

READING CHECK

How did Commodore Matthew Perry win the Japanese emperor's favor?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *commodities* mean in the underlined sentence? What clues can you find in the surrounding words, phrases, or sentences?

READING SKILL

Identify Main Ideas Locate the sentence that identifies the main idea of the summary. Write the sentence below.

During the late 1800s, the United States began to acquire influence and territory outside of its continental borders. It pursued a policy of **imperialism**, or the use of economic, political, and military control over weaker territories. Many imperialist nations wanted colonies to serve as **extractive economies**. Raw materials would be removed from these colonies and sent to the home country. In America there was a surplus of goods. American industrialists would benefit because they could sell their commodities in new colonial markets around the world.

Alfred T. Mahan, a historian and officer in the United States Navy, called upon the government to build a large navy in order to protect American interests around the world. To justify imperialism, many imperialists used ideas of racial, national, and cultural superiority. One of these ideas was **Social Darwinism**, the belief that life is a competitive struggle and that some races are superior to others and more fit to rule. Historian **Frederick J. Turner** wrote that America needed a large amount of unsettled land to succeed. Some Americans felt that the nation should expand into foreign lands.

In 1853, Commodore **Matthew Perry** sailed a large naval force to Japan. Perry won the Japanese emperor's favor by showering him with lavish gifts. Within a year, Japan agreed to trade with the United States. In 1867, Secretary of State William Seward bought Alaska from Russia. The purchase almost doubled the size of the United States and provided timber, oil, and other natural resources. In Latin America, U.S. businessmen sought to expand their trade and investments, which expanded the U.S. sphere of influence.

The Hawaiian Islands had been economically linked to the United States for almost a century. American sugar planters owned much of the Hawaiian land. They used their influence to exclude many Hawaiians from the voting process. **Queen Liliuokalani**, the ruler of Hawaii, tried to limit the political power of the white minority. In 1893, the planters overthrew the queen and set up a new government. The United States annexed Hawaii in 1898. The United States was abandoning isolationism and emerging as a new power on the global stage.

Review Questions

1. How did Social Darwinism contribute to imperialism?

2. What led to the annexation of Hawaii?
