

**STRATEGY
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**THEODORE ROOSEVELT: ACTIVATED VISION
THROUGH THE BULLY PULPIT**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Through the Bully Pulpit**

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Jody L. Bradshaw
TITLE: Theodore Roosevelt: Activated Vision Through the Bully Pulpit
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 7 April 1999 PAGES: 86 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

In 1901, at the age of 42, Theodore Roosevelt became the twenty-sixth President of the United States. He had the vision to see America as a great world power. His leadership transformed America from isolationism to a strong nation with an influential international role. Roosevelt's family background gave him his foundational values upon which he built his Strenuous Life: translating thought into action, words into deeds. As President, Roosevelt pursued domestic progressive reform to provide all Americans a Square Deal. He based his foreign policy on international involvement using diplomacy and power. He skillfully used the Bully Pulpit to activate his vision of America as a great world power. Roosevelt's powerful rhetoric, stories, and symbols communicated his objectives. Theodore Roosevelt's vision and actions launched America into the 20th Century as a world power.

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OVERVIEW: ACTIVATING A VISION

Words with me are instruments. I wish to impress upon the people to whom I talk the fact that I am sincere, that I mean exactly what I say, and that I stand for things that are elemental in civilization.

— Theodore Roosevelt

In virtually every presidential poll or study, recent or past, among scholars or average Americans, Theodore Roosevelt is always cited as one of the top 10 presidents. In many cases, he is among the top five. Roosevelt captured the imagination of the American people, then and now. He embodied the American mythic spirit of the pioneer hero who lived the strenuous life. His heroic persona influenced the American collective consciousness and has survived the scrutiny of time.

Theodore Roosevelt, or TR, as he preferred to be called, was the twenty-sixth President of the United States. He was a man of thought and action, an incredibly talented man whose insatiable appetite for knowledge allowed him to read a book a day. He was also a remarkably energetic man whose pace of life would overwhelm even the most fit. As President he blended his thought and action into an expansive vision for America. Roosevelt saw America as a great nation and future world superpower.

How did Roosevelt launch America into the role of world superpower for the 20th century? What was the foundation of his vision? What motivated him to act? What domestic and foreign policy objectives did he set? What methods did he use to achieve these policy objectives? How did he activate his vision?

This paper will answer these questions. Roosevelt's family background, specifically his father, gave him his foundational values upon which he built his strenuous life of thought and action. As President, his domestic policy was guided by an overarching goal of progressive reform. His foreign policy was based on international involvement using diplomacy and power. His focused vision was for America to be a world power. He activated his vision through his skillful use of the Bully Pulpit. His vision and actions set the stage for the "American Century" when the United States became an international superpower.

BACKGROUND

ROOSEVELT'S WORLD

At the dawn of the 20th century, the United States was in the midst of change and advancement. The Industrial Age brought about an exciting time filled with the application of new discoveries. Westward expansion across the continent was complete and America looked to internal development for its growth. Society felt the effects of change in many areas: transportation; communication; science; business; politics; and warfare.

New possibilities opened up for America. Roosevelt said in his 1894 essay, "National Life and Character,"

At no period of the world's history has life been so full of interest and of possibilities of excitement and enjoyment as for us who live in the latter half of the nineteenth century....Never before in the world's history have there been such opportunities thrown open to men, in the way of building new commonwealths, exploring new countries, conquering kingdoms, and trying to adapt the governmental policy of old nations to new and strange conditions.¹

In fact, the early 1900's had much in common with the world today, the Information Age at the turn of the 21st century. Roosevelt's world was characterized by peace among the great powers and widening zones of liberty. Capitalism and free trade were increasing. Regimes and governments were liberalizing.

Russia was obsessed with internal trouble; Japan was becoming a rising power.² Discoveries and inventions changed how ordinary people lived. The future seemed full of opportunity and hope, but also seemed somewhat uncertain and complex.

ROOSEVELT'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Roosevelt was the youngest man to hold the office of America's Chief Executive. When President William McKinley was assassinated in September 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became the twenty-sixth President of the United States at the age of 42. During his seven and a half years in office, Roosevelt shaped the modern Presidency. He balanced his efforts between domestic and international policy and influence. Each contributed to the same goal, his vision of America as a great nation and world power.

Roosevelt was a true pioneer. He was a President who claimed several "firsts". He was the first President to use a camera; use a typewriter; fly in an airplane; travel on a submarine; appear in the movies; and visit another country while in office. He was the first American to win the Nobel Prize in any field.³

Roosevelt was so immensely talented and active that even if he had not been President, he would have been remembered for a number of accomplishments. He served in many important leadership positions, which included: New York State Assemblyman

(1881-4); U.S Civil Service Commissioner (1889-95); New York City Police Commissioner (1895-7); Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1897-8); Regimental Colonel of the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment - "Rough Riders" during the Spanish-American War(1898); Governor of New York (1898-1900); and Vice President of the U.S. (1901). He played many other roles, too: explorer; conservationist; field naturalist; ornithologist; rancher; big-game hunter; taxidermist; arts patron; author; editor; and historian.

ROOSEVELT'S FAMILY VALUES

Roosevelt's foundation of values originated with guidance and training he received from his family. He was born into a wealthy New York family in 1858, the oldest son among four children. Up until his teen years, TR, or "Teedie" as he was called, grew up as a sickly, asthmatic, near-sighted, delicate boy. He was educated by private tutors, was a voracious reader, and was a collector of animal specimens. Extensive family travels in Europe and Egypt broadened his perspective at an early age.

He had a widely varied heritage which included Dutch, Welsh, English, Irish, Scottish, German, and French ancestry. He was predominately influenced by his reserved Dutch Reformed father, Theodore, Sr., and spirited southern mother, Martha Bullock. He cherished the two proud traditions: the sturdy Dutch industrial

mercantilism of the North and the romantic Scottish agrarianism of the South.⁴

Roosevelt viewed his father as his mentor, hero, and best friend. Roosevelt said, "My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness."⁵ No one had greater influence on him. Theodore, Sr., known as "Greatheart" to his children, was either the founder or early supporter of virtually every humanitarian, cultural, and philanthropic endeavor in New York City. He ensured that attendance and fellowship at church were central priorities for the family, not only on Sunday, but throughout the week.⁶

Theodore, Sr. gave his family a strong sense of moral values. He taught his family about duty, obligation, and responsibility. His belief was based on the Biblical principle from Luke 12:48 -- "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."⁷ Theodore, Sr. demonstrated the duty and obligation of the privileged and wealthy to help and give back to society, through service and leadership. What others saw as "noblesse oblige" was actually rooted in family religious beliefs. Roosevelt's father modeled the responsibility of "good

stewardship" to his family. He was the ultimate good citizen.

Roosevelt grew up seeing values drive actions.

An event that occurred when Roosevelt was only three years old, had a subtle, but profound influence on him later. It had to do with his father's involvement in the Civil War. In 1861, Theodore, Sr. agonized over the role he would play in the war. He felt he was precluded from taking up arms; his brothers-in-law from the South were soldiers. Theodore, Sr. could not risk the possibility of firing upon them. He decided, with great anguish, to do what was at that time an acceptable alternative; he hired a substitute soldier.⁸

Instead of joining the fighting ranks, Theodore, Sr. chose to help the war effort in a civilian capacity. He started a program where Union soldiers could send home part of their pay on a regular basis at no additional cost to them or their families. This service was consistent with his community-oriented contributions of the past.

According to Roosevelt's sister Anna (Bamie), Theodore Sr. always regretted his decision not to fight. Roosevelt's other sister, Corrine, contended that Theodore, Sr.'s decision affected Roosevelt so deeply that it stood out as the single flaw in the life of a heroic father. Some biographers have suggested this as

the reason why Roosevelt later felt compelled to compensate, by volunteering to fight in the Spanish-American War.⁹

In every other aspect, Roosevelt idolized his father, listened to his wise counsel, and followed his guidance. When Roosevelt was twelve years old, his father challenged him to transform himself physically:

"Theodore," the big man said, eschewing boyish nicknames, "you have the mind but you have not the body, and without the help of the body the mind cannot go as far as it should. You must make your body. It is hard drudgery to make one's body, but I know you will do it." Mittie [his mother], who was an eyewitness, reported that the boy's reaction was the half-grin, half-snarl which later became world-famous. Jerking his head back, he replied through clenched teeth: "I'll make my body."¹⁰

Over the course of his early teens, through training, vigorous exercise, and sheer willpower, Roosevelt transformed himself into a capable athlete and rugged outdoorsman. By the time Roosevelt was ready to leave home in 1876 to attend Harvard University, his father gave him advice which ordered his priorities, "Take care of your morals first, your health next and finally your studies."¹¹

During his first year at Harvard, active correspondence with his family underscored Roosevelt's devotion to his family and his determination to maintain their esteem. He wrote to his father,

I do not think there is a fellow in College who has a family who love him as much as you all do me....I am sure that there is no one who has a Father who is also his best and most intimate friend, as you are mine. I have kept the first letter you wrote me and shall do my best to deserve your trust.¹²

Tragically, in 1878, during Roosevelt's second year at school, Theodore, Sr. died at the age of 46. When Roosevelt returned to Harvard to continue his studies, he recorded in his private diary his father's parting assurance that "I had never caused him a moment's pain...that after all I was the dearest of his children to him." Theodore, Sr. inspired in his son a determination to be worthy of "the best and most loving of men."¹³

Later, Roosevelt wrote, "How I wish I could ever do something to keep up his name!" With this longing ambition, Roosevelt would succeed so well that the name of Theodore Roosevelt would become one of the most famous in the world. Ironically, the exuberance of the junior namesake would cover up the memory of its original bearer. Roosevelt's sister, Corrine, recalled that when he was president, he told her that he never took any serious step or made any vital decisions without thinking first what position his father would have taken on the question.¹⁴ Whether in time of trial or triumph, Roosevelt worried whether or not his conduct would have met with his father's approval.

Another formative experience, Roosevelt's time in the West, grew out of hardship. In 1884, Roosevelt returned to his ranch in the Dakota Badlands as an escape from the tragic deaths of his mother and his young wife, Alice Hathaway Lee, who died in childbirth. Both died on Valentine's Day in the same house. His wife's death affected Roosevelt so deeply that he never again mentioned her name, not even to their daughter, Alice Lee Roosevelt. The west offered him both refuge and challenge through its isolation, immensity, and rugged lifestyle.

Historian Nathan Miller says that the Western experience changed Roosevelt's political destiny:

Roosevelt had three major liabilities in politics: he was an aristocrat, he was an intellectual, and he was an easterner. Altogether, he spent only about three years in the Badlands, a period interrupted by sometimes lengthy stays in the East. Yet he so successfully identified himself with the West that for the remainder of his life, the public thought of him as a rough-riding cowboy rather than a New York dude. This western experience removed the stigma of effeminacy, ineffectuality, and intellectualism that clung to most reformers.¹⁵

Roosevelt had intended on spending the rest of his life on his ranch. However, in 1886 he returned to New York and in December married his childhood sweetheart, Edith Carow. Just two and a half years later he resumed his political life.

ROOSEVELT'S STRENUOUS LIFE

Roosevelt was the ultimate advocate and personification of the "Strenuous Life." "I always believe in going hard at everything," he wrote to his son Kermit. "My experience is that it pays never to let up or grow slack and fall behind."¹⁶ He lived every moment with gusto and zest. He seemed to intensely enjoy everything he did.

The Strenuous Life was not just about physical capability, but meant combining thought and action to make a life worth living. As he conceived it, the Strenuous Life would take in Emerson as well as Lincoln; it might consist in writing poetry, or studying Indian songs, or investigating the labor problem or the condition of the poor.¹⁷ It could also include the vigorous physical activity of a sport or an occupation. The important thing was to find something worth doing, and then do it with all one's might.

Theodore Roosevelt was an unforgettable character full of charismatic style. In the opinion of one veteran politician of his time, Roosevelt had "...unquestionably the greatest gift of personal magnetism ever possessed by an American."¹⁸ He was larger than life. In political cartoons, he was often portrayed as a grinning, club-wielding giant who marched across the world

stage with bold strides. Roosevelt's energy and infectious enthusiasm radiated from him wherever he went. He approached everything with an equally high level of vigor and intensity. Years later, people would vividly recall the moment they shook his hand as a "memory of a lifetime."

Roosevelt liked to be the center of attention. As one of his six children humorously put it, he liked to be "the bride at every wedding, and corpse at every funeral."¹⁹ His fans have called him fearless, bold, clever, and dynamic. His critics have called him brash, brazen, outrageous, and unpredictable. Both groups accurately describe the multi-faceted Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt was able to combine his presidential polish and capability with his penchant for adventure and fun. He

...conducted the business of the presidency with such dispatch that he could usually spend the entire afternoon goofing off, if his kind of mad exercise can be euphemized as goofing off. "Theodore!" Senator Henry Cabot Lodge was once heard shouting, "if you knew how ridiculous you look up that tree, you'd come down at once!"²⁰

As for his unpredictability, some friends chalked it up to Roosevelt's youthful spirit. "You must always remember," said his dear friend, Sir Cecil Spring Rice, "that the President is about six."²¹

Biographer Edward Wagenknecht observed that one of the most penetrating things Roosevelt ever said about himself was his reference to "those who care intensely both for thought and for action." Roosevelt was one of the very few people in the world who actualized both in his life. He despised the "...horror of words that are not translated into deeds, of speech that does not result in action..." Roosevelt believed strongly that ideals which are not acted out are mere emotional debauchery.²²

Some might say that because of his personality, it was natural for Roosevelt to translate his belief into action. On the contrary, it took him deliberate effort. Explaining this, he made the statement that "the difficulty is not in the doing but in the finding what the right course is." Roosevelt said, "Whatever I think it is right for me to do, I do....And when I make up my mind to do a thing, I act." To him, this was not boasting, but an objective statement of fact.²³

Roosevelt is most often remembered for being a man of action. He seemed to embody a sense of purpose and drive. One of his Rough Riders, Major W. H. H. Llewellyn, quoted Roosevelt spreading his "gospel of life" when giving advice, "Get action; do things; be sane; don't fritter away your time; create, act, take a place wherever you are and be Somebody; get action."²⁴

Roosevelt liked to be where something was going on, and if it wasn't, he generally managed to make something happen where he was.²⁵

Roosevelt mustered within himself incredible will and courage, which he added to his intense energy to accomplish his chosen actions. Speaking about his time as a rancher in the Badlands of Dakota Territory, he said, "There were all kinds of things of which I was afraid at first, ranging from grizzly bears to 'mean' horses and gunfighters; but by acting as if I was not afraid I gradually ceased to be afraid. Most men can have the same experience if they choose."²⁶

Roosevelt had a highly sophisticated, intelligent mind capable of reading and absorbing the contents of one to three books daily. He said, "Reading with me is a disease."²⁷ H.G. Wells said Roosevelt had "the most vigorous brain in a conspicuously responsible position in all the world."²⁸

Roosevelt constantly drew from his reservoir of reading. He used history and historical literature for guidance in making decisions. He knew the past could be instructive for understanding the present and the future.²⁹ In his "New Nationalism" speech in 1910 he said,

I care for the great deeds of the past chiefly as spurs to drive us onward in the present. I speak of the men

of the past partly that they may be honored by our praise of them, but more that they may serve as examples for the future.³⁰

He would routinely use historical facts and stories to educate his audiences of relevant lessons.

Roosevelt's thought was highly integrated, moving back and forth across vastly different areas of human knowledge, reaching out for appropriate illustrations and applications of principles where others had not intended. Great Britain's Lord Charnwood exclaimed, "No statesman for centuries has had his width of intellectual range; to be sure no intellectual has so touched the world with action."³¹ Roosevelt routinely matched wits "with historians, zoologists, inventors, linguists, explorers, sociologists, actors, and statesmen" whom he met with regularly.³² His powerful memory was so well known and routinely exhibited that Congressmen knew it was useless to contest him on facts and figures.³³

He was America's preeminent storyteller who compared national policy or actions to individual experiences his audience could relate to. He used colorful, descriptive, and often humorous language that captivated attention. William Roscoe Thayer told of the great author Rudyard Kipling describing how he would listen to Roosevelt talk of

...men and politics, criticisms of books, in a swift and full-volumed stream, tremendously emphatic and enlivened with bursts of humor. "I curled up on the seat opposite," said Kipling, "and listened and wondered, until the universe seemed to be spinning round and Theodore was the spinner."³⁴

Some of the expressive terms Roosevelt created or coined are still used today: "square deal," "trust buster," "the larger good," "straight shooter," "hot potato," "lunatic fringe," "beaten to a frazzle," "muckraker," "hat in the ring," "the White House," "hyphenated American," "strenuous life," "weasel words," "good to the last drop," and "bully pulpit." There were few things that Roosevelt loved more than the lively use of language for a moral purpose.³⁵

Roosevelt was a prolific writer, the author of over 25 volumes of history, natural science, biography, political philosophy, and essays. At least two of his books, The Naval War of 1812 and the four volume Winning of the West, are considered definitive works by serious historians.³⁶ He also maintained an amazing level of correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues, penning an estimated 150,000 letters during his lifetime.³⁷ He also wrote in a private diary or journal.

Roosevelt was a man of thought and action. He was an American original who embodied the myth of the American spirit:

an outdoorsman - hiker, hunter, explorer; a responsible citizen -
thinker, reader, writer.

VISION

ROOSEVELT'S VISION - WORLD POWER

Roosevelt was the first national leader who had both the vision and ability to establish the United States as a world superpower. As early as March 4, 1901, in his Vice Presidential inaugural address, he succinctly stated his vision for America - a great nation and a world power.

...We belong to a young nation, already of giant strength, yet whose political strength is but a forecast of the power that is to come. We stand supreme in a continent, in a hemisphere. East and west we look across the two great oceans toward the larger world life in which, whether we will or not, we must take an ever-increasing share. And as, keen-eyed, we gaze into the coming years, duties, new and old, rise thick and fast to confront us from within and from without. There is every reason why we should face these duties with the sober appreciation alike of their importance and their difficulty....³⁸

Only six months later, Roosevelt would be President and start to act on his vision.

He expressed his confidence in America's power and potential publicly and privately. In a letter to John Hay in 1897, Roosevelt said,

Is America a weakling, to shrink from the work of the great world powers? No! The young giant of the West stands on a continent and clasps the crest of an ocean in either hand. Our nation, glorious in youth and

strength, looks into the future with eager eyes and rejoices as a strong man to run a race.³⁹

In a speech in San Francisco he shouted, "Our place...is and must be with the nations that have left indelibly their impress on the centuries!"⁴⁰

In his Presidential inaugural address, in September 1905, Roosevelt said,

Much has been given us, and much will rightfully be expected from us. We have duties to others and duties to ourselves; and we can shirk neither. We have become a great nation, forced by the fact of its greatness into relations with the other nations of the earth, and we must behave as beseems a people with such responsibilities.⁴¹

Roosevelt continued his theme of American world power after the presidency, too, when he wrote in 1911, "The United States of America has not the option as to whether it will or will not play a great part in the world. It *must* play a great part."⁴²

ROOSEVELT'S FRAME OF REFERENCE - MORALISM

The flame igniting Roosevelt's vision and action was his strongly held beliefs and values. Roosevelt was, above all, a moralist. He believed leaders should have a moral influence in their world. Roosevelt said in his essay, "American Ideals,"

....every great nation owes to the men whose lives have formed part of its greatness not merely the material effect of what they did, not merely the laws they placed upon the statute books or the victories they won over armed foes, but also the immense but indefinable

moral influence produced by their deeds and words themselves upon the national character.⁴³

His life was marked by his sense of duty and obligation to follow those morals and help others follow. Historian Nathan Miller says that "he had a passionate sense of moral right and a fierce need to convey it to others."⁴⁴ As if Roosevelt needed a reminder, on his desk was a sign inscribed with the words: "Aggressive fighting for the right is the noblest sport the world affords."⁴⁵

Roosevelt believed in respect for supernatural power combined with maximum human effort. He easily transferred religious ideas to practical and political use, domestically and internationally.

Fear God; and take your own part! Fear God, in the true sense of the word, means love God, respect God, honor God; and all of this can only be done by loving our neighbor, treating him justly and mercifully, and in all ways endeavoring to protect him from injustice and cruelty....We fear God when we do justice to and demand justice for the men within our own bordersOutside of our own borders we must treat other nations as we would wish to be treated in return, judging each in any given crisis as we ourselves ought to be judged -- that is by our conduct in that crisis. If they do ill, we show that we fear God when we sternly bear testimony against them and oppose them in any way and to whatever extent the needs require.Fear God and take your own part! This is another way of saying that a nation must have power and will for self-sacrifice and also power and will for self-protection.⁴⁶

Roosevelt believed it was his duty to influence and shape public opinion through morally persuasive rhetoric appealing to man's

higher motives. Although he could be as ruthless as any politician when circumstances demanded, Roosevelt was essentially a moral man in a world that has increasingly regarded morality as superfluous.⁴⁷

ROOSEVELT'S METHOD - BULLY PULPIT

By far the most famous and effective method Roosevelt used to activate his vision was the "Bully Pulpit." Roosevelt was committed to communicate his ideas and beliefs as a preacher does from his pulpit. His deliberate strategy was to use the White House as his Bully Pulpit.

Through his speaking and writing skills, Roosevelt translated a policy or initiative into a rhetorical story; he built on "myth" symbolism of heroes who conquer difficulty. He plotted good against evil. He took national level interests and talked about them in terms of common individual experience. Roosevelt knew that people loved to listen to stories. His persuasive use of myths and stories acted as compelling symbols to shape the public's knowledge and actions.

Roosevelt considered his greatest contribution to American life as those times when he spoke directly to the public. He had confidence that people would make good decisions and take appropriate actions when they were given the right information.

Therefore, Roosevelt used the Bully Pulpit for more than moral leadership of the nation; he used it to motivate the public into political involvement, whether it was by communicating with their congressmen, by voting, or by speaking out themselves.⁴⁸ He bypassed the gridlock of politics and took his message and agenda directly to the people.

Roosevelt was the first president to effectively use the media to his own advantage and was a master of publicity. He had a way of "slapping the public on the back with a good idea," said one editor.⁴⁹ Roosevelt welcomed journalists and photographers into the White House. His press secretary gave two short briefings a day. The press had access to the presidential schedule of events and appearances. The White House also provided advanced texts of presidential messages and policies to the press.⁵⁰

Roosevelt traveled extensively to every section of the country. During his first administration he made thirty-five trips outside Washington. During these trips he took the opportunity to make speeches and mingle with the people. Roosevelt used the media and his visits to help the American people feel that they were an important part of the political process.

Roosevelt took every opportunity to vigorously express his opinions with directness and moral righteousness. His body language magnified the force of his speeches; he had a lifelong habit of pounding his fist to emphasize a point. His instinct for the spotlight became a trademark of his years in office and afterward. "Yes, it is true that Roosevelt liked the center of the stage, loved it in fact, " wrote the New York editor, Henry L. Stoddard, "but when he sought it he always had something to say or do that made the center of the stage the appropriate place for him."⁵¹ With his whole being, Roosevelt believed it was his responsibility as a national leader to serve as a moral compass.

On the other hand, one critic remarked, "Wherever he goes, he sets up an impromptu pulpit, and his pious enunciations fall -- like the rain and the sunshine, upon the just and the unjust -- accompanied with a timely warning to the latter to look sharp!"⁵² Despite his critics' view, Roosevelt's Bully Pulpit was an incredibly effective strategy, and very few presidents since have used it as successfully.

POLICY

How did Roosevelt's vision translate into national policy that would shape the future of America's role in the world? Roosevelt believed America had to be a strong moral nation internally that dealt with other nations from its strength and character. As he looked across the domestic front, Roosevelt used his progressive philosophy of "Reform" as his overarching policy. Reform fit well with his credo to make things better and his penchant for action. Reform included the "Square Deal," government change, trust busting, decreased power of yellow journalism, and conservation of natural resources. In foreign policy, Roosevelt ensured America was involved in international affairs through diplomacy and power. The "Big Stick" set the stage for launching the Great White Fleet. Roosevelt's belief in the need for balance of power and rule of law generated the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Roosevelt altered American domestic and foreign policy in ways that would influence the nation for an entire century.

DOMESTIC POLICY

Reform and the Square Deal

During his presidency, Roosevelt sought to bring social justice and governmental reform to American industry and commerce. He saw his role as a leader of change to promote morally right actions and programs. Roosevelt wanted to make government work for all Americans. In 1903 he said, " We must treat each man on his worth and merits as a man. We must see that each is given a square deal, because he is entitled to no more and should receive no less."⁵³ To make the Square Deal a reality, Roosevelt championed reform in government.

For nearly 20 years before he became president, Roosevelt had pushed for reform in whatever capacity he served. As a New York assemblyman he was a leader among the minority of Republicans who pressed for social reform through government regulation. As the U.S. Civil Service Commissioner he led the reform effort to replace patronage with merit in awarding government jobs. When he was New York Governor his enthusiasm for reform so provoked state Republican leaders that they arranged for him to be the party's Vice Presidential candidate in 1900.

After his presidential service, in a speech in 1910, Roosevelt summarized his thought and action about the Square Deal and reform,

I stand for the square deal. But when I say that I am for the square deal, I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the games, but I stand for having those rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service.⁵⁴

In 1912, Roosevelt established the Progressive Party, known as the Bull Moose Party, based on a platform of reform initiatives.

Roosevelt believed the vehicle to achieve reform was a steward-minded, service-oriented government. His governing philosophy had a strong moral underpinning; he believed that public service was a high calling and that as president he was a steward. To be a successful steward, he believed he had the moral and political authority to take executive action in a wide range of areas.

Roosevelt virtually reversed the traditional federal policy and practice of laissez-faire. He wanted a dynamic government that aimed to hold together innovators, opportunists, and entrepreneurs within appropriate boundaries. He had the capability to make that change.

Roosevelt significantly expanded the powers and responsibilities of his office and established a model for the

modern presidency. Ex-President Grover Cleveland, himself a man of legendary ability, called Roosevelt "the most perfectly equipped and most efficient politician thus far seen in the Presidency."⁵⁵ During his term, the presidential message to Congress moved from an event that occurred once a year or at a moment of national crisis to a regular transmission of presidential opinion and priorities.⁵⁶

Several other important and lasting reforms occurred during Roosevelt's tenure. In 1903, the Department of Commerce and Labor was established; Roosevelt signed the Elkins Antirebate Act making railroads stick to published rate schedules; he issued an executive order to expedite postal fraud prosecution. In 1906, Roosevelt signed the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Federal Meat Inspection Act that ushered in a new era of consumer protection; he signed the Hepburn Act giving Interstate Commerce Commission the power to regulate railroad rates. In 1908 the Employers Liability Act passed; Roosevelt issued an executive order creating an investigating agency within the Department of Justice -- it eventually became the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Trust Buster

At the turn of the century, industrialization had transformed America from a land of farmers to a country of factory workers.

Business magnates such as John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan were creating huge business empires. Potential competitors were either driven out of business or swallowed up. The resulting concentration of money and power alarmed many people, but in the past, government's laissez-faire policy had precluded interference.

With Roosevelt's moralist frame of reference, he believed in the pervasiveness of sin, and saw how people used their strength in the marketplace to oppress others. He felt government must work as a force to crush the "malefactors of great wealth."⁵⁷ In his first address to Congress in December 1901, Roosevelt stated his position:

There is a widespread conviction among the American people that the great corporations known as trusts are....hurtful to the general welfare....It is based upon sincere conviction that combination and concentration [of business interest] should be, not prohibited, but supervised and within reasonable limits controlled.⁵⁸

Roosevelt believed that the function of government should be to make the chances of competition more balanced, not to abolish competition. When trusts eliminated competition, Roosevelt felt the trusts made themselves the enemies of the three values he championed in his 1905 inaugural address: "energy, self-reliance and individual initiative."⁵⁹ He thought business should play a

stewardship role, and had a responsibility to the public, as well as to its profits.

In March 1902, Roosevelt ordered the Attorney General to use the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, a law designed to break up monopolies, to regulate trusts. The first of 45 anti-trust actions and suits was against J.P. Morgan's Northern Securities Company, the largest existing transport holding company at the time. Roosevelt also went after railway trusts. They discriminated against small business by setting lower freight rates or offering rebates for well-connected, big clients such as Standard Oil, the Armour Company, and the American Sugar Refining Company. Roosevelt's goal was to help small companies compete with the big ones.⁶⁰ The result of Roosevelt's dogged pursuit of reforming corporate practices was that he instilled a new standard of moral and social accountability in the business community.⁶¹

Arbitration

In 1902, Roosevelt set a new precedent for presidential involvement in labor disputes when he settled the Anthracite Coal Strike. Coal miners in Pennsylvania were working 12-hour days under dangerous conditions. The union, United Mine Workers of America, wanted higher wages, an eight-hour day, and union

recognition. Roosevelt realized the strike could have crippled the country because coal was the main heat source. Roosevelt said:

Occasionally great national crises arise which call for immediate and vigorous executive action, and in such cases it is the duty of the President to act upon the theory that he is the steward of the people who has the legal right to do whatever the needs of the people demand unless the Constitution or the laws explicitly forbid him to do it.⁶²

In his role as steward of the nation, he intervened in the strike.

Rather than buckle under to the mine owners' demands, Roosevelt threatened to have Federal troops work the mines. This persuaded union and management to agree that an appointed arbitration commission would hear and judge both sides' arguments. The commission eventually proposed a compromise that was acceptable and the strike was settled. Later Roosevelt claimed his efforts were aimed at ensuring a "square deal" for both sides.⁶³

During the coal strike action Roosevelt set precedents in several areas. For the first time, a President used the influence of government to bring labor and management together to obtain a negotiated settlement. For the first time, a President appointed an arbitration commission whose decisions both sides promised to accept. For the first time, a President threatened

to use troops to take over and operate a major industry.⁶⁴

Roosevelt combined precedent with law and made government a powerful influence in business and industry.

Remove the Muckraker

In pursuit of his moralist driven reform agenda, Roosevelt used the Bully Pulpit to aggressively attack obstacles in the way of his goals. In 1906 he delivered "The Man With the Muck Rake" speech to the general public at the cornerstone ceremony of the U.S. House of Representatives office building. In the speech, Roosevelt criticized those who ignored all that was good about American society while focusing only on the evil. He thought they were committing journalistic violence.⁶⁵

Roosevelt described the muckraker in this way:

In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" you may recall the description of the Man with the Muck Rake, the man who could look no way but downward, with the muck rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck rake, but who would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake to himself the filth of the floor....he...typifies the man who in this life consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty, and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing.⁶⁶

He went on to say that there is nothing wrong with recognizing evil when it is seen, but attention should not dwell on the "vile and debasing" muck. Instead, Roosevelt said, "It is a prime necessity that if the present unrest is to result in permanent

good the emotion shall be translated into action...marked by honesty, sanity, and self-restraint."⁶⁷

Although he was speaking out against the style of journalism used by publications owned by William Randolph Hearst, the effect of the speech was political. Roosevelt delegitimized muckrakers as a group, redefined the limits of media performance, and solidified control over the direction of reform.⁶⁸ The same year as the muckrake speech, Roosevelt carried through legislation which regulated railroads, meat packing houses, food, and drugs, despite a generally hostile Congress.⁶⁹

Conservation

In the same moralist way Roosevelt saw every part of his policy, he saw conservation in terms of a moral imperative. From his Bully Pulpit, Roosevelt used the "Frontier Myth" to inspire the public, energize policies, and infuse his sense of conservation vision. "He altered the traditional myth by recasting its conquering-hero with a farmer-hero, replacing its unlimited frontier with a finite frontier, and by redefining its key values."⁷⁰ In his role as America's public leader, Roosevelt stumped across the country to educate his audiences on conservation's social and moral elements.⁷¹

Roosevelt told a story that hailed the farmer and preserver as the "heroes" whose wise use of the environment protected it. A hero gives his life to something bigger than himself. The "frontier," or environment, was characterized by both unlimited majesty and unparalleled ferocity. However, when linked to actual resources and economic opportunities, the environment was finite. In addition, Roosevelt pointed out that while limited, the frontier provided the more valuable opportunity of physical and spiritual regeneration. Finally, Roosevelt redefined "progress" as the conservation of nature through common effort, rather than by exploitation of the environment for individual profit.⁷²

In his autobiography, Roosevelt reflected on conditions when he began his presidential term:

The idea that our national resources were inexhaustible still obtained, and there was as yet no real knowledge of their extent and condition. The relation of the conservation of natural resources to the problems of national welfare and national efficiency had not yet dawned on the public mind.⁷³

Because of that, he found very little Congressional support for his "crusade." Congress questioned the constitutionality of his executive decision to make national forest reserves unavailable to the industrial livelihood of the state.⁷⁴

As early as his first annual message to Congress in 1901, Roosevelt spoke about the importance of conservation:

The practical usefulness of the national forest reserves to the mining, grazing, irrigation, and other interests of the regions in which the reserves lie....will inevitably be of still greater use in the future than in the past.....The wise administration of the forest reserves will be not less helpful to the interests which depend on water than to those which depend on wood and grass. The water supply itself depends on the forest....The forest and water problems are perhaps the most vital internal questions of the United States.⁷⁵

Roosevelt believed in preservation by use, a rough balance that ideally allows for economic opportunity and the safeguarding of national treasures.⁷⁶

In a 1908 speech, Roosevelt continued to warn about how irresponsible actions toward the environment affected the future:

There has been a good deal of a demand for individualism, for the right of the individual to injure the future of all of us for his own temporary and immediate profit. The time has come for a change. As a people we have the right and the duty, second to none other but the right and duty of obeying the moral law, of requiring and doing justice, and to protect ourselves and our children against the wasteful development of our natural resources, whether that waste is caused by the actual destruction of such resources or by making them impossible of development hereafter.⁷⁷

Roosevelt spread the belief that those who conserved nature's resources through wise use and development, promoted the permanent interests of the country.

Despite Congressional resistance, Roosevelt accomplished a great deal of conservation activity between 1901 and 1909. In 1902, he signed the Newlands National Reclamation Act that set up national control over resource policy. This led to the first 21 federal irrigation and dam projects. The Act also facilitated federal control over millions of acres of land. In 1905 the National Forest Service was established and the first of four federal Game Preserves was designated. The Forest Service gained five new National Parks and 150 National Forests during TR's tenure. In 1906 the Antiquities of National Monuments Act was signed and the first 18 National Monuments were established (including Arizona's Grand Canyon and California's Muir Woods). In 1908 the first Conference of Governors met at the White House to consider conservation issues and Roosevelt appointed the National Conservation Commission to prepare the first inventory of natural resources.⁷⁸

To protect the environment, Roosevelt took aggressive executive action; some have called it abuse of power, others political trickery. Roosevelt called it stewardship. In 1903, in a characteristic move, Roosevelt proclaimed Pelican Island, Florida, as the first federal bird reservation. When he was told that no law allowed him to set aside a Florida nature

preserve at will, Roosevelt asked, "Is there any law that prevents me declaring Pelican Island a National Bird Sanctuary?" Not waiting long for an answer, he said, "Very well, then," reaching for his pen, "I do declare it."⁷⁹

In his autobiography, Roosevelt recounted conservation initiatives during his presidency. He said,

The things accomplished that have been enumerated above were of immediate consequence to the economic well-being of our people. In addition certain things were done of which the economic being was more remote, but which bore directly upon our welfare, because they add to the beauty of living and therefore to the joy of life.⁸⁰

Conservation became a practical application of Roosevelt's vision of America as a great nation. Not only would conservation provide the country's commercial foundation for years to come, but equally important, it would act as an antidote to spiritual malaise in the modern world, and regenerate the American spirit.⁸¹

FOREIGN POLICY

Philosophy

During the past hundred years, many historians and analysts have postulated and speculated about the right "label" for Roosevelt's foreign policy and actions. There is universal agreement that he was not an Isolationist. But beyond that, no resounding consensus exists. What was Roosevelt's guiding

philosophy in Foreign Policy? Was it Americanism, Colonialism, Expansionism, Idealism, Imperialism, Internationalism, Interventionism, Jingoism, Moralism, Nationalism, Paternalism, Pragmatism, or Realism?

By looking at isolated actions, one could choose any of these "-isms" to describe Roosevelt's policy. Some critics have said that his disjointed approach had no unifying base. However, the wide range of foreign policy actions taken during Roosevelt's tenure shows his breadth of perspective and balance; he looked at each world situation in its own context and set of circumstances.

Without categorizing him in a restrictive way, there are three broad philosophies which guided Roosevelt's thought and action in global affairs. At the core is Moralism, the beliefs of right and wrong and the values on which he based his own life. Next is Nationalism, reflecting his genuine pride of American citizenship and his view of America's place in the progress of civilization in the world. Finally, is Internationalism, which revealed Roosevelt's vision for America's involvement as a great power in the world.

Moralism⁸²

Roosevelt's foreign policy originated from his moral beliefs about how individuals ought to act toward each other. His 1899

essay "The Strenuous Life" said, "As it is with the individual, so it is with the nation."⁸³ He compared a vigorous individual life to the life of a moral nation involved in international affairs.

Roosevelt held the idea that a nation is bound by the same moral code as the individual.⁸⁴ He was realistic enough to admit that the application of morality could differ between international and interpersonal relations, but he believed the standard should be the same for both cases. "In keeping with his credo that responsibility goes hand in hand with power, he felt that a nation had a moral duty, noblesse oblige, to work actively in all parts of the world for justice as well as peace."⁸⁵

Roosevelt brought to the world stage the same attitudes that motivated him as a domestic political reformer. In the same way he fought with righteous zeal against domestic corruption and injustice, he energetically involved America in global affairs. Roosevelt believed America had the moral obligation to tame international bullies, maintain order, and uplift "backward peoples". His policies were the precursor of a key issue of late 20th century American foreign policy: How far should the US go in seeking freedom and equality for others?⁸⁶ Roosevelt thought that with the increasing interdependence and complexity of the world,

it would be incumbent on civilized and orderly nations "to insist on the proper policing of the world."⁸⁷

Nationalism⁸⁸

Roosevelt called his Nationalist beliefs "Americanism." He embodied the American spirit of individualism; he believed in a sense of national destiny and was concerned with the nation's honor and prestige in a changing world.⁸⁹ Roosevelt expressed his views on "Americanism" in his books, essays, and speeches. He repeatedly used these themes in various ways: significance of the U.S. Constitution; challenges and responsibilities of free government; need for law and order in a disorderly environment; importance of national preparedness; need for strong individuals to work hard and strive to achieve success; and the progress and growth of a nation. Roosevelt even chose to use, in most cases, the word "America" rather than "the United States" when referring to the nation.

At the turn of the century, America was closing its first period of national history. Its internal frontier was gone and Roosevelt saw that new challenges were ahead.⁹⁰ In his 1899 essay, "The Strenuous Life," he argued that just as a great individual should choose a life of effort and ambition, so should a great nation. Roosevelt said,

We of this generation do not have to face a task such as that our fathers faced, but we have our tasks, and woe to us if we fail to perform them!....If we are to be a really great people, we must strive in good faith to play a great part in the world. We cannot avoid meeting great issues.⁹¹

He used the glorious past as a reference point and motivator for future national greatness.

Roosevelt believed that America was a special country with a unique destiny; he thought its foreign policy should help promote its distinctive principles, but not at the expense of its own interests. He advocated that the greatest service America could perform to promote liberty in the world was to ensure "great-power" peace and the resulting spread of global prosperity.⁹²

Roosevelt thought that a foreign policy which demonstrates America's distinct national character would enhance national unity and remind diverse Americans of their common role in the world.⁹³ It would generate and enhance the best kind of patriotism. Roosevelt's long term dream was nothing more or less than the general, steady, self-betterment of a diverse, but unified, American nation.⁹⁴

Internationalism ⁹⁵

Roosevelt pushed aside the American tradition of Isolationism; he believed that it was impossible for a powerful nation to remain aloof from international affairs. He realized

that the Spanish-American War in 1898 had transformed America from a provincial nation on the fringes of global affairs into a world power.⁹⁶

In his first annual message to Congress Roosevelt warned, "Whether we desire it or not, we must henceforth recognize that we have international duties no less than international rights."⁹⁷ In 1905 at his Inaugural Address, Roosevelt argued that just as individuals have moral responsibilities, so do nations.⁹⁸ The proper behavior of a strong nation was to have an attitude of cordial friendship, goodwill, and justice toward other nations.

In foreign affairs, Roosevelt generally had little regard for Congress; he consulted it only when legally obligated to do so. He believed he could have handled the nation's foreign policy more wisely without the constraint of "selfish, weak-kneed" elements in Congress and the unknowledgeable public.⁹⁹ In many cases, he pressed to the limit executive power and merely informed Congress after the fact.¹⁰⁰ Roosevelt also bypassed the State Department and conducted personal diplomacy and negotiation in some of his most important foreign affairs ventures.

Roosevelt possessed a keen understanding of the intricate network of international relationships and the fragile balance of power upon which peace largely depended.¹⁰¹ He perceived the

growing interdependence of the world; he understood the consequent demand for an increased level of American participation.¹⁰² Roosevelt saw the future in terms of America's permanent involvement in, influence on, and perhaps even engagement with, other nations, as opposed to specific crusades with fixed end points.¹⁰³

Roosevelt believed in the popular Social Darwinistic struggle for resources and political survival. The balance of power, politically and militarily, among nations facilitated not only survival, but also perpetuation of cultural and social evolution. He saw that his foreign policy had the potential to shape, not only the political future of the country, but reinforce the national character. Roosevelt believed that America needed to plunge into the international struggle for power, markets, and resources in order to insure its future well-being as a nation.¹⁰⁴ He believed America needed to relate to the world in terms of its national interests.¹⁰⁵

To Roosevelt, foreign policy included, but was much greater than, access to commercial markets, although economic prosperity was certainly achievable with increased international involvement. Neither was expansion a primary goal. While keeping only a few colonies as protectorates, Roosevelt backed

away from expanding into new areas. The most important goals were to maintain security in the Western Hemisphere and ensure America maintained the necessary power and strength to influence other nations.

Roosevelt's ability to reconcile intense Nationalism with the steady pursuit of Internationalism was a reflection of a section of the public mood, which combined patriotic fervor with an equally broad concern for international peace and progress.¹⁰⁶

Henry Kissinger stated,

Roosevelt commands a unique historical position in America's approach to international relations. No other president defined America's world role so completely in terms of national interest, or identified the national interest so comprehensively with the balance of power.¹⁰⁷

As the first modern President, Roosevelt adeptly blended "Americanism" with Internationalism.

Balance of Power

Roosevelt believed the way to maintain peace in the world was through the balance of power among nations. In his autobiography, he wrote,

Throughout the seven and half years that I was President, I pursued without faltering one consistent foreign policy, a policy of genuine international goodwill and of consideration for the rights of others, and at the same time of steady preparedness.¹⁰⁸

If Roosevelt had been asked to prescribe a formula for success in foreign relations, he would have recommended righteous conduct and an unremitting pursuit of world peace; but he would have insisted equally on the need for power and the well-advertised readiness to use it.¹⁰⁹ Critics have observed with irony that Roosevelt's term of office was characterized by peace with other nations.

Roosevelt saw world events and policies in terms of power.

Historian Howard K. Beale, said,

He was intrigued with power, with the problems of power, and with the rivalries of power...unlike many of his American contemporaries, [Roosevelt] thought more in terms of power than economics, though he realized the two were interrelated. This concern of Roosevelt with power relationships in international affairs was as noteworthy in his day as was his prevision of America's involvement in the world.¹¹⁰

Roosevelt was determined to ensure America gained that international power.

Roosevelt observed that the international equilibrium had been disrupted by the emergence of Germany and Japan on the world stage.¹¹¹ While still Governor of New York, Roosevelt wrote to Elihu Root about his vision of America's increasing global role, "...we ourselves are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe."¹¹²

Roosevelt divided the world into three categories: a few great and wealthy powers; smaller "civilized states" of Europe; and the remaining nations. Among the nations of the world he saw a constant jockeying for supremacy, in which "force" was the ultimate deciding factor between the successful from the defeated. But, this unrestrained international competition was not separate from the concept of justice. Roosevelt believed the great powers were the "civilized" nations and therefore the "purveyors of enlightenment and culture, the protectors of law, order, and liberty, and to a lesser extent the practitioners of democracy."¹¹³

Roosevelt Corollary

During his term of office, Roosevelt emphasized that America, and other "civilized" nations, should act as guardians of peace when chaos threatens world order. He saw this as a kind of international police duty. As early as his first message to Congress in 1901, Roosevelt noted,

Over the entire world, of recent years, wars between the great civilized powers have become less and less frequent. Wars with barbarous and semi-barbarous peoples come in an entirely different category, being merely a most regrettable but necessary international police duty which must be performed for the sake of the welfare of mankind.¹¹⁴

Only a year later in his second annual message to Congress, Roosevelt said,

More and more the increasing interdependence and complexity of international political and economic relations render it incumbent on all civilized and orderly powers to insist on the proper policing of the world.¹¹⁵

He had set the stage for what became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

In Roosevelt's fourth annual message to Congress, December 1904, he articulated his Corollary. The policy focused on America's role in the Western Hemisphere.

If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.¹¹⁶

With his blended beliefs of Moralism and Social Darwinism, Roosevelt saw the Corollary actions as the moral duty of a strong nation. The Roosevelt Corollary put America in a paternalistic role toward other nations in the Western Hemisphere. To maintain

peace and pursue justice, America could, as a last resort, block interference from Europe, or intervene when internal strife threatened a nation.

Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick

One of Roosevelt's most famous sayings is his quote of a West African proverb: "Speak softly and carry a big stick." Although the credo is most often applied to his foreign policy, Roosevelt first used it in 1901 to describe his attitude toward domestic politics, specifically the New York Republican machine.

The proverb, however, does capture Roosevelt's foreign policy philosophy and reinforces his belief of the critical linkage between words and deeds. In foreign policy, Roosevelt believed that power and diplomacy work best when they work together.¹¹⁷ Either may exist on their own, but neither are truly effective without the other.

Diplomacy - Speak Softly

Roosevelt was able to fully implement both parts of his own advice. Too often however, historians have concentrated on the second phrase - Big Stick - to the virtual exclusion of the first.¹¹⁸ Critics charged that Roosevelt rarely Spoke Softly and wielded his Big Stick all too readily.¹¹⁹ Some political cartoonists captured Roosevelt's popular reputation with a

caricature showing him brandishing a spiked club, shouting wildly, and riding a horse off across the world horizon.

In spite of Roosevelt's vigorous talk, and his undeserved reputation for making snap judgements, he did not jump into international situations excitedly.¹²⁰ He used the Big Stick as a tremendous symbol to communicate his message to Congress and the public. In reality, Roosevelt was a cautious and skillful diplomat who negotiated the peaceful settlement of numerous serious disputes and prevented other potential conflicts.¹²¹

Frederick W. Marks III, a student of Roosevelt's foreign policy, observes that "...Roosevelt stands in a class by himself for that blend of statesmanlike qualities which might best be described as *velvet on iron*."¹²² Marks says Roosevelt's diplomacy deserves to be measured against such yardsticks as tact, vision, and the ability to strike a sober balance between power and policy.¹²³

Roosevelt applied his moralist ideals to diplomacy. He believed that a nation is bound by the same moral code as the individual and that a man's word was his bond. He was devoted to the code of honor.¹²⁴ He felt that whenever he had committed himself and his country to a particular course of action, he should do the utmost to deliver what he had promised.¹²⁵

Roosevelt was opposed to bluffing or blustering. He placed emphasis on his use of power as a bargaining chip.¹²⁶ His formula was: speak courteously but firmly, and then stand ready to support your words with action.¹²⁷ Historian Howard K. Beale said,

He wished to be strong enough to take any action he might choose, but then, being strong, he chose his actions with caution. Contrary to the myth that has grown up about him, in international crises he was calm and careful in his decisions. He acted only after he thought about all the consequences of action.¹²⁸

Roosevelt had greatest admiration, not for the plain warrior, but for the "just man armed who wishes to keep the peace."¹²⁹

Some critics have said that Roosevelt's foreign policy and diplomatic achievements were really the work of certain cabinet members. After much focused study on Roosevelt's diplomacy, Frederick W. Marks III said,

The more closely one examines the record, the more apparent it becomes that the real controls on Roosevelt's policy are to be found within the man himself. Careful examination reveals a complex character with a wide range of ideas often obscured by the popular image.¹³⁰

He kept control of the foreign policy decision-making process and more importantly, took full responsibility for it, as well.¹³¹

An essential ingredient in Roosevelt's success as a diplomat was his ability to appreciate diverse points of view without

sacrificing his own patriotism or principles.¹³² His background of extensive travel abroad and vast range of knowledge, lent itself to his genuine interest in understanding the views of other leaders.¹³³ Roosevelt also would seek input from his trusted agents. His closest associates testified that he frequently sought counsel and was eminently advisable. Those less close to him gained the incorrect impression that he was impulsive.¹³⁴

Roosevelt was careful to build credibility. He kept much of his diplomatic maneuvering off the record.¹³⁵ Granted, he was outspoken on many subjects and was a prolific writer of letters, essays, and books. However, "...he conveyed most of his confidential messages by word of mouth and went to considerable length to ensure the discretion of his listeners."¹³⁶ He relied on the personal level of communication and the foundation of relationships between people as the vehicle for resolving international issues. Roosevelt's remarkable diplomatic competencies allowed him to make historical achievements, despite popular misconceptions about his more colorful characteristics.

As seen in his domestic policy, Roosevelt likewise was a great believer in the principle of arbitration for foreign disputes. He felt arbitration would work except in cases of

national honor or vital interest. He was the first world leader to submit a dispute to the Court of Arbitration at the Hague.¹³⁷ Whenever he could prevail upon other countries to resolve their differences without resorting to war, he stood ready to be of service. He mediated disputes between Colombia-Venezuela, Guatemala-Salvador, Nicaragua-Honduras, Russia-Japan, France-Germany, and England-Germany.¹³⁸ Roosevelt was acknowledged world-wide for his successful diplomatic ventures, as well as recognized for his popularity and prestige.

Strength - Big Stick

Roosevelt came to the presidency with the belief that America should be strong and ready to defend its interests around the world. He thought in terms of international power relationships. He advocated strength as the guarantor of peace; because of this, some have emphasized the "Big Stick" and labeled his foreign policy "forceful diplomacy" or "gunboat diplomacy."

The "Big Stick" policy is viewed by many as a policy of unvarnished power, when, in fact, it was a series of cautionary principles. The first part, "Speak Softly," places priority and focus on the diplomatic means to maintain peace.¹³⁹ Roosevelt used sufficient caution and many words to show that his goal was peace and justice in the world. However, he also wanted the

strength to back up his words. If a nation had to resort to using military power, he believed in two other principles: "Never draw unless you intend to shoot" and "Never strike unless prepared to strike hard."¹⁴⁰

Roosevelt was the first president to think consistently and coherently about the link between military technology, national military power, diplomacy, and foreign policy.¹⁴¹ He believed that the military forces required advanced arms and sophisticated equipment in a world of competing interests. In particular, he emphasized a modern battleship fleet as the cornerstone of national military power.¹⁴²

Roosevelt believed international laws or organizations could not stop nations from interpreting their own interests as they saw fit, but a strong countervailing force could moderate their behavior. This force was the strong, ready military he advocated. Maintaining a ready power -- "preparedness" -- was not just a useful tool, but an effective deterrent.¹⁴³ He believed that weakness would invite attack, and that any nation as rich and potentially powerful as America would not remain long at peace unless it was prepared to defend its vital interests.¹⁴⁴

Actions

Power: Panama Canal

One of the most controversial foreign policy decisions of Roosevelt's presidency was the acquisition of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903.¹⁴⁵ Through his adept use of the Bully Pulpit, Roosevelt virtually extinguished controversy over the Canal. His energetic rhetoric changed the Canal into one of the greatest symbols of American power and the nation's rise to global leadership.

Roosevelt had long understood the importance of building power on an international scale. In April 1899, he clearly stated his intent for an American controlled canal in the speech, "The Strenuous Life,"

We cannot sit huddled within our own borders and avow ourselves merely an assemblage of well-to-do hucksters who care nothing for what happens beyond. Such a policy would defeat even its own end; for as the nations grow to have ever wider and wider interests, and are brought into closer and closer contact, if we are to hold our own in the struggle for naval and commercial supremacy, we must build up our power without our own borders. We must build the isthmian canal, and we must grasp the points of vantage which will enable us to have our say in deciding the destiny of the oceans of the East and the West.¹⁴⁶

As President, in 1901 in his first annual message to Congress, Roosevelt said, "No single great material work which remains to be undertaken on this continent is of such consequence

to the American people as the building of a canal across the Isthmus connecting North and South America."¹⁴⁷ Roosevelt was now in a position to influence the outcome of his vision for the canal.

Roosevelt realized the canal's strategic importance for America. Like the naval theorist of his day, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt knew the canal would enable efficient transfer of military forces between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Its location would facilitate America's involvement in preserving stability in the region. On the economic side, the canal would enhance commercial opportunities through easier access to varied markets.¹⁴⁸

Controversy surrounded the circumstances of how the canal territory was acquired. Using his belief that the President should take executive action as a steward of the people, Roosevelt stretched and bent the law as far as it would go, in pursuit of his strategic goal.

In November 1903, the Hay-Herran treaty was signed, providing America the right to build the canal. But, Colombia rejected the lease agreement. This triggered Roosevelt's unusual actions of tacit support of Panama claiming independence from Colombia. A month later, Panama agreed to terms on the canal.

zone lease.¹⁴⁹ As a historian, Roosevelt pointed out that the Panamanian revolution was the 53d anti-Colombian insurrection in as many years; however, he was less successful in arguing that it was accomplished within the bounds of international law.¹⁵⁰

In 1904, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began digging. It would take ten years before the Panama Canal was completed. From 1904 to 1906, wide public controversy occurred relating to the canal's acquisition, America's role in Panamanian independence, and the disease-ridden conditions of the canal work site. In 1906, Roosevelt took two actions that transformed the controversial news of the Panama Canal into an inspirational story of American power, ingenuity, and perseverance.¹⁵¹

First, in November 1906, Roosevelt visited the Panama Canal and became the first president to travel outside the United States while in office.¹⁵² This was not simply an inspection tour or junket. "It was the centerpiece of an effort to define the terms of debate about the Canal in a manner that would quiet critics and disarm skeptics."¹⁵³

During his three-day tour, Roosevelt slogged through the mud in the driving rain; the trip yielded some of the most famous photographs that would permanently define his presidential image. "Roosevelt cultivated the image of a commander visiting his

troops at the front, and military metaphors dominated his speaking on the isthmus. The workers -- much to their delight -- were made out to be military heroes..."¹⁵⁴ The trip was a resounding success and captured national attention for the "conquest of peace."

Second, Roosevelt used the Bully Pulpit to create a heroic myth that reshaped the canal into a national monument and symbol of power. Roosevelt energetically told the story of American heroes, from every walk of life, constructing a canal by conquering disease, moving mountains of dirt, and building essential infrastructure. He spoke about the benefits of great national challenge and praised the patriot spirit of the workers. Dozens of authors, essayists, and lecturers retold the story and before long the myth became reality. The legend of American power remained an enduring part of the American consciousness for three-quarters of a century.¹⁵⁵

Roosevelt Corollary: Intervention

In 1904, Roosevelt stated, in the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, his intention of hemispheric involvement. In 1905 the Dominican Republic defaulted on its European debt and chaos reigned internally. When an Italian naval vessel steamed into the Caribbean, Roosevelt enforced the Corollary. After

discussions between the American and Dominican governments, the Dominicans were persuaded to request American assistance. Under terms of the agreement signed by both parties, American officials took over collection of Dominican customs receipts, a request that had been made twice before, without prompting. A debt repayment plan was also established. The Roosevelt Corollary precluded European intervention.¹⁵⁶

In 1906, Cuba was suffering internal civil strife. Roosevelt reluctantly sent in American troops to back up the provisional government against uprisings.¹⁵⁷ When Roosevelt intervened in both cases in Central America, he did so not because he had dreams of ruling a great Central American colonial empire. Instead, as stated in his Corollary, he wanted to preclude the possibility that the European great powers would see local instability as a cause to intervene.¹⁵⁸ When asked specifically about American interest in the Dominican Republic, Roosevelt responded, "I have about as much desire to annex it as a gorged boa constrictor might have to swallow a porcupine wrong-end-to."¹⁵⁹

Diplomacy: Russo-Japanese Treaty

Roosevelt not only understood the power of diplomacy, he practiced it on a grand scale. In 1905, he brokered peace

between Russia and Japan. His actions helped stabilize Asia, increased America's influence and prestige, and earned him the Nobel Prize.

Japan and Russia were at war over control of Manchuria and Korea. Roosevelt was asked to mediate the dispute. He sought to limit the number of belligerents and restrict the area of fighting, as well as end the conflict before either contestant won a decisive victory. By establishing a position of "balanced antagonisms," he hoped to ensure a more stable and lasting peace.¹⁶⁰

In his diplomatic role, Roosevelt used caution and patience to achieve results.

Six weeks elapsed between Japan's initial request for his good offices and the time when he formally proposed peace talks based on the belligerents' prearranged acceptance. By this time, he had prepared the ground by canvassing each of the major powers, making certain of the support of all.¹⁶¹

In the summer of 1905, the two countries sent representatives to the United States for the Portsmouth Peace Conference. An incredibly capable diplomat with impeccable manners, Roosevelt handled Russian counts and Japanese barons with such delicacy that neither side was able to detect preference. "The man who had been represented to us as impetuous to the point of rudeness,"

wrote one participant, "displayed a gentleness, a kindness, and a tactfulness that only a truly great man can command."¹⁶²

On September 5, 1905, the Portsmouth Treaty was signed, ending the Russo-Japanese War. It was later revealed that part of the mediation involved secret agreements for the Japanese annexation of Korea; in return the Japanese promised to avoid involvement in China, Hawaii, and the Philippines. As a result of Roosevelt's work on the treaty and agreements, a war was ended and America's position throughout the Asia-Pacific area was strengthened.

Strength: The Great White Fleet

As the renowned author of the definitive historical work, The Naval War of 1812, published in 1882, Roosevelt had a keen interest in naval power. When he served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, he stridently spoke out in support of a stronger Navy. During that time, Roosevelt had cultivated a dialogue with Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan who also was advocating naval preparedness. Against the backdrop of President McKinley's policy of non-aggression, Roosevelt's words were intended to create, rather than just influence, national foreign policy.¹⁶³

In June 1897, just two months after he became Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt addressed the Naval War College in what turned out to be the first great speech of his national political career. He chose as his theme, and title, [George] "Washington's Forgotten Maxim": "To be prepared for war is the most effectual means to promote peace."¹⁶⁴ To Roosevelt this meant an immediate, rapid build-up of the American Navy. He dismissed the notion that a stronger Navy would tempt America into unnecessary war. He believed the opposite; it would promote peace, by keeping foreign navies out of the Western Hemisphere.¹⁶⁵

In support of "preparedness," Roosevelt cited fact after historical fact to prove that "it is too late to make ready for war when the fight has once begun."¹⁶⁶ He pointed out that the naval arms race among Britain, Germany, Japan, and Spain made America more vulnerable than at the beginning of the century. He explained that it would be six months before America could parry any sudden attack, and further eighteen months before she could "begin" to return it.¹⁶⁷ Roosevelt believed it was essential to build "a great Navy, ...with armament fit for the nation's needs, not primarily to fight, but to avert fighting."¹⁶⁸ Roosevelt's complete War College speech was printed in all major newspapers and caused a nation-wide sensation.¹⁶⁹

When Roosevelt became President, in his first annual message to Congress, he spent more time on proposals to strengthen the Navy than on any other single subject.¹⁷⁰ Roosevelt said,

The work of upbuilding the Navy must be steadily continued. No one point of our policy, foreign or domestic, is more important than this to the honor and material welfare, and above all to the peace of our nation in the future.¹⁷¹

Roosevelt sought to speed modernization of the armed services and build forces capable of protecting America's new status as a great power.¹⁷² He promoted the battleship Navy as a cultural symbol that embodied America's industrial ability and international peacekeeping responsibility. The stronger Navy would also project America's technological and military prowess abroad.¹⁷³

The Bully Pulpit gave him the perfect platform from which to call attention to programs that had not yet gained full acceptance in Congress.¹⁷⁴ Roosevelt spoke often about America's international role and the Navy's place in achieving it. He used the power of the public to influence legislators on the Navy issue.¹⁷⁵ In every year of Roosevelt's administration, Congress reluctantly authorized at least one new battleship.¹⁷⁶

In the summer of 1907, Roosevelt staged a huge media event and announced that 16 American battleships would leave Virginia

in December and travel around the world. A resistant Congress declared it would not authorize money for the voyage; Roosevelt replied he had the money to get the ships to the Pacific, but Congress would have to get them back. By December, overwhelming public support for the Voyage convinced Congress to increase Navy funding.¹⁷⁷

On December 16, 1907, Roosevelt launched the "Great White Fleet" on its voyage around the world. The reason for the world cruise of white-painted battle fleet has been explained in various ways: a "practice cruise;" a warning to Japan; a "search for prestige;" a readiness test; a goodwill trip; an effort to educate the public and gain support for a larger Navy; and a demonstration to Congress. Any or all of these possible motives could have served Roosevelt's purpose.¹⁷⁸

Regardless of his primary motive, Theodore Roosevelt, the mythmaker, employed the Bully Pulpit to tell a story about the "Voyage." He orchestrated the event and told the media three points: the world needed America to uphold its international responsibilities; the Navy seaman represented the type of champion who could perform the duties; and the battleship fleet was technological means to fulfill America's duty abroad.¹⁷⁹ The

media then helped Roosevelt awaken the nation to the fact of its international role as peacemaker.¹⁸⁰

For 14 months and 46,000 miles the media told the epic story about the heroic Navy Seamen who were rugged, resilient, willing to work hard, and who ventured overseas not as martially aggressive conquerors but as technologically sophisticated ambassadors of peace.¹⁸¹ They sailed aboard the premier example of American technology -- battleships -- which symbolized American industrial power and capability.¹⁸² The media's report of the world was a travelogue image of lands populated by peaceful, friendly cultures that marveled at America's strength of will and ingenuity to circumvent the globe.¹⁸³ "By redefining mythic images of the universe and the hero in American culture, the popular press submerged the martial nature of the battleship fleet." ¹⁸⁴

Roosevelt's relentless campaign for a stronger Navy was successful. When he became president, America ranked fifth among naval powers. By 1907, America had twenty battleships at sea, and its fleet was second only to Britain's Royal Navy.¹⁸⁵ By the end of Roosevelt's term in 1909 there were 27 battleships and the number of naval enlisted men rose by 19,000 to 44,500.¹⁸⁶ Roosevelt said in his autobiography, "In my own judgment the most

important service that I rendered to peace was the voyage of the battle fleet round the world."¹⁸⁷

LEGACY

Very few leaders in American history have left such a lasting legacy as Theodore Roosevelt. His distinctive stamp on the American spirit has spanned from the use of language, across patriotic pride and progressive legislation, to international power as a nation. Roosevelt's vision and actions shaped America for the 20th century. Much of what he achieved affects each and every American today.

In activating his vision for America as a great nation, Roosevelt's work left a Domestic legacy. He expanded the role of the President; increased government's role in helping everyone receive a Square Deal; busted private business trusts; established the Secretary of Commerce; intervened to resolve labor-management disputes; championed consumer protection by regulating food, drugs, and meatpacking; kick-started a broad based conservation program; started the investigating arm of the Justice Department that became the FBI; helped start the NCAA; used the White House as a Bully Pulpit; used the media to communicate his agenda; and even added zest to American usage of English.

Additionally, his Progressive Party platform foreshadowed many modern programs: support for women's suffrage, child labor reform, old age pensions, unemployment insurance and workmen's compensation, and graduated income and inheritance taxes.

Furthermore, Roosevelt activated his vision for America as a world power and left an international legacy. He introduced America as a world power; acquired and started construction of the Panama Canal; built up the modern American Navy; encouraged strong nations to help each other police the world; used diplomacy to mediate in disputes and war to bring resolution and peace; increased trade with other nations; and viewed world stability in terms of a balance of power.

Theodore Roosevelt's strenuous life itself left a lasting legacy. He merged thought and action, and translated words to deeds, all with the goal of making things better for everyone. The remarkable vitality of his life was an inspirational example that boosted the collective American spirit.

CONCLUSION

Theodore Roosevelt had the vision to see America as a great world power. His leadership transformed America from an isolationist country to a strong nation with an influential international role. His policies launched America into the 20th Century as a world power and his rich legacy has helped guide the nation up through the turn of a new century.

Roosevelt was remarkably endowed with gifts of mind and spirit and was in many ways ahead of his time.

In other hands his ability, his understanding of international problems, his interest in power, his desire to be strong enough to settle questions by might, his secret, highly personal handling of foreign affairs might have become dangerous to democracy and to the peace of the world.¹⁸⁸

The reason for Roosevelt's success was his frame of reference.

Roosevelt believed it was his responsibility to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly."¹⁸⁹ Roosevelt's deeply held convictions were the foundation of his vision and were derived from the strong moral beliefs and values he received from his family. He built on this foundation with his own philosophy he called the Strenuous Life: translating thought into action, words into deeds.

As President, Roosevelt pursued domestic progressive reform to provide all Americans a Square Deal. His foreign policy was

based on international involvement using diplomacy and power. Roosevelt skillfully used the Bully Pulpit to activate his vision. His powerful rhetoric, stories, and symbols communicated his objectives to the American people, Congress, and other nations throughout the world.

Roosevelt's vibrant message of responsibility and progress awakened interest and inspired action. A part of his essay on "The Strenuous Life" captured the essence of Theodore Roosevelt's vision and the part each person plays to achieve the goal of national greatness.

I preach to you, then, my countrymen, that our country calls not for the life of ease but for the life of strenuous endeavor. The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by, and will win for themselves the domination of the world. Let us therefore boldly face the life of strife, resolute to do our duty well and manfully; resolute to uphold righteousness by deed and by word; resolute to be both honest and brave, to serve high ideals, yet to use practical methods. Above all, let us shrink from no strife, moral or physical, within or without the nation, provided we are certain that the strife is justified, for it is only through strife, through hard and dangerous endeavor, that we shall ultimately win the goal of true national greatness.¹⁹⁰

History shows that Theodore Roosevelt's vision became reality.

Word Count: 14,927

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