

The U.S. and the Dominican Republic

Introduction:

The U.S. intervened in the Dominican Republic because political instability. There were several presidents within a short period of time. In five years, between 1906 and 1911, one president was assassinated. None of his successors were able to rule for an entire term of four years. The U.S. saw this as a case of 'chronic wrong doing' in her backyard.

The country was also in deep financial crisis. It owed large sums of money to European creditors. President Woodrow Wilson appointed a puppet president Juan Jimenez but by 1915 several riots broke out in protest against his rule.



President Woodrow Wilson

World War 1 was already underway. It was said that the Germans threatened to take over the Dominican Republic if the debt was not paid. Germany the aggressor wanted a base from which to attack Britain and U.S.'s possessions in the Western Hemisphere.

Once more, the U.S. applied the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. She intervened to prevent European intervention in her 'backyard'. She could not afford for Germany to capture the country and become a threat to her precious canal or attack her from the position of the Mona Passage.

Positive effects of U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic

1. Law and order was restored

2. The U.S. paid the debts and took control of their finances especially the Customs house.
3. The health care system was improved. New hospitals, clinics and health centres were constructed.
4. The sewages were drained and other sanitation measures were put implemented.
5. A mosquito eradication program along with vaccination helped to decrease the spread of diseases.
6. New roads and bridges were built.
7. A number of new jobs were created
8. U.S. investment in the sugar industry led to the increased use of machinery and the modernization of this industry.

Negative effects of U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic

1. The U.S. was in total control of the country from 1915 to 1924. They lost their sovereignty.
2. Martial law was declared. The freedom of movement of Haitians was restricted.
3. American military officers were in charge of government operations.
4. The rebels were tried by military court.
5. The U.S. disarmed the general public to reduce the chance of armed revolts by guerilla groups.
6. Racial discrimination occurred
7. Many of the social programs were done in the towns where the Americans occupied while the rural areas remained destitute.
8. The cattle industry was adversely affected due to the importation of cheap American leather.
9. The financial system became dominated by American and Canadian banks.
10. The U.S. censored the press in order to quiet any opposition to their occupation and rule.