



# An Unwanted War: The Diplomacy of the United States and Spain Over Cuba, 1895-1898

By John L. Offner

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Offner clarifies the complex relations of the United States, Spain, and Cuba leading up to the Spanish-American War and contends that the war was not wanted by any of the parties but was nonetheless unavoidable. He shows that a final round of peace negotiations failed in large part because internal political constraints limited diplomatic flexibility.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

The Spanish-American War of 1898 has not received nearly as much detailed study as other American wars. Compared with such great conflicts as the Civil War and World War I, this small, swift war, with few casualties and an unambiguous conclusion, seemed rather simple. Typically, it has been portrayed as a symbolic struggle between a declining European power and the United States, whose foreign policy would dominate the 20th century. Offner (history, Shippensburg Univ.) does his readers a great service by probing beyond easy generalizations and demonstrating the intricate diplomatic efforts used to avoid military conflict. To his credit, he also explores the perspectives of the Spanish and the Cubans, having done prodigious research in international archives. The tangled relationships that Offner reveals between internal politics and foreign relations make the war seem not quite so simple and much more worthy of study. A fascinating and relevant work in the wake of the recent Persian Gulf War, another war that lasted only a few months.

- *Charles K. Piehl, Mankato State Univ., Minn.*

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Review

"Exhaustively researched, clearly and logically written, and forcefully argued.

"International History Review""

"An Unwanted War" combines rich detail, provocative insights, a wealth of fresh material, and a clear-cut point of view.

"The Americas""

One of the most complete and certainly one of the better-researched presentations of the traditional historiography.

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David F. Trask, author of "The War with Spain in 1898""

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"Library Journal" . . . . [Offner] emphasizes the domestic influences that affected the policies of the belligerents but also notes the larger international circumstances that conditioned judgments in Washington and in Madrid. This study demonstrates that the practice of international political history in the United States is alive and well."--David F. Trask, author of *The War with Spain in 1898* "A major contribution to the historical literature on the war with Spain in 1898. John Offner's prodigious research in European and Cuban sources has enabled him to replace all previous treatments about the coming of the war and its impact on the history of the United States."--Lewis L. Gould, University of Texas at Austin"

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distinction reaffirming familiar arguments. It points to the direction and distance we must travel.--*Journal of American History*

A fascinating and relevant work in the wake of the recent Persian Gulf War.--*Library Journal*

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