

READING CHECK

What was the Yellow Press?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *obsolete* mean in the underlined sentence? What clues can you find in the surrounding words, phrases, or sentences?

READING SKILL

Identify Causes and Effects

What was the effect of the Yellow Press on the American public?

At the end of the nineteenth century, tensions were rising between Spain and its colony in Cuba. Cuban patriot **José Martí** launched a war for independence from Spain in 1895. Many Americans supported the Cubans, whose struggle for freedom and democracy reminded Americans of their own struggle for independence.

Newspaper publishers Joseph Pulitzer and **William Randolph Hearst** heightened the public's dislike of the Spanish government. Their publications, known as the **Yellow Press**, pushed for war with Spain by printing exaggerated stories of Spanish atrocities. In February 1898, Hearst's *New York Journal* published a letter written by Spain's ambassador, which called McKinley a weak and stupid politician. The letter fueled American **jingoism**, or aggressive nationalism. Soon after, the American battleship *Maine* exploded in Havana harbor. The Yellow Press promptly accused Spain of blowing up the battleship. In April 1898, the U.S. Congress declared war on Spain, beginning the Spanish-American War.

In the Spanish-held Philippines, Commodore **George Dewey** quickly destroyed a large part of the Spanish fleet. While Dewey was defeating the Spanish navy, Filipino nationalists led by **Emilio Aguinaldo** were defeating the Spanish army. In August, Spanish troops surrendered to the United States.

Meanwhile, American troops landed in Cuba in June 1898. Although the troops were poorly trained, wore unsuitable uniforms, and carried old, obsolete weapons, they were successful. Spanish forces in Cuba surrendered to the United States. Future President Theodore Roosevelt organized a force known as the **Rough Riders**. Joined by African American soldiers from the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry regiments, the Rough Riders played a key role in the war.

In December 1898, Spain and the United States signed the **Treaty of Paris**, officially ending the Spanish-American War. Spain gave up control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Pacific island of Guam. It also sold the Philippines to the United States. While many were happy with America's expanded role in world affairs, some Americans argued that imperialism was unjust and un-American. The Spanish-American War marked a turning point in the history of American foreign policy.

Review Questions

1. How did some Americans feel about Cuba's war for independence?

2. What territories did Spain give up in the Treaty of Paris?
