Table of Contents

Teacher Background Materials

I. Unit Overview

The sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana harbor in April, 1898, caused outrage in the United States and precipitated the war between the United States and Spain. This armed conflict lasted only four months and resulted in few American casualties from military engagements. This brief, "splendid little war," as diplomat John Hay called it, ended with a peace treaty that transferred the Spanish overseas empire in the Caribbean and in the Pacific to the United States. Cuba received independence but was forced to agree to accept America's rights to intervene in its affairs. The United States government quietly annexed Puerto Rico and Guam. However, in the Philippine Islands, a bloody conflict broke out between Filipino forces battling for independence and American troops sent there to quell what they and many other American citizens viewed as a rebellion. This war lasted far longer than the Spanish-American conflict and resulted in many more deaths.

Most secondary school textbooks devote considerable space to the four-month war between Spain and the United States. Few such books, however, focus on the long and brutal conflict that followed in the Philippines. The Philippine-American War deserves the attention of both students and teachers for several reasons. First, it was a longer and more costly conflict than the previous war with Spain. Second, the Philippine-American War illustrates the conflicting views that Americans had about their goals in foreign policy, including questions of strategic national interest and the role and place of American cultural values abroad. It elicited a thorough debate on the merits of the policies of the United States. Third, depending on one's perspective, the war forecasts or does not forecast many of the problems that the United States faced in the later military entanglements in Korea and Vietnam. Fourth, this conflict marks the beginning of a long-term commitment to an American presence in Asia and global involvement outside the Western Hemisphere. Fifth, the resulting occupation has had profound effects on the Filipino government and society.

This unit will examine the causes of the conflict between the American government and the Filipino independence fighters, the arguments for and against annexation of the Philippines, and the nature and impact of the resulting military conflict.

II. Unit Context

The Philippine-American War should be taught as part of a larger unit on United States imperialism in the period from 1890 to 1914. In a typical United States history course, the activities in this unit would be preceded by study of American industrialization in the nineteenth century, the politics of the Gilded Age, the causes of American expansionism, and the events of the Spanish-American War. The unit should prepare students for examination of American foreign policy during the Progressive Era and World War One.

III. Correlation with the National Standards for United States History

The *Philippine-American War* addresses elements of the *National Standards for United States History, Basic Edition* (Los Angeles: National Center for History in the Schools, 1996), **Era 6**: "The Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)." The unit lessons address objective 4B: "The students understand the roots and development of American expansionism and the causes and outcomes of the Spanish-American War."

IV. Unit Objectives

- Students will explain the causes of American imperialist policies and values in the 1890s.
- Students will identify key events that led to armed conflict between Filipino and American military units.
- Students will evaluate the arguments for and against U.S. annexation and subjugation of the Philippine Islands and their people.
- Students will examine the nature of the military conflict between Filipinos and Americans and analyze the consequences and impact of the war.

V. Historical Background

The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902

Teddy Roosevelt, the Rough Riders, and the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine* are but a few of the images people have about the United States' 123-day war with Spain, in 1898. What they may not remember is that this was the war that launched the United States as a world power. Victorious over Imperial Spain in both Cuba and the Philippines in the span of months, the United States became the "New Spain" by taking over Spanish territorial holdings in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and in Asia. At the same time that the U.S. acquired overseas possessions in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, it began a century-long debate over its newly assumed role as empire builder. The Spanish-American War may have catalyzed the debate, but the ensuing Philippine-American War—a long, bloody, and costly affair—truly crystallized the argument over America's new international role. Pro-imperialist arguments held sway until the high costs of war triggered an anti-imperialist backlash, caused an agonizing reappraisal of the assumed benefits of empire-building, and contributed to a long-term amnesia regarding America's first overseas imperial war.

Nineteenth-Century Background

The American people's belief that they had a sacred obligation to spread their institutions and way of life ("manifest destiny") shaped the westward expansion in the 1840s into Texas and the Southwest, Utah and the Great Basin, and California, Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest. The process of empire building resumed soon after the Civil War. In 1867, Secretary of State William

Seward acquired Alaska from Russia for $7.2 million, and, in the early 1870s, the United States debated the annexation of the island of Santo Domingo in the Caribbean. Although the Senate refused to ratify the Santo Domingo treaty, American activity overseas continued with economic interventions in Latin America and with growing interest in gaining islands in the Pacific and a share of the Asian market. Washington negotiated a treaty in 1878 to gain a naval station in Samoa. In July 1898, Congress approved the annexation of Hawaii; and in 1899 Secretary of State John Hay issued his first Open Door note to lay claim to trading rights in China equal to those already enjoyed by other European occupying powers.

1898: America's War with Spain and the Race for Empire

Gun crew, USS Maine
(BB-2/c) 1897
Courtesy of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

No step in American empire-building was as significant as Washington's war with Spain in 1898 and the resulting global territorial expansion involving Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii, and the islands of the Philippines archipelago. America's war with Spain exploded within a larger wave of European and Japanese global expansion, sometimes called the "new imperialism." What became a rush for territorial acquisition sprang from many different motivations, ranging from economic, missionary, and moral imperatives to a policy of pure "realpolitik"—a raw, competitive drive for national power and prestige. The assumption that white, Anglo-Saxon, western nations were superior to the "inferior" peoples of the world and therefore had the right to spread their principles, institutions, and religion around the globe was inherent in the missionary rhetoric of European and American imperialism. Many considered this a God-given responsibility (and "burden") to advance the progress of the world.

For the United States, this Great Power race for empire coincided with Spanish mismanagement of colonial Cuba, an island only 90 miles from the U.S. shores. News reports of Spanish atrocities created American sympathy for the Cubans. When the Cuban insurrection escalated in early 1898, President William McKinley sent the battleship *U.S.S. Maine* into Havana Harbor, ostensibly to protect U.S. citizens. In an atmosphere of heightened tension, the *Maine* mysteriously blew up, and American newspapers fanned the angry reaction at home, accusing Spain of treachery. Domestic pressure, therefore, contributed to McKinley's declaration of war on Spain in April. American victory after only four months left the United States in control of the former Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and Guam and the Philippines in the Pacific.

Groups of Filipinos in the Market at Cavite
In José de Olivares, *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1899).
Available: http://xirs.library.wisc.edu/etext/seait/index.html

1898: The Filipino Independence Movement at a Crossroads

The year 1898 was a major turning point in Philippines history. From the time of the first settlers, dating back to land bridge crossings during the late glacial period, until the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, separate and interconnected Filipino communities, ruled over by chieftains, developed across the islands. The Spanish period began when Ferdinand Magellan landed on Cebu on 16 March 1521 and claimed the archipelago for Spain. In 1542 the island-chain was named Islas Filipinas in honor of Prince Felipe (later Philip II) of Spain. The first permanent Spanish settlement was a fort and church on Cebu in 1565.

While over a thousand islands were inhabited, the capital of Manila increasingly dominated culture and commerce in the course of the next 350 years. Sugar, hemp, and tobacco left Manila Harbor to the markets of China and beyond. Unlike Cuba, however, whose sugar industry generated tremendous wealth for Spain, the Philippines sugar economy yielded little profit. Meanwhile, the Filipino population itself remained mostly rural. Few islanders benefited from the Spanish shipping trade. Filipino men built the ships and served as sailors, but the pay was poor. For those outside of the galleon trade, their economic and social circumstances were even worse. In addition, Spanish missionaries forced the Filipinos to convert to Catholicism and collected taxes on their best land. Filipinos who challenged their oppressive conditions typically ended up in jail or faced execution.

Finally, in the late 19th century, a new group of Filipino activists began to emerge following an 1872 incident. Filipino workers and troops at the Cavite arsenal mutinied against the Spanish for better pay and work conditions. While the uprising was quickly squelched, three local priests who sought equality with Spanish priests were arrested and then executed near Manila Bay. They became the first modern martyrs in the Filipino movement for national independence. The independence struggle blossomed around a group of Filipino doctors, lawyers, and other professionals educated in Europe and the United States. These Western-trained leaders were called "ilustrados"—the enlightened ones.

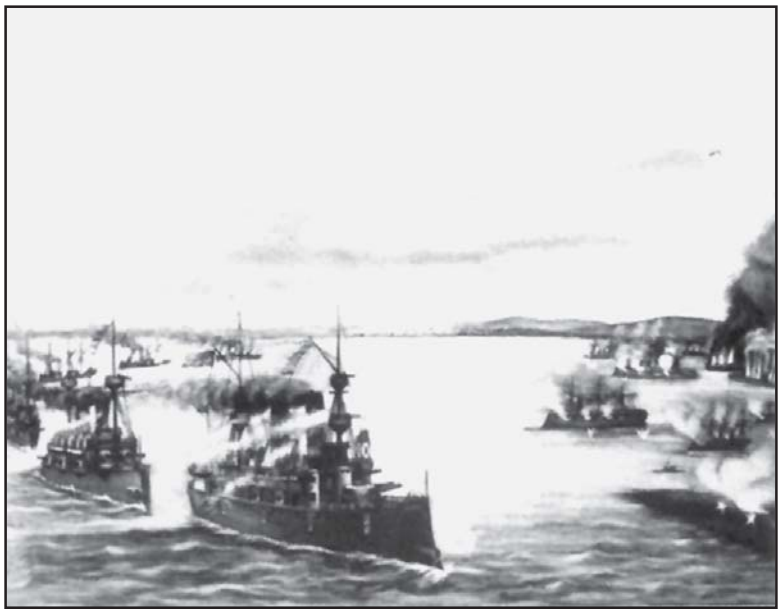
Emilio Aguinaldo
Courtesy Dover Publications
Dictionary of American Portraits, 1967

The Filipino Revolution, therefore, began in 1896 when, under the flag of the Katipunan, or "Society of the Sons of the People," some 20,000 Filipinos staged an uprising against their Spanish overlords. Twenty-seven-year-old Emilio Aguinaldo, the son of a wealthy aristocrat, rose quickly to the top of the revolutionary movement, and became president of the Katipunan in the spring of 1897. "Filipino citizens!" he declared. "Let us follow the example of European and American nations. Let us march under the Flag of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!" With 200,000 Spanish troops tied down in Cuba, Madrid could ill afford a war in the Philippines. Spanish authorities offered Aguinaldo a declaration of peace in exchange for his promise to move the revolutionary leadership to Hong Kong. The Spanish sweetened the peace overture with an undisclosed amount of cash and a commitment to grant certain reforms to the Filipinos. Though Aguinaldo did not believe the Spanish would deliver on their guarantees of political, land, and economic reforms, he desperately needed the money for food and supplies. Aguinaldo thus agreed to resettle in Hong Kong, where he could then buy guns to smuggle back to freedom fighters in the Philippines.

1898–1902:
The Collision of Cultures—U.S. Empire Building and the Filipino Drive for Independence

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt
Naval Surface Warfare Center Division
Available: <http://www.ih.navy.mil/images/asntr.jpg>

The Spanish-American battle over Cuba in 1898 soon entangled Washington and Madrid in the Philippine Revolution and the larger struggle over Spain's colonial possessions in East Asia. The U.S. contest for the Philippine Islands, in particular, turned on the actions of McKinley's Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt ordered Commodore George Dewey to move the American fleet from Hong Kong to Manila to keep the Spanish navy from leaving the Philippines for Cuba. Whether Roosevelt's order was accidental, instinctive, or prescient, it enabled subsequent military steps to be that much more effective. Therefore, following President McKinley's April 22 order to blockade Havana, Cuba, Spain's declaration of war response on the U.S. in Cuba, and Congress's own war declaration against Spain, the American Navy was prepared to act half a world away in the Philippines.



Battle of Manila Harbor, 1898

Copy of lithograph (Butler, Thomas & Co.)
Marine Corps, National Archives 127-N-302104

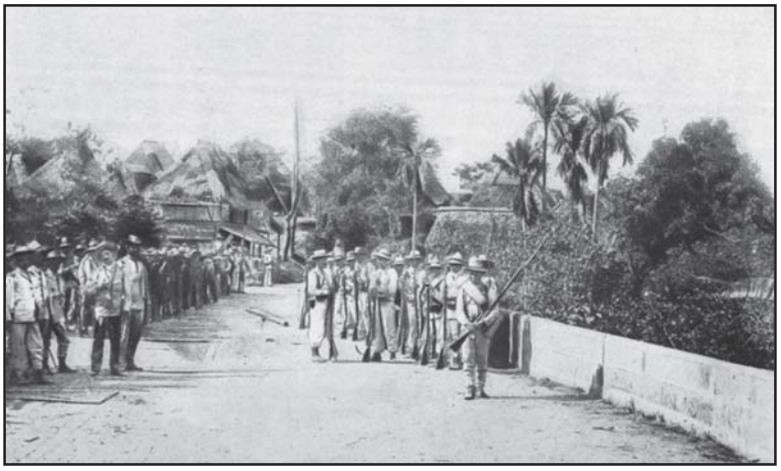
The Americans easily won a showdown against the Spanish fleet in Manila Harbor on May 1, 1898. On that date, Commodore George Dewey directed an American fleet into the Harbor, where he faced the Spanish naval presence. Just after midnight, Dewey's nine modernized ships made five devastating passes at the Spanish fleet. Twelve hours later, the Spanish surrendered their naval base in Manila, as ten of their ships lay ruined. Only one U.S. sailor was killed. That American forces could rout a European power thousands of miles from home made Dewey's victory all the more compelling. Overnight, Dewey became the most famous man in the United States.

Filipino nationalists were ecstatic. Led by General Aguinaldo, and, following years of fighting for independence, they hoped for the honor of liberating Manila and declaring the birth of their sovereign nation. Meanwhile, Dewey—now promoted to rear admiral—waited in Manila for the U.S. Army to arrive. Intent on securing support from Filipino fighters, he sent a ship to Hong Kong to retrieve Aguinaldo. Dewey welcomed the revolutionary leader as a co-equal.

By the time of his arrival back in Manila, Aguinaldo had developed the idea that while the Filipinos desired immediate and complete independence, they also needed the protection of the United States because of threats posed by the German, French, and British navies in the South Pacific. Later, Aguinaldo wrote in his memoirs that Dewey promised to support the revolution. He recorded Dewey saying, "My word is stronger than the most strongly written statement there is." Unfortunately for him, and for the chroniclers of history, the rear admiral provided no such written promise.

Aguinaldo now returned to his family's mansion in Kawite [Cavite], just southwest of Manila, to plot a strategy to defeat a Spanish force that found itself bottled up inside the walled-in district of Intramuros. As Aguinaldo announced,

> Divine Providence is about to place independence within our reach. The Americans have extended their protecting mantle to our beloved country, now that they have severed relations with Spain, owing to the tyranny that nation is exercising in Cuba. The American fleet will prevent any reinforcements coming from Spain. There, where you see the American flag flying, assemble in numbers; they are our redeemers.



Philippine Insurgent Troops in the Suburbs of Manila

Francis Davis Millet, *The Expedition to the Philippines*
(New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899),161.
Available: Library of Congress, *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War*
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898>

Independence fighters attacked the Spanish position for nearly two months, and had cut off water and food supplies, when Aguinaldo sought his enemy's surrender of Manila. The Spaniards balked, however, out of pride and out of fear that they would face murder and humiliation. Hoping for the additional leverage of American naval firepower to force a Spanish surrender to the Filipinos, Aguinaldo was disappointed. Instead of backing the Filipino assault on the Spaniards, Dewey directed newly arriving U.S. soldiers to occupy positions along the outskirts of Manila, adjacent to the revolutionary army.

Facing the prospect of defeat to a Great Power or to an upstart Filipino military, the Spanish proposed surrender terms to the United States that involved a mock battle for Manila, and the exclusion of Filipino insurgents. A staged battle would cause harm to few soldiers while enabling the Spanish to maintain a higher sense of national honor. After agreeing with the Americans to such conditions, the Spaniards raised the white flag to the U.S. "conquerors." American military units obliged by charging the city as the Filipinos watched helplessly. On

August 14 in the church of San Augustine, the Spanish formally yielded control of Manila to the Americans. Blocked from entering the city, Aguinaldo and his followers rendezvoused in a monastery north of Manila to establish a sovereign government, independent of the United States. It was there that Aguinaldo wrote, "The people struggle for their independence, absolutely convinced that the time has come when they can and should govern themselves."

While Aguinaldo wrestled with the fate of the movement he led, United States-Spanish peace talks began in Paris on October 1, 1898. No Filipinos or Cubans attended the deliberations, nor were any invited. McKinley clearly wanted Cuba from the Spanish, but he was not yet sure about the Philippines. Ultimately, he decided that he needed the port of Manila in the Philippines in order to have a naval base in the Western Pacific. After considerable debate and reflection, McKinley also recommended annexing the Philippines rather than giving the Filipinos outright independence. Undeterred by American actions in Paris and the White House, as well as the upcoming treaty debate in the United States Senate, the Filipinos approved a constitution in January 1899 based on the republican representative principles embodied in the United States Constitution.

The Honorable John Hay, Secretary of State
Handing to Jules Cambon, the French ambassador,
the $20,000 due to Spain under the Treaty of Peace.
At the State Department, May 1, 1899.

Harper's Pictorial History of the War with Spain (New York: Harper and bros, 1899), 434.
Available: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/hay.html>

The 1898 election kept the Republicans in control of Congress. Five days later, President McKinley's cabled his terms to U.S. treaty negotiators in Paris. Secretary of State John Hay then sent a follow up wire to the representatives: "Insist upon the cession of the whole of the Philippines. If necessary, pay to Spain twenty million dollars." Spain accepted the amended terms and relinquished the Philippines, Cuba, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The 400-year-old, global Spanish Empire had now vanished. But had the United States also become the "New Spanish Empire" with the transfer of territories?

Empire or No Empire?

The Treaty of Paris, agreed to on December 10, 1898, required U.S. Senate ratification, with approval of at least two-thirds of its members. Despite all that had come before—in newspapers, on

battlefields, and through election rhetoric—was the fundamental question of whether the United States should become an imperial power?

Two days prior to the climactic Senate vote of February 6, 1899, the unofficial headcount showed the treaty opponents two votes ahead. Meanwhile, in Manila, as American and Filipino sentries kept close watch on one another across a neutral divide, a U.S. Army private saw two Filipino soldiers crossing the San Juan Bridge into American-controlled ground. The private called out for the Filipinos to "halt" immediately. One Filipino soldier either did not comprehend "halt" or he chose to ignore the command. Whereupon, as he proceeded onto American ground, U.S. soldiers opened fire and Filipinos forces replied in kind. Sixty U.S. soldiers and 700 Filipinos died in the shootout. When the story reached the U.S. Senate, an emotional wave to "support our boys in the Philippines" caused the defection of two Democrats, and the body narrowly ratified the treaty.

The United States had officially acquired its first colonies—and also its first colonial rebellion. As a result of McKinley's decision and the Senate's action, the U.S. Army battled Filipino nationalist insurgents for four years, from 1898 to 1902. This was a timetable ten times longer than the war with Spain. In sum, the American-Philippine war was a drawn-out series of encounters that caused the deaths of over 4,000 Americans (compared to 385 in Cuba) and at least 50,000 Filipinos, many of whom were civilians dislocated by American policies. (It should be pointed out that fighting did not completely cease in 1902, as occasional skirmishes flared up until Philippine independence in 1946.)

Rear Admiral George Dewey

Henry Neil, *Exciting Experiences in Our Wars with Spain and the Filipinos*. (Chicago: Book Pub. Union, 1899), 234. Available: Library of Congress, *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War* <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898>

In early 1899, as Rear Admiral Dewey doubled his order of ammunition to deal with the Filipino insurrection, the U.S. public and press rallied to the effort. As the *New York Times* wrote in February 1899:

> The insane attack of these people upon their liberators! It is not likely that Aguinaldo himself will exhibit much staying power. After one or two collisions, the insurgent army will break up.

To avoid a similar revolt in Cuba, U.S. officials appealed to rebel leaders to demobilize their troops, based on the hope that the United States would follow through on the proposed Teller Amendment (Henry Teller, D, CO), which promised eventual independence for Cuba. The Teller Amendment did pass in 1902. For Filipinos in 1899; however, they received no assurances of long-term independence, no Teller Amendment. Instead, they continued to resist. Within two months, they had killed or wounded 500 U.S. soldiers. By August, the U.S. government met Dewey's request for 60,000 more troops. Aguinaldo responded, in kind, with an open call for guerilla warfare.

Anti-Imperialism

At the same time, the Anti-Imperialist League that had begun only months before grew in mem- bership. Among the most vocal of anti-imperialists were members of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). As Bessie Scovel of the WCTU put it:

> Again and again has my blood boiled
> at the hundreds of American saloons being established
> throughout our new possessions.
> And, shame of shames, our military authorities in the
> Philippines have introduced the open and official
> sanction of prostitution!

LIBERTY TRACTS. No. 1.

THE

CHICAGO LIBERTY MEETING

HELD AT

CENTRAL MUSIC HALL

APRIL 30. 1899

"No man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism."—*Abraham Lincoln, Speech of October 16, 1854.*

"Our reliance is in the love of liberty which God has planted in us. Our defense is in the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all men in all lands, everywhere. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God cannot long retain it."—*Abraham Lincoln, Letter to H. L. Pierce, April 6, 1859.*

"IF THIS BE TREASON, MAKE THE MOST OF IT."—*Patrick Henry.*

PUBLISHED BY
CENTRAL ANTI-IMPERIALIST LEAGUE
TACOMA BUILDING, CHICAGO
1899

Cover of meeting held in Chicago by the American Anti-Imperialist League.
Chicago Liberty, cover.
<http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898>

What particularly unsettled Temperance Union members were the repeated stories of sexually transmitted diseases coming out of South Asia. They were appalled to discover that their "pure boys" had left behind their loving mothers and strong values, gone to the Philippines, and returned home sick, wounded, or dead. The founder of the Anti-Imperialist League, Edward Atkinson, also published pamphlets on venereal disease and sent them to troops in the Philippines. In part, Atkinson wanted to prove that empire building would undermine traditional American principles, such as free speech. When the Postmaster General had the pamphlets confiscated en route to the Philippines, Atkinson publicly proclaimed, "You see? This is what happens. If we seize the Philippines to go and become an imperialist power, we'll no longer have our freedoms."

Costs of Empire Building

By late summer 1899, when stepped-up American troop reinforcements faced Aguinaldo's equally serious pledge to wage guerrilla-style war, the price tag for empire-building shot up. Casualty figures in the Philippines also worried President McKinley. Three thousand Americans and 15,000 Filipinos had been killed. U.S. generals in Manila were ordered to censor reporters' dispatches that contained any unfavorable news. Yet, American reporters in the Philippines blamed the generals and not the President for this censorship.

At the same time, Filipino fighters wore common dress, blended into the larger population, and engaged in nighttime raids, sniper assaults, and setting booby-traps. Stunned American soldiers reacted in a variety of ways. A. A. Barnes of the Third U.S. Artillery reported:

> Last night one of our boys was found shot and his stomach cut open. Immediately orders were received to burn the town and kill every native in sight. I am probably growing hard-hearted for I am in my glory when I can sight my gun on some dark skin and pull the trigger.

An anonymous soldier wrote:

> I don't believe the people in the United States understand the condition of things here. Even the Spanish are shocked. I have seen enough to almost make me ashamed to call myself an American.

Theodore Conley of the *Kansas Regiment* commented:

> Talk about dead Indians! Why they are lying everywhere. The trenches are full of them.

In June 1900, the Republicans gathered in Philadelphia for their national convention. President McKinley was easily re-nominated, largely because the nation prospered after a devastating depression in the 1890s. Teddy Roosevelt was selected as his running mate, not because he was Governor of New York State, but because he was a war hero and could add excitement to the Republican ticket.

The election of 1900, a rematch of the 1896 race between McKinley and his Democratic rival, William Jennings Bryan, revolved as much around the question of economy as the on-going war in the Philippines. Bryan, in fact, hoped to defeat the incumbent president by repeatedly raising the war and turning the election into a referendum on McKinley's foreign policy. McKinley won in a landslide on the basis of returning America to prosperity following a brief depression while Bryan's strategy of attacking U.S. imperialism—and the Philippines War in particular—backfired. The Republicans could now argue that McKinley's reelection signaled not only popular approval for the president's handling of the economy but also resounding support for the empire-building campaign in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Shortly after his second inaugural address, in March 1901, President McKinley offered Cuba limited self-government under the terms of the Platt Amendment, a congressional document that previously made Cuba a U.S. protectorate. However, the grant of Cuban autonomy was quite restricted, as the United States retained the right to intervene in Cuba's affairs, at any point, and to establish an indefinite naval presence at Guantánamo Bay. The Cubans ultimately acceded to American pressure and barely voted the Platt Amendment into their constitution.

During precisely the same time frame, in the Philippines, U.S. soldiers infiltrated rebel headquarters outside of Manila and captured Emilio Aguinaldo, the military and spiritual leader of the Filipino independence movement. While the war against American troops continued in the southern Philippines, the battle around Manila died down considerably in the summer of 1901. In tapping William Howard Taft as the first civilian governor of the Philippines, President McKinley defined "Big Bill" Taft's purpose in terms of "benevolent assimilation." Taft referred

to the Filipinos as his "little brown brothers." Treating the Philippines as a quasi-laboratory for Progressive Era reforms, Taft's colonial government set up American-style schools and American education methods, including English language emphasis. In order to reinforce the process of Americanization, Taft adopted a draconian law that banned any form of anti-American behavior, whether written, spoken, or represented in art, music, or Philippine flag-waving. Still, Filipinos continued to struggle for independence at all levels.

In September 1901 President McKinley, when visiting the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, spoke about the nation's new role and position in the world.

> We have a vast and intricate business built up through years of toil and struggle, in which every part of this country has its stake. Isolation is no longer possible or desirable.

McKinley was the first president to tell Americans they had global responsibilities as well as global economic opportunities. The next afternoon while at a public reception, the anarchist-assassin, Leon Czolgosz, fired his concealed gun into the president's stomach. Unable to recover from the severe laceration, William McKinley died eight days later, to be replaced by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

Ten days into the Roosevelt presidency, Americans stationed in Balangiga, 400 miles southeast of Manila, came under attack. As Yankee troops sat to breakfast that morning, armed Filipinos emerged from hiding places and hacked forty-eight soldiers to death. While most Filipinos viewed the event as a blow for independence, the twenty-four American survivors—and a horrified U.S. public—interpreted the daylight raid as an unprovoked atrocity. In direct response, General Jacob Smith commanded U.S. forces to pursue revenge across the larger island of Samar. "I want no prisoners," ordered Smith. "I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms against the United States." "I'd like to know the limit of age to respect, sir," requested his subordinate, Littleton Waller. "Ten years," replied General Smith. American troops, therefore, set about to torch villages, destroy property, and slaughter men, women, and children.

South of Manila, in the province of Batangas, the Americans assembled all non-insurgents into military zones of protection. The similarities to Spanish methods in Cuba were unmistakable, as anyone found outside of these zones was assumed to be hostile, and were killed or imprisoned. A leader of the anti-imperialist faction in the U.S. Senate, George Hoar, pushed for a thorough investigation into the American reprisals. In the process, three Army officers, including General Jacob Smith, found themselves court-martialed.

From Surrender to Independence

In April 1902, following more than three years of warfare, Filipino leaders conceded defeat to the United States. For their part, the exhausted Americans had lost most of the zeal that had led to late nineteenth-century imperialism. Even President Roosevelt, once a champion of U.S. empire-building, admitted that his nation was ill-suited for imperialism. On reflection, he opined that the Philippines had become America's Achilles heel. While the United States would use military force, time and again, across Latin America, and in portions of Asia, the Pacific, and elsewhere, it did so primarily for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a largely informal,

economic empire. The Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1902) from which it sprang are among the exceptions that prove the rule of U.S. empire-building, at least in the early twentieth century. Given the unexpected difficulties of the Philippines conflict, the United States assiduously avoided open-ended military campaigns until the Second World War.

During World War II, Japan conquered the Philippines. Sixty-thousand Americans and more than a million Filipinos died while driving the Japanese from the islands. Soon after, on July 4, 1946, the United States granted the Filipinos their independence.

VI. Unit Lessons

Lesson 1: Causes of the Philippine-American War

Lesson 2: The United States Senate Debates the Annexation of the Philippines

Lesson 3: Warfare in the Philippines

Lesson 4: The Impact of the War