

After prayerful consideration, McKinley concluded "that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them . . ."

The foes of overseas expansion favored independence for the Philippines. They tried to convince themselves that American imperialism was a passing phase.

**Our Expansive Uncle,
But It's Only Temporary**



William H. Walker. *Life*, 1899.

The anti-expansionists were a minority. Most Americans appeared to agree with Senator Lodge that "where the flag once goes up it must never come down." By the end of the century the United States had not only driven Spain out of Cuba; it had swallowed up Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, Wake Island, and a chunk of Samoa. If there had ever been any doubt, by 1900 America was indisputably a Great Power.

From the Big Stick to the "War to End War"

A vast potential market beckoned in the Far East. Now that the United States was a Pacific power, it was in a position to claim a piece of the action. Pago Pago in Samoa provided a way station for U. S. trade with the South Pacific—New Zealand and Australia. Hawaii was a bridge between the West Coast and the Philippines. The Philippines gave America a window on eastern Asia.

The European imperialists had begun carving up the Chinese empire in earnest after China's poor showing in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. Britain was alarmed: it had by far the largest foreign-trade stake in the Far East. If nothing were done to stop the Europeans from acquiring long-term leaseholds in China and surrounding them with high tariff walls, Britain's trade would one day be strangled. London reminded Washington of British support during the Spanish-American War, and suggested that Washington could reciprocate by supporting British efforts to keep China's ports open.

The United States twice refused, invoking its traditional policy of nonentanglement. But American merchants and missionaries were just as anxious as the British to have the United States intervene. They kept up the pressure on the State Department until the Secretary of State agreed to reconsider.

In a dramatic reversal of policy, Secretary John Hay in September, 1899, sent Open Door notes to the six powers with interests in China. He urged each one not to interfere with the commercial interests of the others in its particular sphere of influence. In a corollary to the first notes, delivered in 1900, Hay put the United States on record as supporting the territorial integrity of all China and commercial equality in all parts of the Chinese empire. In effect, Washington was trying to protect its own as well as Britain's access to the lucrative China trade. And it was attempting to forestall the dismemberment of China.