American Involvement in the Caribbean
Many Americans believed that the US had **special interests in the Caribbean** region. After the Spanish-American War, the United States gained **direct control of Puerto Rico and indirect control of Cuba**.

The construction of the **Panama Canal** and the **rise of American business interests** in the Caribbean further contributed to American involvement. American leaders acted to **keep other foreign powers out** of the region because they might pose a threat to the United States.
Why and Where to Build a Canal

AFTERMATH

Guam, Philippines, and Puerto Rico were Spanish possessions ceded or sold to the United States after the War.

The United States also forces fought in the Philippine Insurrection 1898 - 1902 and in the Boxer Rebellion in 1900.
The Panama Canal

The Spanish-American War has shown the importance of building a **canal** (a man-made waterway that connects two bodies of water) **between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans**.

It took a **battleship** six weeks to sail 14,000 miles from the west coast of the US to Cuba. By 1903, the US decided to build a canal **across Panama**, in Central America. At that time, Panama was part of Colombia.
Panama Canal cont.

The US **offered Colombia $10 million** for the land to build a canal.

When Colombia delayed giving its acceptance, President Roosevelt bargained with a group of rebels in Panama. He sent warships to help Panama gain its independence from Colombia, and the **rebels agreed to sell the US the land** to build the canal.

The actions of the US against Colombia **angered many Latin American countries**. Panama gained its independence and the canal was completed after **ten years of construction** (1903-1914). The US was given control of the Panama Canal Zone.
Issues with Colombia
Cuba

Following the Spanish-American War, Cuba became an **American protectorate** (a territory under the protection and control of another country.) **American forces** remained on the island, and **American businesses** invested heavily in Cuba.
CUBA AND VICINITY, 1898
THE SPANISH - AMERICAN WAR
Spanish Dispositions, 20 June 1898

Total strength in Santiago Province, 36,382. Total in other provinces, 160,238, located principally as shown.
Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico became an **American possession** after 1898. Since 1952, Puerto Rico has governed itself as a **US “Commonwealth.”** However, there is a great deal of **disagreement** as to how Puerto Rico should be governed in the future.
U.S. Policy in the Caribbean

In the early 1900s, the US government began to take a more active part in the affairs of Latin America. In 1904, President Theodore Roosevelt declared that the US would act as a policeman in the Western Hemisphere. The expansion of US power in Latin America was known as the Big Stick Policy. It was often used by the US to justify sending troops to the West Indies and Central America. Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic became American protectorates like Cuba. These frequent interventions caused many Latin American nations to resent the U.S.