

McKinley and Roosevelt, imperialist buccaneers in the Pacific

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The regular session of Congress which opened in December was occupied chiefly with the situation in Cuba. President McKinley showed himself singularly patient and self-controlled in the midst of the popular excitement against Spain and the clamour for intervention by the United States in behalf of the Cubans; but finally, on the 23rd of March, he presented an ultimatum to the Spanish government, and on the 25th of April, on his recommendation, Congress declared war upon Spain. During the war itself he devoted himself with great energy to the mastery of military details; but there was bitter criticism of the war department resulting in the resignation of the secretary of war, Russell A. Alger (q.v.). The signing of a peace protocol on the 12th of August was followed by the signature at Paris on the 10th of December of articles of peace between the United States and Spain. After a long discussion the peace treaty was ratified by the United States Senate on the 6th of February 1899; and in accordance with its terms Porto Rico, the Philippine Archipelago, and Guam were transferred by Spain to the United States, and Cuba came under American jurisdiction pending the establishment there of an independent government. Two days before the ratification of the peace treaty, a conflict took place between armed Filipinos under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo and the American forces that were in possession of Manila. The six months that had elapsed between the signing of the peace protocol and the ratification of the treaty had constituted a virtual interregnum, Spain's authority having been practically destroyed in the Philippines and that of the United States not having begun. In this period a formidable native Filipino army had been organized and a provisional government created. The warfare waged by these Filipinos against the United States, while having for the most part a

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desultory and guerilla character, was of a very protracted and troublesome nature. Sovereignty over the Filipinos having been accepted by virtue of the ratification of the Paris treaty, President McKinley was not at liberty to do otherwise than assert the authority of the United States and use every endeavour to suppress the insurrection. But there was bitter protest against this "imperialism," both within the party by such men as Senators George F. Hoar and Eugene Hale, and Thomas B. Reed and Carl Schurz. and, often for purely political reasons, from the leaders of the Democratic party. In the foreign relations of the United States, as directed by President McKinley, the most significant change was the cordial understanding established with the British government, to which much was contributed by his secretary of state, John Hay, appointed to that portfolio when he was ambassador to the court of St James, and which was due to some extent to the friendliness of the British press and even more markedly of the British navy in the Pacific during the Spanish War. Other important foreign events during McKinley's administration were: the annexation of the Hawaiian Islands (see HAWAII) in August 1898, and the formation of the Territory of Hawaii in April 1900; the cessation in 1899 of the tripartite (German, British, and French) government of the Samoan Islands, and the annexation by the United States of those of the islands east of 171, including the harbour of Pago-Pago; the participation of American troops in the march of the allies on Peking in August 1900, and the part played by McKinley's secretary of state, John Hay, in securing a guarantee of the integrity of the Chinese empire. In 1900 McKinley was unanimously renominated by the National Republican Convention which met in Philadelphia on the 19th of June, and which nominated Theodore Roosevelt, governor of New York, for the vice-presidency. The Republican convention demanded the maintenance of the gold standard, and pointed to the fulfilment of some of the most important of the pledges given by the Republican party four years earlier. The intervening period had been one of very exceptional prosperity in the United States, foreign commerce having reached an unprecedented volume, and agriculture and manufactures having made greater advancement than in any previous period of the country's history. The tendency towards the concentration of capital

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in great industrial corporations had been active to an extent previously undreamt of, with incidental consequences that had aroused much apprehension; and the Democrats accused President McKinley and the Republican party of having fostered the " trusts." But the campaign against McKinley and the Republican party was not only " anti-trust " but " anti-imperialistic." William Jennings Bryan, renominated by the Democratic party in July (and in May by the Fusion People's party) on a free silver platform, declared that imperialism was the " paramount issue " and made a second vigorous campaign; and the opposition to McKinley's re-election, whether based on opposition to his economic or to his foreign policy, was not entirely outside of his own party. As the result of the polling in November, 292 Republican presidential electors were chosen, and 155 Democratic electors, elected in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and the Southern states, represented the final strength of the Bryan and Stevenson ticket. The Republican popular vote was 7,207,923, and the Democratic 6,358,133. Since 1872 no president had been re-elected for a second consecutive term.