DBQ: THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

FOR EACH DOCUMENT, EXPLAIN HOW IT HELPS TO EXPLAIN THE AMERICAN DECISION TO ENTER INTO WAR WITH SPAIN

**Document A: British reaction to the Cuban Insurrection of 1868-1878**

...Both Britain and the United States claimed that Spain had no right to interfere with their ships outside the territorial waters of Cuba...The situation became critical on March 29, 1968 when the captain general of Cuba, General Dulce, issued a decree declaring that all vessels captured in Spanish waters or on the high seas, and carrying mend and arms to aid the Cuban rebels, would be treated as pirates and that their crews would be liable to execution. Lord Clarendon, the British foreign secretary, protested angrily against this “glaring violation” of the law of nations. The gravity of the situation was underlined by the approval of orders to British warships to recapture any British vessel thus seized, even if it had been convoyed into Spanish waters. The Foreign Office approved such orders with the utmost reluctance, but excused them by the need to meet extremes with extremes.

**Document B: Weyler’s Reconcentration Policy and its Horrors, by Trumbull White**

“As the country was stripped of its population by the order of concentration, it is easy to believe that 400,000 persons were gathered behind the forts without being given food, medicine, or means of any kind to earn a living, except where in the larger cities some few could find employment in menial offices. Judging by the orphans I was shown in Jacoba, Aidecoa and elsewhere, and from all I saw and heard, I believe that half of the 400,000 have died as the result of starvation. I know from the official register of the city of Santa Clara, which ordinarily has a population of about 14,000 that the deaths for November were over 1,000 and the number of deaths for December was over 900, and showed an increase, considering the loss of the former 1,000 from its total population. The exact figures for December are 971. At that city the government was distributing 500 single rations per day out of a total appropriation for the purpose of $15,000. This was not relief, but a mere prolongation of the sufferings of a small part of the reconcetrados of the city. “

**Document C: Teller Amendment (the following resolutions were passed by both houses of Congress on April 20, 1898)**

Resolved, First. That the people of the Island of Cuba are, of right ought to be, free and independent.

Second. That it is the duty of the United States to demand, and the Government of the United Sates does hereby demand, that the Government of Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters.

Third. That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States, and to call into the actual service of the United States the militia of the several States, to such extent as may be necessary to carry these resolutions into effect.

Fourth. That the United States hereby disclaim any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said Island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people.

**Document D**

**Manifest Destiny was a phrase that originally stated the United States was destined to expand from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific Ocean; it has also been used to advocate for or justify other territorial acquisitions. As time progressed, the phrase came to represent a theoretical justification for U.S. expansion outside of North America.**

Source: John L. O’Sullivan

“The Great Nation of Futurity” – 1839 speech

*“The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere -- its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood – of peace and good will amongst men… We must onward to the fulfillment of our mission -- to the entire development of the principle of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality… Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?”* 3

**Document E**

**In his final presidential message to Congress on December 7, 1896, Grover Cleveland reviewed the history of Spanish-Cuban relations and outlined what he felt were the alternatives open to the United States. Below is an excerpt from that speech.**

*Source: State of the Union Address by President Grover Cleveland*

*December 7, 1896*

*“It is now also suggested that the United States should buy the island (of Cuba)—a suggestion possibly worthy of consideration if there were any evidence of a desire or willingness on the part of Spain to entertain such a proposal. It is urged, finally, that, all other methods failing, the existence of internecine strife in Cuba (rebellion by Cubans) should be terminated by our intervention, even at the cost of a war between the United States and Spain—a war which it advocates confidently prophesy could be neither large in its proportions nor doubtful in its issue.”* 4

**Document F**

**Starting in 1896, William Randolph Hearst, publisher of the New York Journal and several**

**other newspapers., openly declared his support for the Cuban rebels. He refused to**

**publish stories that were favorable to the Spanish. The two stories below were published**

**in other papers owned by Hearst, several days before the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine.**

*"Washington, Feb. 9 -- Oratory in behalf of the Cuban insurgents occupied three hours time of the Senate to-day. Elaborate speeches were delivered by Cannon, of Utah, and Mason, of Illinois, in advocation of the resolution they introduced yesterday calling upon the President to bring the Cuban war to a close.”* 7

As if to further illustrate the rising tensions, on Feb. 10 the Examiner ran a brief front page story headlined, "Porto Rico the point of attack." The article said *"It is understood that in case of war* *with Spain the Administration's military and naval programme includes the immediate seizure of* *Porto (sic) Rico, as well as the investment of Cuba. Believing the war would be an extremely* *short one, it would be advisable that Porto Rico should be held ... in order to completely dispose* *of Spanish title possessions in the Western Hemisphere."* 8

**Document G:**

**Enrique Dupuy De Lôme was the Spanish diplomat in charge of Cuban Affairs at the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C. in 1898, De Lôme wrote a letter to a Spanish official in Havana that was intended to be private. The letter was intercepted by Cuban rebels, and released to William Randolph Hearst’s newspaper, The New York Journal. In**

**the letter, De Lôme was critical of U.S. President, William McKinley. The letter was published just 6 days before the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine. Below are excerpts from this letter.**

*Eximo Señor Don Jose Canalejas:*

*My Distinguished and Dear Friend…*

*“The situation here (in Washington, D.C.), remains unchanged. Everything depends on the political and military success in Cuba… it relieves us in the eyes of this country of a part of the responsibility for what happens there (Cuba), and they must cast the responsibility on the Cubans, whom they believe to be so immaculate.”*

*“(President) McKinley is weak and catering to the rabble, and besides (he is) a low politician who desires to leave a door open to me and to stand well with the (members of his political) party… it will only depend on ourselves whether he proves bad and adverse to us.”*

*“It would be most important that you should agitate the question of commercial relations, even though it would only be for effect… make propaganda among the senators and others in opposition to the Junta (Cuban rebels) and win over exiles (Cubans who fled the violence in their country for safety in America).”*

*“Always your attentive friend and servant, who kisses your hands,*

*Enrique Dupuy De Lôme”* 9

**Document H: Summary of the sinking of the Maine**

The USS Maine, a second class battleship built between 1888 and 1895, was sent to Havana, Cuba in January 1898 to protect American interests during the long-standing revolt of the Cubans against the Spanish government. In the evening of February 15, 1898, Maine sank when her forward gunpowder magazines exploded. Nearly three quarters of the battleship’s crew died as a result of the explosion.

Many Americans blamed the Spanish for the explosion and war began a few months later.

**Document I: Excerpts from the Platt Amendment that ended the Spanish American War**

"I.-That the government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes or otherwise, lodgement in or control over any portion of said island."

"II. That said government shall not assume or contract any public debt, to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the island, after defraying the current expenses of government shall be inadequate."

"III. 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, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba."

"IV. That all Acts of the United States in Cuba during its military occupancy thereof are ratified and validated, and all lawful rights acquired thereunder shall be maintained and protected."

"V. That the government of Cuba will execute, and as far as necessary extend, the plans already devised or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein."

"VI. That the Isle of Pines shall be omitted from the proposed constitutional boundaries of Cuba, the title thereto being left to future adjustment by treaty."

"VII. That to enable the United States to maintain the independence

of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations at certain specified points to be agreed upon with the President of the United States."

"VIII. That by way of further assurance the government of Cuba will embody the foregoing provisions in a permanent treaty with the United States."

**In a paragraph describe what you feel are the primary reasons that America went to war with Spain, using the documents as evidence and support.**