IN OUR IMAGE

AMERICA'S EMPIRE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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5. IMPERIAL DEMOCRACY

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The American public euphorically assumed that Commodore George Dewey's victory had shattered Spain's rule in the Philippines. But despite their defeat at sea, the Spanish still held Manila as a growing Filipino insurgency spread throughout the islands. The United States stumbled into a long, difficult and divisive ordeal, both in the archipelago and at home. Later regretting the involvement, President McKinley confided to a friend: "If old Dewey had just sailed away when he smashed that Spanish fleet, what a lot of trouble he would have saved us."

In the wake of his triumph, however, Dewey was supremely confident. He reported to Washington that he dominated Manila Bay and controlled the Spanish naval base at Cavite. With five thousand men, he said, he could seize and hold Manila "at any time." Oscar Williams, the U.S. consul who had returned with the American fleet, promised that the Filipino rebels would help. After going ashore to consult their leaders, he informed Dewey that thirty thousand insurgents would "cheerfully follow our flag" in an offensive against the ten thousand Spanish troops defending Manila. The Filipinos, he said, were "brave, submissive and cheaply provided for," and in concert with a U.S. force they could wipe out the Spanish "in a day."

The Philippines was *terra incognita* to Major General Wesley Merritt, whom McKinley had already chosen to command the U.S. Army there. His maps of the archipelago were obsolete and rudimentary. He had no idea if he could procure adequate food and water, if horses were available or if the terrain suited his artillery. His knowledge of health conditions in the islands was sketchy, except that he had heard that diseases there included malaria and leprosy. He was vaguely aware that the climate could be oppressively hot and humid. And apart from the few details collected by Williams, he lacked intelligence on the strength and deployment of the Spanish forces. But worst

of all, America's soldiers were unprepared to fight, in the Philippines or anywhere else, as the United States poised for the first overseas war in its history.

The navy had been modernized and strengthened, thanks to Mahan, Roosevelt and others. But the army's 2,000 officers and 26,000 men had experienced combat only in skirmishes with Indians. McKinley appealed for 125,000 volunteers, but organizing them augured nightmarish training, supply and transportation problems. The War Department was a bloated bureaucracy that, with little else to do during the decades of peace since the Civil War, spent much of its time in internecine rivalries. Russell Alger, the secretary of war, set the tone. Bored and ailing, he devoted his feeble energies to hectoring Major General Nelson Appleton Miles, the army chief, who in turn took a perverse pleasure in conniving against his colleagues. Miles was now squabbling with Merritt over the scope of the war to be waged against Spain, and their quarrel baffled the already befuddled McKinley.

A handsome New Englander of sixty-two, Miles, with his silver mustache and chestful of decorations, looked every inch the "brave peacock," as Roosevelt had dubbed him. He had been a fine soldier during the Civil War, when he earned the Congressional Medal of Honor. He later won distinction as an Indian fighter, capturing Chief Joseph and his Nez Percé warriors, and orchestrating the defeat of Geronimo's Apaches. His present post, which he assumed in 1895, had been invented by President Grant as a sinecure for the nation's senior military man, but the tedium of ceremonial prominence made Miles peevish and disputatious. He had also become cautious, perhaps out of recognition of the army's inadequacies. His prudence annoyed Miles, and their squabble was as much a personal clash as a difference over strategy.

Miles favored the occupation of Manila, but he regarded Dewey's request for five thousand men as too small and urged McKinley to triple that number. With regulars scarce, they would be mainly volunteers. Miles argued for confining the action to the seizure of the city; an attempt to take over the entire country would strain America's meager resources.

Merritt disagreed. A West Pointer with a solid Civil War record, he was sixty-one and vegetating on Governor's Island, New York, his headquarters as chief of the eastern military region of the United States. Seeking a last shot at glory, he envisioned nothing less than the complete conquest of the Philippines—with regulars, not raw recruits—and the war would not stop with the defeat of the Spanish. Rejecting Oscar Williams's claim that the natives were "eager to be organized and led" by U.S. officers, he predicted that they would also resist the Americans "with the intense hatred born of race and religion." So, he told McKinley, "it seems more than probable that we will have the so-called insurgents to fight as well as the Spaniards."

Unless he was assigned regulars, Merritt threatened, he would resign the command. McKinley, who admired his vigor, gave him some crack units that had been designated for Cuba. With that, Merritt prepared to plunge into the unknown—his venture complicated by McKinley's failure to define an objective for the expedition.

McKinley at this stage ought to have been pondering America's future role in the Philippines. Assuming that U.S. troops and ships captured Manila, what next? Should they subdue Luzon and the other islands? Or should they back

the Filipino bid for independence, as Congress had recognized Cuba's right to freedom? Could Spain retain the archipelago, perhaps in exchange for concessions on Cuba and Puerto Rico? Might the islands be ceded to a foreign power or divided into zones of influence? In short, what was America's ultimate goal?

These were crucial questions, on which hinged not only America's fate in the Philippines, but its broader policy for the Pacific. Today, in Washington, task forces and special committees would be conferring around the clock to churn out piles of studies and recommendations. In the spring of 1898, however, amid the blooming azaleas and dogwoods that annually color the capital, nobody was seriously probing for answers, least of all McKinley. Indeed, he only clouded the confusion when, on May 19, seventeen days after Merritt had asked him to clarify the U.S. mission in the Philippines, he produced a typically amorphous directive.

America's "twofold purpose" was "the reduction of Spanish power in that quarter" and the introduction of "order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States." Left undefined, though, was whether the "possession" would be permanent or temporary. The United States, after ending the "former political relations" between Spain and the Filipinos, intended to create a "new political power." Again, it was unclear whether America would exercise this authority—and, if so, for how long. Merritt was to announce on his arrival in Manila that the United States had come "not to make war upon the people . . . but to protect them in their homes, in their employments and in their personal and religious rights." A State Department memorandum added, however, that the natives would be required to show the U.S. Army the "obedience that will be lawfully due from them"—an indication that martial law was to be imposed.

Discovered many years following McKinley's death was a rare handwritten note that he had scribbled just after Dewey demolished the Spanish fleet: "While we are conducting war and until its conclusion, we must keep all we can get. When the war is over, we must keep what we want." But he never once articulated what he thought he could get, or what he wanted.

Shortly after his inauguration McKinley had pledged to oppose "all acquisitions of territory" beyond the continental limits of the United States; the promise was soon forgotten. The Teller amendment to the act of war voted by Congress barred America from annexing Cuba, and McKinley could have applied the ban to the Philippines; he made no mention of it. Nor would he confirm or deny talk by members of his cabinet that he might only secure a U.S. naval base and trading station in the islands. Perhaps he kept silent because he regarded the disposition of the archipelago to be a bargaining chip in eventual peace negotiations with Spain. More likely, he simply lacked ideas.

The only clue to his thinking was a report in the *New York Tribune* leaked by the White House. The president believed, said the newspaper, that there would be "time enough to discuss the sale, barter or retention of the islands when Spain has been driven to abandon Cuba and sue for conditions of a general peace." As usual, McKinley was trailing rather than shaping events.

The U.S. public at that juncture was equally hazy. Most Americans opposed the continuation of Spanish rule in the Philippines. The anti-imperialist Springfield (Massachusetts) *Republican* denounced as immoral the return of the islands to "a dominion hated, crushed and regenerate." Roosevelt, at the other end of the spectrum, also said that they should be "taken away" from Spain. But there was no clamor for U.S. acquisition of the archipelago, even from the expansionists. A survey of Congress revealed overwhelming resistance to its retention. Even the jingoist Hearst press warned against annexation of the territory on the grounds that it had been "a source of corruption and weakness to Spain" and might poison America as well. Aboard his flagship in Manila Bay, Dewey voiced the same view to a visitor: "Our government is not fitted for colonies. We have ample room for development at home. The colonies of European nations are vital to their economic life, ours could not be."

But opinions changed as the summer of 1898 approached, and a bitter dispute soon polarized the champions and foes of annexing the Philippines. McKinley, in the crossfire, increasingly faced hard choices.

Henry Cabot Lodge, the archimperialist, did not raise the issue of keeping the Philippines until after Dewey's victory. Then, almost overnight, he concluded: "We must on no account let the islands go. . . . We hold the other side of the Pacific, and the value to this country is almost beyond imagination." Others, for their own motives, began to repeat a similar theme. Evangelists perceived the faraway land to be fertile soil for their aims—a "garden of the universe" to be filled with "school houses and missionaries," as a Baptist minister intoned. A statement by the Daughters of the American Revolution foresaw the islands offering America "a new career . . . grander and more imposing than anything" in the past, and an influential California businessman portrayed Manila as a base for trade with China. Addressing Republican stalwarts on May 17, Chauncey Depew, the New York Central railroad tycoon, warned against bucking the tide. "A strong feeling spreading over the land in favor of colonial exansion [is] getting so strong that it will mean the political death of any man to oppose it pretty soon."

Few imperialists were more eloquent than Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, a young scholar and lawyer, later to be elected senator from Indiana. A passionate progressive in domestic affairs who battled to regulate cartels and child labor, he subsequently became a fierce isolationist, joining Lodge to block U.S. entry into the League of Nations. When war with Spain broke out in April 1898, however, he designated the Philippines as "logically our first target" and the Pacific "the true field of our earliest operations." His speech to a Boston audience marked a milestone in xenophobia: "We are a conquering race. . . . American law, American order, American civilization and the American flag will plant themselves on shores hitherto bloody and benighted, but by those agencies of God henceforth to be made beautiful and bright."

The enemies of expansionism, then organizing, were equally impassioned. Their militants included the prolific Carl Schurz, who in 1856, at the age of twenty-seven, had fled to Wisconsin from political persecution in his native Germany. He became an ardent abolitionist and Republican party activist. After serving as Lincoln's envoy to Spain, he rose to the rank of major general in the Union Army, later won election as senator from Missouri and joined Rutherford B. Hayes's cabinet as secretary of interior. Dour, irascible and brilliant, he wielded enormous sway among the German immigrants of the Middle West and afterward exerted national influence writing for *Harper's Weekly.* A peculiar blend of idealism and racism permeated his resistance to imperialism. To annex the Philippines, he argued, would not only violate

America's principles of "right, justice and liberty," but also bring an influx of "more or less barbarous Asiatics" into the United States. He was, along with Andrew Carnegie and others, a founder of the Anti-Imperialist League.

In the spring of 1898 McKinley still lacked a plan for dealing with the Spanish in the Philippines; and he was paying even less attention to the Filipino insurgents. The evidence suggests, indeed, that he was oblivious to their existence. The absence of guidance from Washington licensed Dewey, Merritt and other American officials to improvise. Their only preoccupation at that juncture was to defeat the Spanish. To achieve that goal, they sought the help of the Filipinos, indulging them with pledges that had no foundation in reality. The Filipinos naïvely believed the promises until they discovered, to their dismay, that they had been manipulated. Within less than a year, tensions were to spark a tragic war between the Americans and Filipinos that almost surely could have been averted had McKinley, at the outset, proceeded into the Philippines with a policy.

* * *

During the war against the Filipino insurgents U.S. propagandists maligned Emilio Aguinaldo with many charges, including venality. In fact, he behaved with singular probity after reaching Hong Kong late in December 1897. The Spanish had given him a check for four hundred thousand pesos as a first payment for quitting the Philippines, and he deposited the money in a British bank. He siphoned off the interest to feed, lodge and clothe his comrades and himself, leaving the principal intact to buy weapons in hopes of reviving his revolution. Scrupulously pinching pennies, he and his followers languished in poverty. Without their families and friends, and unable to speak either English or Chinese, they also felt sad, lonely and estranged in the British colony. They bickered among themselves as they watched events back home, awaiting the chance to rekindle their struggle against Spain.

Rounsevelle Wildman, the American consul in Hong Kong, had earlier rebuffed a Filipino request for U.S. cooperation. As war with Spain loomed, however, he and other American officials in Asia perceived the insurgents to be possible allies after all, and conceded to talk with them. Their dialogue, conducted in a fog of misunderstanding, was to cloud rather than clarify their relations. The Filipinos assumed that the Americans reflected U.S. policy, but the Americans, without instructions from Washington, represented only themselves.

Soon after Dewey's squadron had assembled in Hong Kong in March 1898, Lieutenant R. V. Hall of the gunboat *Petrel* sought out the Filipinos in the colony to collect intelligence on Manila's defenses. He ducked the issue when they pressed him for U.S. endorsement of their bid for independence, but he assured them, with Dewey's approval, that the Americans would arm and transport their troops back to the Philippines if they agreed to "help fight the Spanish." They concluded that an alliance with the United States was in the works.

Aquinaldo personally pursued the subject on April 6 with Captain Edward P. Wood, the skipper of the *Petrel,* whom Dewey had ordered to continue the talks. Aguinaldo asked him to define America's intentions toward the Philippines. The United States, replied Wood, was "very great and rich, and did not need colonies"—and, he added, Dewey would put such a statement in writing. Aguinaldo, deluded by his hopes, inferred from the elliptical remark that the Americans would back his cause. He and Wood planned to discuss the matter further, but an incident aborted their next session.

The Spanish, striving to subvert the nationalists, sent one of their Filipino agents, a rebel defector, to Hong Kong. He filed suit against Aguinaldo in a British colonial court, demanding a slice of the Spanish indemnity. His game was to raise doubts about Aguinaldo's use of the funds and, in so doing, smear the insurgent leader's image. Though Aguinaldo kept careful ledgers, he recoiled from publicly disclosing his movement's finances in court. He sailed for Singapore, traveling incognito with two aides. He landed there two weeks later, just as war between the United States and Spain broke out. His fortunes were now to take a new twist.

Howard Bray was one of those Western "fixers" who pervade Asia to this day. A former British colonial official in India, he had been a planter in the Philippines until the Spanish expropriated his property in a dispute. He moved to Singapore, where he occasionally wrote on the Philippines for a local newspaper. Lately, too, he had been feeding information on the archipelago to E. Spencer Pratt, the U.S. consul, who forwarded the reports to Dewey. Bray, both out of hatred for the Spanish and to serve his own interests, sympathized with the Filipino rebels. Calculating that they would benefit from American support, he introduced Aguinaldo to Pratt and acted as interpreter.

The U.S. consular service then consisted largely of expatriate merchants, scholars, writers and other amateurs, who for assorted motives chose to live abroad. Many owed their appointment to political patronage and, as diplomats, were dilettantes with only a hazy knowledge of foreign affairs. Their duties tended to be ritual. They flew the flag, hosted social functions and attended receptions. Some promoted trade, even using their positions for personal gain. They often operated without word from Washington, which suited them fine. After all, they were not bureaucrats.

Pratt typified the breed. He had no authority to make commitments on behalf of the United States. Nevertheless, he urged Aguinaldo to return to Hong Kong and join Dewey in the war with Spain. Pratt would not explicitly guarantee U.S. recognition of Philippine independence, but he implied that Aguinaldo could expect America, which had promised freedom to Cuba, to do the same for the Philippines. "As in Cuba, so in the Philippines. Even more so, if possible. Cuba is at our door, while the Philippines is ten thousand miles away."

Aguinaldo agreed to collaborate, but he asked that Dewey send him a formal request along with a written pledge of U.S. support for his cause. Pratt dissimulated. He cabled Dewey that Aguinaldo was prepared to join him in Hong Kong, omitting any mention of conditions. Dewey answered promptly: TELL AGUINALDO COME SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Perplexed by Dewey's terse response, Aguinaldo asked about the written pledge. Pratt again pretended. Dewey, he told Aguinaldo, had assured him in a separate private message the United States would "at least recognize the independence of the Philippines under an American naval protectorate." Both Dewey and he himself could be trusted, Pratt went on, somewhat irritated, as

if Aguinaldo's request for a formal promise was disrespectful. "The words of a United States navy officer and an American consul represent a solemn pledge," he said. "The United States government is a very honorable, very just and very powerful government."

Eager for personal profit and self-promotion, Pratt also skirted propriety. He offered to procure guns for the rebels, at a commission, and proposed to serve as their agent in Washington after they won independence.

The Filipino community in Singapore honored Pratt as a benefactor at a noisy party in which he touted his friendship with Aguinaldo and tipsily toasted the Philippine "republic." Proud of his popularity, he sent press reports of the evening to Washington along with newspaper accounts of his talks with Aguinaldo. Secretary of State William Day replied frostily: AVOID UNAUTHORIZED NEGOTIATIONS WITH PHILIPPINE INSURGENTS. Pratt lamely denied that he had even discussed U.S. policy with Aguinaldo. Day, unconvinced, again scolded him for taking steps of a "significance that this government would feel compelled to regret." Pratt, who had expected to be rewarded, was subsequently dismissed. Aguinaldo, however, had been sorely misled by his attention.

The prospect of fighting alongside the Americans elated Aguinaldo as he reached Hong Kong. But he learned, to his chagrin, that Dewey had departed for the Philippines without him. A few days later, he heard of Dewey's victory in Manila Bay. After all the pressure exerted on him to cooperate with the United States, he had been rejected.

Dewey had "attached so little importance" to Aguinaldo, he told a Senate committee nearly four years later, that he had left him behind. Besides, Dewey added, the Filipinos had become a nuisance. "They were bothering me. I was very busy getting my squadron ready for battle, and these little men were . . . taking a good deal of my time." One of them, invited to go along, backed out at the last minute because he had misplaced his toothbrush. But if Dewey had held Aguinaldo in such low esteem, why did he summon him to Hong Kong? "More to get rid of him than anything else."

Aguinaldo was again stranded in the British colony—a warrior without a war. He now began to pester Wildman, who privately described him as a "childish figure of petty moods . . . far more interested in the kind of cane he will carry or the breastplate he will wear than in the figure he will make in history." But Wildman, like Pratt, could not resist a business deal. He contracted to purchase rifles, ammunition and other equipment for the Filipinos for a commission, and accepted a down payment of 117,000 pesos. Most of the matériel was never delivered, nor did Wildman ever account for the missing money. He disappeared in a shipwreck on his way home in 1901, and is honored today in a commemorative plaque for U.S. foreign service heroes in a State Department lobby.

Dewey finally summoned Aguinaldo, who reached Manila Bay aboard an American vessel on May 19, and the two men met for the first time. Aguinaldo, dressed in khaki, proudly wore his captured Spanish sword as he climbed onto the deck of Dewey's flagship, the *Olympia.* Resplendent in a white uniform, the new epaulets of a rear admiral gracing his shoulders, Dewey greeted him with condescending warmth. They repaired to a comfortable salon to converse,

Ayala Museum

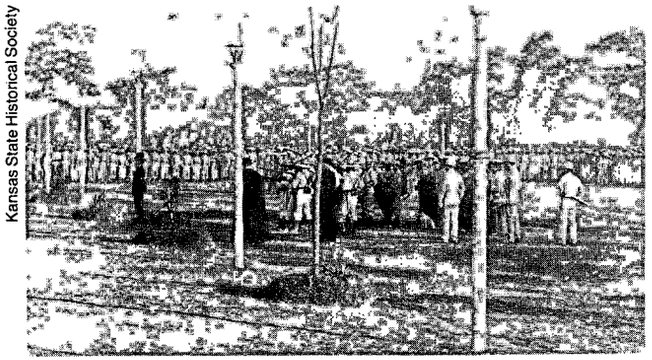
A romanticized version of Filipino peasants before the Spanish discovery of the Philippines in 1521.

Ayala Museum

Ferdinand Magellan erects a cross on Cebu in April 1521, claiming the archipelago for Spain. He was killed in a skirmish with the natives soon afterward.

Ayala Museum

A nineteenth-century photograph of Spanish colonial officials, a priest among them. The Catholic hierarchy heavily influenced the colonial regime.



Kansas State Historical Society

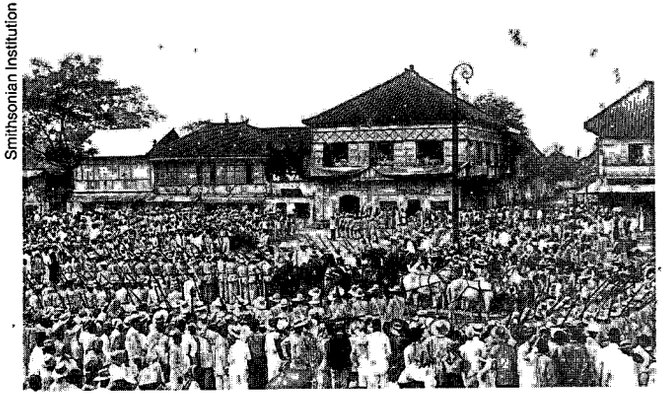
The execution in 1896 of José Rizal, the Philippine national hero, by Spanish troops. Rizal favored assimilation with Spain rather than independence.

The National Archives

Theodore Roosevelt as a Rough Rider in Cuba during the Spanish-American War of 1898. Roosevelt was instrumental in pushing the United States into the war.

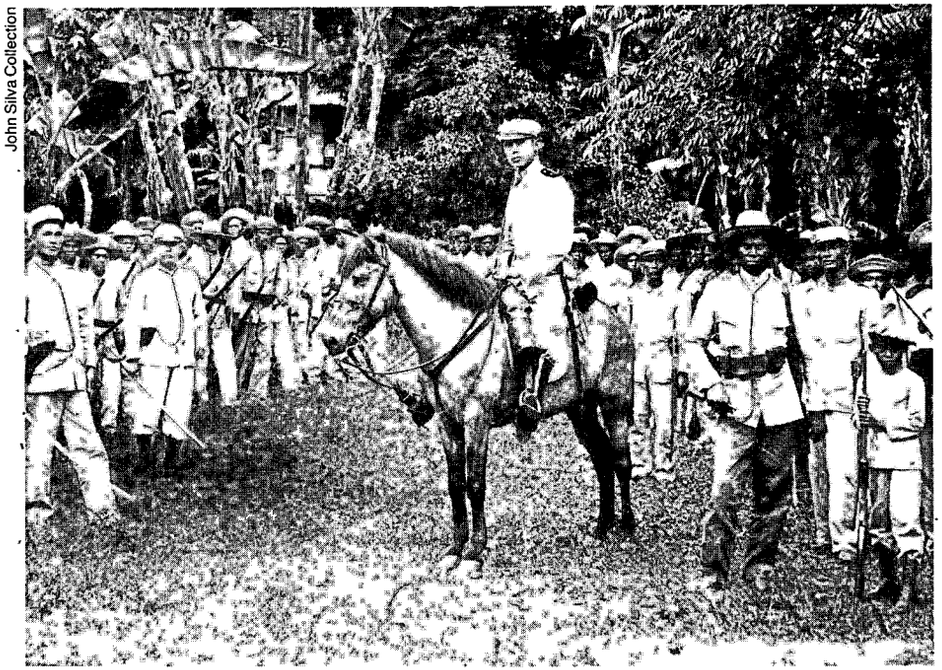
Emilio Aguinaldo, chief of Filipino nationalists, declared Philippine independence in 1898.

The National Archives



Smithsonian Institution

Filipinos celebrate the formation of an independent government in 1899 in the town of Malolos, north of Manila.

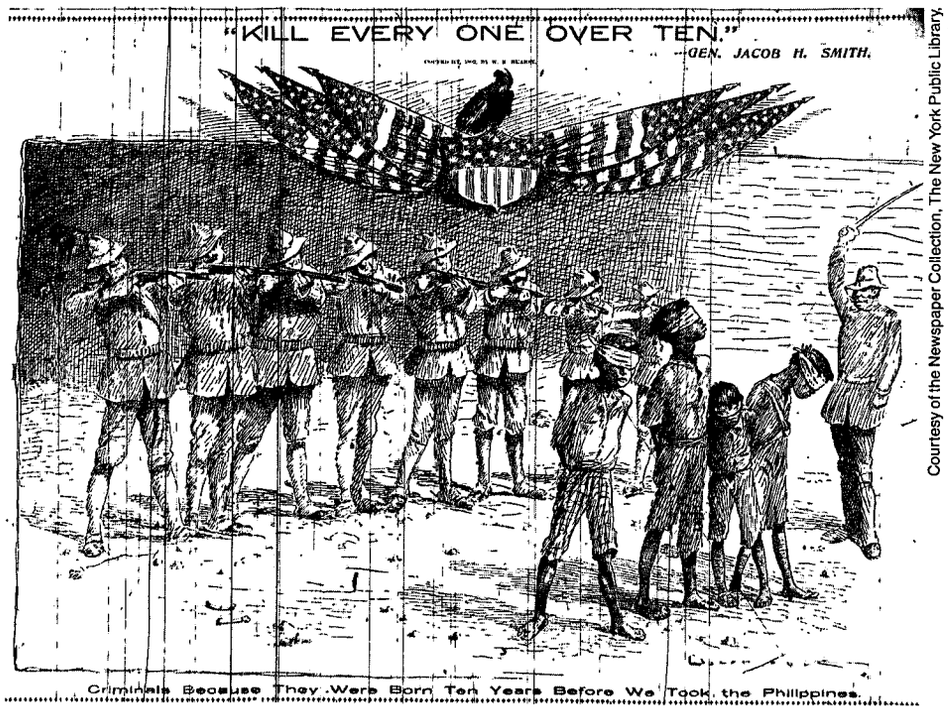


John Silva Collection

Gregorio del Pilar, the "boy general" of the Philippine nationalist army, was killed in the war against the Americans. He has since been enshrined as a romantic hero.

Courtesy of Dorothy Hazzard Ignatieff

Colonel Frederick Funston *(seated)* and the team that captured Aguinaldo in one of the boldest actions of the U.S. war against the Filipinos.



Courtesy of the Newspaper Collection, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation

American atrocities against Filipinos eventually appalled the U.S. public, which had earlier supported the war as a manifestation of American power.

Dewey in English and Aguinaldo in Spanish, with one of Aguinaldo's aides haltingly interpreting.

From the blurred perspective of Washington, meanwhile, McKinley anxiously observed the cadence of events. American expeditions were then preparing to embark for Cuba and the Philippines, and the specter of a long and costly war alarmed him. If only Spain would agree to a compromise, perhaps the worst might be avoided. As usual, however, he was bereft of ideas. On the advice of John Hay, his envoy to London, he authorized British diplomats to explore peace possibilities. But a new complication arose when Secretary of State Day informed him of Pratt's talks with Aguinaldo. For the first time, he realized, the Filipinos would have to be part of the equation.

They deserved "just consideration," he told an aide—but how? He could not endorse their claim to independence without jeopardizing a potential deal with the Spanish, who were determined to retain the Philippines even though they had reconciled themselves to losing Cuba. The Filipinos would have to wait for their independence. The problem was confused, however, by McKinley's inability to control his representatives abroad. Pratt had raised Aguinaldo's hopes with promises of support. Now, McKinley discovered, Dewey had also met with Aguinaldo. If Dewey had pledged to back the Filipinos, the Spanish would certainly refuse to negotiate a settlement; an intensified war was virtually inevitable.

It was difficult to communicate with Dewey, who had cut the cable from Manila and could be contacted only through Hong Kong—a tortuous procedure that required his sending a ship to the British colony to collect messages. Dewey was reluctant to spare a boat for the round trip across the South China Sea, a journey of three or four days. Besides, he now viewed himself as a kind of viceroy, capable of managing his private domain without interference from Washington. He had not furnished McKinley with the substance of his conversation with Aguinaldo—nor even reported that the meeting had taken place. McKinley only learned of the encounter in the middle of June, probably from the newspapers. He queried Dewey for details, cautioning him to avoid "a political alliance with the insurgents or any faction in the islands that would incur liability to maintain their cause in the future." Dewey either failed to receive word immediately or felt under no constraint to respond quickly. Finally on June 27 he confirmed in a dispatch to the Navy Department that he had in fact met with Aguinaldo—five weeks earlier.

By then, Dewey had seen Aguinaldo several times. But he flatly denied in his belated reply that he had pledged to "assist the insurgents by any act or promise," or had voiced sympathy for their cause. He had refused Aguinaldo's request for help, telling him that he regarded the insurgents to be nothing more than "friends . . . opposed to a common enemy." Nor did he gather from Aguinaldo that the rebels were "committed to assist us." Some four years later, in testimony before a Senate committee, Dewey insisted that he had never intended to develop close ties with the Filipino leader, even after bringing him back to Manila aboard a U.S. ship. As Dewey put it, he routinely sent boats to pick up mail and supplies from Hong Kong, and one of them fetched Aguinaldo as well. It had merely been, he said, an "act of courtesy."

Aguinaldo related a different story in his memoirs: Dewey had assured him

that the United States was "rich in territory and money, and needed no colonies." So the Filipinos ought "have no doubt whatsoever" about American support. When Aguinaldo expressed a fear of hostilities between the U.S. and Filipino forces if the promise were violated, Dewey reacted sharply. An American officer's "word of honor" would never be transgressed, Aguinaldo claimed to have heard him say.

Dewey had become fond of the Filipinos. Several hundred of them had gone to work for him in the former Spanish navy yard at Cavite and, he later recalled, they were "docile, amiable, intelligent [and] most kindly disposed toward us," regarding the Americans as "their liberators." But he was too experienced and disciplined to have given Aguinaldo a firm guarantee of U.S. support for Philippine independence—particularly after McKinley had instructed him to steer clear of the rebels. So Aguinaldo's expectations must have colored his memory of their talks. He also may have confused the pledges of Pratt and Wildman with whatever Dewey told him, since their statements were virtually identical. His hopes were probably buoyed as well by comrades who had stayed behind in Hong Kong to function as his movement's diplomatic service. They monitored American press reports, and concluded from selective reading that U.S. public opinion opposed the annexation of the Philippines.

But Dewey was a study in inconsistency, either tailoring his recollections to suit circumstances or simply forgetting his earlier statements. He tended to babble, casually ventilating his thoughts without paying attention to their repercussions. But his comments carried immense weight at the time. As the hero of Manila Bay, he was for Americans at home the uncontested expert on the Philippines. To the Filipino insurgents, he personified the power and the purpose of the United States. In fact, he was operating in a policy vacuum.

Whatever he actually said, Dewey probably planted in Aguinaldo's head, perhaps inadvertently, the notion that America would not seek to control the Philippines. Without directions from McKinley, he relied for guidance on the U.S. Navy's war plans, which made no mention of territorial acquisition beyond the capture of Manila and a few other towns in order to exert leverage on Spain at a peace conference. His request for only five thousand men to occupy Manila also indicated that he envisioned a limited campaign in the archipelago. He knew as well that Congress had voted to uphold independence for Cuba, an island ninety miles from Florida with major U.S. investments, and he must have assumed that America would not want a property on the other side of the world, where its stake was nil. Indeed, he implicitly recommended in his dispatch to Washington in June 1898 that the same law be applied to the Filipinos. "In my opinion," he wrote, "these people are far superior in intelligence and more capable of self-government than the natives of Cuba."

Dewey later revised his views. The Filipinos "expect independence," he reported with apparent approval in an early message to the Navy Department. But in January 1902, after the United States had gone to war against them, he disclaimed before the Senate committee reviewing Philippine policy that they had aspired to freedom. "You may believe me, gentlemen," he affirmed, "they did not at first. They did not."

Young and naïve, Aguinaldo filtered Dewey's remarks through the prism of his own dreams. He also construed American attention to mean that he was now a U.S. ally in the struggle against Spain. After all, Dewey had given him

the equivalent of an order following their talks: "Go ashore and start your army."

Aguinaldo obeyed. Disembarking in his native Cavite, he showed local Filipinos a few Mauser rifles that Dewey had allowed him to take from a captured Spanish arsenal, claiming that he expected more when he was fully mobilized. He also announced the creation of a "provisional dictatorship," with himself at its head, and issued a series of typically verbose proclamations emphasizing American support for his crusade. The U.S. fleet would soon bombard Manila to open the way for his "march into the capital." The Americans, "my friends," had "promised me all that I have asked for, more than we had ever hoped to obtain, and are going to aid me in all things." The United States, "the cradle of genuine liberty," the savior of "our people oppressed and enslaved by tyranny and despotism," had pledged him and his movement "protection as decisive as it is undoubtedly disinterested . . . considering us as sufficiently civilized and capable of governing for ourselves our unfortunate country."

Numbers of Filipinos had already quit the Spanish army to join the insurgents, one of them saying that he would fight Spain's "foreign enemies but not my own compatriots." Aguinaldo's return quickened the trend. By the middle of June, nearly all the native auxiliaries had defected, and the rebels could attack depleted Spanish detachments throughout the country with relative ease. Mariano Noriel, an insurgent general with the build of a heavyweight boxer, overran almost every Spanish garrison in Cavite within weeks, taking three thousand prisoners. His victories stimulated Filipinos to rise up elsewhere in Luzon. Many were dispossessed peasants, inspired as much by the opportunity to grab lands owned by the Spanish monastic orders as by nationalist sentiment.

The Filipinos amassed thousands of rifles and rounds of ammunition, either captured from defeated Spanish outposts or purchased from Chinese smugglers. By early summer, thirty thousand of their troops, commanded by General Antonio Luna, had dug fourteen miles of trenches around Manila. Jammed behind the walls of the inner city, the Spanish were blocked from escaping by sea by Dewey's squadron. The rebels seized the capital's only pumping station, shut off the water supply and gradually began to strangle the beleaguered Spanish.

On June 16, Spanish warships departed Spain to lift the siege. But they abruptly altered course for Cuba, where the U.S. Navy imperiled a Spanish fleet. General Basilio Augustín Dávila, the Spanish governor in Manila, panicked. He communicated with Madrid through circuitous routes, his messages a mounting crescendo of woe. His plight, at first "very grave," soon became "unparalleled in history." He could not cope with the hysterical population that packed the city as his defense force dwindled from injuries, death and desertions. Cavite had "risen in mass," isolating him from the provinces, and the American army would soon land, leaving him no choice "than to succumb"—with "consequences fatal" for Spain. An aide, exasperated by the repetitious pleas of desperation, dubbed him "the undertaker."

With only some two thousand men at his disposal, Dewey awaited Merritt's troops for the offensive against Manila. He praised the Filipinos encircling the city as "our friends, assisting us [and] doing our work," and later likened them

to the Negroes who had rallied to the Union side in the Civil War. But while he understood that the slaves had fought for freedom, his notions of Aguinaldo's aims were fuzzy.

He largely relied for information on Oscar Williams, the U.S. consul who had accompanied him to Manila. Williams, who saw Aguinaldo frequently in Cavite, assured Dewey that the rebels "hope that the Philippines will be held as a colony of the United States." Wildman, the consul in Hong Kong, agreed. Their "statements to the contrary," he said, the Filipinos in the British colony wanted to become Americans, and constantly beseeched him for guarantees of eventual U.S. citizenship. Dewey found yet another source of intelligence in Edouard André, the Belgian consul in Manila, who also told him that the Filipinos "do not desire independence." None of this advice concurred with what he had heard from Aguinaldo himself. But these were white men, and Dewey believed them. Aguinaldo, he concluded, merely sought to end Spanish rule, and "did not look much beyond that."

Dewey underestimated Aguinaldo, who was thinking ahead. Aguinaldo had stepped up his campaign in an effort to occupy as much territory as possible before the U.S. ground forces arrived. Thus, he calculated, he could improve his bargaining stance with the Americans. For the same reason, he decided to declare the independence of the Philippines.

Chief among his advisers was Apolinario Mabini, the most cerebral of the rebels. Then thirty-four, Mabini came from a humble Chinese *mestizo* family. He had educated himself, and ultimately earned a law degree from the University of Santo Tomás. Poliomyelitis had crippled his legs, but not his zeal. A member of José Rizal's aborted *Liga Filipina,* he was jailed and quickly released by the Spanish, who could not imagine an invalid to be dangerous. Aguinaldo, hearing of his legal skills, had him carried in a hammock to Cavite by porters. Aguinaldo was repelled by the sight of a cripple, until Mabini's intellect and fervor erased his doubts.

Admirers called Mabini the "brains of the revolution," but his rivals labeled him Aguinaldo's "dark chamber." Lean, dour and frequently tactless, he was a theorist often unable to deal with practicalities. He had derived from his studies of the American and French revolutions the conviction that the first duty of government was "to interpret faithfully the popular will." The thesis, banal today, alienated the rich nationalists, who maintained that *ilustrados* like themselves ought to run the country. To Mabini, however, they were only out to safeguard their own interests. Aguinaldo tried to juggle the two sides. He courted the wealthy elite, whose support lent him social status and respectability. At the same time, he needed Mabini's talents. He never succeeded in harmonizing the irreconcilable differences that, in the end, split and doomed him—perhaps because he failed to define an ideology more profound than the attainment of independence.

Mabini drafted a "constitutional program" that granted full power to Aguinaldo for the duration of the war. But the document envisioned democratic institutions then unique in Asia, like a national legislature and elected officials. Freedom of religion, speech and the press were guaranteed, and women could vote, attend all educational institutions and hold certain offices. Capital punishment was outlawed except for such wartime offenses as "military insubordination in the face of the enemy."

Mabini warned Aguinaldo against proclaiming independence prematurely. The Filipinos, he argued, should organize their government first in areas liberated from the Spanish and demonstrate to the world their ability to rule themselves. He also feared that, without a formal pledge of U.S. support, they risked a two-front war against the Americans and the Spanish. Aguinaldo ignored him. He commissioned a national anthem and a flag as well as a declaration of independence that turgidly related the history of the Filipino struggle since Magellan. One passage, testimony to his persistent faith in the Americans, affirmed Philippine freedom "under the protection of the mighty and humane" United States.

On the afternoon of June 12, 1898, Aguinaldo read the marathon declaration from the balcony of his family house in Cavite el Viejo, now known as Kawit, his hometown in Cavite. The ceremony appears to have been subdued, judging from a faded photograph. Only about a hundred people gathered in front of the ornate mansion, today a ramshackle museum located on a busy road. The *ilustrados,* in top hats and frock coats, seem solemn—perhaps out of concern for the future, maybe from sheer boredom with the tedious proceedings. The sole American present was a Colonel L. M. Johnson, an obscure retired officer then in business in Shanghai, who had come to Manila to exhibit a newfangled contraption known as the cinematograph. Aguinaldo, eager to have an American on hand to symbolize U.S. recognition of his endeavor, had persuaded him to participate. Johnson signed the declaration of independence, his name incongruously standing out in the list of ninety-seven Filipino witnesses.

Aguinaldo had hoped for Dewey's signature. Dewey ignored the invitation to the ceremony, later explaining that it was "mail day" and he had been too busy. Nor had he bothered to read the document, a copy of which Aguinaldo sent to his flagship. In one of his contradictory recollections, Dewey told a Senate committee in 1902 that he had simply been oblivious to the Filipino aspirations. "I attached so little importance to this proclamation that I did not even cable its contents to Washington, but forwarded it through the mails. I never dreamed that they wanted independence."

* * *

Major General Wesley Merritt welcomed his assignment to the Philippines as a fitting climax to a distinguished career. A dashing cavalry officer during the Civil War, cited six times for gallantry, he had accompanied Grant to Appomattox and later fought with Custer against the Indians. He was still handsome at sixty-two, with silver hair and cold gray eyes, but he had grown stout and snappish at desk jobs, and yearned for action. As his expedition assembled in San Francisco in the middle of May, however, he began to regret the appointment.

The Philippines, he sensed, would be a sideshow to the Cuban theater, which was closer to home and attracted greater public attention, and he feared that his ambitions might go unfulfilled. As it was, he faced the daunting task of training and supplying fifteen thousand men and moving them across an ocean to an unfamiliar battleground. Not the least of his problems was to charter transports from private companies, since neither the army nor the navy owned troopships; America had never before waged a war overseas.

Merritt observed his soldiers with misgivings. Mostly volunteers from west of the Mississippi, they typified the motley civilian mass that America traditionally mobilizes in moments of war: farmers, students, store clerks, office employees, factory workers, adventurers, drifters and roustabouts. The Colorado regiment included one Damon Runyan, a newspaper reporter, decades away from the guys and dolls of Broadway. Merritt had more confidence in his senior officers and sergeants, among them Civil War veterans like himself who had remained in the army to fight Indians. They would discover the Philippines to be a terrain alien to their experience; many, once there, were to act as if they were still pursuing Apaches.

Young Americans had rallied to McKinley's appeal for volunteers with enthusiasm. Time had effaced the horrible memories of the Civil War, and they had only heard tales of its heroics, which they were now eager to emulate. The excitement that pulsated through Nebraska exemplified the frenetic mood of the country.

Hardly had Congress voted its war resolution in early April than Governor Silas Holcomb wired McKinley, pledging Nebraska's two National Guard regiments to the effort. Towns across the state organized enlistments drives, and youths stampeded to join up.

Within three weeks, more than two thousand troops packed a makeshift camp sprawled over the fairgrounds outside Lincoln, the state capital. A parade at the site on the afternoon of May 7 drew twenty-five thousand spectators, a third of them arriving in town aboard special excursion trains. Hotels were booked solid, and restaurants soon ran out of food. Carts, carriages, bicycles and pedestrians clogged the road to the camp, where the crowd was so dense that the soldiers barely had room to march. All he could see, wrote a reporter for the *State Journal,* were "white tents and dark forms" in the distance.

The two state regiments had hoped to serve together. But one was sent to Georgia to prepare for Cuba and the other, bound for the Philippines, went to San Francisco. The rail journey to California enthralled the young Nebraskans in the unit headed for the Philippines, and the *Journal* reporter was caught up in the excitement. "Farmers stopped their plowing and wildly waved, women and girls stood in farm doors and fluttered handkerchiefs and aprons, the country schools turned out to a kidlet and jubilantly demonstrated their patriotism. In every town along the way, people . . . lined the tracks, waving flags and cheering with all their lung power, assisted by brass bands and drum corps."

The volunteers converged on San Francisco to encamp at the Presidio, overlooking Golden Gate Bay, still a U.S. Army installation. Built as a garrison in the late eighteenth century by the Spanish, who were then masters of California, it had scarcely been improved since. Winds constantly swept across the hillside, covering tents with dirt and dust, and the seasonal rain muddied company streets. The new camp, named for Merritt, resembled a confused, raucous carnival. Mothers, wives and sweethearts had accompanied the troops, and they roamed around freely, poking into the field kitchens to bake cakes and cookies for their boys. San Francisco had also been invaded by prostitutes from throughout the country, and the venereal-disease rate was soaring. The city's saloons overflowed with the novice warriors escaping from

the daily drudgery of close-order drill and marches. Hardly a night passed without a brawl.

Maintaining discipline and hygiene were not the only problems. The army was unequipped to fight. The regulars had been armed with Krag-Jorgensens, new repeating rifles manufactured in Norway. But volunteers had to make do with single-shot Springfields, which used detectable charcoal powder and often misfired—prompting one rookie to remark, "It's more dangerous to be behind it than in front of it." Canteens and blankets were scarce, and troops had been issued blue-flannel uniforms unsuitable for the tropics. Meanwhile, McKinley's vague orders puzzled Merritt. He wired Russell Alger, the secretary of war, to complain that he was "at a loss to understand" his objective in the Philippines. Alger, equally baffled, could not help.

The expedition was due to depart piecemeal from late May through August. Brigadier General Thomas H. Anderson, a leathery Civil War veteran who had last served in Alaska, commanded the first contingent. Brigadier generals Francis V. Greene and Arthur MacArthur would follow with their units, and Major General Elwell S. Otis was to bring the last detachment. Merritt and his headquarters staff, traveling separately, were to leave at the end of June.

On May 25 Anderson and his 2,500 men steamed out of San Francisco harbor aboard three ships to a cacophony of cheers, songs and whistles coming from a cluster of tugs, barges, ferries and yachts.

For the first time in history, U.S. troops were going to war outside America's continental limits. They began the campaign with a comic-opera overture.

Anderson's convoy was escorted by the cruiser *Charleston,* whose skipper, Captain Henry Glass, read sealed orders after he reached the open sea. He was to detour to seize Guam, a Spanish colony since its discovery by Magellan nearly four centuries before. Early on June 20, leaving the transports at anchor in the distance, Glass entered the port of San Luis d'Apra, the island's capital, and shelled its ancient fort. The fire evoked no response. Glass edged closer in the eerie silence, nervously scanning the coast through his binoculars. Eventually a boat approached, carrying a Spanish officer. He apologized politely. "You will pardon our not immediately replying to your salute, *mi capitán,* but we are unaccustomed to receiving salutes here and are not supplied with proper guns for returning them." "What salute?" riposted Glass. "Those were hostile shots. Our countries are at war."

The island lacked a cable link to the outside world, and the news astounded the Spaniard. Glass ordered him to return with the governor for a surrender ceremony on the *Charleston.* The governor sent regrets. Protocol forbade him from boarding foreign naval craft, but he graciously proposed an audience in his office instead. Glass, without further ado, sent five soldiers ashore to arrest him. Next day, the U.S. convoy resumed its voyage to Manila, now with sixty-four Spanish prisoners, including the melancholy governor. Glass had left a few men behind. They unfurled the Stars and Stripes over Guam—and Spain's first possession in the Pacific became America's first possession in the Pacific.

Late in June, as American troops disembarked in Cuba, the Anderson contingent waded through the surf at Cavite. The soldiers, relieved to be ashore after nearly a month at sea, erected tents and bought fruit and tobacco from native peddlers. They also ventured into the narrow streets of the nearby

town, where Aguinaldo's senior officers had taken over the best Spanish mansions. They attracted little attention from the rebels, small men in white cotton pajamas and broad-brimmed straw hats who were busily cleaning and distributing weapons, manufacturing ammunition, training and grinding out manifestos and proclamations.

Soon the burgeoning U.S. force moved to a peanut field closer to Manila, naming it Camp Dewey. Dysentery, malaria and cholera ravaged the troops, and they also suffered from chronic nausea caused by army rations of canned salmon derisively called "goldfish." Rain fell steadily, flooding their trenches and dampening their morale. "It beats all creation how it can rain out here," reported an American correspondent. The soldiers, he observed, had discarded their drenched uniforms to drill in underwear.

The American war correspondents promptly went forth to look at the Filipino deployments around Manila. They bore passes signed by Aguinaldo, as one of them wrote, ordering his men to "permit us to go where we pleased, to guard us well from harm, and, if we were hungry, to feed us."

The *primera zona,* nearest Manila, was commanded by General Noriel and his part-French deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Juan Cailles, a suave soldier with a silky mustache. They welcomed the journalists with customary Filipino hospitality, treating them to a cockfight followed by a dinner of meat, chicken, liver and rice afloat in garlic and coconut sauce. Faintly dyspeptic, the journalists were then bounced by pony cart over a muddy road to the honeycomb of insurgent trenches ringing the city. There, crouched under slapdash shelters between downpours, the rebels smoked cigarettes and chewed sugarcane—periodically rising above the parapets to show their disdain for danger as they exchanged wild shots with the Spanish. Impressed, Oscar King Davis of *Harper's Weekly* commented that the Filipinos had succeeded in driving the Spanish back through "a thick jungle of thorny bamboo and heavy scrub practically impossible" for American soldiers to penetrate. "Whatever the outcome of the insurgent problem here, Aguinaldo has saved our troops a lot of desperately hard campaigning. The Spaniards are completely hemmed in [with] no hope for them but surrender."

Dewey, awash in contradictions, also praised the Filipinos, telling visitors that their military progress had been "wonderful," and that their treatment of Spanish captives was humane. He felt sure that Aguinaldo would await the arrival of the full U.S. ground force for a joint attack against Manila. Shortly before, he had disregarded Aguinaldo's declaration of independence, but now he informed General Anderson that Aguinaldo had proclaimed independence and "seems intent on establishing his own government." The situation could turn "awkward," he explained, should McKinley decide to annex the Philippines.

Dewey seldom left his flagship, but now he offered to conduct Anderson to Aguinaldo's headquarters. The meeting, Dewey advised, should be "as unofficial as possible—no sidearms, no ceremony [and] no indication to Aguinaldo that we take his government seriously."

The session was tense. Aguinaldo, sullen and remote, had by now come to distrust Dewey and addressed Anderson, again evoking the issue of U.S. support for his cause. Embarrassed, Anderson replied that he was a simple soldier, only there to set up and supply a military base. He added, however,

that the Americans had come to free the Filipinos from "Spanish tyranny," and that they ought to "get along amicably together" against a "common enemy." But, he later recalled, the U.S. troop presence "bitterly disappointed" Aguinaldo, who wanted to capture Manila alone and thus gain credibility as the savior of the Philippines.

Anderson, a tall, weathered veteran with sharp eyes and a spade beard, was no great intellect. Like his colleagues, he viewed the Filipinos with condescension. Yet only he among the top American officers dealt with them directly, and he realistically appraised their traits. They were sincere and determined, he told Washington, warning that the creation of a U.S. military administration would "probably bring us into conflict" with them. "We have heretofore underrated the natives," who were "industrious" and "not ignorant, savage tribes, but have a civilization of their own, and though insignificant in appearance are fierce fighters." Aguinaldo also merited gratitude. At first suspicious, he had become "more friendly and . . . willing to cooperate" in the huge task of housing and feeding the U.S. troops who had landed, and in preparing the terrain for those on the way.

Aguinaldo had indeed shifted his headquarters to the town of Bacoor, ten miles from Cavite, to minimize friction betwen his men and the Americans. After some reluctance, he also furnished the U.S. force with supplies. Anderson's favorable estimate of him riled the War Department hawks, who buried his report in Washington's bureaucratic catacombs—where it remained until senators critical of U.S. policy in the Philippines made it public years later.

Anderson also argued in an article published after his retirement that Aguinaldo had every reason to expect U.S. support, since Dewey had brought him home aboard an American vessel. But Anderson had been just as duplicitous as Dewey and other American officials during his service in the Philippines. Once, when Aguinaldo asked if the United States meant to keep the islands, Anderson assuaged him with the same bromide that the Filipino had heard before: "In one hundred and twenty-two years we have established no colonies. I leave you to draw your own inference." Aguinaldo, eager to placate the Americans, nodded agreement. He had studied the U.S. Constitution "attentively," he claimed, and could not find any "authority for colonies." Thus he had "no fear."

Other kibbitzers meanwhile confused him. Howard Bray, writing from Singapore, urged him to deny landing rights to the Americans until they recognized his "duly constituted" government. Spencer Pratt, also in Singapore, exhorted him to seize Manila quickly, and requested a souvenir of the battle. Rounsevelle Wildman, in Hong Kong, admonished him for doubting America's altruism. The Americans had only gone to war, Wildman wrote, to emancipate Cuba from Spain and were "actuated by precisely the same feelings toward the Philippines." So, "whatever the final disposition of the conquered territory . . . you can trust the United States that justice and honor will control all its dealings with you."

Aguinaldo, perplexed, became testy. He boycotted a Fourth of July party organized by the Americans because the invitation addressed him as "general" instead of "president." He detained two U.S. officers who had strayed into his zone, releasing them only after Anderson's intercession, and he periodically spurned American requests for supplies. Heeding Bray's counsel, he warned

Anderson against new U.S. troop landings without his permission. When Anderson ignored the protest, he implored Pratt and Wildman, as if they carried any weight, to urge the American government to "define" its relations with him in a "formal convention."

The usually calm Dewey became peevish toward the Filipinos. On one occasion, he threatened to shell their positions if they moved closer to Manila; on another, he invited a group of them aboard his flagship to complain that their tiny "mosquito" boats, which buzzed his fleet, were a nuisance and should be curbed. When one of the natives muttered an oath, Dewey had him tossed overboard.

Aguinaldo grew more and more petulant as fresh U.S. detachments disembarked during July under the command of generals Greene and MacArthur. With Merritt's arrival in late July, the strained ties between the Americans and Filipinos began to fray rapidly.

Conditions, Dewey warned Washington, were now "most critical." If the Spanish surrendered Manila to the Americans, the Filipinos might react violently at having been deprived of a prize they regarded as theirs. Merritt's "most difficult problem," Dewey speculated, would be to control Aguinaldo, who had "become aggressive and even threatening toward our army." Merritt would have preferred to deal with the Filipinos as U.S. soldiers of his generation had handled the Indians: by wiping them out. But McKinley, still fearful of arousing anti-imperialist sentiment at home, had instructed him to avoid at all costs a "rupture" with the insurgents. Merritt therefore chose to shun them, presumably on the theory that they would evaporate if ignored.

Merritt later blamed Dewey for having "more or less encouraged" Aguinaldo by meeting with him. Merritt himself might receive Aguinaldo as a "subordinate" prepared to "offer his services" to the Americans, but otherwise intended to avoid all contacts with him until after the U.S. forces had captured Manila. At that point, the Filipino's "pretensions should not clash with my designs."

But Merritt faced a dilemma: He could not attack Manila without breaking through the Filipino encirclement of the city, which would have transgressed McKinley's order to him to maintain peace. On the other hand, he could not essay a diplomatic attempt to persuade them to pull out of their positions without violating his own rule against talking with Aguinaldo. He resorted to a ruse..

He delegated General Greene to approach Noriel, the Filipino commander nearest Manila, with an "unofficial" offer. Greene would give him several "fine pieces of artillery" in return for yielding the sector south of the city to the Americans. The proposal tempted Noriel, whose only cannon was an old muzzle-loading columbiad captured from the Spanish, but he needed approval. Pressed by Greene to decide immediately, he sent an aide through a blinding rainstorm to Aguinaldo's headquarters at Bacoor, twelve miles away. Aguinaldo, always striving to gain formal recognition from the Americans, would only comply if Merritt signed the request. Anticipating Merritt's rejection of the transaction, Greene pledged to forward Aguinaldo the desired document after the Filipinos withdrew. Aguinaldo naïvely conceded.

Greene delivered neither the document nor the artillery pieces. As U.S. troops moved into the vacated Filipino trenches, Noriel realized that he had been duped. Nearly in tears, he rushed to Aguinaldo, shouting: "Look what they are doing! If we're not careful, they will soon be replacing our flags with their own all over the country!"

Aguinaldo, humiliated, feared that his own officers might doubt his leadership. Certainly, he could no longer expect them to trust the United States. But, precisely because Greene's deceit had stung him, he felt compelled to justify the Americans—almost as a defense of his own gullibility. "You are being tragic!" he snapped back to Noriel. "They are our allies, always remember that!"

At night on July 31, to flex their muscles at the U.S. troops entering the area, the Spanish unleashed a series of senseless artillery and infantry attacks. Ten Americans died—the first to be killed in action in the Philippines.

Manila, now in its third month under siege, had become unbearable. The Intramuros, whose normal population numbered ten thousand, held seventy thousand people, many sleeping in the streets. Water was scarce, fruit and vegetables rare, and horseflesh a delicacy. Disease had spread, especially among women, children and the elderly, and the sick crammed churches already packed with wounded soldiers. It was only a matter of time before the city fell.

Spanish officials contemplated capitulation with dread. Terrified by the prospect of "savage" Filipinos investing Manila, they would only surrender to the Americans. But, under Spain's quaint code of honor, a court-martial awaited them unless they put up a fight. So a sham battle with the U.S. forces had to be contrived to save them from disgrace, much less punishment. Dewey had earlier shunned the idea when Governor Augustín suggested it through the British consul. He then lacked the men to block the natives, who would "wreak their vengeance upon the Spaniards and indulge in a carnival of loot," as he later explained. Now that the U.S. infantry had arrived, however, the rebels could be kept at bay. Dewey sent a message through the Belgian consul, Edouard André, to the new governor, General Fermín Jaudenes, named in July to replace Augustín, who had been dismissed for "defeatism." The Americans were ready for the charade.

The news of Spain's rout in Cuba demoralized the Spanish in Manila. They could no longer entertain the hope of a flotilla steaming in to rescue them—the illusion that had sustained them during the siege. Merritt was now eager to dash into the city. But Dewey stalled, quietly maneuvering to work out a bloodless scenario with Jaudenes.

Despite his orders to fight, Jaudenes had intimated to André that he might cede to the Americans—"to white people, never to niggers," as he put it. On August 4, Dewey and Merritt gave him forty-eight hours to lay down his arms, then extended the deadline for five days, setting the attack for the next morning. They confected the ultimatums in part to furnish Jaudenes with the face-saving evidence that he had buckled only under U.S. pressure. But they also meant the threats to be credible, should he actually resist. For the same reason, they kept the charade secret from their own senior officers and naturally excluded Aguinaldo from the deal. American troops were ordered to keep the Filipinos outside the city—if possible by persuasion.

Covert negotiations continued through André until the phony operation was scripted and scheduled for August 13. Dewey was to lob a few shells at both

the Intramuros and Fort San Antonio Abad, a decrepit structure on the southern edge of Manila. His flagship would then fly the international code letters for surrender, the signal for the Spanish to raise a white flag. After officers from the two sides signed a truce, U.S. troops would stride into the city, unmolested. The exercise was to be over by afternoon "without loss of life," as Merritt noted. But it ran into snags.

Divulging the hoax to four of his ship captains, Dewey directed them to feign a bombardment that would spare Manila any serious damage. One of the skippers deliberately gave his gunners the wrong range for their targets. But, assuming that he had miscalculated, they corrected their sights and scored several direct hits. Dismayed, he sounded a cease-fire and withdrew his vessel from the line.

On land, the masquerade was even more difficult to manage. The Colorado volunteers, approaching Manila from the south, sloshed through mud as their band played the hardy perennial "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight." The ease of it all gratified them: Fort San Antonio Abad, their initial objective, was empty, and a white flag fluttered over the Intramuros, their second goal. In another zone, the Filipinos exuberantly joined a U.S. column, thinking the attack was genuine. Spanish troops panicked at the sight, and started shooting back. Six Americans and forty-nine Spaniards died in the skirmish.

Dewey, lamenting the losses, later faulted Merritt for having "rushed in too soon." But the casualties were really the consequence of a communications gap. Had Dewey not severed the cable, Manila would have learned that Spain, beaten in Cuba, had signed an armistice with the United States the day before. As it was, news of the cease-fire reached the capital via Hong Kong three days after the sham battle. Spanish jurists contended during the later peace negotiations that, under international law, the prior truce had nullified the U.S. victory; the situation, therefore, should have returned to *status quo ante bellum.*

The phony fight for Manila further strained the already threadbare ties between the Americans and Filipinos. The nationalists, dismayed at having been left behind, pressed toward the city. Anderson urged Aguinaldo to restrain them "until we have received the full surrender" from the Spanish—at which stage, he pledged, "we will negotiate with you." Aguinaldo reluctantly complied. But four days afterward, McKinley ruled that the Americans alone would control the capital. "The insurgents and all others," he told Merritt, "must recognize the military occupation and authority of the United States." Angry at the apparent betrayal by the Americans, Apolinario Mabini forecast worse ahead: "The conflict is coming sooner or later, and we shall gain nothing by asking as favors of them what are really our rights."

He could have blamed Aguinaldo for gullibility, however. By trusting the Americans, and not attacking Manila before the U.S. forces landed, Aguinaldo was denied a role in the defeat of Spain, an outcome for which he had struggled for two years. Dewey and Merritt also barred him from the surrender ceremony. General Greene, presiding over the austere ritual, accorded the Spanish "all honors" and the status of war prisoners until the United States and Spain concluded a peace treaty.

Jaudenes later blamed the disaster on Spain's disregard for the Philippines.

Only his prudence, he pleaded before a court-martial in Madrid, had saved Manila from "pillage and devastation" by the Filipinos. The judges, torn between respect for his achievement and fidelity to military tradition, declined to reach a verdict. Jaudenes soon retired, his honor intact but his reputation stained.

Spain was not alone in defeat. Like vultures hovering over a carcass, European and Japanese warships had entered Manila Bay in May, after Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet. Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, then seeking dominions overseas, had sent in a flotilla of five cruisers under Vice Admiral Otto von Diederichs, his naval commander in the Far East. Wilhelm had received a preposterous report from an agent in Manila that the Filipinos were contemplating the creation of a monarchy and might welcome a German prince as king. He also hoped to acquire a Philippine base if the archipelago were carved up—or perhaps he could use Germany's presence there to bargain for territory elsewhere. Dewey, who hated Germans, was certain that they had come to help the Spanish.

He found confirmation for his suspicions in early July, when a German cruiser evacuated women and children from a provincial Spanish garrison besieged by the Filipinos. He accused Germany of breaking his blockade of the islands and authorized his men to board and search German vessels. When Diederichs protested, Dewey flew into a tantrum: "If Germany wants war, all right, we are ready!" Cables crackled between Washington and Berlin as alarmed diplomats in both capitals cooled tempers. Finally, at the beginning of August, the German fleet steamed away—Kaiser Wilhelm having concluded that his prospects in the Philippines were dim.

The flap with Germany, though trivial, nevertheless set ripples in motion. Reports of Dewey's prowess, exaggerated to lavish proportions by an adoring U.S. press, inflated his already legendary stature to towering heights. Like many another hero, he soon made the fatal mistake of believing his own publicity—and even began to imagine himself a presidential candidate. Meanwhile, grossly distorted by distance, the spectacle of Germany's bluster lent substance in Washington to the theory of "contingent necessity." It became axiomatic to American strategists that, unless the United States took over the Philippines, another of the foreign imperialist powers would grab the archipelago.

* * *

"Why is President McKinley's mind like a bed?" "Because it has to be made up for him before he can use it."

That popular joke of the period was all too true in late July, two or three weeks before the armistice. By now resigned to defeat, the Spanish hoped to win generous terms from the United States by proposing negotiations. They transmitted a peace overture through Jules Cambon, the French ambassador in Washington. The offer confronted McKinley with the ordeal of making decisions.

Congress had already voted in favor of independence for Cuba, so he was mercifully spared that issue, but McKinley had to define a policy for the Philippines. After a chat with him on the topic, Lodge cryptically remarked

that he "means to go much farther than anyone I think guesses." But McKinley had no plan except to negotiate the future of the archipelago as part of a comprehensive settlement with Spain.

Seeking guidance on his reply to the Spanish proposal, he turned to his cabinet members. Summer enveloped Washington, and he invited them to escape the stifling heat by cruising the Potomac aboard a lighthouse tender. Puffing cigars and sipping cool drinks, they discussed the subject for four consecutive days, with McKinley acting more like a moderator than an arbiter. John Griggs, the shrewd attorney general, advocated holding the Philippines for its reputed commercial advantages—a view backed by Cornelius Bliss, the patrician secretary of the interior. James Wilson, the secretary of agriculture, a gray-bearded Scottish farmer from Iowa, was a devout Presbyterian who saw the archipelago as a field ripe for evangelical endeavor. Secretary of State Day found annexation unappealing. Lodge and Mahan tried to sway him with visions of America's strategic role in the Pacific. Day objected, saying that America was unsuited to rule "eight or nine millions of absolutely ignorant and many degraded" Filipinos. He also maintained, as a judge, that colonialism violated the constitutional precept of government by consent of the governed. At best, he allowed, the United States might keep only Manila as a naval base—a "hitching post," McKinley interjected.

In a note to himself, scribbled beforehand, McKinley had outlined a basis for talks with the Spanish, one that coincided with the cabinet consensus: Spain must yield Cuba and Puerto Rico unconditionally, but the status of the Philippines could be negotiated. As soon as the Spanish agreed to a truce, McKinley would appoint a delegation to pursue peace talks.

Day and his staff thereupon drafted a formal "protocol" to initiate the process. Cambon cabled the text to Spain, and it shuttled back and forth between Madrid and Washington for weeks, undergoing revisions. Cambon performed a dual role that proved him to be one of the most talented diplomats of the time. Representing the Spanish, he urged McKinley to soften his terms, pointing out that the United States could afford to be charitable. As their adviser, he persuaded the Spanish to acquiesce, candidly reminding them that defeat had limited their options. They finally agreed to give up Cuba and Puerto Rico and to concede to the American occupation of Manila until subsequent negotiations determined "the control, disposition and government" of the Philippines.

Bare electric bulbs flickered in the White House Cabinet Room on the afternoon of August 12, as a summer storm lashed its dim windows. Stiff and unsmiling, as if to emphasize the solemnity of the occasion, McKinley peered down on the table as Cambon and Day signed four copies of the armistice accord. Day had never been a true imperialist, but now his appetite for territory was whetted. Scanning a globe in the room, he said to an aide, "Let's see what we get by this."

Reflecting the expansionist mood creeping over the nation, the Senate had just voted after many delays to bring Hawaii into the U.S. fold. But Congress was still split, largely along party lines, over the wider issue of America's global role. McKinley, who detested discord, recoiled from exacerbating the dissonance—especially with legislative elections due in the fall. A peace treaty would also require Senate ratification, and he hoped for its endorsement with

minimum debate. Thus, as the talks with the Spanish neared, he sought negotiators who would heed his wishes yet seem to be impartial—and, above all, deliver a settlement that aroused as little domestic opposition as possible.

He eventually formed a five-man delegation that was constitutionally dubious and politically tilted. Blurring the doctrine of separation of powers, he chose three senators who would later ratify a pact that they had negotiated. He also weighted the group with three avowed expansionists: senators Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota and William P. Frye of Maine, both Republicans, and Whitelaw Reid, publisher of the *New York Tribune.* The only strong anti-imperialist on the panel was Senator George Gray, a conservative Democrat from Delaware. William Day, who had been uncomfortable handling foreign policy as secretary of state, resigned to head the delegation. He anticipated a federal judgeship afterward, and McKinley expected him to be pliable. McKinley named John Hay, the urbane ambassador to London, to succeed Day, believing him more qualified to handle the intricacies of international affairs.

The delegation prepared to depart on September 18 for Paris, the site of the peace conference. The evening before, McKinley gave its members their instructions in the form of a long sermon at a farewell White House banquet. America had gone to war "only in obedience to the dictates of humanity and in the fulfillment of high public and moral obligations," with "no ambition of conquest," he said. For that reason, he had not acquired Cuba. But the Philippines was different. The capture of Manila had imposed on the United States "new duties and responsibilities, which we must meet and discharge as becomes a great nation." Foremost among these was "the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent." Accordingly, he told his negotiators, he would accept nothing less from Spain than "the cession in full right and sovereignty" of Luzon.

"The march of events rules and overrules human action," McKinley intoned, the ponderous phrase again a reflection of his preference to follow rather than lead. Only ten months before, he had vigorously opposed a war for territory, saying that such a conflict would, "by our code of morality . . . be criminal aggression." But now he was sliding deeper into the imperialist camp and, within weeks, would demand total U.S. acquisition of the Philippines.

His conversion was a gradual process. He had at first been tempted to retain only Manila as a trading post and coaling station, as Secretary of State Day had recommended. But naval strategists advised him that the port was indefensible, and their counsel prompted them to order his peace negotiators to demand Luzon. He could have guaranteed the independence of the Philippines under a U.S. protectorate, an alternative favored by the Filipinos. He also rejected that solution, however, reasoning that America ought not assume the burden of responsibility without the benefits of authority. Thus he drifted toward complete annexation of the islands.

In one of the most singular explanations for the formulation of a foreign policy ever devised by an American president, McKinley divulged to members of a Methodist missionary society visiting him at the White House a year later that he had been inspired by divine guidance. He detained them as they rose to leave his office. "Not quite yet, gentlemen! Before you go, I would like to

say just a word about the Philippine business." With that, he proceeded to tell the tale of his revelation.

In "truth," he said, he had not wanted the islands and had no idea what to do "when they came to us as a gift from the gods." He had paced the floor of the White House nightly, even kneeling to beg "Almighty God for light and guidance." Then, suddenly one night, a list of options appeared. It would be "cowardly and dishonorable" to restore them to Spain and "bad business and discreditable" to give them to France or Germany, "our commercial rivals in the Orient." Nor could they be abandoned to the natives, who "were unfit for self-government [and] would soon have anarchy and misrule." His only choice, therefore, was to take the archipelago and "to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ died."

Devoutly religious, McKinley may indeed have been swayed by prayer, but he might have explored other courses of action. In particular, he did little to understand the aims of the Filipinos in his only encounter with one of their spokesmen, treating him instead with polite indifference.

Felipe Agoncillo, a rich Filipino lawyer and Aguinaldo's chief diplomat, arrived in Washington in September in quest of U.S. support. Granted an audience by McKinley at the White House on the afternoon of October 1, he appeared in a dark suit and bowler hat, the *ilustrado* uniform, and with typical Filipino gusto launched into a rhetorical exegesis. He recalled the iniquities of Spanish colonialism, expressed admiration for American democracy, described the Filipino nationalist program and evoked Dewey's purported pledge to back Philippine freedom. Cadenzas of elegant Castilian cascaded from his lips, his vibrato voice rising and falling in dramatic cadence as Alvey A. Adee, the State Department factotum, translated. McKinley had never heard anything like it. He listened fitfully, trying to remain awake as the afternoon light waned and Agoncillo, carried away by his own eloquence, swept on.

Finally, McKinley responded. He rejected Agoncillo's request for Filipino representation at the peace talks in Paris on the grounds that Spain would object. Nor could he authorize the U.S. delegation to hear the Filipino case, lamely explaining that Agoncillo's command of English was inadequate. But, unfailingly courteous, McKinley thanked his visitor, shook his hand warmly and saw him to the door with an invitation to submit a memorandum to the State Department. Adee later accepted the memorandum "in the most informal manner" and promptly interred it in a file. McKinley's rebuff notwithstanding, Agoncillo sailed for Paris. There too, the American negotiators brushed him off.

Had his bureaucracy operated efficiently, McKinley might also have gathered an insight into the Philippines from two young U.S. naval officers, Paymaster W. B. Wilcox and Cadet L. R. Sargent, whom Dewey had sent on a survey of Luzon. No Americans until then had undertaken so extensive a study. They toured the island for two months, interviewing hundreds of people. Aguinaldo, they learned, enjoyed wide support. The Filipinos overwhelmingly desired independence, preferably under U.S. protection, yet believed that whatever America "may have done for them, it has not gained the right to annex them." Dewey praised their report as the "most complete and reliable" available, but, for some inexplicable reason, he delayed for weeks before mailing it to Washington, where Navy Department officials relegated it to the archives.

General Greene, on the other hand, heavily influenced McKinley. He returned to Washington an instant expert after spending six weeks in a peanut field near Manila, having compiled a huge memorandum on the Philippines covering everything from its ethnic diversity to statistics on taxes and trade. Its sheer volume impressed McKinley. They had several conversations as well in which Greene, a champion of U.S. annexation of the islands, contended that Aguinaldo was a potential despot disliked by most Filipinos. Despite severe eyestrain, McKinley also read a recent article in the *Contemporary Review,* a London periodical, that was being widely quoted in the American press. Its author, John Foreman, a former British resident of Manila, claimed that Aguinaldo's movement was limited to Luzon. Consequently, he concluded, perhaps accurately, that bitter regional squabbles would rapidly rip an independent Philippines apart, making it prey to Japan, Germany or another imperialist power.

But nothing propelled McKinley more dynamically toward total annexation of the Philippines than his perception of U.S. opinion. He "seemed to fear," one of his aides noted, that anything less than full acquisition of the islands would incur the wrath of the nation.

Dewey had repaired the cable out of Manila, and American correspondents were filing glowing accounts of the glorious activities of U.S. soldiers in the Philippines. The stories gradually changed the national mood. A survey conducted in September showed eighty-four major newspapers in favor of keeping the archipelago, a sharp switch from only a few weeks before. Finley Peter Dunne described the shift in his column in the *Chicago Journal.* " 'I know what I'd do if I was Mack,' said Mr. Hennessy. 'I'd hist a flag over th' Ph'lippens, an' I'd take in th' whole lot iv thim.' 'An' yet,' said Mr. Dooley, ' 'tis not more thin two months since ye larned whether they were islands or canned goods.' "

Just as he had heeded God's word, so McKinley tuned into the voice of the American people. He toured the Middle West for ten vivid days in early autumn, stumping for Republicans in the forthcoming election and canvassing reactions to America's new global role. As usual, he spoke piously of justice, humanity and morality, but he felt—or thought that he felt—a surge of imperialist sentiment. Crowds cheered enthusiastically in Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Ohio as he talked of assuming "the trust that civilization puts upon us" and keeping "territory that sometimes comes to us when we go to war in a holy cause." At an exposition in Omaha, he rhetorically asked, "Shall we deny to ourselves what the rest of the world so freely and so justly accords to us?" "No!" the audience shouted, and he went on: "The war was not more invited by us than were the questions . . . laid at our door by its results. Now as then we will do our duty."

He exultantly returned to Washington, confirmed in his estimate of the public's expectations. On October 26, he sent new orders to his negotiators in Paris. He now wanted the Philippine islands in their entirety. "The cession must be of the whole archipelago or none. The latter is wholly inadmissible, and the former must therefore be required."

The peace talks had by then dragged on for nearly a month in a sumptuous

salon of the French foreign ministry. The Spanish, after some bickering, had finally acquiesced to the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam. But they refused to yield the Philippines, contending that the Americans had captured Manila after the signature of the armistice and that they did not hold much beyond the city in any case.

Splits within the U.S. delegation further snarled the negotiations. Former Secretary of State Day, a scrupulous jurist, echoed the Spanish view that the prior armistice agreement nullified the seizure of Manila. Senator Gray, an ardent isolationist, dissented even more adamantly. To take over the islands would reverse America's traditional "continental policy," risk "dangerous complications with foreign nations" and increase military expenditures and the "burdens of taxation." He also threw back at McKinley the president's own claim to have gone to war with "no ambition of conquest."

McKinley, decisive for the first time on this issue, would not budge. The Republican election triumphs in November had shown him the light. The "one plain path of duty," he replied, was full U.S. acquisition of the archipelago.

But even the imperialists on his peace delegation were now worried. The liberal Spanish prime minister, Práxedes Mateo Sagasta, was being harassed by his right-wing rivals. Unless a compromise were found he might be compelled to break off the talks and resume fighting. Senator Frye finally came up with the crassly practical idea of paying off Spain. His weary colleagues concurred, and so did McKinley. On November 21, Day suggested the figure of $20 million to Montero Ríos, the head Spanish negotiator. Ríos forwarded the proposal to Madrid and, chain-smoking nervously, read his government's florid reply two days later. Spain, for "lofty reasons of patriotism and humanity," ceded to "the law of the victor, however hard it may be," rather than return to "the horrors of war."

The peace treaty, signed by the two delegations in Paris on December 10, granted independence to Cuba and made Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines U.S. possessions. It only awaited ratification by the Senate to become legitimate. But to become a reality in the Philippines, it would have to be accepted by the Filipinos.

* * *

The American forces faced staggering problems after they entered Manila in August 1898. Crowded with refugees, the capital suffered from critical food and water shortages. Garbage that had accumulated during the siege littered the streets, many of them flooded for lack of drainage. Municipal bureaus and courts were closed, and former Spanish officials sullenly refused to cooperate in restoring services. Swindlers, gamblers, adventurers and other riffraff soon landed, lured by the chance to bilk the Americans. Prostitutes flocked in from San Francisco, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo. The Escolta, one of the city's main shopping thoroughfares, rapidly became a honky-tonk of noisy bars and saloons filled day and night with boisterous drunks.

Racial tensions inevitably mounted. Later generations of U.S. troops in Asia were to pin derisive labels on the natives, like "slopies" for Chinese and "gooks" for Koreans and Vietnamese. The early Americans to reach the Philippines at first referred to Filipinos as "niggers" and subsequently called

them "gugus"—an epithet derived from the tree bark used as shampoo by the local women. Ugly incidents multiplied as the Americans clashed with native soldiers in the area around Manila. Private William Christner, a Pennsylvania volunteer, wrote to his father: "We killed a few to learn them a lesson, and you bet they learned it."

Characteristically, though, the Americans combined contempt for the natives with an evangelical impulse to improve their conditions. They swiftly brought law and order to Manila by creating a police force and military tribunals. They repaired roads and reopened schools. Concentrating on public health, they set up clinics, vaccinated children against smallpox and banned the local practice of dumping slops out of windows. One American team even devoted weeks to the repulsive task of removing the human excrement piled up under houses, whose toilets consisted of a hole in the floor. Soon Manila regained a semblance of normality. The U.S. Army band performed every afternoon at the Luneta, the city's central park, playing "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" so frequently that Filipinos reverently bared their heads, assuming it to be the American national anthem.

But the American and Filipino forces seemed destined to collide. Fatuous and arrogant, U.S. officers made no effort to appreciate Aguinaldo's aspirations. He, in turn, felt increasingly frustrated. Hoping that the Senate would repudiate the treaty with Spain and instead press McKinley to recognize Philippine independence, Aguinaldo pursued a dual policy. He deployed his troops throughout Luzon, reckoning that the control of territory would confirm his power and thus strengthen his bargaining position with the United States. Similarly, he bid for status by creating a formal government, complete with a constitution and an elected assembly. His military gains bolstered his claim to represent the only true nationalist force, but his political initiative faltered, with serious consequences for his movement.

He had moved late in the summer from Cavite to Malolos, a bustling market town twenty miles north of Manila. There he established his headquarters in a handsome old monastery and draped himself in the trappings of office. He furnished the building's chambers with loot stolen from Spanish homes, and posted uniformed halberdiers to guard its gates. On September 15, 1898, in an adjacent church, he convened a national assembly amid a fanfare of flags and martial music. The hundred delegates were hardly the primitive natives depicted in travelogues of the time. Wearing top hats and cutaway coats, most were lawyers, doctors, merchants, schoolteachers and writers, many of them educated in Europe. Aguinaldo, also dressed for the occasion, looked in swallowtails like a doll on a wedding cake. They indulged in such puerile French revolutionary rituals as addressing each other as "citizen," and reveled in an extravagant banquet, its dozen or more courses running the gastronomic gamut from *saumon hollandaise* through *coquilles de crabes vol-au-vent* and *dinde truffée* to *gelée de fraises*—all accompanied by fine wines and liqueurs. An American correspondent present remarked of the event, "They conducted themselves with great decorum, and showed a knowledge of debate and parliamentary law."

Dazzled by their wealth and prestige, Aguinaldo deferred to the *ilustrados,* who voted him president and appointed Mabini prime minister, titles they intended to be cosmetic. A rich attorney, Felipe Calderón, had drafted a

constitution that vested authority in a legislature dominated by the upper classes—an "oligarchy of intelligence" better qualified to govern than "ignorant" soldiers, as he put it. He discarded Mabini's egalitarian ideas, limited suffrage to the landed gentry and rebuffed proposals for agrarian reform.

Radicals protested against the conservative program, and the congress split into factions whose differences persisted, eventually debilitating the nationalist movement. Afterward, when war broke out between Filipinos and Americans, many conservatives chose to collaborate with the U.S. side, which promised to protect their economic and social privileges. The rivalries sapped Aguinaldo's struggle for independence and facilitated U.S. annexation of the Philippines. But the basic liberties guaranteed by the Malolos constitution were sufficient to justify Aguinaldo's later claim that it marked "the first crystallization of democracy" in Asia.

Despite his disappointments, Aguinaldo tried to prevent his men from clashing with U.S. units flanking Manila during the early fall. But his troops, hard to restrain under the best of conditions, were doubly difficult to discipline in the face of nearly constant American pressures.

Merritt had gone home in late August at his own request, annoyed by McKinley's refusal to allow him to conquer the entire archipelago. He had spent his three weeks in Manila aboard a ship anchored in the bay, learning nothing. Major General Elwell Stephen Otis stepped in.

At sixty-one, Otis was a portly figure with mutton-chop whiskers and a shrill voice. A Harvard Law School graduate, he had fought in the Civil War and against Indians and had founded the army's staff school at Leavenworth, Kansas. But despite his gilt-edged credentials, he was an inauspicious choice for a job that required tact and imagination. A head wound had left him an insomniac, and he sought solace at his desk from dawn until midnight—"counting the beans," as an aide described his obsession with trivia. Dewey called him "a pincushion of an old woman," and he reminded MacArthur of "a locomotive bottomside up on the track, with its wheels revolving at full speed." Though he never met Aguinaldo, he later charged him with "duplicity." Filipinos, he said, were "robbers" who aimed to "drive the Americans into the sea, and kill every white man in Manila."

McKinley, anxious to placate Spain, insisted that the native forces be barred from Manila by "whatever means" necessary. Otis confidently replied that with "delicate manipulation," he could handle them. He then proceeded to act like a bully.

American reinforcements were due to land soon, raising the U.S. force to twenty-two thousand men. Seeking to deploy them in a Manila suburb occupied by the Filipinos, Otis sent Aguinaldo an ultimatum. The peace talks with Spain had not yet started, but, his law degree notwithstanding, Otis argued that there was "no legal question as to the propriety of full American sovereignty" over the sector. He wanted the native troops out in a week—or else, he warned Aguinaldo, he would take "forcible action" and "hold you responsible for any unfortunate consequences that may ensue."

Otis was on dangerous terrain. The Filipino force, comprising about thirty thousand men, had lately received new weapons. A skirmish might flare into fighting and embarrass McKinley, who then hoped for a compromise with Spain. But Otis had stared down Sitting Bull in a confrontation at Yellowstone

in 1876 and could cope with Filipinos. He told Washington, "I shall not yield to any of their requests, or make any concessions."

Aguinaldo, also awaiting the peace talks, hesitated to defy the Americans. He offered to comply if Otis softened his language. Otis consented. On September 14, two thousand Filipino soldiers marched out of two zones near Manila to the tempo of three bands. They saluted the Stars and Stripes as it replaced their flag over the trenches.

Otis sent Aguinaldo a note of thanks for his "friendly spirit." But Aguinaldo's moderation only convinced him that he could easily bend the Filipinos—and, again threatening force, he demanded that they yield other positions. Again retreating, Aguinaldo finally ordered his troops to recognize America's "military occupation and jurisdiction" over Manila and its suburbs.

Otis concluded by early December that the independence movement was crumbling, basing his view on talks with a few conservative Filipinos who had lost confidence in Aguinaldo. Trinidad Pardo de Tavera, a distinguished scholar and early nationalist, argued that "under no circumstances" should the United States leave the Philippines. He was seconded by Florentino Torres, a rich lawyer, who proposed the "frank and loyal acceptance" by the Filipinos of a permanent American presence—or else, he said, the islands would be taken over by another foreign power. Assuming these *ilustrados* to be representative, Otis cabled McKinley: INSURGENTS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO AMERICAN ANNEXATION.

A bizarre episode proved him wrong. On December 13, a message reached him from the port of Iloilo, located on the island of Panay three hundred miles south of Manila. The Spanish garrison there was still defending the town against Filipino nationalists, and local merchants sought American help to lift the siege, which was hurting trade. Otis, lusting for action, assigned Brigadier General Marcus Miller to lead a U.S. force to the scene. But Dewey refused to provide ships without Washington's approval. Unlike his eager army colleagues, he felt that control of Manila and another base or two suited America's aims. He also feared a war with the natives, who to him were "little more than children." McKinley, however, authorized the expedition "to preserve peace and protect life and property" in Iloilo. Miller departed with 2,500 men aboard four transports, with a cruiser as an escort.

McKinley was then in Georgia, striving to heal the wounds of the Civil War by evoking the U.S. defeat of Spain as a national achievement. He also hoped to rally public support for ratification of the treaty with Spain in the Senate, whose southern members suspected annexation of the Philippines on the grounds that brown people would enter America. Warm ovations convinced him of the wisdom of his overseas venture, but he persisted in sending muddled messages to his commanders in Manila after Miller's task force had steamed into the harbor of Iloilo.

The Spanish had withdrawn from the port on Christmas Day, and the Filipino commander denied Miller the right to land without "express orders" from Aguinaldo. Having come to terms with the nationalists, the merchants who had originally requested U.S. aid now advised Miller against disembarking troops. Miller, a crusty Civil War veteran, nevertheless favored an attack, but Otis checked him as he attempted to decipher McKinley's confusing

directive, which ordered the American expedition to be firm yet conciliatory and to capture the town without risking a fight.

The U.S. troops at Iloilo were to remain aboard their ships for the next six weeks, stifling in the tropical heat. McKinley, later reversing himself, praised Otis's prudence: "Glad you did not permit Miller to bring on a conflict. Time given the insurgents cannot hurt us and must weaken and discourage them. . . . They will see our benevolent purpose."

But McKinley's virtuous intentions eluded the Filipino militants. The newspaper *La Independencia,* founded by the hotheaded General Antonio Luna, unleashed a tirade against the United States despite Otis's efforts to suppress its publication. The atmosphere became more feverish when Aguinaldo, in what Otis later termed "a virtual declaration of war," warned that he would "open hostilities" if Miller tried to seize Iloilo. "I denounce these acts before the world," Aguinaldo intoned, "so that the conscience of mankind may deliver its infallible verdict as to who are the true oppressors of nations and the tormenters of humanity. Upon their heads be all the blood that may be shed."

McKinley committed another blunder that aggravated the strained situation. Dewey, alarmed by the tension, had urged him to "allay the spirit of unrest" by issuing a proclamation defining U.S. policy toward the Philippines. With nobody on his staff competent to guide him, McKinley turned to Dean Worcester, a University of Michigan zoologist then visiting Washington. Worcester, later a key figure in the American colonial administration of the islands, was unqualified as a political adviser. He had studied wildlife in parts of the archipelago, but had never been to Luzon, the crucible of Filipino nationalism and knew nothing about its leaders or their objectives. McKinley nevertheless enlisted his help to draft a proclamation, which he cabled to Otis on December 26 with instructions to make it public immediately.

America's "earnest and paramount aim," said McKinley, was to "win the confidence, respect and affection" of the Filipinos by "proving to them that the mission of the United States is one of benevolent assimilation." They could hold office if they acknowledged American "supremacy." But "the strong arm of authority" would be "sedulously maintained" to "repress disturbance and to overcome all obstacles to the bestowal of the blessings of good and stable government." Meanwhile, the U.S. presence was to be "extended . . . to the whole of the ceded territory," since America had acquired "sovereignty" over the islands through the treaty with Spain.

Otis recoiled from publishing the document. McKinley, he realized, could not legally affirm U.S. control over the Philippines until the Senate had ratified the peace treaty. He also feared that radical Filipinos, spoiling for a fight, would react against McKinley's virtual decision to take over the archipelago. So, though a mere soldier, he rewrote the statement, replacing milder phrases for inflammatory terms like *supremacy* and *sovereignty.* He "did not think the president understood the situation," he recalled later, and "under the conditions then prevailing" felt "perfectly justified . . . to make such amendments."

Otis's revisions might have averted a crisis had not General Miller, sitting off Iloilo, inadvertently bungled. Washington had transmitted him a copy of McKinley's original text, which he naïvely handed to the local Filipino commander as evidence of America's benign intentions. The native officer forwarded the version to Aguinaldo, who immediately concluded that McKinley meant to seize the Philippines.

Aguinaldo prepared for war. Early in January 1899, he directed his provincial commanders to stockpile rice and other supplies. He also instructed the *sandatahan,* a fifth column of native commandos inside Manila, to plan an attack against the Americans in the capital. The Filipinos were sure to win, he told his generals, revealing to them that he had dreamed the night before of a triumphal march into Manila four hours after the fighting began. The prospect excited Colonel Juan Cailles, the Filipino commander of one zone near the city. When an American officer ordered him to withdraw his men fifty paces from the boundary line, Cailles sent him a challenging note: "Since Maquinley [*sic*] opposes our independence, I refuse to deal with any American. War, war is what we want!" Aguinaldo commended Cailles: "I approve and applaud what you have done."

Otis also braced for combat. Ignoring Aguinaldo's protests, he moved the Nebraska volunteers to Santa Mesa, on the western fringe of Manila, claiming that its climate was healthier than that of their former camp. In fact, the area was strategically situated at the juncture of the Pasig and San Juan rivers, the city's key waterways, and it also dominated a vital road. The Americans tightened their communications throughout the sector with a network of telegraph wires. Dewey deployed his ships within range of the Filipino positions, but he seemed to be troubled by the mounting tensions. "We may be fighting with the insurgents at any moment," he wrote to his son on January 23, adding that he preferred to abandon the archipelago "rather than have . . . a war with them."

The army did not share Dewey's reticence. Despite McKinley's earlier plea for peace at any price, the War Department publicly disclosed that Otis was now under orders to use force for the purpose of "defending himself and the interests confided to his charge." Otis, anticipating an outbreak, said: "The least spark may start a conflagration."

The two sides poised for war, but neither was ready to fire the first shot. Instead, they agreed to make a last stab at a reconciliation. The Americans issued safe-conduct passes to a delegation of Filipinos to come to Manila for a series of six meetings that dragged on through January.

The U.S. officers at the talks, proceeding without guidance from Washington, had no clear objective. They were vaguely aware of McKinley's desire for peace, but they also knew that he now favored annexation of the Philippines—a policy that would probably lead to war with the Filipinos. Nevertheless, they saw the sessions as a useful delaying tactic. As one of them later explained, they were "trying to gain time" until the arrival of four fresh U.S. battalions, "which we needed very much."

The Filipinos, for their part, still seemed to believe in the possibility of independence under a U.S. protectorate—a proposal that they repeated again and again in the course of the conferences. But they were also stalling in the hope that the Senate might disapprove the treaty with Spain and thus compel McKinley to consider a Philippine policy more attuned to their aspirations.

* * *

The real question, however, was far broader than the future American relationship with the Philippines: Would the United States shun this new obligation abroad and cling to its traditional insularity, or would it advance toward larger global responsibilities by becoming an imperial power? It was a question for the nation to decide.

The Anti-Imperialist League, the most vocal lobby against expansion, held its first meeting in Boston in November 1898. Patrician conservatives composed its upper echelons. George Boutwell, the president, was a vintage Republican who had been governor of Massachusetts and Grant's secretary of the treasury. Grover Cleveland and Andrew Carnegie figured among its distinguished members, along with numbers of prominent lawyers, educators, editors and clergymen. But Theodore Roosevelt's cruel portrayal of them as "men of a bygone age" was apt. Many, in their sixties or seventies, yearned to keep America unfettered by foreign entanglements. Several, abolitionists before the Civil War, equated the Filipino quest for independence with the Negro struggle for freedom; some even compared Aguinaldo to John Brown.

By contrast, militant imperialists like Roosevelt, Lodge and Beveridge were young, dynamic, progressive and, in their way, infused with idealism. Roosevelt had returned from his moment of glory as a horseless Rough Rider in Cuba to run for governor of New York. In October 1898, as his campaign gathered momentum, he pleaded in one of his more memorable speeches for retaining the Philippines. "The guns of our warships have awakened us to new duties. We are face to face with our destiny, and we must meet it with a high and resolute courage. . . . Let us rather run the risk of wearing out than rusting out."

As the test approached on Capitol Hill, the two senators from Massachusetts, both Republicans, represented opposite extremes of the spectrum. Henry Cabot Lodge, managing the fight for approval of the treaty, warned that its rejection would mean "humiliation of the whole country in the eyes of the world" and show America to be "unfit as a nation to enter into the great questions of foreign policy." George Hoar, meanwhile, had been arguing for months that the seizure of territory abroad would transform America into "a vulgar, commonplace empire founded upon physical force, controlling subject races and vassal states, in which one class must forever rule, and other classes must forever obey."

The Senate appeared to be split along party lines—with the notable exception of Hoar, a loyal Republican on nearly every other issue. An illustrious New Englander, then seventy-two, his ancestors included a Harvard president and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. A colleague called him the "most cultivated man" in the Senate, and he did indeed collect rare books and read poetry. He had been in Congress for thirty years, laboring for civil-service reform and antitrust legislation. Round, bespectacled and white haired, he resembled a jovial elf; the image, however, concealed a fickle crank. He had voted to annex Hawaii and at first hailed the conflict with Spain as "the most honorable single war in history," believing that McKinley would resist the imperialists. Now he charged the president with plotting the "downfall" of the republic. But McKinley continued to worship and respect him. One day, when

he asked Hoar how he felt, the senator replied, "Pretty pugnacious, I confess, Mr. President." McKinley grasped his hand warmly and, eyes moistening, said, "I shall always love you, whatever you do."

William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic standard-bearer, had zigzagged. Fearful of trailing public opinion, he had initially acclaimed the war with Spain, even recruiting a regiment of Nebraska volunteers with himself, commissioned a colonel, as its commander. But his men, bound for Cuba, got no further than a filthy camp in Florida, where they swatted mosquitoes and sand flies and fell ill in droves. Mustered out, he became a critic of imperialism; by December 1898 he had switched again. He now supported the treaty with Spain, reckoning that the Republicans would come to grief in the Philippines, and thus improve his chances for the presidency in 1900.

As he counted votes before the debate, McKinley realized that he lacked the two-thirds majority needed for approval. Of the ninety seats in the Senate, the Republicans occupied forty-six, some held by defectors like Hoar. He had to convert at least a dozen Democrats and others—no mean task.

The expansionists received a boost from Rudyard Kipling, the British apostle of imperialism, whose poem "The White Man's Burden" was then circulating in America prior to its publication in *McClure's* magazine. He had timed the verse to the Senate debate, subtitling it "The United States and the Philippine Islands." It warned of the frustrations of ruling "new-caught, sullen peoples, half devil and half child," who would "bring all your hope to nought." But Americans must "have done with childish days," and rise to maturity by assuming the responsibility of governing distant lands.

> Comes now, to search your manhood
> Through all the thankless years,
> Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom.
> The judgment of your peers!

The debate opened on a lofty plane as skilled jurists among the senators wrangled over interpretations of the Constitution. The learned George Vest of Missouri, a strict constructionist, observed that federal statutes contained no provision for colonies. In any case, he argued, the United States could not annex territories abroad against the will of their people without violating its own principle of "government by consent of the governed." Orville Platt of Connecticut, an equally serious student of the law, contended to the contrary that America's acquisition of Louisiana, Alaska and parts of Mexico had never been hindered by such scruples. The level of debate declined. Arthur Gorman, a conservative Maryland Democrat, warned that retention of the Philippines would open America to Filipinos, and "downgrade" white supremacy. Benjamin "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman of South Carolina took up the same theme, objecting to "the injection into the body politic of the United States . . . that vitiated blood, that debased and ignorant people." The Senate also approved a resolution disclaiming any intention of making the archipelago "an integral part" of the United States—another racist ploy designed to deny eventual statehood to the islands or citizenship for their people. Lodge, pleading for ratification, pledged that McKinley had no plans to keep the Philippines permanently. McKinley, however, promptly punctured the promise by refus-

ing to permit an amendment to that effect. Nor would he support an effort by several senators to pledge independence to the Philippines upon the establishment of a stable government there.

Thomas Brackett Reed, the elephantine speaker of the House of Representatives and a premier Washington wit, injected a note of levity from the sidelines to the solemn rhetoric in the Senate. Deflating the imperialists, who saw value in America's new Pacific dominions, he quipped: "If you travel westward you'll reach the Philippines by way of Hawaii, and if you travel eastward you'll reach Hawaii by way of the Philippines. The whole question is whether you prefer to take your plague before your leprosy, or take your leprosy before your plague." Later, commenting on the $20-million-dollar indemnity owed Spain for the Philippines, he predicted that the expenditure would not stop there. "We have about ten million Malays at two dollars a head unpicked, and nobody knows what it will cost to pick them."

The Senate, pressed by other business, agreed to vote on February 6, a Monday. But, as the deadline neared, McKinley was still shy of the required majority. Lodge and Mark Hanna cornered senators in the cloakrooms, bartering their votes in return for coveted committee slates and funds for projects back home. McKinley, himself playing patronage, promised a federal judgeship to a crony of Louisiana's Samuel McEnery and gave John McLaurin of South Carolina the right to name his state's postmasters. He also won over George Gray, the anti-imperialist Democrat from Delaware who had served on the peace delegation in Paris, with a seat on a circuit court.

The treaty passed narrowly. Eleven Democrats had changed sides, a few of them in deference to William Jennings Bryan. Only two Republicans, the intractable Hoar and Eugene Hale of Maine, remained opposed. It had been, Lodge observed, "the hardest, closest fight I have ever known, and probably we shall never see another like it in our time."

McKinley had expected victory since the Saturday night before the vote. He was dictating the text of a speech when, at about eleven-thirty, an aide interrupted with a dispatch from the *New York Sun* correspondent in Manila. The Americans and Filipinos had clashed, the U.S. soldiers sustaining casualties. McKinley read the report several times, laid it on his desk and, with a mixture of sadness and satisfaction, said to his secretary: "It is always the unexpected that happens, at least in my case. How foolish these people are. This means ratification of the treaty."