The Imperialist Vision

Objective: To learn about America’s expansion into the Pacific and Caribbean.
Beginning in the 1880s, many Americans wanted to make the United States a world power.

Many European powers were practicing imperialism (the economic and political domination of a strong nation over other weaker nations).

These European powers became protectorates, which is when the imperial power allowed the local rulers to stay in control and protected them from rebellions and invasion.

After industrializing, many Americans believed the nation had to develop overseas markets to keep its economy strong.
Many supporters of Social Darwinism argued that nations competed with each other politically, economically, and militarily, and that only the strongest would ultimately survive.

Writer and historian John Fiske argued that English-speaking nations had superior character, ideas and systems of government, and were destined to dominate the planet. This became known as Anglo-Saxonism.

Josiah Strong linked Anglo-Saxonism to Christian missionary ideas, which convinced many Americans to support imperialism.
Expansion in the Pacific

- When Americans began looking for overseas for new markets in the 1800s, they naturally tended to look westward.
- Many American business leaders believed that the United States would benefit from trade with Japan as well as with China.
- In 1852, President Franklin Pierce ordered Commodore Mathew C. Perry to take a naval expedition to Japan to negotiate a trade treaty.
- Japan signed a treaty opening the ports of Simonda and Hakodadi to American trade after they realized they could not compete against modern Western technology and weapons.
Annexing Hawaii

- Americans became interested in Hawaii because ships traveling between China and the United States regularly stopped there.
- By the mid 1800s, many sugarcane plantations had been established on the islands.
- In 1887, prominent planters pressured the Hawaiian king to accepting a new constitution that limited the king’s authority and increased the planters’ power.
- In 1891, Queen Liliuokalani ascended the Hawaiian throne and unsuccessfully attempted to impose a new constitution that would have reasserted her authority as ruler.
- The planters overthrew the queen and set up a provisional government.
American business leaders wanted to increase the sale of American products in Latin America because Latin Americans bought most of their manufactured products from Europe.

James G. Blaine proposed that the US invited LA nations to a conference and promote Pan-Americanism, which was the idea that the US and Latin America should work together to support peace and to increase trade.

The Latin American delegates rejected Blaine’s ideas of reducing tariffs but did create the Commercial Bureau of the American Republics, which is known today as the Organization of American States.
Building a Modern Navy

- After the United States got involved in the Samoa Islands, Chile, and Venezuela, the American people and the government supported building a modern navy.
- Supporters argued that if the US didn’t build up the navy, then it would be shut out of foreign markets by the Europeans.
- Alfred T. Mahan also observed that building a modern navy meant that the US had to acquire territory for naval bases overseas.
- By the late 1890s, the US was well on its way to becoming a top naval power after Congress authorized the construction of a modern American navy.