

Spanish - American War, 1898-1900

Spanish-American war

Why US becomes involved:

1. Economic ties (plantations/trade)
2. Growth of US expansionism
Cuban involvement part of this:
 - ❖ 1889 US held 1st Pan American Conference (modern Org of Am States)
 - ❖ USA extending its influence to neighbours: Mexico; Nicaragua & Panama (possible canal sites)
 - ❖ USA increasing its econ involvement in Latin America & challenging UK dominance here.
3. US Public opinion wants involvement:
Hearst press demands involvement to:
 - ❖ rescue Cubans from "Spanish Brutality"
 - ❖ Protect US investments
4. Political pressure for direct involvement
1898 sees Cuban nationalists close to victory without US help
= alarming in Washington
(fear that a truly independent Cuba would not look to the USA for support but to another European power eg UK or France. This violated the **Monroe Doctrine** of the 1820's.

So in Washington it was argued that if Spain could not keep Cuba, then to keep other Europeans out, the USA had to have most influence = **no transfer principle**
McKinley resists initially but gives way and involves the USA after:

5. Sinking of Maine
Real cause = mystery but 266 US deaths in Havana harbour lead to US war against Spain

Events

April 1898: US declares war on Spain

May Spanish fleet destroyed in Pacific

July Spanish army defeated on Cuba

Dec Treaty of Paris:

Independence for Cuba

US gain Puerto Rico, Guam, Philippines

NB Involvement to be seen in context of US policy in general to central America at the time: The Big Stick & Roosevelt Corollary.

Significance of US involvement:

1. Removes Spain from Cuba quickly
2. US influence expands greatly in Cuba
 - ❖ Cuban nationalists excluded from peace talks then discredited
 - ❖ US sets up military govt in Cuba to oversee setting up of new state and "protect" the new state.
 - ❖ US builds up an alliance with the main Cuban group supporting US influence: Cuban estancieros- the traditional elite.
1. US sees victory as a verification of its new expansionist policy in the area = development of Big Stick in area
3. Easy US victory has repercussions throughout Latin America:
 - Increases inferiority complex of latins

- Growth of anti-yankee feeling, especially in south America: Jose Enrique Rodó, Manuel Ugarte

The Protectorate, 1899-1903

US actions to establish control & influence:

1. Order restored:
 - nationalist army disbanded
 - US retained military base in Guantanamo
 - New administration set up
 - 1901: new elected assembly met
President Palma elected (=pro US)
2. US investment in infrastructure:
 - New schools, roads, sewers, telegraphs
3. US companies make large investments in sugar & tobacco industry.
- 4. Platt Amendment:** US given rights to oversee Cuban economy, veto Cuban international policy, to be free to intervene if "life, liberty & prosperity" was threatened