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Humanitarian intervention in the long nineteenth century

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10

The US and Cuba, 1895–98

On intervention

Among the handful of humanitarian interventions of the nineteenth century the intervention in Cuba is the most controversial, in view of the US reluctance to leave Cuba and the huge advantages it accrued, including the acquisition of even the faraway Philippines.

Any discussion of the US stance on intervention before 1914 has to take into consideration the Monroe Doctrine of 1823.¹ The Doctrine contained three principles: (1) that the Americas were ‘henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization’ by any European power; (2) that the US would abstain from interfering in European affairs; and (3) that there will be no ‘interposition’ by the European powers in ‘this hemisphere’.² Conversely, there was to be no US interference in the existing European colonies in the Americas. Thus it was not applicable to Cuba, which was held by Spain.

According to John Bassett Moore of Columbia University, the doyen among international lawyers in the US during that period, ‘the most pronounced exception ever made by the United States, apart from cases arising under the Monroe Doctrine, to its policy of non-intervention, is that which was made in the case of Cuba’.³

As for the justification of the intervention in Cuba on humanitarian grounds, the US government was well aware of this concept and its practice as it had evolved in Europe. The US administration included acclaimed lawyers, such as Secretary of State William Day, many of them proficient in international law, such as Attorney General John Griggs, Elihu Root⁴ and Moore, who served as Assistant Secretary of State in 1897–98 and was Day’s main adviser on foreign affairs. Moreover, American jurists had for decades contributed to the debate on humanitarian intervention, with Kent and Halleck in earlier periods having come out against the idea; and a majority in support, namely Wheaton, Woolsey, as well as Pomeroy and Hershey prior to 1898 (see [chapter 4](#), especially [table 4.1](#)).

More generally, the intervention in Cuba was to prove a turning point. As Charles Fenwick has put it: ‘Henceforth the role of the United States was to be

no longer that of a leader of the American States in opposing intervention of Europe in American affairs but was to be itself the intervening power with the other American States ranged against it'.⁵ The subsequent 1903 treaty with Cuba provided the US with a right to intervene ostensibly for the good of Cuba (see below); Theodore Roosevelt's 'corollary' to the Monroe Doctrine of 1904 said that 'chronic wrongdoing' in Latin American states could lead to intervention; and the Wilson Doctrine (1913) led to US interventions in Mexico (1914), Haiti (1915) and the Dominican Republic (1916). Such blatant interventionism led to a strong reaction on the part of the Latin American states, and intervention was declared 'inadmissible' at the 1936 Buenos Aires Conference for the Maintenance of Peace.⁶

The setting

In the first part of the nineteenth century all the overseas territories of Spain's *Siglo de oro* (golden age) had gained independence save Cuba (and Puerto Rico), earning it the name 'the ever-faithful isle'. Spaniards emigrated to Cuba well into the 1880s. Of some 1.6 million inhabitants, 150,000 were *peninsulares* (first-generation immigrants), 950,000 creoles (their offspring) and 500,000 were Afro-Cubans and mulattos. Spain's imperial rule was reactionary, ensuring the *peninsulares* a privileged position.⁷

The first bid for *Cuba libre* was the Ten Years' War (1868–78), initially headed by Carlos de Céspedes, who freed his slaves and declared Cuban independence, followed by Máximo Gómez (a former colonel from Santo Domingo), Antonio Maceo (the mulatto hero of the peasants), Calixto García and others. The war ended with the Pact of Zangón (1878), after victory by the Spaniards under General Martínez de Campos. There were some meagre reforms and in 1886 the long-awaited abolition of slavery. A second independence attempt, known as the Little War (1879–80), headed by García, was also abortive.⁸

April 1892 saw the formation of the Partido revolucionario cubano, by poet and political theorist José Martí, who recruited seasoned soldiers from the previous war, Gómez, Maceo, García and others. On 24 February 1895 the Guerra de independencia was declared. Martí issued the Proclamation of Montecristi (25 March), which stated that the struggle was also for liberation from economic oppression and racial discrimination. Martí together with Gómez arrived in Cuba on 11 April, the latter becoming the overall military leader, seconded by Maceo.⁹

In Spain, Antonio Cánovas, the leader of the Conservative Party, had stated (in 1891) that Spain would fight to 'the last man and the last peso' to retain Cuba.¹⁰ When the revolt broke out, Premier Práxedes Sagasta, the leader of the Liberal Party, blamed the uprising on external agitators and declared that '[t]he Spanish nation is disposed to sacrifice to the last peseta ... and to the last drop of blood of the last Spaniard before consenting that anyone snatch from it even one piece

of its sacred territory'.¹¹ A few days later the Sagasta government fell and Cánovas took over, but he was even more determined to crush the rebellion.

Why the last drop of blood and the last peso? Spain in the last decades of the nineteenth century was a country whose people were disgruntled and poor and whose governments were often corrupt. Spain, in contrast to the days of its 'golden age', trailed behind the other Western countries. Yet all Spaniards were united by the memory of a glorious past, now symbolized by the possession of Cuba (the island had been claimed by Columbus for Spain in his very first voyage, of 1492). Cuba and the immense overseas empire were regarded as God's gift to Spain for the *Reconquista* (the re-conquest) of Christian Spain from the Muslims and an integral part of the Spanish nation.¹² As put by one contemporary, Cuba was 'the flesh of the flesh of Spain; it is part of the history, the glory, and the grandeur of Spain', and surrendering it would be tantamount to denying Spain's national identity and heritage.¹³ Thus the Spaniards scoffed at the repeated US attempts to purchase the island and pressed on till the very end for a military solution; in the process Spain sustained 50,000 soldiers dead and 50,000 disabled by wounds and disease, out of more than 200,000 men who fought in the Cuban jungles, many of them mere teenagers, in what was the largest number of troops ever sent by Spain to the Americas.¹⁴

Around 100 miles to the north of Cuba lies the US, the 'Colossus of the North' as Martí called it.¹⁵ US Secretary of State John Quincy Adams had commented (in 1823) that there 'are laws of political as well as physical gravitation' and Cuba 'can gravitate only toward the North American Union, which by the same law of nature cannot cast her off from its bosom'.¹⁶ Similar views were voiced by an array of office-holders, from ex-President Thomas Jefferson to Secretary of State James Blaine in the early 1880s.¹⁷ Four US Presidents, from John Quincy Adams in 1825, to James Buchanan in 1858, tried to purchase the island from Spain.¹⁸ Here, a phrase from another country bordering the US comes to mind, attributed to the Mexican President Porfirio Díaz: 'Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States'. Cuba had become 'an object of desire' because of its fertility, commanding geographical position and proximity to the US.¹⁹

There is also another side to the US attitude that played its part in bringing about military intervention, which followed what Julián Juderías dubbed, a decade later, the 'black legend' regarding Spain and the Spaniards peddled in Europe and North America since the Enlightenment.²⁰ In US school textbooks of the nineteenth century, the image of Spain was strikingly negative, a stereotype buttressed by scholarly books.²¹ Tyrannical rule, cruelty, decadence and bigotry were regarded as Spain's trademarks for centuries. When a journalist dared mention Las Casas's pithy criticism of the Spanish conquerors, the view was that even he had indicted his compatriots.²² The influential US senator Henry Cabot Lodge called Spain 'medieval, cruel, dying', 'three hundred years behind the rest of the world'.²³ Moreover, in the racist narrative dominant in the country,

the 'Anglo-Saxon race', the Americans in particular, were regarded the 'superior race', with the Africans and American Indians at the lowest scale, and Latin people, such as the Spaniards, somewhere between the two extremes. At various times during 1895–98 the Cuban insurgents were disparaged on the basis that the majority of fighters were Afro-Cubans and mulattos.²⁴

US intervention: humanitarian or not?

One can discern two main versions of the 1898 Spanish–US war, the 'splendid little war' as labelled by John Hay, Secretary of State in the McKinley and Roosevelt administrations. The version which can accommodate the humanitarian dimension is that the initial overriding goal was humanitarian: colonization and imperialism were unintended and came about by chance;²⁵ they were a 'great aberration', as famously put by Samuel Flagg Bemis (the father of American diplomatic history);²⁶ it was a case of 'empire by default'.²⁷

According to the other version, the switch was hardly accidental. As George Herring has put it, '[i]t was less a case of the United States coming upon greatness almost inadvertently than of it pursuing its destiny deliberately and purposefully'.²⁸ The uprising in Cuba and the slipping away of the Spanish overseas empire in the two great oceans provided the US with an unprecedented opportunity. From such a perspective there are no accidents in history; 'great nations' seek opportunities to symbolize their great power status and deliberately propagate greatness.²⁹

As regards the first version, the head of the administration from 1897 onwards, President William McKinley, was by all accounts against resorting to war and innocent of expansionist intentions until mid-1898. When he finally decided that war was on, he did so reluctantly, and humanitarian reasons loomed large in his thinking and were no sham.³⁰

Secondly, big business was against intervention until the eve of the war. This has been 'conclusively demonstrated'³¹ by historian Julius Pratt (in the 1930s), who refers to the attitude of chief industrialists and bankers and the articles in leading financial journals, such as *Journal of Commerce*, *American Banker* and the *Wall Street Journal*, and, to an almost equal extent, business linked with Cuba (mainly sugar interests).³² The upper crust of the business community initially stood firmly against intervention, men such as Andrew Carnegie, John Pierpont Morgan, John Rockefeller, Alfred du Pont and Grenville Dodge.³³ Business people were so opposed that they were pilloried by the public and in the 'yellow press' (sensational ill-researched journalism) as 'soulless', 'the syndicated Judas Iscariot of Humanity' and the like.³⁴ The switch to interventionism on the part of big business took place a few weeks prior to the war, and was based initially on humanitarian grounds and patriotism and not on business opportunities and prospective gains.³⁵

Thirdly, there was genuine sympathy for the Cuban plight among the public and on Capitol Hill, which called for US intervention on humanitarian grounds that would bring about Cuban independence.³⁶ Even sceptics of US intentions acknowledge that there is 'no reason to doubt the authenticity of popular perceptions'.³⁷

There is also the related question of the yellow press, mainly William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, and its role in bringing about war, with its often exaggerated and sensationalized presentations of Cuban suffering.³⁸ Recent scholarship has convincingly contested this view and even without the yellow press, the public would have learned about the abhorrent conditions in Cuba from more reliable sources.³⁹

But other factors seem to point to another direction, making humanitarian reasons appear skin deep.

First was the maturing of an older approach, held by Secretaries of State Sewell in the late 1860s and Blaine in the early 1880s: 'national extension and aggrandizement', 'the large policy'. In the last decade of the nineteenth century several influential people, who could sway foreign policy were associated with the large policy.⁴⁰ A central figure was Captain Alfred Mahan, President of the Naval War College (one of the founding fathers of the new field of geopolitics, together with the British geographer Halford Mackinder and the German geographer Friedrich Ratzel), who advocated naval strength, along the British model, as the road to great power status for the country. Mahan was close to two avowed expansionist Republican politicians, Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt (then Assistant Secretary of the Navy). Others who shared these views were the influential Republican senators William Frye, Cushman Davis, Joseph Foraker, the Democratic senators John Tyler Morgan, Whitelaw Reid (former ambassador to Paris, long-serving editor of the *New York Tribune* and Republican vice presidential nominee in 1892) and John Hay (ambassador to London and Secretary of State immediately after the war). However, when it came to Cuba, most expansionists called for intervention on humanitarian grounds and not for annexation.⁴¹

A rehashed 'Manifest Destiny' (the concept coined by John O'Sullivan in 1839) also entered the scene, a 'New Manifest Destiny', now infused with racism and crude social Darwinism, based on the notion of 'survival of the fittest'.⁴² Two widely read authors, the historian John Fiske (who reiterated the Manifest Destiny theme and popularized the views of Darwin and Spencer on evolution) and the clergyman and Social Gospel leader Josiah Strong, presented the 'Anglo-Saxons' as the most gifted 'race', destined to civilize and lead the world in the name of progress. Such views were endorsed by the leading political scientist of the day, Professor John Burgess, of Columbia University, who called on the Teutonic races (Anglo-Saxons and Germans) to expand and civilize the world (ironically, however, Fiske, Strong as well as Burgess were against military intervention in Cuba⁴³).⁴⁴

Research has also shown that, for the 'jingoese', expanding and acquiring colonies was a reaffirmation of their manhood that had suffered a shock from the 1893 economic crisis that devastated the US.⁴⁵ In the gendered imagery of the 1890s, Cuba was presented as a feminized victim, as a voluptuous damsel in distress calling to be rescued by the manly Yankee, or an unruly female child in need of a firm father.⁴⁶

Secondly, when Commodore George Dewey vanquished the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay (1 May 1898), business journals switched their position, pointing to the advantages of an independent Cuba. They toyed with colonies, an isthmian canal and US presence in the Pacific, the very ideas previously derided. The 'fabled China market' in particular loomed large, though some authors have disputed this.⁴⁷ The 'glut thesis' prevailed, namely that a surplus of goods was piling up in the US, which needed an outlet in Latin America and Asia. For the *American Banker* the opportunity to expand in the Pacific was 'a coincidence which has a providential air'.⁴⁸ With the turn of events, expansion and the search for new markets were presented as a necessity and doing otherwise a folly.⁴⁹

Thirdly is what occurred in the wake of the US victory: (1) acquisition of Puerto Rico and distant Guam, (2) annexation of Hawaii, (3) holding on to Cuba and (4) acquiring the faraway Philippines.

The economic dimension is worth returning to, together with the role of President McKinley. The economic aspect, which had dominated scholarly literature in the 1920s, was discarded by Pratt's intervention in the 1930s. But in the 1960s and 1970s it resurfaced, with the works of new left historians, such as W. A. Williams, Philip Foner and Walter LaFeber.⁵⁰ The thrust of LaFeber's subtle version is not that Pratt was mistaken regarding the period up to March 1898, but that, in view of the sudden conversion to imperialism, which 'grabbed greatness with both hands', the aberration thesis is unconvincing as an explanatory paradigm.⁵¹

The role of McKinley is intertwined with the economic dimension, given the President's partnership with leading business people. Until the 1950s the predominant scholarly view was that the President was well meaning but weak, buckling to public opinion, Congress and the expansionists; to remember Roosevelt's phrase, McKinley had a backbone like a chocolate éclair. This assessment is evident in the works of Bemis and Pratt in the 1930s, Ernest May in the 1950s and Gerald Linderman in the 1970s. However, in recent decades the image of McKinley has been redeemed, with the twenty-fifth US President emerging as a 'master of men', able to orchestrate foreign policy, as argued by H. Wayne Morgan, Lewis Gould, Richard Hamilton, John Offner as well as LaFeber. In this sense McKinley was perhaps the first modern US President.⁵²

Main events

1895–96

Martí and Gómez sought US recognition and aid but not military intervention, for fear of domination. As Martí mused, 'To change masters is not to be free'.⁵³ The inspiring Martí died in an ambush (19 May 1895) and Cuba declared itself independent (15 July), with Salvador Betancourt as President. The Cuban movement in the US, known as the Cuban Junta, was headed by Tomás Estrada Palma (a general in the Ten Years' War in Cuba and associate of Martí), who believed that a special relationship with the 'colossus' was inevitable and to the benefit of the Cuban people.⁵⁴ The Junta vigorously lobbied the State Department and Congress, organized demonstrations, raised funds and sent arms to Cuba via filibustering operations and fed the press with information, mostly exaggerated, of Spanish brutalities. In Cuba the overall strategy of Gómez was 'abominable devastation' aimed at rendering Cuba 'an economic desert', making the cost of Spain's retention of the island unbearable.⁵⁵

Cánovas's reaction was to send General Campos. But the veteran soldier was reluctant to use extreme measures to stem the uprising and was replaced by General Valeriano Weyler. The energetic and ruthless Weyler (previously governor of the Philippines) as governor of Cuba initiated a brutal policy of 'reconcentration', namely building trenches 100 yards wide, equipped with barbed wire and blockhouses, to separate the governmental region from that of the rebels, burning villages and crops, killing all the cattle and herding the inhabitants (mostly peasants) into various fortified areas and towns. The result was horrendous: more than 200,000 died from malnutrition and disease.⁵⁶

All this was widely reported, not least by the yellow press in the US and in cartoons which presented the Spaniards as barbarians.⁵⁷ Weyler came to be known as 'Butcher Weyler', for having 'turned the island into a prison', a 'wasteland of human misery'.⁵⁸ Weyler's strategy met with some initial success by slowing the insurgent advance and by killing the legendary Maceo on 7 December 1896 (he was replaced by García as second in command). Thus 1896, which had started with the prospect of victory for the Cubans, had ended with demoralization and victory as distant as ever. But the Spanish forces for their part were hardly closer to victory.⁵⁹

The Democratic President, Grover Cleveland, feared the creation of a 'Negro republic' like Haiti and thus adopted a policy of strict neutrality. Secretary of State Richard Olney offered US mediation to Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, the Spanish Minister in Washington, stressing that the sole aim of the US administration was the pacification of the island and that it was opposed to independence, for the Cubans were not fit to govern themselves. Cánovas did not accept mediation and his Foreign Minister, the Duke of Tetuan, called for the support of the great powers in Madrid's dispute with Washington.⁶⁰

In April 1896 a joint resolution of the two Houses deplored the situation in Cuba and called for belligerent status for the Cubans, which the President ignored.⁶¹ The new US consul-general in Havana, Fitzhugh Lee, painted a dismal picture of the situation in Cuba and deadlock, and recommended US intervention or the purchase of the island.⁶²

Cleveland, in his farewell address to the nation (7 December 1896), lamented the ‘spectacle of the utter ruin of an adjoining country, by nature one of the most fertile and charming on the globe’, and warned that ‘the United States is not a nation to which peace is a necessity’.⁶³ The outgoing President in the night before the inauguration of McKinley told him that he was afraid that he had left him with a war, to which the latter answered graciously that he hoped that he could do as well as he had done to avoid it.⁶⁴

From 1897 until the eve of the war

The new President upon taking office seemed determined to avoid going to war. As he put it to the respected independent politician Carl Schurz, a few weeks after his inauguration, ‘there will be no jingo nonsense under my Administration’.⁶⁵ McKinley wanted to first establish the facts in Cuba before charting his Administration’s position. He thus sent a trusted political friend, William Calhoun, to Cuba to assess the situation. Calhoun, upon returning, painted a bleak picture of Cuba as a result of reconcentration (‘children with swollen limbs and extended abdomens’), and claimed that if Spain continued in its policy of seeking a military solution, the total destruction of the island and the almost total extermination of its population could not be avoided.⁶⁶

The President sent Stewart Woodford as the US Minister to Madrid to try to iron out differences with Spain,⁶⁷ but sent a stern message to the Spanish government, stating that ‘the rights of humanity exceeded the rights of states’ and demanded the revocation of reconcentration ‘in the name of common humanity’.⁶⁸

Cánovas was assassinated on 8 August 1897 and the new Spanish Premier, Sagasta, promised a humane policy in Cuba. Woodford advised Cuban autonomy and was able to develop a relationship of trust with the main moderate, Professor Segismundo Moret, a distinguished politician, then Minister of Overseas Colonies. On 25 November Madrid adopted a policy of autonomy for Cuba in principle and Weyler was replaced by General Ramón Blanco, with instructions to end reconcentration.⁶⁹ McKinley in his annual message to Congress (6 December 1897) called reconcentration ‘not civilized warfare’ but ‘extermination’,⁷⁰ but referred to the autonomy scheme in favourable terms and noted that Spain ‘should be given a reasonable chance to realize her expectations and to prove the asserted efficacy of the new order of things’.⁷¹

The autonomy offered by Spain to the Cubans was ‘too little, too late, too slowly’.⁷² It was unacceptable to Gómez and Estrada Palma. It was also rejected by

the *peninsulares*, who embarked on anti-autonomy riots in Havana (January 1898), shouting 'death to Blanco' and blaming the US for Spain's offer of autonomy.⁷³ Many *peninsulares* prayed for the annexation of Cuba by the US to save them from the insurgents.⁷⁴

At this juncture McKinley tried to purchase the island from Spain. In January Reid was charged to undertake private negotiations with Madrid to purchase Cuba but the mission failed. In March Woodford tried to convince Moret that selling the island to the US was the best way to 'part with Cuba without loss of self-respect'.⁷⁵

A series of unfortunate events were to bring matters to a head. One concerned a personal letter by Lôme that was published by the *New York Journal* (the letter had been passed on by the Junta) on 9 February 1898 under the title 'Worst Insult to the United States in History'. The letter portrayed the President as 'weak', 'on good terms with the jingoes' and a 'wound-be politician', and implied that talks with the US and autonomy were a ruse to gain time.⁷⁶

Six days later a prized US battleship, the USS *Maine*, at anchor in Havana, was destroyed by an explosion, killing 266 officers and men out of 354. Spain expressed its deep sorrow but, predictably, the two states' respective investigations reached different conclusions: the US report found that an external explosion, a mine or torpedo, had caused it, while the Spanish report concluded that internal combustion (an explosion within the ship) had caused it (the Spanish version is more likely).⁷⁷ But the public, even before the publication of the US report, was convinced that Spain was guilty of 'foul play'.⁷⁸ 'Remember the *Maine*, to hell with Spain' became an everyday catchphrase in 'a hysterical demand for immediate intervention'.⁷⁹ Most students of 1898 regard this episode as the single event that made war impossible to avoid.⁸⁰ McKinley, for his part, had no intention of being 'swept off his feet', as he put it, as a result of the *Maine* episode.⁸¹

Specialists of '1898' attach great importance to a speech made a month later by the respected Senator Redfield Proctor (a former Secretary of War), in the Senate on 17 March, following a visit to Cuba (the Republican senator was a close friend of McKinley and had seen him shortly before the speech, so it can be deduced that he had cleared it with him).⁸² Proctor, speaking dispassionately presented a situation of 'desolation and distress, misery and starvation', children with 'abdomen bloated to three times the natural size'.⁸³ He estimated that of the 400,000 *reconsentrandos*, half had died and one-quarter could not be saved. He pointed out that the autonomy scheme had failed. Proctor's intervention had the effect of swinging towards war those in big business (Proctor was a self-made millionaire), Congress and the general public, including Protestant and Catholic organizations which until then, though sympathetic to the Cuban cause, were against armed intervention. Now the conservative press called for intervention as a duty to humanity.⁸⁴

Proctor's speech was followed in the next days by several emotional speeches in both Houses, by others who had visited Cuba, who confirmed Proctor's findings.⁸⁵

There were also many petitions and letters to Congress and the President, calling for Cuban independence and war with Spain.⁸⁶ In several petitions the colourful phrase ‘carnival of blood’ appeared, fuelled by the Junta, a phrase that had been used by Las Casas to describe the cruelties of the *conquistadores*.⁸⁷ McKinley’s name was hissed in public and his effigy burned, but he hoped to avert a showdown, believing that Spain would give up Cuba to avoid a disastrous war. Apparently, several factors made McKinley switch. Firstly, the view prevailed that the war was at a stalemate and would continue with catastrophic consequences if no intervention took place. Secondly, autonomy, even if genuine, was unacceptable to the Cubans and *peninsulares* alike, and thus impossible to implement. A third factor was the switch of the business community and the nationwide support for intervention. Congress was on a war footing, Lodge, Root, Garret Hobart (the Vice President) and some fifty members of the Republican House caucus told the President that if no intervention took place the party would face the worst defeat ever in the upcoming November elections, and the formidable Speaker of the House of Representatives, Thomas Reed, told McKinley that he could not hold the House anymore – it would declare war together with the Senate.⁸⁸

The final proposal to Spain, on 27 March 1898, was for a peaceful settlement, the end of reconcentration, an armistice, talks with the insurgents, and ‘full self-government, with reasonable indemnity’, which the next day was changed to ‘Cuban independence’. With this final touch, it was obvious that the die was cast.⁸⁹

Spain was in dire straits. The unintended clash with the US had raised nationalist fervour in Spain, with demonstrations rocking major cities, and crowds shouting *muerte a los Yanques*. As was the case in the US, newspapers had their share in rousing the masses (they referred to US horrors towards the Indians now cramped in reservations).⁹⁰ Madrid believed that conceding to Washington would lead to the government’s fall and the overthrow of the monarchy (the bastion of stability),⁹¹ so it tried to wriggle itself out of the situation by providing some last-minute concessions short of independence and gaining the support of the European great powers.

The Spanish government retorted that reconcentration had ceased, armistice would be implemented, provided the insurgents did the same, and autonomy was on course. The Spanish diplomatic initiative bore little fruit. Vienna, Berlin and Paris were sympathetic to the Spanish call but did not want to alienate Washington and bring about an Anglo-Saxon alliance. The British Prime Minister, Salisbury, regarded the matter a US question and supported McKinley.⁹²

Mediation was offered by Pope Leo XIII, which was declined by McKinley, and a visit by the ambassadors of the six European powers to McKinley took place (6 April), in which a text was read out calling for restraint in the name of peace. The *New York World* aptly parodied the meeting as follows: ‘we hope for humanity’s sake you will not go to war’, to which the President answered ‘We hope if we go to war you will understand that it is for humanity’s sake’.⁹³

Apparently, Spain preferred war to the ignominy of giving in: defeat to the US with honour was better than surrender.⁹⁴ Under the circumstances, McKinley felt he had little choice but to ask Congress for the authority to wage war (11 April 1898). In his message to Congress the President pointed out that '[t]he forcible intervention of the United States as a neutral to stop the war, according to the large dictates of humanity and following many historical precedents where neighboring States have interfered to check the hopeless sacrifices of life by internecine conflicts beyond their borders, is justifiable on rational grounds'.⁹⁵ He summarized the grounds for intervention as follows: (1) 'In the cause of humanity and to put an end to the barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries now existing there'; (2) to protect US citizens in Cuba; (3) to end 'the very serious injury to the commerce, trade, and business of our people'; and (4) '[t]he present condition of affairs in Cuba is a constant menace to our peace, and entails upon this Government an enormous expense'.⁹⁶ Before concluding, he declared: 'In the name of humanity, in the name of civilization, in [*sic*] behalf of endangered American interests which give us the right and the duty to speak and to act, the war in Cuba must stop'.⁹⁷ But McKinley 'did not exclude a peaceful settlement',⁹⁸ referring to the Spanish suspension of hostilities and calling Congress to address this aspect as well.⁹⁹

The lack of recognition of Cuban independence in McKinley's speech aroused Cuban indignation and was denounced.¹⁰⁰ It also disappointed most of the senators and congressmen when the message was read out, but they all listened in profound silence, broken only once by a wave of applause for the phrase 'in the name of humanity'.¹⁰¹ The debate in the Senate and Congress, however, largely on the question of independence, lasted a whole week. The stalemate was broken by Senator Henry Teller, who proposed a self-denying ordinance: the US would disclaim any 'intention to exercise sovereignty' over the island (the Teller Amendment). Congress empowered the President (20 April 1898), with 42 to 35 votes in the Senate and 310 to 6 in the House, to make the people of Cuba 'free and independent' and to utilize the armed forces in order to do so. Spain, upon hearing of the resolution, declared war (24 April 1898); Congress followed the next day with its own a declaration of war, which was made retroactive to 21 April.¹⁰²

The consequences of intervention: the Philippines and Cuba's predicament

The Spanish–American War (24 April–12 August 1898), as it came to be known in the US, a designation that ignores the Cubans and their role in the US victory,¹⁰³ was waged by sea and land, the decisive event being the naval Battle of Santiago de Cuba of 3 July. Puerto Rico was also occupied. Beforehand, Commodore Dewey was instructed to begin 'offensive operations' against the Spanish in the Philippines and the US Asiatic squadron entered Manila Bay and sank the Spanish Pacific squadron at anchor (1 May). This battle was the first major engagement of

the war and opened the prospect of the US acquiring the Philippines, though this had not been the original goal. The Philippine theatre had been sought for military strategic reasons, to put the squeeze on Spain at little cost to the US and to shorten the war (in the Atlantic there was another contingency, but one that was not realized, in the form of the US occupying the Canary Islands).¹⁰⁴

The expansionists were on the alert not to miss the opportunity of acquiring the Philippines.¹⁰⁵ But the anti-expansionists also came to the fore, seeking to prevent that from happening (see below).¹⁰⁶ McKinley remained undecided and the cabinet was split over the issue. Following French mediation, peace talks were to start in Paris, with Spain reluctantly accepting the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam, with the fate of the Philippines open to negotiation.¹⁰⁷

The President selected five commissioners for the peace talks: three expansionists, Davis, Frye and Reid, anti-expansionist Democrat Senator George Gray and Day (who resigned as Secretary of State to act as chairman of the commission and was succeeded by Hay), who was wary of acquiring the Philippines.¹⁰⁸ McKinley told the commission (16 September) that 'we took up arms only in obedience to the dictates of humanity and in the fulfillment of high public and moral obligation',¹⁰⁹ and to end Spanish colonialism in the Western hemisphere.¹¹⁰ But the US approach to the Philippines was on a different basis. As he pointed out to the commission in his instructions: 'we cannot be unmindful that, without any desire or design on our part, the war has brought us new duties and responsibilities which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation on whose growth and career from the beginning the Ruler of Nations has plainly written the high command and pledge of civilization'.¹¹¹ He instructed the commission to secure control of Manila and extend US jurisdiction to the whole of the island of Luzon.¹¹²

When the Paris peace conference was in session, McKinley made a tour of the US, delivering speeches. He stressed that they had entered the war for humanitarian reasons and to help the Cubans liberate themselves and he got the clear impression that the public was elated and not averse to expansion. Thus Hay telegraphed the commissioners that the rest of the islands should not be left to Spain.¹¹³

The end result was that Spain ceded Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines (the latter with payment of \$20 million to soften the blow), and relinquished sovereignty over Cuba. The war with Spain provided the momentum to resolve the pending question of Hawaii, which was annexed.¹¹⁴

As Foster Rhea Dulles has put it, many Americans 'dazzled by the vision of empire but reluctant to confess to economic or prestige motives ... found their justification for expansionist policy in the obligation of the United States to assume its share of the civilizing mission of the Anglo-Saxon race'.¹¹⁵ In February 1899, Rudyard Kipling came out with his famous imperialist poem 'The White Man's Burden', which makes explicit reference to the US and the Philippines (indeed, it was first published with the subtitle 'The United States and

the Philippine Islands'), much to the delight of Lodge and Roosevelt. The 'white man's burden' dovetailed with 'new manifest destiny', legitimizing US imperialism, presenting it as the 'imperialism of righteousness'.¹¹⁶ Protestant clergymen went further, viewing US expansion as 'divinely inspired', as God having handed the Philippines to the 'American Christians' (forgetting that the majority of Filipinos were Christians).¹¹⁷

Regarding divine inspiration and the white man's burden, a revealing vignette is worth mentioning. A year after the crucial decision, McKinley told a Methodist delegation (the President was a Methodist) that when faced with what to do with the Philippines he asked for guidance with prayers to 'Almighty God'. 'And one night it came to me this way ...: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France or Germany ... that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves – they were unfit for self-government ...; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the best'.¹¹⁸

One need not regard the religious touch as mere window-dressing or the epitome of hypocrisy. Apart from McKinley's genuine religious feelings,¹¹⁹ bringing together the sacred with the secular, however absurd it may appear to us today, is a proclivity in US foreign policy with a long tradition.¹²⁰ In any event, similar pronouncements, though more down to earth, were made by McKinley on a number of occasions privately as well as in his public speeches in late 1898 and early 1899. It seems that he initially deemed the 'wisest course' taking a coaling station for vessels in the Philippines (early May 1898),¹²¹ then a port in the Philippines and a coaling station in the Marianas (3 June),¹²² then Manila Bay (30 June),¹²³ then Luzon (September) and finally all the islands. What probably did the trick, apart from feedback from the public, were the tidings of General Greene, who, after having toured the Philippines, told the President that handing the island to the insurgents would bring anarchy; Germany and Japan would grab them; and that due to the peculiar geography of the islands Luzon on its own could not be kept (the some 400 islands were so close to each other that a cannon shot from one could reach another). There were also reports that the Filipino Hispanicized elite were favourable to annexation and that Emilio Aguinaldo's self-proclaimed Republic of the Philippines was unpopular, and that his fighters had committed atrocities against Spanish captives and priests.¹²⁴

All the statements of the President give credence to the view that it was an unintentional expansion and not calculated;¹²⁵ that the US had 'greatness thrust upon it', as it were.¹²⁶ But by the same token, the fact that McKinley had taken, however reluctantly, this major decision after considerable deliberation with US interests in mind,¹²⁷ ushering the country into a new age, undermines the 'fit of absentmindedness' thesis.¹²⁸

The Paris Treaty (10 December 1898) had ‘to run the gauntlet of the Senate’¹²⁹ for ratification, where a heated two-month debate took place, focusing mainly on the acquisition of the Philippines.

The anti-imperialists organized themselves in the Anti-Imperialist League and fought expansionism ‘tooth and nail’¹³⁰ from 1898 until 1900. Their campaign included major figures, such as ex-President Cleveland and eight of his cabinet members (including Olney), ex-President Harrison and an older generation of Republicans such as Senator George Frisbie Hoar, John Sherman (McKinley’s first Secretary of State) and Reed, William Jennings Bryan (the Democratic presidential nominee in 1896 and in 1900), Schurz, journalist Edwin Lawrence Godkin (founder of *The Nation* and editor-in-chief of the *New York Evening Post*), Carnegie and the major labour union leader Samuel Gompers (President of the American Federation of Labor). Included were top intellectuals, such as philosophers William James, John Dewey and Felix Adler, sociologist William Graham Sumner, medieval scholar Charles Eliot Norton, social reformer David Starr Jordan and the foremost writers of the day, including Mark Twain (see his essay ‘To the Person Sitting in Darkness’), Finlay Peter Dunne, Henry Fuller and William Vaughn Moody (see his poem ‘An Ode in Time of Hesitation’).¹³¹

The anti-imperialist argument centred on political principles, above all that acquiring the Philippines was a clear break with time-honoured American republican values, as enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, Washington’s farewell address and Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, on which the US was created and lived by: that a government cannot rule people without the consent of the governed; and acquiring the Philippines amounted to blatant imperialism that would harm not only the Filipinos but also the US, which would find itself in league with the European colonialists and monarchies.¹³²

In the Senate, the anti-imperialist approach was headed by Hoar, who argued that the US, having delivered the Cubans from political oppression, must do the same with the Filipinos and that such imperialist ventures would lead to dangerous foreign entanglements and economic ruin for the country.¹³³

The expansionists, led by Lodge, argued that American rule was a blessing of civilization upon the unfortunate Filipinos, who were not prepared to rule themselves; that if the US did not step in others would do so, primarily Germany and Japan, both of them undemocratic; and that following the annexation of Hawaii, the next obvious step was the Philippines, opening the way to the China market.¹³⁴

Given the impressive list of anti-expansionists and their arguments, it comes as a surprise that they did not carry the day. According to Robert Beisner’s assessment, the most effective and articulate anti-imperialists were ‘Mugwumps’ (independent former Republicans) such as Schurz, James, Godkin and Norton and Republicans out of step with their party, foremost Hoar and Carnegie, with the other anti-imperialists ineffective. Another weakness of the anti-expansionists

was that they were disunited and that their lofty arguments seemed old-fashioned and did not inspire the wider public.¹³⁵

The treaty was eventually ratified by fifty-seven in favour and twenty-seven against, that is, with one vote over the two-thirds majority required for ratification (6 February 1899), which, surprisingly, included even some anti-imperialists, such as Bryan. Ironically, two days before (4 February) the Filipinos under Aguinaldo resumed fighting to gain independence, this time against the US.¹³⁶ The anti-imperialists felt vindicated, the imperialists appalled and the debate continued, becoming a central theme in the 1900 presidential elections, between McKinley and Bryan. The Filipino insurrection was to be subdued under Roosevelt's administration, though, interestingly the new President, for all his well known jingoism, was alienated from the whole affair, regarding it as 'our heel of Achilles'.¹³⁷

But let us revert to Cuba. In 1898–1902, the worst nightmares of Martí and Gómez had come to life. As a sign of things to come, when Spain surrendered, the US general in Cuba refused to allow the Cubans under García to participate in the surrender ceremony or enter Havana. García protested in writing in a dignified manner but to no avail.¹³⁸ The US forces did not leave the island, but stayed on until 1902. When the Roosevelt administration allowed the adoption of an independence Constitution and Estrada Palma was elected President, Roosevelt withdrew US forces but secured Guantanamo Bay as a base with a lease in perpetuity. The Platt Amendment (drafted by Root, the Secretary of War, and introduced by Senator Thomas Platt)¹³⁹ was thrust upon the Cubans as a parting gift. It stated that 'the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty'.¹⁴⁰ Washington did not fail to use the Amendment on several occasions until its abrogation in 1934, by sending troops to prop up friendly governments in power or to protect US investments.¹⁴¹

Unfettered Cuban independence was to arrive more than half a century later, in 1959, with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution under Fidel Castro. Upon taking power, Castro and other Cuban figures alluded to the 1895–98 experience, pointing out that the goals of the liberators had been dashed in 1898, with the US intervention and the hegemony that followed it, pointing out that it was more than a century later, in 1959, that the dreams of those heroic fighters had finally become a reality.¹⁴²

Assessment

Cuba, the US, Spain

Most US and Spanish historians have claimed that the Cubans would not have been able to overwhelm the Spaniards and gain independence without US

intervention. By contrast, most major Cuban historians (well before the arrival of Castro), including Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, Herminio Portell Vilá and Fernando Ortiz, dispute this hegemonic US paradigm.¹⁴³ They argue that the Cuban forces were on the verge of winning, and that the intervention of the US was unnecessary and ‘robbed them of their fruits of victory’.¹⁴⁴ But a minority of equally reputable Cuban historians, including Cosme de la Torriente, the father of Cuban diplomatic history, who also happened to be García’s chief of staff, doubts their ability to vanquish the Spanish army without the intervention.¹⁴⁵ More recently, Pérez has produced evidence that Gómez was convinced that Cuban victory over the Spaniards was imminent and that this was also the assessment of US officials, including Sherman, Day, Lodge and consul general Lee from Havana.¹⁴⁶

As regards the US, contemporary commentators stressed three themes: (1) the war re-united ‘the nation’, healing the wounds of the American Civil War; (2) crushing Spain marked the historical moment when the US emerged as a great power; and (3) the victory confirmed that the US was ‘the nation of progressive civilization’.¹⁴⁷

As Josiah Strong had put it: ‘This race has been honored not for its own sake, but for the sake of the world. It has been made powerful, and rich, and free, and exalted-powerful’.¹⁴⁸ A central theme was the ‘mission’ to instil freedom and democracy across the world.¹⁴⁹ How this tallies with Washington’s ugly war against Filipino independence and on the prevention of Cuban independence is another matter.

For Spain, the events in Cuba and the Philippines became known as ‘the Disaster’, and prompted nationwide protests and agonizing soul-searching. The proud Spaniards felt humiliated at having been defeated by the North Americans, whom they held in low esteem (as ‘sausage-makers’). The Spaniards, in a state of shock, pondered why it was the case that when other states were still building empires, Spain had lost its own, which was much older. Were they, after all, a decadent nation? Whatever might be the shortcomings of *fin de siècle* Spain, was true ‘regeneration’ of the once great Spain possible?¹⁵⁰

US motives revisited: in search of a thread

A way out as to the motives of US intervention is ‘to disentangle the imperialist outcome of the war from the conflict itself’,¹⁵¹ or, put differently, the events from 1895 through to the consequences of the Battle of Manila.

In its bare essentials, the search for Washington’s stance boils down to seven dichotomous questions: (1) humanitarian concern or quest for world power, (2) aberration or culmination, (3) action taken in response to public outrage or as part of a well-thought-out strategy, put differently, emotion or design; (4) public opinion (with or without the yellow press) or drive for markets (glut thesis),

(5) genuine support for *Cuba libre* or control of the island, (6) chocolate éclair or resolute President and (7) stalemate or imminent victory for the Cuban fighters?¹⁵²

One can make a reasonable case by selecting evidence to support any of the above fourteen polar opposites, for there is much in abundance for all to be content.¹⁵³ Some polar opposites seem equally valid, or 'reality' lies somewhere in between. For instance, as regards humanitarian concern or quest for world power, the public and several politicians, including McKinley, were motivated by humanitarian concern, to alleviate the suffering of the Cuban people.¹⁵⁴ Many supporters of intervention for humanitarian reasons and in order to liberate Cuba, such as Hoar, Carnegie and Twain, were anti-expansionist and against the annexation of the Philippines.¹⁵⁵ But the President had tangible interests in mind as well, which he hardly concealed, and the expansionists had their own agenda. Regarding aberration or culmination, Washington may have unexpectedly found the Philippines on its lap, but it then pursued its destiny 'deliberately and purposefully'.¹⁵⁶ As for chocolate éclair or resolute leader, McKinley may have been more flexible, less forceful and more attuned to the voice of the people than his predecessor, Cleveland, or his successor, Roosevelt, but this hardly makes him 'a well intentioned bungler' as portrayed by Bemis and others. He was in control of the situation most of the time and when intervention seemed inevitable he went along on his own terms.¹⁵⁷

Reverting to the aberration or culmination dilemma, cognitive psychology can provide a clue. Before a crucial decision is taken there is great uncertainty and angst, but when a decision is finally taken the decision-makers are unwavering, as if the decision was in the making for years. This is done in order to discard the previous agonizing dilemma and uncertainty reigning prior to the decision.

The publicists' verdict

Overall, international lawyers have failed to agree on the character of the US action in 1898.¹⁵⁸ Contemporary jurists such as Theodore S. Woolsey claimed that it was an 'intervention on the grounds of humanity' and the motives pure, even though they were not the only motives; the US was so deeply involved in Cuba that one can also speak in terms of self-defence.¹⁵⁹ Amos Hershey referred to the humanitarian plight but also to the cost of the war to US interests and the hardships of its citizens in Cuba.¹⁶⁰ George Grafton Wilson, an opponent of humanitarian intervention, opined that 'the United States interfered in the affairs of Cuba on the ground of humanity'.¹⁶¹ Elbert Benton, on the contrary, was of the view that the civil war in Cuba 'did not present clearly and unmistakably such tyranny or cruelty as writers on international law seem to regard as justifying intervention'.¹⁶²

Moore referred to 'the ruin of the island', to 'abhorrent conditions' and to the *Maine* episode,¹⁶³ concluding that US 'intervention rested upon the ground that

there existed in Cuba conditions so injurious to the United States ... that they could no longer be endured. Its action was analogous to what is known in private law as the abatement of a nuisance'.¹⁶⁴ Ellery Stowell criticized the nuisance idea, maintaining that the US intervention in Cuba was '[o]ne of the most important instances of humanitarian intervention'.¹⁶⁵ Charles Fenwick concurred with the nuisance thesis but regarded the 'cause of humanity' as first in the list as the grounds for intervention, followed by the rest.¹⁶⁶

Some contemporary European publicists rejected a US right to intervene in Cuba for it was a violation of the Monroe Doctrine, the pledge not to intervene in the existing colonies of the European states in the Americas.¹⁶⁷ Others, such as Le Fur,¹⁶⁸ Lapradelle,¹⁶⁹ Rougier¹⁷⁰ and Westlake¹⁷¹ claimed that it was basically humanitarian. And there was also the nuisance approach, first introduced by Rivier.¹⁷²

From the 1950s onwards, various international lawyers who supported the concept of humanitarian intervention regarded the US intervention as humanitarian, as in the case of Lillich,¹⁷³ McDougal and Reisman,¹⁷⁴ and others.¹⁷⁵ Brownlie regards it as an 'intervention in terms of American interests'.¹⁷⁶ Franck and Rodley dismiss it with the following comment: 'if the suppression of "barbarities, bloodshed, and misery" were the sole yardstick for U.S. intervention in the Latin America of that period, Washington would have been extremely busy ousting regimes, some of which it was rather active in establishing and upholding'.¹⁷⁷ Fonteyne, who refers approvingly to a number of humanitarian interventions in the nineteenth century, does not regard it as humanitarian.¹⁷⁸

We will conclude with the views of three present scholars engaged with the wider question of humanitarian intervention. Michael Walzer in his classic *Just and Unjust Wars* is dismissive, characterizing it 'as an example of benevolent imperialism, given the "piratical times", but it is not an example of humanitarian intervention'.¹⁷⁹ He bases his view mainly on the fact the US intervened militarily supposedly on behalf of the oppressed but against their ends, namely true independence, as seen by the three years of military occupation, the Platt Amendment and the limited independence of Cuba for decades.¹⁸⁰ More recently, Gary Bass concluded that what could have been regarded as the US's first humanitarian intervention 'was sullied by imperialism', since it was not limited to driving Spain out of Cuba.¹⁸¹ Tonny Brems Knudsen regards it humanitarian, given the Spanish policies and McKinley's justification to Congress (including his reference to European precedent), but also open to abuse given the instrumental motives and the lack of a collective framework for intervention.¹⁸²

Concluding remarks

The elements in common between the US intervention in Cuba and the previous cases were the humanitarian plight, the pressure by the press and public opinion

on humanitarian grounds, in this case also the pressure from Capitol Hill, the mixture of motives, the attempt to mediate in the conflict as well as the self-denying ordinance (here, the Teller Amendment). There were also bilateral consultations with European great powers (despite the Monroe Doctrine, which made that unnecessary) and the green light from most of them to go ahead. The final military intervention was an all-out war (as with Russia in 1877–78), with benevolent neutrality on the part of the European great powers. The main new features which made humanitarian intervention appear in a negative light are the following: the expansionist agenda of the imperialists, the whetting of the appetite of Washington and above all the huge benefits brought about by the intervention – colonialism and overseas empire, no real independence for Cuba itself – which made the whole venture as humanitarian seem hollow. Put differently, it brought in the abuse factor in humanitarian plights more starkly than ever before, especially when a great power is the protagonist.

Notes

- 1 E. Root, 'The Real Monroe Doctrine', *American Journal of International Law*, 8:3 (1914), 430.
- 2 R. J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 110.
- 3 J. B. Moore, *The Principles of American Diplomacy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1918), 205.
- 4 Root, Secretary of War (under McKinley) and Secretary of State (under Roosevelt) was the first president of the American Society of International Law. For a scholarly article of his which touches upon intervention, see E. Root, 'The Basis of Protection to Citizens Residing Abroad', *American Journal of International Law*, 4:3 (1910), 517–28.
- 5 C. G. Fenwick, 'Intervention: Individual and Collective', *American Journal of International Law*, 39:4 (1945), 651.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 652–6.
- 7 J. Smith, *The Spanish–American War: Conflict in the Caribbean and the Pacific, 1895–1902* (London: Longman, 1994), 2–3.
- 8 A. Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 15–89; P. T. McCartney, *Power and Progress: American National Identity, the War of 1898, and the Rise of American Imperialism* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2006), 88–9.
- 9 D. F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 2–3; McCartney, *Power and Progress*, 89; Smith, *The Spanish–American War*, 6–8; J. L. Offner, *An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain Over Cuba, 1895–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 3–4; L. A. Pérez, Jr, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 7.
- 10 Quoted in Smith, *The Spanish–American War*, 6.
- 11 Quoted *ibid.*, 9.
- 12 Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 15, 44; H. W. Morgan, *America's Road to Empire: The War with Spain and Overseas Expansion* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), 2.

- 13 *Ibid.*, 6, 15.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 6; A. Smith and E. Dávila-Cox, '1898 and the Making of the New Twentieth-Century Order', in A. Smith and E. Dávila-Cox (eds), *The Crisis of 1989: Colonial Redistribution and Nationalist Mobilization* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 8.
- 15 Smith and Dávila-Cox, '1898 and the Making of the New Twentieth-Century Order', 10.
- 16 Quoted in Smith, *The Spanish–American War*, 28.
- 17 Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 3–7.
- 18 B. M. Miller, *From Liberation to Conquest: The Visual and Popular Cultures of the Spanish–American War of 1898* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 6.
- 19 Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, 28–9; McCartney, *Power and Progress*, 87–8, 92, 93–5; Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 1–7.
- 20 C. Gibson (ed.), *The Black Legend: Anti-Spanish Attitudes in the Old World and the New* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).
- 21 R. L. Kagan, 'Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain', *American Historical Review*, 101:2 (1996), 423–46.
- 22 G. F. Linderman, *The Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish–American War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1974), 122.
- 23 Quoted *ibid.*, 123.
- 24 M. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 58–60; Linderman, *The Mirror of War*, 115, 120–4; McCartney, *Power and Progress*, 87–8; J. Offner, 'United States Politics and the 1898 War Over Cuba', in Smith and Dávila-Cox (eds), *The Crisis of 1989*, 18–21; T. G. Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpretations of the Spanish–American–Cuban–Filipino War', *History Teacher*, 29:3 (1996), 353–4; Kagan, 'Prescott's Paradigm', 425–40.
- 25 J. W. Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965, 2nd edition) [1955], 201, 205, 212–16; J. A. Field, Jr, 'American Imperialism: The Worst Chapter in Almost Any Book', *American Historical Review*, 83:3 (1978), 644–68. For a rebuttal see W. LaFeber and R. Beisner, 'Comments', *ibid.*, pp. 669–78; see also Field's 'Reply', *ibid.*, 679–83.
- 26 S. F. Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States* (New York: A. Holt, 1965, 5th edition) [1936], 469, 475, 503; M. T. Gilderhus, 'Founding Father: Samuel Flagg Bemis and the Study of U.S.–Latin American Relations', *Diplomatic History*, 21:1 (1997), 1.
- 27 I. Musicant, *Empire by Default: The Spanish–American War and the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1998). See also J. Dobson, *Reticent Expansionism: The Foreign Policy of William McKinley* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1988).
- 28 G. C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 309.
- 29 Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba', 344–5.
- 30 Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, 21, 61–2; L. L. Gould, *The Spanish–American War and President McKinley* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982), 104, 117–19; Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 31; J. L. Offner, 'McKinley and the Spanish–American War', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 34:1 (2004), 54–61; R. F. Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), vol. I, 136; W. Zimmermann, *First Great Triumph: How Five Americans Made Their Country a World Power* (New York: FSG, 2002), 386–92, 494–9; M. Sewell, 'Humanitarian Intervention, Democracy, and Imperialism: The American War with Spain, 1898, and After', in B. Simms and D. J. B. Trim (eds), *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 303, 309, 316.

- 31 As acknowledged even by Walter LaFeber, a critic of Pratt's approach. See W. LaFeber, 'That "Splendid Little War" in Historical Perspective', *Texas Quarterly*, 11:4 (1968), 90. However, other leftist revisionist historians are not convinced by Pratt's evidence. See e.g. N. L. O'Connor, 'The Spanish-American War: A Re-evaluation of Its Causes', *Science and Society*, 22 (1958), 129-43; P. S. Foner, 'Why the United States Went to War with Spain in 1898', *Science and Society*, 32:1 (1968), 39-65.
- 32 J. W. Pratt, 'American Business and the Spanish-American War', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 14:2 (1934), 163-75; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 120-35.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 120-6; Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba', 355.
- 34 Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, 14.
- 35 Pratt, 'American Business and the Spanish-American War', 163-201; F. R. Dulles, 1898-1954, *America's Rise to World Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) [1954], 39 n.1, 41; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 111-13, 119-33, 135; Offner, *An Unwanted War*, 30-1; Sewell, 'Humanitarian Intervention, Democracy, and Imperialism', 307, 310.
- 36 Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy*, 207, 215; Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, 13-14; Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 58; McCartney, *Power and Progress*, 91; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 149-65.
- 37 As accepted even by Louis Pérez, a scathing critic of the US administration's intentions. See Pérez, *The War of 1898*, 24.
- 38 Hearst was reported to have telegraphed artist Frederic Remington, whom he had sent to Cuba, 'furnish the pictures, and I'll furnish the war'. Hearst has denied this. See W. J. Campbell, 'Not Likely Sent: The Remington-Hearst "Telegrams"', *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77:2 (2000), 405-22.
- 39 Offner, *An Unwanted War*, 229-30.
- 40 J. W. Pratt, 'The "Large Policy" in 1898', *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 19:2 (1932), 220-2, 228-31, 239-42; Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba', 350-1.
- 41 Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 114-15; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 308-9; Zimmermann, *First Great Triumph*.
- 42 J. W. Pratt, 'It Was a *Courant* Manifest Destiny', in R. H. Miller (ed.), *American Imperialism in 1898: The Quest for National Fulfillment* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1970), 24-7.
- 43 See Field, 'American Imperialism', 647, 649-50.
- 44 Pratt, 'It Was a *Courant* Manifest Destiny', 24-30; Pratt, 'The "Large Policy" in 1898', 219-42; Pratt, *A History of United States Foreign Policy*, 202-6; Dulles, 1898-1954, *America's Rise to World Power*, 30-6, 39; R. Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1944); Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, 15; Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 299-300, 302-5; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 113-15; Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba', 350-2. *Contra* as regards social Darwinism in the US, see R. C. Bannister, '"The Survival of the Fittest in Our Doctrine": History or Histrionics', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 31:3 (1970), 377-98.
- 45 Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 300, 302.
- 46 Paterson, 'United States Intervention in Cuba', 352-3; K. L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 43-5, 67-73, 85; Miller, *From Liberation to Conquest*, 25-32.

- 47 On the controversy see the Varg–McCormick debate: P. A. Varg, ‘The Myth of the China Market, 1890–1914’, *American Historical Review*, 73:3 (1968), 742–58; T. J. McCormick, ‘American Expansion in China’, *American Historical Review*, 75:5 (1970), 1393–6.
- 48 Dulles, 1898–1954, *America’s Rise to World Power*, 47.
- 49 D. M. Pletcher, ‘Rhetoric and Results: A Pragmatic View of American Economic Expansion, 1865–98’, *Diplomatic History*, 5:2 (1981), 95–6; LaFeber, ‘That “Splendid Little War”’, 90–8; Pratt, ‘American Business and the Spanish–American War’, 190–201.
- 50 See J. A. Fry, ‘William McKinley and the Coming of the Spanish–American War: A Study of the Besmirching and Redemption of an Historical Image’, *Diplomatic History*, 3:1 (1979), 93–5.
- 51 LaFeber, ‘That “Splendid Little War”’, 90, 92, 95–8.
- 52 Morgan, *America’s Road to Empire*, xi; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 135–6; Gould, *The Spanish–American War and President McKinley*; Offner, *An Unwanted War*, 38–9; LaFeber, ‘That “Splendid Little War”’, 96, 98; Fry, ‘William McKinley and the Coming of the Spanish–American War’, 77–97; Paterson, ‘United States Intervention in Cuba’, 341–61.
- 53 Quoted in Smith, *The Spanish–American War*, 32. For Martí’s negative assessment of the US, see L. A. Pérez, Jr, *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 77–81.
- 54 Offner, *An Unwanted War*, 3–4.
- 55 Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, 1–6; Smith, *The Spanish–American War*, 9, 15, 32–3; Hamilton, *President McKinley, War and Empire*, 105, 112, 115; Offner, *An Unwanted War*, 3–7; Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, 82–3.
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