

## Essay Question #2

"The Spanish-American War was the result of shrewd maneuvering on the part of a number of Washington imperialists, such as Theodore Roosevelt, who pressured the weak and vacillating McKinley into war in order to gain a colonial empire in the Caribbean and the Western Pacific."

Evaluate this statement.

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# Thesis

- Aided by the propagandist newspaper William Randolph Hearst, who made out that a simple explosion of unstable nitrocellulose shell propellant in the small battleship "Maine" in Havana harbour in Cuba was not a simple accident arising out of this relatively new substance "sweating" nitroglycerine, but was a dastardly plot by the Spanish Government.

While the influence of Theodore Roosevelt and other influential and empire minded persons may have helped persuade McKinley to enter the Spanish-American War, the weight of public opinion must be considered as a major factor in the presidents decision.

The 1800s were the heyday of "Yellow Journalism." Named for the "Yellow Kid", a cartoon character appearing in the mass circulation papers of the time, Yellow Journalism grew out of the competition for circulation between the mass market papers of William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer. In order to boost circulation, the papers would sometimes even create news.

This had its most striking effect in helping to bring on the Spanish American War. Newspapers gave sensationalized reports of Spanish attempts to suppress a rebellion in CubaCuba, making it appear that the spa innards were guilty of extreme human rights violations. As public outrage grew, so too did pressure on the McKinley administration to take a hard line with Spain. Spain was conciliatory, but McKinley felt compelled to send the battleship U.S.S. Maine to the harbor of Havana, Cuba, to show the flag and generally uphold American interests. While there the Maine was blown up and sank with heavy loss of life.

The Yellow Press immediately roared its opinion that this was the doing of Spain, though the cause of the explosion was and remains unknown.



The public outcry raised by such reporting, coupled with the public's sincere but misled humanitarian desire to free the Cubans from Spanish Tyranny.

**\$50,000 REWARD.—WHO DESTROYED THE MAINE?—\$50,000 REWARD**

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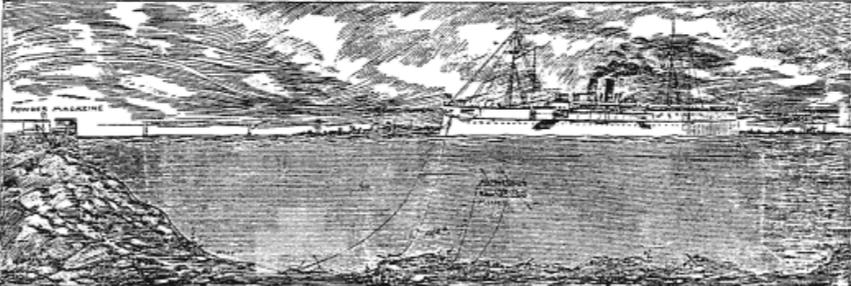
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**DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$50,000!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$50,000 REWARD!</b> For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!</p> <p style="font-size: small;">The New York Journal offers a reward of \$50,000 for information, furnished in good faith, which will lead to the detection and conviction of the perpetrator of the Maine outrage. The reward will be paid to the person or persons who furnish the information, and it will be paid in full as soon as the perpetrator is convicted. The reward will be paid to the person or persons who furnish the information, and it will be paid in full as soon as the perpetrator is convicted.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assistant Secretary Roosevelt Convinced the Explosion of the War Ship Was Not an Accident.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Journal Offers \$50,000 Reward for the Conviction of the Criminals Who Sent 258 American Sailors to Their Death. Naval Officers Unanimous That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$50,000!</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>\$50,000 REWARD!</b> For the Detection of the Perpetrator of the Maine Outrage!</p> <p style="font-size: small;">The New York Journal offers a reward of \$50,000 for information, furnished in good faith, which will lead to the detection and conviction of the perpetrator of the Maine outrage. The reward will be paid to the person or persons who furnish the information, and it will be paid in full as soon as the perpetrator is convicted. The reward will be paid to the person or persons who furnish the information, and it will be paid in full as soon as the perpetrator is convicted.</p>
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**NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE.**

Sergey Zaykov, the Journal's special correspondent at Havana, calls this is the most serious opinion as yet forwarded in the Cuban capital that the Maine was destroyed and half of her crew killed by means of a submarine mine or sunken torpedo. This is the opinion of several American naval officers. The Spaniards, it is believed, arranged to have the Maine anchored over one of the harbor mines. It is considered the mine, with a regular explosion, and it is thought the explosion was caused by sending an electric current through the wire. If this can be proved, the British navy of the Barbets will be aware by the fact that they were ordered to bring the mine round after all the men had been for the night. The Spaniards were in the harbor when the mine was first laid.

Hidden Mine or a Sunken Torpedo Believed to Have Been the Weapon Used Against the American Man-of-War—Officers and Men Tell Thrilling Stories of Being Blown Into the Air Amid a Mass of Shattered Steel and Exploding Shells—Survivors Brought to Key West Scout the Idea of Accident—Spanish Officials Protest Too Much—Our Cabinet Orders a Searching Inquiry—Journal Sends Divers to Havana to Report Upon the Condition of the Wreck.