

The Open Door Policy

Background

The U.S. Open Door Policy had to do with China. By the mid-1800s, China had been closed to outsiders for many centuries. Trade with other countries was prohibited or strictly limited. Throughout the 1800s, China suffered from internal conflicts and wars with other countries. It became known as the "sick man of Asia". China was even defeated by Japan, a much smaller nation, in the Sino-Japanese war in 1894. European nations tried to take advantage of China's weakness. Britain, Germany, Russia, and France rushed to establish rights for trade within China. By 1900, these nations had carved China up into spheres of influence". These were areas where a foreign nation controlled trade as well as economic development. This would include railroad construction, mining, and other key industries.

U.S. Purposes

The United States was very worried about these developments in China. The United States at the time had three strong beliefs about foreign trade. The first was that the growth of the U.S. economy depended on exports. Since the U.S. could produce such much, it relied on exports to continue to expand its economy. China with its many millions of people was a huge potential market for U.S. manufactured goods. The second was the belief that the United States had the right to keep foreign markets open. Since the beginnings of the nation, the U.S. had believed in the right of all nations to trade freely and openly. The U.S. felt it was justified in using force if necessary to defend free trade. The third belief was that if one area was closed to U.S. products, people, or ideas, the United States itself was threatened. The government believed it was protecting the nation's security by keeping markets open.

As a result of these factors, the U.S. decided to adopt the Open Door Policy with China. In 1899, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay established the Open Door Policy. This policy declared that other nations must share trading rights in China with the United States. Trade with China would proceed through an "open door". The European nations decided they had to agree with the United States. The Chinese themselves were not even consulted

Effects

The Open Door Policy resulted in the U.S. becoming much more involved in China and Asia. There were three important events that highlighted this new involvement. The first was the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Many Chinese resented European and American dominance over China. In 1900, a group that Westerners called "Boxers" (because they used martial arts) attacked foreigners in China's major cities. Hundreds of Christian missionaries and others were killed. The United States joined with other trading countries, as well as Japan, to defeat the "Boxer Rebellion" with troops. Thousands of Chinese were killed. After the Boxer Rebellion, the U.S. strengthened the Open Door policy by stating it would "safeguard for the world" open trade with China.

As President, Theodore Roosevelt supported the Open Door policy in China and worked to prevent any single nation from controlling trade there. This concern prompted Roosevelt to step in and negotiate peace in a war between Japan and Russia in 1905. The two nations had been fighting for control of trading ports and other territories in China. Roosevelt convinced the two nations to stop fighting and seek no further territory. For his efforts in ending this war, Roosevelt won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1906.

President Roosevelt continued to worry, though, about the growing power and influence of Japan. This concern led to the third important event. In 1907, Roosevelt sent 16 battleships of the new United States Navy, known as the "Great White Fleet" on a voyage around the world. The purpose of this voyage was to show off U.S. military power. The ships made a stop in Japan to demonstrate that the U.S. could and would defend its interests in China and the rest of Asia.

The principles of the Open Door policy were used to guide U.S. foreign policy for many years. The United States continued to use persuasion and force to keep markets open.

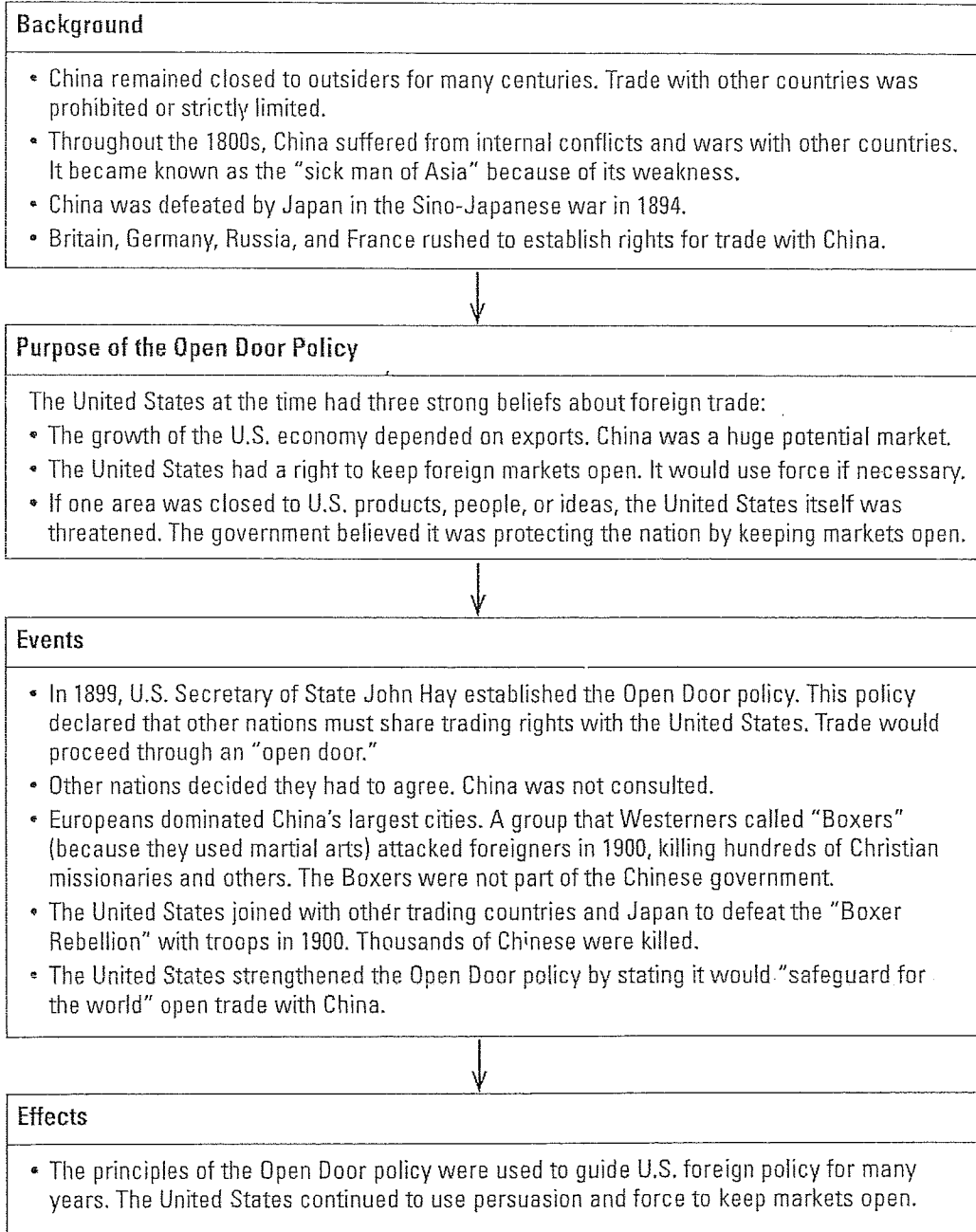
REVIEW

CALIFORNIA CONTENT
STANDARD 11.4.1

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Specific Objective: List the purpose and effects of the Open Door Policy.

Read the chart to answer questions on the next page.



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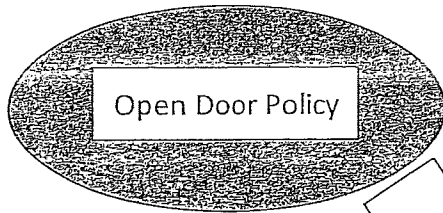
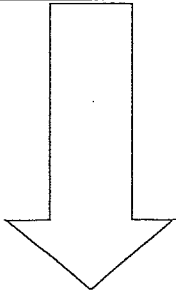
Definition:

Evidence of China's Weakness

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

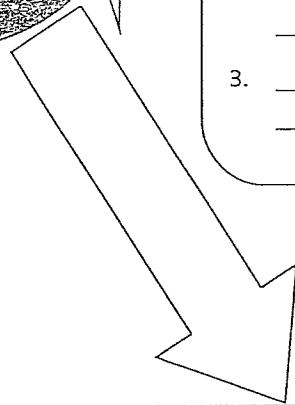


U.S. Purposes or Reasons

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____



Results of Open Door Policy

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
