

A review of american history

[History](#), [American History](#)



The Spanish-American war started with the declaration of war on April 25, 1898 by the United States on Spain following several incidents.

These two incidents that prompted US President McKinley to ask Congress for a declaration of war was the sinking of the American Battleship Maine in Havana harbor with 260 people and the interception of a private letter written by Spanish Minister Dupuy De Lome in Washington describing McKinley as a “ weak man and a bidder for the admiration of the crowd” (Brinkley, 320).

This stirred and fan the American public’s uproar against the Spanish’ brutal occupation of Cuba and many Americans initially supported the war initiative.

Meanwhile, during this time in history, a lot of global stirrings were already prompting the other superpowers to “ slice the global cake” with vulnerable continents and countries like Africa and the weak Chinese Empire. The US government has had its taste of “ conquering” so called dependent people - the American Indians. This experience and the expansionist moves of the other superpowers started the US expansionism tendencies which were further stoked by the so called “ yellow press” or sensationalist journalism.

Meanwhile, huge American businesses have also been expanding overseas - beyond American boundaries in search of sources of raw materials, cheap labor and market for its own products.

Thus, when the two incidents (Maine and Dupuy’s letter) occurred almost simultaneously, the opportunity to intervene in Cuban affairs presented itself with the overwhelming support of the American public and added pressure

from the American business community who has huge investments in Cuba. Soon, the war against Spain reached not only the shores of Cuba but also Puerto Rico, the Philippine Islands, Guam, and other islands like Hawaii and Alaska.

While the sensationalism of the news from Cuba stirred the American Public's support, it was in the same manner - through the news wire that American public learned about the brutal annexation of the Philippine islands and the subjugation of its rebellion for freedom initially fought against its Spanish rulers, then later on, with its new colonizers - the US government.

No less than the famous American author Mark Twain objected to the colonization of the Philippines knowing that like the Cuban rebels, there was an organized Filipino rebellion against Spain prior to the intrusion of the US government into the Philippine islands. Mark twain openly pointed out the enormous contradictions between the US claim of "benevolent" foreign policy and its brutal occupation of the islands.

When US involvement became progressively more difficult to justify, and eventually came to be defended on the grounds that the U. S. could not retire from it without suffering "dishonor" according to then President McKinley, Twain advocated the position that "An inglorious peace is better than a dishonorable war" (Cushing, 1998).

Meanwhile, the war in Cuba was referred to as "a splendid little war" by Secretary of State John Hay (Brinkley, 320). The war was over in as little as four months. The actual battlefield casualties on the American's side were 460 but about 5, 200 died of diseases (Brinkley, 320). The joint forces of the

Cuban rebels and the American Naval blockade already toppled whatever little resistance the Spanish forces mustered to put up.

According to Brinkley's chronology of events (321), the U. S. troops won four decisive battles within a week. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. What begun as a war to help the Cubans free themselves from Spain's brutal government ended up as the US government practically wrangling control over Spain's former colonies - Cuba, the Philippine Islands and Puerto Rico in 1917.

At this time, many Americans who first supported the efforts against Spain now swayed public opinion against the continuing US expansionism and brutal annexation of other countries. The true colors and objectives of the US going to war " to help the Cuban rebels" swiftly shifted not long after the war was declared.