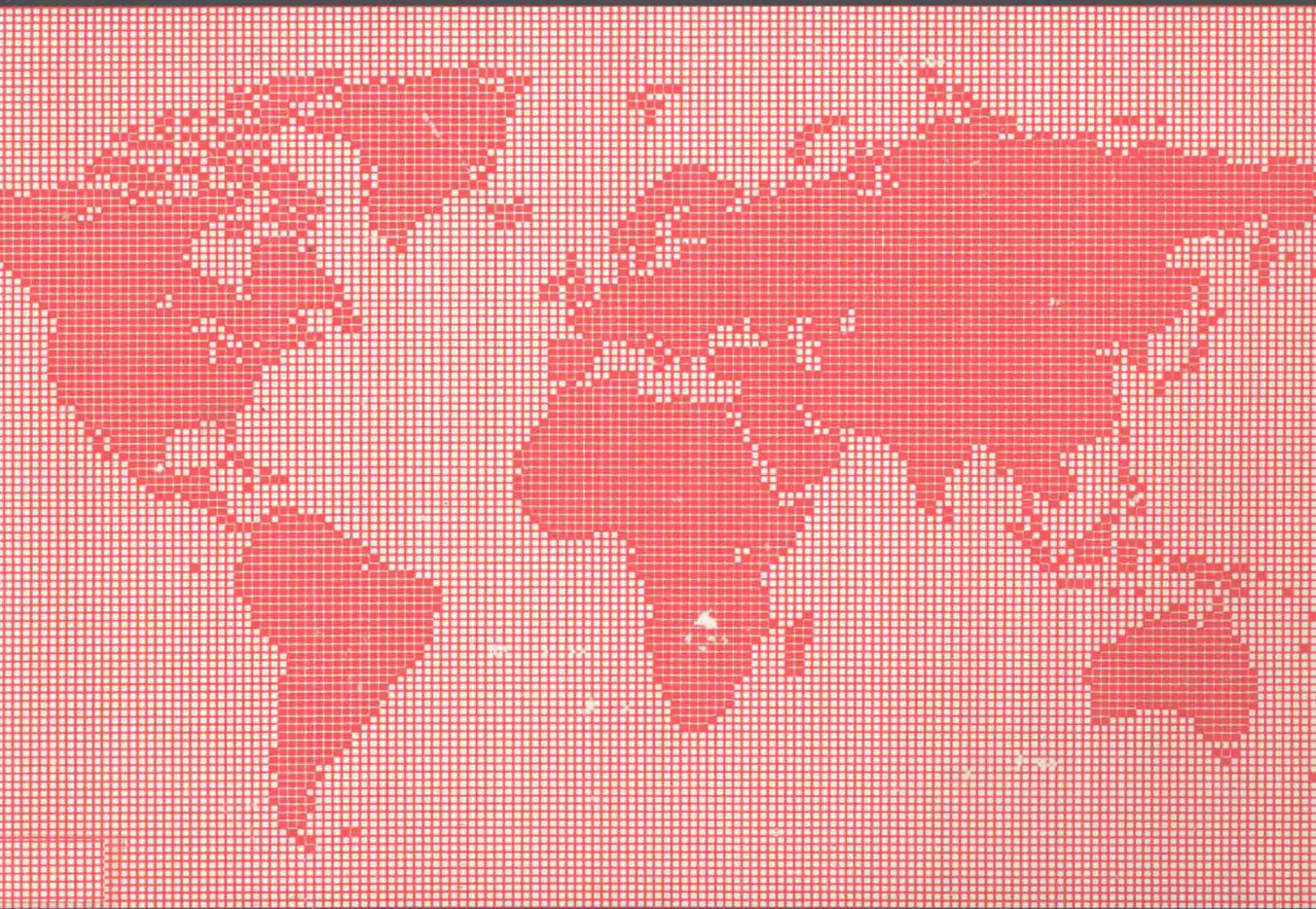


The Role of the
UNITED STATES
in a
CHANGING WORLD



Choices for the 21st Century

Center for Foreign Policy Development at Brown University

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UNITED STATES
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CHANGING WORLD

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Preface

The landmarks of international politics are being transformed at a dizzying rate. Many debates (and textbooks) from just a few years ago now seem trapped in obsolete assumptions. The Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, long a central axis of world politics, has abruptly dissolved. Russia no longer appears to be a plausible global rival despite its continuing nuclear strength. The superpowers' nuclear arms race, once of grave concern in the United States and many other countries, has fallen from most people's minds. Many Americans are now more concerned with other problems and issues, both abroad and at home. The central assumptions and purposes of U.S. foreign policy are now the subject of a great debate, both among citizens and in the expert community.

The Role of the United States in a Changing World: Choices for the 21st Century addresses these central questions head-on. Instead of treating each foreign policy issue separately, this book relates them to a single question: What role should the United States play in the post-Cold War era? By itself, such a broad question could be more overwhelming—or incoherent—than helpful. But the book provides college students of all levels with a framework they can use to confront the question constructively.

The book presents four alternative Futures, or long-term goals, for U.S. foreign policy. As students examine each Future, they will consider its historical roots and fundamental beliefs, economic costs, and near-term policy implications. They will weigh arguments, pro and con, concerning the Future's feasibility and impact upon the rest of the world. The Futures are neither predictions nor comprehensive prescriptions for U.S. policy. They work best as a springboard for helping students examine what constitutes a sound and stable foreign policy. After evaluating the Futures, students are asked to design a plausible Future of their own.

Future 1, *Standing Up for Human Rights and Democracy*, calls for the United States consistently to support democratic governments and movements, while opposing—at times with military force—brutal and aggressive tyrants. This Future holds that dictatorships pose the greatest threat to peace; therefore, promoting democracy, despite the costs, best serves U.S. interests and values. Future 2, *Charting a Stable Course*, calls for the United States to promote peace and stability in various regions through alliances and diplomatic initiatives. It argues that the United States may at times have to support stable but undemocratic

governments, and encourages a central U.S. role in global politics. In Future 3, *Cooperating Globally*, the United States would collaborate with other nations to address global problems and promote common interests. This Future calls for the United States to accept limits on its sovereignty—for instance, its ability to intervene unilaterally in other countries—in order to foster cooperation. Future 4, *Building U.S. Economic Strength*, calls for profound reductions in military spending and the gradual elimination of U.S. troop deployments overseas. It argues that these moves may reduce U.S. influence abroad, but also will reduce the risk of war—and permit a massive shift of resources to solving the United States' social and economic problems.

Additional chapters examine the history of U.S. foreign policy, challenges facing the United States, the relationship between values and interests in U.S. foreign policy-making, analytical methods for addressing competing claims about how the world works, and the use of the Futures framework to help understand specific policy debates. Parts of these chapters are especially appropriate for students with little background in foreign policy studies. Other parts raise challenging issues for any audience. Each chapter is organized to focus student inquiry and provoke discussion and research. The text provides a questionnaire to promote considered judgments on beliefs, values, and policy priorities. Then it provides guidance to students developing a Future 5, and it presents a selected bibliography of useful resources, and a ballot that invites students to make their views known. An Instructor's Resource Guide offers suggestions for adapting the Futures to various class settings.

The Role of the United States in a Changing World is intended for all levels of college classes in international relations, U.S. foreign policy, and other courses treating these issues. This material does not assume any specific background in the topic matter, but encourages students to apply and build on their present knowledge. These materials can be used as units spanning several class sessions or as the framework for an entire course. They can be used to conclude a course or unit on related issues, or to introduce students at the beginning of the course to key issues that they will consider in more detail later.

Acknowledgments

Many people, at the Center for Foreign Policy Development and elsewhere, have worked over the years to formulate and apply a Futures framework to a variety of foreign policy issues. Here we can acknowledge only a handful of the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project's continuing collaborators. The Center's director, Mark Garrison, has given unwavering support to the Choices Education Project. Research director Richard Smoke has made important contributions at every stage.

Every member of the Choices Education Project has played a crucial role in the book's completion. Susan Graseck, project director, has provided guidance, encouragement, a healthy sense of perspective, and concrete suggestions. She is also a delight to work with. Mark Malkasian, curriculum coordinator and contributing author, wrote the historical chapter and weighed in on many difficult questions throughout the work. Project assistant Ashley Tucker carefully parsed the text for errors and weaknesses, and cheerfully tracked down missing facts. Research assistant Stephanie Marrone gave valuable comments on the treatment of international economics, and research assistant Richard Chang helped track down a variety of statistics and visual aids used in the text. Staff assistant Anne Campau Prout provided much-needed logistical support.

These Futures were first presented early in 1991 in a mini-unit for high school students. Karl Berger was the principal author of the high school text, and gave his time to help us improve the present one. Brown University professors Jo-Anne Hart and Mike Spagat helped refine the framework for the high school text, as did Mark Garrison and Richard Smoke. Center research associates Susan Eckert, Mark Kramer, and Stephen Shenfield gave useful guidance in their areas of expertise. Thomas Weiss, associate director of the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown, also advised in developing the high school text.

The present text adapts the earlier presentation of the Futures, but is otherwise new. It was extensively reviewed by Mark Garrison, Richard Smoke, and Stephen Shenfield. Jo-Anne Hart and research associate Michael Song offered expert advice on several topics. Center editorial associate Lorraine Walsh provided her usual exhaustive commentary, greatly improving the finished product.

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John Holland and Irv Rockwood at The Dushkin Publishing Group helped us to craft a readable text, and copy editor Robert Mill rooted out many lingering infelicities. We thank them for their professionalism and patience.

Our wives, Lucy Miller and Susan Rose, endured the late nights and weekends that were devoted to writing and refining various drafts. Lucy weighed in occasionally on questions of style, usually after 11 P.M. Sue prevented Michael Rose (18 months) from dissecting daddy's computer. Lucy and Sue also graciously refrained from sabotaging our modem connections. Now that this year-long project is completed, they'll be glad to get their spouses back into the swing of family life. Our many thanks for their emotional support, tolerance, humor, and friendship.

Mark Lindeman and Bill Rose
for the Choices Education Project

Contents

Introduction 1

- The Four Futures 2
- What Follows 3

Chapter 1: Critical Junctures in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy 5

- The United States Looks Outward 6
- World War I Challenges Isolationism 11
- The United States Assumes Superpower Status 18
- From Vietnam to the Cold War's End: Historical Context for the Future 26
- Into the Future 31

Chapter 2: Four Futures: A Framework for Discussion 32

- The Four Futures at a Glance 35
- Future 1: Standing Up for Human Rights and Democracy 36
- Future 2: Charting a Stable Course 43
- Future 3: Cooperating Globally 49
- Future 4: Building U.S. Economic Strength 56

Chapter 3: Challenges Facing the United States 62

- After the Cold War: New Issues in Europe 63
- Small States and Non-State Actors: The New Threat? 73
- International Problems, International Solutions? 88
- Conclusion 105

Chapter 4: Values, Interests, and Policy: A Tangled Web 106

- Values and the Public Role in Policy-Making 106
- Values vs. Interests: How Real a Distinction? 107
- An Overview of Key American Values 109
- Some Crucial Trade-offs 111

**Chapter 5: Beliefs, Evidence, and Policy
Implications 123**

- Democracies and Peace 124
- Promoting Democracy Abroad 127
- Economic Sanctions 131
- Different Issues, Similar Research Methods 135
- Conclusions 136

**Chapter 6: Back to the Futures: Implications and
Limits 137**

- Crisis on the Korean Peninsula 137
- International Trade 144
- Ecological Issues 150
- Sizing Up the Futures 155

The Four Futures Compared: A Matrix 156

Chapter 7: Focusing Your Thoughts 158

- Threats to U.S. National Interests 158
- Fundamental Assumptions 160
- Fundamental Values 162
- Policy Proposals and Trade-offs 164
- The Four Futures 166

Chapter 8: Crafting a Future Five 169

- What Role Should the United States Play in the World? 169
- The Structure of a Future 169
- Some Criteria for Feasibility 171

Resources 174

Ballot 178

Introduction

There are periods of history when profound changes occur all of a sudden. . . . We are now in one of those periods, which obliges the United States to rethink its role in the world, just as it was forced to do by the cataclysmic changes that followed the end of the Second World War.

—Stanley Hoffmann, “What Should We Do in the World?” *Atlantic* (October 1989)

How involved America should be in world politics and what values it should seek to foster—and at what cost and risk—are questions that remain open, unanswered, and largely unaddressed.

—Robert Jervis, “The Future of World Politics: Will It Resemble the Past?” *International Security* (Winter 1991/92)

Today, the United States finds itself in a world that has fundamentally changed. For more than 40 years the United States and Soviet Union were the foremost powers and rivals in international affairs. Now the Soviet Union no longer exists, and its former republics seek U.S. aid. In all the decades of Cold War, few Americans had stopped to consider what would come next if the Cold War ended. Now the question must be confronted. What role will the United States play in the new world that is emerging?

The events and debates of the recent past point in contradictory directions. In the 1991 Gulf War, more U.S. troops went into combat roles than at any time since the Vietnam War. Yet with the Cold War's end, the United States was moving to make deep reductions in the defense budget—with considerable debate over what to cut and what to do with any savings. The Gulf War presented a paradox: although it involved broad international military and financial cooperation against Iraqi aggression, the United States largely determined the form of cooperation. In the future, will the United States be stronger than ever, or will it have to defer to other countries' preferences?

Some American observers see new opportunities and new dangers around the world. In the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere, democracy seems to be on the rise, although some new

governments are democratic in name only. With U.S. and Soviet/Russian cooperation, many regions have found or moved toward peaceful resolutions of disputes. Yet peace faces many challenges in the former Soviet bloc, where long-suppressed tensions have surfaced. Human rights abuses, poverty, and pollution threaten people around the globe, and Americans continue to learn about emerging ecological hazards like ozone depletion and possible global warming. At the same time, as the U.S. economy stumbles, many Americans are pressing for a new focus on economic and social problems at home. As a new era of world history begins, we find ourselves, as a nation, in need of redefining our long-term goals.

To gain a sense of a new role for the United States in this changed world, we must look deeply into the shared values that bind us together and define us as Americans. We also must examine our assumptions about how the world works and figure out ways to test our ideas. In sum, we must consider who we are as a nation and how the United States fits into an evolving international system.

Several basic purposes inform any effective foreign policy: to defend against outside attack or harm, to further national interests through geopolitical power and economic strength, and to defend or promote national values. However, many contradictory policies may fulfill these broad goals, and choosing among competing options requires value judgments. The responsibility of determining the general direction for U.S. foreign policy belongs to all Americans. Experts can clarify the goals and trade-offs the nation must consider, and lay out specific policy choices along with their costs and risks. But experts have no special insight into which goals should have priority and which risks are worth taking. These are decisions of national scope, which all Americans must make together.

The Four Futures

To bring this subject into clearer focus, the Choices for the 21st Century Education Project has produced a framework of four alternative images, or Futures, of the United States in the year 2005. A wide range of community groups, students, and scholars have used these Futures (and earlier versions of them) to focus their discussions. The Futures make contrasting assumptions about the nature of global affairs, especially with regard to the United States: the threats it faces, what its priorities should be, and the role it should play in the world. Based on these assumptions, each Future presents a goal for 2005, together with the policies that the United States would have to follow to attain it. These Futures are not predictions of what will actually happen, and they do not

present every possible policy or important issue. They do, however, highlight plausible options for the future of the United States.

One goal of this text is to help you apply the methods of political science in order to form considered judgments on policy issues. You should critically assess contending assumptions and policy proposals, carefully examining historical evidence and other relevant facts. Look for ways to test your own ideas against the facts, and then ask whether those ideas can be made more specific or more accurate. When you finish, you may have a new sense of how complex these issues are. But you also should have found many of your own answers, and have a clearer sense of which questions are most important.

What Follows

The following chapter presents a history of U.S. foreign policy that focuses on three previous periods in which the United States debated and then decided to adopt a new role in the world. As you read the chapter, you should consider what arguments were being made for and against various policies, what values were at stake, and—more speculatively—how different decisions might have led to different outcomes. Some attention is paid to the role of public opinion in these decisions. However, the emphasis is more on the arguments than on why certain positions prevailed. Obviously, many aspects of the governmental process and domestic politics enter into foreign policy formation, but they are not the focus of this text.

Chapter 2 presents the four Futures themselves. Keep in mind that you may disagree with some details of a Future while still supporting its general direction. As you read each Future, be sure to consider both its strengths and its weaknesses. Your role is not that of a judge pronouncing “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” on each Future, but of a critical and creative thinker attempting to find the best answers to key analytical and policy questions.

Chapters 3 through 5 delve into central issues in more depth than the Futures alone permit. Chapter 3 focuses on threats and challenges facing the United States, along with some of its options for responding. Chapter 4 emphasizes the value trade-offs with which U.S. policymakers must come to terms, such as inevitable conflicts between U.S. ideals and self-interest. Chapter 5 illustrates some analytical tools that we can use to sort out more narrowly factual issues about the ends and means of policy, such as the questions, “Are democracies peaceful?” and “Do economic sanctions work?” Together, these three chapters present a wide range of issues and arguments, without prescribing policy conclusions, that should enter into informed judgments about the U.S. role in the world.

Chapter 6 returns to the Futures and explores their uses and limits for understanding current or prospective policy debates. Following this chapter is a matrix demonstrating differences among the Futures on several key issues. Chapter 7 asks your opinions on a wide range of threats, beliefs, and policies, as well as the Futures themselves. Necessarily the questionnaire takes the form of multiple choice, but many readers find that the questions resist simple answers. Indeed, the questionnaire should help you decide which questions have simple answers and which ones do not. Chapter 8 challenges you to form your own “Future Five,” and provides some ground rules for making your Future as sound as possible. At the end of the book is a brief ballot that you can use to add your voice to a nationwide poll on this important subject.

Critical Junctures in the History of U.S. Foreign Policy

In his farewell address of 1796, President George Washington responded to the question that again frames discussion of U.S. foreign policy: what role should the United States play in the world?

Washington conceived of the United States as a unique experiment—founded on democratic principles, safeguarded by the rule of law, and free from the sordid dealings of European politics. In his address, Washington warned Americans to “steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world.” He particularly feared treaties that would entangle the United States in European disputes and inject the rivalries of the Old World into U.S. domestic politics.

But Washington was also a realist. He recognized that the United States needed international trade in order to prosper. Future U.S. leaders, Washington maintained, should seek to extend the young republic’s commercial relations while carefully avoiding political connections. The first president advised his successors to follow a policy that would allow the United States to develop arrangements that were “temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view that ’tis folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another.”

Americans followed Washington’s advice. The thought that governed U.S. policy for most of the nineteenth century was stated in the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which declared a political divide between Europe and the New World. The United States avoided interfering in events in Europe, and demanded that European countries not establish new colonies in the Western Hemisphere. U.S. isolation from events overseas permitted the young nation to expand across the continent and take advantage of the bountiful resources within its borders.

Over the past two centuries, the United States has changed beyond George Washington’s imagining. Events have compelled Americans to rethink the U.S. role in the world on a number of occasions. Over time, changes in the American scene—unmatched economic growth, ever-widening global power, waves of immigration, and startling social transformations—have inevitably left Americans wrestling with conflicting foreign policy ideas derived from various aspects of the American

experience. Many Americans pride themselves on their idealism—their love of freedom, liberty, justice, and other noble ideals. At the same time, many applaud the clear-eyed pragmatism that helped make the United States a world power. Basic American political values affirm that human beings are capable of progress, but many Americans have little hope for much of the world outside U.S. borders. Such contrasts naturally enter into the foreign policy debate. Many Americans believe that the United States must play an active role in international politics, while others seek to keep it isolated from the turmoil and chaos of distant nations. One element within the American tradition holds that every country has the right to run its own affairs without outside interference; a contrary current of thought contends that the United States sometimes has the right and a duty to intervene around the world.

The complexities of American political thought are highlighted by the decision-making during three critical junctures in U.S. foreign policy: the debate over the fate of the Philippines and Cuba following the Spanish-American War; the debate over the United States' entry into World War I and role in the postwar world; and, following World War II, the debate over the global role of the United States. These were times of fundamental choice. In each case, when beliefs and values clashed, philosophical tensions were heightened.

The United States Looks Outward

The late 1800s marked a turning point for the position of the United States internationally. The nineteenth century had witnessed the country's explosive growth from a weak, isolated republic to the world's leading economic power. As the country changed, so did expectations about U.S. foreign policy.

Following the Civil War, the United States tentatively increased its involvement in international affairs. In 1867 it purchased Alaska from the Russians, and in the 1890s established a presence in the Pacific by acquiring Samoa and Hawaii. The most crucial foreign policy issue of the era, however, developed from the United States' confrontation with Spain over the island of Cuba. A great debate over U.S. imperialism followed.

Entering the Spanish-American War

In 1895 Cubans began to struggle for independence from Spain, which had ruled Cuba since the sixteenth century. The rebellion came at a

time of fundamental change in the United States. Spurred by explosive industrial growth, millions of Americans poured into big cities. At the same time, millions of immigrants from Europe settled in urban centers. Mass-circulation newspapers, pioneered by William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, sprang up. Public schools provided free education for all. In Washington, policymakers struggled to keep up with the pace of change. More Americans were able to participate in political debates with the advent of mass literacy and the availability of newspapers.

The changes at home also spurred a rethinking of U.S. policy abroad. The United States' growing economy prompted it to develop commercial ties with virtually every region of the world. Many politicians and other leaders pressed for a stronger U.S. presence in international affairs to match the country's economic prowess. They were largely motivated by unabashed pragmatism, believing that U.S. foreign policy should plainly serve the commercial interests of the country. One such advocate was Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, a U.S. naval officer. In 1890 he wrote a historical study entitled *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*. According to Mahan, sea power was the key to protecting access to distant markets and hence national economic strength, and it helped provide military security. He called for a stronger navy, a canal across the Isthmus of Panama, U.S. dominance of the Caribbean, and control of Samoa and Hawaii. Mahan's view was adopted by many of the country's most influential policymakers.

Although such strategic issues were important in the debate over Cuba, the arguments of Mahan and a few Washington insiders had little impact on the U.S. public. For most Americans in the late 1890s, Cuba's struggle with Spain was an emotional issue. Most Americans resented the colonial powers of Europe in general, and Spain was especially reviled. Not only did the Spanish rule Cuba and Puerto Rico with a heavy hand, but many Americans saw the Spanish monarchy as backward and corrupt. These sentiments deepened when a Spanish army of 200,000 men set out to crush the Cuban rebellion in 1896. The Spanish attacked villages where support for the revolt was strong, and herded hundreds of thousands of peasants into fortified towns. They also burned fields of crops and slaughtered thousands of farm animals in hopes of starving out the rebels. The sensationalist newspapers of Hearst and Pulitzer inflamed the public with details of Spanish brutality at a time when photographs were just beginning to be a regular feature of the daily press. Pulitzer's *New York World* wrote: "Blood on the roadsides, blood in the fields, blood on the doorsteps, blood, blood, blood." When the U.S. battleship *Maine* exploded mysteriously in Havana Harbor in February 1898, the press rushed to blame the Spanish. Although President William McKinley had previously urged caution, he too became convinced that the United States should intervene in Cuba. In April 1898 he asked Congress to declare war.



Grant Hamilton, Judge, 1898.

The Spanish Brute Adds Mutilation to Murder

In 1898 cartoons depicting Spanish brutality in Cuba were common. This cartoon portrays Spain as a bloodthirsty, inhuman creature standing over the graves of sailors from the battleship *Maine*.

By the time the nation went to war, there was little opposition to fighting against Spain. The conflict itself proved equally one-sided, with the U.S. Navy playing a decisive role. On May 1, U.S. ships destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Philippines' Manila Bay to prevent it from joining the war in Cuba. In July, the United States crippled the Spanish fleet in Cuba. Without naval support, the Spanish forces on the island were soon forced to surrender. Called a "splendid little war" by Secretary of State John M. Hay, the fighting lasted only four months.

U.S. Policy Toward the Spanish Colonies

When the war ended, a national debate ensued. The United States, which had emphasized for the past century that it was itself a breakaway colony, now found itself in control of former Spanish colonial possessions. Americans had to decide what would happen to the Spanish colonial possessions of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam. By the summer of 1898, President McKinley expressed his support for annexation of the Spanish possessions. Opinion was most divided on the fate of the Philippines. The islands themselves were of dubious value to the United States. Although Senator Albert Beveridge of Indiana spoke of the Philippines as "a base at the door of all the East," most Americans saw little advantage in possessing a poor country halfway around the world.

To generate public support for annexation, McKinley conducted a whistle-stop tour of the Midwest before the November elections of 1898. In his speeches, the president appealed to a sense of American duty and honor. "As I look into your earnest faces," he told a crowd in Indiana, "I know that you would have this nation help the oppressed people who have by the war been brought within the sphere of our influence." Duty and honor aside, annexation was supported by a new generation of strategically minded U.S. policymakers. Leaders like Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts and Theodore Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the Navy, feared that if the United States did not annex the Philippines, Germany or Japan would. Although they had no desire to impose U.S. rule over the entire archipelago, Lodge, Roosevelt, and others saw the Philippines as a prime site for a naval base in the Far East. In the age of coal-powered ships, these bases were vital for naval and commercial vessels that needed to refuel when patrolling or shipping in distant seas. Roosevelt, in particular, believed that when the United States' economic interests were at stake, it could not remain isolated from international power struggles.

Opponents to annexation were not convinced. After the war, most Americans wanted U.S. troops to come home as soon as possible. An imperial role in the Philippines struck many Americans as contrary to the