

Sugar Coated Imperialism in America

AP Seminar

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Word Count: 1310

Imperialism came to be in the 19th century. During the Imperialistic era (1890s-1910s), America worked in efforts to gain land from other countries and islands in order to politically expand their power and beliefs into these countries through ways such as military force which caused many wars.

Imperialism is/was when one powerful country like in this case America takes over another less powerful country/countries. This time however caused many issues that impacted many in ways such as how labor laws were, as well as the treatment of many women and slaves (Zack). Additionally The United States would provide military support for the colonies for protection. In doing so, this would provide them with the advantage of business expansion. Which would help them economically (Cornell.edu). A main problem however was that besides America using violent force to invade and try to take over territories, they didn't always own up to their actions and oftentimes they avoided their problems. "Americans also felt secure from external threats because of their geographic isolation between two oceans, which gave them a sense of invulnerability. Until very late in the 19th century Americans remained essentially indifferent to foreign policy and world affairs."

(sageamericanhistory.net). Therefore, America believed that by using these imperialistic/empire beliefs, that they would highly benefit without thinking about the consequences that would later go on to affect them.

In "The American Empire, Not so Fast" Author Arthur Schlesinger compares liberal Noam Chomsky and conservative Paul Wolfowitz in order to identify America's empire and its politics. Noam Chomsky believes that Imperialism caused more harm than good to America and labeled this time as a "monstrosity" meanwhile Paul Wolfowitz highly praised Imperialism in America and argued how the development of imperialism was a "savior of humanity". Author Arthur Schlesinger on the other hand is more in the middle in regards to both perspectives and writes this article to compare both points of views and state how he is in the middle. He explains that The idea of how they believed Imperialism should've been like (having native Americans but few and working with them to expand) was completely different from its reality (which was having these white Americans completely takeover land

which obviously would go on to create conflict within different countries (pg2) such as the war with Spain for America to annex with Hawaii. Additionally, politically, America made unsuccessful attempts to take over a list of several countries and islands such as all Virgin Islands, Santo Domingo, Canada and Cuba (Schlesinger). Thus after all of this the original imperialistic ideals would later come to reflect its actual reality that would come to unmask America's political belief of feeling superior and above every country in order to gain political success and advancement by doing anything in their power to gain benefits.

In the article “The Republic in Danger...” author Martin Durham argues that imperialism founded all of the conflicts that America lives with today and has experienced in the past. The author comes to this conclusion by comparing the 3 sides arguing on whether imperialism was good or bad for the success of America. Similar to author Schlesinger, although not focusing on 2 specific people, he focuses on three political groups. Neoconservatism, a belief in where one group generally aims to one political side in this case the democratic side and chooses to follow certain beliefs that democrats follow and make changes to others. This side believes Imperialism has actually benefited America and should be “applauded”. Meanwhile, the other side, paleoconservatives (a group of people that follows political beliefs more traditionally, mainly through religion) argues that America’s actions in imperialism need to be stopped because they were causing more harm through civilization and using violence to try to take over countries. In the middle stand paleolibertarianism, who are those that believe that we shouldn’t be ruled by anyone but similar to paleoconservatives, we shouldn’t use violence and go to war with other countries. Imperialism was believed by many left-sided neoconservatives to be a way of “nation-building” and a way of bringing together different countries. During the Imperialistic time, George W. Bush was president and used neoconservative perspectives through his administration in which they showed ways that represented the harms of Imperialistic actions. For instance, the Bush Administration's plan on “nation-building” actually created wars when invading Iraq in order to make them a democratic country (Durham). Additionally, although not proven, it was theorized that because of

Imperialism and its violent approaches, the deadly attacks that occurred on 9/11 were triggered by Imperialism (Durham). The paleolibertarianism side, also known as the anti-imperialists, on the other hand disagreed with imperialism and saw imperialism as a way for neoconservatives to use their powers to cause harm to not only the reconstruction of America but also its relationships with other countries. Pat Buchanan was one of the highest critics when it came to the American empire. He says that “America today, however, was traveling the same path that the British Empire had taken, and the same fate”(Durham) Thus the paleolibertarian side believes that Neoconservatives have been using this belief as a facade of imperialism. As a result, to all of this the author says that all of these political perspectives on imperialism, no matter what side you are taking, are really not taking us nowhere because no improvement is being made.

In “America and the Tragic Limits of Imperialism” author Robert D. Kaplan argues that America is not a question but rather it is a reality built up of a military empire. The author explains that a lot of American connections with other countries mainly come from military groups and resources. In fact American troops have military bases in about 40 different countries (Kaplan). This therefore shows how America is using imperialism and its military powers in order to gain access into other countries. For instance, a way that America takes advantage of these privileges is by using their troops in order to gain access to information especially from their “rival” countries/countries that they don’t really get along with such as Russia to avoid infiltration as well as gaining access to get information from locals in South American villages through their veterinary units there in order to get information on “Latin American Drug Lords”(Kaplan). With America using all of these imperialistic techniques in order to gain benefits, the author describes this a perfect example of how America is not just a simple country but rather an empire “operating all over the world”. Similarly, in an article written by Anthony S. Barrow and Anne Cortina Perry titled “American Prosecutorial Imperialism”, both authors argue that Americans' use of imperialism caused many of the conflicts and wars that America has faced by sharing how past events impacted laws we have today and even how other countries themselves have had to take actions as well.

In fact, these actions have led to the way America operates today. They say that due to conflicts caused by wars between other countries “U.S. prosecutors impose fines and secure admissions of wrongdoing by international businesses in ways that shape corporate policies and practices (Barkow, Perry). They later go on to explain that the way businesses are done with other countries have also been impacted as a result of imperialism. Therefore, all authors are proving that America’s operations and conflicts because of imperialism have affected the country’s success.

To conclude, authors like Martin Durham and Robert D. Kaplan both argue and agree that Imperialism, regardless of its original meaning before the 1700’s, its new meaning given in the 19th century through America has been used as a way for America to abuse its powers through ways such as military force, and take advantage to benefit its countries. This has therefore impacted America's relationships with other countries and the country's success today.

Works Cited

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