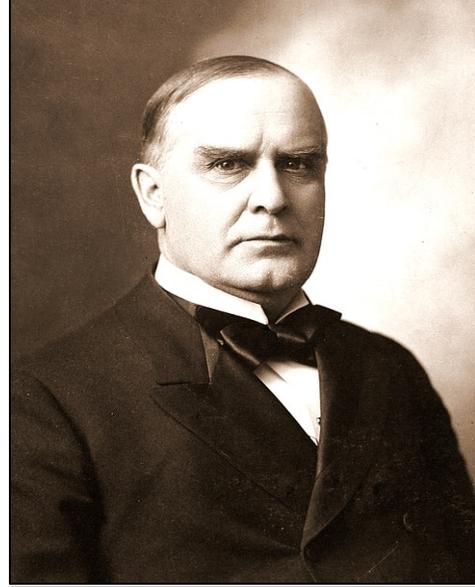


## A Splendid Little War Is Fought

In his farewell address as president, George Washington warned the American people of meddling in European affairs and issues outside of the United States. He emphasized that the American people should focus on domestic policies and avoid political entanglements outside of our borders. Washington's influential statements regarding this topic established the nation's policy on foreign affairs for over one hundred years. The United States had shown little interest in world outside of its borders, but the nation started to come out of its shell in the 1890's. Perhaps it was because imperialistic nations in Europe were grabbing colonies in Africa and Asia. Colonies offered advantages to nations that were willing to venture beyond their borders.



**William McKinley**

Some Americans felt that if we were to take our proper place as a world power, we must compete for colonies, too. Captain Alfred Mahan of the U.S. Naval Academy wrote *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, which argued the need for naval bases in distant parts of the globe. This would allow the United States to use its naval power to protect its borders and claim more land. Others, like Josiah Strong, argued that it was our duty as Americans to help the backwards people of the world and introduce them to our way of life. When nation's established colonies, there also came the economic benefits of raw materials and a market for surplus products.

The islands of Cuba and Hawaii attracted strong interest from American businessmen looking to increase profits. In 1848 and 1854, the U.S. tried without success to buy Cuba, but Spain refused to sell the island. The Cubans had staged several revolts against Spanish rule, but these attempts at gaining independence had always failed. American sugar growers had established themselves as a strong influence in Hawaii, but when **Queen Liliuokalani** ascended to the Hawaiian throne she began taking steps to remove them from the island. In 1893, the American and European businessmen in Hawaii called upon a small group of U.S. Marines to protect them from Liliuokalani and the "imminent threat that she posed to their lives and property." Liliuokalani was overthrown and replaced by a provisional government until Sanford B. Dole became president of the Republic of Hawaii in 1894. U.S. President Grover Cleveland sided with the queen, and it would not be until 1898 that the new president, William McKinley, finally **annexed** (to ad on) Hawaii as a U.S. territory.

Several events in 1895 caused a shift favoring expansionism. The Venezuelan Boundary Dispute over the boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela aroused a strong feeling among many Americans that the Monroe Doctrine (adopted in 1823 stating that any further European efforts to colonize North or South America would be an act of aggression, requiring U.S. intervention) must be enforced; some even favored going to war with Great Britain



**George Dewey**

Eventually, the dispute was resolved by compromise. Then, another revolt broke out in Cuba. At the same time, **William Randolph Hearst** bought the New York Journal and Joseph Pulitzer bought the New York World, and both papers began to feature stories about Spanish atrocities against the Cuban people.

To protect American property and business interests in Cuba, President William McKinley sent the battleship **Maine** to Havana Harbor. On February 15, 1898, the ship exploded. No evidence has ever been uncovered to suggest that the Spanish were responsible, but American newspapers were quick to blame Spain anyway. The American public was ensnared by the headlines and war fever began to spread throughout the nation. McKinley tried to avoid war by negotiating with the Spanish to

end their harsh rule; but when they refused his terms, he bowed to public opinion and asked for a declaration of war.

The U.S. Navy was the first to act. Admiral George Dewey was ordered to attack Manila Bay in the Spanish controlled Philippines. There he won an easy victory over the Spanish fleet. Admiral William Sampson cornered the Spanish back at Santiago Harbor, and when they attempted to escape, he smashed them with a stunning defeat. No wonder Secretary of State John Hay wrote: "It has been a splendid little war." The U.S. Army was unprepared for war, and its most spectacular unit, the Rough Riders, was a volunteer unit formed by Theodore Roosevelt. Made up of college students, cowboys, and ranchers, they became national heroes after capturing San Juan Hill. By the time that the peace treaty was signed between Spain and the United States, the army had not even arrived at the Philippines yet.

The Teller Amendment, passed at the beginning of the war, promised Cuba its independence after the war; in 1901, that promise was carried out and Cuba became a nation (under the protection of the United States). The United States took the islands of Puerto Rico and Guam from the Spanish, and they still remain U.S. territories today. The United States purchased the Philippines from Spain for \$20 million and it became a base of operations for the United States Navy. The Philippines would become an independent nation after World War II.

