

Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

3. Discuss the innovations and technological advances directly related to the U.S. military.
 - 3.1 Describe the development of the U.S. Military operations on the world stage.

8. Discuss the United States' transition from isolation to involvement in world conflicts.
 - 8.1 Examine a conflict in which the United States was involved.
 - 8.2 Describe how an involvement in an international conflict impacted the United States.
 - 8.3 Examine the concept of the United States as an imperialist power.

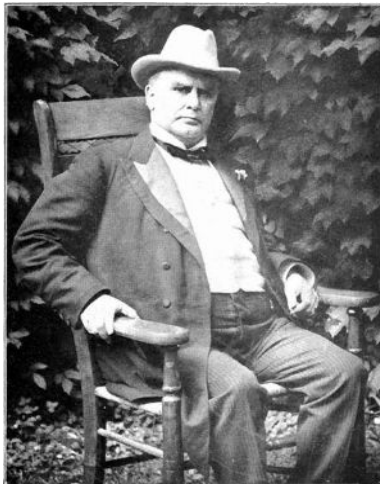
| Course/Unit Learning Outcomes | Learning Activity |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 3.1 | Unit Lesson; Chapter 10; Assessment |
| 8.1 | Unit Lesson; Chapter 9; Chapter 10; Assessment |
| 8.2 | Unit Lesson; Chapter 9; Chapter 10; Assessment |
| 8.3 | Unit Lesson; Chapter 9; Assessment |

Reading Assignment

Chapter 9: The Birth of an American Empire, 1898-1902

Chapter 10: Building the Military Forces of a World Power, 1899-1917

Unit Lesson



President McKinley
(Pach Bros., 1914)

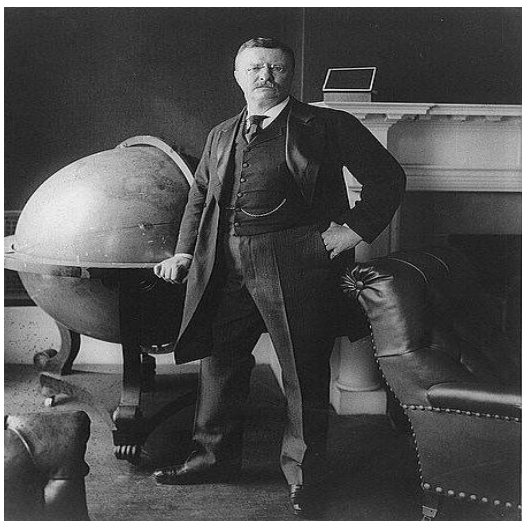
The Cuban Revolution in 1895 served to strain relations between Spain and the United States. American citizens were appalled at the suffering the Spanish inflicted on the Cubans. It also disrupted trade and threatened American investments in Cuba. Many Americans, government officials and citizens alike, viewed Cuba with rose-tinted glasses with the promise of expansion. Certainly Americans did not relish Spanish reconcentration in retaliation to the Cuban rebels (Millett, Maslowski, & Feis, 2012).

Despite this, Americans did not rush to Cuba's aid. President William McKinley had served in the American Civil War and did not warm up to the idea of sending a new crop of American boys to their death—especially in a foreign land over a foreign conflict. Further distracting the president was a domestic depression. He certainly felt the need to focus his attention at home and not abroad, but the imperialist ambitions of many politicians in the U.S. conflicted with McKinley's ideas of keeping America from another war. However, Cuban rebels and the Spanish Army remained in an excruciating deadlock.

Events in early 1898 only escalated the tension. Two especially gained the attention of the American press; first, the publishing of a letter stolen from the Spanish minister that insulted America and President McKinley. Secondly, there was the sinking of the battleship Maine in Havana harbor with 260 lives lost (Millett et al., 2012). These events drew the United States headfirst into the conflict.

Spain began the war with the United States on April 23, 1898, after unsuccessfully attempting to delay the inevitable. Despite Spain's peacemaking attempts, its large colonial force made it a dangerous foe. Spain, however, also had a number of obstacles inhibiting its performance. Spanish troops were ill equipped and weary of fighting the Cuban insurrectionists.

The United States had problems of its own to overcome in the midst of this declaration of war. Leaders of the U.S. Navy and Army had difficulty working together. The army had logistical problems meeting the needs of its troops. However, with the help of Cuban Nationalists, Spain granted Cuban Independence and ceded Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States. Soon to be dubbed the "Splendid Little War," most of the casualties came from disease and dysentery—not fighting—and had been a great success for the United States. While basking in success, many Americans realized that the new acquisitions could also cause problems (Millett et al., 2012).



Theodore Roosevelt
(Shirimasen, 2005)

Theodore Roosevelt (once a Rough Rider who had experience in Cuba) was now president and the commander in chief; he considered the Philippines to be America's Achilles heel. Roosevelt was sensitive to America now being viewed as a colonial power with the annexation of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines and the establishment of a protectorate over Cuba. The fear was that this newly acquired territory in the Far East would bring a large, costly militarism abroad and despotism at home.

The war with Spain left American military policy a new task: building the military forces of a world power. Furthermore, as the U.S. had added to its territories, it had also added the protection of those territories to its military policy. Despite its new colonial ties, the cornerstone of American military policy would remain the defense of the United States (Millett et al., 2012).

The United States remained in a unique position amongst other world powers. It did not have to worry about land invasions.

Any threat posed to the United States would be at the hands of naval powers: Great Britain, Germany, and Japan. It also feared the penetration of major world powers into the northern half of the Western Hemisphere. The flirtation between Mexico and Germany especially concerned the United States, prompting the rise of what could be seen as a new imperialist power.

One of the primary concerns of American defense policy before World War I became the creation of a ready reserve force that could be sent beyond the nation's borders. The Philippine Problem became extremely difficult because the American public did not consider the stake in Asia worth the cost (Millett et al., 2012). How then could the U.S. extend its limited military forces across 6000 miles of ocean to defend interests its citizens did not consider important enough to fight for?

Also during this time, the American battle fleet had been expanded and modernized. It was now superior to all fleets except the British and German fleets. Many other events occurred shortly prior to the outbreak of war. In 1909 the navy agreed to build its major Pacific base at Pearl Harbor. The U.S. annexed Puerto Rico in 1899 and the Virgin Islands in 1915. The Panama Canal opened in 1914, which allowed the United States to develop a two-ocean navy (Millett et al., 2012). These events all added to the effectiveness of the U.S. Navy while meeting many of the goals introduced by Alfred T. Mahan. While enjoying this new role as a naval power, tensions brewing in Europe would challenge America to expand its capabilities beyond just the barriers of its American pond.

The outbreak of hostilities in Europe led the United States to begin a preparedness movement of modernizing the armed forces. The German submarine warfare and the indecisiveness of the European conflict motivated some in America to insist that the United States begin building "a navy second to none" (Millett et al., 2012, p. 319).

References

Millett, A. R., Maslowski, P., & Feis, W. B. (2012). *For the common defense: A military history of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Pach Bros. (1914). *Presidents McKinley* [Image]. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Presidents_McKinley.jpg

Shirimasen. (2005, June 2). *Teddy Roosevelt portrait*. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Teddy_Roosevelt_portrait.jpg

Suggested Reading

In order to access the following resources, click the links below:

The following film segments provide more insight into the Spanish-American War.

The Army Pictorial Center (Producer). (2008). *The Spanish American War* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=45069&loid=196442>

Haffner, C. (Executive Producer), Lusitana, D. E. (Executive Producer), Haddad, M. (Producer), & LaMontagne, K. (Associate Producer). (2005). *William McKinley: Spanish American War* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=43178&loid=93930>

History Education (Producer). (1998). *U.S. Fleet in Cuba* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=42376&loid=117160>

Media Rich Learning (Producer). (2003). *The Spanish-American War: A Legacy of American Imperialism* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=36214&loid=37460>

The following two video segments from the full film *In the Arena (1901-1910): Par 2- Ken Burns: The Roosevelts, An Intimate History* take a closer look at U.S. imperialism and involvement in foreign affairs.

- “Imperialism” (Segment 10)
- “Panama Canal” (Segment 12)

Burns, K. (Producer). (2014). *In the arena (1901-1910): Part 2—Ken Burns: The Roosevelts, An Intimate History* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?auth=CAS&url=http://fod.infobase.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?wID=273866&xtid=60731>

If you are interested in learning more about the Spanish-American War, take a few minutes to read the article below that explores this topic.

Hudson, R. (2014). A splendid little war. *History Today*, 64(6), 28-29. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=96515519&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

The article below explores the Utah Batteries, which were army units comprised of Utah volunteer artillerymen.

Johnson, B. (2012). The Utah Batteries: Volunteer artillerymen in the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars, 1898-1899. *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 80(2), 152-172. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=74442425&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

The article below explores the visual narratives provided by U.S. soldiers' photo albums during the Philippine-American War.

Niedermeier, S. (2014). Imperial narratives: Reading US soldiers' photo albums of the Philippine-American War. *Rethinking History*, 18(1), 28-49. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=94381001&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

The Spanish-American War had an effect on the already strained relationship between Blacks and Whites in the South after the Civil War. This article looks at that issue.

Turpie, D. C. (2014). A voluntary war: The Spanish-American War, White Southern manhood, and the struggle to recruit volunteers in the South. *Journal of Southern History*, 80(4), 859-892. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=99329719&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

The Naval War board was created to strategize and plan for wars after the explosion of Maine in 1898. This article details this body and some of its decisions.

Wenzer, K. C. (2016). The Naval War Board of 1898. *Canadian Military History*, 25(1), 1-23. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=31h&AN=117198951&site=ehost-live&scope=site>