

# The United States in the Caribbean 1776 - 1985



Venezuela/  
British Guiana  
Cuba  
Puerto Rico  
Panama  
Haiti  
Dominican  
Republic

# Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to
  - Identify the **Caribbean countries** into which the US intervened
  - Describe and analyse the major **policies** which shaped US intervention in the Caribbean
  - Analyze and evaluate the **methods** and **consequences** of US intervention in the region

# Eighteenth Century American Trade with the USA

# American Policies and

## Intervention in the Caribbean - **Manifest Destiny**

- Popularized in the USA from **1845** by **John Louis O'Sullivan**
- Construed internal and external **expansion** as an **obvious and God given right** to Americans
- Justify internal expansion **west to the Pacific Ocean** (Texas, Oregon, California)
- Claim the divine right of Americans to **spread democracy and American civilization** among the first peoples at home and among non white civilizations abroad

# MANIFEST DESTINY



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **The Monroe Doctrine**

- Developer - President **James Monroe 1823**
- Stimulus - **Independence** in Latin America by 1822– eg. Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Venezuela
- Essence - The Independent republics of South and Central America are **no longer open to European colonization and intervention**. The USA will personally regard any such attempt as an **unfriendly act**
- Significance – It declared America’s intention to **protect** the Caribbean but also established American **hegemonic** control over the region
- It became the **cornerstone** of US foreign policy – ‘**The Americas for America**’

# The Monroe Doctrine

## MONROE DOCTRINE

Fellow Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives.

Many important subjects will claim your attention during the present Session, of which I shall endeavour to give, in aid of your deliberations, a just idea in this communication. I undertake this duty with diffidence, from the vast extent of the interests, on which I have to treat, and of their great importance to every portion of our Union. I enter on it with zeal, from a thorough conviction, that there never was a period since the establishment of our Revolution, when, regarding the condition of the civilized world, and its bearing on us, there was greater necessity for devotion, in the public servants to their respective duties, or for virtue, patriotism, and union in our Constituents.

We owe it therefore to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers, to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this Hemisphere, as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing Colonies or Dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere. But with the Governments who have declared their Independence, and maintained it, and whose Independence we have, on great consideration, and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States.

James Monroe

# The Monroe Doctrine



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **Big Stick Diplomacy**

- Popularized by President **Theodore Roosevelt**
- Implemented from about **1900 to 1912**
- Characterized by an **aggressive American attitude** to her Caribbean neighbours
  - landing marines
  - smuggling arms
  - inciting unrest
  - appropriating spaces without reasonable consultation with locals
- Significance – Made the Caribbean an American lake by **force**

# President Theodore and the Big Stick Diplomacy



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine**

- Shaped by President **Theodore Roosevelt** by **1904**
- Ideology – **forestall European intervention in the Caribbean by American intervention whenever political and economic stability were threatened**
- Significance – Hypocritically, the corollary
  - ❖ made the US the ‘**International Policeman**’ of the Caribbean
  - ❖ **undermined Caribbean sovereignty**
  - ❖ replaced European intervention with **American intervention**

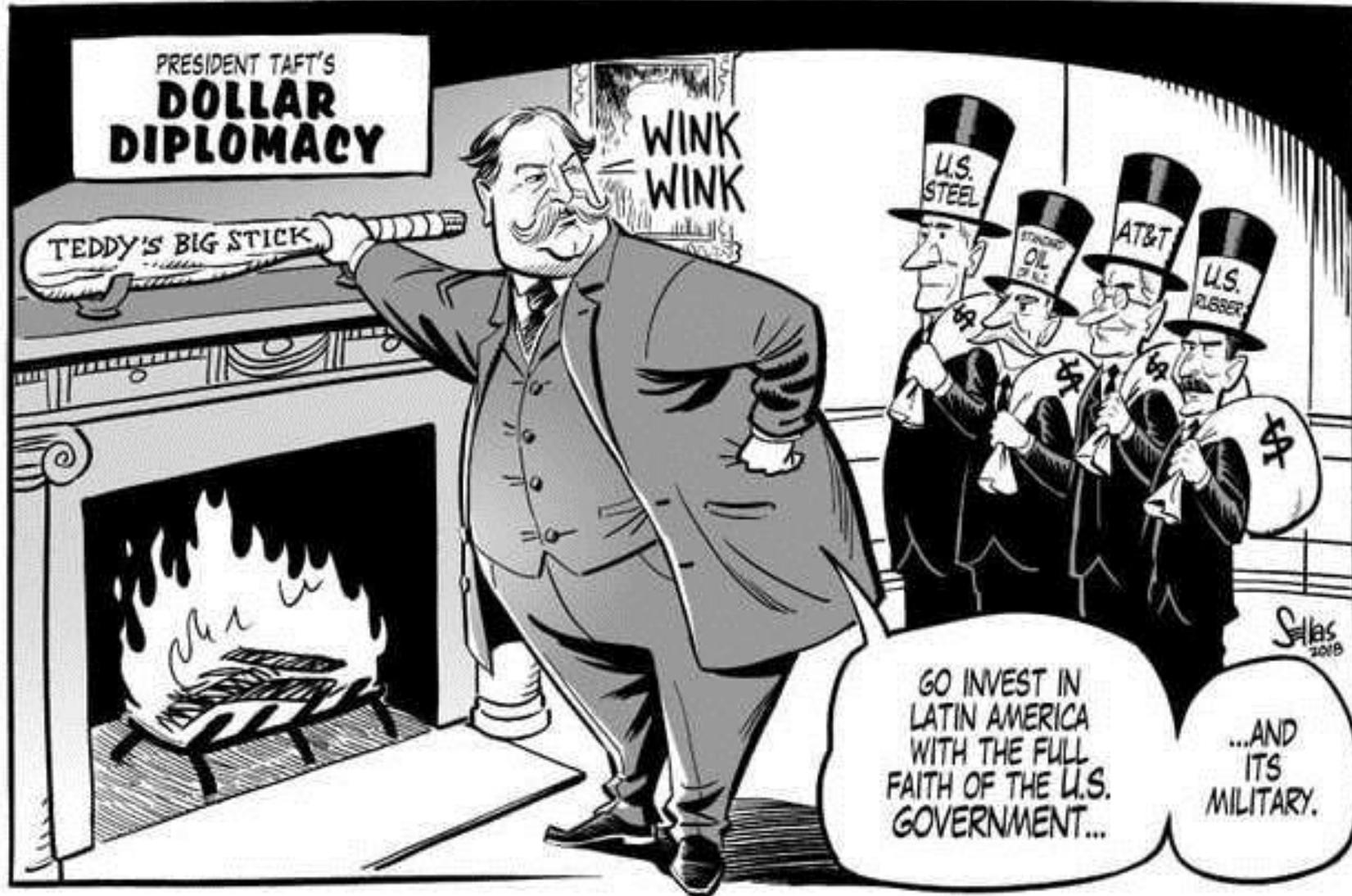
# The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **Dollar Diplomacy**

- Initiated by President **William Howard Taft**
- Dominant US policy in the Caribbean from **1912** to early **1930s**
- Manifested by congressional encouragement of **widespread American investment** in the Americas **backed by military intervention and protection**
- A form of **economic imperialism**
- Impact – Made America notorious as a **greedy and self serving nation**

# President William Howard Taft and Dollar Diplomacy



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **The Good Neighbour Policy**

- Adopted by President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**
- Practiced largely from **1933 – 1945**
- Reaction to criticism of the Big Stick and Dollar Diplomacy
- Features – America curbed **aggressive interference** by replacing military intervention with the promotion of Caribbean **self governance, freedom and democracy**

# President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and The Good Neighbour Policy



# American Policies and Intervention in the Caribbean – **The Cold War Policy**

- Shaped largely by President **Harry Truman** post **World War II**
- Manifestations – Promotion and support of **democratic governments, suppression and containment of socialism and communism** in the Caribbean
- Intensified following the **Cuban Revolution of 1959**

# The Cold War Policy



# **The United States in Venezuela/British Guiana 1895 and 1902**

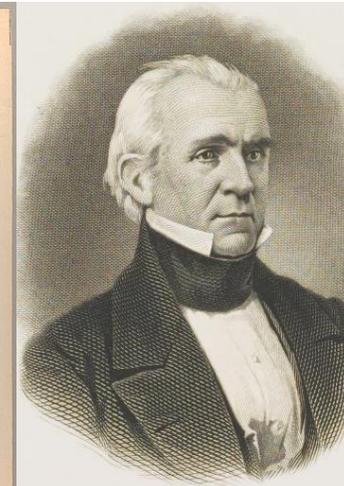
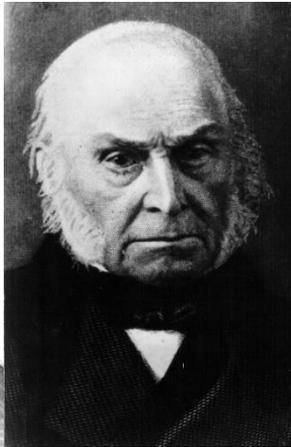
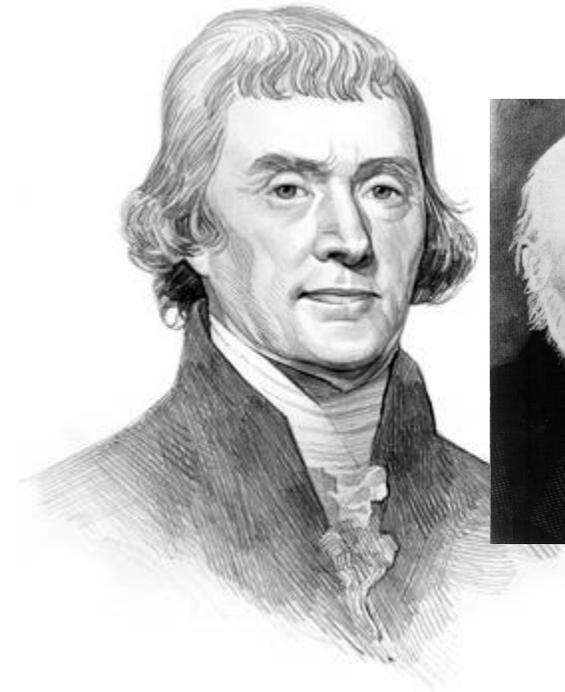
- The first major interference of the US in the Caribbean consisted of the Venezuela/British Guiana border dispute over **Guiana Esequiba** in 1895
- Conflict – **Both Britain and Venezuela claimed Guiana Esequiba, an area rich in gold**
- The USA threatened to declare **war** on Britain if the latter annexed Guiana Esequiba
- Britain **retreated**
- By **1897 an independent commission** was established to settle the dispute – temporary solution
- This incident revealed the strong arm tactics of the **Monroe Doctrine** at work in the region

# The British Guiana/Venezuela Border Dispute



# US Protracted Intention to Intervene in Cuba

- Presidents Thomas **Jefferson**, John **Quincy Adams**, James **Polk** and Franklin **Pierce** expressed interest in the annexation of Cuba throughout the nineteenth century



James K. Polk.



# US Intervention in Cuba

- **Motives** – political interest, commercial investment, expansionism
- **Opportunity** – Rising Cuban nationalism reflected in growing **anti-Spanish sentiments**
- Ten Year War led by Jose Marti and Antonio Maceo 1868 – 1878
- **Immediate cause** - Blowing up of the ***USS Maine*** in Cuba on February 15, 1898 – Killed 357 American service men
- Led to hysteria in the USA and the ‘Yellow Press’ demanding war against Spain
- President **William McKinley** declared war and launched the so called ‘Spanish-American War’ in which the Americans defeated the Spanish in just **10 weeks**

# US Intervention in Cuba

- America **ceded** Cuba and from 1898 to 1901 appointed General **Leonard Wood** to rule the country
- By 1902 the **Platt Amendment** was added to the Cuban constitution—
  - Cuba could not unilaterally conclude **treaties** or negotiate **loans**
  - two USA naval **bases** were set up and held for 99 years
  - USA reserved the right to **military intervention**
- The Platt Amendment made Cuba a **pseudo colony** of the USA **independent only in name** and reflected **Big Stick policy** in action
- Two other American interventions in Cuba – 1906 – 1909 and 1917 - 1922
- Cuba remained a **protectorate** of the USA from 1898 to 1934

# US Intervention in Puerto Rico

- Following the Spanish/American War of 1898, the US won support in Puerto Rico by promising 'Life, liberty, happiness and protection of property' for all
- Instead the US ceded Puerto Rico in 1898
- Motive - diplomatic and economic
- 1900 – Civil government was granted under the Foraker Act /Organic Act making Puerto Rico an unincorporated territory of the USA ruled internally by an American appointed governor and 5 cabinet members
- 1917 Puerto Ricans became American citizens by Act of Congress and not by the Constitution under the Jones Shafroth Act (Jones Act)
- 1940 Nationality Act granted citizenship by the American Constitution
- 1947 implementation of the Industrial Incentives Act – economic diversification, tax breaks, US investment, state driven industrialization – Operation Bootstrap
- 1952 – Puerto Rico became a free associated state of the USA

# US Intervention in Panama

- **Economic motives** – A US controlled canal in Central America would eliminate the need to sail around South America, reduce shipping cost, boost trade
- Steps to intervention
  - 1850 **Clayton-Bulwer Treaty** for a canal between USA and Britain
  - **1881** the **French** under Ferdinand de Lesseps began construction but aborted the effort in **1889** due to malaria, money shortage, inadequate equipment
  - 1901 **Hay-Pauncefote Treaty** was signed giving the USA sole claims over the canal - Columbians objected
  - 1903 the American yellow press denounced the Columbians and urged **Panamanian independence**
  - America unscrupulously provided secret support for the rebellion and then stepped in to bring peace
  - By November 1903 the USA recognized Panama's independence and entered the **Hay-Herran Treaty** in which the US agreed to a 6 mile zone for the canal, \$10 million and a \$25,000,00 annual annuity to be paid to the Panamanians
  - The final Panama Canal Treaty before construction, the **Hay-Bunau Varilla Treaty 1903** gave the US a strip of Panama property to be held in perpetuity
  - Between **1904 and 1914** the Americans using mainly **Caribbean labour** built the canal at an approximate cost of \$400 million dollars
- The accomplishment, notwithstanding the devious **Manifest Destiny and Big Stick policy** pursued by the Americans, was an **engineering marvel**
- President Roosevelt boasted, "I took Panama"

# The United States and the Dominican Republic

- By 1903 the United States occupied the Dominican Republic (DR) because it was indebted to European creditors (Roosevelt Corollary at work)
- By 1905, the USA took control of the customs revenue of the DR to repay loans
- A second US intervention in the DR took place in 1911 this time motivated by politics; assassination of President Ramon Caceres
- A third intervention occurred in 1916 and lasted until 1924 due to political instability (Rivalry between Jimenez and Arias) and indebtedness (30 million)
- Under the military occupation and customs receivership, the Americans developed sanitation work, schooling, health, infrastructural development and other social services
- On the other hand, the Americans brought press censorship and trial by military courts
- Nicaragua, Honduras and Haiti for similar reasons experienced the same treatment

# The US In the Caribbean during World War II

- This interference was facilitated by the '**Bases for Bombers**' **agreement** between the USA and Britain of September 2, 1940
- Seven Caribbean territories were affected – Antigua, Jamaica, St Lucia, Trinidad, the Bahamas, British Guiana and Bermuda

# Background information of the USA in Antigua during WW II

- The **Bases for Bombers agreement** between the USA and Britain September 2, 1940
- Formally entered the pact March 27, 1941
- 2 bases established in Antigua on the west and east of Parham Harbour – the **Army Air Base** called **Coolidge Air Field** and a **Naval Air Station** used as Communication and Tracking Centre in Crabs Peninsula
- Antigua was one of **8 territories** in the deal and the smallest of the 8
- Strategically important to the USA because of the **geographical location, terrain and weather conditions of Antigua** – ideal place for the USA to keep surveillance of happenings including German submarine activity between Florida and Venezuela
- **Brian Hyde** demonstrates that Antigua is the heart of the Caribbean