

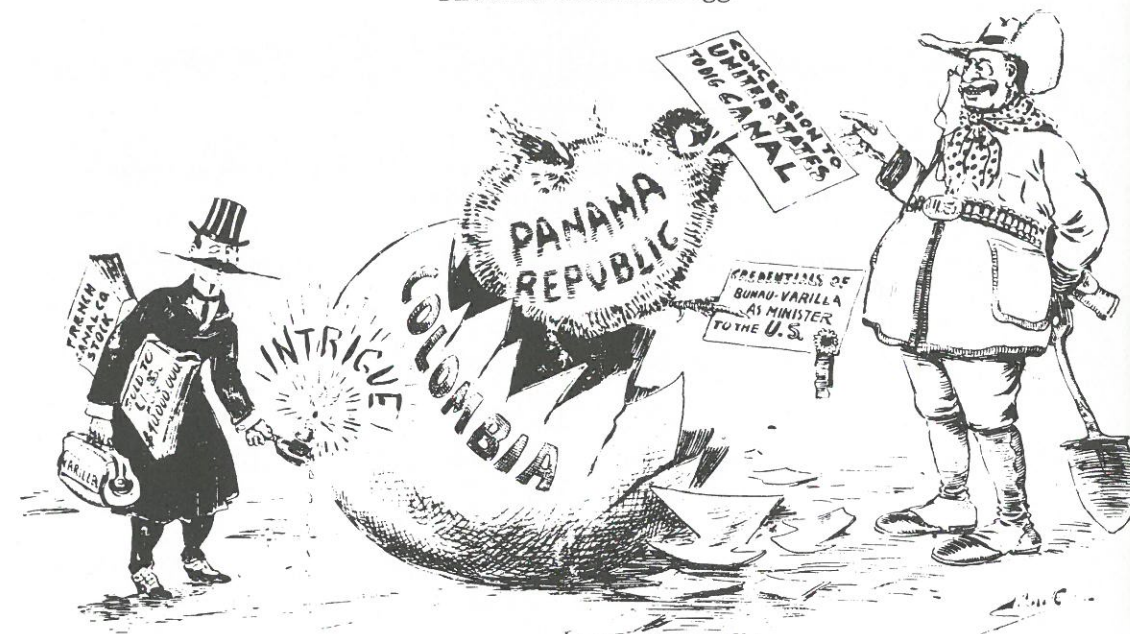
The Peace of Portsmouth was a personal triumph for Roosevelt, although it strained U. S.-Japanese relations and won few friends in Russia.

The fact that both countries had turned to the United States underscored America's new role as a Pacific power. With vast interests to protect, the country's need for a water link between the two oceans was more urgent than ever. If a canal could be cut across the isthmus, it would cut travel time between Puget Sound and the Caribbean by two-thirds.

Britain reluctantly gave the United States the go-ahead to build, control, and fortify a canal. (The Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 had barred the two countries from obtaining exclusive control over any canal built across the isthmus.) The next question was, Where should the canal be built? Through Nicaragua or through Panama, which was then part of Colombia? The French-owned "New Panama Canal Co." lobbied in Washington for a canal through Panama. It was well served by one of its major stockholders, Philippe Bunau-Varilla, a Frenchman and a most effective lobbyist. The House approved a canal through Panama and authorized the President to secure a right-of-way from Colombia. If he failed, he was required to negotiate with Nicaragua.

Colombia was dissatisfied with Washington's terms and held out for a better offer. At that point the Panamanians, apparently on signal from Bunau-Varilla, staged a rebellion. An hour after President Roosevelt received the news that the Panamanians had declared their independence, he authorized *de facto* recognition of the infant republic.

"The man behind the egg."



Crane. *The New York Times*, 1903.

With Bunau-Varilla representing Panama, the two countries signed a treaty on terms highly favorable to the United States. Panama became virtually an American military outpost.

Roosevelt not only made good his promise to "make the dirt fly" in the isthmus. He also tried to make sure that no European power in the future would have an excuse to interfere with our ships passing through the Caribbean to the canal. In 1904 the Dominican Republic was wracked by civil war, and there was a strong possibility that the island's European creditors might come over and try to make good their investments. This prompted Roosevelt to issue his "corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine. The United States, he declared, henceforth would exercise an international police power in the Western Hemisphere. Anyone who wanted debts collected should apply to Washington.

The World's Constable



Louis Dalrymple. *Judge*, 1905.