

# Warm-Up: Causes of the Spanish American War



Cuba had been under Spanish rule for centuries. They rebelled many times but were always violently put down by the Spaniards. In 1895, under the leadership of Jose Marti, the Cubans again began a fight for independence. Many Americans were horrified by the incredible violence and loss of life just 90 miles from our shores. They called for the American government to do something about it to help not only the Cuban people, but also to protect American businesses and citizens who were getting caught up in the fighting.



As a response to the growing riots and violence in Cuba, President McKinley sent the Battleship Maine to the Cuban capital of Havana to protect American citizens and businesses there. The Maine remained there for about 3 weeks when on the night of February 15th, 1898, an explosion rocked the ship killing 260 officers and crew members. Many newspapers such as William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal and Joseph Pulitzer's New York World ran sensational headlines and cartoons about the explosion of the Battleship Maine before any investigation could occur. Years later, evidence indicated that the explosion was more than likely accidental and not the work of the Spaniards.

C



William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal ran this front page before authorities had a chance to determine the cause of the explosion.

## **Questions for Answering and Discussion:**

### **Cartoon A:**

1. What action is happening in the cartoon?
2. What are 2 reasons some Americans wanted the U.S. government to get involved in the situation in Cuba?

### **Cartoons B & C:**

3. What does the cartoonist do to make you hate Spain?
4. What happened on the night of February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1898?
5. What mistake did William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer make?
6. Why would newspapers such as the New York World and the New York Journal exaggerate the truth like this?