Main Idea
Under President Theodore Roosevelt, the United States increased its power on the world stage.

Key Terms and Names
sphere of influence, Open Door policy, Boxer Rebellion, “Great White Fleet,” Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, Roosevelt Corollary, dollar diplomacy

Reading Strategy
Organizing As you read about the increasing presence of the United States in the world, complete a graphic organizer like the one below by listing the reasons President Roosevelt gave for wanting a canal in Central America.

Guide to Reading
Reading Objectives:
• Critique Theodore Roosevelt’s foreign policy as president.
• Explain the Open Door policy and its effects on relations between the United States and Asia.

Section Theme
Continuity and Change The commercial interests of the United States spurred its involvement in distant parts of the world, such as China and Latin America.

Preview of Events
1898
1900
1902
1904

1899
Secretary of State Hay sends first Open Door note

1900
Boxer Rebellion erupts in China

1901
McKinley assassinated; Theodore Roosevelt becomes president

1904
Construction of Panama Canal begins

An American Story
Upon arriving in Panama in 1904, Dr. William Crawford Gorgas, a U.S. Army doctor and chief sanitary officer to the Panama Canal project, quickly realized that death awaited American workers. The United States was about to begin constructing the Panama Canal to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The task would be daunting because the dense jungles of Panama were home to swarms of mosquitoes that spread the deadly disease of yellow fever.

Gorgas set out to lessen the threat of disease by keeping mosquitoes from breeding. He and his crew drained swamps, gullies, and other sources of stagnant water, a main breeding ground for mosquitoes. On those areas of water they could not drain, they spread kerosene and oil, which killed the mosquito eggs before they hatched. They also fumigated nearly every home in the region and destroyed many buckets, pots, and other outdoor containers that local residents let fill up with rainwater. In two years Gorgas and his crew had wiped out yellow fever in the area.

—adapted from The Strength to Move a Mountain

Theodore Roosevelt’s Rise to Power
The construction of the Panama Canal might never have taken place had Theodore Roosevelt not become president. “Teddy,” as the press called him, gained the presidency largely by accident. Roosevelt’s exploits during the Spanish-American War had made
him famous and enabled him to win the election for governor of New York in November 1898. In 1900 President McKinley asked Roosevelt to run as his vice president. Less than a year later, a tragic turn of events thrust Roosevelt into the White House.

The Election of 1900 The election of 1900 once again pitted President McKinley against William Jennings Bryan. Bryan, an anti-imperialist, attacked the Republicans for their support of imperialism in Asia. McKinley focused on the country’s increased prosperity. Employing the slogan “Four Years More of the Full Dinner Pail,” the Republicans promised good times ahead if McKinley was reelected. He did indeed win the election by a wide margin, and Theodore Roosevelt became vice president.

On September 6, 1901, as President McKinley greeted the public during an appearance in Buffalo, New York, a gunman stepped from the crowd. The man was Leon Czolgosz, an avowed anarchist, who opposed all forms of government. Czolgosz fired two shots and hit the president. A few days later, McKinley died from his wounds.

Theodore Roosevelt, just 42 years old at the time, became the youngest person ever to become president. Roosevelt had been chosen as McKinley’s running mate because Republican leaders knew his powerful charisma and heroic war record would be a great asset. They also hoped the relatively powerless position of vice president would quiet his reform-minded spirit. Now they cringed at the thought of a headstrong Roosevelt in the White House. Republican senator Mark Hanna exclaimed, “Now look, that . . . cowboy is president of the United States!”

Roosevelt Becomes President Roosevelt brought to the presidency an energy and enthusiasm rarely seen before in the office. Such vigor stemmed in part from his childhood. Born into a wealthy New York family, Roosevelt was a sickly child who endured a host of ailments, including poor eyesight and asthma.

Roosevelt pushed himself to overcome his frailties. He mastered marksmanship and horseback riding and could row up to 20 miles a day. He took up boxing and wrestling in college and continued with both throughout his life, practicing the belief that competition and conflict keep one healthy.

Roosevelt became a strong proponent of increasing American power on the world stage. Just as he refused to sit around idly in life, the president warned Americans not to “sit huddled” and become “an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond.” Roosevelt also accepted some of the ideas of Anglo-Saxonism. He believed that the United States had a duty to shape the “less civilized” corners of the earth. The new president intended to make the country a world power.

American Diplomacy in Asia In 1899 the United States was a major power in Asia, with naval bases all across the Pacific. Operating from those bases, the United States Navy—now the third largest in the world—was capable of exerting American power anywhere in East Asia.

The nation’s primary interest in Asia, however, was not conquest but commerce. Between 1895 and 1900, American exports to China increased by four times. Although China bought only about two percent of all the goods exported by the United States, the vast Chinese markets excited American business leaders, especially those in the textile, oil, and steel industries.
The Panama Canal

One of the most impressive feats of engineering in the world, the Panama Canal was built under a 1903 U.S. treaty with Panama. It took 10 years to build, required more than 40,000 laborers, and cost almost $390 million. The canal stretches 50 miles (80 km) across the mountainous regions of Panama. In 1977 a new treaty took effect that gave Panama control of the canal as of December 31, 1999.

A Cartoonist’s View

Many people criticized Roosevelt’s role in building the Panama Canal. They believed that he was trying to dominate Latin America. The canal was also costly in terms of human life. Accidents and disease claimed the lives of 5,609 people, including about 4,500 Caribbean laborers.

Trade

Nearly 13,000 ocean-going vessels pass through the canal annually. Roughly 60 percent of the cargo is coming from or going to U.S. ports. The canal’s relative share of world cargo has declined somewhat, but its absolute volume has grown with the continued expansion of global trade.

The Open Door Policy

In 1894 war erupted between China and Japan over Korea, which at that time was part of the Chinese empire. European and American leaders expected China, with its massive armed forces, to defeat Japan easily. These Western observers were astonished when Japan easily defeated China. In the peace treaty, China granted Korea independence. China also gave Japan territory in Manchuria that included the important city of Port Arthur. The war showed that Japan had successfully adopted Western technology and industry. It also demonstrated that China was far weaker than anyone had thought.

Japan’s rising power greatly worried the Russians. They did not want Japan to acquire the territory in Manchuria, because it bordered Russia. Backed by France and Germany, Russia forced Japan to give the part of Manchuria it had acquired back to China. Then, in 1898, Russia demanded that China lease the territory to Russia instead.

Leasing a territory meant that it would still belong to China, even though a foreign government would maintain overall control. Germany and France demanded leaseholds in China, and Britain insisted on several as well. Each “leasehold” became the center of a country’s sphere of influence, an area where a foreign nation controlled economic development such as railroad construction and mining.

These events in northern China greatly worried the United States. President McKinley and Secretary of State John Hay both supported what they called an Open Door policy, in which all countries should be allowed to trade with China. In 1899 Hay sent notes to countries with leaseholds in China asking them not to discriminate against other nations that wanted to do business with the Chinese inside each leasehold. The Europeans and Japanese received the Open Door proposals coolly. Each power claimed to accept them in principle but refused to act on them unless all of the others agreed to do so as well. Hay refused to consider this a rebuff. Once he had received assurances from all of the great powers, he declared that the United States expected the other powers to abide by the plan.

The Boxer Rebellion

While foreign countries debated who should control China, secret Chinese societies were organizing to get rid of foreign control. Westerners referred to one such group as the Boxers. In 1900 the group rose up to wipe out “foreign
Military Impact

Huge quantities of war materials and thousands of troops passed through the canal during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The strategic location of the canal makes its neutrality critical in times of war.

How it works

An average voyage takes 8 hours to cover the roughly 50 miles (80 km) through the canal channel. A series of locks that look like giant steps lift ships about 85 feet (26 m) from sea level to Gatun Lake. Small locomotives run on tracks on the two sides of the locks, helping to stabilize and guide the ships. The same method is used on the other side of the lake, where vessels descend through two more locks.

devils” and their Christian converts, whom they believed were corrupting Chinese society. In what became known as the **Boxer Rebellion**, group members besieged foreign embassies in Beijing, killing more than 200 foreigners and taking others prisoner. In August 1900, an international force that included U.S. troops stepped in and quashed the rebellion.

During the crisis, Secretary of State Hay and British leaders worked to persuade European nations not to use the Boxer Rebellion as an excuse to partition China. In a second set of Open Door notes, Hay convinced the participating powers to back away from a full-scale retaliation against China. He urged them instead to accept compensation from China for any damage that the rebellion caused. After some discussion, China was never broken up into colonies. As a result, the United States retained access to China’s lucrative trade in tea, spices, and silk and maintained an increasingly larger market for its own goods.

Balancing Power in East Asia

As president, Theodore Roosevelt supported the Open Door policy in China and worked to prevent any single nation from monopolizing trade there. This concern prompted Roosevelt to step in to help negotiate peace in a war between Japan and Russia in 1905. At a peace conference in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Roosevelt convinced the Russians to recognize Japan’s territorial gains and persuaded the Japanese to stop fighting and to seek no further territory. For his efforts in ending the war, Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

In the years after the peace treaty, relations between the United States and Japan steadily grew worse. As the two nations vied for greater influence in Asia, they held each other in check through a series of agreements. They agreed to respect each other’s territorial possessions, to uphold the Open Door policy, and to support China’s independence.

In 1907 President Roosevelt sent 16 battleships of the new United States Navy, known as the “**Great White Fleet,**” on a voyage around the world to showcase the nation’s military might. The tour made a stop in Japan to demonstrate that the United States could and would uphold its interests in Asia. This visit did not help ease the growing tensions between the two countries throughout the early 1900s.
The Suez Canal

Forty-five years before the Panama Canal was completed, another canal opened that dramatically changed world trade patterns. In 1869 a French company, led by Ferdinand de Lesseps, completed work on the Suez Canal after more than 10 years of construction.

The Suez Canal is located in Egypt. It connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, creating a shortcut for ships traveling from Europe to the Indian Ocean. Before the canal’s opening, ships had to travel around Africa to reach India and countries in East Asia. The canal greatly reduced travel times between Europe and Asia and rapidly became one of the world’s major shipping lanes. How did the canal change world trade patterns?

A Growing Presence in the Caribbean

Theodore Roosevelt believed in a strong global military presence. He insisted that displaying American power to the world would make nations think twice about fighting, thus promoting global peace. He often expressed this belief with a West African saying, “Speak softly and carry a big stick.” Roosevelt’s “big stick” policy was perhaps most evident in the Caribbean.

GEOGRAPHY

The Panama Canal

One of Roosevelt’s most dramatic actions in the Caribbean was the acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903. Roosevelt and others viewed the construction of a canal through Central America as vital to American power in the world. A canal would save time and money for both commercial and military shipping.

As early as 1850, the United States and Great Britain had signed a treaty in which each nation had agreed not to build a canal without the other’s participation. Because of its strong interest in a canal, however, the United States negotiated a new treaty. In 1901, the United States and Great Britain signed the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty, which gave the United States the exclusive right to build and control any proposed canal through Central America.

A French company had begun digging a canal through Panama in 1881. By 1889, however, it abandoned its efforts because of bankruptcy and terrible losses from disease among the workers. The company was reorganized in 1894, but its operations practically ceased and its only hope was to sell its rights to digging the canal.

The United States had long considered two possible canal sites, one through Nicaragua and one through Panama. The French company cased this choice by offering to sell its rights and property in Panama to the United States.

In 1903 Panama was still part of Colombia. Secretary of State Hay offered Colombia $10 million and a yearly rent of $250,000 for the right to construct the canal and to control a narrow strip of land on either side of it. Considering the price too low and afraid of losing control of Panama, the Colombian government refused the offer.

Revolt in Panama

Some Panamanians feared losing the commercial benefits of the canal. Panama had opposed Colombian rule since the mid-1800s, and the canal issue added to the tensions. In addition, the French company was still concerned that the United States would build the canal in Nicaragua instead. The French company’s agent, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, and Panamanian officials decided that the only way to ensure the canal would be built was to declare independence and make their own deal with the United States. Bunau-Varilla arranged for a small army to stage an uprising in Panama.

On November 3, 1903, Bunau-Varilla’s forces revolted. Meanwhile, President Roosevelt sent ships to Panama to prevent Colombian interference. Within a few days, the United States recognized Panama’s independence. Less than two weeks later, the two nations signed a treaty allowing the canal to be built.

Protesters in the United States and throughout Latin America condemned Roosevelt’s actions as unjustifiable aggression. The president countered that he had advanced “the needs of collective civilization” by building a canal that shortened the distance between the Atlantic and the Pacific by about 8,000 nautical miles (14,816 km).

The Roosevelt Corollary

The growing American involvement in foreign affairs caused Roosevelt to expand his “big stick” diplomacy. In an address to Congress in 1904, the president defined what came
to be known as the **Roosevelt Corollary** to the Monroe Doctrine. In it, he said that the United States would intervene in Latin American affairs when necessary to maintain economic and political stability in the Western Hemisphere:

"Chronic wrongdoing . . . may, in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."

—quoted in *The Growth of the United States*

The United States first applied the Roosevelt Corollary in the Dominican Republic, which had fallen behind on its debt payments to European nations. In 1905 the United States assumed the responsibility of collecting customs tariffs in the Dominican Republic, using the United States Marine Corps as its agent.

Latin American nations resented the growing American influence in the region, but Roosevelt’s successor, William Howard Taft, continued Roosevelt’s policies. Taft placed much less emphasis on military force and more on helping Latin American industry. He believed that if American business leaders supported Latin American and Asian development, everyone would benefit. The United States would increase its trade, American businesses would increase their profits, and countries in Latin America and Asia would rise out of poverty and social disorder. Taft’s policy came to be called **dollar diplomacy.**

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**SECTION 3 ASSessment**

**Checking for Understanding**

1. **Define:** sphere of influence, Open Door policy, dollar diplomacy.

**Reviewing Themes**

3. **Continuity and Change** Why do you think Latin American nations resented American influence in the region?

**Critical Thinking**

4. **Analyzing** How did the Open Door policy and dollar diplomacy affect U.S. relations with other countries?
5. **Organizing** Use a graphic organizer to summarize the results of the Open Door policy in China.

**Analyzing Visuals**

6. **Analyzing Graphs** Examine the graph on page 537. Why do you think such a small number of U.S. exports went to China and Japan?

**Writing About History**

7. **Persuasive Writing** Imagine you are Theodore Roosevelt, and write a speech justifying the actions that led to the building of the Panama Canal. Be specific in your reasons.