

## Chapter 5 Lesson 2

### The Spanish -American War

Cuba was one of Spain's last remaining colonies in the Western Hemisphere. Throughout the history of Spain's control over Cuba, the Cubans had revolted. In 1868, the Cubans rebelled led by Jose Marti. This rebellion lasted a decade but failed to achieve Cuban independence. By the late 1800's, Cuba and the United States were very close trade partners. The US was the primary buyer of Cuban sugar and Americans had invested greatly in Cuba. The passage of the Wilson-Gorman tariff in 1894 led to an increase in Cuban sugar prices and an economic crisis in Cuba. The following year the Cuban rebels began a new rebellion, seized part of Cuba and declared independence.

In the beginning the US remained neutral. Many Americans were persuaded to support the rebels due to the use of yellow journalism. The Spanish sent 200,000 troops led by General Valeriano Weyler, who would serve as the new governor of Cuba. Weyler was very harsh and placed many Cubans in concentration camps to control the civilian population. The American media led by Hearst and Pulitzer used both true and sensationalized stories to stir up American emotion. Wars sell newspapers. Weyler was recalled by Spain in 1897, in an effort to remove the American yellow journalists from the equation. Hearst also published the de Lome letter, in which the Spanish minister to Washington spoke very negatively about President McKinley.

President McKinley offered to negotiate between Spain and Cuba, in order to prevent US intervention in the war. The Spanish removed Weyler and offered Cuban autonomy as long as Cuba would remain part of the Spanish Empire. The rebels refused and rioting broke out in the streets of Havana. The US sent the USS Maine to Havana Harbor to protect Americans in Cuba and to monitor the situation. The Maine exploded on February 15, 1898. McKinley faced great pressure to go to war. Many Americans rallied to the cause and within the Republican Party jingoism was strong. On April 11, 1898, McKinley asked Congress to approve the use of force. On April 19, Congress declared Cuba independent, demanded that Spain exit Cuba and gave McKinley the right to use force.

On May 1, 1898, the US Navy entered Manila Bay. Dewey quickly defeated the Spanish fleet and McKinley sent troops to the Philippines (they took Guam on the way). Dewey contacted the leader of the Filipino rebels and they agreed to work together against the Spanish.

On the island of Cuba, the Spanish were not prepared for a war with the United States. It was essential for the Spanish fleet in Cuba to survive. The Battle of San Juan Hill and Kettle Hill (by the Rough Riders and the AA9th and 10<sup>th</sup> cavalry regiments) forced the Spanish leadership to panic. The Spanish fleet left the harbor and was soon defeated by the US Navy. The United States also quickly took and held Puerto Rico. The Treaty of Paris(1898) was signed in December of 1898.

### The Outcomes

- 1) Cuba gained its' independence as promised (Teller Amendment)
- 2) Platt Amendment, added to the Cuban constitution and allowed the US to control Cuba

- 3) Puerto Rico annexed
- 4) Guam annexed
- 5) Philippines purchased for \$20 Million and kept as an American colony
- 6) Foraker Act(1900), Puerto Rico gained a civil government (but not US citizens)
- 7) Citizenship granted to Puerto Ricans in 1917
- 8) 1947 PR becomes fully self governing commonwealth of the US
- 9) Philippine-American War (1899-1902)
- 10) Taft as governor of Philippines improved education, transportation, health care
- 11) Philippines slowly gain self government
- 12) 1946 Philippines granted independence