



Theodore Roosevelt, 1904.  
Courtesy of the Library of Congress (LC-USZ62-13026 DLC).

**Roosevelt, Theodore** (27 Oct. 1858-6 Jan. 1919), twenty-sixth president of the United States, was born in New York City. His father, Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., a partner in a prosperous family glass-importing firm, was a buoyant, dominant man with a self-described "troublesome conscience." He imbued his son with an acute sense of civic and moral responsibility. He also pressed him excessively. Father, wrote Theodore, "was the best man I ever knew" and "the only man of whom I was really afraid." To his son's enduring regret, he bought his way out of military service in the Civil War in deference to the sensibilities of his Georgian wife, whose brothers were active Confederates. His mother, companionable, intelligent, and pleasure-loving Martha Bullock, was neurasthenic and tended to avoid many responsibilities. From her came Theodore's humorous strain and delight in storytelling.

As a youth Theodore Roosevelt was frail, asthmatic, and nearsighted. He was educated by private tutors until he entered Harvard College in 1876, and he read voraciously even before glasses gave him almost normal vision. By his fourteenth year he had mastered Darwin. He also had begun to acquire the practical knowledge that enabled him to become an accomplished field naturalist. At Harvard, where he ranked twenty-first in a class of 171 and "second among the gentlemen," in his own phrase, he won election to Phi Beta Kappa, while gradually shifting his academic emphasis from natural history to political economy. He became a competent horseman, boxer, and marksman. He published (with a friend) a paper of professional quality on birds of the Adirondacks and wrote a senior thesis that called for limited voting rights for women and their "most absolute equality" in marriage. He also wrote the first two chapters of *The Naval War of 1812* (1882), a work of meticulous scholarship acclaimed in British and American naval circles alike.

By Roosevelt's graduation the qualities that were to attract, repel, or bemuse his countrymen for four decades became pronounced. He abounded in physical and mental energy, acted often on impulse and at times on shrewd calculation, and generally exuded warmth, affection, and charm. Yet he was rarely overly familiar; neither in college nor in the West, where cowboys addressed him as "Mister," did he lose his sense of station. He possessed the gift of words, though he limited their flow with difficulty; and even when he was moralizing, his force and imagery made him unfailingly interesting. A compulsive competitor, he could be, and sometimes was, ruthless. He was also resolute.

"See that girl," Roosevelt remarked at Harvard of Alice Hathaway Lee (Alice Hathaway Lee Roosevelt), a tall, graceful, and somewhat coquettish seventeen-year-old Brahmin from Chestnut Hill. "I am going to marry her. She won't have me, but I am going to have her." Four months after his graduation in June 1880 they were married. A few weeks earlier Roosevelt had enrolled in Columbia Law School. He was elected to the New York State Assembly the following autumn but continued to study law conscientiously. Only after Columbia raised its requirement to three years and the state changed its licensing procedure did he give up the formal study of law.

## Early Political Career

Politics at once gratified Roosevelt's craving for raw power and his urge to promote the common good. Nominally a Republican, he soon affronted party leaders by forcing an investigation of reports that a Republican-appointed justice of the state supreme court had colluded with Jay Gould and others in a "stock-jobbing" deal. He also pressed a bundle of "good government" measures on the GOP majority. Roosevelt, declared the mugwump *New York Evening Post*, had "accomplished more good than any man of his age and experience . . . in years." By the end of his third and last term his reputation for independence within a party framework was statewide. Furthermore, he had made a first break with laissez-faire. The extremes of poverty and wealth, he said of a union-sponsored measure to regulate working conditions, demand that we "modify the principles or doctrines on which we manage our system of government."

Midway through Roosevelt's third term in 1884, his wife died after giving birth to a daughter. He immersed himself in legislative matters to the end of the session, then sought solace on his ranch in western Dakota--"a land of vast silent spaces, a place of grim beauty." He wrote a deeply felt private memorial to his wife and never mentioned her again, not even to their daughter, Alice. For a while the 25-year-old widower considered a life of ranching, hunting, and writing. He expanded his cattle operation, published *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), and wrote *Thomas Hart Benton* (1887). He also began to prepare to write his magnum opus, the four-volume *Winning of the West* (1889-1896), a flawed and unevenly researched work with touches of brilliance.

Meanwhile politics and romance had drawn Roosevelt away from Dakota. In New York City in the fall of 1886 he ran as the Republican candidate for mayor, finishing a poor third to Democrat Abram S. Hewitt, the winner, and to Henry George, the author of *Progress and Poverty* and candidate of the United Labor party. Roosevelt then went to London, where on 2 December he married his childhood friend, Edith Kermit Carow (Edith Kermit Carow Roosevelt). A handsome, strong-willed woman four years his junior, Edith, he noted, "was not only cultured, but scholarly." Quietly, with a rapier-like thrust at times, she both moderated and helped sustain him. She also accepted many of his more disruptive actions in the realization that they "were best for him." She raised Alice Lee and, between 1887 and 1897, had four sons and a daughter of her own: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Kermit Roosevelt, Ethel, Archibald Roosevelt, and Quentin.

Three months after his remarriage, Roosevelt joined the ineffectual U.S. Civil Service Commission in Washington, D.C. He soon became chairman. Not only did he regard appointment and advancement on merit as a tangible measure of an open society, he viewed it as a linchpin of scientific administration. His imaginative and energetic enforcement of the law did much to make merit an integral, if hardly inclusive, component of federal governance. Concurrently, Roosevelt's political philosophy continued to mature. Too astute a student of nature to believe that Darwin's theory of natural selection applied unqualifiedly to human social evolution, he concluded that we should "modify the principles or doctrines" of government to create a more just social environment.

Roosevelt returned to New York in 1895 to serve two turbulently constructive years as president of the New York City Police Board. He regularized discipline, upgraded the selection of officers, and increased dismissals almost ten-fold. He also instituted a formal training program and partially modernized the force and its equipment. As a patrolman remarked when Roosevelt left to become assistant secretary of the navy in 1897, "It's tough on the force, for he was dead square, was Roosevelt, and we needed him in the business."

## **Role in the Spanish-American War**

Roosevelt's year in the navy department was in the same mode. He improved morale, administration, and tactical efficiency, and he publicized the case for increased naval power and technological

improvement. He also argued behind the scenes for war against Spain. Acting on his own while Secretary John D. Long was away from his office one afternoon ten days after the battleship *Maine* sank off Havana, Roosevelt enjoined Commodore George Dewey in Hong Kong to prepare to engage the Spanish fleet in the Philippines in the event of war. The order accorded with standing policy and was not reversed.

Hardly had war come in April than Roosevelt resigned to organize the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment under the command of Colonel Leonard Wood. It was soon dubbed the "Rough Riders." Roosevelt's "heart is right, and he means well," Secretary Long wrote, "but it is one of those cases of aberration-desertion-vain-glory." Actually, Roosevelt had been champing for war for years. As he later said, military combat afforded him the "chance to cut my little notch on the stick that stands as a measuring rod in every family." It was, furthermore, the ultimate test of national character. "No triumph of peace," he declared at the Naval War College in 1897, "is quite so great as the supreme triumph of war." The United States had to expand its influence or lose place, power, and prestige. "If . . . we lose the virile, manly qualities, and sink into a nation of mere hucksters . . . subordinating everything to mere ease of life, then we shall indeed reach a condition worse than that of the ancient civilizations in the years of their decay."

Promoted to commander of the regiment after the first skirmish in Cuba, Colonel Roosevelt led his unmounted cowboy and Ivy League volunteers to victory in a fierce battle for Kettle Hill, in the San Juan ridges outside Santiago. Alone on horseback, he was nicked on the elbow by a bullet as troopers fell on each side. Afterward he gloated that he had "doubled-up" a Spaniard and invited postbattle visitors to "look at these damned Spanish dead." In the field hospitals afterward, he acted with great sensitivity.

Less than two weeks after the Rough Riders were mustered out in September 1898, Colonel Roosevelt became the Republican gubernatorial candidate. Although New York State GOP leaders feared his independent strain, they deemed him the only Republican who could divert attention from charges of corruption in the administration of the Erie Canal. Predictably, his charisma and loudly trumpeted war record pushed him far enough ahead of the ticket to eke out a 17,794-vote victory.

The governorship foreshadowed Roosevelt's presidency. He deferred to the Republican leadership on small matters, fought it on large ones, and imbued officials with a heightened sense of the public trust. Convinced that many social and economic problems were beyond the capacity of cities and towns to solve, he inclined more and more toward centralized, interventionist government. He supported regulation of factories and limitations on the working hours of women and children. He approved an eight-hour day for state employees on the premise that the state should "set a good example as an employer." He spurred the legislature to repeal a law authorizing separate schools for blacks and whites on a local option basis. Terming light taxation of public utilities "an evident injustice," he also supported a franchise tax. Finally, he took important steps to conserve the state's forests, wildlife, and natural beauty. As the Democratic *New York World* conceded, "the controlling purpose and general course of his administration have been high and good."

## **Assuming the Presidency after McKinley's Assassination (1901)**

Meanwhile the governor's alienation of utility and insurance interests prompted Republican leaders to ease him out of the state by supporting him for vice president in 1900. Roosevelt won election in the Republican landslide and became president on 14 September 1901, the day after William McKinley died of an assassin's bullet. Just a month shy of his forty-third birthday he was the youngest chief executive in the nation's history.

Although Roosevelt promised to continue McKinley's policies "absolutely unbroken," he soon chartered his own course. He believed that the nation needed to match its administrative capacity to its economic and political capacity, and he aspired to create an administrative state staffed by experts and committed to regulation of *all* corporations in interstate commerce. His first annual message tried to deflect the states' rights argument against such a program:

When the Constitution was adopted . . . no human wisdom could foretell the sweeping changes . . . which were to take place at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time it was accepted as a matter of course that the several states were the proper authorities to regulate . . . the comparatively insignificant and strictly localized corporate bodies of the day. The conditions are now wholly different and wholly different action is called for.

Within months Roosevelt instituted antitrust proceedings against the Northern Securities Company, a western railroad combine organized by the J. P. Morgan and other interests. His motives were complicated. He sought to test the virtually defunct Sherman Antitrust Law, signal his independence from business and congressional leaders, and affirm his executive power. He hoped, furthermore, that the threat of dissolution would prompt sophisticated businessmen to support his regulatory program. Two years later the Supreme Court upheld the government, and some forty-three antitrust suits followed.

Despite Roosevelt's resultant image as "the great trustbuster," dissolution of trusts remained secondary to his larger object: continuous regulation. In 1903, while the Northern Securities Case was still in the courts, he prevailed on Congress to create a Bureau of Corporations empowered to inspect and publicize corporate earnings. Concurrently, he encouraged passage of the Elkins bill to prohibit railroad discrimination against small shippers.

Earlier Roosevelt had come perilously close to exposing his expansive conception of his office to a Supreme Court test. In October 1902 negotiations to end a bitter, five-month-long anthracite coal strike broke down. The president feared that a shortage of fuel that winter would provoke an urban crisis "only less serious than the civil war" and that failure to act might induce an "overturn" in the fall elections. He further persuaded himself that "the supreme law of duty to the republic" required him to act. Secretly he arranged for the army to take over the mines on signal. He then disclosed his intent to the mine operators, who agreed to appointment of an independent arbitration committee that he tipped in the miners' favor. This amounted to de facto recognition of the union and established a new precedent: federal intervention to foster negotiation of a labor dispute.

## **Second Term as President**

Roosevelt's election to a term "in his own right" in 1904 was a foregone conclusion. He overwhelmed his colorless, conservative Democratic opponent, Judge Alton B. Parker of New York, and swept dozens of GOP congressional candidates into office with him. Even Wall Street supported the president. As the *New York Sun* explained, businessmen preferred "the impulsive candidate of the party of conservatism to the conservative candidate of the party which business regards as permanently and dangerously impulsive." With characteristic moral earnestness, Roosevelt sapped much of his potential influence over Congress his last two years in office by announcing the night of his election that he would not run for reelection in 1908.

Concurrently, the president worked relentlessly to create a more just society based on "as well planned, economical, and efficient" a centralized administration as that of the great corporations. With consummate political skill, he persuaded Congress in 1906 to support the Hepburn railroad rate bill, the Pure Food and Drug bill, federal inspection of stockyards and packing houses, and limited employer's

liability. He further oversaw expansion of the civil service and encouraged appointment of many men of quality to second-tier positions. On the other hand, his cabinet appointees were undistinguished except for Elihu Root as secretary of state and, in some respects, William Howard Taft, the secretary of war.

More crucially, Roosevelt failed to transform his party into a dynamic agency of change. Republican leaders recoiled from his imperious use of power. They resented his stridency, his shrewd manipulation of the press, his use of his office as a "bully pulpit." They shared only marginally his progressive views on labor and consumer issues. And they had limited sympathy, if that, for his effort to create a new administrative state. From 1907 to the end of his administration they stood in open rebellion against him. They sided with the corporate opponents of his regulatory program, ignored six separate messages on abuse of the labor injunction, and rejected calls for tariff reduction for the Philippines. They refused to enact a model child labor law for the District of Columbia or to nationalize marriage and divorce laws. They further disregarded key recommendations of the Keep Commission on Department Methods.

Virtually giving up hope of constructive compromise, the president concentrated much of his energy on educating the public. In words that resonated with the allegations of journalists he had earlier branded "muckrakers," Roosevelt charged that representatives of "predatory wealth" were foiling his program, that corporations were purchasing politicians, and that the courts were depriving labor of the right to organize "under the guise of protecting property rights." In the older tradition of noblesse oblige and the newer mode of reform Darwinism, he insisted that it was "hypocritical baseness to speak of a girl who works in a factory where the dangerous machinery is unprotected as having the 'right' freely to contract to expose herself to dangers to life and limb." He called for guarantees of "a larger share of the wealth" to labor, and he proposed income, and especially inheritance, taxes on the very rich. He also challenged the sincerity of the opponents of federal regulation: "There has been a curious revival of the doctrine of State rights . . . by the people who know that the States cannot . . . control the corporations."

On race, political and temperamental considerations compromised Roosevelt's marginally advanced views. Thus, in a notorious incident in 1906, he summarily discharged "without honor" three companies of black soldiers for engaging in a "conspiracy of silence" over the fatal shooting of a white bartender in Brownsville, Texas. None of the discharged soldiers was ever tried in a court of law, military or civil; sixty years later close historical investigation pointed to white civilians as the probable culprits.

## **Roosevelt's Conservation Efforts**

Roosevelt continued, meanwhile, to push for rational use of the nation's natural resources. Driven by a holistic view of society and informed by his knowledge of nature as enriched by his experience in the West, his policies rested on a blend of applied science, administrative efficiency, and democratic ideals unexampled to that time. Central were the concepts, as propounded by Gifford Pinchot, chief forester of the United States, and others, that "every stream was a unit from its source to its mouth" and that natural resources had multiple uses: The forest should act as a reservoir, inhibit erosion of crop and grazing lands, and afford habitat to wildlife. It also should supply lumber for housing and other human purposes. Against the opposition of powerful members of his own party, and at times of both parties, Roosevelt pressed Congress and the states to place the future public interest above the current private interest. The reserves, he insisted, should be "set apart forever" for the benefit of all the people, not "sacrificed to the short-sighted greed of a few"; they should even provide "free camping grounds."

The first fruits of the multiple-use policy came with the Democratic-sponsored Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902. It encouraged federal construction of vast storage dams, ostensibly to irrigate small farms

at low cost. Three years later Roosevelt induced Congress to transfer the forest reserves from the Department of Interior to the rehabilitated Forest Service under Pinchot in Agriculture. A small revolution followed. Selective cutting was mandated, fees imposed for grazing on the public lands, overgrazing was reduced far below the level on private lands, and development of waterpower sites by private utilities was subjected to enlightened controls. An act of 1906 established the principle of fees for grazing on public lands, and a second law enabled Roosevelt to proclaim a notable series of national monuments from Mount Olympus to the Grand Canyon.

By 1907 Congress was even more hostile to Roosevelt's conservation program than to his proposals for incremental social and economic reforms. It prohibited the president from creating new national forests in six western states. (Roosevelt capitalized on the ten days he had to sign the measure by proclaiming twenty-one new forests embracing sixteen million acres.) It disregarded the multipurpose river valley recommendations of the Inland Waterways Commission and refused to continue the commission itself. It even declined, on a loosely related matter, to publish the seminal report of the Country Life Commission.

All this struck a heavy blow at the president's grand design for a new administrative state. Nonetheless, the sum of his achievements was impressive. Besides eighteen national monuments, he created 150 national forests, fifty-one bird reservations, and four national game preserves. Altogether 230 million acres were placed under federal protection. By calling the first national conference of governors in history in 1908, he also stimulated the formation of forty-one state conservation commissions. As his bitter enemy Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin wrote, Roosevelt had inspired "a world movement for . . . saving for the human race the things on which alone a peaceful, progressive, and happy life can be founded."

## **Foreign Policy in the Western Hemisphere**

Roosevelt also stamped his imprint on foreign policy with unusual force. He gloried in the opportunities for national expression afforded by world power, and he willingly shouldered the responsibilities thrust upon him. Occasionally he returned to the view that a far-flung empire was the hallmark of greatness. "Rome expanded and passed away," he wrote, "but all western Europe, both Americas, Australia and large parts of Asia and Africa to this day continue the history of Rome. . . . Spain expanded and fell, but a whole continent to this day . . . is covered with commonwealths of the Spanish tongue and culture. . . . England expanded and England will fall. But think of what she will leave behind her."

In practice, Roosevelt reacted far more to changes in the balance of power than to his own rolling periods. Assuredly, he maintained a hegemonic posture toward Latin America to the end of his presidency. But in the Pacific and elsewhere he sharply refined his conception of the national interest. He admitted an Asian country--Japan--into the group of "superior" nations sanctioned to dominate the world. He encouraged preparation of the Philippines for eventual independence. And he worked conscientiously to foster peace in both Europe and Asia. Even his vaunted buildup of the American navy was comparatively modest.

Roosevelt agreed with A. T. Mahan (*The Influence of Sea Power upon History*) and others that the United States needed a first-class navy to foster and protect its commercial and political interests. He also subscribed uncritically at first to Secretary of State John Hay's Open Door policy. But neither his commitment to Mahanism nor his support of the Open Door proved wholly consistent. His own supervision of the navy department was erratic, though constructive on balance, and that of the department's several secretaries was lackluster. Roosevelt reinvigorated McKinley's program of two new battleships a year and maintained it to 1905. Satisfied that the buildup made the United States "a

good second to France" and put it about on a par with Germany, he announced that a replacement policy would suffice. (Congress authorized two ships anyway.) Prompted by new international tensions in 1906, especially with Japan, Roosevelt returned to expansionism, including dreadnoughts. Significantly, he made no effort to increase the regular army's authorized strength of 85,555; his concern was tactical efficiency grounded on technological and administrative improvement, as exemplified by his earlier support of Secretary of War Root's modernization program.

From the beginning, Roosevelt's conviction that the Atlantic and Pacific oceans should be linked by a United States-controlled canal propelled him deep into Latin American affairs. In 1902 he apparently induced Kaiser Wilhelm II to resort to international arbitration of a dispute over payment of debts to German citizens. A year later he took the most controversial action of his presidency. Convinced that Colombia had played fast and loose in negotiations over United States construction of a canal through the Colombian state of Panama, he abetted a revolution by the Panamanians. One result was a legacy of ill will that Roosevelt himself augmented. "I took the canal zone," he declared in his autobiography, "and let Congress debate."

Thereafter, Roosevelt's resolve to restrict European influence in the Caribbean directly reflected his interest in the Panama Canal and its protection. In 1904, to preclude a debt-collection mission in Santa Domingo by Germany, Italy, and Spain, the president took over that revolution-wracked country's customs temporarily. He had, he explained, "about the same desire to annex it as a gorged boa constrictor might have to swallow a porcupine wrong-end-to." But he believed nonetheless that the United States had both the right and the duty to serve as a Western Hemisphere police force in the event of "chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society." Under this formulation, which became known as the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, he sent troops into Cuba to avert revolution in 1907.

## **A Balance of Power in the Pacific**

In the Pacific, where Roosevelt came to perceive the Philippines as "our heel of Achilles," he grew increasingly sensitive to the limits of American power as he maneuvered to create a balance of power. He viewed Japan as a counterpoise to Russia, and in 1902 he pledged the United States to silent partnership in the Japanese-British naval alliance. Three years later he fostered mediation of the Russo-Japanese War, partly to keep Japan from weighting the balance too heavily. The action earned Roosevelt the Nobel Peace Prize. Concurrently, he secretly acquiesced to Japanese suzerainty in Korea in return for a disclaimer of "any aggressive designs whatever" in the Philippines. In 1906 he denounced a decision by the San Francisco School Board to segregate Japanese schoolchildren as "a crime against a friendly nation" and then prevailed on the board and the Japanese government to accept a so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement" that provided for the board to rescind the segregation order and for Japan to curb the emigration of peasants and laborers.

The president made a final concession to Japan in 1908 while the American fleet was still on its world cruise. The nonbinding Root-Takahira Agreement implicitly recognized Japanese economic ascendancy in Manchuria in return for a reaffirmation of the status quo in the Pacific and the Open Door in China. Two years after he left office, Roosevelt tried to impress the limits of American power on his chosen successor, Taft, to accept the limits of American power. A successful war over the Open Door in Manchuria, he warned, "would require a fleet as good as that of England, plus an army as good as that of Germany."

On several other fronts, Roosevelt gave moderate support to international mechanisms. He did so without illusion; always his commitment to large American interests transcended his internationalist impulses. In 1903, for example, he virtually forced the British to support the American position in the

Alaskan boundary controversy with Canada. Yet he also believed that power carried the responsibility to promote peace even when the national interest was not directly involved, and in 1906 he fostered the Algeciras Conference to resolve a dispute between France and Germany. By the end of his administration Roosevelt had sponsored twenty-four binding arbitration treaties, cosponsored the Central American Peace Conference of 1907, and endorsed Root's plan for the Hague Conference to create a permanent Court of Arbitral Justice.

Less than a month after Roosevelt left the White House in March 1909, he went to Africa to hunt and incidentally collect fauna for the Smithsonian Institution. The Colonel, as he then preferred to be called, returned in 1910 to a Republican party beginning to split openly into conservative and progressive factions. Taft, who had long disapproved of Roosevelt's broad construction of presidential power, was aligned with the conservatives, Pinchot with the progressives. Roosevelt soon drove the wedge deeper. "This New Nationalism," he declared in a militant statement of his still-evolving views, "regards the executive power as the steward of the public welfare"; it further holds that the judiciary should protect "human welfare rather than . . . property."

### **The Run for a Third Term (1912)**

On 21 February 1912 the Colonel announced that his hat "is in the ring." He then embittered conservatives irreparably by endorsing the recall of state judicial decisions involving constitutional interpretation. Although he outpolled Taft by 2 to 1 in the Republican presidential primaries, he failed to win the GOP nomination because conservatives controlled the party machinery in nonprimary states. Reluctantly, for he knew that he could not win, he became the candidate of his fervent supporters, the newly formed Progressive ("Bull Moose") party.

The Progressive platform embodied much of the program Roosevelt had advocated in the last years of his presidency and amplified from 1910 to 1912. It called for "permanent active supervision" of corporations in interstate commerce, for income and inheritance taxes, and for medical, unemployment, and old age insurance. It also endorsed woman suffrage. Only on civil rights for blacks was it silent. Roosevelt won 27 percent of the popular vote in the general election--the highest ever recorded by a third-party candidate. But Woodrow Wilson, the moderately progressive Democratic governor of New Jersey, captured the presidency with 42 percent of the popular vote and forty states in the electoral college. Taft ran a weak third.

### **War in Europe**

In the next two years, Roosevelt wrote his autobiography, made a memorable sally into art criticism (the necessary penalty of creativity, he wrote of the historic Armory Show of 1913, "is a liability to extravagance"), and explored the unmapped River of Doubt in Brazil, renamed the "Rio Roosevelt." He also campaigned for Bull Moose congressional candidates, though with scant enthusiasm; the outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914 had radically altered his priorities.

The former president first viewed the war as a strategic realist: He perceived that a decisive Allied victory would disrupt the balance of power in Europe, and he feared that German domination of the Continent would challenge American hegemony in the Caribbean. He soon concluded, however, that Germany was the greater threat and that President Wilson should have protested the invasion of Belgium at the outset. Muting his views in deference to antiwar Progressive congressional candidates in the Midwest, Roosevelt waited until after the elections to arraign Wilson. Meanwhile he embarked on a lonely and politically courageous crusade for military preparedness.

For Roosevelt, Germany's warning in February 1915 that neutral ships risked destruction in the war zone around the British Isles completed the metamorphosis of the war from a strategic to a moral struggle. National character and American rights now became the transcendent issue. "We owe it not only to humanity but to our national self respect" to act, the Colonel declared when the British liner *Lusitania* was torpedoed in the war zone with the loss of 124 Americans. Hence his searing indictments of peace-at-any-price pacifists, his insistent demands for universal military service, his poignant statement when his youngest son was shot down over German-occupied France in 1918: "It is very dreadful that he should have been killed, it would have been worse if he had not gone."

Without quite calling for war, the Colonel worked resolutely to move the nation to war. Privately asserting that Republican presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes was somewhat more likely than Wilson to "rise to a very big height" in a crisis, he jettisoned the Progressive party in 1916 to support Hughes and the Republicans. With good cause, he blasted the Wilson administration for its demoralizing delays in industrial mobilization after the United States entered the war. He stiffened his demands "for one hundred percent, undivided loyalty," and he loosely read "Bolshevist" into labor strife. He even urged the public schools to stop teaching German. Yet he remained the progressive moralist on some issues. He scorned draft deferments for the privileged, fulminated against the making of "unearned and improper fortunes out of the war," and backed an effort by La Follette and others to increase an administration bill for a 60 percent excess profits tax. He further urged party and nation to pursue a moderately progressive course after the war.

Roosevelt's attitude toward a league of nations varied with his changing emphases on realism, nationalism, and internationalism. He had called for a world league to enforce peace in his Nobel Peace Prize address of 1910, and he had affirmed the concept in 1914, two years before President Wilson espoused it. In 1915 he said further discussion was "inopportune." Subsequently, he demanded unconditional surrender of Germany and dismissed Wilson's Fourteen Points as "Fourteen Scraps of Paper." He also deplored Wilson's failure to share his view of American dependence on British naval power. The Royal Navy, he insisted, "should be the most powerful in the world." Only after he decided to bring the GOP's nationalist and internationalist factions together in 1918 did he half-heartedly agree to support the idea of a league, and then only "as an *addition to*, . . . not as a *substitute for*," American military power. Had he lived, he probably would have been the Republican nominee for president in 1920. He died in his home, "Sagamore Hill," at Oyster Bay, Long Island.

In foreign affairs, Theodore Roosevelt's legacy is judicious support of the national interest and promotion of world stability through the maintenance of a balance of power; creation or strengthening of international agencies, and resort to their use when practicable; and implicit resolve to use military force, if feasible, to foster legitimate American interests. In domestic affairs, it is the use of government to advance the public interest. "If on this new continent," he said, "we merely build another country of great but unjustly divided material prosperity, we shall have done nothing."

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## Bibliography

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William H. Harbaugh

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## Online Resources

- Theodore Roosevelt Papers at the Library of Congress 1759-1919  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/trhtml/trhome.html>  
A preview collection from the Library of Congress's American Memory website. Includes selections from President Roosevelt's diaries.
- Theodore Roosevelt: His Life and Times on Film  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/trfhtml/trfhome.html>  
From the Library of Congress's American Memory website. Requires a plug-in to view the videos; features 104 film clips.
- Theodore Roosevelt: Icon of the American Century  
<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/roosevelt/index.htm>  
An online exhibit from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.
- The Nobel Peace Prize 1906

<http://www.nobel.se/peace/laureates/1906/>

From the Nobel e-Museum, the Official Web Site of The Nobel Foundation.

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<http://www.anb.org/articles/06/06-00569.html>;

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