezuela. Venezuela became the epicentre of the relationship between Europe and the United States twice: first, in 1894-1895 with the British blockade and occupation of the Corinto Port; and second, in 1902, the combined British, German and Italian blockade that escalated into German bombardments. In combination with the Spanish-American War, the Venezuelan crises established the narrative of the Roosevelt Corollary in 1904 and the dominance of the United States over the whole continent.

Three main constant features of Venezuelan foreign policy have been dominant between the mid-1870s and 1890s. First, the United States became Venezuela’s first cry for help at the sight of trouble but Washington would not answer those calls. Every administration from Hayes to Harrison received demands of support from the Venezuelan authority.²²³ Most were bluntly ignored; some were received with concerns and minimal diplomatic pressures; finally, one call for

²¹⁸ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 101.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 103; Goldberg. *The “Baltimore” Affair*. 82-83.

²²¹ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 104-5.

²²² Bailey. 1969. *Diplomatic History of the American*: 416

²²³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 111.

help received the full attention of the United States in 1895 when the British aggression on Venezuela became a trial on the Monroe Doctrine.

Second, debt disputes became a recurrent source of conflict for Venezuela. Most European powers had trouble getting reimbursement on their loan. President Guzman Blanco secured loans from most European powers, but mostly to his benefit. It did not take long before Venezuela had to deal with disgruntled European powers due to payment defaults by Venezuela.

Venezuela, unable to pay back its debt to its European creditors received a series of ultimatums. The British ultimatums were the most threatening at first and created a crisis of sufficient magnitude to create a breach in the American tendency to avoid involvement in world politics. The issue with Britain started with the border dispute with Guyana in which Britain made a unilateral claim to all the disputed territory. While the United States had been supportive of the Venezuelans on the diplomatic front and warned the European powers against violating the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. government was reluctant to display its military forces to deter or engage the European powers. The Venezuelan crisis generated a change of attitude toward the latter lack of willingness to coerce the European power out of American affairs.

Third, the frontier between Venezuela and British Guyana was under dispute up until that point. The Venezuelan instability made it difficult to negotiate an agreement before 1876 due to the absence of a reliable interlocutor. In 1884, Caracas started by accepting the 1844 offer of Lord Aberdeen that left Venezuela in control of the Orinoco River.²²⁴ The discovery of gold in the region triggered hesitation from the British. London tried to extend its claim westward to secure as much as possible of the gold available. The British Guyana claim expanded by 40% between 1885 and 1886.²²⁵ The tension grew between the two states to the point where it caught President Cleveland's attention.

In 1894, Venezuela asked for diplomatic and military support from the United States under the Monroe Doctrine once more. Groover Cleveland's attitude was unfavourable to any real involvement at first.²²⁶ The British presented an ultimatum to the Venezuelans and quickly took coercive measures to obtain retribution. As a response, Cleveland proposed to arbitrate a resolution to the debt crisis at first since he defended that the Monroe Doctrine was designed to prevent additional colonies in the Western Hemisphere and not to stop the conflict.²²⁷ That signalled to the rest of the Americas that the United States would not play the role of security provider against foreign aggression for the rest of the continent even though it was its regional power. With the rapid escalation of the situation, the Cleveland administration had to rethink its position and harden its diplomatic stance toward the British. That response was formulated by Secretary Richard Olney who argued that the Monroe Doctrine "extended to such matters as the boundary dispute and

²²⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 416.

²²⁵ From the British official yearbook, *The Colonial Office List*. See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 416.

²²⁶ The Cleveland administration was vulnerable. The economy was contracting, and the president had lost the public approval due to mishandling of the national debt.

²²⁷ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 146. Secretary Olney was adamant that a U.S. arbitration was required under the Monroe Doctrine since "To-day the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition. Why? It is not ... because wisdom and justice and equity are the invariable characteristics of the dealings of the United States. It is because, in addition to all other grounds, its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers." Quoted in Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 441.

demanded that London agree to arbitration.”²²⁸ Since Lord Salisbury denied the legality of the Monroe Doctrine regarding the issue of the Venezuelan border, first Cleveland and then Olney escalated the tone and became more hostile toward London.

Great Britain’s official line regarding the Venezuelan border crisis of 1895-96 was that the Monroe Doctrine bore no influence in settling the boundary issue and that arbitration was not required.²²⁹ The rejection of the U.S. arbitration by Salisbury set a new tone to the crisis. He denied that:

The disputed frontier of Venezuela has nothing to do with any of the questions dealt with by President Monroe. It is not a question of the colonization by a European Power of any portion of America. It is not a question of the imposition upon the communities of South America of any system of government devised in Europe.²³⁰

Salisbury’s response infuriated Cleveland. Cleveland responded with a demand to Congress to pass an appropriation for the expenses of an investigating commission that concluded that the United States “must resist by every means in its power.”²³¹ Since the War of 1812, the United States had not come that close to an armed conflict with the British, not even during the Civil War. During the crisis, Cleveland’s Secretary of State, Richard Olney, made no veiled threat to the British when he declared that if Britain did not consent to rapid “impartial arbitration” the issue would be resolved “by another branch of the Government.”²³² The subsequent acceptance of American arbitration by the British was a major victory.

The crisis was also unequivocal regarding Venezuela as part of the sphere of influence of the United States since Secretary Olney treated the crisis as a dispute between the United States and Britain and never consulted the Venezuelan government or even notified it of the American intentions.²³³ The Olney Doctrine assessed two fundamental principles of American foreign policy: “the right of the United States to exclude extrahemispheric powers and the right to hemispheric hegemony.”²³⁴ Salisbury’s response to Olney’s note set the tone for a diplomatic joust that would determine whether or not the Monroe Doctrine could apply beyond the frontiers of the U.S. territory and encompass the entire Western Hemisphere as many U.S. policymakers thought.

The Venezuela Boundary Commission of 1896-7 and the Olney-Pauncefote Treaty of 1897 concluded the first wave of tension between Great Britain, Venezuela, and the United States. However, Venezuela was left at the door of the negotiation table. The arbitration process was designed to favour the British and was of symbolic importance to the United States but did not signal the United States as the champion of the republics of Latin America. The arbitration process put in place signals the new role of the United States as sovereign in the continent.

Venezuela was not over with its financial trouble. Due to a new crisis rising, President Roosevelt put the European powers to the test regarding their attitudes toward the Western

²²⁸ Perkins. *The Great Rapprochement*: 15.

²²⁹ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 102.

²³⁰ *Foreign Relations, 1895*. I, 564-565 (Salisbury to Pauncefote. Nov. 26, 1895) quoted in Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 442.

²³¹ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 443

²³² Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 164.

²³³ *Ibid.* 165.

²³⁴ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 115.

Hemisphere. In 1901, Roosevelt declared that “the United States will not object to European uses of force in the western hemisphere, provided European powers do not acquire territory.”²³⁵ Venezuela had been so irresponsible with its creditors and bondholders, that Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Mexico, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Norway and the United States had all claims against the Venezuelan government.²³⁶ In December 1902, in light of Roosevelt’s declaration, Great Britain and Germany seized the opportunity and blockaded Venezuelan ports as the debt crisis was still ongoing. Eight British and four German ships contained the Venezuelan navy and forced a blockade.²³⁷

Following the blockade, Roosevelt warned the European powers about the maintenance of Venezuela’s territorial integrity.²³⁸ With the crisis in a deadlock situation and increasing signs of potential escalation, both Britain and Germany realized their relative preference toward their relations over Washington rather than their claims over Venezuela.²³⁹ Berlin and London urged Roosevelt to arbitrate the crisis. Roosevelt refused to arbitrate but convened all the parties to the conflict to meet in Washington in December 1902 for a conference to settle.²⁴⁰ Most of the contentions were resolved, *Protocols of Agreement* were signed, and the unresolved details of the preferential claims were referred to the Court of Arbitration at the Hague putting an end to the blockade.²⁴¹ The Court of Arbitration established that the European powers were within their rights to obtain reparation by force in this case. The sanctioning of foreign intervention to obtain debt payment became a security risk with so many American states crippled by debts. This created an increase in European naval presence in the Caribbean. This worried President Roosevelt and triggered the formulation of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. With sufficient naval capabilities, the Roosevelt Corollary established a credible threat to the European powers. The crisis also triggered additional naval appropriation by Congress to reinforce the credibility of the anti-access and area denial capabilities of the United States.²⁴²

Cuba

The interest of the United States in the control of Cuba has been enduring throughout the nineteenth century. Repeated attempts to purchase, annex and dislodge the Spanish diplomatically felt short and partly legitimized the insurrection effort on the island. Presidents Polk, Pierce and Grant explored the possibility to purchase the island. The unsuccessful attempts at annexation made independence an interesting alternative to the U.S. policymakers, especially in light of a declining Spanish power. The inability to sustain properly the insurrection of 1868-1878 or to foster a diplomatic solution was the result of an inward-looking United States foreign policy uninterested in sustained international ventures. The Cuban insurgency re-emerged between 1895 and 1898 and created a climate of violence which in return generated increasing pressure on the

²³⁵ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 147; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 523.

²³⁶ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 522.

²³⁷ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 167.

²³⁸ Hendrix. *Theodore Roosevelt’s Naval Diplomacy*: 47.

²³⁹ Miriam Hood. *Gunboat Diplomacy, 1895-1905: Great Power Pressure in Venezuela*. (South Brunswick: A. S. Barnes, 1977): 186-187.

²⁴⁰ Matthias Maass. “Catalyst for the Roosevelt Corollary: Arbitrating the 1902-1903 Venezuela Crisis and its impact on the Development of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.” *Diplomacy & Statecraft* Vol 20, no. 3 (2009): 388.

²⁴¹ Maass. “Catalyst for the Roosevelt Corollary” 388-391.

²⁴² Congress appropriated the funds to build five additional battleships. Hendrix. *Theodore Roosevelt’s Naval Diplomacy*: 141.

United States to get involved, stabilize the situation, and, by the same token, remove one more European colony in the Western Hemisphere.²⁴³

Already in 1896, President Cleveland warned Europe that “Whatever circumstances may arise, our policy and our interests would constrain us to object to the acquisition of the island or an interference with its control by any other power.”²⁴⁴ The diplomatic maturity of Cleveland led him to also deny the recognition of the Cuban belligerency on the basis that it would lead the United States to declare strict neutrality in the conflict and that the United States was passed the stage of inaction in their sphere of influence.²⁴⁵ Cleveland progressively reinforced the Monroe Doctrine shifting from a defensive brinkmanship strategy to an anti-access and area denial one.

In 1898, the Spanish authority over Cuba was facing a full fledged insurrection.²⁴⁶ The coercive counterinsurgency measures of that era tended to either crushed violently the insurrection or make it way worst. In the case of Cuba, the latter occurred. No attention was given to the Cuban grievances. The Spanish armed forces elected to displace the rural population into urban camps.²⁴⁷ General Valeriano Weyler began the Reconcentration policy in 1896.²⁴⁸ This led to the systematic burning of crops to cause despair in pro-rebel areas which only fueled the conflict.

At first, both Cleveland and McKinley declared the United States neutral in the Cuban conflict to protect economic and financial interests.²⁴⁹ None of them were willing to rush into an armed conflict with Spain. The Spanish forces in the Caribbean were important consisting of 150000 regulars and 80 000 Cuban loyalists.²⁵⁰ A significant number of those troops were disabled by tropical diseases, especially yellow fever. It was estimated that between 25 to 30 percent of Spanish soldiers were incapacitated in Cuban hospitals.²⁵¹ However, the deteriorating conditions in Cuba led the United States to increase its involvement. The decision to enter the war with Spain was a choice not motivated by the threat to primary interest and set an American way of entering a war that would endure. Doubt about the ability of the Spanish to deal with the insurrection was explicitly expressed by key U.S. officials including President McKinley, Secretary of State Olney and his predecessor Secretary of State Sherman, and U.S. Minister to Spain Taylor.²⁵² In addition, a war frenzy emerged. Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge advocated for a more

²⁴³ A succession of smaller insurrections destabilized Cuba including: the 1870-80 “Little War,” the Manzanillo Rebellion in 1883, the 1885 Holguin revolt, the 1892 Guantanamo uprising, the April 1893 revolt, and the Kas Vullas uprising the same year. See, Louis A Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998): Chap. 1, Scribd. However, the insurrection that started in 1895 had the right momentum to destabilize truly the Spanish authority and threaten its control over the island.

²⁴⁴ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 77.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ Rebellions against the Spanish in Cuba were recurrent and cyclical. The rebels managed to purchase and operate the U.S. steamship, the *Virginus*, from 1871 to 1873 with the collaboration of its U.S. crew. The vessel brought contraband to the rebels until it was finally caught by the Spanish who summarily executed the crew and rebels aboard. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*. 125-126.

²⁴⁷ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 187.

²⁴⁸ David Healy. *The United States in Cuba, 1898-1902: Generals, Politicians, and the Search for Policy*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963): 9.

²⁴⁹ Graham A. Cosmas. *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War*. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1971): 69.

²⁵⁰ Cosmas. *An Army for Empire*: 76.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* 76.

²⁵² Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898*: Chap. 1, Scribd.

aggressive foreign policy and wanted to wage war with Spain. The Spanish American War was a “war of choice” that was motivated by a variety of motives not underlining the direct threat to U.S. vital interests.²⁵³

Roosevelt prepared the strategy to fight Spain for President McKinley before leaving his office. Roosevelt’s naval approach to the conflict was inspired by Mahan. The army’s strategy was limited by its resources. The U.S. Army began its assault with a quarter of the Spanish forces. Fortunately for the Americans, General Arsenio Linares dispersed his forces throughout the island rather than concentrating them at strategic points. From the 36,000 men under his command in the western part of the island, only 12,000 defended Santiago.²⁵⁴ The Spanish were also better equipped than their American counterpart. The U.S. army carried breech-loading .45-caliber Springfields still using charcoal black powder against the Spanish armed with longer-range and smokeless clip-fed, bolt-action Mauser rifles.

The emergence of reports regarding the systematic extermination of suspected rebels in Spanish concentration camps increased the pressure on the U.S. government to intervene.²⁵⁵ After the riots of January 1898, President McKinley dispatched the *USS Maine* to assist if the U.S. citizens in Cuba needed evacuation.²⁵⁶ The Sinking of the *USS Maine* on February 15, 1898, sent to Cuba to evacuate U.S. citizens triggered further involvement of the United States. The explosion was quickly presented as an assault on American forces even though the sinking was accidental and not designed by enemy forces. Journalists at the time of the events and historians perpetuated this perception and contributed to making the explosion of the *Maine* the triggering event that precipitated the war.²⁵⁷ However, it remained a war of choice. The Spanish refusal of an American-led arbitration motivated the escalation of the conflict, but, ultimately, the public opinion created and bolstered the American belligerency. The explosion of the *Maine* provided the necessary legitimacy to ease the intervention. Low audience cost is certainly a good incentive to declare war, but other factors intervened to let the war take its course. The explosion of the *Maine* became central to Spanish-American War due to the search for a triggering event for a declaration of war but remains only a pivotal event and not a necessary nor sufficient one to explain the declaration of war.

The *Maine* opened the door to all the jingoists and the yellow journalists to push the country to the edge of war showing that the greatest threat to American diplomacy can be internal. The same proponent of misinformation and American superiority would attempt to erase the role of the Cuban insurgents in the victory against Spain and seal the faith of the transition of Cuba under the deep influence of the United States up until the Cuban Revolution.

Most of all, the *Maine* incident put the President on a war path. On April 11, 1898, McKinley declared “the present condition of affairs in Cuba is a constant menace to our peace [...] in the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in behalf of endangered American interests

²⁵³ Evan Thomas. *The War Lovers: Roosevelt, Lodge, Hearst, and the Rush to Empire, 1898*. (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2010): 12. Scholars have advanced a variety of motives for declaring war on Spain at that time including “a blow for empire; as an act of economic aggression; as a bid for post-Civil War reconciliation; as the expression of gender insecurity; and as a kind of national psychic outburst.” See Thomas. *The War Lovers*, 13.

²⁵⁴ Jamieson. *Crossing the Deadly Ground*: 132.

²⁵⁵ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 183.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 189.

²⁵⁷ Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898*: Chap. 3, Scribd.

which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop.”²⁵⁸ After eight days of debate, Congress authorized McKinley to engage the Spanish. McKinley requested an additional 50 million dollars in military spending following the *Maine* incident. Congress authorized the intervention on April 19 which led McKinley to order a squadron to blockade Havana and other ports on the northwestern side of the island on April 21.²⁵⁹ The War Department evaluated that the 28000 army forces would require an additional 50000 to conduct the war.²⁶⁰ 200000 men answered the call. The Splendid Little War, as coined by Secretary of State John Hay, set a new era of American foreign policy.

The war was short-lived. From the assault on Manila against the Spanish Navy on May 1st, 1898, to the nearly disastrous landing of U.S. armed forces on the Cuban coasts at Daiquiri six weeks later, the U.S. victory was swift but lack of professionalism.²⁶¹ The U.S. forces were ill-prepared, unused to this type of campaign, riddled with incompetence, and suffered from tropical hardship. However, the Spanish forces were even more disorganized, exhausted by years of insurrection and badly supplied. The participation of the Cuban insurgents was badly depicted and poorly considered by the Americans and is too often nearly ignored by the historiography.²⁶² However, the Cuban insurgents had already undermined the Spanish army, and led successful campaigns of sabotage and destruction of infrastructure to cripple the army, and this all across the island.²⁶³ After the surrender of Santiago de Cuba on July 16th, it took only ten days for the U.S. forces to land on Puerto Rico and took over the island by the beginning of August. The armistice was announced on August 12th, 1898.

Signed in Washington, the armistice excluded the Cubans as did the Venezuelan negotiation a few years before. Spain relinquished its sovereignty over Cuba, but without letting it explicitly to the Cuban themselves. Spain ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the Americans and agreed to the U.S. occupation of Manila until the peace conference in Paris. The peace treaty formalized the U.S. dominion over Puerto Rico and Guam (Art. II); left the fate of Cuba in the hands of the United States (Art. I); transferred the sovereignty of the Philippines to the United

²⁵⁸ *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, James D. Richardson, ed., 11 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1907) vol 10: 56-67

²⁵⁹ Cosmas. *An Army for Empire*: 98. “Congress passed a joint resolution which declared: (1) Cuba to be independent, (2) demanded that Spain withdraw from the island, (3) directed and empowered the President to use the entire forces of the army and navy, and the militia of the several states, to put the resolutions into effect, (4) disclaimed any ‘disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island.’” See Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*: 449.

²⁶⁰ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 189.

²⁶¹ The landing at Daiquiri could have been easily repelled, if the Spanish forces had contested the landing with a minimum of preparation. A simple line of interior defence on the ridge behind Daiquiri could have easily stopped the American landing rather than leaving the forces dispersed throughout the island at “a large number of small posts” as an “army of occupation.” See John Scott Reed, “San Juan Hill, Cuba, Battle (1898),” In *The War of 1898*. Edited by Benjamin R. Beede. New York: Garland Publishing, 1994): 489; David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898–1917*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988): 45; David F. Trask. *The War with Spain in 1898*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing. 1981): 208 In place, the Navy provided gunfire support that scattered the small number of defenders, and the American troops were welcomed by 1,500 Cuban insurgents to provide them safe landing. See David Healy, *Drive to Hegemony: The United States in the Caribbean, 1898-1917* (Madison. 1988): 45; and Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 295.

²⁶² Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898*: Chap. 4, Scribd.

²⁶³ *Ibid*.

States in exchange for 20 million dollars (Art. III).²⁶⁴ The United States had committed to the independence of Cuba with the Teller Amendment at the beginning of the Spanish-American War. Annexionists regretted that commitment at the end of the war. The reconstruction was supervised by the American Army during the occupation between 1898 and 1902. The reconstruction period served to establish Cuba as a quasi-protectorate of the United States. While acknowledging the independence of Cuba, Washington had a clear strategic interest in the island.

As a response to the hesitancy of the Americans regarding the ability of the Cuban to self-govern and as a way to protect Washington's interest, Congress approved the Platt Amendment that provided clear mechanisms to intervene in the internal affairs of Cuba. The Platt Amendment integrated into the Army Appropriation Act of 1901 brought Cuba into the United States' sphere of influence as a vassal state. The Amendment stipulated that Cuba could not enter into a treaty with any foreign power (Art. I); allowed the United States to intervene at any time it judges Cuba's independence to be threatened (Art. III); and guaranteed the United States the right to purchase or lease two naval stations (Art. VII).²⁶⁵ From that point, the United States had *carte blanche* to intervene in Cuba's affairs and control the island's foreign policy. Twice, the United States decided to act and deployed forces on the island.

The strategic interest of Cuba was also important in link with the construction of the isthmian canal in Central America. Any foreign occupation of Cuba would provide the means to threaten the peaceful transit through the isthmian canal. Therefore, Cuba became the key to the eastern approach to a Central American inter-oceanic canal for many policymakers including Secretary Elihu Root, President Theodore Roosevelt, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, and Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan.²⁶⁶ To secure that approach, they included in the Platt Amendment a formal engagement that Cuba would "sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specific points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States."²⁶⁷ At first, the United States planned to have four military bases on the island; however, Guantanamo Bay and Bahia Honda were at first the two American bases, and the Navy gave up Bahia Honda in 1912 for more land in Guantanamo Bay.²⁶⁸

Cuba's independence brought the island within the United States sphere of influence. The Platt Amendment legitimated intervention in Cuba. Washington invoked the amendment as soon as instability rose. In September 1906, Theodore Roosevelt sent 5000 troops to occupy the Island

²⁶⁴ Treaty of Peace Between the United States and Spain; December 10, 1898. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/sp1898.asp.

²⁶⁵ Transcript of Platt Amendment (1903). March 2, 1901. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=55&page=transcript>.; ²⁶⁵ Millett, Allan Reed. *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1968): 40. After the inception of the Platt Amendment, many American policymakers were surprised to the lack of recognition and friendship from the Cubans, including Congressman Townsend Scudder, Senator Orville Platt, and Secretary of War Elihu Root. Their inability to understand the despair of the Cuban that resulted from the constraint on their autonomy after years of struggle against the Spanish underlines furthermore the chauvinism of American foreign policy during that period. See Louis A. Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998): Chap. 5, Scribd; Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 504-505.

²⁶⁶ Pérez Jr. *The War of 1898*: Chap. 2, Scribd.

²⁶⁷ Transcript of Platt Amendment (1903). March 2, 1901. <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=55&page=transcript>.

²⁶⁸ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 149.

to end the ongoing insurrection.²⁶⁹ The occupation lasted three years. Roosevelt's interference in Cuba brought the realization that the United States' ability to control its sphere of influence will generate opportunities for "exploitation and antagonism."²⁷⁰ The Platt Amendment formalized the dominance of the United States over Cuba. Cuba's pseudo-independence became conditional on the acceptance of the Platt Amendment by the Cuban assembly. After three votes, the assembly finally accepted the Platt Amendment.²⁷¹ The newly formed republic would begin under the careful supervision and influence of the United States.

Puerto Rico

The inhabitants of Puerto Rico did not display much resistance against the Spanish rule as in Cuba or even the Philippines and was granted home rule in 1897.²⁷² However, as the last remnant of the Spanish rule in the Caribbeans after the conquest of Cuba, it was logical for Washington to dislodge the Spanish forces encamped in Puerto Rico to win the war against Spain. Some strategists, including General Schofield, Cpt. Mahan, and General Miles, thought that Puerto Rico should have been assaulted first to make sure the Spanish could not use it as a base of operations for the larger campaign in Cuba.²⁷³ However, McKinley decided to concentrate first on the assault at Santiago de Cuba to destroy Cervera's squadron. Fortunately, the bulk of the Spanish naval forces were sunk during the blockade and assault of Santiago. Miles finally got the authorization to conduct his operations in Puerto Rico by mid-July. With a rapid conquest, the administration of Puerto Rico was quickly transferred to civilian authority. The situation in Puerto Rico became stable soon after the conquest and remained so. The protocol of August 12 ended formally the hostilities, the Treaty of Paris confirmed Puerto Rico as a possession of the United States, and the Foraker Act of April 12, 1900, normalized the relationship between Washington and Puerto Rico. The Puerto Ricans became officially American citizens in 1917 as a self-governing commonwealth of the United States.²⁷⁴

Danish West Indies and St. Bartholomew

Since the previously failed attempts by Seward and Grant to acquire the islands, the interest of other European powers became an increasing threat to Washington. Germany had been particularly interested in purchasing the Danish West Indies. In 1898, the expansionists were able to set a climate favourable to the purchase of the islands. However, it became a race between the United States and Germany.

Admiral von Tripitz displayed interest in purchasing both the Danish West Indies and the Galapagos Islands to secure a German naval base on both sides of a potential transisthmian canal.²⁷⁵ The rumours of those efforts were enough to convince Washington to attempt to resolve the matter. On January 24, 1902, the Danish-American Treaty was supposed to make official the purchase of the islands for 5 million dollars. While Senate ratified the treaty, the Danish Parliament

²⁶⁹ Millett. *The Politics of Intervention*: v. President Tomas Estrada Palma asked formally President Roosevelt to send two vessels since the government forces were unable to deal with the insurrection from the Liberal opposition. At first, Roosevelt did not want to intervene, but Estrada Palma forced his hand by threatening to resign his office and leave the country in state of anarchy. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 198-9.

²⁷⁰ Millett. *The Politics of Intervention*: 251.

²⁷¹ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 151.

²⁷² Trask. *The War with Spain in 1898*. 337.

²⁷³ *Ibid.* 339-340.

²⁷⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 508; Trask. *The War with Spain in 1898*.

²⁷⁵ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 521.

rejected the agreement by one vote.²⁷⁶ The purchase was delayed by fifteen years and the price inflated by then to 25 million dollars.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua had been the preferred area to build an isthmian canal. However, the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty restrained the United States from developing its own project unilaterally. The British had to be included in any endeavour. British involvement in the Mosquitos, though embedded in the Treaty of Managua, was progressively displaced by Nicaragua's endeavours to assert its sovereignty over the entire territory of Nicaragua, including the Mosquito region.²⁷⁷ Washington had to convince London to abrogate the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty to achieve its objective.

President Garfield and his Secretary of State Blaine tried unsuccessfully to abrogate the 1850 Clayton-Bulwer Treaty to avoid the obligation to share the control of an isthmian canal with the British. Secretary of State Frelinghuysen continued Blaine's efforts after the death of Garfield. After failing to negotiate with the British, he turned to the Nicaraguan. His proposition violated all the principles of the Monroe Doctrine. In order to obtain an exclusive concession from Nicaragua, Frelinghuysen offered a permanent U.S.-Nicaraguan defence alliance. The alliance was signed on December 1, 1884, after the Arthur administration was voted out of the White House. However, the Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty was never ratified by the Senate, Cleveland withdrew from the treaty, and it never came into effect.²⁷⁸ The decision by a lame-duck administration to engage in a formal alliance could have created a precedent that would have led to further formal engagement with Latin America. While the alliance meant that Nicaragua agreed to become a quasi-protectorate of the United States and ensured unilateral control over an interoceanic canal, it created an obligation to the United States that would force them to come to the defence of Nicaragua.

The agreement negotiated under the Arthur administration with Nicaragua to build a canal across the flat land and lakes of the narrower portion of the country was promising to both states. The railroad that allowed to bring many Americans on the journey on the West Coast had lost most of its appeal with the railroads that allowed the journey directly through the United States. However, freight on trains was less efficient and cost more than on ships. The transcontinental railroad had limited value for international trade. The possibility of cheaper transit between the Atlantic and the Pacific was an issue that would bring the interest of all world powers and give the Monroe Doctrine relevance for the next three decades before an isthmian canal became finally a reality. If a Senate favorable to Arthur's position had been elected for a second term the interest toward an isthmian canal in Nicaragua might have prevailed over the competing option in Panama.

Cleveland's administration did not follow through with Arthur and Frelinghuysen's proposal. Cleveland's isolationism and anti-imperialism refrained him to break the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and create a crisis with Great Britain. Cleveland did not adhere to the Grant-Hayes policy of unilateral control of a transoceanic canal. He let the French project run its course and did not move to build an American-controlled canal.

²⁷⁶ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 521.

²⁷⁷ Mary W. Williams. *Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy: 1815-1915*. (New York: Russell & Russell. 1965): Chapter 9.

²⁷⁸ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 157.

To compete with the French canal in Panama, a conglomerate of investors led by Admiral Daniel Ammen formed the Provisional Interoceanic Canal Society to obtain a concession from Nicaragua. Later rebranded the Maritime Canal Company of Nicaragua, the company planned to “build a twelve-lock, fifty-mile canal across southern Nicaragua using Lake Nicaragua and part of the San Juan River.”²⁷⁹ However, the U.S. economy contracted and left the Nicaragua concession penniless. The concession was bankrupt in 1884, was brought back in 1889, and again in 1893. Many endeavours to build the canal in Nicaragua were championed by Senator John Tyler Morgan. He sought governmental guarantees for the bonds of the Maritime Canal Company, led the initiative to and chaired the 1895 Senate Select Committee on Construction of the Nicaragua Canal and the 1899 Senate Committee on an Interoceanic Canal.²⁸⁰ Though his campaign for a Canal in Nicaragua was unsuccessful, he fostered American expertise and mobilized financial interest toward the construction of a transoceanic isthmian canal.²⁸¹

Secretary of State John M. Hay had the opportunity to engage the British successfully after the Venezuelan crisis and the Anglo-Japanese alliance to negotiate the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. Hay knew that he had the possibility to form an alliance with Britain, but that Congress would oppose any such possibility.²⁸² To maximize the British overture, Hay tackled the possibility of negotiating a new treaty with Britain to abrogate the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. The first Hay-Pauncefote treaty signed on February 5, 1900, but never ratified, freed the United States from its obligation to include the British in the construction of a canal in Central America.²⁸³ The United States had finally obtained free reign over the construction of a canal with the only constraints of not fortifying it, or blockading it, and keeping it open in times of peace and war under the neutralization rules.²⁸⁴ Because of the refusal of the Senate to ratify the first treaty, Hay resigned. The second Hay-Pauncefote Treaty was signed on November 18, 1901, and, this time, ratified on February 21, 1902. The treaty included the demand of the Senate to the effect that the treaty had to “supersede the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.”²⁸⁵ In addition, the prohibition of fortification was excluded from the treaty.²⁸⁶ Washington only needed to decide where and when it would construct its canal.

Colombia

With Colombia torn by a revolution in 1885, Secretary of the Navy William C. Whitney sent an amphibious expedition, the largest since the Mexican War.²⁸⁷ President Cleveland advocated for isolation and did not want the United States involved in foreign interventions. However, rebels in Colon burned the U.S. consulate and destroyed American property and captured the steam tug *Gamecock* triggering a cascade of events leading to the direct involvement of the United States in the conflict.²⁸⁸ Throughout April 1885, U.S. troops participated in the

²⁷⁹ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 155.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: 159.

²⁸¹ Joseph A. Fry. “John Tyler Morgan’s Southern Expansionism.” *Diplomatic History* 9, no. 4 (Fall 1985): 329-346.

²⁸² Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 509.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 510.

²⁸⁶ “Hay-Pauncefote Treaty” in *Diplomatic History of the Panama Canal*. (Government Printing Office: Washington. 1914): 292-294.

<https://archive.org/details/diplomaticistor15unit/page/n7/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>.

²⁸⁷ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 160-1

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 161-170.

restoration of order in the Colombian province of Panama. This intervention made Secretary Whitney realize the requirements and risks of retaining a permanent force near the isthmus that would lead inevitably to a “virtual protectorate over a noncontiguous area.”²⁸⁹ The degree of U.S. influence and control exercised in Panama and Nicaragua would be a problem until President Roosevelt decided to side with the Panama route.

Ferdinand de Lesseps’ canal was already in financial problems. The canal in Panama was a gamble for any developer. The interest of foreign powers in an isthmian canal troubled the sleep of many American decision-makers which created much geopolitical uncertainty in the region and could eventually lead to an encroachment between the United States and the European. However, the benefits of a canal outweigh the political costs to many. It was the least of the problems that building an isthmian canal would face. Lesseps’ canal already drained 260 million dollars to build forty percent of it before he declared bankruptcy.²⁹⁰ As long as it remained a privately funded project, the United States saw from a doubtful eye the endeavours, but when discussion of the French government retaking Lesseps’ bankrupt project, it became a dire threat to the Monroe Doctrine.

President Harrison gave a fair warning against European intervention in American affairs and more specifically to the control of trade to the isthmian canal to the French and all other European powers.²⁹¹ The warning was taken seriously, but the Panic of 1893 remove the certainty that the canal would be financed principally by private funds. Therefore, the building of the canal would require public funds. The risk that a European power seized the opportunity to finance a canal and gain control of it was too great for the United States. The pressure to build a canal was becoming too great and the United States needed to step in.

Senator John Tyler Morgan worked tirelessly to make sure that Nicaragua would be the first choice for a canal and for a while he secured a majority in the Senate to this effect. A series of studies and commissions suggested so until the second Walker Commission recommended Panama as the best route.²⁹² In 1896, Lesseps’ failed company was offered to the United States. Even though Nicaragua was closer, had a better climate, and had a route easier to build, Panama would be the route Washington elected after all. With the support of President Roosevelt and Congress, negotiations with Colombia began.

The purchase of the Wyse Concession did not offer a guarantee that Washington would have control over the canal. Secretary of State John Hay and Colombia’s minister to the United States, Tomas Herran, negotiated an agreement in January 1903 to allow the United States to build and operate the Panama Canal. However, Colombia was at the tail end of a brutish civil war, and political and economic disagreement left the Hay-Herran Treaty on uncertain ground.²⁹³ The treaty authorized the New Panama Canal Company to sell and transfer the Wyse Concession and its properties to the United States in exchange for ten million dollars and an annual payment of 250,000 dollars; guaranteed a renewable hundred-year exclusive control and authority over the

²⁸⁹ Hagan. *American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy*: 186

²⁹⁰ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 157.

²⁹¹ Inaugural Address of Benjamin Harrison. March 4, 1889. https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/harris.asp.

²⁹² All of Morgan efforts including the 1895 Senate Select Committee on Construction of the Nicaragua Canal and the 1899 Senate Committee on an Interoceanic Canal, the United States-Nicaraguan Canal Board (the Ludlow Commission) and the First Walker Commission. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 159.

²⁹³ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 164.

canal; and exclude the possibility of a lease to any other government.²⁹⁴ The amount offered by the Americans was disappointing for many Colombian decision-makers and generated resistance to the Hay-Herran Treaty.

Roosevelt sought to secure the rights for the construction of an isthmian canal in Central America. The route through the Colombian province of Panama became the best option financially since well underway and at a small cost considering the deal struck in the Hay-Herran Treaty. Unfortunately, the Colombian legislature rejected the treaty. Roosevelt did not want to leave the Panama Canal available to any European powers, he switched to a more aggressive posture toward Colombia. While an armed intervention was considered by some, Roosevelt chose to support the Panamanian movement for independence which ultimately removed the Colombians from the negotiation process.²⁹⁵

Panama

With the help of the United States, Panama acquired its independence from Colombia on November 4, 1903, but with strings attached. The United States provided support and recognition to the independence movement. A quasi-colonial relationship was sealed in Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. The United States received “in perpetuity, occupation and control of a zone of land and land under water for the construction, maintenance, operation, sanitation and protection of said Canal of the width of ten miles.”²⁹⁶ The United States had finally secured everything to build and control a transoceanic isthmian canal.

The Senate was appalled by Roosevelt’s tactics. The blatant violation of Colombia’s sovereignty infuriated some senators.²⁹⁷ President Roosevelt denied American involvement in the Panamanian revolution pure and simple. He declared in front of the Congress:

No one connected with this Government had any part in preparing, inciting’ or encouraging the late revolution on the Isthmus of Panama, and that save from the reports of our military and naval officers, given above, no one connected with this Government had any previous knowledge of the revolution except such as was and kept up a current acquaintance with public affairs.²⁹⁸

Though untruthful, his declaration sought to remove the United States’ role in Panama’s independence. After all, the United States did not create the independence movement. Manuel Amador and his rebels were part of a movement that had claimed independence for decades. If security was to be expected for the canal, Colombia had demonstrated its inability to maintain it. A new independent government tacitly supported by the United States would have the means and institutions to provide security from coast to coast for the canal. Roosevelt ultimately convinced the Senate, but the problems with the canal were far from over.

²⁹⁴ *Diplomatic History of the Panama Canal*. (Government Printing Office: Washington. 1914): 272-288. <https://archive.org/details/diplomaticistor15unit/page/n7/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>; Turk. “Defending the Empire, 1900-1914.” 191.

²⁹⁵ Senator Hanna was in favor of a quick armed intervention, but Senator Morgan and the Spooner Act would prohibit an armed intervention to take over Panama. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 165.

²⁹⁶ *Diplomatic History of the Panama Canal*. (Government Printing Office: Washington. 1914): 296. <https://archive.org/details/diplomaticistor15unit/page/n7/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>

²⁹⁷ This includes Senators Edward Carmark and John Morgan. See Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 171.

²⁹⁸ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 170.

The United States offered the same deal to Panama as they offered to Colombia. Ten million dollars in gold coins for the ratification of the treaty and 250,000 dollars in gold coins annually.²⁹⁹ While Panama followed American demands with some gratitude, Colombia was not so forgiving. Roosevelt never formally apologized or made any statement to repair U.S.-Colombia relations. Finally, in January 1909, Secretary of State Root ultimately devised a complex trilateral treaty between the United States, Panama and Colombia to begin the U.S.-Colombia reconciliation. According to the treaty, all parties agree to recognize Panama's independence; Panama was to pay 2.5 million dollars to Colombia as its share of the debt before Panama's independence; the United States was to pay half of the 2.5 million dollars to Colombia by sending its annual rent for the canal from 1908 to 1917; allowing free transit and commercial concessions in the Canal Zone.³⁰⁰ The treaty appeased the Colombian for a while, a brief while.

The Rest of Latin America

The fear of European intervention in Latin America was often lurking in the mind of many American policymakers. Repeated coups, revolutions, and debt crises generated unwanted involvement of European powers. As a regional power guided by the Monroe Doctrine, the United States perceived every European involvement in American affairs with a wary eye.

The economy of Santo Domingo reached an unsustainable point in 1903. Santo Domingo asked for U.S. assistance to prevent European action. However, President Roosevelt used the crisis to modify the role the United States played in the conduct of the policy on the Island. In 1905, the Dawson-Sanchez Agreement, in light of the threat of armed intervention due to the increasing debt of Santo Domingo, led the United States to:

attempt the adjustment of the obligations of the Dominican Government; foreign as well as domestic; the adjustment of the payment and of the conditions of amortization; the consideration of conflicting and unreasonable claims, and the determination of the validity and amount of all pending claims.³⁰¹

While not a strict obligation as the wording suggests, Washington would leave the door open to other powers to enforce Santo Domingo's obligations if it did not take charge of the situation with Santo Domingo's creditors. This threat materialized after the Senate was too slow to ratify the agreement and an Italian warship arrived in the Santo Domingo Harbor asking for its payment, and a Belgian chargé made formal demand regarding payment as well.³⁰² To pre-empt a European blockade, Roosevelt applied provisionally the treaty without ratification. The treaty remained caught in the Senate until 1907 and was rewritten to satisfy the disgruntled senators due to Roosevelt's hasty and unlawful application of the treaty.

²⁹⁹ "Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty." *Diplomatic History of the Panama Canal*. (Government Printing Office: Washington, 1914): 300. <https://archive.org/details/diplomaticistor15unit/page/n7/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>

³⁰⁰ "Treaties with Panama and Colombia Relating to the Panama Canal." in *Diplomatic History of the Panama Canal*. (Government Printing Office: Washington, 1914): 314-325; Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 172.

³⁰¹ "Message from the President of the United States, transmitting a protocol of an agreement between the United States and the Dominican Republic, providing for the collection and disbursement by the United States of the customs revenues of the Dominican Republic, signed on February 7, 1905." *Office of the Historian*. Accessed March 14, 2023. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1905/d325>.

³⁰² Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 186-7.

In Haiti, the economic situation was not better, and the political situation was fragile. Between 1889 and 1891, Secretary Blaine attempted to secure a lease of Mole-Saint Nicholas to establish a naval base. Frederick Douglass, who was the American minister to Haiti at the time, torpedoed the negotiation process by refusing to support the effort to secure the lease.³⁰³ Ultimately, Blaine's efforts were unsuccessful. The potential lease of Mole-Saint Nicholas could trigger a revolution.³⁰⁴

The Dawson-Sanchez Treaty was a milestone in the development of the U.S. sphere of influence and its A2/AD strategy. Washington held the power to reorganize the Dominican finance to prevent intervention from foreign creditors.³⁰⁵ Those efforts were consolidated further within Roosevelt's Corollary and set the conception of the Caribbeans as Washington's backyard.

Europe

The increase in the boldness of the United States specifically in actions that threatened European interests in the Western Hemisphere was met by a conciliatory and moderate response from most European powers. Most crises were resolved by bilateral negotiations with the United States. The rare escalations were met by the declaration of neutrality by the other European powers. The *de facto* recognition of the United States as a regional power and world power became part of the foreign policy of many European powers. However, the American mistrust of European intention endured and motivated much of U.S. military modernization. The protection of U.S. strategic autonomy remained paramount during the Gilded Age, and it became even more relevant since now the United States had the capability to enforce that autonomy with credibility.

The situation in Europe was not as glorious as it was in the United States in America. The end of the Metternich system brought Britain "Splendid Isolation" and meant that the threat of a continental alliance in Europe could disturb the balance of power drastically. After the French defeat in 1871, the rise of a unified Germany under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck brought new challenges as a new world power.

The Spanish American War received the support of the British, but Germany, France and Austria-Hungary tried to intercede against the U.S. intervention and mediate the conflict.³⁰⁶ The war had two important consequences for the United States. First, it signalled to the rest of the world that the United States had the capabilities to defeat a European power, even if it was a declining one. The military operations provided valuable information to the required development of the military forces and the adjustments to the military tactics. While the United States had made some substantial progress at that level since the 1880s, the War with Spain put those progress to the test. Second, the Spanish-American War created a new nationalism craze in the United States. The nation mobilized behind the intervention. The U.S. population realized its ability to challenge European powers. This realization improved the confidence of the United States in its ability to autonomous strategic decision making.

The success of the United States throughout this period led them to be considered a world power amongst the European powers including England, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-

³⁰³ J. Michael Dash. *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination*. (New York: ST. Martin's Press, 1997): 14-15

³⁰⁴ Ludwell Lee Montague. *Haiti and the United States, 1714-1938*. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966): 149.

³⁰⁵ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 154.

³⁰⁶ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*: 466-467.

Hungary and Italy. The United States was still far from being the power it would emerge to be after the Second World War, but it was slowly climbing the ladder. On the other hand, the balance of power in Europe was shifting between 1880 and 1910. Great Britain forfeited its ambition toward continental domination; Germany's industrialization made it the ascending power of the continent; France's power was fading; Austria-Hungary and Italy struggled to keep their status as a great power; Spain was dropping out from the great power club; and Russia faced a crippling defeat to the Japanese.

Great Britain

Great Britain was still the world's most important power. Its vast empire and strong navy gave Britain the capability to exercise influence and create disturbances within the regional sphere of influence of the United States. The greater involvement of the United States in world politics and the advance of its expansionist goals were threatening to the British interests in America. The British contributed to a series of disturbances in the Western Hemisphere that ultimately led to the more assertive affirmation of U.S. influence over the Western Hemisphere. The 1879 War of the Pacific, the Venezuelan Crisis, and the negotiation of the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty progressively secured the dominance of the United States and led to the implicit recognition from the British of the prevalence of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The attention required to resolve those crises diverted important resources and revived much of the fear associated with the greater involvement in world politics by the American political elite. Throughout those crises, the United States and Britain transformed their relationship. The relative decline of the British power led them to recognize the primacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. This recognition led the United States to reciprocate the friendship of Britain.³⁰⁷ This alignment of interest manifested during the Spanish-American War and endured for the following decades. While the United States and Britain did not see eye to eye often. Their friendship and strategic partnership would mould the future of world politics.

While maintaining the United States in check had been a key component of the British strategy in America, the reality of the challenged dominance of Britain in Europe required a new strategy. The British still dominated the sea, but as a challenged hegemon, it was to the advantage of Britain to delegate some of its security burden to the United States. As an unaligned rising power, the United States could provide support without compromising Britain's "Splendid Isolation." Furthermore, the 1896 Kruger telegram initialized the progressive increase in tension between Britain and Germany. Those tensions would ultimately push Britain out of Salisbury's "splendid isolation" in the early 1900s. With a new rival, the skilful manipulation of the balance of power and the consolidation of alignments and friendships became essential to Britain. In addition, London realized during the Boer War that it was truly without friends in Europe.³⁰⁸ The expansion of the involvement of the United States in world affairs marked the beginning of the slow transfer of supremacy in the Western Hemisphere from the British to the American. American supremacy in the Western Hemisphere was progressively sealed by the 1895 Venezuelan crisis, the Spanish-American War, and the establishment of the Roosevelt Corollary.

This era started with a boundary dispute in Venezuela that brought the United States and Great Britain to the brink of war in 1895. This crisis drove U.S. naval strategists to push for

³⁰⁷ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 184.

³⁰⁸ Tyler Dennett. *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War*. (Gloucester: P. Smith, 1959): 56.

additional defence on the East Coast and the prevention of attacks from Halifax or Bermuda.³⁰⁹ In a diplomatic game of chicken, the United States searched to enforce the Monroe Doctrine beyond its borders and to encompass the entirety of the Western Hemisphere within its sphere of interest. On the other hand, the British preferred a diplomatic resolution but disagreed with the implicit acknowledgement of U.S. supremacy over the Western Hemisphere. Ultimately, the willingness of the Cleveland administration to escalate if the British did not comply with the U.S. arbitration bent Britain's will to maintain its unilateralism. The discovery of the Kruger Telegram in 1896 brought the realization that compromise with the United States would be beneficial to the growing competition with Germany. U.S. arbitration led to a treaty between Venezuela and Britain in February 1897. The resolution of the Venezuelan border crisis was a significant victory for Washington and was a major concession by Britain.

The victory over Spain broke the inferiority complex that the United States experienced since its Independence toward most European powers, but most of all toward Britain. The campaign against Spain also underlined the complicity and common interest of the United States and Britain. Even though officially neutral in the conflict, Britain provided crucial support to the United States during the Spanish-American War. British consuls accepted responsibility for U.S. nationals in the Spanish territories; they facilitated the transpacific communication since they controlled the Pacific telegraph cable; the British Navy allowed the use of their facilities in China; shared resources and coals; and most of all, Captain Chichester, the commander of the British squadron, contributed to deter Germany from engaging Dewey further in Manila.³¹⁰

While the British were the master of the seas and had the means to blockade the United States in case of escalation, the British government was concerned that the weight of the U.S. internal market and its autonomy from foreign trade would make any blockade endeavours pointless.³¹¹ This realization led the British to conclude that Canada was indefensible against the United States as soon as 1897.³¹² The dominance of the United States in the Western Atlantic was only a question of time.

Spain

Spain as a declining power became the ideal challenger to test the American primacy in the Western Hemisphere. Still, a colonial power with concessions in the Caribbean and the Pacific, Spain had weak control over its colonies and faced unrest that caught the attention of U.S. policymakers. Cuba, too near the American coasts not to beg the involvement of the U.S. government, had already been the subject of annexation rumours in Washington. The civil war that raged on the island and the repressive Spanish counterinsurgency measures that yielded poor results became the subject of many discussions in Washington. The expansionists advocated for intervention; the isolationists preferred a diplomatic solution to the Cuban revolt.

In 1895, the situation could not be ignored anymore. The Cuban insurrectionists had adopted a scorched earth strategy to exacerbate the cost to Spain to maintain its dominion over the

³⁰⁹ Ronald Spector. "The Triumph of Professional Ideology: The U.S. Navy in the 1890s." In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 178.

³¹⁰ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 199-200.

³¹¹ *Ibid.* 161.

³¹² Aaron L. Friedberg. *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline: 1895-1905*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988): 196.

island, and, to add to the pressure, the insurrectionists also targeted American lives and property to trigger an intervention.³¹³ As a consequence, President Cleveland began to pressure diplomatically Spain to part with Cuba. The interventionist Congress tried to force Cleveland's hand unsuccessfully by passing a resolution to recognize the belligerency status of the Cubans.³¹⁴ However, Cleveland was firmly opposed to any U.S. military involvement overseas. As with the other expansionist endeavours that were underway at the time, Cuba would have to wait for the departure of Cleveland from the White House.

In combination with the dispatch of the *USS Maine* to Cuba, President McKinley asked the American fleet in Hong Kong, Lisbon, Key West, and the Gulf of Mexico to be readied.³¹⁵ This level and extent of readiness showed a lack of confidence in the ability of the Spanish government to resolve the crisis in Cuba and that a clash with Madrid was expected. To avoid a war with Spain, President McKinley offered to buy Cuba from Spain and the arbitration of the peace negotiation.³¹⁶ The lack of engagement from Spain toward peace created the first armed commitment to the Monroe Doctrine. While McKinley never invoked the doctrine, the decision to go to war with Spain shook the main guiding principle of American foreign policy. Even though the crisis was occurring in the Western Hemisphere, the implication would go far beyond and create entanglement with European powers.

Congress declared war on Spain in April 1898. This was the United States first war with a European power since the War of 1812. Through the war, the success of the American military led to additional unplanned territorial acquisition for the United States. First Cuba became a protectorate, the Philippines became a colony, Guam and Puerto Rico became territories. On the naval front, Commodore Dewey destroyed the small Spanish squadron in Manila, and Admiral Sampson trapped the Spanish Fleet under Admiral Cervera in Santiago.³¹⁷ Spain amassed the rest of its fleet including its fast-armoured ships (the cruisers *Infanta Maria Teresa*, *Almirante Oquendo*, and *Vizcaya*; and the battleship *Cristobal Colon*) to the Cape Verde Islands.³¹⁸ This position allowed the Spaniards to avoid being trapped in Cuba by an early American offensive. However, this tactical move was not enough to allow Spain to hold the islands. Cervera's fleet was destroyed on July 3, 1898, when it tried to escape the bottleneck of Santiago. Santiago surrendered following the American destruction of the Cervera's vessels.³¹⁹

Spain had important forces at play. 150,000 regulars were stationed in Cuba, 8,000 in Puerto Rico, and 20,000 in the Philippines.³²⁰ An additional 150,000 troops were available in Spain presented a serious opponent to the United States, but the impressive land forces were not supported by a navy able to deploy them, they were ill-equipped, and the navy was lagging even further behind the American one, and the army's morale was at an all-time low.³²¹ After thirty-three days of fighting, the U.S. Armed Forces defeated the Spanish forces. The Spanish defeat had

³¹³ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 74.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.* 76.

³¹⁵ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 189.

³¹⁶ Louis A. Pérez. "The Meaning of the Maine: Causation and the Historiography of the Spanish-American War." *Pacific Historical Review* 58, 3 (1989): 293-322.

³¹⁷ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 463.

³¹⁸ Cosmas. *An Army for Empire*: 104-5.

³¹⁹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 463.

³²⁰ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 287.

³²¹ *Ibid.* 287.

been rapid in the Caribbean, but even more so in the Philippines. The war cost 2919 American lives and cost 250 million dollars.³²² However, the disturbance both in Cuba and the Philippines was far from over. Two more years of active counterinsurgency in the Philippines followed the Spanish-American War. Another thousand lives and an additional 170 million dollars were invested in stabilizing the U.S. control over the Philippines.³²³

The August 12 protocol that stopped the fighting with Spain occurred while the main garrisons in San Juan and Manila were intact.³²⁴ The war could have run for longer, but Spain recognized its inability to win on different fronts and at sea. Spain signed the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, ending the war and where in exchange for \$20 million in exchange for the control over the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and part of the Spanish West Indies Islands to the United States.³²⁵ The demise of Spain as a colonial power was the entry of the United States as a colonial force. In a few months, Washington had entered the perilous path of imperialism and engaged in an open war with a European power. Fortunately, the conflict was contained to the Spanish colonies.

Russia

Relations between Russia and the United States had been cordial since before the Civil War. As cultural opposites, they had not much in common. Only common enemies brought them together and created a tradition of friendship. When their interests collided in Asia, their friendship of convenience progressively dissolved. The American ventures in Asia created points of friction in its relations with Russia. Russia had the largest military force in Asia. After the adoption of the “obligatory military service” in 1870, Russia rose its troops to over a million combatants.³²⁶ As such, it exploited its position to expand its control over Manchuria and North China. During the Boxer Rebellion, Russia took control of Manchuria against the demands of the other powers involved in the resolution of the crisis. Russia deployed 50,000 troops in October 1900 and took over most of Manchuria, seized important railways between Beijing and Tianjin and between Tianjin and Shanhaikwan, and forced the Chinese government to cede a land concession in Tianjin.³²⁷ Russia’s actions in Manchuria precipitated the other European powers to grab pieces of China despite U.S. protest against this violation of China’s sovereignty. Quickly, France, Italy, Austria, Japan and even Belgium claimed concessions all over China.³²⁸ The Russian increasing presence in the northern part of Asia also triggered the Great Game with Britain which only exacerbated the difficulty for Washington to maintain a strategic partnership with Russia.

The tensions, however, did not escalate between Great Britain and Russia into an open war against all odds. Russia rather clashed against Japan. The conflagration resulted in a Russian defeat which transformed the balance of power in Europe and Asia. The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) humiliated Russia in a significant way. Japan had received support from Britain and Germany which had helped with its modernization. Since Japan was the main conflicting power with Russia’s project in Manchuria and Russia disturbed Japan’s project in Korea, additional

³²² Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 473.

³²³ *Ibid.*

³²⁴ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 299-300.

³²⁵ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 122.

³²⁶ Upton. *The Armies of Asia and Europe*: 146-148.

³²⁷ Edward H. Zabriskie. *American-Russian rivalry in the Far East*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946): 66.

³²⁸ Zabriskie. *American-Russian rivalry in the Far East*: 67.

encroachments between them could only escalate sooner or later. The war was declared on February 10, 1904. Roosevelt rapidly reaffirmed the primacy of the neutrality of China, and he did so twice more during the war.³²⁹ The Japanese Navy overtook Port Arthur and annihilated the Russian fleet at Tsushima. Throughout the war, multiple peacemaking propositions were offered. England and France proposed mediation as allies of the belligerents, the United States suggested to mediate as a neutral state; and direct negotiation was proposed by both Russia and Japan.³³⁰ Japan elected the mediation of President Roosevelt which got the support of the Russians who were exhausted by the war. Washington's involvement as a mediator was in continuity with the U.S. policy in Asia since Seward. However, the extent and intensity of the conflict presented a risk of getting indirectly involved in European politics.

Railways became an issue between the great powers in China. The United States proposed a "neutralization" of all the railways of Manchuria between 1909 and 1910 to ease and maximize the benefits of all powers trading China's resources. Great Britain supported the United States at first and brought France and Germany in agreement toward the neutralization of the railroads.³³¹ However, the failure to prepare Russia and Japan, most of all, to the idea of neutralization made the American initiative unsuccessful and made the United States looked as duplicitous.

The Great Game in Asia altered the dynamic between the United States and Russia. Since the relations between the United States and Great Britain had already improved, Russia lost its appeal. London had helped the United States to introduce the Open Door Policy and to secure the possession of the Philippines after the Spanish defeat. The Anglo-American strategic partnership had replaced the one with Russia that existed at the end of the Civil War.

France

France became less present in the Western Hemisphere due to the intensive situation in Europe and its colonies in Africa and Asia. The situations in Tunis, the Congo, Madagascar and Tonkin diverted French resources that could have potentially disturbed the Monroe Doctrine. France restrained from intervening in Latin America even though it had a vested financial interest in Santo Domingo, Venezuela, and Guatemala.³³² France was changing strategically also. In a quest for an alternative strategy to the costly naval arms race between Germany and Great Britain in the 1880s, France developed the *Jeune École*, led by Admiral Théophile Aube, which thought that "coastal defense and commerce destruction" supported by fast cruisers and torpedo boats was more likely to yield satisfactory result in a battleship arms race that France did not have the resources to win.³³³

The French found a way to become an irritant in the Western Hemisphere on one issue. The French endeavours led by Ferdinand de Lesseps to build an isthmian canal in Colombia was one more violation of the Monroe Doctrine according to many in Washington. However, the threat of a French canal in Washington's backyard did not materialize. The French project went bankrupt.

³²⁹ A. Whitney Griswold. *The Far Eastern Policy of the United States*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938): 93-102.

³³⁰ Tyler. *Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War*. 170.

³³¹ Zabriskie. *American-Russian rivalry in the Far East*: 155-16

³³² Jean-Baptiste Duroselle. *France and the United States from the Beginning to the Present*. (Cornell: University of Chicago Press, 1978): 59.

³³³ Henry Blumenthal. *France and the United States: Their Diplomatic Relations, 1789-1914*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970): 165.

In 1888, Lesseps' company "entered into receivership."³³⁴ In 1898, the New Panama Canal Company after years of struggle and a redesigned canal approached the U.S. government to sell the concessions.³³⁵ Forty percent of the work was already done and over 16,000 workers had given their lives to the construction of the Canal.³³⁶ The conditions were horrendous. In the end, Washington benefited from the French concession in Panama. The French New Panama Canal Company was purchased by Washington in 1902 for forty million dollars.³³⁷

Roosevelt appeared in favour of a U.S.-French rapprochement during the Moroccan Crisis. In May 1905, he named Charles Joseph Bonaparte as his secretary of war. In 1906, Roosevelt advocated in favour of the French during the Algeiras Conference in Spain.³³⁸ Roosevelt protected the interest of France in Morocco in a similar fashion than the British did with the United States in Samoa. Roosevelt's involvement was another example of his intermingling in international politics that put at risk Washington's strategic autonomy.

Germany

The 1871 unification gave rise to a renewed great power competition. Germany started to fight for the remaining colonial opportunities in Asia and Africa. The relations with Germany became increasingly difficult. Both powers were on the rise. The German navy was growing rapidly, but most of all its economy. Germany became too interested in the spoils of the United States' victory over the Spanish colonies. Germany acquired the Caroline and the Mariana Islands. In addition, Berlin engaged in a protracted contest over Samoa with the United States.

Germany tried to reap the gain against Spain in the Pacific during the Spanish-American War. Kaiser Wilhelm II demanded the cession of the Philippines. Vice Admiral von Diederichs entered Manila Bay on June 17 with five vessels. His threat was misconstrued. The Spanish fleet already laid at the bottom of Manila Bay.³³⁹ Nevertheless, the German squadron had enough men and firepower to constitute a credible threat to Admiral Dewey. The five men of war with over 1,400 men aboard threatened the American victory over Spain and created the risk of the engagement with a second European power.³⁴⁰ Three British ships entered also the bay followed by French and Japanese warships. The British Captain Bichester moved his vessels between the von Diederichs and Dewey, signalling that Britain would come to the support of whoever opened fire first.³⁴¹ The British actions signalled the imperial rivalry that was emerging between Britain and Germany.

After the Spanish-American armistice, Germany insidiously promoted its expansionist design. Berlin entered a secret agreement in September 1898 with Spain for the purchase of the islands of Kusaie, Ponape, and Yap in the Caroline group.³⁴² Wilhelm II got a better deal. The international presence of Germany as a naval power was consequential. In December 1898,

³³⁴ Michael L. Conniff. *Panama and the United States: The End of the Alliance*. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012): 52.

³³⁵ *Ibid.* 54-55.

³³⁶ Jules Archer. *Uneasy Friendship: France and the United States*. (New York: Four Winds Press, 1972): 152.

³³⁷ Emory R. Johnson. "The Panama Canal: The Title and Concession." *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 18, no. 2 (Jun. 1903): 197.

³³⁸ Archer. *Uneasy Friendship*: 154.

³³⁹ Schake. *Safe Passage*. 198.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 199.

³⁴¹ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 465.

³⁴² *Ibid.* 466.

Germany ratified the treaties confirming the purchase of the Carolines, the Pellews, and the Ladrões (except for Guam) in exchange for five million dollars. Frictions areas with an imperialist Germany would be a recurrent theme for U.S. diplomacy for the following decades. As a new power, less compliant with the Monroe Doctrine, and ready to challenge the norms that limited the extension of its sphere of influence, Germany impinged on the U.S. interest and sphere of influence to an increasing frequency. The German efforts to acquire the Danish West Indies and the Galapagos, and to establish ports in Santo Domingo, Haiti; and even attempted colonization in Brazil, Argentine, and Chile.³⁴³

In 1901, President Roosevelt declared that the Monroe Doctrine did “not guarantee any state against punishment does not take the form of acquisition of territory by any non-American power.”³⁴⁴ Germany perceived this declaration as a green light to strongarm the Venezuelan by implementing a blockade. The Germans were soon joined by the British and the Italian creating an international crisis and a major crisis of legitimacy to the Monroe Doctrine. The Venezuelan Crisis crystallized Roosevelt’s desire to eliminate any residual British influence in the Caribbean but triggered additional competition from the Anglo-German rivalry.

The Germans had their eyes on Latin America. Emperor William II refused to recognize the Monroe Doctrine.³⁴⁵ The Venezuelan blockade ended after Venezuela did enough concessions to the British. The Germans realized that their navy could not act alone without high risk. Germany missed its best opportunity to take control over strategic assets in Latin America. That missed opportunity made Germany increase even more its naval ambition. The German Fleet Law of 1900 planned for a seventeen-year building program.³⁴⁶ That program contributed to triggering an increase in U.S. shipbuilding and set the stage for an arms race with Great Britain and the Great War.

Italy

As a new unified republic, Italy got to rub shoulders with the United States for the first time. In the 1890s, the Italian diaspora’s wave of vendetta in New Orleans led to the death of a chief of police which resulted in a mob lynching of eleven Italian that were linked to the incident.³⁴⁷ Secretary of State Blaine had to deal with Italian attempts at pressuring the federal government to intervene in the state legislature to punish the perpetrators and compensate the victims’ families. Federalist jurisdiction did not allow Blaine to get involved which created diplomatic tensions with the Italians. The Italians played with the idea of military intervention against the United States, but while their navy was superior to the U.S. Navy, the Italians did not have the financial resources to maintain a campaign against the United States.³⁴⁸ Ultimately, the crisis faded, and relations returned to normal. The discovery by the Italian authority that only three of the victims were unnaturalized Italian combined with 25,000 dollars of reparation allowed the crisis to end.³⁴⁹

³⁴³ Clara Eve Schieber. *The Transformation of American Sentiment toward Germany, 1870-1914*. (New York: The Cornhull Publishing Company, 1923): 175-183.

³⁴⁴ Turk. “Defending the Empire, 1900-1914.” 189; Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 147.

³⁴⁵ Baer. *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*: 37.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 39.

³⁴⁷ Bailey. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 414.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 414-15.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Alignment Options: The Requirements of Expansionism and Colonial Ambitions

The echo of decades of the Monroe Doctrine as the main tenet of American foreign policy finally sunk into the mind of many European diplomats and heads of state. Washington gained enough power on the world stage to generate enough credibility to sustain the Monroe Doctrine. However, the resources rich and weak young republics of Latin America represented a strong temptation to the European powers to defy the Monroe Doctrine. The U.S. rhetoric of non-interference was antinomic of the colonial spirit of an era where great powers interfered and controlled as much as they could the non-European world. While the Monroe Doctrine and Roosevelt Corollary established a clear and free U.S. dominance in the Western Hemisphere, American ambitions were met with less than welcoming powers beyond the U.S. sphere of influence. Alliances with any European power remained excluded from U.S. Foreign policy, but *ad hoc* alignments occurred to support Pacific expansionism. U.S. diplomats also worked to consolidate Washington's control over the Western Hemisphere. On the other hand, some of the Latin American Republics saw the Monroe Doctrine as a defence pact against the European powers and asked for American support when European powers tried to interfere in their affairs.

European Re-Alignment

The European balance of power experienced multiple major changes throughout this period. Washington remained neutral toward European affairs and refused categorically to engage in any formal alliance. However, continental Europe was using alliance and alignment as its main tool of diplomacy. Great Britain maintained isolation from the continental alliance system for as long as it could. Throughout the various European and international conflicts, two power blocs formed in Europe by 1905: the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy; the Triple Entente between France, Russia, and Britain.³⁵⁰

The rise of Germany as a threatening power to Europe forced Britain to abandon its "splendid isolation" era and led to a rapprochement between the United States and Britain.³⁵¹ On multiple occasions, the British tried to create a rapprochement with the United States. Ideally, an alliance would have been the best option. However, the United States remained focused on not entangling itself in formal alliances. Even if the behaviour of the British was more akin to an alliance that already existed, the United States remained free from any binding commitment. Secretary of States John Hay supported a U.S.-British rapprochement.³⁵²

The United States could not maintain a "dog in the manger" policy regarding the islands in the Pacific and Latin America.³⁵³ The United States had to take a more active role regionally and internationally. The U.S. role started with the annexation of additional territory. The Guano Act helped to annex many islands in the Pacific. Samoa and Hawaii were threatened by the other European powers and after multiple efforts to maintain their independence, Washington selected to annex those territories rather than seeing them fall into the hand of Germany, France, Japan, or Britain.

³⁵⁰ See William L. Langer. *European Alliances and Alignments*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1931) 1956; and William L. Langer. *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, (1935) 1968).

³⁵¹ Alexander DeConde. "On Twentieth-Century Isolationism." In *Isolation and Security*. Edited by Alexander DeConde, 3-32, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1957): 7.

³⁵² Arthur Stanley Link and William M. Leary. *The Diplomacy of World Power: The United States, 1889-1920*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970): 3.

³⁵³ James L. Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*. (New York: The Free Press, 1981): 82.

The expansionists increased the involvement of the United States in world affairs to a level never experienced before by the United States. Juggling with control in the Western Hemisphere and growing interest in the Pacific led to additional friction with the European powers. In 1899, the United States took part officially to the First International Peace Conference at the Hague along with twenty-five other nations. While no agreement was reached regarding the reduction of armament, the establishment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration created a new multilateral institution toward conflict resolution.

Duality of the Monroe Doctrine for the Small States

The securitization of the rights to exclusive control over an isthmian canal in Central America led to further U.S. involvement in the region. The engagement toward the construction of the isthmian canal in Central America led to relations that had a resemblance with alliances. The progressive removal of the British, French and Spanish influence in the region allowed Washington to secure a treaty with Nicaragua and Panama to build a canal. While only the Panama route was retained, the decades of negotiations and the direct involvement of the United States in the affairs of the Latin American Republics set the stage for the dominance of the United States over the region. The Monroe Doctrine became a shield against European interferences that could unbalance the influence of the United States over the Western Hemisphere.

The strategic autonomy challenge regarding Latin America was to balance the removal of the European influence without the formal commitment to a defence pact. The United States elected to deny the Latin American Republic the ratification of any formal alliance treaty, but Washington engaged in the negotiation of preferential treaties with the specific purpose to secure American interests in Latin America. The most important of those treaties are the ones signed regarding the exclusive right to build a canal in Nicaragua and Panama. The Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty of 1884 was the first of those treaties which established the U.S. exclusivity on a canal in Nicaragua despite the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 that stipulated that any canal endeavour would be shared equally between the United States and Great Britain. The Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty was never ratified, but the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty was suspended in 1901 by the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty where the British relinquished their right to the construction and control of a canal.

Diplomacy of Strategic Vagueness or How to Mesmerize Strategic Partners

The United States learned to navigate the diplomatic intrigues of the European powers. U.S. diplomats tried to keep the Europeans at a distance and avoided intermingling Europe's affairs. However, Europe did not shy away from the Western Hemisphere and created the necessity of an American response. Most diplomats of the era with a few exceptions were usually clumsy, had poor negotiation skills, were often motivated by personal gains and were appointed for political reasons. They most often engaged in informal diplomacy with quid pro quo engagement unendorsed by Washington. As in the period before, informal diplomacy was a predominant tool of American foreign policy, sometimes interfering with official endeavours and creating diplomatic conundrums.

Avoidance of European problems was prevalent during the 1880s and 1890s. As Greenville and Young underlined, "Valparaiso and Honolulu figured more in American diplomacy than Berlin and Vienna."³⁵⁴ (See Table 7.3) In the meantime, involvement in Latin America became

³⁵⁴ Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 126.

broader and more complex. American unilateralism was prevalent toward its southern neighbours, but the intricate interactions between the Latin American states and the European states created a variety of issues that troubled the relations between the United States and the European states. The issue was even more complex when it comes to the U.S. involvement in Asia. The intricate diplomatic arrangements to share the concessions and commerce in Asia were a source of competition between the European powers and the states in Asia, principally China, Japan, and Korea. Washington adopted a neutral stand and worked to remain a pivotal force in the region to mediate the conflict rather than being involved in them.

Table 7.3: International Treaties Ratified by the United States between 1880 and 1910

Treaty	Date	Main Purpose
Renewal of Reciprocity Treaty	1884	Establishment of exclusive rights on Pearl Harbor
Pan-American Congress	1889	The foundation of multilateral cooperation in the Western Hemisphere
General Act of Berlin	1889	Recognition of Samoa's independence and tripartite gestion of the islands
Gresham-Yang Treaty	1894	Interdiction of immigration of Chinese workers for 10 years
Annexation of Hawaii	1898	McKinley annexation of Hawaii
Treaty of Paris	1898	Peace treaty for the Spanish-American War
Treaty of Division of Samoa	1899	Division of Samoa between Germany and the United States
Hague Conventions	1899	Adhesion to international norms of war
Hay-Pauncefote Treaty	1901	Abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and freedom to build unilaterally a canal in Central American
Boxer Protocol	1901	First unequal treaty with China
Hay-Herran Treaty	1903	Attempt to acquire a lease over Panama from Colombia
Hay-Brunau-Varilla Treaty	1903	Establishment of the Panama Canal Zone
Treaty of Portsmouth	1905	Arbitration of the Russo-Japanese War by Roosevelt
Taft-Katsura Agreement	1905	Mutual recognition of the sphere of influence in Asia between Washington and Tokyo
Second Geneva Convention	1906	Rules of war (conditions of wounded, sick and shipwrecked crews)
General Act of Algeciras Conference	1906	Determination of Morocco's status (support to France)

Source: Carl Russell Fish. *American Diplomacy*. (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1919).

Secretary of State Blaine paved the diplomatic avenue to deal with U.S.-Latin American relations. In 1881, Blaine called a Pan-American conference. By doing so, Blaine wanted to position the United States as the hub of the Western Hemisphere to act as a moderator in Pan-American issues and conflicts. Without a clear institutionalized and mandated leadership from the United States, Blaine feared continuous European interventionism. However, Blaine's resignation following the death of Garfield stopped the initiative that waited until 1889 to convene a conference.³⁵⁵ Washington wanted supremacy in the Western Hemisphere and convinced Great Britain to relinquish its influence as a dominant power.

The role of the United States as a Western Hemisphere mediator had a rough start. The attempt at brokering peace between Peru and Chile was unsuccessful and damaged the relations with both states. In addition, the suspension of diplomatic relations with Chile during the crisis of the *Itata* during the Chilean civil war did not improve the situation. Most multilateral endeavours created further tensions and did not provide improved relations between the parties involved and

³⁵⁵ Zachary Karabell. *Chester Alan Arthur*. (The American Presidents Series). (New York: Times Books. 2004): Chap 8. Kindle.; Fish. *American Diplomacy*. 386-387.

the United States. Therefore, until 1889, the United States preferred bilateral agreements. Secretary of State Frelinghuysen negotiated reciprocity agreements to ease trade with South American states at a time when tariffs were high and restricted by the Mongrel Tariff.³⁵⁶

The Olney Doctrine stated that “distance and three thousand miles of intervening ocean make any permanent political union between a European and an American state unnatural and inexpedient will hardly be denied.”³⁵⁷ The Venezuelan crisis was dealt with in a similar fashion than President Polk had dealt with the Oregon question.³⁵⁸ Cleveland took a strong stance against Britain to force the hand of Salisbury. London, finally, gave in to Cleveland’s demands and settled the Venezuelan crisis. The settlement of the Venezuelan dispute with Great Britain and the British support during the Spanish American War brought the diplomatic relations between the two states to a new level of cooperation not seen since before the American Revolution. The Boer War put to the test the fragility of the U.S. commitment to support the British. Even though the United States demonstrated good intents by interceding as a third party to ensure the welfare of British prisoners of war in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State and by providing floated loans to support the British war effort to roughly twenty percent, the Americans had a hard time not to go back to old patterns of neutrality.³⁵⁹ On multiple occasions, shipments of goods to the Boers were intercepted.³⁶⁰ Secretary Hay also denied repeatedly the existence of a “secret alliance” with the British.³⁶¹ Those inconsistent behaviours unveiled the difficulty of the Americans to commit to any real tangible engagement with the British.

In January 1900, the British ambassador to the United States, Julian Pauncefote, wrote to Prime Minister Lord Salisbury that “The warmth & friendliness of manner shown toward me by the President & all his cabinet is very marked, & evidently intended to show their desire to maintain & promote the entente cordiale & the ‘unwritten Treaty’ which undoubtedly exists in spite of the outcry about the word ‘alliance.’”³⁶² Conscious of the impossibility of a formal alliance with the United States, Pauncefote recognized as a show of good faith the dominance over the Caribbean to the United States. The Hay-Pauncefote Treaty abrogated the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and allowed Washington to begin the construction of the transoceanic isthmian canal through Panama. Overall, London made a lot of concessions toward Washington during this period to foster a rapprochement. Even with all those concessions, the United States did not commit to an alliance with Great Britain.

President McKinley did not start his presidency with the ambition of annexing many territories. His approach to dealing with the tension with Cuba was one of diplomacy and conciliation with Spain to resolve the crisis and lowered the regional disturbances. In 1897, Spain initiated important reforms to appease the turmoil in Cuba. The Spanish government suspended the reconcentration policy, granted amnesty to political prisoners and adopted an autonomy plan that would preserve the Spanish sovereignty while providing home rule to the Cubans.³⁶³ Even

³⁵⁶ Karabell. *Chester Alan Arthur*: Chap 8. Kindle.

³⁵⁷ Fish. *American Diplomacy*. 392.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 393.

³⁵⁹ Stuart Anderson. “Racial Anglo-Saxonism and the American Response to the Boer War.” *Diplomatic History* Vol. 2, no. 3 (Summer 1978): 220-21

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 221.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*: 220. Pauncefote to Salisbury, 19 January 1900, quoted in Campbell, *Anglo-American Understanding*. pp. 171-2.

³⁶³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 432, Scribd.

though the Cubans were unsatisfied with those measures, the diplomatic pressure from McKinley yielded results.

In 1898, President McKinley annexed Hawaii, Guam, Wake Island, and American Samoa, and not long after the American forces took over the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. This rapid addition of territories extended the Monroe Doctrine further. George H. Bates who had been the special commissioner to Samoa advocated to extend the protection of the Monroe Doctrine to all those islands.³⁶⁴ This perspective was also shared by Senator Lodge who was one of the most prominent expansionism advocates.³⁶⁵

The anti-imperialists including Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Carl Schurz, David Starr Jordan, and Thomas B. Reed perceived the overseas expansion as a death of the Monroe Doctrine.³⁶⁶ The major annexations following the Spanish-American War underlined a major paradox in the United States intentions. While the war was declared to free the Cubans, Washington ended up controlling the fate of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. In addition, through the Platt Amendment, Washington kept the right to intervene in Cuba's politics. The U.S. foreign policy changed in such a way that many policymakers became uncomfortable with the U.S. grand strategy and attempted, unsuccessfully this time, to stop the expansionist impulse of the imperialists.

Civil-Military Relations: The Chief of Staff, toward a Balance?

The role of Emory Upton in changing civil-military relations was crucial. His study of the German system brought some important changes. Upton discovered that more focused decision-making within the military centralized around a single chief of staff would benefit "peacetime preparations, gathering of information, drawing up war plans, and controlling an educational system that ensured competent collective leadership."³⁶⁷ While Upton's ideas provided a viable path toward the stabilization and development of a world-class military, Upton was challenging important traditions and was going against the preferences of a majority in Congress. The transformation of the U.S. military toward systematic professionalization would still occur as lobbying in favour of Upton's ideas would increase.

However, the progressives that actively worked toward reforming the military institutions were unsuccessful to maintain the chief of staff and Army board inherited from the Civil War. The Army structure rolled back to its pre-war structure. The overwhelming power of the Secretary, of the civilian representative, is reasserted at the cost of the competency and the professional soldier who bear the military knowledge beneficial to the War Department. The various bureaus were unconcerted, rarely cooperative, lacked in planning, and competition over resources. Throughout that process, both the realization that the military apparatus could never bear its maximum efficiency while being governed by civilians and the willingness of military professionals to relinquish the control over the army to a civilian for the sake of avoiding the militarization of society would be a perpetual tension within the American military institution. A tension that would

³⁶⁴ David Healy. *US Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970): 52.

³⁶⁵ Healy. *US Expansionism*: 57.

³⁶⁶ Bailey. 1969. *Diplomatic History of the American People*: 475; Fred H. Harrington. "The Anti-Imperialist Movement in the United States, 1898-1900." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. Vol. 22, no. 2 (Sep. 1935): 212-213.

³⁶⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 417, Scribd.

generate long debates, failed attempts at policy changes and institutional reforms that continue to puzzle policymakers even today. Maj. General John M. Schofield expressed the need for a single uniformed head to the Army with power over the staff but under the strict command of the President and the Secretary of Defense.³⁶⁸ Secretary Upton would finally implement this idea with General Young in 1903.

The War Department came to the realization of its inadequacies after the War with Spain. The Secretary of War, Russell A. Alger, from March 5, 1897, to August 1, 1899, argued after the War with Spain started that:

The governmental machinery was altogether inadequate to immediately meet the emergency. It had, during thirty years, been called upon to plan for and meet the requirements of the Regular Army in time of peace, and naturally enough had become quite fixed in the narrow grooves of peace.³⁶⁹

In an attempt to make Alger the scapegoat for the War Department's failure, an inquiry started in 1898. As a result, Greenville M. Dodge was appointed to investigate the failure of the Spanish-American War and the Department of War. The eight volumes of the Dodge Commission exonerated Secretary Alger and underlined the requirements for a reorganization and enlargement of the regular army, the creation of general staff and the reorganization of the militia.³⁷⁰ However, many of the problems were inherited from the neglect due to the willingness of Congress to cut considerably capabilities and personnel of the military in times of peace to a degree well under what would have provided a sufficient force to mobilize quickly in the case of a declaration of war.

Alger paid the price of the inefficiency and mismanagement of the War Department and had to resign in 1899. His successor Elihu Root was mandated with the transformation and reform of the War Department to correct the ineptitudes that were underlined by the Spanish American War. His conclusions were as follows:

1) The absence of connection between the staff bureaus and the army proper; 2) the absence of any central agency for the formulation of a general military policy for working out the details of a military program and the accumulation of military information; 3) As one of the causes of the foregoing, the permanent assignment of officers and staff duties; 4) the lack of coordination between the various bureaus; and 5) As an incident of the foregoing, the wastefulness of a decentralized system of purchase and supply.³⁷¹

In 1902, Root initiated the preparation of a bill embodying his idea of the General Staff. The General Staff was established on February 14, 1903, and before its implementation, "army units in the field were under the Commanding General of the Army who, as one of the principal War

³⁶⁸ Cosmas. *An Army for Empire*: 28.

³⁶⁹ Alger quoted in Otto L. Nelson (Maj. Gen.). *National Security and the General Staff*. (Washington [D.C.]: Infantry Journal Press, 1946): 22.

³⁷⁰ Edward Ranson. "The Investigation of the War Department, 1898-99." *The Historian* Vol. 34, no. 1 (Nov. 1971): 99.

³⁷¹ Root quoted in Nelson. *National Security and the General Staff*: 43. See also, John Dickinson. *The Building of an Army*. (New York: The Century Co., 1922): 255.

Department officials, was, in theory, the senior army officer.”³⁷² Most of the communication to and from the War Department and any coordination efforts were relayed through the Adjutant General’s Department.³⁷³ Congress modified in major ways the original bill developed by Carter and Root.³⁷⁴ The role of Elihu Root would deeply transform the U.S. military. The inducement of the General Staff under his guidance provided a clearer path toward a planned and organized development of the military and not a strategy simply guided by the contraction of the military in peacetime.

General Young, Chaffe, and Bates were the first three Chiefs of Staff. All three were great soldiers, but poor administrators who had little interest in the War Department supply problems and administrative duties.³⁷⁵ They had little to offer to their function and made an uneventful start to the Chief of Staff function. Things began to change when F.C. Ainsworth of the Medical Corps came to the Records and Pension Office, and Congress rapidly promoted him to the position of major general where he also learned to understand and work with Congress.³⁷⁶

The Navy acquired additional professionalism during that period. In 1873, Stephen B. Luce helped establish the U.S. Naval Institute and would become the first president of the U.S. Naval War College. Most of all, Luce brought science to the Navy which made the United States competitive and innovative. Research and teaching were the main contributions of Luce, but his intention went further. The United States Navy became war ready, adaptable, and organized. While the Navy received a lot of attention under Roosevelt. The leadership of the Navy Department was weakened by a lack of stability since six Secretaries and five Assistant Secretaries to the Navy were in function during Roosevelt’s two terms.³⁷⁷ Admiral Stephen B. Luce condemned the military policies dictated by the savour of the day by Congress especially regarding the “nature of the navy’s peace duties.”³⁷⁸ As a becoming big navy, the U.S. Navy would require further reforms.

Imperial America: Redefining the Presidency

The presidents of this period emerged as a set of reformers able to bring the U.S. foreign policy in line with the rest of the world (see Table 5.4). Washington could start to aspire to status and recognition again. The office of the president underwent important changes and the emergence of the progressives led to the assertion of the United States as first a regional power and second a world power. The interest and influence of Washington reached well beyond its borders and it entered an era of imperialism initiated by unwilling participants and consolidated by those who saw the benefit of maintaining the U.S. colonies and protectorates.

³⁷² Nelson. *National Security and the General Staff*: 6. See also Bernado and Bacon. *American Military Policy*: Chap 13.

³⁷³ Nelson. *National Security and the General Staff*: 7.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 58.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 88.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 88-9.

³⁷⁷ Pedisich. *Congress Buys a Navy*: 177.

³⁷⁸ Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*: 125.

Table 7.4: Presidents and their Main Role on Foreign Policy, 1880-1910

President	Years in Office	Main Role on Foreign Policy
James A. Garfield	1881-1881	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mercantilism and new era of nationalism - Creation of the Naval Advisory Board
Chester Alan Arthur	1881-1885	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformed the public service - Left the tariff high and use the surplus to improve the military and specifically the navy - Beginning of the assertiveness toward Latin America - Planned to build a canal in Nicaragua - Enforced further control over the Indian tribes in the West
Grover Cleveland	1885-1889	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Isolationist to the core, avoid entanglement in world politics. - Passed harsh legislation against Asiatic immigration - Anti-imperialist
Benjamin Harrison	1889-1893	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocated for a big navy - Negotiation for lease harbours in the Danish West Indies, Samana Bay in Santo Domingo, and Môle Saint Nicholas in Haiti³⁷⁹
Grover Cleveland	1893-1897	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Still anti-imperialist, but more inclined toward foreign involvement and great power competition - Olney doctrine - Forced arbitration with Britain over the Venezuelan border - Expansion of the Navy as an economic stimulus package - Neutrality toward Cuba
William McKinley	1897-1901	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - American expansionism and imperialism take form under his presidency with the Spanish-American War, the official control over Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, and the de facto control of Cuba.
Theodore Roosevelt	1901-1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roosevelt Corollary, the Great White Fleet, and expansionist policy. The place of strategic autonomy, isolation and non-interference in European politics remain important.

President Garfield and Blaine’s Introduction

President Garfield’s tenure announced a maintenance of strict neutrality inspired by the Monroe Doctrine. However, the poor security measures to protect the life of the president at the time quickly changed the dynamic, even though President Lincoln had been assassinated only sixteen years earlier. President Garfield had no personal bodyguards at all and roamed the streets of Washington unworried about potential attempts on his life. Charles J. Guiteau, a frustrated unemployed middle-aged man who unsuccessfully tried to exploit the patronage politics occurring during the Gilded Age, took the life of the president only 120 days after his inauguration.³⁸⁰ The long agony of Garfield under the ill-advised care of doctors guided by homeopathy and unsanitary practices brought the necessary concerns about the patronage system to implement some changes.

Secretary of State James G. Blaine was a capable diplomat. He brokered the peace between Mexico and Guatemala, keeping the issue an “American affair.”³⁸¹ Blaine engaged Britain unsuccessfully to modify the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty. His first appointment as secretary of state under Garfield made him an advocate for American supremacy in the Western Hemisphere. He proposed the pan-American Conference with two goals: “[f]irst, to bring about peace and prevent

³⁷⁹ *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*. House Exec. Doc. No. 1, Pt. 3, 48th Cong., 2 Sess., 1884: 40-41

³⁸⁰ Ira Rutkow. *James A. Garfield*. (The American Presidents Series). (New York: Times Books, 2006): Chap. 1. Kindle

³⁸¹ Bailey. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. 399.

future war in North and South America; second, to cultivate such friendly, commercial relations with all American countries as would lead to a large increase in the export trade of the United States.”³⁸² However, his tenure under President Garfield was brief and did not survive in the new Arthur’s cabinet. He would have to wait for President Harrison to transform U.S. foreign policy.

Arthur’s Pragmatism

Chester Alan Arthur had the opportunity to stop the crippling effect of patronage in American politics. However, he had been part of that system, to a lesser degree than many, but still, he had been opposed to reforms when they were recommended by the Jay Commission.³⁸³ The reforms brought by the Pendleton Bill by the end of 1882 after two decades of scandals, pork barrel projects, and an endemic spoil system brought back part of the meaning of duty and professionalism. Bossism and corruption had been ignored for too long. The assassination of a President finally fast-tracked the Pendleton Bill bringing a civil service commission and a board to decide the type of evaluation to do through the hiring process.³⁸⁴

On the diplomatic front, Chester Alan Arthur was a moderated pragmatist. He did not change American Foreign Policy in major ways but rather followed the policy put in place by Secretary Blaine before him. President Arthur continued to engage Latin America to foster better bilateral relations with the prospect of improving trade and displacing the influence of European powers by the same token. Ultimately, his moderation cost him the nomination for a second term and Blaine took his place as a candidate. Frederick Frelinghuysen, Arthur’s secretary of State, engaged in a conservative and cautious foreign policy. Frelinghuysen targeted the easier task first. He methodically pressured both Chile and Peru toward a peace negotiation. He negotiated an exhaustive agreement with Nicaragua which contained the mention of a perpetual alliance between the two states to secure the construction of a canal and trigger the abrogation of the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty.³⁸⁵ Fortunately, the agreement that constituted the worst violation of the Monroe Doctrine of this era was never ratified.

Cleveland’s First Time

Cleveland came to the presidency with an aura of integrity that his predecessors since the end of the Civil War had not. Corruption, bossism, and the spoil system had been reformed under President Arthur, but the politicians were still perceived by the public as beneficiaries of that spoil system. Cleveland brought back integrity to the Presidency. His presidency started with the implicit promise that if the Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty was ratified in the Senate, he would reject it.³⁸⁶ This killed the treaty, never to be voted in the Senate.

Cleveland was essentially an isolationist and refused to expand the military and the navy. His main military contribution was to help the Navy by letting William C. Whitney eliminate the

³⁸² Joseph B. Lockey. “James Gillespie Blaine, Secretary of State, March 7, 1881, to December 18, 1881.” In *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*. Volume VII, Edited by Samuel Flagg Bemis. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963): 275.

³⁸³ Karabell. *Chester Alan Arthur*: Chap. 7. Kindle.

³⁸⁴ While Garfield’s assassination put the spotlight on the problem due to Guiteau’s motives, the Republican loss of the 1884 elections eased the process since the lame-duck session punished the incoming Democrat majority and ripped apart the patronage system. Karabell. *Chester Alan Arthur*: Chap. 7. Kindle.

³⁸⁵ Philip Marshall Brown. “Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen, Secretary of State, December 19, 1881, to March 5, 1885.” In *The American Secretaries of State and their Diplomacy*. Volume VIII, Edited by Samuel Flagg Bemis. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963): 29-31.

³⁸⁶ Allan Nevis. *Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage*. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1933): 205.

Navy's reliance on foreign steel for its armoured vessels.³⁸⁷ The modernization of the Navy was in line with the use of the Navy as a coastal defence force.

The Anomaly of the Harrison Presidency

President Harrison was an anomaly in the isolationist era.³⁸⁸ He launched a big navy program and insisted that Washington needed a "rapid increase in the number of serviceable ships."³⁸⁹ His Secretary of the Navy, Judge Benjamin F. Tracy called for a powerful battlefield fleet and appointed Mahan as President of the Naval War College.³⁹⁰ His actions were oriented toward the realization of an expansionist policy for the United States, one only limited by U.S. capabilities.

President Harrison's great-grandfather had signed the Declaration of Independence, his grandfather, William Henry Harrison, had been president, and his father had been a two-term member of Congress. The Harrison legacy gave already some gravitas to President Harrison, but he also had his enviable record. He served brilliantly during the Civil War and became a pillar of the Republican Party in Indiana after the War. He and his secretary of state, James G. Blaine were "eager and determined to implement an expansionist agenda."³⁹¹

The foreign policy agenda of Harrison and Blaine contrasted with their predecessor drastically. They revived Blaine's Pan-American Conference in 1889, they helped to foment a revolution in Hawaii and attempted to annex the islands; they secured the U.S. interest in Samoa; and they fostered greater openness to American interests in Asia. Secretary of State James G. Blaine was among the first decision maker to underline:

Our own Government cannot take the ground that it will not offer friendly intervention to settle troubles between American countries, unless at the same troubles between American countries, unless at the same time it freely concedes to European Governments the right of such intervention, and thus consents to a practical destruction of the Monroe doctrine and an unlimited increase of European influence on this continent... If our Government does not resume its efforts to secure peace in South America some European Government will be forced to perform that friendly office. The United States cannot play between nations the part of dog in the manger.³⁹²

Blaine formulated the core of the expansionist strategic vision for the United States. He wanted to secure a grand strategy oriented toward the establishment of an American Empire in the Western Hemisphere. His Pan-American project was an attempt to seduce the Latin American countries and co-opt them into the U.S. sphere of influence. Following the conference, Harrison signed eight reciprocity treaties with Central and South American states.³⁹³

Cleveland's Second Time

Cleveland's return was hijacked by the Depression of 1893. The depression showed the disconnect of most policymakers from the rest of the population and was detrimental to Cleveland.

³⁸⁷ Henry F. Graff. *Grover Cleveland*. (The American Presidents Series). (New York: Times Books, 2002): 56.

³⁸⁸ A. T. Volwiler "Harrison, Blaine, and American Foreign Policy, 1889-1893." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 79, no. 4 (Nov. 15, 1938): 637.

³⁸⁹ Quoted in Charles W. Calhoun. *Benjamin Harrison*. (New York: Times, 2005): 106.

³⁹⁰ Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 93.

³⁹¹ Edward P. Crapol. *James G. Blaine: Architect of Empire*. (Wilmington: SR Books, 2000): 112.

³⁹² Blaine quoted in Greenville and Young. *Politics, Strategy, and American Diplomacy*: 92.

³⁹³ Crapol. *James G. Blaine*: 123.

At the same time, Cleveland's foreign policy meant a return to isolationism. His administration started with the reversal of the annexation of Hawaii. Cleveland attempted to reverse Blaine's expansionist policy. Cleveland wanted economic security and not imperialism. This meant that good relations based on respect for the sovereignty of weaker nations were the way to go.

The expansion of the navy created a further need for coaling stations. The Cleveland first administration had secured the rights to exploit the Pearl Harbor installation, but Harrison supported by the American planters in Hawaii had removed the Queen Liliuokalani from power and signed for the annexation of Hawaii. However, Cleveland remained an anti-imperialist and opposed the annexation, but ultimately, his opposition was only delaying the annexation while the U.S. planters maintained a virtual protectorate on the islands.³⁹⁴

Cleveland's approach to the Venezuelan Crisis emancipated the United States from British naval dominance. Arbitration had been a recurrent practice between Washington and London. However, this time, Britain's objection to the arbitration of the border situation between British Guiana and Venezuela was categorical. The diplomatic joust between Cleveland and Salisbury was becoming increasingly significant for the fate of Anglo-American relations, especially after the Kaiser's telegram of January 2, 1896.³⁹⁵ Cleveland's consistency was an impressive demonstration of his conviction toward the rule of the Monroe Doctrine.

The Cuban situation was getting worrisome by the end of the Cleveland administration. However, the president remained convinced that neutrality and diplomacy were the best options to deal with Spain. He also opposed the recognition of the Cuban belligerency.³⁹⁶

McKinley: Expansionist Despite Him

President William McKinley was not a warmonger. His presidency was initially focused on internal issues and not foreign policy. He followed the U.S. neutrality probably longer than many presidents would have under the circumstances with Cuba and opted at first for diplomatic pressure on Spain to resolve the crisis. He resisted the pressure from jingoists like Lodge and Roosevelt. However, the events regarding the growing tension in Cuba and with Spain pushed him to be involved in the greatest expansionist efforts since the annexation of Alaska in 1867. His intervention made Washington officially an imperialist power with overseas possessions.

McKinley preserved the military gains made against Spain, but adopted self-restraint by prioritizing three core areas:

- 1) securing the new insular acquisitions or "stepping stones" across the Pacific; 2) Ensuring Chinese administrative integrity and most favored nation status for the United States in China; and 3) using diplomacy to sustain a favorable balance of power and ensure that no rival power took a step as bold as the one the United States had just taken.³⁹⁷

McKinley's position asserted the end of the Spanish influence and role in the Pacific without inviting the other powers to seize the opportunity to remodel the balance of power in this region. Nevertheless, Germany benefited to a degree from the War to purchase islands in the Pacific.

³⁹⁴ Graff. *Grover Cleveland*: 88; Nevis. *Grover Cleveland*: 549-554.

³⁹⁵ Nevis. *Grover Cleveland*. 646.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 714.

³⁹⁷ Green. *By More Than Providence*: 82.

Roosevelt: The Prestigious Expansionist

Theodore Roosevelt epitomized the expansionist flavour of this era. He incarnated expansionist ideals like no other ones and pushed the limits of American involvement in world politics like no other president before him. His warmongering attitude and fearlessness brought much-needed gravitas to bring the United States into the world of great power politics. It generated respect from the European nations, but also created a potential for greater frictions than before.

President Roosevelt was a complex character often with contradictions. The combination of his highly moralistic views with his cowboy diplomacy had the potential of creating frictions.³⁹⁸ He led American foreign policy like no others before him. His diplomacy created resentment from some Latin American states, especially Colombia due to Panama. His interventionist style could have been perceived as obnoxious to some European powers, but he was able to foster respect and admiration. Roosevelt's interferences during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and the Franco-German trouble over Morocco in 1906 brought him praises and increased the diplomatic role of the United States in great power politics. Roosevelt persisted in his desire to show the world that the United States was a world power, especially in 1907 with the world tour of the Grand Fleet.

The list of Roosevelt's diplomatic achievements is long and significant. He stabilized the newly formed American Empire; implemented the necessary measure to build an isthmian canal in Panama; introduced to the world the United States as a world power; and took the means to protect the U.S. sphere of interest and extend its scope. He epitomized the success of the Monroe Doctrine and the ascension of the United States to the status of great power.

Anti-Access and Overexpansion of the Sphere of Influence

The U.S. military realized that the rapid growth of their overseas acquisitions was reducing their resources by increasing the military burden and weakening their position in the Atlantic. This led to a difficult balance to be struck between the expansion in the Pacific and the security of the Atlantic. The European powers remained a threat to the stability of the Western Hemisphere since many of its states were still vulnerable to European influence. The anti-access and area denial measures put in place diminished the vulnerability. The construction of a blue-water navy able to engage the European powers, the acquisition of multiple bases of operations with the acquisition and lease of territory in the Caribbean, and the dollar diplomacy conceived to diminish the reliance on European funds were all measures designed to reinforce the Monroe Doctrine and the American sphere of influence.

The relationship between the chauvinism of *manifest destiny* and the jingoism of American imperialism was complex and created a difficult relationship regarding the integration of new territories as part of the United States. Territories populated by a coloured population made many politicians uncomfortable. The absence of consensus toward the expansionist policy of the United States resulted in half measures and contradictory positions that created often a weakened position on the international stage. The national tensions at play between expansionism and isolationism, manifest destiny and chauvinism, and protectionism and liberalism did not shake the foundation of the U.S. strategic autonomy. Washington did not trust any other state to share the burden of its security. Strategic autonomy was under pressure with the expansion of the U.S. sphere of interest and with the acquisition of additional territories. The evidence suggests that hegemonic autonomy

³⁹⁸ Frederick W. Marks III. "Morality as A Drive Wheel in the Diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt." *Diplomatic History* 2, no, 1 (January 1978): 45.

took greater importance during that period. The United States, with improved capabilities and low threat primary external threat, engaged in expansionism of both its territory and its sphere of influence (H_{1a}). To consolidate its supremacy as a regional power the United States secured strategic assets in Central America, the Caribbeans and the Pacific. Along with the development of blue-water capabilities for power projection, the United States used those geostrategic assets to improve anti-access and area-denial capabilities (H_{1b}). The dynamism of the United States on the world stage signalled the other great powers that the United States considered them as peers. The war against Spain and the world tour of the Great White Fleet were clear incidences where Washington tried to establish its regional supremacy and its status as a great power.

The 1880s and 1890s set a new beginning toward power acquisition and status recognition. The dynamics at play established the United States' supremacy in the Western Hemisphere. The removal of Spain's influence following the Spanish-American War and the abdication of British influence with the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty granted the United States a definitive credibility as a regional hegemon. The consolidation of that position with A2/AD strategies (H_{1b}) brought additional responsibilities to the United States as a security provider to the Western Hemisphere which increased the U.S. armed intervention in the region. In addition, to remove as much as possible the European influence the United States displaced the former colonists from being the main creditor to the Latin American republics. The Dollar Diplomacy put in place under President Taft provided additional weight to the regional dominance of the United States while removing part of the European influence.

While President Cleveland, McKinley, and Taft showed promising signs toward the liberalization of the U.S. economy. They saw their agenda die in Congress, end dramatically with an assassination, or be dismantled after lost elections. As a Progressive, T.R. Roosevelt stayed away from tariff reforms. While conscious of the benefits of liberalization, President Roosevelt was self-conscious of the limitations inherent to Republican protectionism.³⁹⁹ When Taft came to power and challenged the protectionist system, he did so without sufficient preparation and allies to generate effective changes which ultimately led him to align with the eastern conservatives of the Republican Party.⁴⁰⁰ Even though the Progressive Era could have led to important trade reforms, the period remained essentially under a protectionist system. The bilateral approach put in place by McKinley helped to maintain several good trade relations with some states, but overall, the tariff system shielded the U.S. economy from any tangible initiative of economic interdependence.

The strategic culture of the United States was also under transformation during that period. The peacetime demobilization and restraint gave place to a greater preparedness guided by the development of a blue-water navy. The requirement of regional supremacy and the territorial expansions overseas required greater naval capabilities, especially since the territory under U.S. control was stretching along the Ocean up to the Philippines. The strategic reality changed to a point where the peacetime culture would have been a threat to the security of the United States. The U.S. status had changed too greatly to remain demobilized and keep the forces to a minimum. The United States strategic culture following the Spanish-American War institutionalized a new approach to U.S. security. While previously the goal was to be non-threatening to the European

³⁹⁹ C. Donald Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation: A History of Trade Politics in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 138. Kindle.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 148. Kindle.

great power while asserting its control over the Western Hemisphere without the credibility to enforce that claim, after 1898, the United States maintained sufficient preparedness to maintain forces active in their colonial possessions which increased the credibility of its forces. However, it also increased the pressure on the existing forces. The prolonged insurrection in the Philippines, the enduring intervention in Cuba, and the array of troubles and revolutions in Latin America, all put strain on the U.S. military which had to improve its readiness to a greater degree than before. While Washington developed sufficient capabilities to be considered a great power, its capabilities were not sufficient to face what would come out of the Great War.

The system of checks and balances in the United States often made important changes slow and full of setbacks. The U.S. strategic culture remained dominated by a civilian subculture in which neutralism and isolationism were the keys to U.S. success. However, the cracks in that system were becoming apparent. The U.S. Army had new peacetime responsibilities and for the first time, they were targeted outward and not inward. This change brought a new dimension to the U.S. foreign policy in which the army played a greater role in dealing with overseas trouble within the U.S. sphere of interest. Inevitably, it brought additional pressure to increase military capabilities. However, Congress was still putting strains on the military budget. By the turn of the century, the United States was at a crossroads. Congressional hesitancy and divisions were only delaying the inevitability of a larger role for the United States to support the growing basis of its industry with favourable external markets.

Chapter 8: World War I - Reversal of Strategy (1910-1920)

In an era of accelerating changes and with the world powers on a collision course, the United States still felt protected by its neutrality policy. At the outbreak of the Great War, the American government used neutrality as a shield against the pressure to get involved in the conflict. The neutrality policy allowed the United States to stay out of the war for more than two years. Unwilling, but also unready to intervene, the United States was not indifferent to the Great War. The reports and stories coming from the European fronts were disturbing when not terrifying. Washington was more a natural ally to France and England than Germany. Diplomatic and economic ties were more integrated with France and England than with Germany.

The United States entered World War I on April 6, 1917. The American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) shifted the regional nature of the United States' power to an international force recognized as such. The Spanish-American War had already expanded the U.S. capabilities, but the AEF brought the United States Army to a new level. The integration of the AEF into the conflict was not without friction. General Pershing was unwilling to let the AEF be simply integrated within the British and French forces. This slowed the speed of the involvement of the United States on the Front. The training of the AEF was insufficient to face the Germans who had more than two years of fighting under their belt. Furthermore, Pershing's open warfare doctrine was maladapted to the attrition warfare of the Great War and increased the casualties unnecessarily.

Wilson's Presidency tested many of the limits of American foreign policy. First, President Wilson restrained American involvement and put to the test the limits of neutrality. Second, the U.S. military engaged in its biggest war effort overseas and learned to adapt to unseen war conditions. Third, President Wilson made diplomatic overtures beyond what any European power was willing to accept. Wilson broke the reciprocity of the Monroe Doctrine and reversed the situation that triggered its formulation. Europe was to stay out of the Western Hemisphere, but now the United States was involved in European affairs. President Wilson and General Pershing made sure to not commit to a formal alliance, but the U.S. participation in the Great War was an alliance in everything but in name. The intervention was based on "cooperation" and the AEF was "a separate and distinct component of the combined forces."¹ Finally, in the aftermath of the war, President Wilson made an international commitment to the League of Nations that engaged the United States as never before in world politics. Ultimately, Congress denied the U.S. engagement in the League of Nations and prolonged American isolationism.

The end of the Great War also marked the end of the Progressive Era in the United States. The election of 1918 shifted the political majority toward the Republicans in both houses. The political change short-circuited Wilson's plan for the end of the war. The League of Nations was no longer part of American interest despite Wilson's design. The Allies disregarded many of Wilson's Fourteen Points in the aftermath of the war. The end of all wars was a fable. The old patterns quickly came back. Diplomatic intrigues, colonial struggles, the competition for power, and inequality never went away. 116,516 American soldiers gave their lives to end the Great War.²

¹ Pershing quoted in R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*. (2nd ed.) (New York: Harper and Row, 1986): 977.

² More than 200000 soldiers were wounded. However, more than half were killed by the 1918 influenza. Garrett Peck. *The Great War in America: World War I and Its Aftermath*. (New York: Pegasus Books, 2018): 277, Scribd.

The U.S. participation was key in stopping the barbarous killing machine that was the Great War. President Wilson took part directly in the peace negotiations and tried to transform world politics. As with most revolutionary ideas, his did not yield unanimity.

While the United States came out of the war as a major power, victorious, and better equipped, some of the expected progress that should have emerged from the end of the war did not materialize. The Treaty of Versailles did not provide a viable peace. The United States returned to its previous isolationist stand and did not take part in the League of Nations so dear to President Wilson. Racial violence and riots plagued the United States during the summer of 1919. During the Red Summer, race riots erupted in twenty-five cities leading to episodes of lynchings across the country.³ The United States returned to their isolationist patterns and disengaged from world politics during the interwar period.

President Woodrow Wilson pushed early on for the liberalization of the U.S. economy. In less than a month, Wilson and the Democratic House reduced the average tariff “from around 40 percent to 29 percent and putting a number of previously protected products on the duty-free list.”⁴ Even though tariffs were the main source of federal revenue, new income taxes were introduced as a progressive measure to offset the revenue decrease from lowering tariffs.⁵ The reduction of the protectionist measures improved the status of the United States as a trading state (H_{TS}), but Washington still refrained from deepening the interdependence with the other major powers. The confluence of President Wilson’s economic reforms and the outbreak of the Great War set transatlantic trade to new highs. The American exporters benefited tremendously from the supply shortages between the belligerents. In addition, the troubles in Europe created a trade vacuum in Latin America which benefited the United States to replace the European exporters.⁶ Between the outbreak of the war in August 1914 and the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917, the United States capitalized on its neutrality in wartime (H_{EP2}) to grow its trade surplus. However, the U.S. neutrality reached its limits when the Germans took action against the U.S. trade imbalance in favor of the Allies eventually leading the United States to become a co-belligerent against Germany.

The U.S. participation in the Great War brought unprecedented challenges to the U.S. strategic autonomy up to this point. The war outbreak brought additional pressure toward carefully putting forward the United States neutrality (H_{2b}). The United States as a rising power without threat to its vital interest at the outbreak of the war could benefit more from neutrality than commitment. As a neutral state, the United States could maximize its trade. The United States geographic position made it a pivotal power in the war. As long as Washington could maintain the perception of neutrality, it would be able to reap the benefit of its neutrality. However, the U.S. neutrality was dubious and leaned increasingly more toward the Allies. The German campaign against the Atlantic shipping lanes progressively put pressure on the American economy to side with the Allies and enter the war. The threat to U.S. economic interest and the changing public opinion in favour of U.S. involvement allowed President Wilson to enter the war as a co-belligerent. The co-belligerent status was specifically designed as such to distance the United

³ 83 documented lynchings occurred during the Red Summer. See Peck. *The Great War in America*: 381, Scribd.

⁴ C. Donald Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation: A History of Trade Politics in America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 163. Kindle. In addition to the tariff reforms, Wilson lifted the legal restriction on national banks to finance trade transactions through foreign banks and allowed national banks to establish foreign branches. *Ibid.* 168.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.* 170.

States from formal involvement in an alliance. The United States sided with the Allies but did not become an ally. The U.S. participation was designed to preserve greater strategic autonomy than any other belligerents even though it diminished the coherence of the war effort.

The U.S. involvement in the Great War shook the U.S. strategic culture and national beliefs regarding the role of the United States in the World. While President Wilson and his followers were convinced that the United States had to play a pivotal role in world politics during the negotiation of the Treaty of Versailles, a different coalition thought otherwise back at home. The Republican leader in the Senate, Henry Cabot Lodge exploited the economic depression that was settling in following the War. Lodge accused Wilson of being more concerned with the recovery of Europe than with his own country's economy.⁷ The Republican nominee, Warren G. Harding, and his running mate Calvin Coolidge won in a landslide in the 1920 election on a protectionist and isolationist program. The election of the Harding ticket marked the end of U.S. interventionism beyond its sphere of influence and a return to isolationism (H_{2a}). However, President Wilson had challenged the Monroe Doctrine and the U.S. neutralism (H_{IB2}) that had been the trademark of U.S. foreign policy since 1823 in a fashion that set the seeds of a new American strategic culture that would wait another thirty years before becoming the core of U.S. foreign policy.

The Necessity to End Isolationism and Its Resistance

Avoiding mingling in international affairs was the path of least resistance for the United States at the beginning of the war. It had been rewarding in the past leading to diverse economic connections, and well-rounded trade partners. It helped the United States to manage an unstable environment in the Western Hemisphere without too much interference, and, to a certain degree, created an aura of mutual respect and shared understanding with the world great powers had developed toward the recognition of their own respective spheres of influence. However, that fragile equilibrium was breaking down, and at a rapid pace.

Neutrality was breaking down. Domestically, efforts to keep it intact were strong. Dissension was present, but not overwhelming. Anti-imperialists and expansionists were still debating the U.S. foreign policy. The Roosevelt Corollary established the United States as the master of the Western Hemisphere. The Lodge Corollary in 1912 reinforced even more the intent of supremacy of the United States in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. military capabilities were sufficient to provide area denial and anti-access to the shores of the Western Hemisphere. However, after the outbreak of the Great War, U.S. neutrality was held by a thread internationally. The Allied Powers were lobbying Washington to take part in the war. The reports from abroad progressively made public opinion tilted toward intervention. The preparedness movement put Washington in a war setting. The integration of the banking system into the war economy made the U.S. economy at risk. The submarine warfare orchestrated by Germany in the Pacific started to undermine U.S. neutrality at a rapid pace. The pressure generated by the German campaign was also straining the area denial capabilities of the United States. The German submarines were just a modern form of "*guerre de course*" without the old-time rewards from privateering. In addition, the Zimmerman Telegram, intercepted by the British in early 1917, made known the intention of Germany of using Mexico against the United States. Ultimately, the combination of those factors led President Wilson to declare war in April 1917 and to violate willingly one of the core elements of the Monroe Doctrine, non-intervention in European affairs.

⁷ Johnson. *The Wealth of a Nation*: 173.

The United States participation in the Great War was a strategic and doctrinal challenge principally due to the coalition aspect of the campaign. As a state who prioritized strategic autonomy above all else, participation in the first combined operation of such a large magnitude was inconceivable to the U.S. high command. General Pershing's insistence on a completely independent U.S. army was an obstacle to the strategy of the Supreme War Council. The U.S. participation in the war brought the necessary reinforcement to the European front to repeal the German Spring Offensive and win the Allied Hundred Days Offensive. Overall, the U.S. Army did not play a central role in the command of the Allied campaign, but the U.S. participation in the war was what transformed the possibility of an Allied victory.

Power Assessment: Becoming a World Power

In a classic U.S. peacetime policy, the American military suffered a cycle of restriction and cuts in their budget that brought back some of the progress that was made during and after the Spanish-American War. While some of the improvements that occurred during the Spanish-American War were designed to be ephemeral and reversed back to a quick demobilization. Militarism was not part of American strategic culture. While the nation had the manpower, the resources, and the engineering minds to become a rapid and imposing military power, political might was not interested in diverting state resources toward that effort. A limited and restrained military force was the de facto setting for the U.S. military. However, as in each outburst of military development in the wartime period, the Great War created the necessary pressure to bring the United States back as a credible and competitive great power. Hesitancy was enduring before the United States entered the war. Pacifists and isolationists in Congress kept at bay any commitment that would have precipitated the country into the war early, even though some of the warmongers were actively pursuing engagement as early as possible. President Wilson's pragmatism allowed him to navigate the events and choose the opportune moment to enter the war.

Industrialization and technical innovation revolutionized the power of the military. The pace of war accelerated along with its deadliness. Mechanization led to greater mobility. Communication technologies led to more reliable information, increase the rapidity of the ceasefire mechanism, prevented occurrences of friendly fire, and led to more efficient military operations. The destructiveness of the new weaponry that emerged during this period, including chemical weapons, armoured vehicles, airstrikes, and submarines, led to a total war that broke the balance of power in Europe. The progressive development of aeronautics led to the integration of aircraft into the U.S. military. President Roosevelt allowed the Signal Corps to form an aeronautical division in 1907.⁸ Innovations in the communications field had the potential to generate tremendous improvement on the strategic, operational, and tactical fronts. The military however benefited from those innovations mainly on the administrative and strategic sides until the Army adopted the battery-powered field phones in 1906.⁹ The acceleration of information delivery accelerated the pace of war too.

Economic mobilization, in wartime, became of particular concern during Great War. The war machine required to equip, feed, move and maintain two million men overseas required an industrial and agricultural basis with a lot of vitality and well-managed structure. From the giants

⁸ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 505, Scribd.

⁹ Rebecca Robbins Raines. *Gerring the Message Through: A Branch History of the U.S. Army Signal Corps*. (Washington: Center of Military History, 2011): 138.

of the industry in the larger cities to corn farmers of the rural areas, all were solicited toward the war effort more than ever before. The operational component of warfare, though always crucial, became even more crucial in the context of the war effort which mobilized not only the armed force but of the entire nation.

The Army had more difficulty to anticipate the war requirements and to assess the capability of the industry to respond to those requirements. Rather than thinking about “the inputs (raw materials, skilled labor, and production technology),” the Army was mainly focused on “the outputs (rifles, planes, tanks, blankets, shoes).”¹⁰ This created friction with the industry that were often unable to keep pace with the Army’s demands and which led over time to waste and artificially high price due to the inefficiency of the organization of the supply chain for the Army. The Navy was a little more conscientious regarding this aspect. The Navy Department and the Chamber of Commerce formed advisory committees in 1915 and 1916 to assess the challenges the war effort would impose on the industry in case of the involvement of the United States in World War I.¹¹ Assessment of the probable needs for further development and of the required resources for the maintenance of the fleet eased the production chain and diminished the strain on already limited resources.

The creation of the General Munitions Board (GMB) and the War Industries Board (WIB) in 1917 organized and structured the need of the military to avoid the requirement of the nationalization of some spheres of the industry to palliate the deficiency to meet the operational requirement of the military. However, the GMB and WIB had little authority and could not centralize much of the distribution of resources. Congress created the War Trade Board to deal with the Allied orders, but again the lack of authority of the organization limited severely its ability to manage the scarce resources.¹² Less than a year into the war, the United States was faced with a severe shortage of goods and supplies nationwide and for the military. Military expenditures skyrocketed during the war (see Table 8.1). The U.S. military expenditures at the end of the war were over thirty times higher than at the outbreak of the Great War. Another important change was that the military expenditures remained higher after the war contrary to the previous conflicts where they fell back to pre-war levels.

The morality of the army changed also. The drunks that came in the services were not sustained anymore by a daily ration of whiskey. Men in uniform could not be served alcohol since Congress made it illegal.¹³ However, this law would hardly apply overseas to an expeditionary force. French soldiers received daily rations of wine and cognac. The American soldiers soon emulated the French in their drinking habits. Nevertheless, the problem was much more under control than previously when drinking was allowed and encouraged through rations.

¹⁰ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 532, Scribd.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 532, Scribd.

¹² Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*:532, Scribd.

¹³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 211, Scribd.

Table 8.1: United States' Military Expenditures, 1910-1923

Period	War Department Expenditures	Navy Department Expenditures	Total Military Expenditures	Share of the Federal Budget
1909-1910	189823379	123173717	312997096	45.13%
1910-1911	197199491	119937644	317137135	45.88%
1911-1912	184122793	135591956	319714749	49.96%
1912-1913	202128711	133262862	335391573	46.29%
1913-1914	208349746	139682186	348031932	47.35%
1914-1915	202160134	141835654	343995788	45.23%
1915-1916	183176439	153853567	337030006	45.91%
1916-1917	377940870	239632757	617573627	31.23%
1917-1918	4869955285	1278740487	6148695772	48.44%
1918-1919	9009075789	2002310785	11011386574	59.47%
1919-1920	1621953095	786021456	2407974551	37.60%
1920-1921	1118076423	650373836	1768450259	34.57%
1921-1922	457756139	476775194	934531333	27.71%
1922-1923	397050596	333201862	730252458	22.16%

Source: The Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945: A Supplement to the Statistical Abstract of the United States* (Washington: U.S. Department of Commerce, 1949): 299-300.

Army

The Great War transformed the American military in multiple ways. At the naval level, the United States took the ambition to acquire a “navy second to none.” While Britain remained in control of the sea, the United States was not far behind at the end of the war. For the Army, the transformation was pervasive but less obvious and intentional. The U.S. tradition had been animated by a dynamic between peace force and urgency force. The peacetime army was maintained to a minimum and often led to Congressional cuts that destroyed the social fabric of the military forces leading to high rates of desertion and poor quality of life for the troops. In times of crisis and war, a large force was mobilized, ill-prepared, ill-equipped, disorganized, and less worthy of professionalism and strategic might. Washington improved the situation after the Spanish-American War. The acquisition of overseas territory displaced the role of the military away from the frontiers and the policing of internal troubles during peacetime. It fostered professionalism and maintained a sustainable level of funding for a professional regular force.

On May 18, 1917, President Wilson signed the Selective Service Act to mobilize his army for the Great War. It was the first national draft since the Civil War. The bill passed quickly in the House of Representatives on April 29 but stalled in the Senate. Ironically, Roosevelt’s allies slowed down the process by trying to implement a volunteer force led by Roosevelt who asked for additional responsibility in the war efforts.¹⁴

Army Doctrine

In an effort to improve the mobilization system of the Army major reforms were put in place at the beginning of the twentieth century The Dick Act of 1903 reformed the militia to improve the training and funding of the militias. The Militia Act of 1908 removed the geographic

¹⁴ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 139, Scribd.

limitations of the National Guard to increase the capability to mobilize more efficiently without breaking down the area-specific unity of the troops. However, the compulsory overseas service included in the 1908 law was judged unconstitutional by the attorney general in 1912.¹⁵ Reforms to diminish desertion and increase recruitment were put in place. General Leonard Wood's doctrine emphasized the development of the reserves. Wood favoured three years of active duty in the Regular Army for the enlistees followed by three years in a reserve.¹⁶ In addition, a national militia would supplant the state militia except for frontier defence.¹⁷ However, nothing was done to develop "organized field armies, army corps, combat divisions, or brigades"¹⁸

The military planners at the War Department were focused on military operations in the Western Hemisphere. The War Plan Tan focused on the counterinsurgency support to Cuba and the War Plan Green looked at an intervention in Mexico.¹⁹ *The Organization of the Land Forces of the United States* published by the General Staff in 1912 underlined the requirement for the deployment of overseas forces in the Philippines, Panama, Oahu, Alaska, Guantanamo, and Puerto Rico.²⁰ Still not a world approach, it was a hemispheric one with the Panama Canal at its heart. As a strategic highway between the two oceans, the Panama Canal represented the core interest in the Western Hemisphere. It also marked a displacement of security interests well beyond the coasts of the United States. This displacement underlined the increased confidence in the United States as regional and world power.

The 1912 General Staff's Report also underlined the high maintenance cost of the army. The previous decades of peace demobilization and disarmament were no longer viable with the increasing responsibilities of the United States. The outbreak of the Great War made this dynamic even less viable. The importance of the reserve system and improved training that already became significant in the 1880s and 1890s was now becoming part of the mechanisms to provide a more efficient, less wasteful military machine that would be sustainable even through peacetime according to the General Staff Report.²¹ Efficient maintenance costs required good training and proper equipment. Congress had to appropriate adequate funds to maintain an adequate force.

The period of neutrality after the beginning of the war (1914-1917) yielded little changes to the military doctrine. The lack of urgency due to the comfortable position of neutrality led to a lack of preparation, an undersized army in comparison with the European mobilization, a deficient organization in the War Department, insufficient reserves of armament and equipment, and strategic inertia toward what was happening in the fields of Europe.²² The entry of the United States into the war changed the dynamic. General Pershing's strategy at the beginning of the war was risky and cost many American lives. His open warfare doctrine did not understand the attrition nature of the Great War. General Pershing repeated the errors the Allies made at the Somme in

¹⁵ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 501, Scribd.

¹⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 339.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Mark Ethan Grotelueschen. *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 12.

¹⁹ Allen R. Millet. "Cantigny, 28-31 May 1918." In *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*. Edited by Charles E. Heller & William A. Stofft. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986): 149.

²⁰ General Staff. *Report on the Organization of the Land Forces of the United States*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912).

²¹ General Staff. *Report on the Organization of the Land Forces of the United States*: 29.

²² Grotelueschen. *The AEF Way of War*: 10-11.

1916 during the American initial battles at Château-Thierry, Belleau Wood, and Soissons.²³ Pershing was convinced that entrenchments could be overcome by a “spirit of offensive—mobile combat—with stress on individual marksmanship.”²⁴ Pershing’s initial failure was principally attributable to his refusal of integrating the command of the U.S. forces with the Allies. U.S. troops would have benefited from the three years of experience of the Allied corps in the trenches of Europe in integrating the Allied divisions. However, as part of the logic of maintaining the logic of strategic autonomy deeply embedded in U.S. foreign policy, Pershing was unwavering when it comes to upholding the U.S. operational independence.

Pershing’s position regarding the independence of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) yielded positive strategic outcomes as the war progressed. The rejection of “amalgamation” blocked the rapid integration of the AEF which affected the intensity and duration of the American involvement at the beginning since it could not integrate the already existing infrastructure of the Allied Supreme Command. Due to the rapid offensive by Ludendorff in March 1918, Pershing ended up compromising on the non-amalgamation of his troops in order to be able to take part in the Spring Offensive.²⁵ However, during General Foch’s campaign, Pershing opened an independent American front at St. Mihiel. The following independent American actions allowed Pershing to develop an American logistical, tactical and strategic expertise in the context of the total war of the Great War. In addition, an independent AEF gave a greater voice to President Wilson during the peace negotiation.

The commitment to the Great War was formative strategically for Washington. The United States had to mobilize new military personnel at a rapid pace, acquire and produce equipment and build a war industry, train a massive force to fight against seasoned and well-organized armies, deploy a vast force overseas, and adapt to the new conditions and new strategies to which they had not been exposed before.

Army Power

The American Army did not have much potential to participate in an expedition of the scale of what the Great War required. In 1914, the Army had 92,482 soldiers on active duty stationed along Native American threats long foregone, dispersed in the Philippines, Hawaii, China and the Panama Canal.²⁶ Considering the dispersion and the relatively small number of troops, the American Army was not a threat to the European powers. In comparison, in 1914, Great Britain had an army of 735,000 men; Germany had a peacetime army of about 800,000 men which reached 1,750,000 first-line troops with the reserves and could reach millions more of “second-class territorial troops;” and France stood around 800,000 men also which could reach 1.5 million with

²³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 195, Scribd.

²⁴ Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*. 976. *The Field Service Regulation (FSR)* was the main document for field commanders and stated in clear terms that “*Decisive results are obtained only by the offensive*” Quoted in Millet. “Cantigny, 28-31 May 1918.” 152.

²⁵ David F. Trask. *The AEF and Coalition Warming, 1917-1918*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993): 170.

²⁶ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 66, Scribd.

the reserves.²⁷ By the end of the War, the Allied forces had mobilized 42.1 million men versus 22.8 for the Central powers.²⁸

Congress authorized a first expansion of the Army in 1916, a year after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. The National Defense Act of 1916 authorized an increase of the peace strength of 175,000 over five years, and the army would be expandable to 286,000 men while the National Guard would increase gradually to 400,000 troops.²⁹ The force would progressively expand to half a million soldiers by 1921. In April 1917, the U.S. force numbered 122,588 regulars, 80,446 men from the National Guard, and 101,174 in state services.³⁰ To quickly mobilize a force able to break the German front, Congress passed the Selective Service Act in May 1917. The Selective Service Act established:

1) The Regular Army, to be raised immediately to the full wartime strength of 286,000 authorized by the National Defense Act of 1916; 2) the National Guard, also to be expanded immediately to the authorized strength of approximately 450,000; and 3) a National Army (The National Defense Act had called it the Volunteer Army), to be created in two increments of 500,000 men each at such time as the President should determine.³¹

Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison believed that preparedness was lagging. He developed the *Statement of a Proper Military Policy for the United States*, in which he established that the Regular Army should be more than doubled from 100,000 to 230,000 men.³² Wilson had already agreed to 142,000 men, but Garrison went further and declared that a force of 500,000 was necessary for war readiness and that an annual increment of 133,000 men per year was necessary to do so.³³ Secretary of States Hay proposed a different approach. For him, the strengthening of the National Guard was preferable.³⁴ At first, Congress approved Hay's plan. However, the sinking of the liner *Sussex* which killed eighty people including two Americans triggered a response from the Senate to bring up the Regular Army to 261,000 men.³⁵

Integration of technological innovation accelerated at the beginning of the 1900s. Industrialization brought better and faster machine tooling, increased metallurgy, and more stable and precise chemistry which all allowed the production of better, more precise, and more efficient weaponry. A series of initiatives were put forward by the War Department to bring the United States to the forefront of military technological development rather than integration of major innovation well behind all the other great powers. While still behind most European powers in terms of technological development, the War Department and Congress were starting to

²⁷ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 336; Hew Strachan. "Pre-War Military Planning (Great Britain)." *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* Last updated February 7, 2018. https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/pre-war_military_planning_great_britain.

²⁸ Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*. 990.

²⁹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 348.; Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 518, Scribd; John S. D. Eisenhower. *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002): 23.

³⁰ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 357-358.

³¹ Matloff. *American Military History*. 374.

³² Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 344.

³³ *Ibid.* 344.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 345.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 347.

understand the added value of being competitive in terms of innovation rather than slowly integrating proven and tested technologies developed by other powers.

The adoption of the Model 1903 Springfield rifle and the Model 1902 3-inch gun field gun as the main service weapon in 1903 brought a precise and efficient weapon to the Army.³⁶ In terms of machine guns, the Army adopted the Benet-Mercie which was substandard to other American-made machine guns that were widely used by European powers in the battlefields of World War I, including the Browning, Maxim, and Lewis guns.³⁷ The artillery had successfully integrated shells, recoil mechanisms, and optical sights to ensure greater precision. In combination with improved machinery, the U.S. Artillery Corps was competitive with comparable French 75-mm guns considered the premium fieldpiece at the time.³⁸ At the beginning of the war, the stock of weapons was low. On May 10, 1915, the army had in stock “285,000 Springfield rifles, 400 light artillery pieces, and 150 heavy field guns.”³⁹ The Army started the war with less than 1500 machine guns on hand which represented around four machine guns per infantry regiment.⁴⁰ While the United States had a surplus of steel and a strong industry when it entered the war, it had not put in place the necessary infrastructure to build all the required equipment for the conduct of a war of the magnitude of the Great War. Automatic rifles, machine guns, munitions, mortars, artillery, tanks, airplanes, trucks, and gas masks were in insufficient quantities and required the help of the French and British to sustain the American demand. The Army began the war with enough artillery to equip 220,000 men, and the arms industry was not able to keep pace with the war effort which forced the AEF to use European artillery pieces.⁴¹ U.S. Tank Corps had to use French tanks.⁴²

Engagement in the World War presented its load of challenges. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF) presented many logistical problems that the United States had never faced before. To dispatch and equip thirty-seven divisions across the Atlantic was an unprecedented challenge for the United States. War stories had reached the United States and troubled the mind of many Americans. The idea of facing combat-tested and well-trained Germans on unknown battlefields was scary and created much uncertainty for both soldiers and command. Because of the implicit logistical challenges and the problems linked to operations, the Allies negotiated for the amalgamation of the U.S. forces with British and French ones. This demand created much opposition led by the AEF commander, John J. Pershing.

The divergence between Pershing and the allied command created operational and strategic glitches. The British command wanted a quick amalgamation of the U.S. forces. It proposed to ship all the infantry battalions of ten divisions to France in British vessels.⁴³ After heated negotiation, the British agreed to bring six U.S. divisions to the continent, American cargos would bring the equipment, the British would train them, and they would integrate the AEF after their training.⁴⁴ General Pershing was opposed to the training by European forces since their morale

³⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 318; Grotelueschen. *The AEF Way of War*: 13.

³⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 502, Scribd.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ John J. Pershing. *My Experience in the World War*. (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1931): 26.

⁴⁰ Edward M. Coffman. *The War to End All Wars: The American Experience in World War I*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968): 38.

⁴¹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 362.

⁴² Matloff. *American Military History*. 376,

⁴³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 549, Scribd.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

was so low that they could not influence the American troops in any positive way.⁴⁵ Pershing attitude polarized the U.S. command. General March clashed with Pershing to assert who was in command of the Army.

While the mobilization and command of the AEF were problematic and created tensions, the requirement to support the AEF was putting considerable strain on American resources. The logistic behind the supply chain of the AEF was impressive and required well-timed and well-managed operations. General Pershing put Major General James G. Harbord in charge of the Service of Supply (SOS). His more realistic approach to resources management stabilized the before overdemanding and sometimes wasteful approach. In combination, the American war industry had to reallocate and require resources far beyond its capacity. Readiness was the principal problem of the U.S. forces in 1917. The 1st Division embarked from New York to discover that none of the weapons they were supposed to use were familiar and that they would not start in the trenches of France but conducting drills behind the front in Lorraine.⁴⁶

As the first armed intervention in Europe, American participation in the Great War created considerable resistance among the population. During the entire war period, the armed forces had to deal with 337,649 draft deserters of whom 170,000 were still at large in 1920.⁴⁷ The draft provided sixty-seven percent of the armed forces for the war.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Congress broadened the age limit to serve between 18 and 45 allowing the armed forces to mobilize 2,758,542 men throughout the war.⁴⁹ At the time of the Versailles Peace Conference, the U.S. Armed Forces totalled 4,800,000 soldiers, sailors, and marines among which 2 million fought in Europe.⁵⁰

The end of the war on November 11, 1918, led to a rapid demobilization. Wilson had turned toward diplomacy and the League of Nations at the end of the war. By June 30, 1919, 2,602,218 enlisted men and 128,436 officers received their discharge papers.⁵¹ A standing army of about 130,000 men remained in service by January 1920.⁵²

Navy

When the HMS *Dreadnought* hit the water in 1906, the world's naval security dynamic changed. World powers entered a new naval arms race. The post-*Dreadnought* era became another opportunity to shine for the United States. Fortunately, the U.S. policymakers did not repeat the same mistakes of the past and broke the pattern of peacetime retraction of naval development. However, the naval arms race between Britain and Germany was amongst the early signs of troubles festering in Europe.

Europe was leading the way in naval development. Germany and Britain had filled their ports with bigger vessels equipped with more firepower than ever before. Throughout World War I, the confrontation between those two massive fleets was expected and feared. The clash finally

⁴⁵ Peck, *The Great War in America*: 196, Scribd.

⁴⁶ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 356.

⁴⁷ Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*: 28.

⁴⁸ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 357.

⁴⁹ Coffman, *The War to End All Wars*: 29.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 357; Peck, *The Great War in America*: 8, Scribd. The Army alone totalled 3,685,458 officers and enlisted men. See David E. Johnson. *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U.S. Army, 1917-1945*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2003): 13, Scribd.

⁵¹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 396.

⁵² *Ibid.*

occurred at the Battle of Jutland between May 31 and June 1, 1916. Two months after Jutland, unprecedented naval expansion was voted by Congress. The Big Navy Act of 1916 was designed to protect the Atlantic against any potential victor that would be tempted to cross the ocean when the war ended.

The Germans polluted the waters with close to 200 submarines.⁵³ The indiscriminate campaign against all shipping in the water off the British Islands and the coasts of France was costly to American commerce. The Germans thought they could exhaust the Allies' trade, but in the end, they provoked Washington to enter the war. In April 1917, the German U-boats sunk almost 900,000 tons of Allied and neutral shipping.⁵⁴ Submarine warfare allowed the German Navy to destroy the Allies' commerce, but it forced Washington to build quickly a merchant navy. Congress appropriated seven billion dollars in bonds to build a merchant navy able to support the war effort.⁵⁵

Naval Doctrine

The requirement for a bigger navy came through a new interpretation of the strategic goals of the United States. Alfred Thayer Mahan underlined the strategic importance of sea control, strategic chokepoints, and the concentration of forces. The battlefleet support was inadequate. The Navy had too many domestic bases, and not enough smaller vessels to protect them. The United States had ten major bases on its coasts.⁵⁶ The General Board calculated that the fleet required an additional 125 cruisers, destroyers, and auxiliary vessels.⁵⁷ While not sufficiently equipped to man all ten domestic bases, the United States required overseas bases to support their fleet while on missions. The expansion of U.S. foreign trade along with the expansion of foreign navies including Germany, Japan and Great Britain represented a combined risk that required credible capabilities to deter those powers to interfere with U.S. trade and interests.

Mahan insisted that if Washington wanted to maintain its commercial position, it had to "maintain general and lasting command of the sea."⁵⁸ Naval strategic planning before the Great War was oriented toward the protection of the U.S. colonial possessions. The *color plans* developed by the Naval War College and the General Board of the Navy were designed responses to offensives against U.S. interests. The ORANGE PLAN was designed to protect the Philippines and Guam against the Japanese. Japan was becoming a peer competitor in Asia and had gained confidence during the Russo-Japanese War. The BLACK PLAN aimed at placing the Atlantic fleet strategically in the Caribbeans to intercept a German offensive against the Panama Canal. The RED PLAN was aimed at the British. Those exercises of careful and thoughtful strategic planning for the conduct of defensive and offensive operations with concentrated forces provided the U.S. Navy structure and logical demands for appropriation that reduced the Congressional resistance toward the construction of capital ships.

The naval base development became a strategic issue to establish the predominance of the United States in the Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. Subic Bay and

⁵³ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 369.

⁵⁴ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 372.

⁵⁵ Matloff. *American Military History*. 373.

⁵⁶ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 486, Scribd.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: 488, Scribd.

⁵⁸ David F. Trask. "The U.S. Navy in a World at War, 1914-1919." In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 169.

Cavite Bay became the Far East bases of the United States, and Pearl Harbor became the Pacific base of the United States in 1909. Cruising stations were developed through the 1890s to reinforce the security of the main bases and organized and supplied the fighting fleet.⁵⁹ The significance of the overseas bases surpassed the strategic importance of the home base.

The Great War forced the United States to develop naval strategic adaptability. The neutrality period (1914-1917) and the belligerency period (1917-1919) provoked different approaches to naval strategy. The neutrality period served to establish a strong anti-access and area denial strategy to protect the Western Hemisphere from the contagion of the war. The unrestricted submarine warfare and the Zimmerman Telegram demonstrated that the risk was tangible. Admiral William S. Benson, the first chief of naval operations, and Rear Admiral William S. Sims, the American officer in London mandated to evaluate the naval requirement for war, reoriented the *color plans* toward the reality that surfaced during the Great War.⁶⁰ The needs of the war were simpler than what was expected. The U.S. strategy shifted to a convoy strategy during the belligerency period. Mahan had argued that a *guerre de course* could never be decisive in a naval contest between great powers; however, the Germans demonstrated that it could be costly and advantageous in a war where most actions were on the European continent. Admiral Jellicoe, the First Lord of the British Navy, admitted in April 1917 that if the situation did not change with the German U-boat campaign, Britain would be forced to capitulate by the fall.⁶¹ Consequently, Washington dispatched destroyers and other anti-submarine vessels to Europe to conduct convoys. The strategy was successful. The methodic application of convoys strategies combined with the slowing down of U-boats production reduced considerably the Allied losses.⁶² In addition, the U.S. Navy led the ambitious project of building a mine barrage across the North Sea between the Orkney Islands and Norway laying down 56,600 of the 70,000 mines.⁶³ The barrage did not have a significant impact on the German U-boat. In this era of capital ships, it was ironic that the smaller vessels ended up being the most significant. The U.S. capital ships did not even engage the enemy during the war.⁶⁴

In 1919, the U.S. naval strategy transferred its focus toward the Pacific. The Navy deployed 846,000 tons of capital ships in the Pacific while maintaining 682,000 tons in the Atlantic.⁶⁵ This division of the forces was logically conceived to provide offensive superiority in the Pacific against Japan while maintaining defensive superiority in the Atlantic against the European threat. However, at the same moment, the rest of the world was also realizing that they had a problem with the militarization of the oceans. This led to international negotiations toward setting limits on armament. While the United States and Japan were set on getting parity with Great Britain, the negotiation of the Washington Conference of 1921-22 led to the Five-Power Treaty that limited the number of capital ships of each state. The aims of Secretary of States Charles Evans Hughes were the “reduction of naval spending, the safeguarding of American interests in the Far East, and

⁵⁹ William Edmund Livezey. *Mahan on Sea Power*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980): 244-45.

⁶⁰ Trask. “The U.S. Navy in a World at War, 1914-1919.” 173-174.

⁶¹ Craig L. Symonds. *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy*. (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995): 128.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ The Navy had to dispose mines to every 300 feet at depths of 45, 160, and 250 feet in an area of 240 miles across and 15 miles wide. See *ibid.*; and Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*. 977.

⁶⁴ Symonds. *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy*. 130.

⁶⁵ Trask. “The U.S. Navy in a World at War, 1914-1919.” 180.

the dissolution of the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902.”⁶⁶ The 5:5:3 ratio that fixed the British and U.S. levels of capital ships to 525,000 tons each and Japan at 315,000 tons was a success for Hughes.⁶⁷

Naval Power

The naval arms race between Germany and Great Britain put important pressure on the development of the U.S. Navy. While other powers such as France developed alternative approaches with the *Jeune École*, Washington adhered to Mahan’s strategy that demanded a strong blue-water navy able to compete with the other powers. However, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill “vowed to outbuild Germany two for one.”⁶⁸ To focus the British forces on Europe, London formed the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1904, legitimized American control in the Western Hemisphere after the Venezuelan crisis, and drew closer to France. With the British retreat from the Pacific and the Caribbean in addition to the U.S. overseas possessions, Washington had to assume more naval responsibilities. London had been assuming much of the oceanic stability that benefited the United States since the inception of the Monroe Doctrine.

Table 8.2: Comparative Approaches to the Naval Development Leading to the 1916 Naval Act

Categories of ships	Gen. Program 5-years	B’d’s Program 5-years	Admin.’s Program 5-years	Compromise Bill 1-year	Senate Program 3-years	Final Act 3-years
Battleships	10	10			10	10
Battle cruisers	6	6		5	6	6
Scout cruisers	10	10		4	10	10
Destroyers	50	50		10	50	50
Fleet submarines	9	15			9	9
Coast submarines	58	85		50	58	58
Miscellaneous	13	10		3	14	14

Source: Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *The Rise of American Naval Power 1776-1918*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939): 340; Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press, 2012): 515, Scribd.

While the United States had resisted the urge to engage in the massive construction of capital ships until the 1880s, the pace was effervescent at the turn of the century. Washington launched its first dreadnought, the USS *Michigan* in January 1910; three more were commissioned the next year; ten more over the next five years.⁶⁹ By 1916, Wilson announced that “there is no other Navy in the world that has to cover so great an area, an area of defense, as the American Navy.”⁷⁰ Congress responded positively to this announcement and agreed with the executive assessment regarding the need for a bigger navy which led to the Naval Act of 1916 that approved the construction of 162 vessels, 16 of which would be capital ships.⁷¹ The General Board was

⁶⁶ Branden Little. “An Evolving Navy of Great Complexity, 1919-1941.” In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 183.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 183; Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 230.

⁶⁸ Symonds. *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy*: 120.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Philip T. Rosen. “The Treaty Navy, 1919-1937.” In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 221.

⁷¹ Rosen. “The Treaty Navy, 1919-1937.” 221.

recommending further development with the creation of a fleet of sixty capital ships by 1925.⁷² The development of the U.S. Navy became animated by various development plans, additional Congressional appropriation, and rapid growth of forces that had new and bigger responsibilities since the war in Europe was only creating less security in the world's oceans. During the war, the officer corps expanded from 4400 to 23000 and the enlisted men rise from 56000 to 500000.⁷³ The Act of August 29, 1916, planned an extensive naval building program in a short period. After many contending proposals, the Navy had finally a plan for the war. The Naval Act of 1916 was approved by Congress by a vote of 283 to 50 and by the Senate by 71 to 8. The plan set impressive targets for the U.S. Navy, enough to make it stand against any European power (See Table 8.2). However, the United States entered the war without a single of those vessels ready.

While the motivation for submarine development was low since they did not present much commercial interest, the government had to step in to ensure the technological innovation related to submarine development. The technical challenges associated with the development of submarines were quite important to make them proficient in transoceanic warfare. The propulsion problems, the dual use of diesel and electric engines, the air purification system, and the solidity of the hull among many other technical difficulties to allow for prolonged deployment at sea. In 1914, the Navy had thirty-four submarines which made it the fourth largest in the world at the time.⁷⁴

Substantial changes had occurred in the last decades in order to make the U.S. Navy a world-class navy. The budget had grown substantially, the number of vessels was now able to compare fairly to any other navies, and the size and equipment of the vessels made them a credible threat. From 10 to 15 thousand-ton battleships in 1900, already in 1914, 31000-ton battleships were part of the fleet.⁷⁵ Progressively, coal was replaced by oil in the fleet vessels. Submarine warfare changed the way naval warfare was conducted. The *guerre de course* era had evolved into submarine warfare and the *wolfsack* tactics of the Germans which acted with the same intention of terrorizing sea transport and increasing the cost of transport. By the end of the War, Washington ranked second to the British and in consideration of the ships under construction, it would surpass Britain (see Table 8.3).⁷⁶

World War I influenced a lot the development of cargo fleets in the United States. Nearly all the cargo vessel transiting in the Atlantic were American, and only five percent of the cargo was carried by Allied vessels.⁷⁷ However, at the beginning of the war, that situation was highly problematic since cargo was piling up in the ports of the American East Coast. The difficulty to support and maintain the troops overseas became dire and required an important restructuring and development of the merchant navy to maintain the war effort. The logistical requirements to supply ultimately 2 million men of the A.E.F. fighting in Europe changed the merchant navy

⁷² Trask. "The U.S. Navy in a World at War, 1914-1919." 172.

⁷³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 539, Scribd

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 491, Scribd.

⁷⁵ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 453, Scribd.

⁷⁶ Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *Toward a New Order of Sea Power 1918-1922*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946): 51-54.

⁷⁷ Peyton C. March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932): 95.

between 1917 and 1920. In 1918, the shipyards in America produced 533 ships, and the following year the building of ships doubled to 1180 ships.⁷⁸

Table 8.3: United States Capital Ships Built, Building, and Authorized, January 1, 1919.

<i>Ship Built</i>	<i>Displacement (tons)</i>	<i>Year authorized</i>	<i>Year Completed</i>
<i>Michigan</i>	16,000	1905	1910
<i>South Carolina</i>	16,000	1905	1910
<i>Delaware</i>	20,000	1906	1910
<i>North Dakota</i>	20,000	1907	1910
<i>Utah</i>	21,825	1908	1911
<i>Florida</i>	21,825	1908	1911
<i>Arkansas</i>	26,000	1909	1912
<i>Wyoming</i>	26,000	1909	1912
<i>Texas</i>	27,000	1910	1914
<i>New York</i>	27,000	1910	1914
<i>Nevada</i>	27,500	1911	1916
<i>Oklahoma</i>	27,500	1911	1916
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	31,400	1911	1916
<i>Arizona</i>	32,000	1911	1916
<i>Mississippi</i>	32,000	1914	1917
<i>New Mexico</i>	32,000	1914	1918
<i>Ship Building or authorized</i>			Percentage completed
<i>Idaho</i>	32,000	1914	99.1
<i>Tennessee</i>	32,300	1915	60.7
<i>California</i>	32,300	1915	53.6
<i>Maryland</i>	32,600	1916	39.9
<i>West Virginia</i>	32,600	1916	19.0
<i>Colorado</i>	32,600	1916	6.8
<i>Washington</i>	32,600	1916	4.3
<i>South Dakota</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>No. 50 [unnamed]</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>Montana</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>North Carolina</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>No. 53 [unnamed]</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>No. 54 [unnamed]</i>	43,200	1916	0
<i>Lexington</i>	43,500	1916	0
<i>Constellation</i>	43,500	1916	0
<i>Saratoga</i>	43,500	1916	0
<i>Ranger</i>	43,500	1916	0
<i>Constitution</i>	43,500	1916	0
<i>No. 6 [unnamed]</i>	43,500	1916	0

Source: Harold Sprout & Margaret Sprout. *Toward a New Order of Sea Power 1918-1922*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946): 52.

The efficiency and organization of the shipyard truly passed into the industrialized era making the United States a naval merchant superpower. The rapid development of the merchant marine eliminated the reliance on the British marine to cover the shipping operations. The requirements for shipping resources across the Atlantic during the war period generated many changes in the role and nature of the U.S. Navy. In 1918, the federal government had the largest merchant fleet in the country. The government “confiscated, bought, and chartered 700 vessels;” and “built 1000

⁷⁸ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 106, Scribd.

bulk cargo carriers.”⁷⁹ Because of the German submarine warfare, the Navy Department modified its shipbuilding policy toward building antisubmarine warfare (ASW) vessels adding 51 new destroyers to the fleet.⁸⁰ In combination with light cruisers, converted yachts, and wooden subchasers, the ASW fleet totalled nearly 800 vessels by the end of the war.⁸¹

The integration of aircraft in the Navy was not a priority in the 1910s. Only eight aircraft were part of the Navy before World War I.⁸² Dirigibles were still considered the best option for naval tasks. Supporters of further aviation integration progressively gained support from Congress and the General Board and finally granted one million dollars to build fifty airplanes and three dirigibles.⁸³ However, by 1918, the Navy Department had built over 1700 aircraft.⁸⁴

Air Force

Airplanes were first introduced in the U.S. Army in the Signal Corps for observation and messenger service.⁸⁵ Aviation received little support from the government at first. The Signal Corps started its aeronautic endeavours with the introduction of Dirigible Number 1 during the summer of 1908 and the first flight trial began in September 1908 with the Wrights brothers’ airplane in Fort Myer, Virginia.⁸⁶ The first Air Squadron was formed in Texas in December 1913 with eight early Curtiss biplanes.⁸⁷ The sheer size of the squadron led to its disappearance after its first deployment in Mexico in 1916 where none of the airplanes survived.⁸⁸ While the military use of airplanes was still experimental at this point, their share value as reconnaissance tools was soon acknowledged by the army. The nascent aeronautic endeavours had two major problems, planes and pilots. The destruction of planes and the death of pilots occurred faster than they could be replaced.

With improvements in airplane technology and improvement of the training of pilots, the loss became manageable and aviation in the Army could expand. At the beginning of 1917, the Signal Corps Aviation Section had fifty-five operational airplanes.⁸⁹ Overall, the Army had in its possession between 200 to 300 airplanes when it declared war.⁹⁰ The projection for the construction of additional airplanes was too optimistic and too ambitious. With the aim to “darken the skies of Europe” with airplanes, the French Premier, Alexandre Ribot asked for 4,500 planes in the year following the U.S. entry into the war.⁹¹ The demand was too ambitious and did not take into account the U.S. own needs. On July 24, Congress appropriated 640 million dollars for military aviation and the Signal Corps progressively lost its central role in its development after

⁷⁹ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 539, Scribd.

⁸⁰ 51 new 1,200 tons built in an average of seventeen days. See *ibid.* 539.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.* 492.

⁸³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 492. Scribd.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 542.

⁸⁵ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 334.

⁸⁶ Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 128-129.

⁸⁷ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 505, Scribd; Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 148.

⁸⁸ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 505.

⁸⁹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 362.

⁹⁰ Johnson. *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*: 73. Scribd.

⁹¹ Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 191-192; Johnson. *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*: 76. Scribd.

General Pershing created the Air Service, AEF.⁹² Even with those funds, the production was lagging behind.

Along with the establishment of the forced draft, Washington appropriated about a billion dollars to grow airplane production.⁹³ It took more than ten months before the first aviation unit began active operation in France.⁹⁴ General March granted the Air Corps a separate organization to allow its expansion and development in a way coherent with the requirement of air support and air operations.⁹⁵ On May 19, 1918, aviation was separated from the Signal Corps to be reassigned to its own organizations, the Bureau of Aircraft Production and the Department of Military Aeronautics which made the Air Service an “an independent arm of the Service.”⁹⁶

Lieutenant Colonel William Mitchell was charged to support Pershing’s army with an air force. With few resources, Mitchell was able to assemble by April 1918 an air service command and numerous pursuit squadrons.⁹⁷ Pilots grew from seventy-five pilots to 11,425 by the end of the war.⁹⁸ With domestic production unable to reach its goals, the American Air Service received 4,791 airplanes from France, 261 from Britain, 19 from Italy, and 1,216 from the United States.⁹⁹

Threat Assessment: Regional Instability and Europe Under Fire

President Wilson came to power with the intent of breaking the “dollar diplomacy” implemented by his predecessor. The role of debt collector for bankers and concession hunters that came to emerge from Taft’s dollar diplomacy was judged immoral by Wilson. Wilson and his Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan “intended to replace money with morals.”¹⁰⁰ The Great War caught most of the American attention in terms of security between 1914 and 1919. However, if Wilson did not have to turn his gaze toward Europe, much of his foreign policy would have been oriented toward the stabilization of Latin America and might have involved further interventions.

Wilson came to power as a fervent defender of the Monroe Doctrine. However, his foreign policy denatured the orientation of the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt and Taft had already engaged in interventionist policy to protect U.S. interests and removed the financial leverage of the European powers over the weaker states of the Western Hemisphere. Wilson decided to end the “dollar diplomacy” of his predecessors and to target what he conceived as the source of the economic downfall of many of those weak republics, a stable government. Wilson used non-recognition or the threat of non-recognition to create pressure on the unstable republics of Latin America and the Caribbeans.

In Europe, Wilson had the difficult task to maintain neutrality after the outbreak of the war. Neutrality was maintained until April 1917. For the first time, the United States armed forces set foot on the European continent. Against all odds, nearly a hundred years after the inception of the Monroe Doctrine, Washington was intervening in the internal affairs of Europe without a credible

⁹² Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 193.

⁹³ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 363.

⁹⁴ Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 173.

⁹⁵ Peyton C. March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932): 11.

⁹⁶ March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. 198.

⁹⁷ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 208, Scribd.

⁹⁸ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 363.

⁹⁹ Johnson. *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*: 80.

¹⁰⁰ Howard Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy: Volume II from 1897*. (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988): 306.

threat of retribution in the Western Hemisphere. The United States was in control of its sphere of influence to a greater extent than ever. While President Wilson attempted to maintain the United States involved in world politics at the end of the war, his ideals were not shared by a sufficient majority yet in the United States.

The Western Hemisphere

With the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914, the security of Latin America became even more of a priority. The canal transformed the U.S. foreign policy in two major ways. First, the United States could not forego the instability of the region and would become interventionist at every sign of instability threatening the viability of the canal operation and control. Second, it created a new hierarchic relationship with Latin America. Washington self-proclaimed its role as a security provider that created involvement in all the spheres of Latin America. The economy and political development of all the Latin American states became vulnerable to Washington's intervention.

Washington's role in his sphere of influence began to be qualified as "imperialist." The "dollar diplomacy" and "cowboy diplomacy" of the United States at the turn of the century transformed the natural pattern of development of Latin American republics.¹⁰¹ Panama, Cuba, and Nicaragua had their political transformation modified by U.S. intervention that prohibited the natural course of the transformation of the political system toward a system designed to serve the American interest. As part of the A2/AD strategy of the United States, the interventions in Latin America and most of all in the Caribbean were designed to prohibit the European intervention that had been the predominant pattern of diplomacy in the region. U.S. military presence was a high barrier to entry to the European powers to influence the faith of the small republics of Latin America.

President Wilson attempted to correct the mischiefs of *dollar diplomacy*, but his government ended up intervening in Panama, Nicaragua, Haiti, Santo Domingo, and Mexico. Under the guise of morality, his government tried to impose democracies by the establishment of protectorates. The idealism of Wilson was ill-conceived when it came to the Western Hemisphere and was another form of imperialism led by a "democratic" manifest destiny.

Haiti and Santo Domingo

Vulnerable states became a liability with the growing tension in Europe. Washington realized the value of diminishing the reliance on foreign powers by those states. It was better for the United States to be the creditor of those states rather than leaving the risk of foreign intervention or worst occupation of weak Latin states. To reduce dependence of Haiti on European funds, President Taft granted an important loan to Haiti, 12.5 million dollars secured by a customs collectorship.¹⁰² Germany was an annoying addition to the mix of European powers that exercised destabilizing influence on vulnerable states of Latin America. However, as vulnerable states, Haiti and Santo Domingo fell prey to their own instability and not the undue pressure of foreign power. Revolt in Haiti in 1915 and Santo Domingo in 1916 called for foreign intervention from the United States to stop the rebels and to impose an occupation by Marine forces. The occupations lasted up

¹⁰¹ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 151-2.

¹⁰² Dana G. Munro. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964): 245-

until 1924 in the Dominican Republic and in 1934 in Haiti.¹⁰³ The dismemberment of President Guillaume Sam in the streets of Port-au-Prince after he slaughtered 167 political hostages left Haiti vulnerable.¹⁰⁴

Instability is a common thread of Haiti's political life since independence. Between 1911 and 1915, seven Haitian presidents were assassinated or overthrown.¹⁰⁵ Following the U.S. intervention of 1915, President Wilson tried to negotiate a financial protectorate similar to the one in place in Santo Domingo.¹⁰⁶ However, the situation was so unstable that no government remained in place long enough to negotiate an agreement. With the impending threat of French and German intervention, the United States decided to intervene rather than see a transposition of the Great War in its backyard. The troubled situation in Haiti was a pretext to set foot on a strategic position in proximity to the Panama Canal. The pacification process of Haiti did not yield much result and made the occupation last until 1934.

In the case of Santo Domingo, the influence of Washington was already embedded in the financial protectorate established under President Roosevelt in 1907. The role provided by the Dawson-Sanchez Treaty allowed the restructuring of part of the Dominican economy but singularly failed to stabilize its political situation. In 1914, President Wilson sent "American commissioners" to "compel the resignation of the president and demand an election under American supervision."¹⁰⁷ While the elections provided provisional peace to Santo Domingo, the tensions re-escalated and forced an armed intervention in 1916 to keep the democratically elected president in power. After the resignation of the president, the Marines took over the political affairs of the island until 1924.¹⁰⁸ Again, President Wilson targeted an undemocratic situation to justify armed intervention.

Cuba

The re-establishment of the Cuban government under President José Miguel Gomez in 1909 was a glimmer of hope for much-desired stability on the island. The strategic significance of the island was a perpetual worry for Washington. The relatively stable period ended with the election of 1916. In his bid for re-election, President Menocal had fraudulently silenced the result of the victory of his opponent, Alfredo Zayas.¹⁰⁹ The situation escalated, and former President Gomez launched an insurrection against Menocal. Washington provided support to Menocal at first by sending 10,000 rifles and 2,000,000 munitions.¹¹⁰ The Cuban insurrection that ensued between February and March 1917 triggered an American response and U.S. forces landed in Santiago to restore the order. Menocal was able to stay in power following the U.S. intervention.

Honduras

Between March and April 1909, U.S. diplomats attempted to secure the neutrality and financial security of Honduras and refund its debt. Honduras had contracted important loans to

¹⁰³ Allan R. Millett, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012*. (New York: Free Press. 2012): 510, Scribd.

¹⁰⁴ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 529.

¹⁰⁵ "U.S. Invasion and Occupation of Haiti, 1915-34." *Office of the Historian*, Accessed April 12, 2023. <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1914-1920/haiti>.

¹⁰⁶ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 155.

¹⁰⁷ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 154.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 155.

¹⁰⁹ Munro. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921*: 489-490.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 492.

London between 1866 and 1870 which started to be defaulted in 1872 to the point where in 1909 the debt with its interests had reached 120 million dollars.¹¹¹ The risk of pressure from London that could threaten the autonomy of Honduras was real. The risks became even greater when former President Manuel Bonilla led an insurrection against President Miguel Danila between 1909 and 1911. The rebellion in Honduras during that period was an invitation to the British to secure payment with an intervention.

As an attempt to squeeze out the economic power of the European powers over the debt of Honduras, President Taft proposed a financial protectorate similar to the one established by President Roosevelt in Santo Domingo. Taft reproduced Roosevelt's tactic by declaring the protectorate before the ratification by the Senate.¹¹² American bankers took over the Honduran debt and diminished its vulnerability to European creditors. However, as with Haiti and Santo Domingo, Wilson decided to intervene militarily to stabilize the political situation in 1919. The U.S. intervention lasted until 1925.

Costa Rica and Guatemala

In line with most Central American states, Costa Rica was in financial trouble with its debtors and defaulted on its payments. By 1910, the Costa Rican debt reached 15 million dollars.¹¹³ Washington came to the help of Costa Rica and helped to renegotiate its debt. The renegotiation brought back stability to Costa Rica. However, in 1917, a military coup triggered an American intervention. In 1907, the Central American governments ratified along with the United States a treaty to recognize the legitimacy of the small republics (The Central American Peace Conference). However, Costa Rica violated the treaty in 1917 when after a coup, Tinoco came to power illegally in light of the Treaty.¹¹⁴ President Wilson ordered a military intervention in 1917 that went well beyond the non-recognition principle embedded in the 1907 Treaty.¹¹⁵ Wilson was progressively integrating the primacy of democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

Guatemala escaped on two occasions the cowboy diplomacy of the United States during that period. First, Guatemala escaped the fate of a financial protectorate during their process of negotiation with its British creditors, even though Britain had threatened to intervene in 1913.¹¹⁶ Second, Guatemala escaped military intervention when it failed to meet the democratic requirement imposed by President Wilson and its interpretation of the Non-Recognition Pact of 1907. Guatemala had been under the authority of Estrada Cabrera since 1898. The dictatorship rule of Cabrera became threatened by Wilson's democratic urges. Wilson pleaded for a democratic transition but also warned the opposition that an armed transition would not be recognized.¹¹⁷ The intervention did not occur, and Guatemala was able to solve its political crisis without U.S. interference.

Mexico

Porfirio Diaz brought relative stability to Mexico between 1877 and 1910. However, in 1910, the frustration of the Porfirian system imploded and the country entered a new civil war.

¹¹¹ Munro. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921*: 217.

¹¹² Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 156.

¹¹³ Munro. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921*. 236.

¹¹⁴ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 157.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 158.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 160; Munro. *Intervention and Dollar Diplomacy in the Caribbean, 1900-1921*. 240-245.

¹¹⁷ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 159.

The 1910 Mexican Revolution led to the overthrow of Diaz in 1911. The rebel forces led by Francisco Madero defeated the government forces quickly and removed Diaz from power in May 1911.¹¹⁸ Political and economic unrest in Mexico triggered on multiple occasions debates on intervention in Mexico. Both the United States and the European powers debated on various occasions the possibility of military intervention in Mexico.

Political instability in Mexico preoccupied the Taft and Wilson administrations on top of the concerns in Europe. The coup by Madero in 1911 to remove Porfirio Diaz followed by the assassination of Madero two years later threw Mexico into political turmoil. Opposition against Huerta rose, and a civil war broke out led by Venustiano Carranza, Francisco “Pancho” Villa, and Emiliano Zapata. The government of General Victoriano Huerta was too reactionary to gain the support of either Taft or Wilson. In February 1913, the 2nd Division was mobilized on the Mexican border.¹¹⁹ Starting March 14, 1912, the export of arms and ammunition from the United States to Mexico was prohibited by President Taft’s executive order and was maintained by President Wilson until February 1913 to allow the arms sale to Carranza.¹²⁰

The tension escalated on April 14, 1914. Huerta’s forces arrested seven American sailors and an officer in the town of Tampico. The Mexican officer in charge quickly released the sailors.¹²¹ However, Huerta realized that Washington was likely to use the situation to take action against him. Huerta reached out to Germany for help. On April 20, Wilson asked Congress to authorize the use of military forces against Huerta.¹²² The following morning the news that a German steamship full of weapons and ammunition was on its way to Veracruz.¹²³ Wilson sent naval units to blockade arms shipments from Europe, but the operation backfired and rallied Mexican public opinion behind Huerta.¹²⁴ The U.S. forces under General Frederick Funston assaulted Veracruz the same day.¹²⁵ Funston’s forces took possession of Veracruz, the main Mexican port. The next day 3,000 more marines joined the forces of Funston. By the end of the month, almost 7,000 troops were in Mexico.¹²⁶ German weapons sold to Mexico were perceived as a violation of the Monroe Doctrine. In an attempt to defuse the crisis, Washington proposed a negotiation process mediated by Argentina, Brazil, and Chile. The talks failed and not long after Huerta was ousted.¹²⁷

The possibility of war with Mexico remained strong throughout this period. The Mexican Revolution, the fear of German penetration during World War I, and the Zimmerman Telegram – in which Germany was to offer to Mexico to ally against the United States and help to reconquer

¹¹⁸ Fish. *American Diplomacy*. 483.

¹¹⁹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*: 338.

¹²⁰ Clarence C. Clendenen. *The United States and Pancho Villa: A Study in Unconventional Diplomacy*. (Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1961): 33; Fish. *American Diplomacy*. 483; Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 313.

¹²¹ Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 313-314.

¹²² *Ibid.* 314.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 314.

¹²⁴ James L. Abrahamson. *America Arms for a New Century*. (New York: The Free Press, 1981): 110-11.

¹²⁵ R. Ernest Dupuy. *The Compact History of the United States Army*. (New York: Hawthorn, 1961): 220.

¹²⁶ Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 314.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 315.

Texas, New Mexico and Arizona back¹²⁸ – created a tangible threat to the U.S. sphere of influence. While far less dire than the situation in Europe, the threat of conflict with Mexico was more immediate. Soon, an already weakened Mexico became a geostrategic interest to European powers in the Great War. With a quarter of the known oil reserve at the time, Mexico became strategically important.¹²⁹ The American intervention in Mexico played advantageously in favor of Germany who hoped that the conflict would keep the American forces into a prolonged conflict that would refrain Washington from getting involved in Europe.

The National Guard intervened at the Mexican border in 1916 to conduct a punitive expedition against the Pancho Villa.¹³⁰ The latter had conducted a raid against Columbus, New Mexico, on March 9, 1916, and killed several Americans.¹³¹ Wilson decided to send Brigadier General John J. Pershing first with 7,000 men to capture Villa. Again, the U.S. intervention was a failure. Pershing, in his pursuit, received reinforcement and his forces almost doubled to 12,000 triggering a formal complaint from Carranza.¹³² The expeditionary forces almost clashed with the Mexican army that was dispatched to stop the advance of the U.S. forces further into the Mexican territory. Wilson mobilized 112,000 National Guardsmen to deter any further escalation.¹³³

The civil war was still raging in Mexico when the Zimmermann Telegram became public. Mexico was in no place to conduct a war against the United States. Germany was not in a credible position to deliver on its promise to Mexico to provide support to conquer New Mexico, Texas, and California. President Carranza had much more to gain from staying friendly with the United States than aligning with Germany.

Nicaragua

The political instability of the Nicaraguan government and its proximity to the Panama Canal pushed the United States to intervene. The emergence of a revolution against the corrupt and anti-American government of José Santos Zelaya and his successor José Madriz led to the American intervention to protect U.S. and foreign interests.¹³⁴ In 1912, to prevent the collapse of the central government, American forces were deployed in Nicaragua to stop the active revolt at the demand of President Adolfo Diaz.¹³⁵ The intervention ordered by President Taft led to a shift toward the dollar diplomacy of the United States toward Latin America to maintain a tighter grip on their sphere of interest.¹³⁶ The repayment of the Nicaraguan debt to the British by Washington modified the type of relationship between the United States and Nicaragua. The intervention was going further than the strict military presence. The financial and political involvement of the

¹²⁸ William F. Friedman and Charles J. Mendelsohn. “The Zimmerman Telegram of January 16, 1917 and its Cryptographic Background.” *Office of the Chief Signal Officer* (Washington: Government Printing Office. 1928): 1. https://www.nsa.gov/Portals/75/documents/news-features/decclassified-documents/friedman-documents/lectures-speeches/FOLDER_198/41766889080599.pdf. Accessed March 22, 2024.

¹²⁹ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 80, Scribd.

¹³⁰ Coffman. *The War to End All Wars*: 13.

¹³¹ Raines. *Gerring the Message Through*: 147.

¹³² Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 316.

¹³³ Two battles occurred between the American and Mexican troops, but apart from those two occurrences, both sides remained within the acknowledged conditions between Wilson and the Mexican government. See Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 512, Scribd.

¹³⁴ Doris A. Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy: A History of U.S. Intervention Policies and Practices*. (Washington: Public Affairs Press. 1959): 148-9.

¹³⁵ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 533.

¹³⁶ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 150.

United States would become the trademark of U.S. regional hegemonic policy that would perdure from that point. Dollar diplomacy would eventually lead to similar patterns to the ones used by colonial powers and that the Monroe Doctrine was supposed to protect against. Taft wanted to make Nicaragua officially a financial protectorate, and Nicaragua's independence was only protected by the Senate's refusal to ratify the treaty.¹³⁷

President Wilson distanced himself from the dollar diplomacy. He returned to the protectorate approach in Nicaragua. Secretary Bryan signed a Platt-Amendment-like agreement with Nicaragua, the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty of August 5, 1914. The treaty included a lease of Great Corn and Little Corn islands near the eastern coast of the canal route and a ninety-nine-year renewable lease off the western coast of the Canal in the Gulf of Fonseca.¹³⁸ Washington secured those islands in an attempt to prevent the possible construction of a competing canal to Panama. The armed intervention in Nicaragua endured until 1933.¹³⁹

Colombia and Panama

President Roosevelt managed to offend the Colombians before leaving office. While Secretary Root managed to appease the Colombian resentment regarding the dispossession of Panama for a short by ratifying a treaty with Panama and Colombia. However, in 1911, former President Roosevelt created a new scandal with his Berkeley speech. His remark regarding the Panama Canal and how he was the one who "took it" increased the hostility between the United States and Colombia.¹⁴⁰ Woodrow Wilson and his Secretary of State Bryan tried to rectify Roosevelt's bigotry and irreverence. Bryan signed a treaty to apologize formally to Colombia along with a payment of 25 million dollars. However, the Senate denied the ratification of the treaty.¹⁴¹ It would take the death of Roosevelt to finally reach an agreement to repair U.S.-Colombian relations.

The Panama Canal was inaugurated in 1914. It became the most precious possession of the United States. The defence of the Canal, which was already an important issue as part of the U.S. A2/AD strategy, became even more important after the onset of World War I. The competing European powers, while weakened by their infighting in Europe, had activated a war machine that required many resources that would benefit from the easy transit from the Isthmian Canal in Panama. Fortunately, the situation did not evolve to confrontation and the existing measures were deterrent enough.

Danish West Indies

After fifty years of back and forth between Denmark and the United States, both states agreed to the sale of the Danish West Indies (Saint Thomas, Saint Croix, and Saint John) for the important sum of twenty-five million dollars on January 17, 1917.¹⁴² The prospect of German U-boats capturing the islands became too great a risk for the United States which explained why Washington agreed to pay five times the original price agreed fifteen years earlier.

¹³⁷ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 150.

¹³⁸ Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 534.

¹³⁹ Graber. *Crisis Diplomacy*: 152; Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 308.

¹⁴⁰ Schoultz. *Beneath the United States*: 172-174.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* 174.

¹⁴² Bemis. *A Diplomatic History of the United States*. 521.

Europe

August 1914 changed many things. The world powers' dynamics were in turmoil, the world was discovering how the war machine would butcher the youth of a whole generation, and the field of Europe became soaked with their blood. For the United States, it became an internal moral and political struggle for many reasons. The shadow of the possible American involvement in the war created internal tensions and dissensions in the entire American society. The war did not leave anyone indifferent. By the autumn of 1916, the war had become an electoral issue.

The sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 modified considerably public opinion toward Germany and allowed the increase in war preparedness but did not tilt the public opinion enough to force the entry of the United States into the war. The death of over a hundred and twenty-eight American citizens aboard the vessel rose awareness in favour of war preparedness. However, it took almost two more years for President Wilson before he moved forward and led the U.S. military into war. The United States entered the war in April 1917. Over two million men of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) were to fight alongside French and British troops to defeat Imperial Germany and its allies. This display of force and the mobilization of resources established the United States as a World Power.

The War that erupted in 1914 led to the breakdown of four empires and the downfall of their royal houses. However, for the United States, the war bore less significance than all the European powers. Far from the battlefield, the Americans would benefit from having the choice and time to decide whether to enter the war or not. The Atlantic was standing between Washington and the war. However, in the long run, an ocean will not be enough to shield the United States from the effects of the Great War. The financial risk imposed by the massive loans to the belligerents; the U-boats campaign that damaged U.S. trade and cost U.S. citizen lives; the public opinion increasingly favourable toward a U.S. intervention; the political campaign and propaganda in favour of preparedness and participation to the war; and the end of the Russian participation into the war effort after the February Revolution pressured the president to finally declare war in April 1917.

The frenetic mobilization of forces that followed the declaration of war transformed a generation, provoked a crisis of consciousness toward the violence of modern warfare, and brought nearly two million U.S. servicemen, nicknamed the *Doughboys* by the Europeans, to experience the cruel barbarity of attrition warfare in the trenches of Europe; and left the U.S. political elite with the bitter taste of supporting the vengeful Allied powers who ruined the peace process with irrational demands. The participation of the AEF in the war effort bolstered the Allied Powers just enough to give the initiative to the Allies by the summer of 1918. The War Department expected to have 3.2 million soldiers in Europe by the following summer.¹⁴³ The pressure on the Germans was increasing and the war fatigue of the war initiators was palpable to all parties involved. Therefore, the Allies forced the offensive of fall 1918.

World War I

Despite the Monroe Doctrine and the Roosevelt Corollary, the United States was deeply involved economically and culturally with Western Europe. The balance between preserving strategic autonomy in the Western Hemisphere and protecting the economic interest of the United States in Europe was severely tested at the beginning of the twentieth century. The financial and

¹⁴³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 242, Scribd.

military strain on the Allies that would increase throughout the war eventually put additional pressure on the United States to get further involved in European affairs.

The war with Spain changed the dynamics of entanglement in European affairs through the American involvement in colonial issues in the Asia-Pacific area. Washington's participation in the Algeiras Conference in 1906 was perceived as one step too many toward European involvement. However, President Wilson decided to remain neutral. On August 4, 1914, Wilson issued a proclamation of neutrality which insisted that:

Military forces in aid of a belligerent cannot lawfully be originated or organized within its jurisdiction; and that, while all persons may lawfully and without restriction by reason of the aforesaid state of war manufacture and sell within the United States arms and munitions of war, and other articles ordinarily known as "contraband of war," yet they cannot carry such articles upon the high seas for the use or service of a belligerent, nor can they transport soldiers and officers of a belligerent, or attempt to break any blockade which may be lawfully established and maintained during the said wars without incurring the risk of hostile capture and the penalties denounced by the law of nations in that behalf.¹⁴⁴

Washington played on the margins of those conditions of neutrality during the war to limit the economic disruption of the war. However, when the German invasion deadlocked in trench warfare during the fall of 1914, Great Britain attempted to secure a blockade of German trade to the limits of international laws to exhaust its economy. Washington tried to maintain its trade with Germany whatsoever to maintain its neutral status. At the beginning of the war, Secretary Bryan was opposed to loans to the Allies, but by the late summer of 1915, Lansing allowed the emission of loans to the belligerents.¹⁴⁵ By the time the United States entered the war, Washington had loaned the Allies 2.3 billion dollars and 27 million to the Germans.¹⁴⁶ The loan and trade imbalance between the United States and the Allies versus the Germans created much frustration regarding the United States neutrality against the Germans.

The inability to preserve an effective neutrality that included unimpeded sea navigation put progressively increasing pressure on Congress to allow for an intervention in the War. The first American casualties occurred when a German submarine sunk the *Falaba* in the Irish Sea on March 28.¹⁴⁷ The tensions generated by the unrestrained submarine campaign by the Germans created tensions and diplomatic pressures on the United States. The targeting of American citizens, though unintentional, led to unsympathetic relations with Germany. The *Lusitania* was the deadliest of those early attacks but remained insufficient for Wilson to precipitate the United States in world conflict especially after the German agreed to interrupt their attacks on passenger vessels.¹⁴⁸ Wilson was more inclined toward keeping the United States out of the war and required an overt act of aggression to enter the war. However, the return to unrestricted submarine warfare in early 1917 changed that.

Arthur Zimmermann, the newly appointed German Foreign Secretary who approved the unrestricted submarine warfare, would add another overt act of aggression toward the United

¹⁴⁴ Woodrow Wilson quoted in Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 194-5

¹⁴⁵ Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 322-328

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 328

¹⁴⁷ Daniel M. Smith. *Robert Lansing and American Neutrality: 1914-1917*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972): 56.

¹⁴⁸ Sprout and Sprout. *Rise of American Naval Power*. 333-334.

States. On January 19, 1917, Zimmermann transmitted a coded message to Ambassador Bernstorff that would contribute to pushing the United States into the Great War. Zimmermann proposed an alliance with Mexico and Japan to prevent the American troops to reinforce the European front. Zimmermann advocated in the telegram: “That we shall make war together and together make peace. We shall give general financial support and it is understood that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona.”¹⁴⁹ While the German overture could have been unknown by U.S. authority, the Zimmermann Telegram ended up on President Wilson’s desk through the work of British intelligence. While not the most credible threat to U.S. territorial integrity, the Zimmerman Telegram was another supporting document to ease Wilson’s entry into the war.

Following the Zimmermann Telegram, the attacks on American vessels rose. It took five weeks of active display of the incidence of the unrestricted submarine campaign to push the Americans officially into the war. The United States government entered the war officially on April 6, 1917. However, the American military forces were meagre at the beginning of the conflict. With 5791 officers and 121,797 enlisted men supplemented by 80,446 National Guard officers and men, Wilson had to mobilize the population and the industry to make the United States contribution to the war significant.¹⁵⁰ After a year of recruitment and mobilization, the army had 1,365,000 mobilized at home and 1,293,000 abroad.¹⁵¹ The American forces displayed the organization and power of a major power and crawled out of their isolation and self-restraint period.

After 200 days of combat, the American death toll reached 53,402 men killed in action, over 200,000 were wounded in action, and around 57,000 died of diseases, especially from the 1918 flu.¹⁵² While previous conflicts had generated many lost lives, nothing could compare to the intensity of the violence and destruction of the battlefield of Europe during World War I. The scale and intensity of the warfare that went on for those 200 days left a profound and sorrowful picture in the psyche of many Americans. The American deaths were still pale in comparison with the 8 million dead soldiers that the war claimed. In addition, the war cost 50 billion dollars to the United States and increased the federal budget from 742 million in 1916 to 14 billion dollars in 1918.¹⁵³ This changed the global balance of power and increased the strategic autonomy potential of the United States.

Great Britain

The end of the Splendid Isolation at the turn of the twentieth century brought back the British into European continental affairs and its alliance system. England had dominated world politics for nearly a century following the Napoleonic Wars and was the status quo power in this contest. Peer competition was on the rise and the European continental turmoil was challenging British dominance. The Great War challenged British dominance and the fragile continental balance that existed before. Indirectly, Washington suffered early on the repercussion of that change of policy. London tried to use its strategic partnership with the United States to secure peaceful relations in the Western Hemisphere favourable to British interests.

¹⁴⁹ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 106, Scribd.

¹⁵⁰ Coffman. *The War to End All Wars*: 18-9.

¹⁵¹ Peyton C. March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932): 7.

¹⁵² Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 567, Scribd. Garret recorded the total death toll of 116,516 dead and 204,002 wounded, see: Garrett, *The Great War in America*: 8, Scribd.

¹⁵³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 147, Scribd.

The U.S. neutrality was an irritant for the British. The American merchant marine was reaching the coast of Germany and its allies. Britain attempted to blockade Germany in the North Sea including the American cargoes. London to increase the damage made by the blockade enlarged the contraband list, picked up the neutral vessels far from the coast to avoid German retaliation, and applied the doctrine of continuous voyage to both contraband and blockade.¹⁵⁴ British authorities blacklisted eighty-two American companies and individuals for keeping in business with Germany.¹⁵⁵ Secretary of State Lansing protested the measures in October 1915. He condemned the unjustified detention of American cargo and the British attempt to use the U.S. blockade during the Civil War as a precedent to justify its actions.¹⁵⁶ Those measures increase the cost of trade with Germany, generated losses in shipment, and were an annoyance. This rendered the maintenance of U.S. neutrality difficult. The natural flow of neutral trade was interrupted by measures that violated international norms. Britain was threatening the freedom of the sea.

The U.S.-British trade relations were strong. The British vessels were carrying most of the U.S. shipping, but restrictions from London gave the necessary incentive to Washington to reverse the tendency and build a strong merchant marine. On September 7, 1916, President Wilson enacted a state-owned merchant marine and appropriated 50 million dollars to build ships.¹⁵⁷

During the war, Britain appeared as an ally in search of active support from Washington. Prime Minister David Lloyd George begged the American in a message to:

1) American forces should be brought overseas quickly, in American bottoms; 2) the Americans should be associated with the British, as fellow Anglo-Saxons, rather than with the French; and 3) the most effective way for the Americans to be employed in British units would be as individual replacements of in small units, to fill out experienced British tactical formations.¹⁵⁸

While General Pershing agreed with the first point, the two others were violating the U.S. strategic autonomy. While it would have been simpler to follow Prime Minister George's recommendation, it was inconceivable for Pershing. Wilson and Lansing supported Pershing's operational autonomy.

Germany

The submarine warfare conducted by the German fleet was fairly proficient in destabilizing the commercial traffic in the Atlantic. It also was the ultimate provocation that tilted American public opinion against Germany. By the time the United States entered the war, the German submarines were sinking the Allied ships faster than they could replace them.¹⁵⁹ Considering the strategy in place by Germany, the United States focused their efforts on the development of an escorting fleet that could first and foremost safeguard the lifeline of resources the United States was bringing to its new European allies. Convoys changed the dynamic at sea in favour of the Allies.

¹⁵⁴ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 201.

¹⁵⁵ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 73, Scribd.

¹⁵⁶ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 202-204.

¹⁵⁷ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 73, Scribd.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Eisenhower. *Yanks*: 39.

¹⁵⁹ Craig L. Symonds. *The U.S. Navy: A Concise History*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016): 70.

Soon enough, the German submarine warfare generated American deaths even though the United States were still not engaged in the conflict and still claimed neutrality. On March 28, 1914, the RMS *Falaba* was sunk after a German U-boat attack costing the life of one American citizen.¹⁶⁰ On April 28, the American vessel *Cushing* was attacked by a German airplane.¹⁶¹ On May 1, 1914, the German attack on the American ship *Gulflight* cost the lives of two Americans.¹⁶² The tensions with Germany progressively increased. The Germans were not without cause though. German intelligence suspected that the British were transporting munitions from the United States on board ocean liners full of civilians.¹⁶³ Liners crossing the Atlantic became more likely targets afterward and the targeting of civilian vessels created a substantial risk for an incident that could tilt American public opinion more in favour of the entry of the United States into the war.

On May 1915, a U-20's torpedo burst open the hull of the *Lusitania* sinking the vessel in eighteen minutes costing 1198 lives including 128 Americans.¹⁶⁴ The RMS *Lusitania* was an ocean liner sailing from New York to Liverpool. Despite Wilson's effort to diminish the impact of the sinking of the *Lusitania*,¹⁶⁵ public opinion began to pose less resistance toward war involvement from that point. Many prominent actors, including Theodore Roosevelt and the League to Enforce Peace led by former president William Howard Taft, took a stand toward retribution against Germany.¹⁶⁶ While Wilson was working to defuse the tensions with Germany without much support within his own government, the Germans would sink another vessel, the SS *Arabic*, costing additional American lives on August 19.¹⁶⁷ The growing rank of interventionists was increasing the pressure on President Wilson. American pacifism and isolationism lost center stage in reaction to those events, and Preparedness became the motto of the Wilson administration.

The second phase of German commerce raiding started in February 1917. The German U-boats started unrestricted submarine warfare that targeted American vessels. 133 U-boats would deploy strategically along the sea lanes in packs of 32 to 36 U-boats to intercept commercial shipping and troops transports.¹⁶⁸ The efficiency of the German U-boat packs was impressive. The U-boat fleet could deploy for a period running up to six months and sink around 600,000 tons of shipping a month resulting in substantial attrition in the war efforts.¹⁶⁹ This meant resource scarcity, less reinforcement, more insecurity at sea, and increased costs for transport and resources across the board. Systematized convoys became a strong tool to diminish considerably the efficiency of the German strategy. The Americans, first, ceased their diplomatic relation with Germany and responded to the German submarine campaign with "armed neutrality." Armed

¹⁶⁰ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 50, Scribd.

¹⁶¹ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 197.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 52, Scribd.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*; Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 197.

¹⁶⁵ See Wilson's Philadelphia Statement on May 10, 1915. In Arthur S. Link (ed.). *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 33. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980): 147-49.

¹⁶⁶ Roosevelt suggested that any commercial ties with Germany be severed. See Peck. *The Great War in America*: 54, Scribd

¹⁶⁷ The German had pledged on May 4, 1916 that merchant vessels would not be targeted anymore without warning. See Symonds. *The Naval Institute Historical Atlas of the U.S. Navy*. 121.

¹⁶⁸ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 536, Scribd.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

neutrality aimed at arming merchant ships as a deterrent against U-boats. However, it only legitimized the sinking of belligerent vessels by U-boats. The strategy endured for two months.¹⁷⁰

The strategy to deal with U-boats had to change. While the United States was able to provide efficient support to diminish the efficiency of the German strategy, it did little in terms of support to the Allied navies' warfighting capabilities. The U.S. Navy did not have state-of-the-art battleships already built to provide adequate support. The American post-Dreadnought battleships were being built and not ready. The U.S. Navy sent a division of pre-Dreadnought coal-burning battleships North of Scotland, not as a significant relief to an overextended British fleet, but as a gesture.¹⁷¹ A gesture of solidarity as the pace of shipbuilding in American navy yards would accelerate, as the war effort would pick up the slack of leaving Europe to tear itself apart for too long already.

Layers of measures were put in place to contain Germany's war effort. At the naval level, the blockade of the German shores was essential to slow down the submarine's activities and the *guerre de course* success. Submarine mines covered the northern exit of the North Sea. Fifty-six thousand American mines and sixteen thousand British mines were laid down to stop the Germans with little success.¹⁷² In total, over 400,000 contact mines were placed along the 250 miles between Scotland and Norway to cover 15 to 35 miles wide over the war.¹⁷³ The cost of the endeavour exceeded its reward. However, the process had the benefit of having a low cost of human life.

By the end of the war, Germany submitted to punitive and unsustainable conditions by the Treaty of Versailles signed on June 28, 1919. Germany had to disarm; its military forces were limited to a maximum of 100,000 men; its navy was restrained to twenty ships and 15,000 men; and all military aviation was prohibited.¹⁷⁴ The U.S. Occupation Force vacated Coblenz in January 1923.¹⁷⁵

France

France benefited from a strong capital of sympathy from the United States during the Great War early on. Americans served in the Foreign Legion and the *Escadrille américaine* created in April 1916. Germany contested the participation of neutrals beside French troops. Consequently, the *Escadrille américaine* was rebranded the *Lafayette Escadrille* in November 1916.¹⁷⁶ When the United States joined the war, they landed in France. Pershing's arrival was not as exciting for the French as they expected. The 190 officers and men of the first contingent of the AEF aboard the *Baltic* that arrived in France in August 1917 were a meagre reinforcement after the massive losses of the Nivelle offensive.¹⁷⁷ The French would experience other disappointments regarding the false enthusiasm created by the entry of the United States into the war. The French authorities had placed high expectations on American involvement. Ribot's unrealistic airplane demands, the slow transport of U.S. troops to the French coast, the lack of preparedness of the U.S. War Department, and most of all, the independence of Pershing's command.

¹⁷⁰ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 100, Scribd.

¹⁷¹ Symonds. *The U.S. Navy*: 71-2.

¹⁷² *Ibid.* 72.

¹⁷³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 541, Scribd

¹⁷⁴ Eisenhower. *Yanks*: 290.

¹⁷⁵ Dupuy and Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*: 990.

¹⁷⁶ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 60, Scribd.

¹⁷⁷ Mead. *The Doughboys*. 91.

Wilson had to remind the French that Pershing was in complete command over the U.S. military operations in France. The only authority that the French and the Supreme Command had was to assign a sector and a mission to the U.S. forces.¹⁷⁸ The French would have to be patient since Pershing made his plan to assemble and maintain an army of 500,000 men on the ship crossing the Atlantic to France.¹⁷⁹

Russia

The role of Russia in world politics was changing. Weakened by its own revolutions, the Imperial giant was on the verge of collapse. While Russia sided with the Allies at the beginning of the war, it soon had to focus on its own internal troubles. The Russian front collapsed during the autumn of 1917. The revolt of munitions workers in Petrograd in March 1917 followed by the uprising of the army led ultimately to the abdication of Czar Nicholas and the downfall of the Romanov dynasty. Alexander Kerensky succeeded to the Czarist regime, but only for a moment. The march of communist revolutionaries drove the country into another year of civil war.

The Bolsheviks took over the government in November 1917. They suspended all Russian operations in the war and negotiated a peace agreement with Germany. On March 3, 1918, the Bolsheviks signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which put an end to the Russian involvement in the war. The departure of the Russians from the war allowed the Germans to concentrate their forces on the West. In an attempt to re-open a front to the East with the Germans, 9,000 American troops were sent to assist the anti-Bolshevik forces in Siberia and to contain the Japanese advance of its 73,000 contingent en route to capture the Trans-Siberian Railroad.¹⁸⁰ Washington qualified its operations as “merely a method to making use of Russia, and not a method of serving her.”¹⁸¹ The operation had multiple objectives: 1) establish a small force in Murmansk (5,000 men); 2) help the Czecho-Slovak forces in Vladivostok; 3) guard the Allied military stores already in position at Kola; and 4) ease the transit and organization of the Russian anti-Bolshevik resistance.¹⁸² When the Americans reached Vladivostok in August 1918, the Czech forces were almost all gone.¹⁸³ The Americans and the Japanese stayed to watch each other and help the anti-Bolsheviks.

The Asia-Pacific

The dynamic in Asia had changed a lot. China was left to its own devices during the Great War. Japan was emerging as a regional power. Washington could have been the balancing power in the region and interposed further against Japanese expansionism. However, Taft tolerated the annexation of Korea, Secretary Root had allowed the exploitation of Manchuria and the Lansing-Ishii Agreement was an implicit recognition of the dominance of Japan over China.¹⁸⁴ Wilson allowed the transfer of the Shandong province, the Marianas, the Caroline, and the Marshalls to Japan during the Paris Peace Conference. While Washington had turned to Europe in times of need, Japan had turned to China for its profits.

¹⁷⁸ Mead. *The Doughboys*. 94.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 96.

¹⁸⁰ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 186; Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 343; Walter LaFeber. *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998): 117.

¹⁸¹ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 188.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*; Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 343-45.

¹⁸³ LaFeber. *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations throughout History*. 119.

¹⁸⁴ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 184.

Japan

Already before the War, Japan was moving toward expanding its influence and power in Asia. The United States were stuck between their defence of Chinese territorial integrity and the maintenance of its neutrality. The Navy was concerned with the Japanese and the General Board recommended the implementation of parts of the ORANGE PLAN.¹⁸⁵ The plan postulated the “potential temporary loss of the Philippines and Guam and proposed the establishment of a defense perimeter based on the Aleutians, Hawaii, and the Panama Canal to be held until the arrival of the Atlantic Fleet.”¹⁸⁶ One thing was certain, Japan was becoming the biggest threat to American interests in Asia.

The situation between the United States and Japan in China became more tense. The failure of the Knox Consortium and the Taft Consortium was seen as a green light for Japan’s ambition to dominate China.¹⁸⁷ In addition, President Wilson wanted to interrupt the dollar diplomacy implemented by Taft. Wilson’s policy, however, released the perceived constraints on Japan. With the war in Europe, Japan had the opportunity to expand its sphere of interest and potentially its territory in China. Washington was the remaining power with the available capabilities to stop Japan.

In addition, the United States was the only remaining power that could stop the Japanese expansion after the beginning of World War I. But it failed to do so. Japan exploited the Great War to take over German interests. While the rest of the world was fighting in Europe, Japan already an ally with Great Britain decided to declare war against Germany. As a result, Japan took over the naval base in Kiachow Bay and invaded the Shandong peninsula. Following the capture of the Shandong peninsula, Japan transmitted twenty-one demands to China which would have made China a Japanese protectorate in January 1914.¹⁸⁸ The transfer of the Shandong Peninsula to Japan put the United States at odds with China. Japan attempted to get the acknowledgement of its control over those new territories and sent Viscount Kikujiro Ishii to negotiate with Secretary Lansing in November 1917. The Lansing-Ishii Agreement recognized the Japanese “special interests” in China at the same time it allowed China to retain its “territorial sovereignty.”¹⁸⁹ Each diplomat agreed to the ambiguity of the treaty to avoid confrontation. Wilson made further concessions during the negotiation of the Peace Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations since he feared that Japan would not join the League otherwise.

Japan was becoming a greater challenge to the United States in the Asia Pacific. The Japanese in Shandong province and the mandate over the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas set Japan on a collision course with the United States presence in the region.¹⁹⁰

Philippines

The dual threat of external attack in the context of World War I and the perpetual internal turmoil threat required extra attention from the War Department. However, before the war, interest

¹⁸⁵ Including the withdrawal of cruisers from the Asiatic station which was judged as too provocative by Wilson. See Richard W. Turk. “Defending the Empire, 1900-1914.” In *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History, 1775-1984*. Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984): 166.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 167.

¹⁸⁷ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 182.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 307.

¹⁸⁹ Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 307.

¹⁹⁰ Trask. “The U.S. Navy in a World at War, 1914-1919.”180.

in the Philippines seemed to be waning. President Taft, even though he had been the head of the Second Philippine Commission and became the first Governor General of America's Asian Colony, showed little interest in the Philippines during his presidency.¹⁹¹ President Wilson abolished the Philippines Commission and set up a bicameral legislature, but did not show any desire to relax the American control over the islands.¹⁹² The Philippines remained an important strategic asset important to U.S. trade and its sea lanes.

The internal threat, however, was not so well addressed. To ensure the peacekeeping of the archipelago, regiment of the Philippines scouts and local police under the authority of American officers. The Moros remained the main threat to internal security. The Americano-Filipino forces had to face the Moros a few more times during the campaigns of Bud Dajo Mountain (1911) and Bud Bagsak Mountain (1911 and 1913).¹⁹³

To answer the external threat, the Army engineers engaged in the fortification of strategic points. In 1908, a joint Army-Navy planning board engaged in the fortification of the Corregidor at Manila Bay's mouth.¹⁹⁴ The construction of Fort Drum, a few islands at the mouth of Manila Bay became known as the "concrete battleship."¹⁹⁵ Even with those fortifications, the Philippines was considered in a vulnerable position. Pearl Harbor was preferred as a base of operation for the Pacific fleet.

Alignment Options: Triple Entente Vs. Triple Alliance

The American preferences were favourable to an alignment with the Triple Entente, but the United States remained firmly committed to neutrality. However, as the war endured, Washington displayed less and less genuine impartiality between the belligerents. The U.S. neutrality was progressively eroded in the waters of the North Sea where the combined actions of the British blockade and the German U-boat campaign made unsustainable and increasingly ambiguous the validity of the U.S. position.

The United States used the legal precedents to establish and maintain its neutrality at the beginning of the war. The Declaration of Paris, the Conventions of the First and Second Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, and the Declaration of London in 1909 were all documents that set rules for the conduct of neutrality. The Declaration of London provided guidelines and a "definite code of international law capable of adequately safeguarding the American rights as a neutral."¹⁹⁶ The Declaration of London had not been ratified by any Great Power before the war. At the demand of the Department of State, Germany and Austria adopted the Declaration of London in August 1914, but London refused.¹⁹⁷

The large number of belligerents made the respect of neutrality increasingly difficult. Neutrality was relatively easy to maintain in a limited war, but in total war, its practice was bounded to fail. The abuses of the Allies, especially Britain, regarding the treatment of neutrals in

¹⁹¹ Chintamni Mahapatra. *US-Philippines Strategic Relations: Underpinning Unequal Associations*. (New Delhi: Reference Press, 2007): 48.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* 49-50; H. W. Brands. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 109.

¹⁹³ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 513, Scribd.

¹⁹⁴ Brands. *Bound to Empire*: 117.

¹⁹⁵ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 512, Scribd.

¹⁹⁶ Daniel M. Smith. *Robert Lansing and American Neutrality: 1914-1917*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972): 19.

¹⁹⁷ Edwin Montefiore Borchard. *Neutrality for the United States*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937): 60.

their blockade system broke the logic of neutrality. The Germans became disillusioned with international principles regarding neutrality. Therefore, to limit severely the commerce by neutral vessels, the Kaiser declared on February 4, 1915, the waters around the British Isles a war zone and launched its first U-boat campaign.¹⁹⁸ Dealing with the German chancellorship became increasingly complex as the United States failed victims to the indiscriminate actions of the U-boats.

Neutrality became progressively more problematic for the United States. Multiple challenging situations to neutrality emerged where the U.S. government was on the fringe of not respecting the international principles and laws of neutrality. While all the efforts to maintain that status showed evidence of a genuine interest in maintaining neutrality, the difficulty to manage U.S. interests within those situations was more complex. Already, pre-existing preferences for the allies' forces were prevalent and created an ambivalent and difficult position for the U.S. government. For example, a short while before the beginning of the war, German companies erected wireless stations at Tuckerton, New Jersey, and Sayville, Long Island with the capability to communicate with Germany.¹⁹⁹ The President issued an order not long after this issue was raised to prohibit the use of any radio station in the U.S. to transmit any message of "unneutral character."²⁰⁰ While on the other hand, when the Fore River Company and the Bethlehem Steel Corporation were assigned contracts to deliver submarines to the British, more debate occurred. Lansing recognized that as long as the submarines were sent unassembled, it was not violating legal neutrality.²⁰¹ However, President Wilson ruled against filling those orders for submarines since he considered it a violation of neutrality.

When Wilson declared war against Germany, he did not commit to any alliance with England or France. He kept referring to the Allied powers as "associates" throughout the war.²⁰² While the actions and policies of the American government were consistent with those of an ally, the term was avoided to keep out of any formal commitment on the record. The Americans were at war but for themselves. If the interests of the allies lined up with the American ones, they would continue to fight side by side, but the American troops would remain under strict U.S. command.

Wilson added a layer to his shift from neutrality to belligerency. To him, the U.S. participation in the war was an act toward "collective security."²⁰³ His entire efforts to build the League of Nations was oriented toward the development and maintenance of collective security.

Diplomatic Resistance and the Appeal of Engagement

The United States had reached a great power status but rarely acted accordingly. While in a credible position as a regional power in its own sphere of influence, it bore little weight against other great powers. U.S. international treaties were limited throughout this period to regional issues or a result of the engagement in the Great War (see Table 8.4). Beyond what seems like the uniqueness of President Wilson's idealism, the U.S. foreign policy during the Great War was not so much misaligned with the ones of his predecessors.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel M. Smith. *Robert Lansing and American Neutrality: 1914-1917*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972): 50.

¹⁹⁹ Link. *Wilson*: 58.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*: 58-9.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*: 62.

²⁰² Peck. *The Great War in America*: 188, Scribd.

²⁰³ Borchard. *Neutrality for the United States*. 50-51.

Table 8.4: International Treaties Ratified by the United States between 1880 and 1910

Treaty	Date	Main Purpose
North Pacific Fur Seal Convention	1911	Wildlife preservation
Declaration of London of 1909	1912	Maritime Law – blockades, contraband, prize, and neutrality
Treaty with Haiti	1915	Economic tutelage over Haiti (not ratified by Haiti due to political troubles)
Treaty of the Danish West Indies	1916	Purchase of the Danish West Indies
Lansing-Ishii Agreement	1917	Trade agreement with Japan that recognized China as part of the Japanese sphere of influence
Treaty of Versailles	1919	End of Great War and establishment of the League of Nations (not ratified)
U.S.-Austrian Peace Treaty	1921	Separate peace with Austria
U.S.-Hungarian Peace Treaty	1921	Separate peace with Hungary
Treaty of Berlin	1921	Separate peace with Germany
The Four Power Treaty	1921	Engagement of peaceful relations in the Pacific between the United States, Great Britain, France, and Japan
Five-Power Treaty of the Washington Conference	1922	Arms control treaty to limit the naval arms race and ban chemical warfare
The Nine Power Treaty	1922	Engagement in the protection of the territorial integrity of China and the maintenance of the equality of opportunity between the United States, Belgium, Great Britain, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and Portugal
Treaty of Lausanne	1923	Set the boundaries of Turkey

Source: Carl Russell Fish. *American Diplomacy*. (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1919); Armin Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

Before August 1914, Washington was experimenting with its new position as a great power. Roosevelt and Taft had been the flag-bearers of Dollar Diplomacy. They established a series of unfair treaties with nations in the Caribbeans where Washington refinanced their debt and established a quasi-protectorate over those states to prevent further involvement with European powers that could lead to a military intervention like the ones in Mexico and Venezuela between the 1860s and 1900s. To maintain and secure its control over the Panama Canal, the Taft administration negotiated, in 1913, a treaty with Nicaragua in which the United States obtained an “an option in perpetuity on the alternate canal route and the right to establish a naval base in the Gulf of Fonseca, together with a lease of the Great and Little Corn islands.”²⁰⁴

A new threat emerged in Mexico in 1912 which gave birth to the Lodge Corollary. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge seized the Senate with the potential risk of Japan acquiring rights for a naval base in Magdalena Bay in Mexico. The presence of a foreign power on the coast so near the U.S. coast and the Panama Canal was perceived as an important threat. Technically, Japan would not have violated the Monroe Doctrine since it was not a European power. However, the principle was the same. This led, therefore, to an extension of the Monroe Doctrine. On August 2, 1912, the Senate passed a resolution stating that:

That when any harbour or other place in the American continents is so situated that the occupation thereof for naval or military purposes might threaten the communication or the safety of the United States, the Government of the United States could not see without grave concern the possession of such harbor or other place by any corporation or association which has such

²⁰⁴ Daniel M. Smith. *Robert Lansing and American Neutrality: 1914-1917*. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972): 10.

relation to another Government, not American, as to give that Government practical power of control for naval or military purposes.²⁰⁵

While Lodge's resolution was not endorsed by the president, the message set the tone toward the protection of U.S. interests and the reinforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, without committing President Taft to complications in the relationship with Japan.²⁰⁶

Woodrow Wilson attempted to maintain U.S. neutrality in a total war. He managed to do so between August 1914 and April 1917. He remained committed to negotiating peace rather than prolonging the war. He entered the war, but never entered officially an alliance with the Allied Powers and maintained operational independence of the AEF throughout the war. However, his involvement in European affairs denatured the logic of the Monroe Doctrine. While the European powers had been the ones violating the Monroe Doctrine since 1823, after 1917, the situation was reversed. Wilson's declaration of war set an unseen situation for Washington that led him to propose unprecedented policies. Most of those policies took form after the end of the war.

Peace Mediation Attempts to Peace Talks

The Wilson administration signalled on multiple occasions its willingness to lead peace negotiations between the European belligerents. However, peace negotiations are difficult. The challenge to find the right balance between multiple actors' agendas in the heat of an open conflict that generated a death toll greater than any war before and draw many state resources would not be something that Wilson could resolve easily. The windows of opportunity for such mediation would be rare and short-lived.

Wars are started with the calculation that one side should win over the other and in a cost-benefit fashion. Miscalculations are more the norm than the exception. Expectations that one of the belligerents could improve its odds toward victory by prolonging the war and conducting a few more operations continuously held back the possibility of peace negotiation. The stalemate created at the outbreak of the Great War continuously draw huge amounts of resources and men but was never decisive enough to declare victory and engage in peace talks.

Wilson hoped to foster enough diplomatic will on both sides to create a dialogue toward peace. His first peace campaign was scheduled to begin after his re-election in December 1916. However, the recent German victory in Romania made Berlin believe that victory was within reach. Consequently, the German demands toward Wilson's mediation effort were disingenuous and could never be accepted by the Allies.²⁰⁷ On December 18, Wilson initiated his mediation campaign anyway. Wilson requested each side of the war to assert the realm of possibilities toward negotiation. However, the Central powers declined to transmit their aims to Wilson arguing that it would weaken them at the negotiation table, and the Allies demanded that Germany accept the blame for the war and pay reparations.²⁰⁸ Wilson's peace initiative was also an attempt at keeping the United States out of the war.

²⁰⁵ Quoted in Thomas A. Bailey. "The Lodge Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine." *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 48, no. 2 (Jun. 1933): 223-224; Armin Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. (New York: Macmillan, 1966): 160.

²⁰⁶ Bailey. "The Lodge Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine." 224.

²⁰⁷ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 50, Scribd.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 91.

Wilson revived his peace mediation initiative in January 1917. His proposition of “peace without victory” did not resonate much with the European belligerents. While both sides would have benefited from Wilson’s peace plan, none were ready to engage in it since they had committed too much already to the war. To achieve his “peace without victory,” President Wilson devised fourteen points to foster a sustainable and greater peace (see Table 8.5).

Table 8.5: President Wilson’s Fourteen Points (Simplified)

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Open covenants, openly arrived at;2. Freedom of the seas in war and peace;3. Removal of trade barriers;4. National armament reductions;5. Impartial adjustment of colonial claims;6. Evacuation of Russian territory and independent solution by Russia of her political development and national policy;7. Evacuation and restoration of Belgium;8. Evacuation and restoration of all occupied French territory and return of Alsace-Lorraine;9. Readjustment of Italian frontiers on lines of nationality;10. Autonomy for the peoples of Austria-Hungary;11. Evacuation of Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro, restoration of occupied territories, and Serbian access to the sea;12. Turkish portions of the Ottoman Empire to be assured secure sovereignty, but other nationalities under Turkish domination to be freed;13. Independence of Poland, to include territories with predominantly Polish population, with free Polish access to sea;14. Formation of an association of nations ensuring liberty and territorial integrity of great and small alike.

Source: Quoted from R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy. *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 35000 B.C. to the Present*. (2nd ed.) (New York: Harper and Row, 1986): 977.

The Paris Peace Conference

The Paris Peace Conference began on January 18, 1919, at the Quai d’Orsay. The magnitude of the conference was a rare event for the time. Thirty-two delegations were involved in the peace process and potentially could transform the world order. A majority of the Allied and Associated Powers asked for “security and expansion—not the moralization of the world.”²⁰⁹ President Wilson had to deal with a group of discontent states out for revenge on the Germans (see Table 8.6). The German infrastructure and industries had been less affected by combat and remained intact.

²⁰⁹ Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy*: 348.a

Table 8.6: Sanctions and Punishment Imposed on Germany During the Peace Process and Included in the Treaty of Versailles

<i>Date</i>	<i>Sanctions</i>
November 11, 1918, to June 28, 1919 January 1919	Maintenance of the naval blockade Requisition of German ships, and confiscation of the entire merchant marine as part of the reparation. The requirement was that the German Build 200000 tons of shipping for five years and hand it over to the Allies.
June 28, 1919	Transfer of authority of the German Shandong Peninsula concession to Japan Transfer of authority of the Marshalls, Carolines, and Marianas to Japan - All majors German rivers and waterways under the supervision of an international commission - Return of Alsace-Lorraine to France - Recognition of an independent Poland including the loss of territory surrounding East Prussia (including the Silesian coalfields) - Transfer of authority of German Colonies to the League of Nations - League of Nations mandate over the coal-rich Saar region administered by France - Transfer of the South Tyrol up to the Brenner Pass to Italy
1921	The Reparation Commission decided that Germany would have to provide 132 billion gold marks (\$33 billion). Reparation distributions are allocated as such: - 28 percent to England - 52 percent to France - Remainder to Belgium and Serbia

Source: Garrett Peck. *The Great War in America: World War I and Its Aftermath*. (New York: Pegasus Books, 2018) chap. 7, Scribd; Howard Jones. *The Course of American Diplomacy: Volume II from 1897*. (Chicago: The Dorsey Press, 1988): 346-358.

Wilson had a broader agenda than any other leader during the peace negotiation. His agenda was led by idealism and liberalism which provided the basis for a strong mechanism of conflict resolution. However, Wilson’s ambitions were not shared by many European leaders and not even by most of his fellow citizens. Wilson’s priority was the creation of the League of Nations. He was able to convince the Allies to draft the Covenant for the League into the draft of the peace treaty on January 25.²¹⁰ While Wilson’s vision was inclusive, the conference organized itself around the allied victors who organized the Council of Ten composed of main representatives from the five key allies (United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan) in addition to their foreign ministers.²¹¹

In a way, President Wilson attempted to carry along a devious form of strategic autonomy. By advocating the equality of all inside an organization based on unanimous decisions was to embody the autonomy of all. An autonomy with difficult maneuverability, but an autonomy unimpeded from the constraints of formal alliance. Wilson in his demand for a “peace without victory” sought a world “without entangling alliances.”²¹² While trying to break the time-tested patterns of alliances, the balance of power, and secret diplomacy, Wilson was trying to expand the autonomy that the United States valued for so long to other weaker states by inflating their voice and incidence on world politics within the League of Nations. Wilson’s intentions were ambiguous to that specific effect. However, the rules of collective security embedded in the Covenant of the

²¹⁰ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 304, Scribd.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*: 345.

²¹² LaFeber. *The Clash*: 114.

League of Nations created constraints on all member states and threatened important component of strategic autonomy.

The blockade on Germany was still going on when the peace conference began. The ceasefire did not stop the war effort right away. Germany would continue to pay the price of the war up until the next one. The peace conference quickly moved toward punishing Germany rather than finding an enduring solution to European stability. Progressively, the Allies imposed sanctions and punishments on Germany. Wilson had to restrain the intensity of the sanctions, especially those proposed by Clemenceau. Clemenceau wanted to create a buffer state in the Rhineland and annex the ethnically German Saarland.²¹³ Nevertheless, many measures, even before the finalization of the treaty, were designed to punish and incurred costs on Germany (see Table 8.6). The war guilt clause of the treaty was problematic, but Germany was in no place the restart the fighting. The Carthaginian Peace that emerged was designed to keep Germany as weak as possible.²¹⁴

In addition, just to get the Allied powers to agree, multiple concessions had to be made. Italy wanted its border to be made official in conformity with the secret agreement it made during the war.²¹⁵ Tokyo demanded the recognition of the transfer of the German concessions in Shandong.²¹⁶ France imposed the formation of a buffer state in the Rhineland and the payment of an indemnity from Germany.²¹⁷ Great Britain expected to keep its newly acquired colonies in Africa and the Pacific.²¹⁸

The Treaty of Versailles, with its 214 pages, had nothing of a negotiated peace between belligerents. The victors had negotiated between themselves. Germany bore the blame for the war and had to pay for its costs. The Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire were completely dismantled. While the Austro-Hungarian Empire was divided to a greater degree in accordance with the self-determination principle, the Ottoman Empire was pieced according to the claims of the French and British dominions.

The Treaty of Versailles was not ratified by the Senate. Despite the best efforts by Wilson who had to interrupt his campaign in favour of the treaty, illness and Republican-led chambers crippled Wilson's objectives. The Senate voted 38 for and 55 against the Treaty of Versailles on November 19.²¹⁹ Again, on March 19, the vote failed to reach the two-thirds majority required to ratify the treaty (49 in favour and 33 against).²²⁰ The United States would never join the League of Nations and would remain technically at war with Germany until the Berlin Treaty on August 25, 1921.

League of Nations

The League of Nations would test the determinacy of the United States to maintain its strategic autonomy. In February 1919, a draft of the Covenant of the League of Nations was

²¹³ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 326, Scribd.

²¹⁴ John Maynard Keynes. *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*. (New York: Macmillan, 1920): 31-32.

²¹⁵ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*. 215.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁹ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 370, Scribd.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* 373, Scribd.

prepared to be examined internally. The project had been the pride of President Wilson. However, he underestimated the reception of his project at home.

The reception of the Covenant in Washington was brisk. Signs of dissatisfaction were important both in the House and the Senate. The agreement with the foreign powers had already been a challenge to Wilson. The proposition was put to the vote by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations with forty-five amendments and the four reservations were defeated.²²¹ Senator Henry Cabot Lodge proposed fourteen reservations to be added to the next proposition. President Wilson opposed Lodge's reservations, but they were attached to the vote on the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant. Lodge made direct reference to Monroe Doctrine in the reservations to underline its primacy over the treaty.²²² The ratification of the Treaty failed in the Senate on March 20, 1920.

Civil-Military Relations: Reforms and the Test of the A.E.F.

Times of intensive combat have generated important changes in American civil-military relations. The Great War provoked a few significant changes. The chief of staff position was given more authority, and the rapid formation and training that multiplied the Army forces by ten led to the solidification and improvement of the training facilities,

The War Department changed fundamentally with the passage of the Army Reorganization Act of 1903. The Act established the general staff system in which the War department was led by a chief of staff.²²³ However, the Chief of staff position created some friction throughout American history and that friction was exacerbated at the time of the creation of the position. The conflict between General Wood and General Ainsworth which resulted in General Wood putting General Ainsworth under arrest signalled a tumultuous beginning for the position of Chief of Staff.²²⁴ The American model for the War Department was inspired by Elihu Root who adapted the German General Staff system which responded to the necessity of coordination and integration of the Army functions against the Napoleonic threats.²²⁵ Root argued that the reforms were essential to ensure efficient control of the military by the civilian authority. Root explained his position when he wrote:

It will be perceived that we are here providing for civilian control over the military arm, but for civilian control to be exercised through a single military expert of high rank, who is provided with an adequate corps of professional assistants to aid him in the performance of his duties, and who is bound to use all his professional skill and knowledge in giving effect to the purpose and general direction of his civilian superior of make wat for another expert who will do so.²²⁶

²²¹ Rappaport. *Sources in American Diplomacy*.²²⁴.

²²² *Ibid.* 225.

²²³ Paul Y. Hammond. *Organizing for Defense: The American Military Establishment in the Twentieth Century*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961): 10.

²²⁴ Peyton C. March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932): 45. Ainsworth was ultimately allowed to retire and was not brought to trial, but the effects of that kerfuffle were pervasive. General Ainsworth was "very close to the members of the members of the House Military Committee of that date, and the committee passed successive laws which were intended to minimize the power if the General Staff." See *ibid.*

²²⁵ Hammond. *Organizing for Defense*: 12.

²²⁶ Elihu Root quoted in Hammond. *Organizing for Defense*: 20.

However, contrary to Root's recommendations, the Chief of Staff was never the sole adviser to the Secretary of War and became more of a manager than a strategist.²²⁷ The role of the War Department Chief of Staff was to be the "immediate advisor of the Secretary of War on all matters relating to the Military Establishment" and to be "in charge with the planning, development and execution of the Army program."²²⁸ His tasks include preparing "the necessary plans for recruiting, organizing, equipping, mobilizing, training and demobilizing the Army and for the use of the military forces for national defense."²²⁹ The reform intended to overcome the problematic relations between the commanding generals and the secretaries of war.

The first years following the introduction of the chief of staff position in 1903 were difficult. The struggle from General Leonard Wood (1910-1914) and the Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson (1911-1913) to remove General Ainsworth set the tone.²³⁰ Wood's personality combined with Stimson's backing made him an efficient chief of staff. The title was not of any help to his successors. The leadership of the chief of staff that was supposed to transform the War Department was confronted by the heads of the various bureaus (Adjutant General, Corps of Engineers, Ordnance, and Quartermaster). The chief of staff had little authority.

The Overman Act (1918) allowed a clear establishment of the chief of staff as the organizing and planning hub of the War Department. The chief of staff had finally clear authority over bureau chiefs. General Peyton C. March took the office of Chief of Staff of the Army on March 4, 1918, and quickly pushed for troops' deployment in France.²³¹ General March in collaboration with Bernard Baruch, the new chairman of the WIB, reorganized the WIB and the War Department toward efficiency and speed. They reversed the slow and sluggish supply of and mobilization to Europe. The War Department and the WIB were also competing for identical resources, i.e., men. The draft calls escalated quickly to reach 275,000 per month from May 1918 to the end of the war.²³² March created four main divisions: Operations; Military Intelligence; Purchase, Storage, and Traffic; and War Plans.²³³

The growth of the army presented the challenge of improving its organizational capacity to form and train its recruits and to provide enough officers to lead its men. Professionalization of the armed forces was becoming more institutionalized. By 1910:

the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, named the Army School of the Line (once the Infantry and Cavalry School), the Signal School, the Army Field Engineer School, and the Army Field Service and Correspondence School for Medical Officers, plus the Mounted School at Fort Riley, the Coast Artillery School at Fort Monroe, the Engineer School at Washington, and the Medical School also at Washington. At Fort Leavenworth, the old Infantry School had also given birth to a Staff College. The Army War College in Washington capped the system.²³⁴

²²⁷ Hammond. *Organizing for Defense*: 24.

²²⁸ Otto L. Nelson (Maj. Gen.). *National Security and the General Staff*. (Washington [D.C.]: Infantry Journal Press, 1946): 288.

²²⁹ Nelson. *National Security and the General Staff*. 288; Weigley. *The American Way of War*. 316.

²³⁰ Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 497, Scribd.

²³¹ March. *The Nation at War*. 3.

²³² Millett, Maslowski, and Feis. *For the Common Defense*: 546, Scribd.

²³³ Matloff. *American Military History*. 379.

²³⁴ Weigley. *The American Way of War*: 325.

The reality of the Great War battlefield required specialized training that was not integrated into the American system. General Pershing accepted the support of the Allies to set up special training centers and schools to help the U.S. forces to master the reality of trench warfare, the use of chemical gas, demolitions, the use of hand grenades and mortars.²³⁵ After the first rotation on the front, Pershing integrated new elements in the training of his troops to correct the lacuna.

In February 1918, President Wilson also created a “war cabinet” to coordinate efficiently the war effort. The war cabinet was composed of Bernard Baruch of the War Industries Board, Harry Garfield of the Coal Administration, Herbert Hoover of the Food Administration, Treasury Secretary William McAdoo, Edward Hurley of the Shipping Board, Vance McCormick of the War Trade Board, and the president himself.²³⁶ This civilian cabinet dealt with the many economic bottlenecks that could slow down the war effort.

The post-war reforms failed to realign the balance between civilian and military authority. The National Defense Act of 1920 was a response to the martial spirit that emerged during the Great War. The Act only authorized half of the force recommended by the General Staff, so 280,000 men.²³⁷ The U.S. disengagement and the naval arms control agreement brought a progressive contraction of the military forces once more.

The Economist and the Moralist

Two important presidents marked this era, William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson (see Table 8.7). Taft’s biggest misfortune was to be the president between Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Those two pillars of U.S. policy were larger than life and cast a shadow over the work of President Taft. In addition, it was his dear friend Theodore Roosevelt who ruined his chance of re-election in 1912 when he decided to run as an independent. Otherwise, Taft might have led the United States during the first years of World War I.

Table 8.7: Presidents and their Main Role on Foreign Policy, 1910-1921

President	Years in Office	Main Role on Foreign Policy
William Howard Taft	1909-1913	Reformed the Army Continuation of Dollar Diplomacy Financial protectorate over Nicaragua Overall protectionist, but proposed free trade with Canada
Woodrow Wilson	1913-1921	Wilson changed drastically the diplomatic and military role of the United States. While involved in a very limited way in military planning, he broke with the centennial tradition of non-intervention in European affairs and the neutrality of the United States during European conflicts.

The large programs and spendings of Roosevelt as a president had created a large deficit. President Taft came in with the task of trimming the federal spending. This had unfortunate consequences for the Army and Navy. He cut costs by 50 million dollars in 1909.²³⁸ In light of those important cuts, the army and the navy required changes in structure and mission. While the Navy, under Secretary George von Lengerke Meyer, was able to maintain a strong operational fleet, both Secretaries Jacob M. Dickenson and Henry L. Stimson made poor figures in attempting

²³⁵ Matloff. *American Military History*. 382,

²³⁶ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 153, Scribd.

²³⁷ Thomas S. Langston. *Uneasy Balance: Civil-Military Relations in Peacetime America since 1783*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2003): 55.

²³⁸ Lewis L. Gould. *The William Howard Taft Presidency*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009): 123.

to form a modern army.²³⁹ The crippling structure of the War Department made the task difficult for the War Secretaries. Adjutant General Fred C. Ainsworth made sure to maintain the outdated practices that benefited him. Secretary Stimson and General Wood worked hard to have Ainsworth removed to finally create some much-needed changes. Taft and his Secretary of State Philander Knox reformed the State Department and created bureaus by geographic locations. They both actively promoted the primacy of the Monroe Doctrine and engaged in dollar diplomacy to shield the Republic of Latin America against the financial pressures of the European powers.

Taft quickly learned that foreign policy initiatives are risky. Taft met important resistance when he proposed a “reciprocity agreement” to Canada in 1911. This trade agreement proposed free trade with Canada. This created dissension inside the Republican party.²⁴⁰ The revolution against Porfirio Diaz in Mexico was another crisis that created difficulties for his administration. The Diaz government had benefited from the Dollar Diplomacy that was supposed to help stabilize its government. The escalation of the insurrection in 1912 forced Taft to dispatch 20,000 troops to Texas.²⁴¹ Finally, his commitment to the popularity of international arbitration treaties proved to be prejudicial to his presidency. McKinley and Roosevelt who committed to arbitration treaties prohibited the integration of questions of vital interests and national honour to arbitration.²⁴² Taft experienced the risk of such an issue being proposed for arbitration. Between 1910 and 1911, he had to oppose the potential arbitration of the canal tolls in Panama.²⁴³ The arbitration issue was at the root of the conflict that rose with Roosevelt and ultimately led to divisions within the Republican party.

President Woodrow Wilson was and remains a controversial figure. His questionable choices regarding the segregation of the federal workforce and his dismissal of the African-American managers.²⁴⁴ His track record had many progressive policies that changed American politics and allowed the emergence of American liberalism. However, Wilson is often remembered for his racism. The paradox of Wilson fighting for the rights of ethnic minorities and their self-determination worldwide while being unable to provide equal rights to the citizens of his own country led to a conflicting image of his presidency. He is and will remain a controversial figure, but an important one who had to deal with a difficult situation and contributed in a significant way to American foreign policy.

President Wilson took office in 1913. Nothing prepared him enough for the struggle he would have to face after August 1914. The Wilson administration was not prepared to enter a world war when it came into office, and it spent much effort to stay out of the war when it broke during its first term. Wilson had to struggle with all the contentions that came with the Great War. Wilson delegated a lot of his responsibilities regarding the war after April 1917 to the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, to General Pershing and to the Chief of Staff General Peyton C. March.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ Gould. *The William Howard Taft Presidency*. 124-125.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 143.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 145.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 160.

²⁴³ Henry F. Pringle. *The Life and Times of Howard Taft. Volume Two*. (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939): 650-653.

²⁴⁴ Peck. *The Great War in America*: 11, Scribd.

²⁴⁵ Baker was a Cleveland lawyer who was known as a pacifist and knew little about warfare. See Edward M. Coffman. *The War to End All Wars: The American Experience in World War I*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968): 20-1.

According to General March, President Wilson intervened twice in the war and both times, he was wrong.²⁴⁶ The first time, he ordered the Siberian Expedition. The second time, he sent troops to Murmansk and Archangel in northern Russia. For that deployment, Gen. March asked the president to limit the deployment to the Philippines' contingent (7,000 men) to avoid diverting too many resources from the Western Front.²⁴⁷

Wilson ended up being a major reformer when it came to foreign policy. First, he rejected dollar diplomacy. Second, he engaged in non-recognition diplomacy which led to military intervention in American states that took power illegitimately. Third, he entered a war with European states in Europe. Fourth, he engaged in the war with allies. Fifth, he attempted to bind the United States within an international organization that operated under the notion of collective security and unanimous decision. His vision for the future of U.S. foreign policy challenged all his predecessors and the tradition that was in place regarding the conduct of foreign policy in the United States.

In the end, President Wilson was also trying to transform the nature of the European balance of power. He wanted to break the old patterns of diplomacy and transform how conflicts were resolved and peace was achieved. His efforts materialized in the Fourteen Points which were intended to appeal to a more holistic approach to peace than what was the tradition before. Wilson rejected any prospect of a Congress of Vienna-style settlement to restore the previous balance.

The Premature End of Isolationism

John J. Mearsheimer and Michael Mandelbaum argues that the United States became an offshore balancer during the Great War.²⁴⁸ Though directly involved in the war after April 1917, Washington was able to maintain its neutrality throughout the first years of the war without suffering too much economically (H_{2B}). As the balance of power in Europe was about to shift dangerously against the interests of Washington if the Allied powers were to lose, Washington decided to intervene to protect its own interests. The perceived insecurity created by the German against the United States first and foremost by the risk of Germany in “control of Continental Europe” and the subsequent threat it could pose to “the preservation of the Atlantic System” were sufficient to precipitating the U.S. entry.²⁴⁹ Its insularity in comparison to Europe allowed an involvement without a disproportionate and immediate fear of retribution on the American continent. The success of the United States in that context was largely due to its insularity and the efficiency of the Monroe Doctrine. The protection of its interests in the Western Hemisphere had removed much of the control and influence exercised by European powers. The American War Declaration also came at a time when Germany was attempting to maneuver against the U.S. economic influence on the war by targeting the Atlantic commerce and looking into the possibility of Mexican belligerency against Washington as shown in the Zimmerman Telegram. Washington consequently intervened in Europe as a preventive measure.

The participation in the Great War also marked the end of an era for the Monroe Doctrine. President Monroe asked for reciprocity in his declaration. President Wilson overstepped that

²⁴⁶ Peyton C. March (Gen.). *The Nation at War*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1932): 113.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 123.

²⁴⁸ Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. 157; Michael Mandelbaum. *The Four Ages of American Foreign Policy: Weak Power, Great Power, Superpower, Hyperpower*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022): Chap. 5. Scribd.

²⁴⁹ Osgood. *Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations*: 111.

principle when he decided to take part in the hostilities of the Great War. The U.S. belligerency broke the barrier that the previous supporters of the Monroe Doctrine had erected in the Atlantic. The United States signalled a deepening of their role as a great power and provoked a change in the perception of the United States in the world order. While much effort was put in place to calm the effervescence of the military revolution that occurred during the Great War, including the Five-Power Treaty and the League of Nations, the risk factors for another involvement in a major war by the United States were greater than it was before the Great War. Isolation would be a possibility in the absence of a major conflict as Washington decided to do during the interwar period. However, the share of the relative power held by the United States had from this point the potential to change the outcome of any conflict.

President Wilson's foreign policy was aimed at keeping the United States out of the war at first. However, Wilson's neutrality became increasingly more difficult to maintain. He progressively changed his position throughout the War. Neutrality dominated his discourse during the first year of the War (H_{2b}). His discourse then became focused on the negotiation of a "peace without victory" to present an early solution to the conflict without involving the United States militarily. However, the European belligerents rejected the prospect of a U.S. mediation, and President Wilson did not steer the public opinion sufficiently in his favour and had to change his policy once more. Between the mid-1915 and the mid-1916, the national discourse switched toward military preparedness.²⁵⁰ The most important change occurred, however, during Wilson's campaign for re-election. Wilson started his fight for the "war to end all wars." That shift represented a break into the isolationist (H_{2a}) and the neutralist (H_{2b}) positions of the United States. While Wilson broke the mould of traditional U.S. foreign policy, he inevitably had to preserve the image of the United States as a strategically autonomous state. He maintained the operational independence of the AEF and refused to commit to a formal alliance with the Allies. In the end, the isolationist and neutralist elements inside the United States displaced the influence of Wilson following the war and were able to roll back the U.S. to its traditional position. The U.S. isolationism of the interwar period was an ambivalent strategic choice for the United States. While the avoidance of commitment to the League of Nations removed the pressure of multilateralism, Washington had become too much of a great power to remain an unwilling participant in world politics.

The military preparedness phase of the Wilson administration provided the dual purpose of securing military resources in the eventuality of the involvement of the United States in the war and reinforcing the area denial and anti-access capabilities of the United States (H_{1b}). However, the deployment of the AEF in Europe damaged the Monroe Doctrine and the U.S. strategic autonomy. President Wilson's progressive internationalism bore influence beyond the United States foreign policy. His role as a central voice for the League of Nations introduced the added value of a permanent multilateral forum to negotiate international issues. However, the lack of a mechanism to recognize the power differential between the states created a crucial problem especially when it came to security issues. In addition, the division between the isolationists and the internationalists inside the United States was still leaning favourably toward the isolationists. President Wilson led a coalition to transform the U.S. strategic culture, but in the end, the isolationist strategic culture (H_{1B1}) survived beyond the war.

²⁵⁰ Thomas J. Knock. *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1992): 58.

Conclusion

Washington demonstrated that it had the skills to manipulate risks to the extent of shielding a gigantic part of the world from foreign intervention. The success of that idea was not immediate. It took more than a hundred years to truly develop a system stripped of alliances, but that created a sphere of influence where the United States was the dominant power without competitors. President Monroe and Secretary Adams could not probably have thought that their policy regarding Europe and the independence of the Spanish ex-colonies would lead to the establishment of such influence. While the success of the United States is not solely attributable to its foreign policy, without a successful application of strategic autonomy, Washington would have been caught further into the conflicts of the European powers and potentially would never have expanded to the extent they did.

The two major phases of expansion of the United States between 1823 and 1921 followed the successful implementation of strategies that limited the influence of the European powers in the Western hemisphere. It allowed the United States to create momentum toward expansion without the European power posing armed was willing interposition. Washington was able to get the neutrality of the European powers during the War with Mexico, the Civil War, and the Spanish-American War. While that neutrality was not denuded of parochial interest on the European behalf, it allowed the United States to conduct the war against a single enemy, and not multiple ones.

The defensive brinkmanship strategy following Monroe's declaration and the Civil War worked in favour of the United States. The combined effect of the British acknowledgement and implicit naval deterrence that followed Monroe's Declaration gave almost eclipsed the effect of the brinkmanship strategy. However, the Jacksonian years strengthened that defensive brinkmanship strategy to the point where Washington was able to engage in continental expansionism without retributions. The Texas and the Oregon annexation combined with the territories gained from Mexico during the war highlighted the success of the brinkmanship strategy. However, the efficiency of the policy was incomplete during the Civil War. While the Union was able to deter the European powers to get directly involved in the war, Lincoln and Seward were not able to stop the action of the European powers in the Western Hemisphere and most of all France from making Mexico a protectorate.

The isolationism that followed the Civil War was not a protective measure that responded to the requirements of the internal troubles that drained much of the resources and energy of the federal government. In addition, the dominance of Congress during that period made the development of intensive diplomatic initiatives less likely. On the other hand, that period allowed the partial stabilization of the country and helped its economic and industrial development. When the United States decided to re-engage the world and begin a new phase of expansionism, its economy was vibrant and solid.

The second expansionist era of the United States was riskier than the previous one. The development of a big navy become a prerequisite for overseas expansion. In addition, the development of the navy created credibility to the deterrence against the European powers. The establishment of a naval force able to operate both in the Atlantic and the Pacific combined with the introduction of dollar diplomacy enforced a system of area denial and anti-access to the European powers in the Western Hemisphere. The system took a long time to perfect, but by the

time the Panama Canal was built, the United States was firmly in control of the Western Hemisphere and had acquired new territories.

The Great War changed the foreign policy of the United States in a fundamental and significant way. The neutralism that Wilson implemented after the outbreak of the war was slowly breaking down. Public opinion, the financial risk, the damage to U.S. trade, and the strategic interests of the United States were under tremendous pressure from the threat coming from Europe. Wilson finally declared war in April 1917. He broke the reciprocity of the Monroe Doctrine and led to a new phase of U.S. foreign policy. The involvement in the war triggered a series of engagements by President Wilson that permanently threatened the U.S. strategic autonomy. Even though Congress and the Senate opposed Wilson, the strategic mindset in Washington had changed. That mindset would only express itself after the Second World War since the United States rolled back to isolationism after the Great War. Nonetheless, the strategic ambitions had changed and the presidents that followed the Second World War understood the more engaging role the United States had to play in international security.

Balance of Power

Alliance avoidance and an explicit disdain toward the infighting of continental Europe led Washington to refrain from taking any credible part in the balancing intrigues of world politics. The United States still received the support of Great Britain following Monroe's 1823 Declaration. Without the implicit support of London, President Monroe would have had problems achieving his goal of removing the essentials of French, Spanish, and Russian influence in the Western Hemisphere. Internal balancing was often limited and responded only to threats to vital interests. External balancing did not occur through alliance formation but by strategic partnership in *ad hoc* situations where U.S. interests intersected with other powers. Therefore, balancing (H_{GPI}), though an important component of the international system, was not explicitly at the centre of U.S. foreign policy in a traditional fashion. The Monroe Doctrine can be argued to have taken the form of a balancing-like act since it required the support of London to bear credibility. Without Salisbury's deterrence against the Holy Alliance, European powers would have had a field day in Latin America. However, the United States decided to threaten the Holy Alliance unilaterally without any promises from London.

H_{GP1} “The greater the threatening state’s aggregate power, the greater the tendency for others to ally against it.”¹



2

While the United States engaged on multiple occasions in expansionist ventures, it did so unilaterally and did not form any alliance. Therefore, the paper tiger bandwagoning hypothesis (H_{GP2}) was not supported even though Washington created favourable conditions to do so. The expansion westward including the annexations of Texas, and Oregon, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Gadsden Purchase, and the Annexation of Alaska were not followed by alliance formation. The later expansion in the Caribbean and the Pacific did not upset the U.S. resolve toward non-entanglement.

H_{GP2} When a regional power engages in security through expansion, the threats it poses to other states make them more compliant.³



The regional influence of the United States ultimately allowed for control in the Western Hemisphere. While at first more of an intent than an effective control, the United States’ regional dominance became credible around the turn of the twentieth century. The growth of the U.S. Navy provided the necessary means to secure U.S. regional influence and to project power overseas. However, even when the U.S. regional supremacy became clear, the European powers did not ally against the United States as they did with China (H_{GP3}).

H_{GP3} Unopposed regional powers are more likely to be balanced against by extra-regional coalitions.⁴



The United States remained throughout the period studied essentially an uncommitted power. The non-entanglement doctrine of Washington remained limited to the continent until 1898. The extensions of its sphere of interest to overseas possessions opened a breach in U.S. isolationism. The only exception before 1898 was the U.S. involvement in the Far East. However, Washington only devoted limited resources to Asia which made the United States’ commitment free of entanglement since the cost of abandoning was low.

At first, the United States was not a credible threat against the European powers. A European intervention would have been costly but would have been most likely victorious. The United States did not have any interest in allying with the newly independent republics of Latin America (H_{IP1}). They were more a liability than a potential source of support. The United States would not have been able to impose restraint on the Latin American republics. The young republics would have been more defiant to the European powers and might have triggered a situation in which Washington would have been forced to get involved.

H_{IP1} Middle powers have a greater tendency to ally with the nearest powerful state.⁵



¹ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*, 32.

² Legend:

- : Falsified
- : Inconclusive
- : Supported

³ Jack L. Snyder. *Myths of Empire Domestic Politics International Ambition*. (Ithaca, N. J.: Cornell University Press, 1991), 5.

⁴ John J. Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: Norton, 2001), 42.

⁵ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*, 32.

Incentives to ally with London were multiple. The Jay Treaty in 1795 normalized the relations between the United States and Great Britain. However, the tensions between the two states remained episodically high. The War of 1812, the *Caroline* Affair, the Aroostook War, the Oregon boundary dispute, the *Trent* Affair, the Venezuelan Crisis, and the Alaska boundary dispute came in the way of the U.S.-British friendship. Until the Atlantic Charter, Washington sustained a strict neutrality position that prohibited the development of U.S.-British relations beyond the strategic partnership status. While Great Britain was the greatest threat to the United States but also their best strategic partner, Washington remained uncommitted to ally with Great Britain and bandwagon with it (H_{IP2}).

H _{IP2} Middle powers with scarce alignment options will bandwagon with their greatest threat.	
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France acted often as the troublemaker for the United States. While the independence of the United States would have not been possible without the Treaty of Alliance and the subsequent intervention of the French in the Revolutionary War, the alliance with France did not survive and was a core motivator of the strict neutrality policy of the United States. As a defunct ally, France became a destabilizing force that troubled the stability of the Western Hemisphere and the security of the United States on multiple occasions. It would have been in the interest of the United States to form a coalition against France to deter its unwelcome intermingling in American affairs (H_{IP3}). However, Washington remained committed to its neutrality and faced challenges from France alone.

H _{IP3} “The more unalterably aggressive a state is perceived to be, the greater the tendency for others to balance against it.” ⁶	
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The United States with its strict neutrality policy seemed to have passed the buck of its potential role in the international system for a long time (H_{IP4}). In addition, Congress generated restraint on the U.S. military capabilities. As an offshore power, the United States had many incentives to buck-pass its involvement in European affairs. Washington’s fear of entanglement was the main motivator, but the economic gains from neutrality were also offering a better outcome than participation in any European conflict. Consequently, the United States buck-passing was an indirect consequence of U.S. neutrality. The European conflicts had to become generalized to become a tipping point for U.S. involvement such as in the two World Wars. However, the United States took a more active role as a stabilizing force in the Western Hemisphere when it started to improve its naval capabilities in the 1880s.

H _{IP4} “The greater the probability of allied support, the greater the tendency to balance. When adequate allies support is certain, however, the tendency for free-riding or buck-passing increases.” ⁷	
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Overall, the United States challenged the conventional wisdom of the balance of power theory between 1823 and 1917. The U.S. involvement in the Great War marked the beginning of the international involvement of the United States in the conduct of world politics and not just in the protection of its own interests. However, the U.S. involvement in the Great War was unsupported by a clear strategy. As Walter Lippmann argues, “President Wilson had no foreign policy, accepted by the nation, which gave him the means of judging whether, why, when, where,

⁶ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*, 33.

⁷ *Ibid.*

how, and to what end, the United States must take its position in the war.”⁸ Wilson’s internationalist policy created a rollback of U.S. foreign engagement since formulated without enough support at home. It would take another three decades before Washington truly formulated a policy aimed at international stability.

Geography

While geography is often at the basis of the theoretical conception of neutrality and isolation, the research on the case of the United States has demonstrated that it eventually became more a necessary condition than a sufficient one. While Washington benefited from the Atlantic Ocean that separated it from Europe, it did not stop the European powers from attempting to get involved in American affairs. The Monroe Doctrine was only an intention at first, a partial success during most of its existence, and a true feat of accomplishment when Washington finally obtained the necessary capabilities to enforce it. Insularity matters, but not as much as the defensive brinkmanship and the anti-access area denial measures that the United States put in place between 1823 and 1920.

The conventional wisdom hypothesis regarding geographic isolation (H_{GI}) was only successful to the point where London was engaged toward securing the Atlantic to the United States neutrality. The unofficial maritime support of Great Britain allowed the United States to prosper without the fear of revisionist powers that would compete for dominance in the Western Hemisphere. The Atlantic Ocean offered an important buffer between the United States and Europe, but most major great powers had at one point or another bases of operations in the Western Hemisphere that would have allowed them to challenge Washington.

H _{GI} Geographic position can foster self-reliance and shield against external threats.	
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What seems to truly have benefited Washington was the Europeans themselves. On multiple occasions, the United States was in a vulnerable position and was saved by crises occurring in Europe. The instabilities between the European powers saved the U.S. strategic autonomy on multiple occasions. Britain had a vast empire to manage that went well beyond the Western Hemisphere and required parsimonious dispatch of forces. France had to deal with its own internal stability in addition to the management of its empire.

Not having a peer competitor with its capital in the Western Hemisphere was the most important aspect of geography that benefited the United States. It created a false effect of insularity with the European powers. In more modern conditions with the transportation technologies and the modes of communication, this would have been harder to maintain. However, the United States was able to do what other large states not situated in Europe were not able to do. India became the crown jewel of the British Empire and China was not able to repeal the European influence and was exploited by almost all of them.

Trading State and Economic Prosperity

The United States entered the world stage as a trading state. As much as the United States was seeking to yield the benefit of trade, alliances did not factor into the equation (H_{TS}). In addition, protectionism was a recurring aspect of U.S. trade policy. However, on a few occasions,

⁸ Walter Lippmann. *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*. (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1943): 32.

exporters played a role in the maintenance of neutrality as a national policy to protect their interests. The United States did not want to create asymmetrical interdependence not in their favour. Consequently, with neutrality, the United States diversified its trade partners without any formal commitment to specific partners (H_{EP1}). Interdependence did not help the signalling process in the case of the United States and did not go beyond the formulation of a neutrality policy.

H _{TS}	The greater the economic development of a state, the more likely it is to create preferential relations with economic partners and create alliances.	
H _{EP1}	Trading states signal neutrality to the international system's economic openness.	

The link between neutrality and trade benefits did not hold as well as during wartime (H_{EP2}). During minor conflicts, U.S. neutrality held off for the most part. The United States was able to hold relations with its economic partners throughout some important conflicts in Europe too, including the Crimean War, Franco-Prussian War, and the Boer War. However, during the Civil War, the United States experienced their own medicine and realized that neutrality can be duplicitous and provide additional tensions. The Confederate efforts to obtain war vessels from Britain and France led to diplomatic tensions with the Union that endured after the war.

H _{EP2}	Neutrals' impartiality in conflicts eases trade arrangements and allows continuity in commercial relations.	
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While at first relying on cotton as the main exchange commodity, the rapid industrialization of the United States yielded a fructuous trade of various commodities. The low internal pressure of U.S. industrialization during the Jackson era and the Gilded Age should have prevented Polk's and McKinley's expansionism. Patrick McDonald and Erik Gartzke's research has demonstrated that trade and investments only marginally influenced the likeliness of engaging in war.⁹ U.S. foreign policy during the 1840s and 1890s support those findings since the United States engaged in expansionist endeavours. McDonald argues that U.S. interests "were mercantilist and anticapitalist in nature."¹⁰

Washington fostered asymmetrical dependence to a certain degree, especially with the states of the Western Hemisphere. The United States became a surrogate for Latin American states to replace the European powers. The progressive replacement of the European powers by the United States as the main creditor to the Latin American states created asymmetrical dependence. Taft's dollar diplomacy epitomized that approach and set a positive feedback loop toward U.S. financial support to states in the Western Hemisphere at risk of undue influence from European powers. The commercial and financial role of the United States affected the dynamics of power in the Western Hemisphere and became an essential part of the Monroe Doctrine and its corollaries. However, the economic interdependence of the United States did not foster alliance formation before the Second World War and remained uncommitted to other policies than neutrality.

⁹ Patrick McDonald. "Peace through Trade or Free Trade?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48, no. 4 (2004): 547-572; Patrick McDonald. "The Purse Strings of Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 3 (2007): 569-582; Patrick McDonald. *The Invisible Hand of Peace: Capitalism, the War Machine, and International Relations Theory*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Patrick McDonald. "Capitalism, Commitment, and Peace." *International Interactions* 36, no. 2 (2010): 146-168; Erik Gartzke. "The Capitalist Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* Vol. 36, no. 1 (2007): 166-191; and Erik Gartzke and Joseph Hewett. "International Crises and the Capitalist Peace." *International Interactions* 36, no. 2 (2010): 115-145.

¹⁰ McDonald. *The Invisible Hand of Peace*: 19.

The United States' ambivalence toward engaging in trade policy without first protecting the development of its own industry and the cautious avoidance of alliances underlined the potential perceived risk of too much interdependence. The globalization of the world economy has increased the economic interdependence of most states. Interdependence has increased to the point where discussion about the weaponization of economic interdependence emerged.¹¹ While it is becoming increasingly a concern to U.S. interest with the economic growth of China, the rest of the world has been vulnerable to U.S. interdependence for a many years already. Smaller powers will become increasingly vulnerable to the weaponization of interdependence and emerging powers such as India, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and South Korea ought to develop defense mechanisms to shield their autonomy.

National Identity

The discourse about the U.S. national identity is a central part of the historiography of the period between the Declaration of Independence and the Second World War. If the U.S. national identity is the core belief system that motivated U.S. foreign policy during that period, it was a dual national identity, divided between isolationism and expansionism. An interesting question emerged from that realization. What aspect of U.S. national identity did make isolationism and expansionism compatible? The literature identifies three main components of the U.S. national identity. Individual liberty, manifest destiny and non-entanglement brought together an intricate combination balancing between isolationism and expansionism. Divisions have been an inherent part of American political life. Isolationism was not enough to provide a full picture of the American strategic culture (H_{IB1}). Unilateralism and expansionism factored in too much to consider isolationism as the central aspect of U.S. strategic culture. In addition, non-entanglement remained constant, but isolationism was fluctuating and presented many instances of contradiction to its principles. The tension between the inward and outward strategies of development created contradictions in the isolationist narrative.

H_{IB1} Founding leaders' aversion toward alliances created a pervasive effect that embedded isolationism as part of a state's strategic culture. 

The ideas and writings of the Founding Fathers stayed an important part of the American narrative and their ideas about foreign policy kept on tainting the policy choices of many presidents. However, as with many other belief systems, the ideas advocated by the Founding Fathers became part of the discourse of the next generations, but in a reinterpreted fashion. During the Jacksonian era, the ideas of manifest destiny took the forefront of American foreign policy making and transformed some of the peaceful aspects designed by the Founding Fathers. The U.S. manifest destiny was celebrated for its valuation of American exceptionalism and individual liberty, but also xenophobia, racism, and chauvinism.

The institutionalization of the norms of isolationism was insidious and therefore inconclusive (H_{IB2}). U.S. isolationism and most of all the norm of non-entanglement were maintained essentially by the system of check and balance already pre-dating the formation of the

¹¹ Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman. "Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Network Shape State Coercion." *International Security* Vol. 44, no. 1 (2019): 42-79; Daniel W. Drezner, Henry Farrell, and Abraham L. Newman (ed.). *The Uses of Abuses of Weaponized Interdependence*. (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2021)

U.S. strategic culture of isolationism. Congress opposed the imperialists during the 1890s, the Senate stopped Wilson's internationalism following the Great War.

H1B2	The norm of neutrality sets institutional constraints to internationalists and expansionist policymakers which are hard to overcome without fundamental changes in strategic culture.	
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In the end, U.S. strategic culture did not account consistently for the pervasiveness of strategic autonomy as a guiding principle. Divided and often contested, the isolationist strategic culture was not a definitive determinant of the U.S. pursuit of strategic autonomy. The set of beliefs guiding isolationism played a non-definitive part in the foreign policy decision-making of the United States. Decision makers' rationality played a greater and most definitive role in foreign policy decision-making. Strategic autonomy was not an explicit part of the U.S. foreign policy and was never an explicit part of the Founding Fathers' narrative. However, the U.S. foreign policy behaviour of the United States was consistent with the logic of strategic autonomy. Whether isolationist or expansionist, the United States acted (or was restrained to act) in the international system consistently with the aim of protecting its strategic autonomy. The Monroe Doctrine offered a structure to a narrative that sustained the U.S. foreign policy until Wilson entered the Great War.

Intermediary Autonomy

The United States took a great risk with the Monroe Doctrine. A calculated risk since the unofficial British naval support allowed Washington to give weight to Monroe's Declaration and deter the Holy Alliance, but it was nonetheless a high risk. Monroe and Adams put a lot of faith in British Foreign Secretary George Canning. In combination with the non-entanglement principle professed by the Founding Fathers, the Monroe Doctrine capitalized on the renewed insularity with the removal of the overwhelming presence of Spain in the territories south of the United States. The independence of all Spanish colonies in Latin America between 1808 and 1826 except for Cuba and Puerto Rico removed most of the colonial possessions of the Holy Alliance in the Western Hemisphere. While the European presence was far from over, the independence of the republics of Latin America created an opportunity for the United States to assert its regional predominance. The United States was able to position itself as a force to be reckoned with in the Western Hemisphere and that would not tolerate the intervention of the European powers in its sphere of influence.

H3	States are more likely to avoid alliance commitment to increase the uncertainty of the outcomes of a conflict between other powers. a. Middle powers with advantageous geographical positions (insularity or buffer) can use their diplomatic skills to make gains over the tensions and conflicts of others when they play a pivotal role.	
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Washington used only marginally its geographical position to play a pivotal role among the great powers (H3). Many decision-makers were afraid of the reaction of the Europeans if they were provoked. That fear led to the underfunding of the military, the lack of naval capabilities, and most of all, the strict refusal of any involvement in European affairs. The United States had the luxury of staying out of European conflicts thanks to its geographical location far from the coasts of Europe and the maritime stability offered by the Royal Navy. The United States had the opportunity to play a pivotal role in a few major European conflicts and refused to do so before the Great War. The United States managed to stay away from the Crimean War (1853-56), the

Franco-Austrian War (1859), the Austro-Prussian War (1866), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71), and the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78). In addition, the United States was able to avoid direct conflict with the European powers between 1812 and 1898. Washington exploited its geographical location to shield its sphere of interest rather than expand it overseas and get involved in European affairs. Things started to change in 1898. The Spanish-American War was over issues in the American sphere of interest but had repercussions overseas. The United States defeated a European power and took over its colonies in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The only theatre where the United States played a consistently pivotal role was Asia. As a neutral, the United States attempted to play the role of mediator in the region, especially between China and the European powers. Following the First Opium War, the U.S. commissioners to China worked to maintain cordial relations between the Chinese and the European to protect American economic interests. The opening of Japan and Korea became possible also because of the U.S. neutrality that made Washington less of a threat and more of an economic partner. The U.S. diplomatic skill allowed the maintenance of relative prolonged stability in a volatile area.

Washington adopted an isolationist strategy following the Civil War (H4aa). The domestic instability and fragility that followed the Civil War required many resources to maintain the Union together. The Reconstruction period was marked by a rapid decrease in the military forces following the Union victory over the Confederate rebels (H4ac). The occupation forces in the South and securitization of the frontiers required more attention than what Congress was allotted. The Annexation of Alaska was a fortunate expansion of the territory, but rather an anomaly in this period. All the other attempts at annexation of additional territories were to fail due to congressional opposition or the simple expectation of that opposition. The isolationists were in control of the chambers and blocked attempts by Seward and Grant to annex new territories to the United States (H4ab).

<p>H4 States engage in strategic autonomy not to get caught in unwanted rivalry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Intermediary states with scarce alignment options are likely to adopt an isolationist posture to preserve their autonomy when there is a low probability that they will be threatened.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Internally fragile states are more likely to adopt an isolationist posture;b. Expansionist initiative risk to be blocked internally;c. Military force level is more likely to be kept low to avoid being perceived as threatening.	
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As a middle power and regional power, the United States' defensive brinkmanship has been the most important approach to foreign policy to deter European intervention in its sphere of influence, and rather bring diplomatic solutions to the various crises that emerged between 1823 and 1920. The game of chicken played with the European powers including Great Britain, Russia, France, and Spain helped the United States to obtain concessions from all those powers on various occasions. While a lesser power than most European powers, the United States was able to capitalize on the added costs of the geographical distance from the Western Hemisphere and the European capitals to use a minimum of resources that still translated into a credible threat (H4ba). That "all or nothing" approach lacked finesse and could have led to a European power calling the bluff. The Louisiana Purchase, the Adams-Onis Treaty, the acquisition of the Oregon Territory, the Texas Annexation, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Gadsden Purchase, the Venezuelan Crisis, and the acquisition of the American Samoa were obtained without open conflict with the Europeans even though they had vested interests in all the cases.

The situation in Cuba between the insurgents and the Spanish forces became an excuse for a U.S. intervention and was a failure of the defensive brinkmanship strategy. While the U.S. neutrality policy aimed at a diplomatic solution to the crisis at first, it evolved toward a brinkmanship crisis and eventually escalated toward war. The United States was able to increase the pressure progressively on the Spanish by threatening an intervention. The United States' efforts were insufficient to bend the Spanish into complying with all the U.S. demands. The military mobilization and the increasingly favorable public opinion toward the war combined with the unfortunate event of the *Maine* pushed Washington to take on a European power under the Monroe Doctrine and its corollaries for the first time. However, by that time, the United States was not an intermediary power anymore.

The first decade and a half after Monroe's declaration put to the test the manipulation of the risky nature of the defensive brinkmanship. The United States signalled their threat to the European powers without the military backbone to support this threat. Since London aligned its interest with the United States unofficially, Washington was able to inflate the credibility of its threat and deter the Holy Alliance intervention in the Western Hemisphere to retake its lost colonies (H4bb). The following continental expansion in Texas, Oregon Territory (Oregon, Washington, Idaho, parts of Wyoming and Montana), and the territories acquired during the War with Mexico (California, New Mexico, and parts of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming) brought the United States to a different stage of brinkmanship weakened by the large landmass it had to stabilize before returning to expansionism again. In addition, the fragile balance between the abolitionist North and the pro-slavery South brought by the Missouri Compromise broke down with the addition of new states that ultimately escalated into the Civil War.

H4	<p>b. Intermediary states use inflated diplomatic signals and threats to deter greater powers and maintain the former strategic autonomy regionally. The success of those signals and threats is dependent upon the middle power's ability to make them credible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increasing the cost/benefit calculus; b. Manipulating the risks of the violation of the signal/treat; or c. Exploiting <i>ad hoc</i> tensions between other powers to maximize the cost. 	  
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The exploitation of *ad hoc* tensions between other powers was not as conclusive in the case of the United States (H4bc). The Fenian revolt between the Irish sympathizers and the British in Canada created more backlash than opportunities for the United States. However, the United States benefited from the European conflicts in an *ad hoc* manner. The Franco-Prussian War led to the removal of Napoleon III which ended the French venture in America to gain control over Mexico. In the end, no obvious attempt at manipulating the tensions between the great powers was used by the United States to divert their attention from American politics.

Washington was adamant about non-entanglement and alliance avoidance. That transparency about its stand on alliances minimized the offer toward alignment options. The United States' emphasis on non-entanglement and neutrality made Washington an unreliable partner to most states. The British posed as an unofficial strategic partner at two crucial moments. First, following Monroe's Declaration, the British provided implicit assistance to provide a naval backbone to the U.S. policy. Second, with the resolution of the Venezuelan Crisis and the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, London acknowledged the regional primacy of the United States in the Western

Hemisphere. London’s latter gesture was an attempt to share the burden of security with the United States the same way it did with Japan to safeguard the security of Asia. London was ending its own “splendid isolations” and securing regional partners (unofficially in the case of the United States) to share the burden of naval security and focus its resources on the impending European arms race with Germany.

While Washington took the stand of non-alignment with the Monroe Doctrine that held the European powers at a distance, Latin America perceived wrongfully at first the United States as a potential ally to protect the young republics against European interventionism (H4c). The United States had traction as a regional power toward alignment with the republics of Latin America. Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, and Nicaragua all offered a form of strategic partnership to the United States. The U.S. interest in Mexico, Nicaragua, Colombia and later Panama for an isthmian canal created more than half a century of competition for the construction of a canal. The involvement of the British and French brought also European interest. The Clayton-Bulwer entrapped the United States into the obligation of partnerships with the British for the construction of the canal. However, with decades of maneuvering, the United States was able to change the dynamics and secure the means to unilaterally build a canal in Panama without the constraints of the British or the Colombians. Washington was able to exploit its alignment option to obtain the rights to a canal, but it took half a century to achieve its goal. Therefore, the efficiency of the U.S. ability to disentangle the diplomatic competition over the construction of a canal was dubious at best.

H4 c. Intermediary states with abundant alignment options have incentives to diversify their support sources if they capitalized on their diplomatic skills and reputation if they want to increase their strategic autonomy.	
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Cases of bait-and-bleed are subject to secrecy and can be difficult to identify. In the period covered by this work, the United States did not engage in a clear case of bait-and-bleed (H5). The Confederates attempted to bring the European powers into the Civil War, but not in a fashion in accordance with the bait-and-bleed approach since the Confederates were already at war. The non-intervention in European affairs did not allow the United States to engage in diplomatic intrigue susceptible of provoking a conflict between two other powers. While impressive in the grand scheme of diplomatic relations, bait-and-bleed is a rare successful strategy. Latin America was a susceptible target to such measures, but the area was already so volatile with civil wars and regional conflicts, that the United States had more interest in the stabilization and security of the region.

H5 States may increase their relative power and autonomy by precipitating a protracted conflict between two other powers. ¹²	
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The United States managed as middle and regional powers to stay clear of alliances, preserve their non-entanglement principle and avoid the turmoil that could have spilled over from

¹² Bait-and-bleed strategy is defined by Mearsheimer as a strategy to increase the power of the state that makes the bait. In Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 153. However, in this research it is conceived as a corollary between the increase of power and an increase of autonomy since the increase of power is achieved through a decline of the other powers’ capability during their conflict. The resulting increase in autonomy serves subsequent strategies that would have been constrained by the two other states involved in the protracted conflict. This will be particularly relevant in the China case where the 1962 India-China War prompted Pakistan to attack India in 1965 and fueled the Indo-Pakistan enduring rivalry.

Europe. However, the nineteenth century was relatively stable in Europe. When the Great War erupted, the United States had a hard time staying away. Even though U.S. neutrality held out for two years and a half before the United States entered the war, the pressure from a major conflict in Europe brought the situation to the brink and let the American internationalist emerge and transform the tradition of American foreign policy inherited from the Monroe Doctrine. The United States experienced a rollback to isolationism after the Great War, but internationalism took root, and the logic of isolationism became less compelling.

Hegemonic Autonomy

As an emerging great power, the United States had to display its power with parsimony and restraint. However, the expansionist urge became irresistible for obvious reasons. The continental westward expansion was the path of least resistance toward becoming a regional power. The Louisiana Purchase, the annexations of the Floridas, Texas, Oregon, and Alaska, and the conquest of the territories west of the Rio Grande were progressive and consequential expansions to the surroundings of the Thirteen Colonies (H1a). The United States, while bold in some of those expansions, worked to minimize the risk of entanglement with other powers. The United States ran higher risks during the War with Mexico, but its success in the campaign against the Mexicans generated the required momentum to acquire quickly a vast portion of the less populated territory of Mexico. When it came to the expansion related to the Spanish-American War, the control over the isthmian canal, and the control of the trade route to Asia in the Pacific, the United States expanded their territory in a logic consequent with reinforcing their anti-access and area-denial strategy (H1b). The A2/AD strategy was already an important component of the American strategy that valued early on the coastal defence and the coastal fortifications. However, the development of blue-water capabilities in the 1880s and the securitization of overseas naval bases provided a real A2/AD system. The consolidation of that system at the turn of the century secured the regional primacy of the United States. While interventionism in its regional sphere of influence increased, the foreign threats of intervention by overseas powers was less likely than ever. The overseas expansionism of the late nineteenth-century United States combined with its A2/AD strategy marked the emergence of the United States as a world power to be reckoned with. The U.S. participation in the Great War consecrated the role of the United States as a world power, but even if Wilson displayed a new form of internationalism at the time, the United States remained an unwilling participant in world security.

<p>H1 States are more likely to select strategic autonomy when they want to avoid sharing gains.</p> <p>a. Great powers and regional powers with sufficient capabilities and limited primary external threats have high incentives to create opportunities for the expansion of their sphere of influence and/or their territory.</p> <p>b. Great powers with regional supremacy that want to expand or protect their sphere of influence are likely to engage in anti-access and area-denial strategies to avoid the involvement of external power or coalition in support of the neighbouring states.</p>	 
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As an unwilling participant in world politics, the United States selected isolationism and neutralism to avoid entanglement in overseas conflicts. Isolationism was first triggered by domestic troubles. As a weakened regional power out of a brutal civil war, the United States during the reconstruction opted for isolationism to heal its wounds and focus its resources toward re-unifying the Union. The following decades and a half became troubled by domestic disturbances.

The series of conflicts with the indigenous populations were intertwined with the development of the West but left a dark mark on U.S. history. However, the United States was not a world power at that moment. The adoption of isolationism after the Great War was to safeguard the United States from the cost of involvement in Europe. The war-torn Europe project required resources that the United States did not want to spare. The burden of recovery became linked with the Marshall Plan following the Second World War, but the rejection of the League of Nations and the Treaty of Versailles removed the United States' potential role in the European reconstruction after the First World War. The U.S. isolationism following the Great War became a beast of its own. The interwar period, though not studied in this work, offers an additional component to the theory of strategic autonomy.

Neutrality was a recurrent tool of U.S. foreign policy. It legitimated the rejection to align with the European powers and preserved the economic benefits of trade (H2b). The Monroe Doctrine insisted on non-entanglement in European affairs, and neutrality was the best way to achieve this goal without experiencing too much of the consequences. Neutrality bore its rules and constraints but offered the possibility to the United States to keep harvesting the benefits of trading with the whole of Europe and not only a selected few.

<p>H2 States are more likely to choose strategic autonomy when they do not want to divert their resources to alliance goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A great power is more likely to isolate itself if it does not want to divert resources on alliance goals with an ally at risk to get involved in a costly and protracted war where the great power does not have its primary interests threatened. b. Rising great powers are more likely to adopt neutrality as a strategy to avoid entrapment in conflicts due to alliance responsibilities. Rising great powers avoid both regional and international commitments to other states to avoid the risks of escalation, entrapment, counteralliance, and quasi-rent appropriation. 	 
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The problem with isolationism and neutrality in the case of the United States is that the latter is often embedded in the core principles of the former. Neutrality goes hand-in-hand with isolationism. The theoretical difference between the two took more importance during the interwar period. Even though, U.S. isolationism was supported by neutrality, that neutrality had a severe bias toward the Allies.

Military Capabilities

Washington was able to establish a strong and prosperous military-industrial complex. Military innovations and adaptability remain a trademark of the military-industrial complex that the United States built since its inception. Nevertheless, its progression was not always simple. The dynamic of Congressional cuts during the peacetime period made the development of a solid military industry perilous. The early expansionist efforts and the War with Mexico led to the introduction of the combined model of development between the private and public sectors. The Civil War establish the basis of an arms industry with a stronger private sector. Following the Civil War, most weapon systems “became obsolete before they wore out.”¹³ The Great War brought the

¹³ Andrew Moravcsik. “Arms and Autarky in Modern European History.” *Daedalus* 120, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 29.

biggest transformation. The United States became an arms manufacturer able to provide weapons across the world.

H_{MP} “The greater a state’s offensive capabilities, the greater the tendency of others to align against it. Therefore, states with offensively oriented military capabilities are likely to provoke other states to form defensive coalition.”¹⁴



The development of the American know-how and the industrialization of its economy fostered an American-made military industry (H6). The United States was quick to offer support to private arms manufacturers which fostered innovation and a profitable arms production that would eventually become the largest arms provider on the planet.

H6 States that indigenize their weapons systems decrease their reliance on external support for their military forces and consequently increase their autonomy.



By capitalizing on domestic development, the requirement for external sources of weapon systems became unnecessary (H7). The U.S. arms trade became important early on. The continental expansion led to the armament of the civilian to ensure their security in a volatile environment. The settler’s experience on the frontier sustained the development of the small arms private industry which set the foundation of the American arms industry.¹⁵ The industrialization and technological development that took place in the nineteenth century led to an accelerated pace of development of the U.S. arms industry. By the turn of the century, the United States was among the leaders in patenting new armament technologies and was a major arms exporter.

H7 States that diversify their sources of weapon systems avoid the potential entrapment from a unique weapons provider with too much influence.



Contrary to some other cases of strategic autonomy, including India, the defence industry and the arms trade did not bear a major significance on the United States’ ability to achieve its goals. Early on, the industrial capabilities of the United States integrated weaponry and shipbuilding to provide the necessary military equipment. The only constraint became the amount of money devoted to the armament of the U.S. military forces.

Alliance Avoidance

Alliance avoidance has been the most constant and unquestionable principle that was maintained between Monroe’s Declaration and the April 1917 War Declaration. Even during the U.S. participation in the Great War, Washington technically never committed to an alliance. Alliances were suggested by many throughout the years, including senators, congressmen and members of the cabinet. However, aversion to the risk of entanglement governed the U.S. foreign policy throughout that period. That unwavering principle was the key to the success of U.S. strategic autonomy. An alliance with Great Britain would not have been the worst thing in the world for the United States since the Royal Navy was what gives a semblance of credibility to the Monroe Doctrine when it was put in place. However, Great Britain was a challenge to the U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere on so many occasions that an alliance might have cautioned

¹⁴ Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. 33.

¹⁵ Pamela Haag. *The Gunning of America: Business and the Making of American Gun Culture* (New York: Basic Books. 2016): 58–59.

many of the actions that ended up being prevented by U.S. resistance, threat, and diplomatic pressure.

Diplomatic Skills

The evaluation of the diplomatic skills of the United States is a puzzling and interesting story. The lack of diplomatic culture and training led to horrible diplomatic failures as much as unexpected successes when it came to diplomatic missions. Unexpected situations emerged ranging from ministers using their position to negotiate personal and financial interests to Navy captains establishing a protectorate over territory.

Many presidents and secretaries of state engaged their counterparts in ways that allowed the development, maintenance, and improvement of the U.S. strategic autonomy. Intentional rupture with the U.S. preference toward strategic autonomy occurred only rarely and was often the result of diplomatic manipulation by other actors (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Major Diplomatic Events that Limited U.S. Strategic Autonomy

Date	Event	Implication
April 19, 1850	Clayton-Bulwer Treaty	Forced any construction and maintenance of a ship canal to be a joint effort with Great Britain (Canning manipulation)
October 1861	Joint Operation by France, Great Britain and Spain against Mexico	Lincoln and Seward were not in a position to offer much opposition to the European joint operation and the following power grab by France and the enthronement of Emperor Maximilian made the violation of the Monroe Doctrine last throughout the Civil War.
October 25, 1862	Liberia-American Treaty	Recognition of Liberia's independence which included a responsibility to protect
December 1, 1884	Frelinghuysen-Zavala Treaty	Defence alliance with Nicaragua to secure the canal rights and concession (never ratified)
April 7, 1906	General Act of the Algeciras Conference	Roosevelt's involvement in European politics (France's rights over Morocco)
April 2, 1917	Declaration of War	Wilson declared war on Germany and joined the Allied war effort
January 10, 1920	Covenant of the League of Nations	Signed with the Treaty of Versailles. Art. X would lead to entrapment according to U.S. Congressmen. Treaty was rejected and never ratified.

The diplomatic style of each president ended up being more significant than what was expected. The manipulation and tendency to play games-of-chickens of President Polk led to one of the most important phases of expansion of the United States. Lincoln and Seward complemented each other to avoid further involvement of the European powers during the Civil War, especially during the *Trent* crisis. President Cleveland's anti-imperialism slowed down American expansionism by almost a decade. President Roosevelt's cavalier attitude led him to take control of the American Empire after McKinley's reluctant conquest of the Spanish colonies. Wilson's idealism, though imperfect on many levels, led to the most radical transformation of the U.S. foreign policy away from strategic autonomy even though he was a neutralist when he was elected.

Even though they all have so many divergent opinions and goals, they all shared the desire to defend U.S. strategic autonomy.

Concentration of Power

The presidential authority was not constant throughout the studied periods. The U.S. democratic system intentionally created an imbalance in power. Before the Civil War, party politics were less significant when it came to the formulation of foreign policy and the office of the president was holding greater autonomy. However, after President Johnson's confrontation with the Radical Republicans, Congress seized the initiative when it came to the dynamic of foreign policy. Combined with the reality of the Reconstruction, the Indian Wars, and the massive strikes that animated the postbellum period, Congress was more focused on internal policy and left little room to maneuver for the president.

The situation returned to a predominance of the presidential dictum in terms of foreign policy during the progressive era. Overall, the concentration of power was often a sufficient condition to limit the development of expansionist goals by various presidents but was never an obstacle to isolation and neutralism. The House and the Senate have been among the best defenders of strategic autonomy. They opposed agreements that would have compromised the United States' security autonomy, including the Covenant of the League of Nations. The Senate prevented multiple times premature annexations of territories including Santo Domingo, Hawaii, and the Danish West Indies.

Congress was a real obstacle to the development of the U.S. strategic autonomy due to its policy in link with the military appropriations, both for the Army and Navy. Congress applied a consistent policy of disarmament and demobilization following every major conflict. The maintenance of a minimal peacetime army and the prioritization of coastal defence over capital ship building led to a reduced military force that had little credibility regarding the ambition of its diplomacy. While the most important regional player, most European powers outclassed the United States at every level before the late nineteenth century.

Military Balance

Military professionalism in the U.S. military had a difficult path due to the tradition of minimal peacetime military forces that crippled the development of a professional regular army. This led to multiple military engagements without adequate professional forces to fight them. For most of its existence between 1823 and 1898, the peacetime U.S. military forces were kept to a minimum and offered frontiers responsibilities in horrid conditions. Nevertheless, the work of both Emory Upton and Elihu Root was influential in reforming the War Department and bringing reforms to the military. In addition, those reforms were at times postponed and inadequately implemented. The unbalanced nature of the civil-military relations provided a long period of forced restraint due to inadequate military capability to maintain a credible international presence followed by a short outburst of expansionism supported by rapid militarization (H8).

H8	Unbalanced civil-military relations can create a false impression of autonomy or restraint.	
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The imbalance between the civil and military authorities was problematic for a few reasons. First, with the overbearing influence of the civilian when it comes to the organization of the Army, the priority was not always given to the maintenance of adequate forces. Equipment, living

conditions, and training were often inadequate. Second, the military command suffered on a few occasions from the unbalance in terms of the authority of the Secretary of War. The commanding generals required clear authority when it came to operations, but that authority was on occasion overruled by a zealous secretary of war.

Implications of Strategic Autonomy

In the end, it is important to understand the meaning of U.S. strategic autonomy in contemporary international relations. As much as understanding U.S. strategic autonomy between the 1800s and the early 1900s is the key to explaining the rise of the United States as a great power, it is even more insightful to the comprehension of the foreign policy-making of the states whose interests are misaligned or in direct opposition with the status quo. As other states such as India, China, Pakistan, Iran or even North Korea are trying to challenge or avoid the established order, strategic autonomy becomes one of the most essential components of their foreign policy. The ability to avoid formal alliance, to circumvent the influence of the other major powers, or to at least maintain it to a minimum appears to be the most consequential way to contest the established order or avoid the negative consequences of the unfair dealings that some states experience. Interdependence, great power competition, and the normalization and institutionalization of international relations are bound to find challengers and outliers. A community of interests as vast and plural as the one existing in the modern international system inevitably leads to conflict. The existing mechanisms to reduce the risks of conflict can be circumvented and strategic autonomy remains the key to do so.

The United States between 1823 and 1920 had many advantages to safeguard its strategic autonomy. The Atlantic Ocean was a sufficient obstacle to deter most invasions of the large U.S. land mass rich in resources. No other major competing powers had their capital in the vicinity. The naval policing from Britain shielded the United States from the other European powers. The international economy was less integrated. While contemporary cases did not meet all those conditions, the opportunism of a limited number of U.S. policymakers to manipulate risks with sufficient diplomatic whip to deter the greater powers from exploiting U.S. vulnerabilities. Washington was able to expand its territory, sphere of influence, and power. The process was not without its dangers and setbacks but paved the way for the emergence of a superpower. On the other hand, not all cases of strategic autonomy are successful or have the same geostrategic advantages as the United States. Diplomatic skills appear to be the most significant element toward the success of strategic autonomy. Without proper diplomatic finesses, states attempting to gain further influence or to minimize the influence of others are bound to ruffle feathers with others and see their vulnerabilities exploited.

In addition to emerging powers that put forward strategic autonomy, smaller states including buffer states, non-aligned and neutrals have attempted to exploit the international system to their advantage even though they might lack in capabilities. Where they lack in capabilities, they make up for diplomatic skills and comparative advantage. European states such as Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Yugoslavia emphasized strategic autonomy at one point or another during their history to avoid getting entangled in the wars of Europe or the Cold War tensions. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) engaged similarly in strategic autonomy to stay out of the two blocs' rivalry during the Cold War. The Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) have also been attempting

to reduce the control and influence of Russia by exploiting their geostrategic position between China and Russia.

Strategic Autonomy Research

Additional cases of strategic autonomy must be investigated. As much as the conduct of those types of strategies can be beneficial for weaker powers to avoid being compromised by more powerful ones, they can also be detrimental to the whole system when a great power or regional power decides to engage in expansionist actions against weaker foes without being submitted to the restraints that the international system is trying to develop with the institutionalization of international relations. Strategic autonomy will continue to challenge the order of the international system. Governments will continue to try (and sometimes succeed) to avoid the constraints imposed by other actors in the international system.

Even though today, Washington is among the most committed states toward international security and is involved in the largest alliance system in existence, remnants of the Monroe Doctrine era and its strategic autonomy are still present in the strategic and political intelligentsia. Declarations about disengagement, restraint, and isolationism are still part of the political discourse from time to time. However, it remains that the cost the United States bore in its efforts to police the world is the complete opposite of the peacetime policy that occurred during the phases of development of the United States when it was implied that after a war, the U.S. forces were to disengage and demobilize. The U.S. military budget was maintained at a high level even after the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Strategic autonomy is option hardly sustainable for Washington as long as it is going to assume the role of a superpower. Too many hotspots threaten the ability of Washington to remain strategically autonomous while maintaining multilateral engagements and internationalism as their core foreign policy dimensions and this even though it remains the dominant power in the system.

Strategic autonomy appears to be among the preferred strategic options for emerging powers. China, India, and Iran present important cases of strategic autonomy. They all three attempted for a prolonged period to dissociate themselves from the strategic constraints of the Cold War and its aftermath by maintaining no formal alliances. They all three search to limit the influence of greater powers and to do so, they engaged in alternative strategies other than balancing. In addition, strategic autonomy meets additional challenges with the international integration and the networking groups at play. Strategic autonomy risks becoming an increasingly rare commodity and the states or actors who will be able to circumvent the systemic and institutional constraints to strategic autonomy will continue to create change in the system and underline the weaknesses in it.

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