

The Spanish-American War of 1898

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá Španělsko-americkou válkou, která je považována za jednu z nejkratších a pro Spojené státy americké pak jednu z nejvlivnějších válek v historii. Moderní dějiny neznají jiný případ, kdy vítězná strana dosáhla takových politických a územních zisků, a to za pouhých 113 dní války. Práce se nejprve zaměřuje na události, které konfliktu předcházely a které tak negativně ovlivnily vztah Spojených států amerických a Španělska. Obsahuje stručný náhled do dění konce devatenáctého století, zmiňuje politiku amerického izolacionismu, stoupající napětí na španělských koloniích a taky vliv žlutého tisku na americkou společnost. Důraz je především kladen na průběh války a její závěr. V neposlední řadě se tato práce věnuje mírovému procesu, do kterého spadá Pařížská smlouva a poté následkům války, které byly pro obě země dalekosáhlé.

Klíčová slova: Španělsko-americká válka, Spojené státy americké, Španělsko, Monroeová doktrína, Tellerův a Plattův dodatek, USS Maine, Žlutý tisk, Imperialismus, Pařížská smlouva

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the Spanish-American war, which is considered one of the shortest and for the United States of America one of the most influential wars in history. Modern history knows no other case in which the victorious party had made such political and territorial gains in just 113 days of the war. The thesis first focuses on the events that preceded the conflict and which thus negatively affected the relationship between the United States and Spain. It briefly documents the end of the nineteenth century, and also mentions the policy of American isolationism, rising tensions in the Spanish colonies and the influence of Yellow Journalism on American society. The emphasis is primarily on the course of the war and its conclusion. Finally, this thesis discusses the peace process, which includes the Treaty of Paris and then the consequences of the war, which were far-reaching for both countries.

Keywords: The Spanish-American War, the United States, Spain, Monroe Doctrine, Teller and Platt Amendment, USS Maine, Yellow Journalism, Imperialism, Treaty of Paris

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INTRODUCTION

In 1898, the United States declared war on Spain, marking the first time that American troops fought major battles outside their own country's borders since the war with Mexico. The armistice that stopped hostilities on August 12 was signed only three and a half months after President William McKinley announced a war on April 25. However, the roots of the tension between Spain and the United States go deep into the history of both countries. The results of the war altered the global power balance in ways that are still evident today.

For Spain, the defeat in the war meant the end of a centuries-long decline from imperial power. For the United States, it was the start of what would become known as the “birth of the American century”. The isolationist shell had been shattered, and a new American empire emerged, stretching from the Caribbean to the Far East. As the ambassador of the United States in London, John Hay, put it, “it was a splendid little war,” transforming a former colony into a global power. Only approximately three hundred American soldiers were killed in combat, but another two thousand died of tropical diseases.¹ Cuba, the Spanish colony, had been rebelling against its mother country for years, and the struggle had gradually gained attention in the United States, where some people began to sympathize with the Cubans, picturing them as warriors fighting for their independence akin to the American Revolution. When the USS Maine exploded in Havana harbour in February 1898, the tension between the two countries escalated. While the United States military investigated the cause of the explosion, American newspapers already reported that it had been sabotaged by the Spanish. Even though the explosion of the USS Maine led the United States to finally declare war on Spain, it was only one of the factors that precipitated the conflict.

This thesis begins by briefly documenting the end of the nineteenth century and identifying the events that led up to the war with Spain in 1898. The focus then shifts to the course of the war and finally, its consequences, particularly for the United States. The purpose of this thesis is to provide answers to questions such as: What were the reasons for the Spanish-American War? Was the United States solely interested in assisting Cuba's freedom, or were other factors at play? What prompted the United States to take a different approach to the newly acquired territories, and why, unlike Cuba and the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico remain under the United States administration?

¹ George A. O'Toole, *The Spanish War: An American Epic 1898* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1986),

1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Once the greatest in the world, the Spanish Empire was the first to extend its power beyond the European continent. However, after the French invasion in 1808 under Napoleon Bonaparte, the world's first superpower found itself on the verge of collapse.

As other European nations were expanding their empires for most of the nineteenth century, Spain held only a few territories under its control. The only Spanish territory in America was Cuba and Puerto Rico because much of Latin America, from Argentina to Mexico, was liberated from its colonial rule in the early nineteenth century. They also retained control of a few small areas in Africa and the Philippines, Guam, and a few nearby islands in the Pacific Ocean. Several of those countries, though, were revolting and seeking independence from Spanish rule.²

1.1 The Spanish Era

When Christopher Columbus landed in the New World in 1492, the Spanish empire was becoming a dominant power in Europe. The precious metals obtained from the New World then enabled Spain to dominate the world stage. Their influence continued to grow as they had great control over the Catholic Church, the only recognized form of Christianity in Western Europe, for many years.³ At its height, Spanish kings reigned over parts of Italy, the Netherlands, central Europe, Latin America, and Asia, including the Philippines. Spain even had sovereignty over parts of California, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico in the United States. During its colonial era, Spain was one of the most powerful empires in the world.⁴

Despite maintaining control over its large colonial empire, Spain began a period of apparently irreversible decline in the seventeenth century. On the contrary, other European countries, particularly England and France, were strengthening their positions at the same time. As previously mentioned, during the Napoleonic Wars, French soldiers invaded Spain and deposed the Spanish monarch. This led to the economic decimation of the nation and, as a result, the country was politically divided between liberals and conservatives. During the reign of King Ferdinand VII (1814-1833), all Spanish colonies in the New World were

² Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed* (Bletchingley: Ch publications, 2019), 1-7.

³ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 4.

⁴ Roger E. Hernandez, *The Spanish-American War* (New York: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2009), 5-6.

lost, except for Cuba and Puerto Rico. Thus, as the end of the nineteenth century approached, Spain, which still was holding onto a few remnants of its golden age, found itself in a very vulnerable position.⁵

1.2 The United States of America in the Nineteenth Century

By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States of America was just over one hundred years old. During its early years, the United States played only a modest role on the international level, taking part in only a few years of conflicts between the American Revolution and the end of the nineteenth century. The country has generally avoided interfering in the affairs of other countries. For instance, after a two-year war, it vanquished neighbouring Mexico in 1848, yet it stayed out of the European upheavals at the time.

The most significant and expensive war in which the Americans had engaged after the American Revolution was de facto their own civil war. Even though it ended in 1865, several areas of the country continued to recover until 1890.⁶ Despite being a domestic problem, the outcome of the Civil War was reflected in international affairs. The defeat of Confederate rebels strengthened the United States' world position and its democratic ideals. Slavery's abolition was defended against pro-slavery supporters, eventually putting pressure on foreign governments to follow suit in the latter three decades of the nineteenth century.⁷

1.2.1 The Conflict between Empire and Democracy

In the early years of American independence, the prevailing view was that America could best contribute to democracy by practising it primarily domestically. But as time passed, the American nation became aware of the conflict between the noble principle of its actions and the need to survive in the international system. As a result of these events, President James Monroe issued a foreign policy statement to Congress on December 2, 1823.⁸

“The Monroe Doctrine had been a pillar of the United States' foreign policy. It established the foundation for American expansion in the Western Hemisphere and provided a framework for reciprocal non-interference in transatlantic relations.”⁹

⁵ Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 607-8.

⁶ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 8-10.

⁷ Office of the Historian, “The Consequences of Union Victory, 1865,” Office of the Historian, accessed February 8, 2022, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1861-1865/victory>.

⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 29-31.

⁹ Marco Mariano, “Isolationism, internationalism and the Monroe Doctrine,” *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011): 35-45.

The doctrine has thus made the Atlantic Ocean a barrier that separated the United States from Europe and vice versa. Monroe's warning was clear: stay away from the New World and the United States will not be involved in European affairs in return.¹⁰

However, this altered in the nineteenth century when there was a certain need for economic expansion. This century was a period of global imperial growth. The European powers sought influence, not just in Africa, but also in Asia, where they competed in the Asian market. In response to Europe's economic ambitions, many prominent Americans, including Theodore Roosevelt, began to feel that the United States must succeed in the economic world to protect not only its interests. Even though some still preferred to maintain the isolationist mentality that had defined the early nation, others saw this as an opportunity to increase American influence and prosper as many European nations had.¹¹

¹⁰ Michael Burgan, *The Monroe Doctrine* (Minneapolis: Compass Point Books, 2007), 4-8.

¹¹ Howard Cincotta, *An Outline of American History* (Washington: United States Information Agency, 1994), 194.

2 CAUSES OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

2.1 The Remaining Spanish Colonies

During the early nineteenth century, Spain had lost most of its American colonies in wars of independence. The only two colonies in the New World they possessed were Cuba and Puerto Rico. Because the colonies provided transportable wealth and key trading positions, especially Cuba, which was one of their most lucrative islands, Spain was reluctant to relinquish its claims to the remaining territories. As a result, Spain continued to pose a threat to the United States.¹²

Notwithstanding the announcement that the United States would not interfere in Latin American countries, it provided the Americans with a great opportunity to expand their influence southward. Cuba was one of their main interests since before the Civil War and their desire grew stronger with the passing decades. The main factor why so many Americans considered the annexation of Cuba at the time was its proximity to Florida.¹³

Although Cuban independence was talked about in the United States, many people were still reluctant about the direct intervention in Spanish-Cuban suffering that lasted most of the nineteenth century. Some opponents of the intervention argued that the United States lacked the international legal authority to interfere in Spain's sovereign affairs, urging the administration of President William McKinley to avoid a conflict that was likely to be long and costly. Others warned that the Cuban people were simply not ready for self-government after four centuries of Spanish despotism. But the outcome that all of them feared was the expansion of American imperial control over Cuba or even the annexation of the island where one-third of the population was of African heritage and almost everyone was Catholic.¹⁴

2.2 Cuban Wars for Independence

For most of the second part of the nineteenth century, Cuba had been fighting for independence from Spain. The Spanish policies were cruel and did not allow the Cuban people to have any influence on how the island was governed. Their taxes were disproportionately high as well, which was something that they had no control over because

¹² Edward J. Renehan, Jr., *The Monroe Doctrine: The Cornerstone of American Foreign Policy, Milestones in American History* (New York: Chelsea House, 2007), 6.

¹³ Jayne A. Carson, *Nation-Building, The American Way*, (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2003), 3.

¹⁴ John L. Offner, "McKinley and the Spanish-American War," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31, no.1 (2004): 52.

Spain set the tax rate without the island's involvement. This led to numerous revolutions and riots for Cuban independence.¹⁵

From 1868 until the Spanish-American War (1898), three wars for independence took place on Cuban territory, and the relations between Spain and the Cuban revolutionaries escalated even more. Spain responded to the uprising with severe measures, further suppressing the people from Cuba. In February of 1896, the Reconcentration policy was established, and Cuban towns and cities turned into reconcentrated areas. Cubans were given eight days to move into fortified camps, and if anyone disobeyed, he was considered an insurgent and even executed. The camps were overcrowded with a variety of epidemic diseases and food and other supplies there were very scarce. This had disastrous consequences. As a result of this policy, tens of thousands of Cuban civilians – estimated up to 400 000 – died in these camps, either from disease or starvation.¹⁶

This brutal method of trying to stop the rebellion by starving the people practised by the Spanish general Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau generated collective anti-Spanish feelings in the United States. People who did not initially sympathize with the rebels finally saw a reason to support Cuban independence. Even more damaging to Spain's dominion was that the atrocities committed by Weyler in Spain's name were soon extensively covered in American newspapers. Compared to previous attempts at Cuban independence, this has attracted a much larger audience and the question of whether the United States should intervene to assist Cuba sparked a debate.¹⁷

2.3 Yellow Journalism

“Yellow journalism” refers to a type of newspaper reporting that used sensational, manipulative type of news mainly to evoke emotions. During its peak in the late nineteenth century, it was one of many factors that contributed to the Spanish-American War and subsequently resulted in the takeover of overseas territories by the United States.¹⁸

The term originated from a rivalry between major newspaper publishers - Joseph Pulitzer (*New York World*) and William Randolph Hearst (*New York Journal*). In 1895, Pulitzer began publishing the “Yellow Kid,” the comic's most well-known character. Hearst

¹⁵ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 14.

¹⁶ Jayne A. Carson, *Nation-Building, the American Way*, 3.

¹⁷ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 16.

¹⁸ Office of the Historian, “U.S. Diplomacy and Yellow Journalism, 1895-1898,” Office of the Historian, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/yellow-journalism>.

then hired Pulitzer's cartoonist and published the Yellow Kid in his newspaper. This battle over the New York City newspaper gave rise to the term "Yellow-Kid Journalism", which referred to the way the two newspapers tried to outsell each other through sensational stories. The term was subsequently shortened to "Yellow Journalism."¹⁹

In the late nineteenth century, the concept of photojournalism was newly developed, which became a critical aspect of the creation of yellow journalism. This was primarily because using images to generate stories provided a visual appeal that did not exist before. Newspaper publishers such as Hearst and Pulitzer took this opportunity, and eventually, the Spanish-American War was fully covered in American newspapers through pictures. The purpose of Hearst's reporting was to "excite the soul and sell newspapers." Herein was the magic of yellow journalism: the more sensational the story was, the more people wanted to read it. Furthermore, accurate reports were not necessarily the most important when it came to this kind of reporting. Thereby the truth was frequently overlooked in a favour of a more intriguing headline or information. Ultimately, this type of attention-grabbing, along with dramatic headlines and creative depictions of events in Cuba, helped both publishers to sell a lot of papers.

Yellow journalism played a significant role in the outbreak of international conflict and in what followed in the history of the United States. While the newspapers exploited the Spanish-American War to sell newspapers, they were not responsible for bringing the United States into the war. Other factors played a bigger role in triggering the war. The cruelty of the Spaniards was not fictitious, and the American public and politicians had already expressed anti-Spanish sentiments before the newspapers published sensational stories. Since the 1880s, powerful figures such as Theodore Roosevelt led a growing movement of American expansion abroad. The Yellow Press remains important in the history of the United States' foreign relations because it has shown how the media managed to attract the attention of many readers and thus influence public reactions. This dramatic style of reporting helped bring a reluctant nation into the Spanish-American War, a conflict that would eventually expand America's global influence.²⁰

¹⁹ Lesley Kennedy, "Did Yellow Journalism Fuel the Outbreak of the Spanish-American War?," History, August 21, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/spanish-american-war-yellow-journalism-hearst-pulitzer>.

²⁰ Office of the Historian, "U.S. Diplomacy and Yellow Journalism, 1895-1898."

2.4 The Explosion of the USS Maine

The anti-Spanish sentiment reached a tipping point in early 1898, when the United States battleship, Maine, sank in the port of Havana.

Although President William McKinley had largely tried to avoid the war, his administration was beginning to be concerned about the thousands of American citizens living in Cuba and the millions of dollars invested on the island. Even the American consul-general at Havana had been urging McKinley to send a battleship to the harbour for months. However, after the riots, when the United States' support for Cubans was strongest, McKinley began to take the same view. Thus, on the night of January 24, one of the most modern battleships of the United States fleet, Maine, left the North Atlantic Squadron and headed south to Havana. The voyage was formally presented as a friendly visit, but the American military thought that the presence of such a tangible symbol would display its power and the protection of the American people in Havana, hence keeping the Spanish dissidents in line. Maine remained tranquil in front of Havana Bay for the next three weeks.²¹

But on the night of February 15, 1898, Maine sank when an explosion tore through the ship's hull. The real tragedy of the event was the death of over half of the military personnel on board. Only 88 of the 350 men assigned to work on the USS Maine survived.²²

Since journalists in the country were looking for a sensational story, word of the explosion reached the United States before any inquiry into the cause of the explosion could be conducted. Pulitzer and Hearst took advantage of the idea that the United States was ready to unite against another country by publishing front-page news pieces such as: "Destruction of the Warship Maine Was the Work of an Enemy." With headlines like this, the American public fully believed the media and declared Spain a public enemy. The phrase: "Remember the Maine, to hell with Spain!" became a rousing call to action.²³

The information in the newspapers differed in one thing – how the Spaniard sank the ship. Experts arguing that the ship may have sunk without the use of a mine, but that the explosion had occurred on board, were ignored at the time. Philip R. Alger, the biggest authority in warehouse administration, also held the same view. When an American naval

²¹ George A. O'Toole, *The Spanish War: An American Epic 1898*, 21.

²² Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 27-29.

²³ Jennifer Ellis, "Media and War," 3.

investigation eventually stated that the explosion had been caused by a mine in the harbour, it was all that was needed to seal America's path.²⁴

To this day, no one knows exactly what caused the explosion. However, once it occurred, sentiment for the fight against Spain reached a new high. On April 11, 1898, President McKinley finally succumbed to public pressure and asked Congress for approval to send troops to Cuba. As a justification, he stated violations of human rights, damage to American economic interests, the protection of American citizens living in Cuba, and a general threat to peace and security.²⁵

Congress, therefore, found itself in a difficult situation. Several factors prevented them from diving headfirst into the war. Their main concern was that the United States would be perceived as attempting to establish an empire by annexing Cuba from Spain. The US Congress ultimately decided that passing the Teller Amendment was the best approach to ensuring that the United States was not perceived as an invading power.²⁶

2.5 The Teller Amendment and the Declaration of War

Following its declaration of war issued on April 1898, Senator Henry. M. Teller proposed an amendment to the United States, which provided clarity to the War Resolution by proclaiming that Cuba would not become a colony of the United States nor would it be annexed. This would serve as the basis for American future foreign goals and policy.²⁷

The amendment clearly stated that the United States “hereby disclaims any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.” The Teller Amendment was approved by the Senate on April 19.²⁸

After finally receiving Congress' approval, President McKinley sent the declaration of Cuba's independence to Spain with the ultimatum that if they do not relinquish its authority and government on the island of Cuba and do not withdraw its arm forces, they will be forced out by the U.S. military. The Spanish government saw this ultimatum as unacceptable.

²⁴ Josef Opatrný, *Malá skvělá válka: Španělsko-americký konflikt, duben-červenec 1898* (Prague: Epoque, 2013), 112-113.

²⁵ Josef Opatrný, *Malá skvělá válka: Španělsko-americký konflikt, duben-červenec 1898*, 112-113.

²⁶ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 30.

²⁷ Library of Congress, “Teller and Platt Amendments – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War,” Library of Congress, 2011, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/teller.html>.

²⁸ Library of Congress, “Teller and Platt Amendments – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War.”

Consequently, on April 22, the president ordered the U.S. Navy to form a blockade along the northern coast of Cuba, which is considered an act of war under international law. In response to the blockade, Spain reacted indignantly and declared war on the United States on April 24. The next day, the U.S. Congress confirmed the war and stated that a state of war existed between the two countries since the resolution was signed on April 21.²⁹

²⁹ George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, *Dějiny Spojených států amerických* (Prague: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2008), 459.

3 THE WAR

When the United States declared war on Spain in April 1898, it is undeniable that the army was not in a position to respond to the urgent call to conduct war. This is partly the result of both Cleveland and McKinley, who sought a diplomatic solution to the Cuban crisis and largely avoided military preparations. As an effect, the War Department was not encouraged to prepare for a probable war against Spain.³⁰

The United States navy was ranked as the sixth-largest in the world, but its ships remained virtually untested and after the Civil War, they were also in shortage. This was even more evident in the American army since the soldiers were not very advanced, and many of them lacked adequate training. Following the outbreak of war on April 23, McKinley subsequently issued a call for 125,000 volunteers to join the American military. Among those who enlisted were about 10,000 African Americans who saw this as an opportunity to fight for a country that had only recently abolished slavery.³¹

3.1 Fighting in the Philippines – Battle of Manila Bay

The first major battle of the Spanish-American War took place in a Spanish colony on the other side of the world, where Spain was expecting it the least– the Philippine Island. The Philippines had fought for independence longer than Cuba, making it an ideal target for the U.S. military. The Battle of Manila Bay is regarded by naval history as one of the greatest achievements of the United States Navy. Many people believed that this area was particularly vital in terms of the United States' international interests because foreign markets in Asia and the Pacific were very important at the time. Thus, by acquiring this territory, the United States was not only building an empire, but it would also gain access to the markets of China and India.³²

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt gave the order to strike the Spanish ships stationed in and around the Philippines. He appointed Commodore George Dewey to command the Asiatic Squadron aboard the flagship U.S.S. Olympia. Dewey was ordered to sail to the Philippine Islands and capture or destroy all Spanish ships. This was supposed to prevent the reinforcement of Spanish forces in Cuba.³³

³⁰ Joseph Smith, "The 'Splendid Little War' of 1898: A Reappraisal," *History* 80, no. 258 (February 1, 1995): 22-25, doi:10.1111/j.1468-229X.1995.tb01657.x.

³¹ Joseph Smith, "The 'Splendid Little War' of 1898: A Reappraisal," 23-25.

³² Josef Opatrný, *Malá skvělá válka: Španělsko-americký konflikt, duben-červenec 1898*, 153.

³³ Daniel E. Brannen, *Spanish-American War*, (Detroit: U-X-L, 2003), 33.

Dewey's Olympia and three other warships arrived in Manila Bay on April 30. Here they were to defend against the Spanish squadron under the command of Patricio Montojo. However, only seven of the Spanish ships were armoured, and none of the crews had fired a gun in more than a year. The battle of Manila Bay began on the morning of May 1, 1898, when the Spanish squadron opened fire, but their shells were ineffective, thus missing their target. Dewey gave Captain of Olympia permission to shoot, and so his ships began to fire at the enemy from the port and then from starboard guns, causing two Spanish ships to explode and sink. Subsequently, Dewey ordered a break in the fighting and although the surviving Spanish vessels refused to surrender, the victory was on the side of the United States. He telegraphed his victory to the White House, and as a result of this battle, the United States was instantly recognized as a world power. More than 380 Spaniards were killed or injured, while American casualties were minor, consisting of nine wounded men and one killed from a heart attack.³⁴

After decimating the Spanish ships, the Americans landed in the Philippines and began fighting the Spanish on land, where they received some support from the local revolutionaries who no longer wanted to be ruled by the Spaniards. In addition, Dewey's victory is considered one of the most decisive, as it led to the American takeover of Manila and eventually of the entire Philippines after the United States defeated the Spanish on the island in August.³⁵ For the United States, this marked the beginning of a new age, as the country raised its flag over a great empire in the Eastern Hemisphere, transforming from a primarily American to global power.³⁶

3.2 Fighting in Cuba

The battles in Cuba were less coordinated than in the Pacific Ocean and turned out to be significantly more difficult for the United States. Despite the lack of military experience, the American Navy had contemporary equipment that helped them defeat the Spanish fleets. On the other hand, the army did not prepare for the various problems that later accompanied them in the fighting in the tropical land. Nonetheless, it was in Cuba where the most famous battles determined the fate of the Spanish-American War and attracted a lot of attention,

³⁴ Thomas Fleming, "10 Battles That Shaped America," *Military History* 27, no. 5 (January 2011): 39, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=54945149&lang=cs&site=eds-live>.

³⁵ History.com, "Battle of Manila Bay," History, last modified August 21, 2018, www.history.com/this-day-in-history/treaty-of-paris-ends-spanish-american-war.

³⁶ Richard H. Titherington, *A History of the Spanish-American War of 1898* (New York: D. Appleton, 1900), 350.

especially thanks to Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders – officially known as the First United States' voluntary cavalry.³⁷

During the early days of the war, The United States Squadron decided that the best location for its principal base would be Key West, Florida. This was ideal for enforcing a blockade of Havana, which was only 100 miles away. The Key West Squadron and all operations in the Atlantic were under the direction of Rear Admiral William Sampson, while Major General William Rufus Shafter was in command of the land assault.³⁸

On June 10, 1898, the Marines captured Guantánamo Bay and the war in Cuba began. Around 17,000 troops, most of whom were volunteers, landed in Siboney and Daiquirí, where they were joined by revolutionaries. It was located to the east of Santiago de Cuba, the second-largest city on the island and their first target.³⁹

General Joseph Wheeler, eager to hurry into action and achieve glory for himself and the cavalry troop he led, assaulted the Spaniards in a skirmish at Las Guasimas on June 24. While the media subsequently declared a triumph for the United States cavalry, the Spaniards were more likely to retreat tactically to delay the Americans from advancing on their positions. The first battle in Cuba also became an unpleasant awakening to reality for American forces who had become accustomed to believing that the Spaniards lacked the resolve to fight. Furthermore, the Americans had a much harder time adjusting to the region's heat and humidity. The spread of disease and climate conditions led to the disruption of supply lines.⁴⁰

A week later, an even more intense battle was fought, when the American troops attacked the San Juan Heights. On July 1, 1898, U.S. General Shafter gave the order to launch the first assault on the village of El Caney. Even though the United States had outnumbered the Spanish forces, the Spaniards were armed with better weapons and therefore resisted the Americans for more than nine hours. In comparison to the 300 Spaniards, 500 American soldiers died.⁴¹ After the Spanish finally retreated, some forces

³⁷ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 39-40.

³⁸ John DiGiantomaso, "The Naval Battle of Santiago," Spanamwar.com, accessed March 24, 2022, <https://www.spanamwar.com/santiago.htm>.

³⁹ Library of Congress, "Introduction – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War," Library of Congress, 2011, <https://loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/intro.html>.

⁴⁰ Joseph Smith, "The 'Splendid Little War' of 1898: A Reappraisal," 30-31.

⁴¹ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 57-58.

pushed forward San Juan Hill, where hundreds were killed by the artillery fire from the Spanish.⁴²

Following the battle on El Caney, the American troops were divided into two flanks. The American Ninth and Tenth cavalries and Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders marched up to Kettle Hill, while Brigadier General Jacob Kent and his troops charged up San Juan Hill. The fight in Kettle Hill did not last long because the Spaniards were at a significant disadvantage. They withdrew, leaving the Rough Riders and the African American soldiers to continue their advance. Soon after, San Juan Hill was conquered, and the Americans were able to see Santiago from the summit. The next day, the siege of the city began.⁴³

On July 3, Schafter demanded the Spanish surrender, but they did not accept it. While United States commanders remained inactive on the island and debated their next line of action, the Spanish Admiral Cervera attempted to evacuate the port but was defeated by the American Navy led by Admiral Sampson. Thereafter, the American navy captured 1,600 sailors and held them captive until Spanish forces surrendered. Following Cervera's defeat, the end of the war came swiftly. On July 17, after lengthy negotiations, the Spaniards finally agreed to unconditional surrender and handed the city over to the Americans.⁴⁴

The victory of Santiago ended the war in Cuba, but at a heavy cost. Both Spain and the United States suffered major losses and by the end of July, the men who had been in Cuba, including the Rough Riders, suffered from infectious diseases. It was even estimated that only half of the American soldiers were eligible for active duty, while the rest spent the rest of their lives fighting yellow fever or malaria. The blame was placed on the lack of foresight of the United States government and the complete collapse of the army's commissary and medical departments. When the soldiers who had contracted malaria or its consequences returned home to the United States, it appeared to be a defeated rather than an all-conquering force.⁴⁵

3.3 Fighting in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico was another Spain's major colony in the Caribbean. By the end of the nineteenth century, the island was largely autonomous and had undergone colonial reform, the

⁴² History.com, "The Battle of San Juan Hill," History, last modified June 29, 2021, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-battle-of-san-juan-hill>.

⁴³ Library of Congress, "Introduction – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War."

⁴⁴ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 60-62.

⁴⁵ Joseph Smith, "The 'Splendid Little War' of 1898: A Reappraisal," 31-32.

formation of the first political parties and the abolition of slavery. Due to its location and potential prosperity, Puerto Rico has drawn considerable attention from many nations. By contrast, for Spain, this colony was not as lucrative as Cuba, and Spanish control over the island was purely political – it was a symbol of their prosperous colonial era.⁴⁶

The first invasion of Puerto Rico was planned even before the landing in Santiago. It was probably because the leaders of the Army and Navy saw the acquisition of Puerto Rico as a military necessity. Acquiring this small island would prevent Spain from sending any reinforcements to Cuba and it would also provide the United States with the additional protection of the country's interests in the Caribbean. As a result, on July 18, 1898, General Nelson A. Miles was given orders to sail to Puerto Rico and he was accompanied by around 3,400 men.⁴⁷

The reason for the occupation of Puerto Rico was clear – the presence of the United States on the island would facilitate peace negotiations. Major General Nelson A. Miles planned to land in the port of Fajardo, but in the end, another target was chosen – Guánica Bay, where the American ships arrived on July 25. Miles declared that the United States was entering the island to liberate, not to rule, to win over the Puerto Rican people. From Guánica Bay, the army began marching north toward the more heavily protected San Juan, the capital of Puerto Rico. Unlike in Cuba, the main challenges of the soldiers were primarily the harsh terrain rather than tropical illnesses. However, their journey to San Juan was halted when Spain and the United States agreed to negotiate a peace treaty on August 13, thereby ending all military hostilities.⁴⁸

3.4 Fighting in Guam

Guam, located near the Mariana Islands in the Pacific Ocean, has been occupied by the Spanish since 1668, during the same period Spain claimed the Philippines. Because the island was not as prosperous as the other islands, the Spanish paid little attention to it.⁴⁹

The United States sent the warship, U.S.S. Charleston, to capture Guam in June 1898. Ironically, it turned out that the Spaniards on the island had no idea that a state of war had existed between the two countries when the American ship arrived. This was most likely due

⁴⁶ Josef Opatrný, *Viva Cuba Libre*, (Prague: Epoque, 2016), 286.

⁴⁷ James M. McCaffrey, *Inside the Spanish-American War: A History Based on First-Person Accounts* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2020), 158-59.

⁴⁸ Marisabel Brás, "The Changing of the Guard: Puerto Rico in 1898," Library of Congress, 2011, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/bras.html>.

⁴⁹ Patrick McSherry, "The Capture of Guam," Spanamwar.com, accessed March 29, 2022, <https://www.spanamwar.com/Guam>.

to a lack of communication between the government of Spain and Guam's governor. Afterwards, the Americans immediately sent a telegram to the Spanish governor, demanding the surrender within one half-hour. In just twenty-nine minutes, the Spaniards responded and surrendered Guam. For that reason, Guam was captured without bloodshed and became the first United States territory in the Pacific.⁵⁰

3.5 The Role of the Rough Riders in War

The Rough Riders were the first voluntary cavalry and the most famous unit in the Spanish-American War. They were under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt, who recruited a diverse group of characters from all over the country, including cowboys, miners, athletes, and Native Americans. It was the regiment's peculiarity, Roosevelt's enthusiasm and his gift for public relations that attracted a lot of attention even before they participated in the war.⁵¹

Theodore Roosevelt entered politics to correct the injustices that he observed in the country. Initially, he intended to focus on reforming the American society because he was concerned with improving the lives of the vast majority of Americans. Roosevelt was able to converse with people of many classes, races, and nationalities, regardless of his status. This is what naturally led him to become a politician. Throughout his career, he became a leader of the progressive movement and believed that the United States had the potential to become a strong leader on the international level. President William McKinley later recognised Roosevelt's efforts and named him the Assistant Secretary of the Navy a year before the war in 1898 began.⁵²

In May 1898, Theodore Roosevelt resigned from his position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy to form the First Volunteer Cavalry, which would go to war to liberate Cuba from Spanish tyranny. Before he left, he issued Admiral Dewey orders to sail to the Philippines. Together with the unit commander, Colonel Leonard Wood, they sailed for Cuba for the initial start of the war. There they have joined the Fifth Corps, another well-armed and eager group of volunteers. Their contribution, particularly in the epic battles of San Juan and Kettle Hills, demonstrated the importance and strength of the unit, earning it the respect it deserved. Furthermore, Theodore Roosevelt was awarded the Medal of Honour for his role in leading the attack on Cuba, and in 1901, he became the twenty-sixth and also the youngest President

⁵⁰ Patrick McSherry, "The Capture of Guam."

⁵¹ Library of Congress, "Rough Riders – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War," Library of Congress, 2011, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/roughriders.html>.

⁵² Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 41-43.

of the United States. Similarly, his Rough Riders have earned their place in history and remain in the American collective consciousness to this day.⁵³

3.6 The Role of the Buffalo Soldiers in War

Buffalo Soldiers was the name given to the African Americans, who fought in the American Revolution and the Civil War. However, they were not officially allowed to serve in the regular United States army until after the Civil War, when Congress enacted laws to reform the military. Thus, for the first time in American history, African Americans could fight alongside white Americans.⁵⁴

During the Spanish-American War, they were one of the most important regiments along with the Rough Riders. As Theodore Roosevelt once said: “No one can tell whether it was the Rough Riders or the men of the 9th who came forward with the greater courage to offer their lives in the service of their country.”⁵⁵

Since the beginning of the uprisings in Cuba, African Americans have sympathized with the Cuban struggle against Spanish oppression, which was very similar to the plight of black Americans in the South. As the war with Spain became more imminent, many blacks regarded this as an opportunity to change their oppressed position and fight alongside the whites in the struggle against tyranny elsewhere. They also believed that by supporting the war with Spain, they could progressively improve prospects for racial equality.⁵⁶

In 1898, all four black regiments, created in 1866, were called into service. Given the condition, it was not surprising that the black regiments were among the first units sent to Cuba. As part of the invasion preparations, they were initially dispatched to Tampa, Florida, where open racial discrimination was the standard. Local white citizens refused “to make any distinction between the coloured troops and the coloured civilians.” Despite the prejudices that often accompanied them, the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry fought heroically in the battles of Las Guasimas, El Caney and San Juan Hill.⁵⁷

It is undeniable that African Americans have proven to be highly skilled soldiers. This is because they had spent a considerable amount of time fighting across the United States

⁵³ Library of Congress, “Rough Riders – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War.”

⁵⁴ Library of Congress, “Buffalo Soldiers (Educational Materials: African American Odyssey),” Library of Congress, 1998, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/odyssey/educate/buffalo.html>.

⁵⁵ National Park Service, “Buffalo Soldiers and the Spanish-American War,” National Park Service, February 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/buffalo-soldiers-and-the-spanish-american-war.htm>.

⁵⁶ Bruce A. Glasrud, *Brothers to the Buffalo Soldiers: Perspectives on the African American Militia and Volunteers, 1865-1917* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2011), 129-31.

⁵⁷ National Park Service, “Buffalo Soldiers and the Spanish-American War.”

and in a variety of climates, making them significantly more adaptable to the circumstances and challenges that come with fighting in a tropical climate. In addition, the Buffalo Soldiers not only knew how to fight, but they also assisted in the mapping of new lands, which was extremely useful in Cuba. While the Rough Riders eventually became one of the few things that Americans remembered about the war, the Buffalo Soldiers' contribution was crucial to the victory of the United States. It was even speculated that if the black soldiers had not participated, the number of casualties would have been much higher, simply because none of Roosevelt's men possessed the same level of experience or courage as the African Americans.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 47-51.

4 THE PEACE PROCESS

The conflict of 1898 was a brief but momentous war that led to Spain losing all of its holdings in the Caribbean and the Pacific, effectively ending the Spanish colonial empire after nearly five centuries. By contrast, the United States emerged from the war as a global power with extensive overseas territories.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding that Americans mostly followed the Teller Amendment, the outcome was probably not what Cuba had hoped for.⁶⁰

Although the Spanish government was well aware that Cuba had already been lost, they planned to at least negotiate with the United States to maintain Puerto Rico and the Philippines. President William McKinley, on the other hand, immediately rejected the Spanish demands and submitted his own. He listed the departure of Spaniards from Cuba and the surrender of Puerto Rico to American control as prerequisites for ending the war. In the Pacific, McKinley demanded that one of the Mariana Islands, as well as Manila and Manila Bay, be transferred to American sovereignty until the fate of the entire Philippine archipelago was resolved.⁶¹

Spain approached the French ambassador in Washington, Jules Cambon, and asked him to act as their mediator in negotiating peace terms with the United States. He advised the Madrid administration to accept the American offer, which they did within the following days. As a result of this, a ceasefire was declared on August 12. On this day, the fighting formally ended, but the war would not officially end for another four months.⁶²

4.1 The Treaty of Paris

On December 10, 1898, the United States and Spain convened in France to sign the Treaty of Paris. Since all of Europe, except for England, was in favour of the Spanish side, the American commissioners had to negotiate in a difficult environment.⁶³

To maintain its word concerning Cuba, the United States permitted the island to become an independent nation, but only with conditions relating to their relationship. The treaty also required Spain to hand over both Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States' control.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ History.com, "The Spanish-American War", History, last modified November 11, 2021, <https://www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/spanish-american-war>.

⁶⁰ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 63.

⁶¹ Donald H. Dyal, *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish-American War* (London: Greenwood Press, 1996), 254.

⁶² Office of the Historian, "The Spanish-American War, 1898."

⁶³ Library of Congress, "Treaty of Paris of 1898 – The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War," Library of Congress, 2011, <https://loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/treaty.html>.

⁶⁴ Library of Congress, "Treaty of Paris of 1898 – The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War."

The key issue discussed was the handover of the Philippines. With Dewey's victory in Manila Bay, every civilian and newspaper in the United States understood that Spanish rule over the Philippines had come to an end, but no one knew what the islands' future would be. McKinley first regarded the island as a "hitching post" for the navy and for expanding trade with the Far East. Proponents of American expansionism, in contrast, were leaning toward full American ownership. Eventually, McKinley inclined toward the colonization of the Philippines.⁶⁵ The Spanish commissioners initially refused to include the Philippines in the cessation of its territories but later agreed, and the United States paid Spain twenty million dollars for the island's possession. The terms of the treaty were brought back to the United States, where they were ratified by a single vote on February 6, 1899.⁶⁶ The document was greeted with joy by the majority of Americans because it symbolized their country's emergence as a global power. Therefore, when it was presented to the United States Senate for ratification, most observers expected it to be approved.⁶⁷

Even though Hawaii was not a Spanish territory, the United States annexed it right at the start of the war, fearing that the Japanese might seize it while the United States dispatched its forces to the Philippines. Following its rebellion against the Hawaiian queen in 1893, the Hawaiian people sought annexation by the United States but were rejected by former President Grover Cleveland. Later, during the presidency of William McKinley, advocates of annexation stated that Hawaii was essential to the economy of the United States due to its strategic location. With Congress's approval of a joint resolution on August 12, 1898, Hawaii became the first territory of the United States and was eventually accepted as a state in 1959. Despite not officially being a part of the conflict, Hawaii was primarily annexed as a result of the Spanish-American War.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ivan Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: H. Holt, 2008), 590.

⁶⁶ Library of Congress, "Treaty of Paris of 1898 – The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War."

⁶⁷ Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Defining Moments: The Spanish-American War* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 2012), 85.

⁶⁸ Office of the Historian, "The Spanish-American War, 1898."

5 CONSEQUENCES OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

Many Americans regarded the Spanish-American War as “splendid” because it united them to assist those who had been fighting against the injustices of Spanish monarchical rule for years. Despite this, it left many questions unanswered. The war revealed the under-preparedness of the American army. The Americans suffered great casualties primarily due to illnesses resulting from fighting in Cuba. Over 3,000 soldiers were killed, while more than 2,500 of them succumbed to tropical diseases. Although American troops fought bravely and devotedly, the subsequent subjugation of overseas territories under the United States’ control raised questions about their motives.⁶⁹ African Americans who had fought for their country faced growing segregation when they returned home. The legality of the empire became a constitutional issue, dividing American politicians into two camps: imperialists and anti-imperialists. The people of the former Spanish colonies found themselves in a very unclear situation since not one Cuban, Filipino, or Puerto Rican representative was present throughout the negotiations over their future.⁷⁰

5.1 US Imperialism in Cuba

After the Spanish-American War, when peace discussions concerning Cuba’s future began, Cubans were not permitted to participate in negotiations for their own country. During the post-war period, Cuba was occupied by the American military. The quality of life in Cuba was gradually improving, and various changes were implemented. American forces set up schools and improved sanitation to eradicate yellow fever.⁷¹ Although the United States did not formally annex Cuba, as promised by the Teller Amendment, it required Cuba to allow considerable American control over its new constitution. As a result, the Platt Amendment was enacted, outlining the future relationship between the United States and Cuba.⁷²

The Platt Amendment gave the United States “the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty...”⁷³ Connecticut Senator Orville H. Platt submitted this

⁶⁹ Joseph Smith, “The ‘Splendid Little War’ of 1898: A Reappraisal,” 37.

⁷⁰ Brad K. Berner, *The Spanish-American War : A Documentary History with Commentaries* (Madison, New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014), 213.

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=752982&lang=cs&site=eds-live>.

⁷¹ United States History, “Platt Amendment: Giving America Oversight in Cuba,” United States History, accessed April 7, 2022, <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h821.html>.

⁷² Kimberly Kutz Elliott, “The Spanish-American War,” Khan Academy, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/rise-to-world-power/age-of-empire/a/the-spanish-american-war>.

⁷³ Library of Congress, “Teller and Platt Amendments – the World of 1898: The Spanish-American War.”

document to Congress in March 1901, and its details were later incorporated into the legislation. At the time, Cuba was governed by the American military government. The United States military remained on the island until 1902 when the Military Governor based on Cuba's acceptance of the Platt Amendment, transferred the government to its people and the Republic of Cuba was founded.⁷⁴

The new government of Cuba was severely constrained by the Platt Amendment. By adopting the conditions, Cuba agreed that its government would never enter into any treaties with foreign powers and that the United States would be the only country to whom they would transfer their lands. The United States would also be authorized to intervene in the new constitution to ensure the preservation of Cuban independence. Moreover, the document permitted the United States to build and maintain a naval base in Guantanamo Bay.⁷⁵

Regardless of formally recognizing Cuba's independence, the United States quickly established a protectorate over the island. This ultimately led to strong opposition from the Cuban people, who no longer considered the nation as their liberator. In 1906 and 1912, the United States had to intervene with the military, thus escalating the resentment.⁷⁶ It wasn't until 1933, that Congress declared that no state had the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another. This was largely due to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Good Neighbour Policy, which advocated for the abolition of all United States' rights in Cuba under the Platt Amendment. As a result, the Platt Amendment was officially abolished in 1934, and the United States finally agreed to leave all control of the island to Cuba. There was, however, one notable exception. The United States would be allowed to keep its naval base in Guantanamo Bay until all sides agreed to alter or cancel it. It's no surprise that the United States has never consented to the handover and Guantanamo Bay remains under its control to this day.⁷⁷

After a long and complicated history, a more pleasant relationship was gradually established between the two countries. For Cuba, capital investments from the United States are critical in driving the island's development, while for American companies, Cuba is a

⁷⁴ "The Origin and Purpose of the Platt Amendment," *The American Journal of International Law* 8, no. 3 (July 1, 1914): 586, doi:10.2307/2187499.

⁷⁵ The American Journal of International Law, "The Origin and Purpose of the Platt Amendment," 588-89.

⁷⁶ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 65-66.

⁷⁷ United States History, "Platt Amendment: Giving America Oversight in Cuba."

lucrative market. The future relations between the United States and Cuba will most likely continue to play out for another few decades.⁷⁸

5.2 US Imperialism in Puerto Rico

The Treaty of Paris signed on April 11, 1899, established the sovereignty of the United States over Puerto Rico. Similar to Cuba, immediately after the Spanish-American War, the United States created a military government in Puerto Rico which lasted from 1898 to 1900.⁷⁹ The military occupation caused many problems for Puerto Ricans, including the depreciation of the Puerto Rican currency against the US dollar, higher taxes and negative impacts on imports and exports.⁸⁰

In April 1900, the United States passed the Foraker Act to replace the military government. As a result of the new act, a new civilian government has been constituted. The people of Puerto Rico were permitted to elect their government members, but the governor was appointed by the President of the United States and an executive council of eleven members, five of whom had to be born on the island. Puerto Rico's colonial status remained unchanged, but any political or economic choices were primarily in the hands of the United States government. They were namely prohibited from trading with other countries and imposing tariffs. The United States government officially introduced the US currency, and all trade had to be conducted solely on American ships.⁸¹

Puerto Rico was a critical strategic position for the United States in military operations. Possessing the island meant being able to secure its interests at sea.⁸² The construction of the Panama Canal and the outbreak of World War I both occurred in 1914, giving the island new value in the eyes of American politicians. The newly built Panama Canal served as an important link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, emphasizing Puerto Rico's crucial role.⁸³

⁷⁸ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 83-87.

⁷⁹ José, Garriga Picó, "The United States and Puerto Rico Political Relations Act Background, Issues and Principles," *ASPIRA Issue Brief* (December 1997): 2-3, <https://sociales.uprrp.edu/cipo/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2016/02/Garriga-Pico-Issue-Brief-on-Young-Bill.pdf>.

⁸⁰ María, Pérez Y González, *Puerto Ricans in the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press Group, 2000), 26-27.

⁸¹ María, Pérez Y González, *Puerto Ricans in the United States*, 26-27.

⁸² Marisabel Brás, "The Changing of the Guard: Puerto Rico in 1898."

⁸³ History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, "Puerto Rico," accessed April 7, 2022, <https://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/HAIC/Historical-Essays/Foreign-Domestic/Puerto-Rico/>.

Attempts to Americanize the island continued in 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones Act, granting Puerto Ricans American citizenship. However, Puerto Rican civil rights were still limited. The act also established a locally elected Senate and House of Representatives, and while Puerto Rican engagement in local affairs was strengthened, Congress and President still retained their legislative authority.⁸⁴ On the island obtaining US citizenship was a contentious issue. Many Puerto Ricans have rejected it, claiming that they have pride and that citizenship in the United States is unimportant to them. Even though the Jones Act was intended to alleviate Puerto Ricans' concerns and reinforce America's identity in the Caribbean, it has only worsened the political situation. Concerns about a degree of autonomy, statehood, or independence have led Puerto Rican politicians to their identity crisis and confusion. They didn't feel like foreigners since they were now citizens of the United States, but they also didn't feel like members of the Union, because they were still an unregistered territory in the United States.⁸⁵

Throughout the 1930s, a nationalist movement led by the Democratic Party garnered popular support on the island and successfully fought further against American integration.⁸⁶ Later in 1950, Congress passed a process that allowed Puerto Ricans to call a Constitutional Convention to establish a local government, which was ratified in 1952. For Puerto Rico, this meant having internal self-government and a bicameral parliament, but defence and international policy would continue to be handled by the United States. With the approval of this constitution, Puerto Rico became a *Free Associated State*. Nevertheless, rather than calling it the *Free Associated State*, the United States selected the name Commonwealth, which was to define the term for a renewed partnership.⁸⁷

Since 1952, the island has held several referendums in which Puerto Ricans have been unable to agree on whether the current situation is better for them or whether becoming the 51st state of the United States would be more beneficial.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Raquel Reichard, "Why Isn't Puerto Rico a State?," History, September 2021, <https://www.history.com/news/puerto-rico-statehood>.

⁸⁵ History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, "Puerto Rico."

⁸⁶ History.com, "U.S. Forces Invade Puerto Rico."

⁸⁷ Raquel Reichard, "Why Isn't Puerto Rico a State?"

⁸⁸ ČT24, "Portoriko jako 51. Stát USA? Karibský ostrov se snaží vymanit z vleklé krize," Česká televize, 2017, <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/svet/2148624-portoriko-jako-51-stat-usa-karibsky-ostrov-se-snazi-vymanit-z-vlekle-krize>.

5.3 US Imperialism in Guam and Samoa

The origins of the Spanish-American War had nothing to do with Guam, yet the war remains significant to the history of the Mariana Islands. As previously stated, the United States purchased the Philippines and Guam from Spain for twenty million dollars. In consequence, the island was transferred from one power to another.⁸⁹

When the United States began occupying Guam at the end of the nineteenth century, the people of Guam had no say in any decisions made about the island, and hence were not asked if they wanted to become an American colony. Like Puerto Rico, the island was immediately placed under military law.⁹⁰ The army's goal was clear: the requirements of the military on Guam took precedence over everything else in the administration of the island. Thereby, the "Naval Government of Guam" was established, and the governor of the island was made up of Naval officers.⁹¹ These governors, though, generally lacked democratic rights for the islanders and were rather perceived as autocratic dictators.⁹²

Between 1901 and 1904, a series of court cases known as the Insular Cases were heard before the Supreme Court of the United States, including the territories that had been obtained during the Spanish-American War and were classified as "unincorporated territories". The US Supreme Court has confirmed that people in these areas have limited rights under the US Constitution and are not entitled to statehood.⁹³

At the beginning of the twentieth century, many Chamorros, the original inhabitants of the Marianas, longed for self-government and citizenship. Their attempts resulted in the signing of numerous formal petitions to the US Congress. The first petition presented to the Americans in 1901, advocated for the formation of a permanent civilian government. This and many other petitions concerning civil liberties for the people of Guam were constantly rejected by the Washington government until 1950. Guam's ambitions to achieve self-government and US citizenship were thwarted in December 1941, when the island was invaded by Japan during World War II and was subsequently under their control for 31 months.⁹⁴ During this time, residents of Guam were executed and tortured. The Battle of

⁸⁹ Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), 108-12.

⁹⁰ James Perez Viernes, "Civil Rights and US Citizenship (1898-1950)," Guampedia, last modified March 22, <https://www.guampedia.com/chamorro-drive-for-civil-rights/>.

⁹¹ Robert F. Rogers, *Destiny's Landfall: A History of Guam*, 114.

⁹² James Perez Viernes, "Civil Rights and US Citizenship (1898-1950)."

⁹³ Don Farrell, "History of Efforts to Reunify the Mariana Islands," Guampedia, last modified March 2022, <https://www.guampedia.com/history-of-efforts-to-reunify-the-mariana-islands/>.

⁹⁴ James Perez Viernes, "Civil Rights and US Citizenship (1898-1950)."

Guam took place on August 10, 1944, and the United States recovered their control of the Northern Mariana Islands.⁹⁵

Following World War II, the United States Congress passed the Organic Act in 1950, which ended the Naval rule of the island and established a non-military, civil administration. All residents of the island have finally gained US citizenship and the act also solidified the political status of the island as the United States' "unincorporated territory". Therefore, after decades of Chamorros' aspirations for self-government, the Organic Act was viewed as a success. Today, both Guam and Puerto Rican people are citizens of the United States, although they cannot vote in American elections.⁹⁶

Samoa, located in the Polynesian region of the Pacific, followed a similar path as Guam. Even though Samoa was not covered in the treaty with the Spanish, the island's inhabitants had spent years fighting a civil war that ended in 1899. During this time, Germany and the United States reached an agreement that divided the island into two spheres of influence. The United States gained the eastern half of the island, while Germany took control of the western half. New Zealand eventually took the western islands from the Germans during World War I and ruled them until the Western Samoans gained independence in 1962. Currently, the western half of the island remains autonomous, while the eastern half is known as American Samoa. The people of American Samoa are nationals of the United States, who can enter and reside in the United States, but they are not American citizens.⁹⁷

5.4 US Imperialism in the Philippines – The Philippine-American War

The Spanish-American War altered the course of Philippine history. The Philippines had desired independence from the Spanish rule for years, which is why, during the war, the Filipinos quickly allied with the United States. They supported the United States because they believed the Americans had come to the Philippines as their liberators seeking to free them from Spain, just as they had in Cuba.⁹⁸ Following the conflict, Filipino insurgents led by Emilio Aguinaldo seized control of Luzon, the Philippines' largest island, and declared

⁹⁵ Tony Palomo and Katherine Aguon, "WWII: From Occupation to Liberation," Guampedia, last modified September 2021, <https://www.guampedia.com/wwii-from-occupation-to-liberation/>.

⁹⁶ James Perez Viernes, "Civil Rights and US Citizenship (1898-1950)."

⁹⁷ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 82.

⁹⁸ Factsanddetails.com, "U.S. Takes Over the Philippines: Spanish-American War and its Aftermath," Facts and Details, last modified June 2015, https://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Philippines/sub5_6a/entry-3840.html.

independence on June 12, 1898. Emilio Aguinaldo was elected the country's first president, but the United States refused to recognize the newly formed government.⁹⁹

The natives felt deceived after learning about their future from the Treaty of Paris, which revealed that their island had been ceded to the United States by Spain. For the Filipinos, this meant that they had been handed over to another Western power, which was not what they had fought for. As a result of the contempt for the Philippine sovereignty, the rebels turned against the Americans and launched the Philippine-American War. The ensuing conflict was characterized as an "insurrection" by some American historians, who refused to believe the Filipinos' claim that they were merely fighting to save their country from foreign invaders.¹⁰⁰ The United States defended their claim to the island, claiming that the Filipino people were incapable to rule themselves and that by offering them their leadership, the United States was fulfilling its responsibility to care for those people.¹⁰¹

Except for Manila, Aguinaldo's men took control of practically every island, and the next three years were predominantly an American conquest battle. The war between Filipino rebels and American troops became increasingly brutal. To eliminate the enemy, both sides used harsh tactics, including building strongly guarded camps and torturing prisoners.¹⁰² Aguinaldo was caught in 1901 and pledged allegiance to the United States, but many of his supporters continued to fight. Despite the undeniable military disadvantages of the Filipino forces, the war lasted until mid-1902. Theodore Roosevelt declared the war to be concluded on July 4, 1902, but sporadic uprisings against American rule continued to occur in the following years.¹⁰³ In comparison to the Spanish-American War, both sides suffered far more casualties. During the Philippines' suppression, the United States lost more than 4,000 men, while over 20,000 Filipino insurgents were killed. The conflict claimed the lives of up to 200,000 Filipino civilians as a result of the fighting and also cholera and malaria epidemics that erupted.¹⁰⁴

Earlier in 1900, under William Howard Taft, a new policy was designated to give the people of the Philippines a reason to be satisfied with the United States' occupation and

⁹⁹Office of the Historian, "The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902, Office of the Historian, accessed April 11, 2022, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war>.

¹⁰⁰Factsanddetails.com, "U.S. Takes Over the Philippines: Spanish-American War and its Aftermath."

¹⁰¹Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 72.

¹⁰²Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Defining Moments: The Spanish-American War*, 93.

¹⁰³History.com, "Philippine Independence Declared," History, last modified June 2020, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/philippine-independence-declared>.

¹⁰⁴Office of the Historian, "The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902."

control. As a result of this, the Philippines were granted a large degree of self-government, and social reforms and new projects, such as the construction of transportation infrastructure were implemented under the new policy. The commission worked to improve the lives of most people on the islands over time, gaining their support and thus assisting the United States military in winning the war.¹⁰⁵

The Jones Law passed by the United States in 1916, gave the Filipinos legislative power consisting of the House of Representatives and the Senate. In 1935, the Commonwealth of the Philippines was created, giving the island the same level of autonomy as Puerto Rico and other United States territories. Unlike these territories, however, the Philippines was promised independence from the US, which was eventually achieved in 1946 with the declaration of the Republic of the Philippines.¹⁰⁶

The annexation of the Philippines by President McKinley is widely regarded as one of the most divisive choices in the history of the United States. Many pro-annexation politicians were concerned that if the United States did not annex the Philippines, other countries such as Japan or Germany would. Even though Congress stated that the declaration of war against Spain encompassed the liberation of the islands from Spanish control, the public did not favour the United States' participation in the Philippines. With so many lives lost in the Philippines, there was growing opposition in the United States against the tyranny that their government was perpetrating. The Anti-Imperialist League was formed as a result of this.¹⁰⁷

5.5 The Anti-Imperialist League

As soon as it became evident what the United States government intended to do as a result of the Spanish-American War, anti-imperialist sentiments arose. The Anti-Imperialist League met for the first time in June of 1898 at Faneuil Hall to launch a campaign against America's growing imperialism and was officially founded in November of the same year.¹⁰⁸

The Anti-Imperialist League represented a wide range of personalities, including politicians, businessmen, writers, and journalists. Some of the most notable figures among the members included former Democratic President Grover Cleveland, former Republican

¹⁰⁵ Office of the Historian, "The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902."

¹⁰⁶ Philippine-History-org, "Philippine History," Philippine-History-org, last modified January 2020, <http://www.philippine-history.org/>.

¹⁰⁷ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 73-74.

¹⁰⁸ National Park Service, "The American Anti-Imperialist League at Faneuil Hall," last modified October 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/anti-imperialist-league-fh.htm>.

President Benjamin Harrison, satirist Mark Twain, and presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan.¹⁰⁹

The League's first major campaign was an endeavour to prevent the Philippines from being annexed. The members of the League publicly criticized the United States for its hypocrisy, arguing that the purpose of the war was to liberate Cuba, not to expand US power into the Pacific. Nevertheless, once the Treaty of Paris was ratified in 1899 and the United States received the Philippines, anti-imperialists realized that their attempts were futile and gave up. Later, when the situation in the Philippines deteriorated and the death toll rose, many anti-imperialists felt compelled to speak out once more.¹¹⁰ In 1901, the League petitioned President Theodore Roosevelt to bring Filipino General Emilio Aguinaldo to talk with him about the wants of the people of the Philippines, but Roosevelt, unsurprisingly, refused. The league was constantly releasing truthful information about what was happening in the Philippines, emphasizing that the techniques employed by United States troops were no different than those used by Spain when it ruled the country.¹¹¹ The Anti-Imperialist League gradually lost popularity throughout the years that followed, eventually disbanding in 1921.¹¹²

Although it did not occur all at once, this era marked the start of the United States' enduring global interference around the world. Following the events and the division that emerged after the Spanish-American War, the United States initially hesitated whether to re-enter the world stage during World War I. Besides, Americans also felt that interfering in European affairs was not their responsibility, which was again reflected in their decision to postpone United States' involvement during World War II. However, when the United States was recognized as one of the world's two superpowers emerging from World War II, it became exactly what the anti-imperialists had been concerned about before.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Defining Moments: The Spanish-American War*, 92.

¹¹⁰ Hillstrom and Hillstrom, *Defining Moments*, 92.

¹¹¹ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War: A Captivating Guide to the War Between the United States of America and Spain along with the Philippine-American War that Followed*, 75-76.

¹¹² Spencer C. Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars: A Political, Social, and Military History*, 22.

¹¹³ Captivating History, *Spanish-American War*, 76.

CONCLUSION

The Spanish-American War had a significant impact on both American and world history. For years, many scholars and historians have investigated the true origins of the war and whether the reasons were justifiable. However, because several factors contributed to the United States declaring war on Spain, these issues as well as the first two questions posed in the introduction, cannot be answered with absolute certainty. For some Americans, it was the ideal opportunity to strike and begin establishing their empire as liberators, believing that it was necessary for the nation's "Manifest Destiny" – a view shared by many Americans that the United States' expansion was destined, and thus inevitable. Others still preferred to cling to the country's isolationist history of remaining out of foreign affairs. An important role in the war was also played by the American press as it kept the public continuously informed about the mistreatment of Cubans by the Spaniards. Even though the information published was not always accurate, the two men in charge of the country's two main newspapers were far more interested in selling the papers. At the same time, there were obvious economic reasons for the conflict, since Americans had a considerable amount of investment in Cuba, and with the escalating turmoil on the island, this investment was becoming increasingly threatened.

The United States began to recognize its strengths immediately after the war's conclusion; therefore, it was almost logical that after defeating the collapsing European empire, the United States would wish to put its newfound power to use. All four territories obtained during the signing of the Treaty of Paris were new important regions for them, allowing them to create a broad trade system that was expected to help the country's economic recovery. As a result, American foreign policy underwent a rapid shift, with isolationism eventually being displaced by expansionism.

The key question remains, though: Why did some territories obtain independence while others did not? As highlighted before, the Panama Canal, which was completed in 1904, gave Americans a completely new perspective on Puerto Rico's strategic value. Furthermore, owing to the island's proximity to the United States, the inhabitants of the island were granted American citizenship. Similarly, Guam was kept for purely strategic reasons. Its convenient location in the Pacific Ocean made it an excellent naval base, and the siege of the island was almost without any resistance, allowing the United States to quickly assert its government on the island, which it continues to do to this day. This cannot be said of Cuba and the Philippines, where the situation was far more problematic. Both countries

were granted independence because their previous efforts for freedom have shown the United States that keeping the islands under its authority by force would only lead to further instability.

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