The Spanish-American War 1898

Becoming a World Power
Great Power on a World Stage

• 1890—Spanish empire had been reduced to Cuba, Philippines, Puerto Rico, and a few smaller islands

• Harsh treatment of Cubans by Spanish:
  – Cubans were peasants and laborers that worked on sugar and tobacco plantations
    • US raised tariff (tax) on foreign sugar—lead to unemployment
  – Cuban exiles in the US, led by Jose Marti, declared Cuban independence in 1895
  – Spanish used brutal methods to repress uprising
  – Raised humanitarian concerns in the US
Yellow Journalism

• Humanitarian concerns in Cuba were reported in newspapers like Joseph Pulitzer’s New York World and William Randolph Hearst’s New York Journal

• Newspapers DELIBERATELY sensationalized (exaggerated) the news
  – Yellow Journalism depicted Spaniards as murderous brutes in order to sell more newspapers
    • Gave Americans an inaccurate picture of events in Cuba
Triggering Events

• Early 1898 - a letter by De Lome, the Spanish ambassador published in American newspapers
  – De Lome letter outraged Americans by calling President McKinley “weak”

• U.S.S. Maine was sent to Cuba to protect lives and property of Americans
  – U.S.S. Maine was sunk by an explosion that killed 258 U.S. sailors
    • Cause of explosion remains unknown
    • Hearst and Pulitzer blamed Spanish for sabotage
DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY

$50,000!
$50,000 REWARD!
For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt Convinced the Explosion of the War Ship Was Not an Accident.

The Journal Offers $50,000 Reward for the Conviction of the Criminals Who Sent 258 American Sailors to Their Death. Naval Officers Unanimous That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.

NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINER

Hidden Mine or a Sunken Torpedo Believed to Have Been the Weapon Used Against the American Man-of-War—Officers and Men Tell Thrilling Stories of Being Blown Into the Air Amid a Mass of Shattered Steel and Exploding Shells—Survivors Brought to Key West Scout the Idea of Accident—Spanish Officials Protest Too Much—Our Cabinet Orders a Searching Inquiry—Journal Sends Divers to Havana to Report Upon the Condition of the Wreck.
Sinking of the Maine

- Set off a firestorm of protests in the United States
- Spanish government was willing to halt fighting against Cuban rebels and open camps of Cuban prisoners, but refused to grant Cuban independence
The Spanish-American War Begins...

• Fought on two fronts—Pacific Ocean and Caribbean

• Shortly after start, U.S. Pacific fleet sent to Philippines to aid Filipino rebels
  – Already in a revolt against Spanish
  – Navy defeated Spanish ships in Manila Bay
THE AMERICAN EMPIRE IN 1903

LEGEND
- National boundary
- United States
- Span. Empire
- Fmr. Spanish Possessions

Cuba under U.S. occupation 1898 to 1902; semi-colonial rule until 1959
Panama U.S. protectorate 1903-39
Spanish American War

- Theodore Roosevelt raised a volunteer force—“Rough Riders”
- Rough Riders defeated Spanish forces at San Juan Hill in Cuba
- Navy also took Guantanamo Bay
- Some troops withdrew because of Yellow Fever
- Other forces occupied Guam and Puerto Rico
- Within 4 months, Spain was defeated
Results

- American forces occupied **Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam**
- Spanish-American War marked **end of Spain’s colonial empire**
- War is considered a **turning point** because it established the US as a World Power!
- US demonstrated naval strength
Puerto Rico
Guam
Cuba
Philippines

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