

Filipino insurrection: compromise with america to win a conflict against spain

[Business](#), [Human Resources](#)



“ You seem to have about finished your work of civilizing the Filipinos. About 8, 000 of them have been civilized and sent to heaven. I hoped you like it.”- Andrew Carnegie, American industrialist and anti-imperialist, 1899. My National History Project will examine the Philippine-American War, a war between the United States and Filipino revolutionaries from 1899 to 1902, an insurrection that may be seen as a continuation of the Philippine Revolution against Spanish rule.

Americans won the hearts and minds of some Filipinos by setting up schools and local government and by constructing hospitals, roads, and sewers, but guerrilla activity and terrorism continued unabated. The inability to distinguish between friend and created frustration and fear among American troops, who increasingly tried to bring peace through brutality. This was America’s first true colonial war as a world power. After defeating Spain in Cuba and in the Philippines in 1898, the U. S. purchased the Philippines, Puerto Rico and several other islands from the Spanish. However, the Filipinos had been fighting a bloody revolution against Spain since 1896, and had no intention of becoming a colony of another imperialist power. In February of 1899, fighting broke out between the occupying American Army and the Filipino forces. When the Spanish authorities in Manila yielded the capital of the Philippine Islands to American forces under admiral George Dewey in August 1898, they knew the game was up and they much preferred to surrender to the Americans than to the native Filipino nationalist who were waging a guerilla war against them. The Spaniards made it a condition that none of the guerrillas be allowed in the city and none were. The demand for liberation from Spain has been escalating in the Philippines

since the 1880s and in 1892 a poor warehouseman named Andres Bonifacio founded a resistance group called the Katipunan, (Highest and Most Respected Society of the Sons of the People). Dedication to driving the Spaniards from the islands. Fighting broke out in 1896, the authorities mounted a reign of terror and the Katipunan was taken over by a rival leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, who removed Bonifacio from his path by the simple expedient of having him executed.

The basic causes of the Philippine-American War can be found in the U. S. government's quest for an overseas empire and the desire of the Filipino people for freedom. In other words, this war was a clash between the forces of imperialism and nationalism. After centuries as a Spanish colony, a revolution led in part by Emilio Aguinaldo broke out in 1896 in the Philippine Islands. After fighting a savage guerilla war for two and a half years, the Filipinos suddenly found themselves in a seemingly advantageous position as allies of the United States. In 1898, Spain fought a losing war with the United States in which her colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam were overrun with relative ease by the U. S. Army and her Atlantic Fleet devastated outside of Santiago, Cuba. Similarly, Spain's Pacific Fleet was wiped out in the Battle of Manila Bay, and American troops landed on the outskirts of the capitol city. After its defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898, Spain ceded its longstanding colony of the Philippines to the United State in the Treaty of Paris.

On February 4, 1899, just two days before the U. S Senate ratified the treaty, fighting broke out between American forces and Filipino nationalist led by

Emilio Aguinaldo who sought independence rather than a change in colonial rulers, the ensuing Philippine-American War lasted three years and resulted in the death of over 4,200 American and over 20,000 Filipino combatants. As many as 200,000 Filipino civilians died from violence, famine, and disease. It all started in the “Battle of Manila Bay”, the decision by U.S. policymakers to annex the Philippines was not without domestic controversy. Americans who advocated annexation evinced a variety of motivations: desire for commercial opportunities in Asia, concern that the Filipinos were incapable of self-rule, and fear that if the United States did not take control of the islands, another power such as Germany or Japan might do so. Meanwhile, American opposition to U.S. colonial rule of the Philippines came in many forms, ranging from those who thought it morally wrong for the United States to be engaged in colonialism, to those who feared that annexation might eventually permit the non-white Filipinos to have a role in American national government. Others were wholly unconcerned about the moral or racial implications of imperialism and sought only to oppose the policies of President William McKinley’s administration.

There were two phases to the Philippine-American War. The first phase, from February to November of 1899, was dominated by Aguinaldo’s ill-fated attempts to fight a conventional war against the better-trained and equipped American troops. The second phase was marked by the Filipinos’ shift to guerrilla-style warfare. It began in November of 1899, lasted through the capture of Aguinaldo in 1901 and into the spring of 1902, by which time most organized Filipino resistance had dissipated. President Theodore

Roosevelt proclaimed a general amnesty and declared the conflict over on July 4, 1902, although minor uprisings and insurrections against American rule periodically occurred in the years that followed. Internal dissent within the independence movement and the capture and defection of many of its leaders did more to slow the rebels' momentum than American military might. The insurrection could be said to have finally ended in March 1902, when Aguinaldo was captured in a daring raid perpetrated by American and loyal Filipino troops, but resistance in the southern Philippines continued for years after Aguinaldo's capture. The United States entered the conflict with undeniable military advantages that included a trained fighting force, a steady supply of military equipment, and control of the archipelago's waterways. Meanwhile, the Filipino forces were hampered by their inability to gain any kind of outside support for their cause, chronic shortages of weapons and ammunition, and complications produced by the Philippines' geographic complexity. Under these conditions, Aguinaldo's attempt to fight a conventional war in the first few months of the conflict proved to be a fatal mistake; the Filipino Army suffered severe losses in men and material before switching to the guerrilla tactics that might have been more effective if employed from the beginning of the conflict. President Theodore Roosevelt, the war was brutal on both sides. U. S. forces at times burned villages, implemented civilian reconcentration policies, and employed torture on suspected guerrillas, while Filipino fighters also tortured captured soldiers and terrorized civilians who cooperated with American forces.

Many civilians died during the conflict as a result of the fighting, cholera and malaria epidemics, and food shortages caused by several agricultural catastrophes. Even as the fighting went on, the colonial government that the United States established in the Philippines in 1900 under future President William Howard Taft launched a pacification campaign that became known as the “ policy of attraction.” Designed to win over key elites and other Filipinos who did not embrace Aguinaldo’s plans for the Philippines, this policy permitted a significant degree of self-government, introduced social reforms, and implemented plans for economic development. Over time, this program gained important Filipino adherents and undermined the revolutionaries’ popular appeal, which significantly aided the United States’ military effort to win the war. In 1907, the Philippines convened its first elected assembly, and in 1916, the Jones Act promised the nation eventual independence. The archipelago became an autonomous commonwealth in 1935, and the U. S. granted independence in 1946.