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Abstract

People and governments have been in conflict for centuries over their ideals. Similarities in present conflicts can be traced back to similar events in the past. History will not always give us the exact process to solve our present conflicts. The knowledge of past events will provide you guidance and direction. I will give specific examples of how studying the Spanish American War, the U.S. military experience in Cuba, and Muslim counter insurgency in the Philippines could shed light on our world today. I will also show how the military has an impact within our borders. It is my position that if history is not studied and understood, we will be setting ourselves up to repeat the mistakes of the past.

I'm going to outline for you up front some key facts that many of you may or may not be aware of. I will be talking about how a 1st term Republican president found himself involved in a popular war. He had the support of the government and the people in the beginning of the war. The U.S. was greeted as liberators as the war began. Stories of abuse of detainees began to surface in the media. The support for the war began to fade over time. The build up of an insurgency caught the U.S. policymakers off guard. Before I get too involved in the detail I want to make it clear I am talking about the Spanish/American War. The Spanish American War had many obstacles that can be found in present day Iraq. It is my opinion that military professionals take time out of their busy schedules to study military history to make them a better Soldier.

President William McKinley and President George W Bush were both 1st term Republican Presidents when the nation entered into war. President McKinley and the nation moved toward war after the sinking of the battleship "Maine". President George W. Bush and the nation moved toward war after the attacks of 11 September 2001. Both Presidents faced a major event very early in their Presidency. President McKinley was only in office thirteen months before the Maine was sunk. President Bush was in office for nine months when the terrorist attacks pushed the nation toward war. President McKinley was appealed to by England, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia for peace. McSherry (n.d.) With the exception of England, the same countries objected with President Bush. President McKinley later stated in his message of war that "the grounds for intervention may be due in part as the cause of humanity and to put an end to the barbarities, bloodshed, starvation, and horrible miseries now existing in the country". He

also felt it was our duty because it was right next door. Richardson (n.d.) The Spanish American War was an early example of a country going to war partly over humanitarian reasons.

In both incidents the American people may not have had a true understanding of other causes that pushed the country in to war. The average American of 1898 knew very little of the U.S. involvement in Spain, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. McSherry (n.d.) The sudden loss of life with the sinking of the Maine and the attacks of 9/11 trusted the call for action to be heard. The news media of the day were quick to report the facts of the time. The report of “Remember the Maine” was carried across the country. The television reports carried over and over the images of the World Trade Center attack. The support for both wars was very high in the beginning. The Spanish American War was over in 114 days of actual fighting. Benton (1972) President Bush on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln proclaims an end to major combat operations in Iraq. He stated, “Now our coalition is engaged in securing and reconstructing that country Iraq”. White House (2003) Both Presidents must manage the aftermath of the war. The problems and struggles for both administrations will become apparent throughout the paper.

The Philippines greeted the Americans as liberators. That soon changed as the Americans crossed the Filipino lines to engage the Spanish in Manila. Niskanen (2004) The Spanish were defeated, but the Filipino’s were left out of the surrender. The U.S. refused to recognize the new Philippine Republic. The same images were seen in Iraq at the beginning of the war. The Americans were seen as liberators for the removal of Saddam Hussein. The conflicts developed as we became seen as occupiers and less as liberators.

The plans to deal with insurgency in both the Philippines and Iraq developed after the fact. The Pentagon began to reorient its postwar operations toward counterinsurgency in the summer of 2003. Donnelly (2003) American Soldiers began to be repeatedly ambushed in the areas around Baghdad. The outlying towns of the Sunni triangle like Falluja were the last part of Iraq to which coalition Soldiers were deployed. Donnelly (2003) This became a very robust guerrilla infrastructure. The same could have been said of Luzon in the Philippines because it was nearly a year before the Army moved into the area. This gave the rebel leaders almost a year to prepare for the *querra de emboscadas* (“war of ambushes”).

The stories of abuse begin to surface. This started to undermine the popular support. The stories were sparked when letters from Soldiers deployed in the Philippines began to appear in home town newspapers. The Senate Committee on the Philippines embarked on an investigation into “Affairs in the Philippine Islands”. Pro war Senators on the committee tried to sideline questions of U.S. troop conduct, anti-war Senators working with anti-imperialist investigators, provided a platform for U.S. Soldiers to testify regarding the practice of torture, including the “water cure.” Krammer (2008) This drew a response from Secretary of War Elihu Root to conduct court-martial proceedings for some Soldiers and Officers. The same can be said of the pictures that were taken of Iraqi detainees.

The U.S. military experience in Cuba is also worth looking at as a reference for future involvement. The Cubans were involved in a long struggle for independence over Spain. War with Spain was declared after Congress voted 311 to 6. The Senate also passed the joint resolution 43 to 35. It also included the Teller Amendment, named after the Senator

Henry Teller (Colorado) which disclaimed any intention by the U.S. to gain control over Cuba except in a pacification (peace keeping) role and promise to leave the island as soon as the war was over.

The Treaty of Paris ended the Spanish American War and transferred sovereignty of Cuba to The United States. This fact left many in the United States unsure what to do with Cuba. The United States was quick to win the war but found itself unsure how to manage the aftermath. The U.S. set up General John Brooke the 1st Military Governor to rule the territory. The U.S. built buildings, schools, roads and hospitals. The winning of the peace was a challenge then and now.

General Leonard Wood succeeded Brooke as military commander on 23 December 1899. Wood and Secretary of War Root realized what would become the Platt Amendment. This was from Senator Orville Platt of Connecticut. It was part of the Army Appropriation Act of 1901. It required the Cuban government to: “maintain a low public debt; refrain from signing any treaty impairing its obligation to the U.S.; to grant to the U.S. the right of intervention to protect life, liberty, and property: validate the acts of military government; and, if requested provide long term naval leases.” Niskanen(2004) The lasting change that is most important is having a profound impact on cultural norms and values. Once the United States left Cuba the projects initiated by the government stopped.

The Platt Amendment agitated the Cubans so much they sent a delegation to Washington D.C. to oppose it. The bill was signed before the delegation was able to meet with President McKinley. This amendment along with the Cuban trade reciprocity treaty set the foundation for US dominance in Cuba. This set nearly 60 years of antagonism

between the two countries. Several attempts were made to modify the agreements but General Wood threatened that U.S. Soldiers would remain in Cuba until the amendment was accepted. Wolfe (n.d.)

The counter insurgency operations during the Philippine insurrection have a comparison to the conflict in Iraq. The commanders in the Philippines had no effective counterinsurgency policies to draw upon. The Army was slow to react to the guerrilla warfare by Emilio Aguinaldo the leader of the Philippine resistance. The tactics used by the insurgents included ambushing American supply columns and attacking sentries with bolos (a machete type weapon concealed under clothes). American patrols encountered concealed pits and arrows triggered by tripwires strung along the path. Telegraph lines would be cut, and insurgents would lie in wait for a repair team to move in to fix the problem. Richardson (n.d.) The new tactics being deployed against the Americans required a new method of operations.

The commanders relied on their subordinate commanders to create and deploy strategies they had deemed effective. The Philippines were made up of over 7,000 islands. The Philippines had eighty-seven tribes and eight different languages with seventy different dialects. Andrews (2002) It would take more than a year of success and failures to develop a delicate balance of chastisement and attraction. Both Aguinaldo and the American commanders knew the success of this guerilla war depended on the local support of the Filipino people. The personality of the commanders also determined the pacification policy his unit would implement.

“The insurgents relied on the villagers for food, money, shelter, recruits, and information”. Andrews (2002) The insurgents also hid among the people, playing the role

of friendly amigo as the American patrols passed through the villages. The Americans captured several guerrillas wearing civilian clothes underneath their military uniforms. Through field glasses, one officer observed a Filipino change from insurgent to amigo: “he has shed all signs of the soldier, grabbed a white flag and some agricultural tool and gone to work, hard, in the nearest field and shouted ‘viva America’ when the American soldier came into sight.” Andrews (2002) The insurgents murdered local officials that the Americans had put in place. The Americans were spread over a wide area with in the country and couldn’t provide proper protection. The Americans couldn’t truly gain the trust of the local population because their actions were just as harsh. The use of torture was implemented to gain information for suspected insurgents. This was a generally used practice of most units.

A new plan needed to be developed to attempt to segregate the local population from the insurgents. A balance of chastisement and attraction needed to be found. When commanders helped local government officials create village councils and a police force that could provide local security this created loyalty to the Americans. By providing the local mayors with security, business opportunities, and independence the loyalty grew. When the insurgents tried to kill local officials it drove the people closer to the Americans. Local militias were formed to broaden the security. The local population began to point out insurgents that lived in the area and jeopardized the local security. The local population and the insurgents became separated. The control over the food supply within the local government and the restriction of movement outside the city began to move the insurgent’s operation from attack to survival. Over the next several months a large number of guerrillas were captured or killed.

The United State's conflicts with the Muslim extremists can also be traced back to the Spanish American War. The Philippines Insurrection was conflict that bogged down U.S. Forces after what was considered being a quick end to major ground operations. President McKinley addressed Congress and stated "The Philippines are not ours to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the service of self-government". Luga (2002)

The primary concern of the American administration was to have the Moro's acknowledgement of United States sovereignty and for them to remain neutral in the raging Philippine Insurrection (1899-1901). The United States pledged to respect the right and dignity of the people and their leadership and not to interfere with the Moro's practice of their religion and their customs. Luga (2002) The Moro people became suspicious of the American troops in Mindanao and took this as a threat to their religion. In March 1902, the first major American-Moro military confrontation took place. The passage of the Philippine Bill of 1902 provided the independence of the Philippines. The Americans changed from a police of noninterference to direct rule over the Moros. Luga (2002) This was to prepare them for integration into the government of the Philippines.

A study of U.S. military involvement with our borders can also show examples of how a study of military history will help with prepare soldiers for today's mission. The active military as well as the National Guard have been called to duty to perform many missions within our borders. Federal troops were called on several times during the civil rights movement of the 1960's. National Guard troops have been mobilized for civil unrest during the 1960's and 70's. The recent mobilization to the Gulf Coast has also seen a large number of both active and reserve component mobilized together to support

a natural disaster. The media is present in nearly all aspects of military operations. These operations can be both abroad and here at home. The portrayal of Lt. General Honore during the Katrina hurricane provided a great deal of stability to a very unstable situation.

I have sited several examples of how similar conflicts in the past have a common theme for today. Just as in the past others argued that today's events are not the same as those of history. The counter argument has been the stresses and technology of today are much more complex than those of the past. One may also argue that their current problem is unique unto itself. It may be similar, but the outcome will be, or was different.

The study of military history makes a more knowledgeable soldier. That knowledge can make the difference on today's complex battlefield.

In conclusion, it is obvious to see the similarities that face the U.S. military today. The difficult decisions required today have been made before. The development of today's Soldier should be trained to understand the impact of past decisions. The study of historical decisions can show both the correct and incorrect path to take. It should at least give the decision maker an understanding of how past decisions played out. This is why it's important for military professionals to take time out of their busy schedules to study military history.

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