

U.S. Imperialism Document-Based Questions (DBQ)

Historical Context: During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the United States was expanding its economic and political power around the world. Members of Congress as well as individuals and groups in the general public debated the role of the U.S. in the world and whether it should be expanding its influence. By the early 1900s, the United States had become a world power.

Directions: Analyze the documents and answer the short-answer questions that follow each document in the space provided.

Document 1:

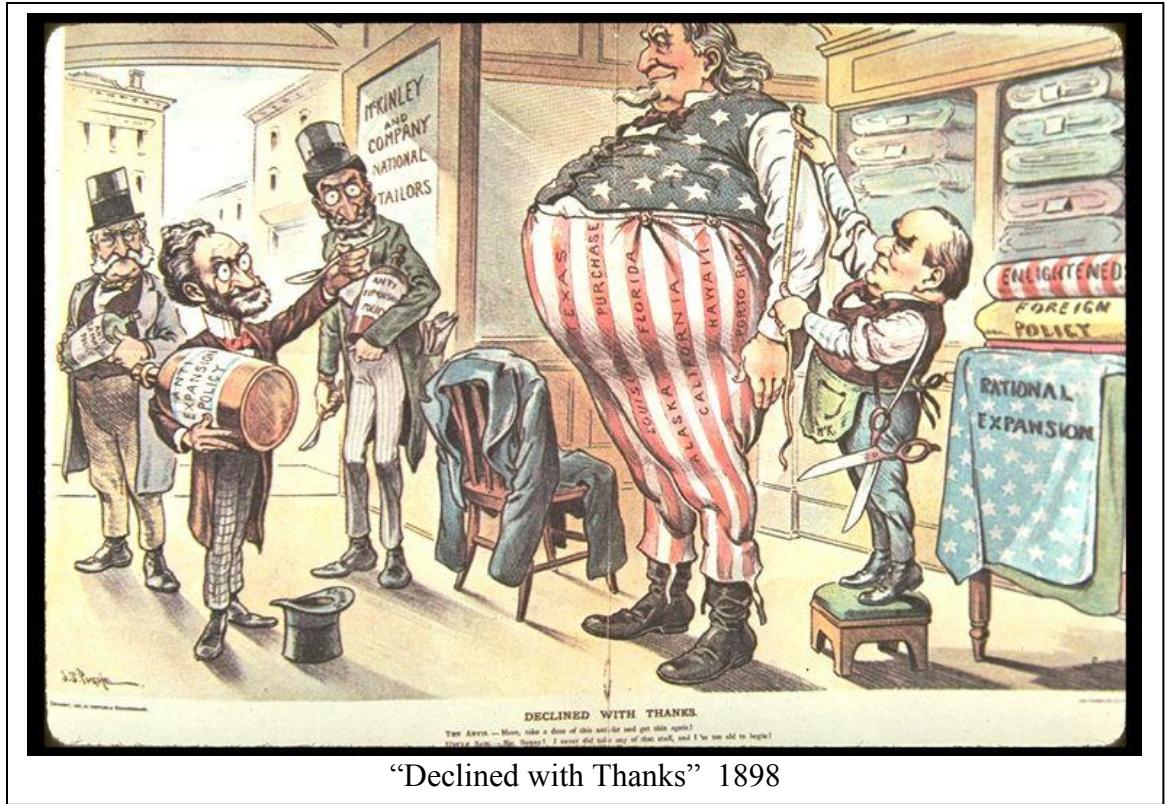
1. Describe the change in the U.S. exports from 1870 to 1914.



2. How was the industrialization of the U.S. one of the causes of U.S. imperialism?

Document 2:

1. In this political cartoon, what does the image of Uncle Sam communicate about U.S. foreign policy?



“Declined with Thanks” 1898

Document 3:

“If the Philippines are annexed what is to prevent the Chinese, the Negritos and the Malays [from] coming to our country. How can we prevent the Chinese coolies from going to the Philippines and from there swarm into the United States and engulf our people and our civilization? If these new islands are to become ours, it will be either under the form of Territories or States. Can we hope to close the flood-gates of immigration from the hordes of Chinese and the semi-savage races coming from what will be part of our own country?” - Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, Speech given in December 1898.

1. What problems did Gompers believe annexation of the Philippines would bring about?

Document 4:

“...The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East.. Lines of navigation from our ports to the Orient and Australia, from the Isthmian Canal to Asia, from all Oriental ports to Australia converge at and separate from the Philippines.. They are a self-supporting, dividend-paying fleet, permanently anchored at a spot selected by the strategy of Providence, commanding the Pacific.. And the Pacific is the ocean of the commerce of the future.. Most future wars will be conflicts for commerce. The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world. And, with the Philippines, that power is and will forever be the American Republic.” -Excerpt from a speech made by U.S. Senator Albert Beveridge from Indiana in the U.S. Senate in 1900?

1. According to Senator Beveridge, what is one reason why the U.S. must expand its power in the world?

2. How does Senator Beveridge justify the expansion of the power of the United States?

Document 5:

Theodore Roosevelt, Governor of New York, "Expansion and Peace," The Independent, December 21, 1899.

...Nations that expand and nations that do not expand may both ultimately go down, but the one leaves heirs and a glorious memory, and the other leaves neither. The Roman expanded, and he has left a memory which has profoundly influenced the history of mankind.... Similarly, today it is the great expanding people which bequeath to future ages the great memories and materials results of their achievements, and the nations which shall have sprung from their loins, England standing as the archetype and best exemplar of all such mighty nations. But the peoples that do not expand leave, and can leave, nothing behind them...

1. According to Roosevelt, why would the United States be justified in annexing the Philippines?

Document 6:

1. Why did Washington believe involvement with foreign nations would be harmful to the new nation?

President George Washington's "Farewell Address to the People of the United States" first published in a Philadelphia newspaper on September 19, 1796.

...As avenues of foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot.

...The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop.

...It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world; so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it; for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements. I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy. I repeat it, therefore, let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense. But, in my opinion, it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them. Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.

Document 7:

The White Man's Burden by Rudyard Kipling, 1899. This is an excerpt from the famous poem, written in response to the American take over of the Philippines after the Spanish-American War

1. What was the white man's "burden"? _____

2. Why must white men take up this "burden"? _____

"Take up the White Man's burden....
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden--
The savage wars of peace--
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease..."