Contending Explanations of Progressive Imperialism

“Wisconsin School” (Economic Determinants)

- US sought export markets abroad to absorb surplus production at home
- After 1873, US economy experiences deflation and over-production.
- Agriculture dependent on exports (e.g., 2/3rds of US cotton production was exported)

.. but …

- Major markets were in Europe and Latin America; not Asia
- US extra-continental territorial expansion is limited:
  o Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines
  o no major export markets seized

Ideological Sources of Imperialism

Merchants and Missionaries

- exporters favor increased US influence abroad
- missionaries pursue US influence in Asia to further evangelization

Political Visionaries

- T. Roosevelt, H. C. Lodge
- US Navy (A.T. Mahan) advocates seapower
Response to International Pressure

- limited threat from Asia or L. America
- Britain withdrawing from Western Hemisphere (Venezuela, 1895-96)