

## **II. America Transformed**

### A. The First Small Step: The Spanish-American War of 1898

1. In order to understand how America abandoned its policy of political separation to become the world police power, we need to look at a series of three wars.
2. The first minor conflict that launched America on its career of policing began as a war of independence for the people of Cuba against their Spanish rulers.
3. Unlike the rest of the Ibersphere, Cuba had not become independent prior to the Monroe Doctrine.
4. Americans watched as the Spanish Empire brutally suppressed the independence movement in the war. Spain became the first modern country to make use of concentration camps, where citizens were taken and forced to live in essentially prison-like conditions, simply to prevent them from helping the rebels.
5. Americans were deeply disturbed by what they learned of the war, but they wanted to keep following the Monroe Doctrine.
6. Strangely, an American battleship, the *USS Maine*, was sent to Havana (the capital of Cuba) to protect American “interests,” and then was destroyed by a powerful explosion, which was blamed on Spain.
7. This seemed to provide a reason for intervention that had not existed before. “*Remember the Maine! And don’t forget the starving Cubans!*” was a new rallying cry heard around America.
8. Once America committed to war, it was an easy victory. Spain had been struggling to put down the rebellion, and America was already more powerful than Spain, which also had to send its forces all the way across the Atlantic Ocean.
9. Through the **Spanish-American War of 1898** Americans got their first “taste” of policing the world. They were proud of themselves for helping Cuba. They were proud of their military for performing so well. They started to think of themselves as a “great” power.

### B. When America Began to Change Into What It Is: World War I (1914-19)

1. In 1914, yet another great European war began.
2. At first president Woodrow Wilson said the war was one “*with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us.*”
3. Following the Monroe Doctrine, the United States stayed neutral from 1914 to 1917.
4. President Wilson was even re-elected on the slogan, “*He has kept us out of war.*”
5. And yet America entered World War I in 1917.
6. President Wilson explained that in his view, “*the world must be made safe for democracy.*” The United States is the country that it is today,

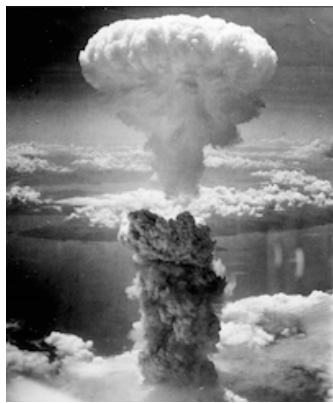


President Woodrow Wilson gave America a new mission: making the world “safe for democracy.”

because it first accepted this responsibility in World War I, and accepts this responsibility as normal today.

C. Saving The World A Second Time: World War II (1939-45)

1. 117,000 Americans died in World War I.
2. Americans were very upset and rejected Wilson's concept of making the world safe. They chose a new president, Warren Harding, who promised a "return to normalcy"—which meant a return to the "normal" policy of political separation.
3. So when World War II arrived, the United States remained apart. It did not join World War II from 1939 to 1941.
4. Then Japan launched a sneak attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, with the goal of crippling America's navy.
5. The attack failed to achieve the desired outcome. United States entered the war and played the decisive role in defeating Japan and its ally Nazi Germany.



The explosion that destroyed Nagasaki is captured in this photograph. Atomic bombs are so powerful that a single bomb can destroy an entire city. The explosion produces a huge, characteristic "mushroom cloud" that extends far up into the atmosphere.