

## President Theodore Roosevelt Explains American Foreign Policy

1. What is the United States' proper role in the world today?

"If England should fail to preserve the European balance of power the United States would be forced to step in and re-establish it, no matter what countries our efforts would have to be directed. We ourselves are becoming, owing to our strength and geographical situation, more and more the balance of power of the whole globe."

2. How will the United States play this new role in world affairs?

"I have always been fond of the West African proverb: 'Speak softly and carry a big stick, you will go far.' I never take a step in foreign policy unless I am assured that I shall be able eventually to carry out my will by force."

3. Won't this policy lead the United States into war?

"Conflicts between civilized nations and the 'semi-barbarous peoples' (are) a most regrettable but necessary international police duty which must be performed for the sake of the welfare of mankind. Chronic wrong-doing may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power."

4. Do you see any limits on U.S. military involvement?

"I regard the Monroe Doctrine as being equivalent to the open door in South America. I wish to see the United States the dominant power on the shores of the Pacific Ocean."

5. Was the United States justified in its actions in Panama?

"I confidently maintain that the recognition of Panama was an act justified by the interests of collective civilization. If ever a Government could be said to have received a mandate from civilization ... the United States holds that position with regard to the interoceanic canal."

6. Were your personal actions justified and legal in Panama?

"I am interested in Panama because I started it. If I had followed traditional methods I would have submitted a dignified State paper to Congress and the debates on it would have been going on yet; but I took the Canal Zone and let Congress debate; and while the debate goes on the Canal does also. Damn the law! The vital work, getting Panama as an independent Republic was done by me without the aid or advice of anyone and without the knowledge of anyone."

7. Does the United States have an obligation to obey your treaty obligations?

"Ignore the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty and proceed with the construction of the canal with or without Britain's consent, "a nation has the right to abrogate a treaty for what she regards as sufficient cause."

8. How do you respond to the charge that American foreign policy is being shaped by the interests of big business?

"The tremendous and highly complex industrial development which went on with ever accelerated rapidity during the latter half of the nineteenth century brings us face to face with very serious problems."

"Business concerns which have the largest means at their disposal and are managed by the ablest men take the lead in the strife for commercial supremacy among the nations of the world. America has only just begun to assume the commanding position in the international business world which we believe will more and more be hers. It is of the utmost importance that this position be not jeopardized, especially at a time when foreign markets are essential."