

International involvement

Politics, International Relations



International Involvement Several significant events took place from 1890-1905 that involved the United States, particularly the United States becoming more involved in international affairs. The United States has been a major player in world affairs over the last two centuries. In the years following its War of Independence, its policies tended to be isolationist, but over the centuries it has transformed, mainly by trade and economic imperatives, into a superpower that exerts military, economic and cultural domination over much of the rest of the world.

This paper will outline two major events occurring from 1890-1905. Treaty of Paris 1898 The first meeting for the Treaty of Paris occurred on October 1, 1898 when officials from Spain and the United States congregated in Paris, France. The intent of the meeting was to generate an agreement, or treaty that would put an end to a war, also known as the Spanish American War. The American officials present at the meeting were the Honorable Whitelaw Reid, Senators George Gray, William Frye and William Day (Library of Congress, 2010).

The outcome of the meeting resulted in Spain receiving 20 million dollars from the United States in exchange for possession of the Philippines. Along with the Philippines being placed under American control, the United States also gained power over Guam and Puerto Rico. The meetings took place over a nine day period and the Treaty of Paris was finalized and signed on December 10, 1898 (Library of Congress, 2010). Venezuelan Boundary Dispute 1895-1899

Although most may relate the Venezuelan Boundary Dispute to December 17, 1895, when the United States president at the time Grover Cleveland

submitted a letter to Congress practically declaring war on Venezuela, the Dispute essentially initiated in 1841 when Venezuelan officials claimed British military was approaching Venezuelan land with intention of taking possession. The main reason for this was in 1814 Great Britain gained control of Guyana by signing a treaty with the Netherlands without a definite western boundary (Pike, 2010).

In result, the British hired a man named Robert Schomburgk, who was a well-known and well respected surveyor, to clarify how far the boundary of the land that the British owned. The survey that Robert Schomburgk conducted in 1835 resulted in an additional 30, 000 square miles of ownership for the British (Pike, 2010). This additional territory was later named the Schomburgk Line. However, Venezuela argued the results of the survey in 1841 and claimed that its borders extended as far east as the Essequibo River, which meant that Venezuela was claiming nearly two-thirds of British territory.

Years later after gold was discovered in the Schomburgk Line by Britain, Venezuela contested the ownership of the area in 1876, and asked the United States for assistance in the matter, referring to the Monroe Doctrine as rationalization for United States involvement. The Monroe Doctrine (referring to former United States President James Monroe) stated if European countries attempt to unfairly overtake land the United States would view the action as a requirement for United States military involvement (Yale Law School, 2008).

The request for United States involvement continued for the next 19 years, but received little response from the United States. The United States finally

became involved in 1895 when Secretary of State Richard Olney delivered a letter to British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury, ordering the British settle in court the boundary dispute. Lord Salisbury responded by arguing that the Monroe Doctrine did not apply throughout the world.

In December 1895, President Grover found the Prime Minister's response unacceptable and requested Congressional approval for a boundary commission, which would serve as a "final deciding panel," and requested that the United States do whatever is necessary to enforce the findings of the commission (Pike, 2010). Congress agreed to do so and rumors of War with Britain began to erupt in United States newspapers throughout the country. Once rumors of War circulated in Great Britain Lord Salisbury eventually agreed and submitted his argument of the land to the appointed panel and did not mention anything else of the Monroe Doctrine.

Venezuela submitted its dispute as well with the confidence of the outcome favoring Venezuela. Then on October 3, 1899 the panel decided in favor of Great Britain and the Schomburgk Line (Pike, 2010). Although Venezuela was disappointed in the decision and did not necessarily agree with the decision, it did not appeal and, more important, revealed to the world that the United States possessed power throughout the world. Conclusion As previously stated, several significant events occurred from 1890-1905, but more important, the events that took place before and after that time have also affected the current power status of the United States military and how the world views the United States as a nation. In addition to events such as the Treaty of Paris and the Venezuelan Boundary Dispute, the United States has shown throughout history that not only can the United States accomplish

endeavors by employing military force, but it can also assist other countries in solving disputes acting as a logically thinking and fair third party.

References Library of Congress. (2010, July 15). Treaty of Paris 1898. Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hipic/1898/treaty.html> Pike, J. (2010). Venezuela Boundary Dispute, 1895-1899. Retrieved from <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/venezuela1895.htm> Yale Law School. (2008). Monroe Doctrine; December 2 1823. Retrieved from http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp