Americanism vs. Imperialism, Andrew Carnegie:

Andrew Carnegie was one of the most important American industrialists of the late 19th and early 20th century, the founder of U.S. Steel, and a major philanthropist. Late in life he advocated various causes associated with international peace and cooperation. He was a prominent opponent of American annexation of the Philippines.

FOR several grave reasons I regard possessions in the Far East as fraught with nothing but disaster to the Republic. Only one of these, however, can now be considered -- the dangers of war and of the almost constant rumors and threats of war to which all nations interested in the Far East are subject. . . . There is seldom a week which does not bring alarming reports of threatened hostilities, or of new alliances, or of changes of alliances, between the powers arming for the coming struggle.

It is only four years since Japan defeated China and had ceded to it a portion of Chinese territory, the fruits of victory. Then appeared upon the scene a combination of France, Russia and Germany, which drove Japan out of China. Russia took part of the spoils for herself, and Germany later took territory near by. Japan got nothing. Britain, the most powerful of all, stood by neutral. Had she decided to defend Japan, the greatest war ever known would have been the probable result; the thunderbolt would have fallen. Were the question to be decided to-day, it is now considered probable that Britain would support Japan. . . . Into this magazine the United States proposes to enter and take a hand in the coming contest. It is obvious that what was done with Japan in regard to Chinese territory may be done with the United States in regard to her territory, the Philippines, and for the same reason, that the dictator is overwhelmingly strong and the victim helplessly weak.

The relative strength of the powers contending for Empire in the Far East is as follows: Great Britain has 80 first class ships of war, 581 warships in all; France has 50 first class warships, and a total of 403; Russia has 40 first class warships, 286 in all; Germany has 28 first
class warships, a total of 216. Japan will soon rank with Germany, and be stronger there because close to the scene of action. The United States proposes to enter into the zone of danger with 18 first class, and a total of 81 ships. These would hardly count as half that number, however, owing to her greater distance from the battle ground. . . .

I say, therefore, that no American statesman should place his country in any position which it could not defend, relying only upon its own strong right arm. Its arm at present is not much to depend upon; its 81 ships of war are too trifling to be taken into account; and as for its army, what are its 56,000 regulars? Its volunteers are being disbanded. Both its Navy and its Army are good for one thing only for easy capture or destruction by either one of the stronger powers. It is the protection of Britain, and that alone, upon which we have to rely in the Far East slender thread indeed. Upon the shifting sands of alliances we are to have our only foundation. . . . in order to make herself an imperial power she must do as imperial powers do -- she must create a navy equal to the navy of any other power. She must have hundreds of thousands of regular troops to co-operate with the navy.

…What shall we do with the Philippines? These are not ours, unless the Senate approves the Treaty; but, assuming that it will, that question arises. The question can best be answered by asking another: What have we promised to do with Cuba? The cases are as nearly parallel as similar cases usually are. We drove Spain out of both Cuba and the Philippines. Our ships lie in the harbors of both. Our flag waves over both.