

## **“We Have Remembered the Maine”**

### **The Basics**

#### **Time Required**

1-2 class periods

#### **Subject Areas**

AP US History

The Emergence of Modern America, 1890-1930

#### **Common Core Standards Addressed:**

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6-12

#### **Author**

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### **The Lesson**

#### **Introduction**

This lesson attempts to explain how and why the United States abandoned a generally isolationist foreign policy and territorial expansion confined to the continental United States, resulting in the acquisition of territories around the globe and new strategic responsibilities that would define the United States as a world power in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Born in rebellion against the world’s most formidable imperial power, the Founding Fathers crafted a republican form of government that reflected disdain for the trappings of imperialism and an implicit faith in the right of the people for self-governance. Yet, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the United States found itself ready to compete with the Old World powers for markets and geopolitical influence throughout the globe, particularly in the Caribbean, South America, and Asia. While the Americans had been ready expansionists since establishing footholds on the North American continent, that expansion had been confined to the contiguous land areas and accomplished through diplomacy, demographic movements, and armed conflict, frequently bloody and ruthless, directed primarily at the Native Americans who resisted the inexorable movement of the American settlers. But by the 1890s, this “frontier,” as Frederick Jackson Turner defined it, had closed, forcing the Americans to look abroad for new markets and areas of influence.

The 1890s witnessed major events that influenced its foreign policy: 1) the 1893 depression, the worst in the nation’s history, where it became clear that America’s prodigious industrial capacity required foreign markets in order to sell its surplus goods and maintain a high-level of employment; 2) the appearance among American political, intellectual, and military leaders of Social Darwinist notions that included a mix of ideas that included a firm belief in Anglo-Saxon superiority, a neo-Manifest Destiny sense of mission, and an unquestioned sense that democratic American values and institutions offered colonial peoples the means to liberty and self-governance; 3) the emergence of what diplomatic historian Walter Mead identifies as the Hamiltonian school of foreign policy, where the United States faced a new strategic reality that required it to maintain a two-ocean navy in order to protect its shipping lanes and defend its Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and to do this required territories throughout the globe whereby its fleet could replenish and repair.

By World War One, the United States had gained an empire, one that offered both opportunities but, more clearly, problems. What rights and privileges should be provided to the newly acquired

colonies? Should the territories be annexed or offered independence? What of matters of race, religion, and ethnicity? Can the United States remain a republic while embarking on imperial conquest? Can a republic hostile to standing armies accept the military necessity of defending an empire? How these questions would be answered would largely define the role that the United States would take in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Guiding Questions**

### **Learning Objectives**

- to develop the construct of the “Five Ds”—destiny, dollars, diplomacy, democracy, Darwinism—when interpreting foreign policy decisions
- to analyze the role that the press and interest groups play in foreign policy decisions
- to introduce three historiographical perspectives for interpreting American foreign policy—moralistic/legalistic, *realpolitik*, economic interests
- to analyze the implications of the Treaty of Paris, 1898

### **Preparation Instructions**

#### Reading:

William McKinley, “War Message”

Available at <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/mkinly2.htm>

#### Music:

Charles Robinson, “We Have Remembered the Maine” (1898)

Available at [http://www.pbs.org/crucible/frames/\\_music.html](http://www.pbs.org/crucible/frames/_music.html)

Bob Marley, “Buffalo Soldiers,” (1983). Available on *Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and the Wailers*

#### Political Cartoon:

Charles L. Bartholomew, *Minneapolis Journal*

Available at: [http://www.pbs.org/crucible/frames/\\_journalism.html](http://www.pbs.org/crucible/frames/_journalism.html)

### **Lesson Activities**

#### Set:

The class will begin with a 2’ segment from the musical, “Newsies” heralding the sinking of the battleship Maine along with sensationalist headlines about the need to avenge the death of American sailors. This will provide an easy segue way to the discussion about the origins of the war and the unique role that tabloid journalism played in shaping public opinion.

#### Closure/Transition:

Students will be left with new dilemmas associated with the war: disputes between allies, whether to annex the new acquisitions or to support independence movements, and lingering racial and religious prejudices. While winning the war was relatively easy, securing the peace will prove difficult, just as President Bush found out in Iraq.

### **Assessment**

- What was the background of American involvement in Cuba in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?
- What was the significance of the *Cuba Libre* movement?
- What policies did Valeriano Weyler implement to deal with the Cuban revolution?
- What role did the “yellow press” play in shaping public opinion?
- What was the significance of the de Lome letter?
- To what extent were economic factors involved in America’s decision to wage war?
- According to President McKinley’s “War Message,” why should Congress declare war?
- Is the “War Message” accurate when describing the sinking of the Maine?
- What was the United States’ strategic plan for winning the war?
- What was the significance of Commodore Dewey’s victory at Manila?
- What role did Theodore Roosevelt play in the war?
- What role did the Buffalo Soldiers play in the war?
- What was the Teller Amendment?
- What role did Emilio Aguinaldo play in the war?
- What role did Maximo Gomez play in the war?
- What were the major features of the Treaty of Paris in 1898?
- How were Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos depicted in political cartoons?
- What was the anti-imperialist argument in opposition to the treaty?
- What military reforms did Secretary of War Elihu Root enact as a result of the war?

### **Resources**

#### **Lyrics**

“Buffalo Soldiers” available at

<http://lyricsplayground.com/alpha/songs/b/buffalosoldier.shtml>