

Foreign policy is an outer side of the nation's life, and this applies even more to the foreign policy of the United States. Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. sums up this statement in his excellent book *The Cycles of American History* writing: "The foreign policy is the face a nation wears to the world."¹ Tremendous growth of the United States during the 19th century set up conditions, which helped to the 'Colossus of the North' to assume during the 20th century a role of the most important world power. Especially because of the result of the Cold War and the recent course of international events, political scientists are comparing present position of the United States with the Roman or British Empire in a peak of their power.²

One of the most interesting aspects of a study of American history is its uninterrupted continuity and 'logic,' which consequently brings forward strong appeal to our presence. By continuity I mean creation of a national identity or a 'common identity' of the American nation. A line between the past and the present in case of the United States is very strong.³ If we accept the statement of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., then the face of the American nation obtained mature features during the second half of the 19th century. The process of framing of principal characteristics and features on which the American foreign policy has been based throughout the 20th century until today had been finished during the last thirty years of the 19th century. Therefore, the main purpose of this dissertation will be to analyze the formation of foreign policy of the United States during the years 1848 – 1898, when the Spanish – American War could serve us as a 'climax' of one period of U.S. history, in which it assumed a position of unquestionable leader of the Western Hemisphere. That was a pre-step towards joining of the 'club' of world powers.