

ALL WARS ARE LOCAL: LESSONS FROM THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL TODD BROST
United States Air Force

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for Public Release.
Distribution is Unlimited.

USAWC CLASS OF 2011

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.



U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle State Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-03-2011		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE All Wars are Local: Lessons from the Philippine Insurrection				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Todd M. Brost				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Dr. Tami Biddle U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The Philippine Insurrection of 1899-1902 is a little remembered part of US history. The US sent forces halfway around the world to fight a conventional enemy with an ill-defined end state, and then found itself in a protracted insurgency fight that grew increasingly unpopular at home. The US Army had to cope with a lack of knowledge about the people, the local politics, and the terrain. The Army adapted to the challenge and evolved many successful ways of dealing with the insurrection. The parallels to today are uncanny, and it is unfortunate that many of the lessons of a century ago slipped away. This paper will look at the events of the Philippine Insurrection and examine what the US military can learn from it. Particularly important lessons include: 1) not rushing to hand over control to civilian authorities; 2) developing a range of governance measures; 3) retaining the flexibility to deal with local situations; 4) developing civic institutions from the ground up. These lessons retain their utility and can be applied in the future. The US Army ought never to forget the experience of the Philippine Insurrection.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Spanish-American War, Counterinsurgency					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

ALL WARS ARE LOCAL: LESSONS FROM THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

by

Lieutenant Colonel Todd Brost
United States Air Force

Dr. Tami Biddle
Project Adviser

This SRP is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Strategic Studies Degree. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104, (215) 662-5606. The Commission on Higher Education is an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lt Col Todd Brost, USAF
TITLE: All Wars are Local: Lessons from the Philippine Insurrection
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 23 March 2010 WORD COUNT: 5,354 PAGES: 26
KEY TERMS: Spanish-American War, Counterinsurgency
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The Philippine Insurrection of 1899-1902 is a little remembered part of US history. The US sent forces halfway around the world to fight a conventional enemy with an ill-defined end state, and then found itself in a protracted insurgency fight that grew increasingly unpopular at home. The US Army had to cope with a lack of knowledge about the people, the local politics, and the terrain. The Army adapted to the challenge and evolved many successful ways of dealing with the insurrection. The parallels to today are uncanny, and it is unfortunate that many of the lessons of a century ago slipped away. This paper will look at the events of the Philippine Insurrection and examine what the US military can learn from it. Particularly important lessons include: 1) not rushing to hand over control to civilian authorities; 2) developing a range of governance measures; 3) retaining the flexibility to deal with local situations; 4) developing civic institutions from the ground up. These lessons retain their utility and can be applied in the future. The US Army ought never to forget the experience of the Philippine Insurrection.

ALL WARS ARE LOCAL: LESSONS FROM THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

Take up the White Man's burden--
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard¹
-- Rudyard Kipling

Like Rudyard Kipling's Poem, *The White Man's Burden*, the United States' experience during the Philippine Insurrection is either only vaguely recalled by most, or interpreted as an ugly imperialistic episode, better forgotten. Many who do know a bit about these events recall the soldier's saying "civilize them with a Krag" (a reference to the issue rifle of the day), or the water cure, a method of questioning insurgents.² Those who remember the Philippine Insurrection at all remember it for its brutality, mainly due to the controversial nature of the conflict. The US public did not really understand why their sons were halfway around the world, and there was an ongoing, vigorous debate in the country about the US role in the world. Those opposed to the war, and the Filipino insurgents themselves, highlighted the most extreme elements of the fighting in order to delegitimize US actions. This caused the war to slowly slip out of US public consciousness over the years, sort of like a bad experience one wants to forget. But forgetting a searing experience is a mistake for any society. Many of the harsh lessons derived from the Philippine Insurrection could have helped to shape US actions in the subsequent one hundred years.

In 1898 the US sent forces halfway around the world to fight a conventional enemy with an ill-defined end state, and then found itself in a protracted insurgency fight that grew unpopular at home. The US Army had to cope with a lack of knowledge about the people, the local politics, and the terrain. The American public struggled with the

nation's new role in the world, and they disagreed with each other over their conclusions. All of these things sound familiar to our ears today, but some of the differences between how the US handled the Philippines and how it has handled Iraq and Afghanistan bear examining. Maybe the modern world can learn a thing or two from the experiences of a century ago. It is worth examining some of the contrasts and comparisons between US behavior during the Philippine Insurrection and its behavior in the era of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars.

The underlying theme emerging from the history of the Philippine Insurrection is the need to adapt to local conditions and to have the flexibility to do so. While there was pressure from some quarters to hand government control over to civilians, the military did retain both military *and* governing responsibilities for two to three years depending on the location. This combining of the two responsibilities led to a better understanding of the local environment by the commanders, and made their task easier ultimately. Also, local commanders had the flexibility to deal with the wide variety of situations they found themselves in across the islands. This allowed them to tailor responses to situations rather than have it dictated from Manila (or Washington). Finally, the Army built the Philippine institutions from the ground up. The Spanish, who had held imperial control over the Philippines since the 16th century, had done little to encourage local governance, so the US tendency to focus on local efforts rather than national efforts had a tangible impact on populations that were the key to the counterinsurgency fight. After a review of the key events of the conflict, this paper will explore each of these areas, and will conclude with policy implications for today's political and military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Background

The Philippine islands consist of 7,107 islands that are mostly mountainous with some coastal plains.³ The climate is tropical and, in the late 19th century, the land tended to be heavily forested with limited road networks. While the area around Manila was developed, roads in the rest of the islands tended to be nearly impassable to a modern army, especially during tropical rains.⁴ Many regions had no trails at all for moving goods or people. Because of this, much internal trade was dependent on small craft sea commerce, which made it vulnerable to naval interdiction.

This island character makes the Filipino population extremely diverse with numerous ethnic groups including Negritos from New Guinea, Indonesians, Malaysians, European mestizos, and Chinese—with these divided into many sub-groups.⁵ In 1898 there were 27 languages identified in use throughout the Philippines.⁶ The Filipino people also practiced multiple religions, though the vast majority were Roman Catholic. However, there were and are a great many Islamic Moros. This religious diversity still causes tension within the islands.⁷ One of the dominant ethnic groups on Luzon was the Tagalogs, who were the leaders of the Philippine Independence movement; but ethnic rivalries between Tagalogs and other groups would later undercut revolutionary unity.

The Spanish had ruled the Philippines since the 16th century, and while the colonial government was in charge, the ruling class or “principales”, made up of chieftains, wealthy landowners and business owners, controlled local politics.⁸ As the Spanish attempted to squeeze more profit out of the Philippines in the 1800s, the resulting turmoil began to lay the seeds for revolution. A nationalist movement,

centered in the Tagalog ethnic area of Cavite, arose in 1896 and Emilio Aguinaldo took control of this emerging movement shortly thereafter. The Spanish imperial government acted to neutralize this threat, and by December of 1897 the rebel leader Aguinaldo accepted a deal that led to his banishment to Hong Kong.⁹

War against Spain. The Spanish-American War began as a dispute over the Cuban bid for independence from Spain. By the 1890s there was a large Cuban revolutionary movement committed to eliminating Spain's 400 year rule of the island, and the US public was sympathetic to the independence cause. The US, led by a cautious but sympathetic President William McKinley, pressured Spain to end the conflict and negotiated autonomy for Cuba to begin in 1898. After riots broke out in Havana in January of 1898, the US sent the battleship USS Maine to Cuba to ensure the safety of US citizens. On the morning of 15 February, 1898, a large explosion rocked the USS Maine, and she sank, killing 266 sailors.¹⁰ At the time it was not clear if the Spanish were responsible, and it is not clear even today. Nonetheless, the event led to a US blockade of Cuba, a Spanish declaration of war on 23 April, 1898, and a reciprocal declaration by the US on 25 April, 1898.¹¹

McKinley did not want to go to war with Spain; he saw war as "an uncontrollable process that, once entered upon, dictated its own course and results." He added that once war had begun, "The statesman could do little but ride the whirlwind and cope with the chaos it left behind."¹² McKinley was under immense domestic pressure from both anti-imperialist groups that supported the Cuban independence movement and expansionist groups that supported action as a step towards the US obtaining its own quasi-empire. These pressures were increased by sensationalist elements of the press

using so-called “yellow journalism” tactics to whip the flames of frenzy in the US in order to sell more newspapers. These tactics blurred fact and fiction, contained hyperbole and sensationalism, overemphasized the negative, and were motivated by the publisher’s self-interest.¹³ As one biographer of influential *New York Journal* publisher William Randolph Hearst put it, “It was an unnecessary war. It was the newspapers’ war. Above all, it was Hearst’s war.”¹⁴ Others have disputed this assertion, but the press coverage of events in Cuba was an influence on the political climate of the time.¹⁵

The US operations in the Philippines were at first a sideshow in the Spanish-American War, a blow against the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay that would prevent the Spaniards from reinforcing their forces in the main area of interest, Cuba. Also the capture of Manila might be used as leverage with Spain over Cuba.¹⁶ On 1 May 1898, Commodore George Dewey led his Asiatic Squadron into Manila Bay and destroyed the Spanish fleet in a rout. But naval forces alone could not take and hold Manila so President McKinley made the decision to send an expeditionary force under Major General Wesley Merritt, US Army. The key question now was, what is the objective of US forces in the Philippines? But a lack of clarity regarding this fundamental strategic principle would bedevil the commanders and the soldiers in the Philippines for years to come. Maj. Gen. Merritt met with President McKinley on 12 May, but afterwards he still did not fully understand the objective. Later he received further clarification: “reduction of Spanish power...and of giving order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States”¹⁷ But it was not clear how long the US would retain possession of the Philippines. The same groups that pressured President McKinley into war with Spain in the first place were now advocating different paths with respect to the

future status of the Philippines. Imperialists wanted the US to keep possession of the islands as both a strategic naval base and an economic resource to exploit. Anti-imperialists wanted the US to get out of the Philippines as soon as possible. This put McKinley in a political bind, and he handled it like many politicians do, by being vague. An undefined approach enabled him to see which way the sentiments ran and to see how events unfolded in the Philippines in order to adjust guidance in the future. This of course made the US Army's task much more difficult, led to continued lobbying by both domestic US factions, and gave hope to Filipino insurgent leaders that they could influence the US policy.

As war neared in the Philippines, Aguinaldo was encouraged by US authorities to return to the Philippines, and the US even arranged for his transportation by ship.¹⁸ Commodore Dewey and other US officials thought they could use his revolutionary movement to help drive the Spanish out. Beyond that, however, they do not appear to have given the matter much thought. Aguinaldo had his own agenda, unsurprisingly. He declared independence in June, and by July he had formed a revolutionary government. Philippine forces began to take control over the provinces; by the time the US expeditionary force arrived, the stage was set for conflict. This complex political, geographic, and ethnic environment was what the United States faced as it prepared to take action in the Philippines in 1898.

On 30 June 1898 the initial US Army forces arrived at Manila Bay, and over the next two months, American forces built their strength and took up positions in the hot, muddy trenches on the outskirts of Manila. They faced a roughly equal number (13,000) of Spanish soldiers. Following a period of artillery bombardment, US Army

forces stormed the Spanish fortifications on 13 August 1898 and, following a brief but intense fight, forced a Spanish surrender. Even during the fighting, US forces were concerned about keeping Filipino forces out of Manila, going so far as to bar their entry. Shortly thereafter, Maj. Gen. Merritt left to advise the peace delegation in Spain, and command fell to Maj. Gen. Elwell Otis. General Otis was now faced with bigger problem than the Spanish or the occupation of Manila: he was surrounded by a Filipino revolutionary army that felt betrayed, and that controlled the majority of the island provinces.¹⁹

Conventional war against the Philippine Army of Liberation. Finally in December 1898 President McKinley provided some additional guidance, directing Maj. Gen. Otis to occupy and administer the entire Philippines under the policy of “benevolent assimilation.”²⁰ This policy declaration followed the formal acquisition of the Philippines from the Spanish as a result of the Treaty of Paris signed 10 December 1898. McKinley made a point that the US was there to protect Filipinos, their rights and their property, not exploit them. He stated that the Army was to “win the confidence, respect, and affection of the inhabitants of the Philippines.”²¹ This guidance did not clarify how long the US would administer the islands; it did mean, however, that the Army would need to break out of Manila and spread its control, starting across the main island of Luzon.

The McKinley administration believed they could get the people of the Philippines to accept becoming part of the United States, and there were some factions of wealthy Filipinos who supported this prospect. Based on reports from Maj. Gen. Otis, President McKinley began to believe the majority of Filipinos would accept US rule, and that the revolutionary movement was led by a few Tagalog extremists.²² Correspondingly,

McKinley did not want to bring about a colonial government by force; he held out hope that the revolutionary factions in the Philippines would come around seeing the benefits of US rule. Conversely, the revolutionaries were hoping to gain foreign recognition, and to further consolidate their hold over the country before fighting the Americans.²³

On the evening of 4 February 1899, after nearly five months of negotiations and heightened tensions, skirmishing broke out along the lines. US forces subsequently began a series of offensives that drove the Army of Liberation out of the area immediately around Manila. Simultaneously, insurgent forces attempted an uprising inside Manila proper, but this was put down in less than three weeks. This outbreak of hostilities was not welcomed in Washington since the American administration was still trying to negotiate with the Filipino revolutionaries. Now however, there seemed to be no going back.

After more than a month of preparations, US forces launched an offensive into northern Luzon where the Philippine Republic's capital, Malolos, was located. The intent was to destroy the Army of Liberation. This offensive was characterized by the incredible difficulty of moving through the thick brush, swollen creeks, and poorly mapped terrain of the island. While US forces reached Malolos, the Army of Liberation slipped away. The theme would be repeated in April-May, and again in October-November 1899 when Aguinaldo's forces slipped away from attempts to encircle them. But these campaigns finally convinced Aguinaldo that his forces could not defeat the US Army conventionally. He therefore began a strategy of guerilla war against the American occupation in November 1899.

Counterinsurgency. The Filipino strategy was to outlast US patience by making the war too painful for the US to continue. Aguinaldo's forces sought to inflict casualties on the US and prolong the war in order to erode US popular support. Insurgent commanders were instructed to avoid direct confrontation with US troops when they did not hold the advantage, and to fight instead by ambush. One commander urged guerillas that if they had "100 cartridges they should use no more than ten a year and thus prolong the war for ten years."²⁴ The revolutionaries would also kill collaborators such as scouts or town officials, often in a very public manner, to deter other Filipinos from joining the US side.²⁵

As the US presidential election of 1900 began to unfold, Aguinaldo and his deputies began to pin their hopes on the idea that they could influence the American public and thereby change US policy towards the Philippines. President McKinley's opponent in the election, William Jennings Bryan, was an anti-imperialist and advocate of US withdrawal from the Philippines, so Filipino revolutionaries thought that if they could last until fall of 1900, they might gain their independence through the US political process.²⁶ One Filipino revolutionary propaganda document went so far as to say "the triumph of Bryan is a triumph of the cause of the Filipinos."²⁷

The revolutionaries also hoped for foreign support, but they were not very successful in gaining it. Chinese revolutionaries supported the cause, and Filipinos hoped that an uprising in China would tie down more American troops.²⁸ The Japanese were also sympathetic, but were careful in their approach to the war. A small number of Japanese "volunteer" officers advised the Filipino revolutionaries, but Japan was unsuccessful in shipping arms to them. The US blockade was effective at preventing

any large arms shipment from Japan or elsewhere, so the Filipinos were limited in both rifles and ammunition.²⁹

Despite the unclear initial objectives, the US settled on an ultimate goal of US civil governance for the entire island chain with Filipino participation. McKinley's "benevolent assimilation" policy meant the US would seek to better the situation for the average Filipino so that he/she would come to see the advantages of US rule and thereby accept the situation. One revolutionary leader called this a "policy of attraction," and lamented "it is not strange that they continue attracting many sympathizers."³⁰ US soldiers built schools, roads, and sanitation works, set up governance that involved more Filipinos than the Spanish ever did, encouraged trade, and reformed tax codes. These efforts were highly effective at improving the average Filipino's life, and proved to be a powerful means of leverage against the insurgency.

The US also had to provide security for the Filipino supporters and those Filipinos who wished to support the US efforts but were afraid to do so. Despite the direction to spread control throughout the islands, the Army lacked the manpower to quickly impose its will all across the hundreds of islands at once; the total US troop level was approximately 63,000 in February 1900 with only less than half on the main island of Luzon.³¹ The Army wanted to begin by controlling Luzon, believing that if they pacified the heart of the insurgency, the Tagalog region of Southern Luzon, the rest of the archipelago would follow. But events, opportunities, and direction from Washington encouraged the Army to spread its forces thin throughout the islands, making it difficult to execute this sequence.

Examples of this dispersion could be found on the islands of Panay and Cebu, where the wealthy Filipino landowners preferred US presence to what they saw as Tagalog rule of the revolutionaries. They convinced Maj. Gen. Otis that the islands were safe, and only a small number of forces would be required to maintain order. But when US forces arrived they found an imported insurgent movement coupled with banditry, and their struggles siphoned more troops away from Luzon. Army commanders on these islands were initially able to control only the larger towns, but slowly they wore down the insurgents who were not resupplied from Luzon, and the insurgencies there fizzled out.³²

Northern Luzon was largely friendly to the Americans due to the hostility of the populace to the Tagalogs, so initial resistance was light. However revolutionaries from outside this area conducted terrorist campaigns against local Filipino officials, and continued to fight against the American forces throughout late-1900 to mid-1901. The Army response was to launch offensives against the guerrillas, concentrate the population of select villages, and destroy crops in areas when insurgents were active. By mid-1901, the US Army was able to pacify the region, capitalizing on the hostility of the local population against the guerilla tactics.³³

The non-Tagalog areas in Southern Luzon were a bit more difficult for the US to control. The guerrillas withdrew into the hills, largely avoided the Army and tried to control the remote areas. The Americans' benevolent assimilation policies won over the populace, causing them to support the US with indigenous police forces, while the Army sought to cut the rebel's food supply and pursue the guerrillas in the hills. Like Northern Luzon, most resistance was over by mid-1901.³⁴

The Tagalog area of Southern Luzon was much different. The population was highly supportive of Philippine independence, and the Tagalog elite were leaders of the movement. Local leaders, wary of cooperation with the US, either remained neutral or actively undermined the US effort. The Guerrillas controlled the majority of the population and towns in this region. Even by November 1901, there was a very active resistance in Southern Luzon, and addressing it demanded a major effort by the Americans, led by Brig. Gen. J. Franklin Bell. As the new commander in this region, Bell recognized the failure of the benevolence policy and sought to isolate the guerrillas from local support, to protect the friendly population, and to punish those aiding the revolution.³⁵ He told his officers to be “considerate and courteous in manner, but firm and relentless in action.”³⁶

Bell’s campaign was highlighted by his extensive use of circulars to communicate with both his own troops and the Filipino population.³⁷ He established zones of reconcentration where US forces provided schools, medical care, and employment. Outside of these areas the Army would destroy anything of use to the rebels to include crops and shelter, and Bell instituted a pass system for travel to control movement of personnel. Bell also jailed those suspected of aiding the insurgents. With much of the Philippines pacified by late 1901, American forces were freed up, and Bell made extensive use of numerous patrols to search for guerrillas and supplies. The wealthy landowners found it too expensive to support the insurgents, and the guerrillas in the field could hardly rest and resupply. The last rebel commander in the area surrendered in April 1902.³⁸

In contrast to Brig. Gen. Bell's campaign, the commander on the island of Samar, Brig. Gen. Jacob H. Smith launched a bloodier fight to control this sparsely populated southern island. The war in Samar was brutal; it was taken by many to be representative of the *entire* Philippine Insurrection, even though it was not. The impetus for the brutality was the massacre of 48 soldiers of the 9th Infantry in the town of Balangiga on 28 September, 1901.³⁹ American soldiers, already stoked by a desire for revenge, were further encouraged by Brig. Gen. Smith. One example of the type of rhetoric Smith used was when he told Major Littleton Walker, the Marine battalion commander, "I wish you to kill and burn. The more you kill and burn, the better you will please me."⁴⁰ Smith's strategy was to destroy crops, livestock, and houses to starve the insurgents, and to force the population to stop supporting them. This strategy was ineffective, and in early 1902 his superior, Brig. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee, pressured Smith to adopt Brig Gen Bell's approach. By April 1902, the last of the resistance was over, but the viciousness of the fighting lingered in the memories of many of those involved. Samar was remembered within the US Marine Corps with toast to veterans of this campaign: "Stand Gentlemen, he served on Samar!"⁴¹

Lessons and Policy Guidance

Don't rush to hand over control to civilians. There are some tasks in a counterinsurgency that are largely military, notably providing security for the population. Indeed, the underpinning of a successful counterinsurgency campaign is providing security to the populace. Army Field Manual FM 3-24, developed in the midst of the US-Iraq War, states "controlling the level of violence is a key aspect of the struggle...a more benign security environment allows civilian agencies greater opportunity to

provide their resources and expertise. It thereby relieves military forces of this burden.”⁴² This allure though can lead to a rush to hand over governance to civilians as fast as possible, and perhaps to overestimate the level of security that exists in order to “relieve the burden.” The US Army in the Philippines worked town by town to provide this security, and carefully set up police forces and auxiliary units to have the Filipino population take some ownership over this crucial task.⁴³

Develop a whole range of governance measures; do not focus exclusively on security. Because there was no civilian administration to turn to, local commanders had to develop a whole range of governance measures, especially if they were to follow the US policy of benevolent assimilation. In 1900, a captain in charge of a town was not able to turn to a civilian administrator in to provide services to the population; he was, instead, on his own. US troops enthusiastically built schools and even taught in them, and these efforts were very well received by the Filipino population. The US secularized the educational system, patterned after the US system. (Interestingly enough, this had been a demand of the revolutionaries.⁴⁴) The US Army did not want to live in unhealthy conditions so soldiers did a great deal of work to improve sanitation—and the population benefited. Proper waste disposal was organized, and a town’s inhabitants would be required to clean town facilities regularly.⁴⁵ Transportation into backcountry areas was difficult, so the Army took to road and bridge building to improve their mobility. Again, the Filipino people benefited.

Besides services for the town, a local commander also had to construct a town government. He had to first organize elections, but in some areas it was difficult to get people to participate due to fears of retribution by insurgents. Commanders would

oftentimes take actions that would not be acceptable today, and in truth were not sanctioned by Army Headquarters in Manila. They might lock villagers in a room and make them vote, appoint people outright, or even put former insurgents in charge to co-opt them – all depending on the local conditions.⁴⁶ The commanders felt it was more important to get a local government up and functioning rather than have a model electoral process.

The contemporary Army must do everything possible to avoid alienating local populations through arbitrary treatment or brute force. In counterinsurgency operations it is essential that the Army find ways to convince locals to take responsibility for self-governance. The local population must feel an investment in—and thus a desire to preserve—the local governmental institutions that provide for stability and predictability.

An Army captain would have to develop a tax infrastructure to support the town. Townspeople could not spend more than the economy could produce so was essential to get the local economy up and going. Trade was an important part of the economy and some areas were very dependent on sea trade due to poor roads. Some areas were dependant on agriculture, others on hemp export. Local commanders had to take specific conditions into account and tailor policies to suit local conditions and cultures.⁴⁷ In a capitalist, democratic system, security and economic productivity go hand-in-hand.

Don't rely on "one size fits all" methods. One size fits all does not work in counterinsurgency. The extremely diverse population, terrain, local political situation, and economics in the Philippines demanded a flexible response by the US Army. This often times is not the Army's strong point, but conditions in the Philippines created an environment where flexibility was applied, albeit not always on purpose. The

decentralization of authority, often due to distance or poor communications (but sometimes due to the trust of superiors) led to some leeway in how a garrison or town was run.⁴⁸ One example of this flexibility was the use of indigenous troops. Largely officially prohibited, unit commanders sometimes would make agreement with local groups and form unofficial auxiliary units. These units were essential to scouting, patrolling and policing the remote bush of the islands.⁴⁹ Eventually, in 1901, Army Headquarters in Manila relented and lifted the prohibition on arming Filipinos.

Build the institutions from the bottom up. One hundred years ago Americans would not have looked at government as a top-down driven enterprise. In that era, government was about the local town council or county government, and services were provided at that level, not from the federal government. Also, with a large part of the American Expeditionary Force being volunteers and militia, they were less likely to be willing to answer to a large Army bureaucracy. This is not to say the Army did not try to dictate policies from Manila, but it retained a flexibility that reflected the norms and expectations of the era. Roads and schools were constructed by the townspeople, and by local US Army units. The local commanders appointed and ran police forces. This bottom up approach allowed Filipinos to see benefits in their town at a level they never saw from the Spanish or from the Revolutionary government. They were able to play a role in - and take ownership of – their own progress.

Conclusion

The contemporary US military cannot shy away from occupation and administration duties when they are necessary and unavoidable. In the aftermath of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, the US military was quick to attempt

to hand over control to civilian authorities (both American and indigenous). In Iraq the Coalition Provisional Authority took over control of governance of Iraq from the military a month after the invasion; it was later dissolved, and control handed over to the Iraqis in June of 2004. The security environment was not even close to satisfactory, but nevertheless, the US pushed this transfer of control from military to civilian. While this approach was done largely for political reasons, (American policymakers wanted to hand Iraq back over to the Iraqis as quick as possible) the US government missed an opportunity to impose order and reconstruction from the beginning, with soldiers on the spot, from the moment Saddam Hussein's government disintegrated.

Nation building must start from the ground up, not the top down. This is not to say that central governance is not important, it just is not the most important thing. If the center of gravity is the population, the population will see more tangible results at the local level than from big, centrally-driven projects. The money that the US has pumped into Afghanistan at the top levels of Afghan government has often been a source of corruption, not a solution to problems. A report prepared for the US Agency for International Development stated that "the unprecedented large inflows of international assistance and the pressures to commit development aid quickly carry associated vulnerabilities to corruption."⁵⁰ It is perhaps not surprising that "Afghanistan ranked 179th out of 180 on Transparency International's 2009 list of the world's most corrupt countries, ahead of only Somalia."⁵¹

The US military will need to further develop its doctrine and to enhance and emphasize training when it comes to civil affairs and occupation duties after a conflict. When the Army created separate civil affairs units, it sent the message to commanders

that this function was somehow separate from war fighting. Certainly there was never an occupation exercise at the National Training Center prior to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today's US military has learned that postwar stabilization is key to the task of fighting and winning the nation's wars. What they need to remember in the years to come is that training for these critical tasks must be part of part of what combat units do, and not slip into the comfortable, old, pre-9/11 habits focused on major combat operations alone.

The US military put down the insurgency in the Philippines in less than three years, which seemed lengthy at the time. Today, a mere three years seems remarkable. The US Army in the Philippines had the flexibility to adapt to the various local conditions it found itself in all across the widely scattered islands. The Army also did not quickly hand over control of governing the Philippines to civilian authorities; out of necessity commanders developed a strong grasp of local conditions and idiosyncrasies. This understanding, coupled with flexibility, allowed the commanders in the field to tailor their responses to events as appropriate. These responses were focused at the local level, so the average Filipino saw tangible results from US efforts to improve their lives, and this, coupled with a secure environment, led to the American success in the Philippines.

The US counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines was a hard fought and at times painful experience that the US military should have learned from for the future. Perhaps because it had been painful and difficult, the experience was largely forgotten. Current US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan however have lent a sense of perspective and renewed interest in this little-known chapter in history. It is important

that the US military attempt to mine the past for the gems of wisdom it may contain. A dedicated and robust study of history can help an institution avoid the pitfalls and emulate the successes of its predecessors.

Endnotes

¹ Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands," *McClure's Magazine*, (1899) Note - Rudyard Kipling's poem first appeared in *McClure's Magazine* in 1899. Some saw it as a call to for the US to embrace British-style imperialism, but others interpreted it as a warning of the pitfalls imperialism would bring.

² John Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The United States Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), vii.

³ *CIA Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rp.html> (accessed December 8, 2010).

⁴ Robert Ramsey III, *Savage Wars of Peace: Case Studies of Pacification in the Philippines, 1900-1902*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2007), 20-21.

⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid*, 4.

⁷ Major Thomas Bundt, "An Unconventional War: The Philippine Insurrection 1899," *Military Review*, May-June 2004, 9.

⁸ Brian Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, (Lawrence, KS, University Press of Kansas, 2000), 16.

⁹ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags*, 14.

¹⁰ Naval History and Heritage Command, "The Destruction of the USS Maine," <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq71-1.htm> (accessed March 21, 2011).

¹¹ David Silby, *A War of Frontier and Empire, the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902*, (New York, Hill and Wang, 2007), 34.

¹² Graham Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army and the Spanish-American War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971), 117.

¹³ David Spencer, *The Yellow Journalism: The Press and America's Emergence as a World Power*, (Chicago, Northwestern University Press, 2007), ix. Note—many contemporary writers compare the yellow journalism tactics to today's cable news media approach.

¹⁴ William Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Scribner's, 1961), 144.

¹⁵ W. Joseph Campbell, *The Spanish-American War: American Wars and the Media in Primary Documents* (Westport, CT, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005) 1-2.

¹⁶ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 5.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 15.

¹⁹ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 24-25.

²⁰ Ibid, 30.

²¹ Ibid, 9.

²² Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 37.

²³ Ibid, 35.

²⁴ Brian Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, (Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 132.

²⁵ Ibid, 133-134, 165.

²⁶ Ramsey, *Savage Wars of Peace*, 24-25.

²⁷ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 100.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 100-101.

³⁰ Ibid, 95.

³¹ Telegram, Maj. Gen. Otis to Adjutant General, received 6 February 1900, *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain, Vol 2*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 1142; Linn, *The Philippine War 1899-1902*, 255.

³² Linn, *The Philippine War*, 65-87.

³³ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War*, 164.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 259.

³⁶ Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, address, 1 Dec 1901, *Telegraphic Circulars and General Orders, Regulating Campaign Against Insurgents and Proclamations and Circular Letters, Relating to Reconstruction after Close of War in Provinces of Bantagas, Laguana, and Mindoro, P.I. Issued by Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell, U. S. Army, Commanding Brigade*,

from December 1st, 1901 to December 1st, 1902, comp. M. F. Davis (Bantangas, Philippines, 1902).

³⁷ Robert Ramsey III, *A Masterpiece of Counter guerrilla Warfare: BG J. Franklin Bell in the Philippines, 1901-1902*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2007), 7.

³⁸ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 262.

³⁹ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 248-249. Note: The inhabitants of Balangiga and guerrillas rose up against the three officers and seventy-one enlisted men of C Company, 9th Infantry. This action was planned for some time as a captured letter from the town president to the local revolutionary leader detailed a plan to “strategically rise up” against the US garrison. Tragically, this letter was intercepted a month before the massacre, but was not read in time.

⁴⁰ U. S. Congress, *Trials or Courtmartials in the Philippine Islands in Consequence of Certain Instructions*, (Washington, DC, 1903) 2-3.

⁴¹ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 306.

⁴² U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-24 Counterinsurgency, (Washington DC: US Department of the Army, December 2006) 2-1, para 2-3.

⁴³ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 283. See also Bell’s *Telegraphic Circulars* No. 3, Dec 9, 1901.

⁴⁴ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 87.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 60.

⁴⁶ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 200-202.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*.

⁴⁸ Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, 284.

⁴⁹ Linn, *The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War*, 110,126,156.

⁵⁰ Ernest Leonardo, “Assessment of Corruption in Afghanistan”, (Washington, DC, March 2009), 5, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADO248.pdf (accessed March 20, 2011).

⁵¹ Sayed Salahuddin, “Analysis: Why Can’t Afghanistan Tackle Corruption?”, *Reuters*, September 8, 2010, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/09/08/us-afghanistan-corruption-analysis-idUSTRE6871KP20100908> (accessed March 20, 2010).

