**American Imperialism and the State, 1893–1921**

How did the acquisition of overseas colonies affect the development of the American state? How did the constitutional system shape the expansion and governance of the American empire? *American Imperialism and the State* offers a new perspective on these questions by recasting American imperial governance as an episode of state building. Colin Moore argues that the empire was decisively shaped by the efforts of colonial state officials to achieve greater autonomy in the face of congressional obstruction, public indifference, and limitations on administrative capacity. Drawing on extensive archival research, this book focuses principally upon four cases of imperial governance – Hawai'i, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti – to highlight the essential tension between American mass democracy and imperial expansion.

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*For Cynthia Moore and*
*to the memory of John Moore*

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# Preface and Acknowledgments

In the late 1970s, the historian James A. Field, Jr. took to the pages of the *American Historical Review* to describe his frustrations with the study of American expansion at the end of the nineteenth century. His provocatively titled essay, "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book," excoriated the profession for developing a "curious narrative" that relied on "an inverted Whig interpretation of history, differing from its predecessor primarily in that now the children of darkness triumph over the children of light."[1] Although scholars have made considerable progress since Field's witty essay appeared, much work remains to be done on the *politics* and *administration* of American expansion.

*American Imperialism and the State* offers a new interpretation of US expansion at the turn of the twentieth century that focuses on the institutions and structures of the nascent American empire. It argues that we must see the acquisition and governance of overseas colonies as a formative moment in American state development – one that loomed large in the minds of several presidents and the early architects of American foreign policy in the twentieth century. The concern, for many of them, was whether the American constitutional system was compatible with long-lasting formal empire.

To explore this question, this book focuses principally upon four cases of American imperial governance – Hawai'i, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti – to show how the American empire *developed* and *adapted* to the constraints of the American system of separated powers. Although the formal American empire of colonies, dependencies, and protectorates would largely give way to less obvious forms of imperial control, the organizational structures developed to govern the new colonies offer us a unique window into the development of the American foreign policy state, and present some more general challenges to standard stories of American state building and the development of American foreign relations. In short, a central claim of this book is that the evolution of the

[1] James A. Field, Jr., "American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book," *American Historical Review* 83 (June 1978): 644–5.

American empire cannot be understood without fully understanding the interplay of political institutions that governed this empire.

If the US empire was exceptional, it was not because American liberal traditions made it more benevolent than its competitors. In making this argument, I join scholars such as Julian Go who has observed that "America's national character had little to do with the forms of rule the United States enacted in its colonies."[2] Where this book departs from Go's incisive analysis is its focus on the structure of the American state and the autonomous actions of state officials. In the pages to come, I show how Congress and the American constitutional system constrained the imperial dreams of two presidents and officials in the executive branch – and would eventually lead to the empire's partial collapse by the 1920s. Yet the strategies and institutional capacities developed to overcome these congressional and constitutional restraints would also, I argue, lay the foundations for the modern executive-dominated security state.

My hope is that this book will contribute to an emerging conversation in political science about the role of territorial expansion and empire in shaping the American state. It is my view that American political development requires a clear understanding of American imperialism, but political science – a discipline where the exceptionalism of the United States is frequently taken as a starting point for analysis – has remained surprisingly silent about this period. When it is mentioned, it is too often dismissed as an aberrant or ultimately irrelevant moment in American history. Yet by focusing on the domestic state to develop their theories, scholars have missed an opportunity to apply insights from historical institutional studies of American state building to explain state action in an international context.

This book is meant to fill this gap in the literature by focusing on the development of an overseas American empire. In doing so, I intend for it to provide a historical complement to work on inter-institutional theories of American foreign policy. Second, the book is meant to offer a new analytic perspective to existing narratives of US imperialism. By adopting a state-centered view, this book diverges from accounts that view the development of US empire through the lens of power politics, American racism, indigenous resistance, and local conditions in the colonized nations. Nevertheless, I see this work as a complement, rather than a challenge, to these perspectives. I hope that the historians and sociologists who pioneered these critical studies of American imperialism will agree.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the lengthy acknowledgments that begin so many academic books puzzled me. How, I wondered, given the solitary nature of scholarship, could an author possibly have so many people to thank? I now understand. In the process of writing this book, I have managed to incur more than my fair share of debts to friends, colleagues, and institutions. And now, much to my great delight, I have the privilege to thank them.

The first thanks go to my teachers. As an undergraduate at Swarthmore College, Rick Valelly first introduced me to political science. Were it not for his inspirational teaching and enthusiasm for the study of American political development, it is unlikely that I ever would have gone to graduate school. This book began as a

[2] Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25.

dissertation in the Department of Government at Harvard University. During my years as a graduate student, Eric Schickler's unrivaled knowledge of the Progressive-era Congress greatly improved my understanding of the political dynamics of American imperialism. Theda Skocpol's brilliance and deep understanding of state development and comparative historical research was matched only by her support and generosity in discussing this project from its earliest stages. My greatest debt is to my advisor, Daniel Carpenter. Throughout the process of researching and writing this book – indeed, throughout all of my time as a graduate student and a junior professor – Dan has been a patient and encouraging force. He was among the first people to see the value in this project, and he helped me shape the argument over countless cups of coffee – and even a few fly-fishing trips to western Massachusetts.

This book would not have been completed without the generous support of several institutions. I am indebted to the National Science Foundation and the Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University for financial support during my years as a graduate student. The Center for the Study of American Politics at Yale University gave me the time to finish my dissertation and to begin the process of transforming it into this book. I am particularly grateful to Stephen Skowronek for his advice and support during my time at Yale. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Scholars in Health Policy Research program gave me two years away from teaching. This time allowed me to add several new sections to the manuscript under the guidance of Margaret Weir and John Ellwood at the University of California, Berkeley. Finally, my thanks go to Cambridge University Press for graciously allowing me to adapt, for Chapters 1, 4, and 5, portions of my article "State Building Through Partnership: Delegation, Public-Private Partnerships, and the Political Development of American Imperialism, 1898–1916," *Studies in American Political Development* (2011), 25: 27–55.

Over the last four years, the University of Hawai'i has proven to be an ideal place to complete this project. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Hokulani Aikau, Debora Halbert, Brien Hallett, Manfred Henningsen, Jon Goldberg-Hiller, Ehito Kimura, Neal Milner, Lawrence Nitz, Noenoe Silva, Manfred Steger, and Myungji Yang for their advice and *aloha*. They all discussed my ideas at length in the office and over long dinners in Kaimuki, barbeques on Kaimana Beach, and ridge hikes in the Ko'olau Range.

As I worked on this book over the years, I relied on a network of extraordinary friends who made the process bearable with their sound advice and good humor. Special thanks go to Scott Burns, Jonah Eaton, Dan Hopkins, Annaliesse Hyser, Doug Kriner, Ryan Moore, Dann Nassemullah, Andrew Reeves, Lizzie Rothwell, Danny Schlozman, and Spencer Strub who listened patiently as I prattled on about obscure Progressive-era figures in Cambridge, Philadelphia, and Berkeley. Bob Eaton and Wendy Batson provided me with an evening meal and a bed in Takoma Park, which made the months of archival research in Washington so much easier.

My biggest debt, of course, is to my family. My aunt, Glory Styles, knew just when I needed to take a break from work to explore the East Bay's culinary scene. Despite being occupied with their own careers, my brother and sister kept my spirits high even when they must have wondered if I was really making any progress at all. I dedicate this book to my mother, Cynthia, and to the memory of my father, John. Their love and support made it possible.

# List of Abbreviations

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| Allen Papers | Henry T. Allen Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| American Historical Collection | American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University. Quezon City, The Philippines |
| Barrows Papers | David P. Barrows Papers, The Bancroft Library, University of California. Berkeley, CA |
| BIA | Bureau of Insular Affairs |
| Bryan Papers | William Jennings Bryan Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Butler Papers | Personal Papers of Major General Smedley D. Butler, Marine Corps Research Center. Quantico, VA |
| Caperton Papers | William Caperton Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Cooper Papers | Henry A. Cooper Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society. Madison, WI |
| Dole Papers | Sanford B. Dole Papers, Hawai'i State Archives. Honolulu, HI |
| Edwards Papers | Clarence Edwards Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Boston, MA |
| Forbes Papers | W. Cameron Forbes Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. Cambridge, MA |
| FRUS | *Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office) |
| Harrison Papers | Francis Burton Harrison Papers in the Burton Norvell Harrison Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |

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| Hay Papers | John Hay Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Hollander Papers | Jacob Hollander Papers, National Archives and Records Administration II. College Park, MD |
| Jessup Papers | Philip Jessup Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Knox Papers | Philander Knox Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| LeRoy Papers | James A. LeRoy Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI |
| Lodge Papers | Henry Cabot Lodge Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Boston, MA |
| Republic of Hawai'i Records | Republic of Hawai'i Records, Hawai'i State Archives. Honolulu, HI |
| RG 46 | Records of the Committee on the Philippines, Senate Records, RG 46, National Archives and Records Administration I. Washington, DC |
| RG 59 | Records of the Department of State, RG 59, National Archives and Records Administration II. College Park, MD |
| RG 139 | Records of the Dominican Customs Receivership, RG 139, National Archives and Records Administration II. College Park, MD |
| RG 233 | Records of the Committee on Insular Affairs, House Records, RG 233, National Archives and Records Administration I. Washington, DC |
| RG 284 | Records of the Government of American Samoa, RG 284, National Archives and Records Administration at San Francisco. San Bruno, CA |
| RG 350 | Records of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, RG 350, National Archives and Records Administration II. College Park, MD |
| Root Papers | Elihu Root Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Smith Papers | James F. Smith Papers, Washington State Historical Society. Tacoma, WA |
| Story Papers | Moorfield Story Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Taft Papers | William Howard Taft Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Washington, DC |
| Worcester Papers | Dean C. Worcester Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI |