

Fifty-Eighth Congress

November 9, 1903 – March 3, 1905

First Administration of Theodore Roosevelt

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Historical Background

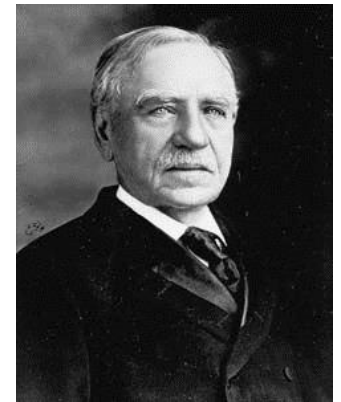
Following on the heels of what proved to be a tumultuous 57th Congress, with the assassination of President William McKinley, succession of Theodore Roosevelt, rising racial tensions, and major labor strikes, the 58th Congress proved to be relatively quiet one - at least in comparison to those immediately preceding or succeeding it. Republicans continued to control Congress, but the 1902 elections slightly eroded their advantage in the House. With the retirement of Iowa Representative David Henderson, Representative Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois won the election as House Speaker. Most legislative concerns were directed to matters surrounding forestry, post office fraud, development of merchant marine, and the construction of the Panama Canal.

During his 1904 address before Congress, President Roosevelt articulated his vision of the shifting role the United States should be playing in the western hemisphere. Dubbed the Roosevelt Corollary, the President viewed his foreign policy doctrine as complementary to, or a refinement of, the Monroe Doctrine. The Monroe Doctrine, as outlined by its author, President James Monroe, officially opposed any European colonial adventurism in the Americas and stated explicitly that attempts by any European state to colonize any independent territory in the western hemisphere would be interpreted as “the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.” In effect, the Monroe Doctrine declared the political disposition of the countries of the American continents to be the prerogative of the United States. During 1902 and 1903, a crisis developed in Latin America when Venezuelan President Cipriano Castro stopped making payments on the country’s crushing international debt obligations. In December 1902, Germany, whose merchants and bankers dominated the Venezuelan economy, along with the United Kingdom and Italy, began a

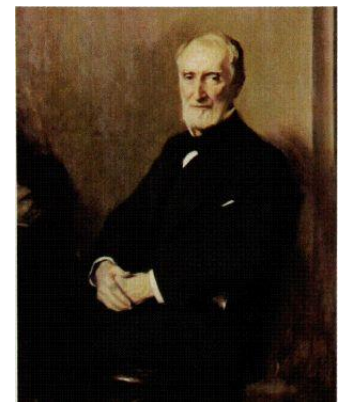
House	Senate
Majority Party: Republican (207 seats)	Majority Party: Republican (57 seats)
Minority Party: Democrat (176 seats)	Minority Party: Democrat (33 seats)
Other Parties: Independent (3 seats)	Other Parties: None
Speaker of the House: Joseph G. Cannon	President Pro Tempore: William P. Frye

naval blockade of the country to force Castro's hand. In addition to the question of resuming international debt payments, several European powers complained about claims made by citizens of various European states living and operating in Venezuela who'd had property stolen or destroyed during the decades of civil unrest in the country. Castro turned to the United States to intervene with the powers enforcing the blockade and the U.S. forwarded a message from the Venezuelan president to the leaders of the blockade, inviting them to convene negotiations toward a settlement. However, in his message, Castro solely made reference to claims arising from the 1898 civil war, which was unacceptable to the blockading powers. As the blockade continued, public opinion as reflected in the British and American press was soundly in opposition to the blockade. At the same time, Castro proved to be a stubborn adversary, giving no ground beyond his invitation to settle the matter via arbitration. The blockading states had little choice but to relent and arbitration talks were held in Washington D.C. The four parties reached a settlement on February 13, 1903.

President Roosevelt came away from his involvement in the crisis in Venezuela with grave concerns over what he saw as unacceptable vulnerabilities to U.S. interests throughout Latin America. Roosevelt harbored qualms regarding the provision of the Washington Protocols that provided for the establishment of mixed commissions to hear and adjudicate claimants' cases against Venezuela. He also outright repudiated the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague, which held that the blockading powers who brought the case were entitled to preferential treatment in securing payment of their claims. In both cases, it would seem as though Roosevelt was working against the interests of the United States, which held substantial Venezuelan debts and whose citizens had amassed numerous claims against the government in Caracas. As Roosevelt saw it, however, the settlement of the economic aspects of the arbitration in favor of the states and their citizens with claims against the government of Venezuela risked encouraging further geopolitical adventurism in the U.S.'s restive backyard. It was precisely these concerns that drove the President to articulate his Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine announced during his State of the Union Address of 1904. As the President described it, the Roosevelt Corollary establishes that the United States will intervene in cases where European powers have claims against any American states and will be the conduit through which all claims, arbitration, and settlement will be conducted, rather than allowing European powers to press claims directly against other American states. It wouldn't be long before Roosevelt would have the opportunity to put his new foreign policy comportment to the test in the Dominican Republic and Panama.



President Pro Tempore
William P. Frye



Speaker of the House
Joseph G. Cannon

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [*Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980*](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Roosevelt, Theodore. [*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1904. 58th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.1/1 (Pr26.:904). ProQuest Congressional, 4780 H.doc.1/1

Roosevelt, Theodore. [*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress*](#). House, Dec. 7, 1903. 58th Congress, 2rd Session, H.doc.1/1 (Pr26.1:903). ProQuest Congressional, 4627 H.doc.1/1

War or Peace?

New American Imperialism

During the 58th Congress, the United States largely avoided any direct confrontations with other sovereign states. However, during the years of his Presidency, Roosevelt articulated a radically new, forthrightly activist vision for an American foreign policy and was eager to put the new principles into practice. Theodore Roosevelt announced his "Corollary" to the Monroe Doctrine during his 1904 State of the Union Address. Accordingly, the United States was positioning itself as the primary arbiter of disputes between the European powers and the emergent American states. Moreover, he stated that the United States would intervene in the Western Hemisphere should Latin American governments prove incapable of governing or maintaining stability. This shift in America's comportment to the rest of the world meant the U.S. would act to prevent European creditor powers from invading Latin American nations at risk of defaulting on their debts. It was a major development in U.S. foreign policy and signaled the new direction the country would take in the twentieth century.

During the late-19th and early-20th centuries, U.S. policy toward Latin America was largely focused on maintaining a level of political stability necessary to the conduct of commerce and protecting American commercial interests throughout the region during a volatile period. The major exception to this was the case of the Panama Canal. Explorers, imperialists and traders had floated the idea of carving a canal through the isthmus of Panama to link the Atlantic shipping trade to the Pacific as early as the sixteenth century. In the mid-19th century, the French, who had recently completed construction of the Suez Canal, began a project to cut a canal across Panama, however poor engineering and the scourge of tropical disease proved too much to overcome. In the years that followed, rival canal projects were proposed, including one that would trace a route through Nicaragua. Consonant with his perception of U.S. prerogatives in the western hemisphere, President Roosevelt thought that a U.S.-controlled canal was vital to American interests. The 57th Congress enacted the Spooner Act, which authorized the purchase of the French Panama Canal Company assets. In the meantime, U.S. Navy personnel arriving in Panama hinted to Panamanian rebels that if they chose to seek their independence from Colombia, the U.S. would support their claim.

On November 3, 1903, Panama declared its independence from Colombia. Tipped off about some unspecified action about to be taken by the Panamanians, Colombia sent navy ships to Colon and Panama City, but the U.S. Naval presence baffled Colombian attempts to interfere by insisting upon maintaining the neutrality of the railroads. Meanwhile, the newly independent government of Panama immediately began negotiations with the United States leading to the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which was signed November 18 and ratified by the Senate the following February. The treaty granted the United States full and permanent jurisdiction over a 10-mile wide canal zone and authorized a system of payments to the government of Colombia. The crisis, such as it was, was short-lived, and contributed to President Roosevelt's sense of the rightness of his reforms.

In November 1903 in the Dominican Republic, U.S. naval ships patrolled the waters outside the capital Santo Domingo to protect the interests of American commercial concerns operating in the city. Early the next year, as the USS *Yankee* patrolled the harbor observing fighting between rebels and the government, a boat was sent to the ship to make contact with the Dominicans. When rebels fired on the boat, mortally wounding one seaman, President Roosevelt sent two U.S. Navy destroyers to Santo Domingo. When those crews continued to meet with hostility at the hands of rebels, an amphibious assault was launched against the rebels' stronghold at the old Fort Ozama. Within hours, the assault drove the rebels from the fort and returned to their vessels. These incidents in Latin America would be the model of U.S. intervention in its back yard for the next 30 years and unquestionably positioned the United States as a global power.

Source:

Roosevelt, Theodore. [*Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress*](#). House, Dec. 6, 1904. 58th Congress, 3rd Session, H.doc.1/1 (Pr26.:904). ProQuest Congressional, 4780 H.doc.1/1

Economic Trends and Conditions

The economy had sunk into a mild recession during the last quarter of 1902 and continued into 1904. The simmering tensions between the nascent labor movement and industry continued into the 58th Congress, most significantly in the so-called Colorado Labor Wars. The Colorado Labor Wars refers to a series of major strikes by workers represented by the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) at gold and silver mines and mills in various Colorado locales, including Colorado City, Cripple Creek, Denver and Durango, during 1903-1904.

The WFM, founded in 1893, distinguished itself in early actions against mine operators in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Cripple Creek and Leadville in Colorado, with their willingness to confront mine operators and strike breakers with violence. The most radical of the labor organizations of the day, the WFM was committed to the principle of revolution fomented by the working class. This, coupled with a state government wholly in sympathy with the mine and mill operators and distinctly willing to deploy violence as

a tactic to confront strikers, led to one of the more violent confrontations between labor and industry to date. Moreover, the state worked with foreign governments to deport members of the WFM and striking workers. These strikes had a wide enough impact on western mining and business and warranted a special investigation by the Senate Judiciary Committee and the new Department of Commerce and Labor. Stirrings of tariff reform were felt during 1904 but died out when resistance to the idea proved too politically volatile for Congress and President Roosevelt.

Sources:

Patterson, Malcolm Rice. [Statement of the Western Federation of Miners](#). Committee on the Judiciary. Senate, Feb. 20, 1904. 58th Congress, 2nd Session, S.doc.163. ProQuest Congressional, 4590 S.doc.163

Roosevelt, Theodore. [A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado, from 1880 to 1904, inclusive, with correspondence relating thereto](#). Committee on the Judiciary. Senate, Jan. 27, 1905. 58th Congress, 3rd Session, S.doc.122. ProQuest Congressional, 4765 S.doc.122

Major Treaties

Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty. Granted to the United States full and permanent sovereignty over a 10-mile wide zone across the Isthmus of Panama and transferred all rights, properties, and concessions of the New Panama Canal Company and the Panama Railroad Company. The United States agreed to pay Colombia \$10 million and an annual fee of \$250,000 starting nine years after the treaty took effect. Approved November 18, 1903. Approved by Senate February 23, 1904. ([33 Stat. 2234](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

Lone Wolf v. Hitchcock, held that the Congress exercised plenary power with respect to agreements with Native American tribes and could therefore unilaterally amend or abrogate treaty obligations between the United States and Native American tribes. The decision reversed the doctrines embodied in the *Cherokee Cases* (1831-1832), which recognized tribal sovereignty and land rights, 187 U.S. 553 (1903)

Bleistein v. Donaldson Lithographing Company, concluded that commercial speech, specifically in this case in the form of advertising materials, is subject to copyright protection, 188 U.S. 239 (1903)

Champion v. Ames, upheld the constitutionality of the Federal Lottery Act, which prohibited sending lottery tickets across state lines, arguing that the tickets were items of real value and therefore traffic in them constitutes

interstate commerce subject to regulation by the Congress, 188 U.S. 321 (1903)

Giles v. Harris, concluded that the Supreme Court could not interfere in the matter of the Alabama state constitution's requirements for voter registration, even if in practice it prevented Blacks from registering because the requirements applied to all citizens of the state and the court had no intention of monitoring the entire election process. The Federal government would be authorized to oversee, monitor, and enforce voter registration with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, 189 U.S. 475 (1903)

Northern Securities Co. v. United States, concluded that the Northern Securities Company, which was formed by a merger of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroad companies, was a trust in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act and ordered the company's dissolution, 193 U.S. 197 (1904)

Source:

Costello, George A. and Johnny H. Killian. [*Constitution of the United States of America. Analysis and Interpretation*](#). CRS, Library of Congress, Jan. 1, 1996. 103rd Congress, 1st Session, S. Doc. 103-6 (Y1.1/3:103-6). ProQuest Congressional, 14152 S.doc.6

1903 Events

- **Jan. 1:** [Edward VII of the United Kingdom was proclaimed Emperor of India](#)
- **Jan. 19:** [The first west-east transatlantic radio broadcast was made from the U.S. to England](#)
- **Feb. 11:** [The Oxnard Strike of 1903 became the first labor union formed from members of different races](#)
- **Feb. 15:** Inspired by a political cartoon of Theodore Roosevelt refusing to shoot a bear, Morris Michtom and his wife Rose create the first "Teddy Bear"
- **Feb. 23:** [Cuba leased Guantánamo Bay to the U.S. "in perpetuity" under the terms of the Cuban-American Treaty](#)
- **Mar. 5:** The Ottoman Empire and the German Empire signed an agreement to build the Constantinople-Baghdad Railway
- **Mar. 14:** [The Hay-Herrán Treaty, granting the U.S. the right to build the Panama Canal, was ratified by the United States Senate but later rejected by the Colombian Senate](#)
- **Apr. 14:** [Dr. Harry Plotz of Columbia Medical School discovers a vaccine for Typhoid Fever](#)
- **June 10:** Binney & Smith begin selling Crayola crayons in a box including 8 colors: black, brown, blue, red, violet, orange, yellow, and green
- **June 11:** Serbian King Alexander Obrenović and Queen Draga were assassinated
- **July 1-July 19:** Maurice Garin won the First Tour de France bicycle race

- **July 7:** The British took over the Fulani Empire
- **July 23:** Dr. Ernst Pfenning of Chicago became the first owner of the Ford Motor Company's Model A car
- **Aug. 10:** Paris Métro train fire killed 84 people; resulted in a series of safety measures later adopted by similar underground urban transit systems around the world
- **Sept. 29:** Prussia became the first locality to require mandatory driver's licenses for operators of motor vehicles
- **Nov. 4:** [With encouragement from the U.S., Panama proclaimed independence from Colombia](#)
- **Nov. 17:** The Russian Social Democratic Labor Party split into two groups; the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks
- **Dec. 17:** [Orville Wright flew an aircraft with a petrol engine at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in the first documented, successful, controlled, powered, heavier-than-air flight](#)
- **Dec. 30:** Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago killed over 600 people in one of the deadliest theater fires in the world and the deadliest single-building fire in U.S. history

1904 Events

- **Feb. 3:** The United States gains control of the Panama Canal Zone for \$10 million
- **Feb. 7:** [The Great Baltimore Fire in Baltimore, Maryland destroys over 1,500 buildings in 30 hours](#)
- **Feb. 8:** *Russo-Japanese War* - [A Japanese surprise attack on Port Arthur \(Lushun\) starts the Russo-Japanese War](#)
- **Feb. 10:** [Roger Casement publishes his account of Belgian atrocities in the Congo](#)
- **Feb. 23:** [For \\$10 million, the U.S. gains control of the Panama Canal Zone](#)
- **Apr. 8:** The Entente Cordiale signed between the UK and France, starting the alliance against Germany that would later play great significance in World War I
- **May 4:** [U.S. Army engineers begin work on The Panama Canal](#)
- **July 1:** The third Summer Olympic Games opens in St. Louis, Missouri, United States as part of the World's Fair
- **July 21:** The Trans-Siberian railway was completed
- **Oct. 27:** [The first underground line of the New York City Subway opens](#)
- **Oct. 28:** The St. Louis Police Department begins using fingerprinting in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary
- **Nov. 8:** U.S. presidential election of 1904 – Republican incumbent Theodore Roosevelt defeats Democrat Alton B. Parker
- **Dec. 31:** In New York City, the first New Year's Eve celebration held in Times Square

Sources:

[Alsop claim: Case of U.S.A. \[...\] versus Republic of Chile before His Majesty George V of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of British dominions beyond seas, King and Emperor of India \[...\]](#). GPO, Jan. 1, 1910. (S3.21/4:C26/1). ProQuest Congressional, S3.21-4.3

Committee on Ways and Means. House. [Reciprocity with Cuba, hearings before Ways and Means Committee](#). GPO, Jan. 15, 1902. 57th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.535. ProQuest Congressional, 4375 H.doc.535

["House of Representatives."](#) Congressional Record, 58th Congress, 2nd Session (Feb. 8, 1904) Vol. 38, p. 1728. ProQuest Congressional, CR-1904-0208

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Lodge, Henry Cabot. [Verbatim report of the five days' Congo debate in the Belgian House of Representatives](#). Senate, Dec. 13, 1906. 59th Congress, 2nd Session, S.doc.139. ProQuest Congressional, 5070 S.doc.139

[Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of America \[correspondence with Navy Department on proposed regulations on wireless telegraphy\]](#). Secretary, Department of Navy, Jan. 9, 1905. (N1.2:W74). ProQuest Congressional, N102-72

[Memorandum on prevention of typhoid fever](#). U.S. Army, Dec. 24, 1902. Adjutant General's Dept. Circ. No. 1902/62 (W3.4:902/[no.62]). ProQuest Congressional, W304a-26.62

Reagan, Ronald. [Wright Brothers Day, 1987](#). Federal Register, 1984-2014, Dec. 5, 1987. Presidential Proclamation No. 5750. ProQuest Congressional, 1987-PR-5750

Roosevelt, Theodore. [E.O. 348-C of Aug. 31, 1905, prescribing compensation for members of the Advisory Board of Engineers for the Panama Canal, amended](#). Numbered Executive Orders, 1862-Present, Nov. 25, 1905. Executive Order No. 373-A. ProQuest Congressional, 1905-EO-373-A

Roosevelt, Theodore. [Journal of the Senate of the United States of America \[...\]](#). Senate, Dec. 7, 1903. 58th Congress, 2nd Session, S.Jnl.58-2. ProQuest Congressional, 4568 S.Jnl

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Roosevelt, Theodore. [Message from the President of the United States. \[...\] concerning the convention between the United States and Colombia for the construction of an interoceanic canal across the Isthmus of Panama](#). Committee on Foreign Relations. Senate, Dec. 19, 1903. 58th Congress, 2nd Session, S.doc.51. ProQuest Congressional, 4587 S.doc.51

[Temporary government of Canal Zone at Panama](#). Committee on Interoceanic Canals. Senate, Apr. 1, 1904. 58th Congress, 2nd Session, S.rp.1859. ProQuest Congressional, 4575 S.rp.1859

Walcott, Chas. D. [Annual Report of the Board of Regents of The Smithsonian Institution \[...\]](#). Smithsonian Institution, Apr. 24, 1908. 60th Congress, 1st Session, H.doc.847. ProQuest Congressional, 5365 H.doc.847

Major Acts

Transfer Act of 1905. Transferred control of the nation's forest reserves from the Department of Interior to the Department of Agriculture. Approved Feb. 1, 1905. ([33 Stat. 627, Chap. 288; PL58-34-3](#))

Foreign Commerce Trademark Amendments. Updated Federal trademark law to include Federal trademark protection in interstate commerce, rather than only providing protection to trademarks used in international commerce. The Act further streamlined and simplified trademark law for foreign interests doing business in the United States, freeing exporters from having to contend with a patchwork of local and state-level trademark protection statutes. Approved Feb. 20, 1905. ([33 Stat. 724, Chap. 592; PL58-84-3](#))

Source:

Dell, Christopher and Stephen W. Stathis. [Major Acts of Congress and Treaties Approved by the Senate, 1789-1980](#). Government Division (CRS), Sept. 1, 1982. 97th Congress, 2nd Session, 82-156 GOV. ProQuest Congressional, CRS-1982-GOV-0005

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