Chapter 7; Section 2

The Spanish-American War

- SPI 7.1 – Identify the causes of American imperialism (i.e., militarism)
- Target – How did militarism contribute to American imperialism?
- SPI 7.2 – Identify consequences of American imperialism (i.e., Spanish-American War, yellow journalism, military occupation)
- Target – How were Spanish-American War, yellow journalism, and military occupation a consequence of American imperialism?
- Essential Question – Was sympathy for the Cuban people or economic expansion the major reason why the United States declared war on Spain?

The causes were intertwined.
- In Section 2 we will learn the causes of the Spanish-American War and how the United States became an imperialist power.

Main Idea – Important
- In support of the Cuban rebellion and in retaliation for the loss of the USS Maine, the United States declared war on Spain.
- By 1898 Cuba and Puerto Rico were Spain’s last remaining colonies in the Western Hemisphere.
- The United States issues a declaration of war.
- Although the fighting lasted only a few months, the “splendid little war,” as Secretary of State John Hay described it, it dramatically altered the position of the United States on the world stage.
- Cuba was one of Spain’s oldest colonies in the Americas.
- Its sugarcane plantations generated considerable wealth for Spain.
- In 1868 Cuban rebels declared independence, but the rebellion quickly collapsed.
- By the early 1890’s the United States and Cuba had become closely linked economically.
- These economic ties created a crisis in 1894, when the United States imposed a new tariff on sugar that devastated Cuba’s economy.
- A new rebellion broke out in February 1895.
- The rebels seized control of eastern Cuba, declared independence, and formally established the Republic of Cuba in September of 1895.
- When the uprising in Cuba began, President Cleveland declared the United States neutral.
- What caused most Americans to support the rebels were the stories of Spanish atrocities reported in two major newspapers, the New York Journal, and the New York World.
- The Journal, owned by William Randolph Hearst, and the World, owned by Joseph Pulitzer, competed with each other to increase their circulation.
- Sensationalist reporting, in which writers often exaggerated and even made up stories to attract readers, became known as yellow journalism.
- In 1897 Republican William McKinley became President.
- He did not want to intervene in the war.
- He felt it would cost too many lives.
In September 1897, McKinley asked Spain if the United States could help negotiate an end to the conflict.
He made it clear that if the war did not end soon the United States would intervene.
Spain removed General Valeriano Weyler, (El Carnicero, The Butcher) from power and offered the Cubans autonomy.
Autonomy – the right to their own government.
Spain offered autonomy only if Cuba remained part of the Spanish empire.
The Cuban rebels refused to negotiate.
In January 1898, the loyalists rioted in Havana.
Worried that Americans in Cuba might be attacked, McKinley sent the battleship USS Maine to Havana in case the Americans had to be evacuated.
February 15, 1898, while the Maine was in Havana Harbor, it was torn apart by an explosion.
No one is sure about why the Maine exploded.
Many Americans believed it was an act of sabotage by the Spanish.
“Remember the Maine” became the rallying cry for those demanding a declaration of war against Spain.
Congress McKinley to spend $50 million for war preparations.
Within the Republican Party, Jingoism was very strong.
Jingoism – aggressive nationalism.
Democrats also demanded war.
April 11, 1898, McKinley asked Congress to authorize the use of force.
On April 19, Congress proclaimed Cuba independent, demanded that Spain withdraw from the island, and authorized the president to use armed force if necessary.
April 24, Spain declared war on the United States.
Main Idea – Important
The United States fought and defeated Spain in both the Caribbean and the Pacific.
The United States Navy was ready for war with Spain.
The navy’s North Atlantic Squadron blockaded Cuba.
Commodore George Dewey was ordered to attack the Spanish fleet based in the Philippines.
The Philippines was a Spanish colony.
May 1, 1898, Dewey’s squadron entered Manila Bay in the Philippines.
Four American ships opened fire and rapidly destroyed all eight of the severely outgunned Spanish warships.
Dewey’s quick victory took McKinley by surprise.
The army assembled 20,000 troops to sail from San Francisco to the Philippines.
On the way the Americans also seized the island of Guam, another Spanish possession in the Pacific.
Dewey contacted Emilio Aguinaldo, a Filipino revolutionary leader.
Aguinaldo quickly launched a new rebellion against the Spanish.
American troops seized the Philippine capital of Manila.
The Spanish in Cuba were not prepared for war.
Tropical diseases and months of fighting rebels had weakened their soldiers.
If the United States could defeat the Spanish fleet, Spain would not be able to supply its troops in Cuba.

The United States Army was not prepared for war either.

In many training camps, conditions were so unsanitary that epidemics broke out, and hundreds died – far more than would be killed in battle with the Spanish.

June 14, 1898, a force of about 17,000 troops landed east of the city of Santiago, Cuba.

Among the American troops advancing toward Santiago was a mix of cowboys, miners, and law officers known as the “Rough Riders.”

Colonel Leonard Wood commanded them.

Theodore Roosevelt was second in command.

One group attacked San Juan Hill, and the Rough Riders attacked Kettle Hill.

After seizing Kettle Hill, Roosevelt and his men assisted in the capture of San Juan Hill.

The all black 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments accompanied the Rough riders up Kettle Hill.

The Spanish commander in Santiago panicked.

He ordered the Spanish fleet in the harbor to flee.

As they exited the harbor on July 3, American warships attacked them, sinking or beaching every Spanish vessel.

Two weeks later, the Spanish troops in Santiago surrendered.

Soon afterwards, American troops occupied the nearby Spanish colony of Puerto Rico as well.

Main Idea – Important

In defeating Spain, the United States acquired an overseas empire.

Many people supported annexing the Philippines because of the economic and military benefits of the islands.

It would also give the United States another Pacific naval base, a stopover on the way to China, and a large market for American goods.

Not all Americans supported annexation.

Anti-imperialists included William Jennings Bryan, Andrew Carnegie, Jane Addams, Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), and Samuel Gompers.

Despite objections of the anti-imperialists, President McKinley decided to annex the islands.

Treaty of Paris

December 10, 1898, the United States and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris.

Cuba became an independent nation.

The United States acquired Puerto Rico and Guam and agreed to pay Spain $20 million for the Philippines.

The Senate ratified the treaty and the United States had become an imperial power.

McKinley took steps to ensure that Cuba would remain tied to the United States.

The Platt Amendment was submitted by Senator Orville Platt.

1. Cuba could not make any treaty with another nation that would weaken its independence.
2. Cuba had to allow the United States to buy or lease naval stations in Cuba.
3. Cuba’s debts had to kept low to prevent foreign countries from landing troops to enforce payment.
4. The United States would have the right to intervene to protect Cuban independence and keep order.
Cuba added the amendment to their constitution which effectively made Cuba an American protectorate.
In 1900 Congress passed the Foraker Act, establishing a civil government for the island of Puerto Rico.
The law provided for an elected legislature, but also called for a governor and executive council to be appointed by the president.
Supreme Court rulings held that Puerto Ricans were not American citizens.
The United States learned that controlling its new empire would not be easy.
Emilio Aguinaldo called the American decision to annex the Philippians a violent and aggressive seizure.
He ordered his troops to attack American soldiers.
The Philippine-American War or Philippine Insurrection lasted for more than three years.
Approximately 126,000 American soldiers were sent to the Philippines to fight.
More than 4,300 American soldiers died, either from combat or disease, as did an estimated 50,000 to 200,000 Philippines.
The first United States civilian governor of the islands, William Howard Taft, tried to win over the Filipinos by improving education, transportation, and health care.
In March 1901, American troops captured Aguinaldo.
A month later, Aguinaldo called on the guerillas to surrender.
On July 4, 1902 the United States declared the war over.
In 1946, The United States granted independence to the Philippines.