The remarkable leader of the Haitian slave revolt was Toussaint Breda (later called Toussaint L'Ouverture). Slave revolts from this time normally ended in executions and failure—this story is the exception. It began in 1791 in the French colony of Saint Dominique (later Haiti). Though born a slave in Saint Dominique, Toussaint learned of Africa from his father, who had been born a free man there. He learned that he was more than a slave, that he was a man with brains and dignity. Toussaint had a slave master who had him trained as a house servant and allowed him to learn to read and write. He took full advantage of this, reading every book he could get his hands on, especially the writings of the French Enlightenment philosophers, who spoke of individual rights and equality.

In 1789 the French Revolution spread through France. The sugar plantations of Saint Dominique, though far away, would never be the same. Inspired by Enlightenment thinkers, the early French revolutionaries considered seriously the question of slavery. Those moderate revolutionaries were not willing to end slavery, but they did apply the "Rights of Man" to all Frenchmen, including free blacks and mulattoes (those of mixed race). Plantation owners in the colonies were furious and fought changes. Finally, the revolutionaries gave in and withdrew the policy in 1791. The news of this betrayal triggered mass slave revolts in Saint Dominique, and Toussaint became the leader of the slave rebellion. He became known as Toussaint L'Ouverture (the one who finds an opening) and brilliantly led his untrained army of slaves. He successfully fought the French (who were succumbing to yellow fever in large numbers) as well as the invading Spanish and British.

By 1793, the revolution in France was in the hands of the radical Jacobins. This group, led by Maximilian Robespierre, was responsible for an effort to rid France of "enemies of the revolution." Though the Jacobins brought the Reign of Terror to France, they also wanted to take the ideas of the revolution as far as they could go, so they promoted the idea of "equality" and voted to end slavery in the French Colonies, including what is now known as Haiti. There was jubilation among the blacks in Haiti, and Toussaint agreed to help the French army eject the British and Spanish. Toussaint proved to be a brilliant general, winning seven battles in seven days. He later became an unofficial governor of the colony.

In France the Jacobins lost power, ending the Reign of Terror. More moderate leaders came and went, eventually replaced by Napoleon, who responded to the pleas of the plantation owners in Haiti by reinstating slavery in the French colonies, once again plunging Haiti into war. By 1803 Napoleon was ready to get Haiti off his back: he and Toussaint agreed to terms of peace. Napoleon agreed to recognize Haitian independence and Toussaint agreed to retire from public life. A few months later, the French invited Toussaint to come to a negotiating meeting with full safe conduct. When he arrived, the French (at Napoleon's orders) betrayed the safe conduct guarantee and arrested him, putting him on a ship headed for France. Napoleon ordered that Toussaint be placed in a prison dungeon in the mountains, and murdered by means of cold, starvation, and neglect. Toussaint died in prison, but others carried on the fight for freedom.

Six months later, Napoleon decided to give up his possessions in the New World. He was busy in Europe and these far-away possessions were more trouble than they were worth. He abandoned Haiti to independence and sold the French territory in North America to the United States (the Louisiana Purchase). Years later, in exile at St. Helena, when asked about his dishonorable treatment of Toussaint, Napoleon merely remarked, "What could the death of one wretched Negro mean to me?"
Imperialism in Latin America:
Simon Bolivar and Latin American Revolutions

Bolivar was born in Caracas (present-day Venezuela) in 1783 to an extremely wealthy "creole" family (Latin Americans descended almost entirely from European Spaniards). Orphaned at a young age, Simon went to live with his grandfather and was schooled at the finest schools that Caracas had to offer. Bolivar left to tour around Europe in 1804, but when he returned to Venezuela in 1807, he found a population divided between loyalty to Spain and a desire for independence. When Napoleon invaded Spain in 1808 and imprisoned King Ferdinand VII, many Venezuelans felt that they no longer owed allegiance to Spain, giving the independence movement undeniable momentum. On April 19, 1810, the people of Caracas declared provisional independence from Spain, in which they would rule Venezuela by themselves until such a time as Spain was back on its feet and Ferdinand restored. Young Simón Bolívar was an important voice during this time, advocating for full independence. Along with a small delegation, Bolívar was sent to England to seek the support of the British government.

When Bolivar returned from Europe, he found civil strife between those seeking independence and royalists (supporters of Spanish rule). On July 5, 1811, the First Venezuelan Republic voted for full independence, dropping the charade that they were still loyal to Ferdinand VII. On March 26, 1812, a tremendous earthquake rocked Venezuela, making it easier for the royalist army to capture important ports. The First Republic soon collapsed and the Spanish regained control of Venezuela. Bolivar was defeated and went into exile. In late 1812, he went to New Granada (now Colombia). He was given a small army and aggressively attacked Spanish forces throughout the region, and on August 7, 1813, Bolivar rode victoriously into Caracas at the head of his army. Bolivar quickly established the Second Venezuelan Republic. The grateful people named him “The Liberator” and made him dictator of the new nation. Although Bolivar had outmaneuvered the Spanish, he had not beaten their armies. He did not have time to govern, as he was constantly battling supporters of Spanish rule. At the beginning of 1814, royalist forces began assaulting the young republic. Bolívar was forced to abandon one city after another, thus ending the Second Republic. Bolivar went into exile once again.

In 1815, Bolivar found Venezuela in the grip of chaos. Pro-independence leaders and royalist forces fought up and down the land, devastating the countryside. In early 1819, Venezuela was devastated, its cities in ruins, as royalists and patriots fought vicious battles wherever they met. Bolívar realized that he was less than 300 miles away from the Viceregal capital of Bogota, which was practically undefended. If he could capture it, he could destroy the Spanish base of power in northern South America. Bolivar was successful in the Battle of Boyaca, and in August marched into Bogota unopposed.

Bolivar now had captured money and weapons and increased the size of his army. He crushed the last major royalist force in Venezuela and declared the birth of a New Republic: Gran Colombia, which would include the lands of Venezuela, New Granada, and Ecuador. He was named the president, and now Northern South America was liberated. Bolivar continued fighting battles for independence in present day Ecuador and continued into what is now Peru and the country named for him, Bolivia. He had driven the Spanish out of northern and western South America and now ruled over the present-day nations of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama. It was his dream to unite them all, creating one unified nation. However, regional leaders had been fighting for power in Bolivar’s absence, so he seized power over several leaders and established a dictatorship to control the country. The people turned against Bolivar and a civil war nearly broke out. But as Bolivar’s health became an issue, he resigned the presidency and died in late 1830.
Imperialism in China: The Opium War

The Age of Exploration in the 16th century saw a rapid increase in Western influence into Asia and China in particular. During this time, Britain, France, Spain, Holland and Portugal all established colonies in different areas of Asia and began to enforce their influence. Western merchants began reaching China in the 1600s and 1700s were impressed by the splendor of the Chinese civilizations and they began to arrive to buy Chinese goods, such as: tea, silk and porcelain. For its part, the Chinese government worked to limit European influence within China. For example, European merchants were restricted to trading at one city: Canton.

In the early 1800s British merchants discovered that they could increase their profits by trading opium from India and Turkey to China for Chinese goods. Because opium is an addictive drug, the trade in opium made many merchants very wealthy, while the Chinese government was upset as opium smoking spread across China. All classes of Chinese people could smoke opium in “opium dens”. The Chinese government (Qing dynasty) recognized the social and economic dangers of opium and attempted to ban its use. In 1839, the government destroyed millions of dollars’ worth of British imported opium that had been brought to the city of Canton. To the surprise of the Chinese, the British responded with military force.

The First Opium War (1839-1842) saw the Chinese military defeated by the overwhelming British forces. While the Chinese had many more troops, they were no match for the advanced military tactics and weaponry of the British. In 1840, the British seized Canton and attacked Chinese forces along the coast. The loss of the First Opium War resulting in the Chinese being forced to accept the humiliating terms of the Treaty of Nanking. Under this treaty, the Chinese had to accept foreign diplomats and open more ports to foreign trade. As well, Britain took control of the island of Hong Kong and received compensation for the destroyed opium.

The Second Opium War began in 1856, when Britain tried to force the Chinese government to accept more concessions. One of these concessions included the legalization of opium which the British wanted so it could ensure further trade in China. Similar to the First Opium War, the Chinese were decisively defeated by the British military and were forced to accept a humiliating treaty. The Treaty of Tientsin was signed in 1860 and removed more barriers to European influence in China. The Chinese government had to open additional ports to European trade and make the opium trade legal. As well, foreigners were allowed to live within China. As a result, China became more influenced by the imperial powers (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan), which established their spheres of influence within China.

For its part, the United States did not establish its own ‘sphere of influence’ within China but argued that it should receive the same commercial and trading rights as other foreign powers. In 1898, President McKinley established an “Open Door Policy”, meaning the U.S. wanted equal access to trade in China for all nations. The following year, the U.S. government sent letters to the foreign powers in China. In these letters the United States called on these countries to allow free trade in their ‘spheres of influence’. As well, it called for Chinese political unity, meaning the country should not be carved up into colonies. While no nation formally agreed to this policy, it did help to preserve an open door to trade in China. However, it did little to stop China from being dominated by foreign powers.
Establishment of Liberia

Starting in 1816, the American Colonization Society (ACS) sought to create a colony in Africa for the purpose of providing a homeland for free black Americans. Over the next three decades, the society secured land in West Africa and shipped people to the colony, which became the nation of Liberia in 1847. The ACS spent its first few years trying to secure land in West Africa. In 1821, it made a deal with local West African leaders to establish a colony that included a strip of land only 36 miles long and three miles wide (today, Liberia stretches over 38,250 square miles). The next year, the society began sending free people—often groups of families—to the colony. Over the next 40 years, upwards of 12,000 freeborn and formerly enslaved black Americans immigrated to Liberia.

The ACS was distinct from black-led “back to Africa” movements that argued black Americans could only escape slavery and discrimination by establishing their own homeland. Though some free black Americans may have supported the society’s mission, there were also plenty who criticized it. The society was made up of white men from the north and south, including slave owners who felt that free black people undermined the institution of slavery, and should be sent away. Others in the society felt that slavery should be gradually dismantled, but that black people could never live freely with white people. As the abolitionist movement grew in the early 1830s, abolitionists’ criticism of the society began to erode its support. In addition, many abolitionists considered it cruel to deport black Americans to Liberia, where they struggled to survive in a new environment with new diseases. The American Colonization Society evolved throughout the 1830s so that by the end of the decade, it began to support immediate abolition while still promoting its colony in Africa as a place for free black Americans to relocate. This caused the society to lose support among southern slave owners who were committed to preserving slavery.

In 1846, indigenous traders and British merchants threatened Liberian authorities over the taxes the ACS, a private organization, charged. Because European countries refused to recognize Liberia as having the power to tax, the Americo-Liberian colonists voted for independence so they could have the sovereignty to collect taxes. Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a man born free in Virginia, became the colony’s first black governor in 1841, and declared Liberia’s independence in 1847; it became the first African colony to gain independence. By then, the American Colonization Society had lost a lot of money and was falling apart. In its Declaration of Independence, Liberia accused the U.S. of injustices that made separation necessary and urged other countries to recognize its statehood.

Yet, the United States did not recognize Liberia as an independent nation until 1862, during the American Civil War. That year, enslaved people in Washington, D.C. won their freedom, and Congress approved funds to relocate those who wanted to move to Liberia or Central America. The Americo-Liberian settlers saw a problem in the decrease of immigrants from the U.S. and depended on the immigrants from nearby regions of Africa to increase the population. However, the Americo-Liberians formed a social structure that existed for decades in which local Africans could not fully participate in society, and replicated many of the exclusions that had limited their own lives in the United States.
Imperialism in India:
The Sepoy Rebellion

By the 1600s, the British and other European nations were attracted to the lucrative spice trade with India. Queen Elizabeth chartered the British East India Company, a private company of British merchants, giving it a monopoly in trading with India. In 1613, the Muslim emperor of India granted the company the right to establish trading stations in northeast India. By making treaties with local Indian princes and warlords, the East India Company rapidly controlled more and more Indian territory, and used three large private armies to protect its property and to expand its control over Indian territory. By 1856, the company employed native Indian troops as infantrymen called sepoys. Three-fourths of the sepoys were Hindus, and the rest were Muslims.

Early in 1857, the British issued a new rifle to the sepoy regiments that used a paper cartridge that combined the gunpowder and the bullet. The rifleman had to bite off the end of the cartridge before pushing it down the barrel of the gun. To ease its passage down the gun barrel, each cartridge was heavily greased with beef or pork fat. This horrified the Hindu and Muslim sepoys because they would have to bite into beef or pork fat to use the new cartridges, which they believed would violate their religions. The British quickly realized their mistake and tried to assure the sepoys that they would not have to use cartridges greased with beef or pork fat. But the sepoys distrusted their British officers and rumors quickly spread that the British were insulting the Hindu and Muslim religions by issuing the greased cartridges. In April 1857 at a military post near Delhi, sepoy cavalrymen refused to use the new cartridges. The British court-martialed and sentenced them to prison, then humiliated them by stripping off their uniforms and shackling their ankles in front of 4,000 sepoy troops. Shocked by what they had seen, the troops mutinied. They quickly overwhelmed the British and released the sepoy prisoners, then began shooting every British man, woman, and child in sight.

When the slaughter ended, the mutineers marched off to Delhi to seek the help of an elderly Muslim king who had stepped down from power many years before. As the sepoys entered Delhi, the people of the city joined them in seeking Bahadur Shah II, an old Muslim king. At first reluctant, Shah, the "King of Delhi," finally agreed to take up the sepoy cause. He called for all Hindus and Muslims to unite. "May all the enemies of the Faith be killed today," he said, "and the [foreigners] be destroyed root and branch!" Shocked by the capture of Delhi by sepoy mutineers, the British began to disarm the East India Company sepoy regiments. When the sepoy mutiny first erupted, the British had only 23,000 regular British army troops in India to restore order. Eventually, the British had to bring in troops from all over their empire to fight the rebels. But the mutiny grew into a general uprising against the British across northern and central India. Sepoy regiments, together with farmers, villagers, government workers, and estate owners looted and burned British homes, churches, missions, and East India Company property. They also hunted down and killed any British people they found. British army units began their own war of vengeance. On their way to recapture Delhi, British soldiers randomly tortured, shot, and hanged hundreds of Indian people.

For more than a year, the sepoys and their civilian allies desperately fought the British army. The British recaptured Delhi only after several days of bloody hand-to-hand street fighting. By the end of 1858, the British had finally restored order. Queen Victoria pardoned all rebels except those who had murdered British subjects. After the uprising, the British began a new policy of respect for Indian religions and traditions. Most importantly, Parliament abolished the East India Company and placed the governing of India directly in the hands of the British government.
Imperialism in Japan: The Meiji Restoration

Japan’s Tokugawa (or Edo) period, which lasted from 1603 to 1867, would be the final era of traditional Japanese government, culture and society before the Meiji Restoration of 1868 toppled the long-reigning Tokugawa shoguns and propelled the country into the modern era. To guard against external influence, Tokugawa shoguns worked to close off Japanese society from Westernizing influences, particularly Christianity. But with the Tokugawa shogunate growing increasingly weak by the mid-19th century, two powerful clans joined forces in early 1868 to seize power as part of an “imperial restoration” named for Emperor Meiji. The Meiji Restoration spelled the beginning of the end for feudalism in Japan and would lead to the emergence of modern Japanese culture, politics and society.

Suspicious of foreign intervention and colonialism, the Tokugawa regime acted to exclude missionaries and eventually issued a complete ban on Christianity in Japan. Near the beginning of the Tokugawa period, there were an estimated 300,000 Christians in Japan; after the shogunate’s brutal repression of a Christian rebellion on the Shimabara Peninsula in 1637-38, Christianity was forced underground. The dominant faith of the Tokugawa period was Confucianism, a religion with a strong emphasis on loyalty and duty. In its efforts to close Japan off from damaging foreign influence, the Tokugawa shogunate also prohibited trade with Western nations and prevented Japanese merchants from trading abroad. With the Act of Seclusion (1636), Japan was effectively cut off from Western nations for the next 200 years (with the exception of a small Dutch outpost in Nagasaki Harbor). At the same time, it maintained close relations with neighboring Korea and China, confirming a traditional East Asian political order with China at the center.

Despite efforts at improving the economic problems in Japan, mounting opposition seriously weakened the Tokugawa shogunate from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century, when years of famine led to increased peasant uprisings. A series of “unequal treaties” in which stronger nations imposed their will on smaller ones in East Asia, created further unrest, particularly the Treaty of Kanagawa, which opened Japanese ports to American ships, guaranteed them safe harbor and allowed the U.S. to set up a permanent consulate in exchange for not bombing Edo. It was signed under coercion when Commodore Matthew Perry sent his American battle fleet into Japanese waters.

In 1867, two powerful anti-Tokugawa clans combined forces to topple the shogunate, and the following year declared an “imperial restoration” in the name of the young Emperor Meiji, who was just 14 years old at the time. The Meiji Constitution of 1889—which remained the constitution of Japan until 1947, after World War II created a parliament, or Diet, with a lower house elected by the people and a prime minister and cabinet appointed by the emperor. Rapid modernization took place after the Meiji Restoration. The new government opened the country once again to Western trade and influence and oversaw a buildup of military strength that would soon propel Japan onto the world stage.
Imperialism in Africa:  
The Suez Canal

The Suez Canal is a man-made waterway connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the Red Sea. It enables a more direct route for shipping between Europe and Asia, effectively allowing for passage from the North Atlantic to the Indian Ocean without having to circumnavigate the African continent. The waterway is vital for international trade and, as a result, has been at the center of conflict since it opened in 1869. The Suez Canal stretches 120 miles and separates the bulk of Egypt from the Sinai Peninsula. It took 10 years to build and was officially opened on November 17, 1869. Owned and operated by the Suez Canal Authority, the Suez Canal’s use is intended to be open to ships of all countries, be it for purposes of commerce or war—though that hasn’t always been the case.

Although the Suez Canal wasn’t officially completed until 1869, there is a long history of interest in connecting both the Nile River in Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea. The ancient Egyptians attempted to create a canal, but they all eventually filled with silt. Various other attempts were made by the Romans and possibly Omar the Great to build passageways over the centuries, but those, too, failed due to disuse. Napoleon, in his time as the leader of France, believed that building a French-controlled canal on the Isthmus of Suez would cause trade problems for the British as they would either have to pay dues to France or continue sending goods over land or around the southern part of Africa. However, due to miscalculations, there was flooding and the attempt was abandoned.

The next attempt occurred in the mid-1800s when a French diplomat and engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, convinced the Egyptian viceroy of the Ottoman Empire, Said Pasha, to support building a canal. In 1858, the Universal Suez Ship Canal Company was formed and given the right to begin construction of the canal and operate it for 99 years, when the Egyptian government would take over control. At its founding, the Universal Suez Ship Canal Company was owned by French and Egyptian interests.

Construction of the Suez Canal officially began on April 25, 1859. Low-paid forced Egyptian labors using picks and shovels did the initial digging which was extremely slow and painstaking. This was eventually abandoned for steam- and coal-powered machines that quickly finished the work. It opened ten years later on November 17, 1869, at a cost of $100 million.

Almost immediately, the Suez Canal had a significant impact on world trade as goods were moved around the world in record time. Its initial size was 25 feet (7.6 meters) deep, 72 feet (22 meters) wide at the bottom and between 200 feet and 300 feet (61-91 meters) wide at the top.

In 1875, debt forced Egypt to sell its shares in ownership of the Suez Canal to the United Kingdom. However, an international convention in 1888 made the canal available for all ships from any nation to use.
Imperialism in Africa

Imperialism in Africa occurred in the late 1800s and would come to have a profound effect on the continent. European exploration sparked European expansion into West and Central Africa. One of the most significant events of this period was that of King Leopold II of Belgium and his role in the Congo. He would rule over the Congo as his personal empire and would be responsible for the death and mutilation of six to eight million Congolese people. His brutal treatment of the local people would come to symbolize the worst aspects of European imperialism in Africa.

King Leopold II was born on the 9th of April, 1835 in Brussels, Belgium. He was the king of Belgium from 1865 to 1909 and played a significant role in its period of African imperialism. In hopes of building Belgium’s global empire of colonies, he helped lead efforts to colonize the Congo River basin, and officially formed the Congo Free State in 1885. He ruled over the Congo Free State as his own private possession and used his control over the region to amass a fortune for himself. The area had valuable resources, such as: rubber, copper and other raw materials. Rubber was an incredibly valuable resource at the time, as the newly invented rubber tire was being used in bicycles and early automobiles.

Leopold II would oversee the brutalization of millions of Congo peoples in order to harvest and sell the rubber. He granted monopolies to European companies and earned large profits for himself. The companies ruthlessly exploited the land and the people in the Congo in their pursuits of profit. The company managers would force the Congo people to work long hours and punished them if they did not meet their quotas. Punishments were brutal and involved: beatings, cutting of their hands, starvation, imprisoning women and children to force men to work harder and destroying entire villages. The punishment that came to be best associated with the brutal reign of Leopold II is the cutting off of the hands of the Congo people. Quotas were established of how much rubber was supposed to be produced in and a day. If the people did not meet their quota for rubber then they could have one or both of their hands cut off.

The atrocities eventually drew international attention and the intense pressure caused the Belgian government to investigate what was occurring in the Congo Free State. Eventually, in 1908, the territory was taken over by the Belgian government and renamed Belgian Congo, but not before Leopold II demanded a fee for the sale of his control over the Congo. For his part, Leopold II amassed a substantial fortune and was considered to be one of the richest men in the world near the end of his life. Before he died on December 17th, 1909, he supposedly had a personal fortune as high as $500 million.
**Imperialism in Africa:**  
The Second Boer War

**The Dutch Control the Cape Colony**  
Before Britain controlled Southern Africa, it was controlled by the Boers (the Dutch and Afrikaans word for farmers – Afrikaans is the language of the Dutch settlers in South Africa). The Boers were descendants of Dutch (people from Holland / the Netherlands) settlers who founded the Dutch East India Company in the Cape Colony in 1652. The Dutch established a trading post and imported slaves from Dutch colonies to work on their farms. The indigenous people in the region known as the Khoikhoi were often in conflict with the Dutch over land ownership. After a series of wars, the Khoikhoi were eventually kicked off of their land. Many other Khoikhoi people were killed by a smallpox epidemic that started at the Cape of Southern Africa when Dutch sailors arrived carrying the airborne virus. As Dutch power lessened in the area, the British seized the Cape in 1795 before returning it to the Boers in 1803. By 1814, the British had acquired the Cape from the Boers. There they established a colony where power was held in the hands of whites and slaves imported from Dutch colonies. Indigenous Africans were subject to the rule of the British. The Boers left Cape Colony in the 'Great Trek' and founded their own republics.

The First Boer War broke out when Boers turned to armed resistance against the British in December of 1880. While the British suffered heavy defeats at the hands of the Boers, peace came in 1881 when Britain was given supervisory control over the foreign interactions of Transvaal (the colony at the time), and Transvaal was later given full independence of its domestic policies. After the First Anglo-Boer War the British government did not give up its ambition for unifying South Africa under Imperial British rule. The two Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal still maintained their desire for independence. The Boer republics were a stumbling block for the British Empire.

The discovery of gold in 1886 made Transvaal a potential threat to British supremacy in South Africa at a time when Britain was trying to build their colonies against a bigger threat from French and German colonies. On October 11, 1899, the Second Boer War broke out after Britain rejected a proposal from the government of Transvaal. The War lasted until 1902 after the Boers suffered several defeats and had to retreat.

One major aspect of the Second Boer War was the use of a concentration camp system, where civilians were confined in camps. The British were not the first in the modern age to use such a system, such as had been used by the Spanish in Cuba to stop a rebellion in 1896. Despite these camps not being set up for the purpose of killing large numbers of people in South Africa, it is estimated that nearly 30,000 Boer women and children, and at least 20,000 black South Africans died in the camps.

By 1910, the British decided to create the independent Union of South Africa which included the Cape Colony and the Boer republics. The hope was that this new unified country could support and defend itself, while still being a part of the British Empire. The new union adopted a constitution for a government run only by whites in a system referred to as apartheid, which didn’t end until 1994.
Imperialism:

The Spanish American War

The Spanish American War originated in the Cuban struggle for independence from Spain, which began in February 1895. Spain’s brutally repressive measures to halt the rebellion were graphically portrayed for the U.S. public by several newspapers, and American sympathy for the Cuban rebels rose. The growing popular demand for U.S. intervention became an insistent chorus after the sinking in Havana harbor of the American battleship USS Maine, which had been sent to protect U.S. citizens and property after anti-Spanish rioting in Havana.

Spain announced a new program to grant Cuba limited powers of self-government. But the U.S. Congress soon afterward issued resolutions that declared Cuba’s right to independence, demanded the withdrawal of Spain’s armed forces from the island, and authorized the use of force by U.S. troops to secure that withdrawal. Spain declared war on the United States on April 24, followed by a U.S. declaration of war on the 25th. The ensuing war was pathetically one-sided, since Spain had readied neither its army nor its navy for a distant war with the formidable power of the United States.

In the early morning hours of May 1, 1898, Commodore George Dewey led a U.S. naval squadron into Manila Bay in the Philippines. He destroyed the anchored Spanish fleet in two hours before pausing the Battle of Manila Bay to order his crew a second breakfast. In total, fewer than ten American seamen were lost, while Spanish losses were estimated at over 370. Manila itself was occupied by U.S. troops by August.

The elusive Spanish Caribbean fleet under Adm. Pascual Cervera was located in Santiago harbor in Cuba by U.S. reconnaissance. An army of regular troops and volunteers under Gen. William Shafter (including then-secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt and his 1st Volunteer Cavalry, the “Rough Riders”) landed on the coast east of Santiago and slowly advanced on the city in an effort to force Cervera’s fleet out of the harbor. Cervera led his squadron out of Santiago on July 3 and tried to escape westward along the coast. In the ensuing battle all of his ships came under heavy fire from U.S. guns and were beached in a burning or sinking condition. Santiago surrendered to Shafter on July 17, thus effectively ending the brief but momentous war.

The Treaty of Paris ending the Spanish-American War was signed on December 10, 1898. In it, Spain renounced all claim to Cuba, ceded Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States and transferred sovereignty over the Philippines to the United States in exchange for $20 million. Philippine insurgents who had fought against Spanish rule soon turned their guns against their new occupiers. The Philippine-American War began in February of 1899 and lasted until 1902. Ten times more U.S. troops died suppressing revolts in the Philippines than in defeating Spain. The Spanish-American War was an important turning point in the history of both antagonists. Spain’s defeat decisively turned the nation’s attention away from its overseas colonial adventures and inward upon its domestic needs. The victorious United States, on the other hand, emerged from the war a world power with far-flung overseas possessions and a new stake in international politics that would soon lead it to play a determining role in the affairs of Europe and the rest of the globe.
Imperialism in China:
The Boxer Rebellion

By the end of the 19th century, the Western powers and Japan had forced China’s ruling Qing dynasty to accept wide foreign control over the country’s economic affairs. In the Opium Wars (1839-42, 1856-60), popular rebellions and the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), China had fought to resist the foreigners, but it lacked a modernized military and suffered millions of casualties.

By the late 1890s, a Chinese secret group, the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists (“I-ho-ch’uan” or “Yihequan”), had begun carrying out regular attacks on foreigners and Chinese Christians. (The rebels performed calisthenics rituals and martial arts that they believed would give them the ability to withstand bullets and other forms of attack. Westerners referred to these rituals as shadow boxing, leading to the Boxers nickname.) Although the Boxers came from various parts of society, many were peasants, particularly from Shandong province, which had been struck by natural disasters such as famine and flooding. In the 1890s, China had given territorial and commercial concessions in this area to several European nations, and the Boxers blamed their poor standard of living on foreigners who were colonizing their country.

In 1900, the Boxer movement spread to the Beijing area, where the Boxers killed Chinese Christians and Christian missionaries and destroyed churches and railroad stations and other property. On June 20, 1900, the Boxers began a siege of Beijing’s foreign legation district (where the official quarters of foreign diplomats were located.) The following day, Qing Empress Dowager Tzu’u Hzi (or Cixi, 1835-1908) declared a war on all foreign nations with diplomatic ties in China.

As the Western powers and Japan organized a multinational force to crush the rebellion, the siege stretched into weeks, and the diplomats, their families and guards suffered through hunger and degrading conditions as they fought to keep the Boxers at bay. By some estimates, several hundred foreigners and several thousand Chinese Christians were killed during this time. On August 14, after fighting its way through northern China, an international force of approximately 20,000 troops from eight nations (Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) arrived to take Beijing and rescue the foreigners and Chinese Christians.

The Boxer Rebellion formally ended with the signing of the Boxer Protocol on September 7, 1901. By terms of the agreement, forts protecting Beijing were to be destroyed, Boxer and Chinese government officials involved in the uprising were to be punished, foreign legations were permitted to station troops in Beijing for their defense, China was prohibited from importing arms for two years and it agreed to pay more than $330 million in reparations to the foreign nations involved. The Qing dynasty, established in 1644, was weakened by the Boxer Rebellion. Following an uprising in 1911, the dynasty came to an end and China became a republic in 1912.
Imperialism in Africa: The Battle of Adwa

In 1896, Ethiopia fought a desperate battle against a stronger European nation attempting to invade, conquer, and colonize the smaller nation and more importantly, be able to exploit its natural resources. A series of brutal battles were fought between the army of King Menelik II of Ethiopia and the Italian Army under the command of the Italian governor of Eritrea, General Oreste Baratieri.

The mistrust between the two nations had begun seven years before in 1889 during the signing of a treaty in which King Menelik II agreed to provide to Italy land in the Tigray province in exchange for support in the form of weapons the Italians had been supplying him for some time. The Italians wanted more. There were two versions of the treaty to be signed, one in Italian, and one written in Amharic. Unbeknownst to the conquering King was the fact that the version in Italian had been altered by the translators to give Rome more power over Menelik II and his kingdom of Ethiopia. The Italians believed they had tricked Menelik II into giving his allegiance to Rome in the treaty. Mistakenly, they believed him to be unsophisticated in the way the Europeans believed themselves to be. To the Italians surprise, the treaty was rejected despite their attempt to influence the king with 20 million rounds of ammunition. He would have none of it and denounced them as liars who had attempted to cheat himself and Ethiopia.

When Italy’s attempt failed, they tried to set up a rival of the King by promising to support him with money and weapons and hoped he would overthrow Menelik II. When that failed, the Italians turned to General Baratieri, who was no stranger to battle and devised a good strategy to lure the Ethiopians into an ambush. However, there were problems with his strategy. First, he had drastically underestimated the strength and will of the army facing him. Although aware he was outnumbered, the General believed the Ethiopians to be undisciplined and unskilled at the art of war negating the advantage in numbers. Certain he would have an advantage over the ‘savages’, he dug in his 20,000 troops and 56 guns at Adawa awaiting the King and his men. In the meantime, Menelik II had trapped a thousand or so of the Italian army and agreed to allow them safe passage if Italy would reopen negotiations with him concerning a peace treaty. The Italian government refused and in fact did the opposite, authorizing more dollars to pursue the war in Ethiopia.

Baratieri’s next mistake was setting out confident in their battle strategy, when the officers in charge of implementing the attack learned how poor the rough sketches of the area they had were. It was dark and cold in a high mountain pass in February and it was doomed. Divisions of Italian soldiers became confused, lost, and disorganized. Through the confusion a two mile gap in their battle line was opened and the Ethiopians rushed in cutting the Italian attack in two. Able to lob shells from higher ground down upon the invaders, the Ethiopians raced to seize the advantage but the Italians held their ground and at mid morning it looked as if they may be able to win in spite of all the difficulty they had encountered. Considering retreat, Menelik II was persuaded to additional soldiers he had been holding in reserve. Having fought hundreds of battles to protect their homeland, Menelik’s warriors attacked with a ferocity the Italians couldn’t have imagined. Taking hardly any prisoners, the victors of Battle of Adwa killed 289 Italian officers, 2,918 European soldiers and about 2,000 askari. A further 954 European troops were missing, while 470 Italians and 958 askari were wounded. Some 700 Italians and 1,800 askari fell into the hands of the Ethiopian troops.

With the victory at the Battle of Adwa in hand and the Italian colonial army destroyed, Eritrea was King Menelik’s for the taking but no order to occupy was given. Realizing they would bring all their force to bear on his country if he attacked, Menelik instead restored the peace that had been broken by the Italians and their treaty manipulation seven years before.