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The Philippine Insurrection (1899-1902): development of the U.S. Army's counterinsurgency policy

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THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION (1899-1902):
DEVELOPMENT OF THE U.S. ARMY'S
COUNTERINSURGENCY POLICY

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for a degree of
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In

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in Liberal Arts

by
Frank L. Andrews
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ABSTRACT

Counterinsurgency is one of the most difficult forms of conflict an army can face. After defeating Spanish forces in Manila during the Spanish-American War, a well-developed insurrection, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, challenged the United States Army for nearly four years. Although the army in 1898 was unprepared for a large-scale, two-front war, it conducted an extremely effective counterinsurgency campaign 7000 miles from home in inhospitable terrain.

Despite lacking a formal, written counterinsurgency doctrine, the frontier experiences of the army, orally passed on from one generation of soldiers to the next, provided invaluable lessons that could be applied in the Philippines. This was only of limited benefit, however, since the vast majority of soldiers who fought in the Philippines were volunteers, with limited military experience. The army's senior leaders, many veterans of the Civil War and Indian campaigns, were able to apply their experiences and develop effective strategies to counter the insurrection. General Elwell S. Otis

immediately realized that a military solution alone would not end the insurgency. By implementing President William McKinley's policy of benevolent assimilation, Otis attempted drive a wedge between the Philippine people and the guerrillas. The insurgents countered this tactic by resorting to a campaign of terror to insure continued support from the people. Otis' subordinates, realizing policy of attraction had failed, then developed and implemented a strategy designed to isolate the guerillas from their base of support, the village, and then defeat the guerrillas militarily. This strategy, belatedly endorsed by General Arthur MacArthur, eventually caused the collapse of the insurrection in many areas of the Philippines. In the final stages of the conflict, the army adopted more repressive measures, which stiffened resistance. Only when the Americans employed the policies of conciliation and repression in the correct proportion were they able to end the insurrection.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The brutal repression of the rebellion in Cuba by the Spanish in 1896 captured America's attention as the jingoistic press denounced the Spanish commander, General Valeriano "Butcher" Weyler. As thousands of Cubans died in detention camps, Congress passed a resolution proposing that the United States "employ its good offices to gain Spain's recognition of Cuban independence."¹ Faced with increasing pressure for American intervention, newly elected President William McKinley attempted to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. However, the *USS Maine* exploded and sank in the Havana harbor on the night of February 15, 1898, effectively ending McKinley's efforts to avoid a war between the United States and Spain.

Ten days later, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, secretly cabled Commodore George

¹John Elsberg, ed., Army Historical Series, American Military History, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1989), pp. 320-321.

Dewey, Commander of the Asiatic squadron, informing him that, in the event of war, he was to conduct offensive operations against the Spanish fleet in the Philippine Islands. On April 22, three days after Congress declared war, Dewey received his orders to "proceed at once to the Philippines" and capture or destroy the Spanish fleet.² As Dewey steamed from Hong Kong towards Manila Bay and glory, he could not have foreseen the consequences of his resounding victory over the Spanish fleet on May 1. America's involvement in the Philippines began after Dewey requested additional manpower from Washington, since he lacked the ground troops necessary to defeat the Spanish garrison in Manila. Two days later, the Secretary of War, Russell Alger, ordered 5,000 troops to the Philippines.

With the eventual defeat of the Spanish, the United States would inherit not only the Philippine archipelago, but also an insurrection that the Spanish had been fighting for some time. This would be America's first experience with modern guerilla warfare. Over 126,000 American soldiers served in the Philippines. The total cost would be \$400 million, with 4,234 Americans killed in

²Stanley Karnow, In Our Image, America's Empire in the Philippines (New York: Ballentine Books, 1989), pp. 101-2.

action, thousands more wounded, and tens of thousands of Filipino casualties.³

Despite the accidental nature of America's involvement in the Philippines, the United States Army was able to wage what one historian has called its most successful counterinsurgency campaign of all time.⁴ What makes the army's success surprising is that in 1898, the army was completely unprepared to fight a large-scale war 7,000 miles from the United States. Furthermore, the Commander in Chief, President McKinley, failed to provide clear guidance to his generals in the field. In fact, after McKinley dispatched troops to the Philippines, he told a friend that he "could not have told where those darned island were within two thousand miles."⁵ McKinley certainly did not grasp the size and intensity of the Filipino rebellion against the Spanish. More importantly, he failed to consider what potential impact the insurgency might have on the American forces sent to fight the Spanish in the Philippines.

American victory in the Philippine Insurrection was not a foregone conclusion, as some have argued. In 1898,

³Ronald E. Dolan, Philippines, A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 6.

⁴Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 324.

⁵Karnow, In Our Image, p. 105.

the Regular Army numbered only 27,000 soldiers. The nation lacked a pool of trained reserves and the National Guard suffered from poor training, leadership, and outdated equipped. Initially, the Cuban theater of the Spanish-American War was the higher priority for troops, receiving a majority of the Regular Army units. Later, the Boxer Rebellion in China reduced the number of soldiers available to fight in the Philippines. Even when American troop strength peaked in 1901, the Filipino insurgents outnumbered American forces by a ratio of at least two to one. The army also lacked a formal written counterinsurgency doctrine. Counter-insurgency, as defined in current army doctrine, encompasses "those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency."⁶ Given all these problems, how was the army able to develop and implement an effective counterinsurgency policy to pacify the Philippines?

To answer this question, one must first realize that, since its inception, the army had fought numerous unconventional enemies and conducted several large-scale pacification operations. Additionally, experiences and

⁶Field Manual 101-5-1, Operational Terms and Graphics (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 1997), p. 1-40.

lessons learned during the Civil War and the Indian campaigns, while not directly applicable in the Philippines, gave army leaders experience in fighting an irregular enemy. Secondly, from the beginning of the Philippine Insurrection, senior army leaders realized that military actions alone would not solve the problems in the Philippines. Instead, they correctly deduced that the solution was primarily a political one.

By successfully implementing the policy of attraction, in the form of President McKinley's idea of benevolent assimilation, the American government offered the Filipinos basically the same things they initially had fought to secure from the Spanish, namely, political, economic, and social reforms. When conventional military operations and the policy of attraction failed to end the insurgency, commanders in the field employed the policy of chastisement through the measured use of force under the provisions of General Orders 100. By using conciliation and repression in the correct proportion, American military leaders developed a policy that undermined the insurgents' will to resist. Finally, United States authorities utilized an effective three-pronged strategy designed to win the support of the local inhabitants,

isolate the insurgents from the populace, and defeat the guerrillas militarily in the field.

The army did not develop effective counterinsurgency policies overnight. Initially focused on conventional military operations and civic actions, the army was slow to react to a change to guerrilla warfare by Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of the Philippine revolutionary movement. Additionally, the commanding generals failed to devise an all-encompassing strategy to defeat the insurrection. Instead, they endorsed policies that their subordinate commanders had created, implemented, and proven effective. It would take over a year of trial and error to find the correct balance between the policies of attraction and chastisement. Since support for the insurrection varied from island to island, and even within provinces on the same island, commanders had to determine which policies to apply. In fact, fighting took place in only thirty-four of the seventy-seven provinces in the Philippines.⁷ The personality of the commander would also determine the pacification policy his units would utilize. By studying the policies of senior army leaders and the campaigns their subordinates conducted in different areas,

⁷ Linn, The Philippine War, p. 185.

one can determine the effectiveness of the various pacification approaches used by each commander.

The geography of the Philippine archipelago would also play an important role, dictating that units be dispersed over wide areas, leaving subordinate commanders even greater flexibility to pacify their sectors. The archipelago consists of over 7,000 islands, of which only 500 are larger than one square mile. In 1898, the total population of the Philippine Islands was well over 7,000,000 inhabitants, spread among 1,000 islands; however, over 95 percent of the people lived on the eleven largest islands.⁸

The geography of the islands led to the development of an extremely diverse population. The eighty-seven tribal groups in the Philippines spoke eight languages with over seventy different dialects. Luzon alone had five major groups (the largest being the Tagalogs), all of which spoke different languages. As a result of Spanish rule and the influence of the friars, the majority of the population was Catholic, while the southern islands, Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago, were primarily Moslem. Manila was the largest city with a population of over

⁸Kenneth Ray Young, The General's General: The Life and Times of General Arthur MacArthur (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), p. 180; Karnow, In Our Image, p. 38.

300,000; however, most of the people lived in small towns and villages concentrated along the coasts. The interior areas were mountainous and contained thick jungles, with few roads, railroads, or trails. The rainy season lasted from the end of May until October, making normally difficult movement in the interior nearly impossible.⁹

Divided by geography, religion, language, race, and culture, the inhabitants of the Philippines were never able to unify to oppose foreign intervention. As a result, Spain faced little resistance when it colonized the islands in 1565. The Spanish imported the same forced labor (*repartimiento*) and taxation and land-grabbing systems (*encomienda*) they had used in Mexico. Catholic friars, when not busy promoting Christianity, acquired large estates and oversaw the local government and tax system. Over time, Filipino resentment against Spanish rule and the abuses of the friars grew steadily.¹⁰

The Philippine revolutionary movement had its origins in a worker's rebellion at an arsenal in the province of Cavite on January 20, 1872. Resentful of being treated as second-class citizens by the *peninsulares*, many

⁹Young, The General's General, p. 180; Karnow, In Our Image, p. 38.

¹⁰Karnow, In Our Image, pp. 49-51, pp. 57-58.

*criollos*¹¹ had begun to identify more with the Filipinos than the Spanish. A disgruntled *criollo* army sergeant planned the uprising. The Spanish brutally suppressed the revolt, publicly executing three *criollo* priests implicated in the plot. This left behind "a sullen resentment that would be exploited by a later revolutionary movement."¹²

The future leaders of the revolutionary movement were sons of the wealthy *mestizo* or *indio* families, or were lawyers, doctors, and other professionals. They had been educated in Manila or attended European universities. Eventually they formed "a small intellectual and professional community in Manila that transcended ethnic barriers."¹³ These *ilustrados*, or enlightened ones, initially wanted equality between Filipinos and Spaniards living in the Philippines, not independence. As Spanish authorities refused to implement even moderate reforms,

¹¹Society in the Philippine Islands was stratified socially, ethnically, culturally, and economically. In descending order were the *penisulares* (Spaniards from Spain), *criollos* (Spaniards born in the Philippines), followed by those of mixed blood, Spanish *mestizos* and Chinese *mestizos*. At the bottom were the *indios*, or native Filipinos. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

¹²Stuart Creighton Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation" The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 32. For a description of the revolt, see Karnow, In Our Image, pp. 65-67.

¹³John Gates, Schoolbooks and Kraggs (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 10.

however, many *ilustrados* became convinced that revolution was the only available alternative.

A national consciousness was slowly forming among many Filipinos. Dr. José Rizal, founder of the Philippine League and an informal spokesman for the "Propaganda Movement," wrote the novel *Noli Me Tangere*, in which he protested Spanish rule in the Philippines and criticized the policies and wealth of the friars. This book had the same galvanizing effect on Filipinos as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had on Americans living in the pre-Civil War North.¹⁴ Because Rizal's book stimulated the growing Filipino nationalist spirit, the Spanish exiled him in 1892. Later arrested in Barcelona and convicted of organizing rebellions, the Spanish executed Rizal in 1896. Spain, concerned with the prospect of more uprisings, sent an additional 4,000 soldiers to the Philippines, bringing total troop strength up to 22,000.¹⁵

The same year Rizal was executed, Andreas Bonifacio formed a secret society called the *Katipunan*. Once Spanish authorities discovered the existence of the *Katipunan*, they acted quickly to prevent the movement from spreading. The police rounded up and imprisoned several

¹⁴ Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁵ Karnow, *In Our Image*, p. 73.

thousand suspected members of the *Katipunan*, torturing and executing many of them. In an effort to prevent the destruction of the *Katipunan*, Bonifacio declared war on Spain on August 29, 1896 and began the Philippine Revolt by attacking an isolated Spanish garrison in Luzon. One of Bonifacio's lieutenants, Emilio Aguinaldo, capably led the rebellion in the province of Cavite, defeating a force of 2,000 Spanish troops who were attempting to drive him out of the province.¹⁶

Aguinaldo sought to capitalize on the emerging nationalist spirit to unite the Filipinos against the Spanish. The result was that, in the face of Spanish repression, the *Katipuneros* and the urban *ilustrados* formed an alliance. Real unity, however, was difficult to achieve and required forceful measures. As Stuart Miller has written,

This alliance was actually the first real expression of modern Filipino nationalism, one that, although partially and temporarily, managed to transcend the very sharp vertical divisions of class and the formidable horizontal, ethnic ones. Passionate ideological positions, however, kept the insurgency divided.¹⁷

¹⁶ Karnow, In Our Image, p. 75.

¹⁷ Miller, Benevolent Assimilation, pp. 33-34.

A power struggle between Bonifacio and Aguinaldo based on religion, ideology, and personality exemplified this division. Aguinaldo, a Chinese *mestizo*, was an *ilustrado* and the leader of the Cavite *Katipunan*. Bonifacio was the son of poor parents, and grew up in a Manila slum. Aguinaldo eventually arrested Bonifacio and later executed him.¹⁸ Aguinaldo consolidated power and emerged as the undisputed leader of the revolt.

A year of fighting followed in Luzon, Panay, and Negros. However, by August 1897, Spanish forces surrounded Aguinaldo's poorly armed soldiers in their stronghold in the mountains of Central Luzon. The Pact of Biac-na-Bato resolved the ensuing stalemate. Under provisions of the pact, Aguinaldo disavowed the rebellion and declared his loyalty to Spain. Additionally, Aguinaldo and twenty-seven of his followers agreed to deportation to Hong Kong. In return, the Spanish promised to pay Aguinaldo 800,000 pesos, institute reforms, and liberalize its rule of the Philippines. Both sides failed to honor the terms of the treaty. The Spanish did not make any political reforms and paid less than half of the money to the rebels, while Aguinaldo used the money he did receive to buy guns and direct the rebellion from Hong

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 34.

Kong. By March 1898, fighting resumed in the provinces in Luzon, and quickly spread to the Visayan Islands.

CHAPTER 2

THE ARMY ON THE EVE OF WAR

Throughout its history, the United States Regular Army had been engaged primarily in unconventional military operations. Although it failed to develop a formal written doctrine to address such operations, soldiers and officers passed the collective wisdom gained from years of frontier service from one generation to the next, ensuring that lessons learned, while not codified, were not forgotten. While this should have prepared the army well for the Philippine Insurrection, America's aversion to maintaining a large, standing army meant that volunteers would comprise the vast majority of the soldiers that fought in the Philippines. In fact, over 90 percent of the initial forces sent to the Philippines were newly raised Volunteer units, many of which had extremely limited military experience.

The Army's first effort at formal instruction in unconventional warfare occurred at West Point in 1835, when Dennis Hart Mahan first offered courses on small-unit

tactics and Indian warfare, based on lessons gleaned from the previous one hundred years of warfare on the American frontier. Mahan taught the cadets to use friendly Indians as scouts and to march deep into Indian territory to destroy their food supplies and villages.¹ These techniques were eventually employed to end the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). The army initially established a cordon of small posts to secure white settlements and patrolled the surrounding countryside to limit the Seminoles' freedom of movement. The conflict finally ended when the army began campaigning in the summer, attacking the Seminoles' villages and destroying their crops hidden deep in nearly impenetrable swampland.²

During the Mexican-American War, Major General Winfield Scott would deal harshly with Mexican bandits, denying them quarter and executing those accidentally captured. Scott also burned villages suspected of harboring guerrillas. However, his soldiers also distributed food, cleaned streets, and maintained schools and hospitals. Such complementary measures were remarkably similar to those implemented in the Philippines

¹Andrew J. Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), pp. 12-13.

²Ibid., p. 10.

fifty years later. Ulysses S. Grant, one of Scott's subordinates, wondered if "the great majority of the Mexican people did not regret our departure as much as they had regretted our coming."³

Likewise, many of the senior officers in the Philippines learned first-hand effective techniques for dealing with partisans and unruly civilians during the Civil War. The last commander of U.S. military forces in the Philippines, Adna Chaffee, had been a subordinate of General Philip Sheridan during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Chaffee helped put the torch to the Loudoun Valley in 1864, in an effort to capture Colonel John S. Mosby's Partisan Rangers.⁴ Just as Chaffee learned from Sheridan, Sheridan as a lieutenant had learned from Colonel George Wright. In a campaign against the Indians in the Washington territory in 1858, Wright had applied techniques he had learned during the Second Seminole War.⁵ While no written doctrine existed to capture lessons learned, the army's extensive knowledge gained fighting unconventional wars or facing insurgents and irregulars in the American Revolution, the Seminole Wars, the Mexican American War, and the American Civil War was not lost. It

³Ibid., p. 16.

⁴Ibid., p. 133.

⁵Ibid., p. 11.

was "transmitted from one generation of soldiers to the next through a combination of official and unofficial writings, curricular materials, conversations, and individual memories."⁶

As important as the tactical lessons learned during the Civil War was the development of General Orders 100, *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field*, originally signed by President Abraham Lincoln on April 24, 1863. The army published it in response to the formation of the Partisan Regulars by the Confederate Army in the spring of 1862. The fact that the Partisan Rangers were an official part of the Confederate Army forced the North to reevaluate its policy concerning irregular forces.

Dr. Francis Lieber, a noted legal scholar, wrote *Guerrilla Parties*, which served as the basis for General Orders 100. In his pamphlet, Lieber divided irregular forces into four categories: the partisan, the guerrilla, the war rebel, and the armed prowler (or bushwhacker). Lieber considered irregular forces legitimate (i.e. partisans) if they were uniformed, enrolled, paid, led by officers, and subordinate to a proper military authority. If an irregular force met

⁶Ibid., pp. 5-6.

these conditions, they were "fully entitled to the laws of war as long as they themselves did not violate them."⁷

Guerrillas, as Lieber defined them, were not tied directly to an army, and "carried on a petty war by raids, extortion, destruction, and massacre."⁸ These guerrilla bands were especially dangerous and fell outside the laws of war because "they could easily evade pursuit by laying down their arms and become insidious enemies."⁹ Although for that reason, guerrillas could be treated harshly, Lieber believed they should be afforded the rights of prisoners of war until their crimes could be proved.

The war rebel and the armed prowler were different matters. Lieber defined the war rebel as a civilian who took up arms against an occupying power. The armed prowler, or bushwhacker, was a civilian who took it upon himself to shoot sentinels. Both wore civilian clothes and hid among the local population. Lieber considered these irregulars to be bandits, and argued that the occupying army should treat them according to their crimes, whether or not they abided by the laws of war.

⁷Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁸Ibid., p. 33.

⁹Ibid.

Likewise, civilians who provided assistance and information to the war rebel or armed prowler deserved similarly harsh treatment.¹⁰

General Orders 100 proscribed the acts committed by irregular bands, and allowed strict punishments such as expulsion, relocation, imprisonment, fines, property confiscation, and possible execution of those who aided the enemy. It also allowed for denying quarter to the guerrillas who gave none or who disguised themselves as civilians.¹¹ Paragraphs 82-85 authorized the death penalty for "murderers, highway robbers, persons destroying property, spies, conspirators, and the part-time guerrilla."¹² For the first time, the army officially recognized the right of retaliation.

Despite the apparently harsh tone of General Orders 100, it also "admonished soldiers to respect the personal and property rights of unarmed citizens, as well as their religious and social customs."¹³ All forms of wanton looting, pillaging, cruel acts, torture, and revenge were strictly prohibited. Lieber believed that a reciprocal relationship existed between the occupying army and the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 34-35.

¹²John Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags (Westport, CT: Yale University Press, 1982) p. 191.

¹³Birtle, U.S. Army, p. 34.

civilians. If the latter took up arms, supported irregulars, or resisted the occupying army, they were committing a crime and could expect harsh treatment from the military. Conversely, if they were compliant, the army should show restraint and, under General Orders 100, "treat civilians with justice and humanity."¹⁴

After the Civil War, General Orders 100 became an established principle of United States military law. By 1875, the curriculum at the United States Military Academy included classes on the provisions of General Orders 100. Internationally, Prussia, France, and Great Britain adopted it as well. General Orders 100 served as the foundation for the Hague Conventions in 1899 and 1907, the first international agreements on the laws of war. Lieber's work officially became part of United States Army doctrine in 1940, when the army incorporated it into Field Manual 27-10, *Rules of Land Warfare*.¹⁵

At the end of the Civil War, the United States Army had an effective and widely accepted counterinsurgency policy. The army was also battle-hardened from four long years of conflict and was arguably the most powerful

¹⁴Brian MacAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 9.

¹⁵Birtle, *U.S. Army*, p. 35; Gates, *Schoolbooks and Kraggs*, p. 191.

military force in the world; however, rapid demobilization changed that. In 1866, Congress set the army's authorized strength at 54,000, but eight years later, reduced it to just over 27,000 officers and men. Desertion, sickness, and discharges meant that on average, less than 20,000 men were present for duty. Congress exacerbated the personnel problem in 1874 when it imposed a force reduction, but did not reduce the total number of units in the army. Most infantry companies consisted of less than forty privates.¹⁶ The army remained roughly at that level of manning until the outbreak of the Spanish-American War.¹⁷

The small size of the regular army meant that promotions for officers were few and far between. An officer often was not promoted until his superior retired or died. In 1877, a lieutenant could expect to reach the rank of major in twenty-five years, and colonel in thirty-five years.¹⁸ The situation worsened to the point that by 1890, the average age of a first lieutenant was forty-five, the average captain fifty years old.¹⁹

¹⁶Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars, The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), pp. 15-16.

¹⁷Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-212, History of Military Mobilization in the U.S. Army, 1774-1945 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 141, pp. 149-150.

¹⁸Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 19.

¹⁹Birtle, U.S. Army, p. 63.

The reconstruction of the South following the Civil War provided these officers with experiences that aided them later in the military administration of the Philippines.²⁰ The district commanders in the South had to deal with matters such as "horse stealing, moonshining, rioting, civil court proceedings, regulating commercial law, public education, fraud, removing public officials, registering voters, [and] holding elections."²¹ After Reconstruction ended in 1877, the regular army's primary mission was the protection of settlers on the western frontier from the Indians. The widely dispersed white settlements and Indian tribes required the army to garrison numerous small outposts, a difficult mission for a small force on the vast frontier, inhabited by over 270,000 Indians. In one military division, there was only one soldier for every one hundred square miles of territory.²² Since regiments were spread over such an expansive area, the army conducted few large-scale operations or maneuvers. By 1898, it could be said that the United States did not have an army in the operational sense of the word. "It possessed instead a large

²⁰Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 66.

²¹John Elsberg, ed., Army Historical Series rev ed. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1989), p. 285.

²²Birtle, U.S. Army, p. 59.

collection of companies, battalions, regiments, and batteries" scattered among eighty posts in the frontier.²³

Despite all of these shortcomings, the regular army would emerge from thirty years of nearly continuous campaigning against the Indians well prepared to fight the Philippine Insurrection. Two specific conditions of the Indian Campaigns provided invaluable experience directly applicable in the Philippines. First, the army fought an enemy who was not clearly distinguishable from his "kinsmen not disposed at the moment to be enemies."²⁴ Both the American Indian and Filipino could "change with bewildering rapidity from friend to foe to neutral, and rarely could one be confidently distinguished from the other."²⁵ Secondly, the army faced an enemy who employed unconventional techniques, and who fought only on his own terms.

Several other lessons learned by the aging lieutenants and captains stationed in remote posts would serve them well when they were rapidly promoted and placed in charge of Regiments and Divisions in the Philippines. As post or garrison commanders on the frontier, they had

²³Graham A. Cosmas, An Army for Empire, The United States Army in the Spanish-American War (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), p. 9.

²⁴Utley, Frontier Regulars, p. 45.

²⁵Ibid.

wrestled with the problem of whether to concentrate forces in critical places or disperse them over wide areas. Company and troop commanders developed innovative techniques to increase their mobility in pursuit of lightly burdened Indians by reducing their columns' reliance on wagon and supply trains. Forward-thinking officers employed native scouts and formed native units to track hostile Indians. Finally, they recognized the importance of separating the renegade Indians from their villages and bases of supply.

Unfortunately, the sheer number of troops required during the Philippine Insurrection meant that volunteers and not the regular army would do most of the fighting. The sudden outbreak of hostilities with Spain led Congress to double the size of the Regular Army to over 58,000 men and officers by the summer of 1898. President McKinley's proclamation of April 23, 1898 called for 125,000 Volunteers to fight the Spanish-American War. Dewey's surprise victory at Manila Bay opened a second front in the war with Spain, and McKinley responded by calling for an additional 75,000 Volunteers on May 25, 1898. These sudden increases in the size of the army left the Army

Quartermaster Department scrambling to equip, train, and supply a force of a quarter of a million men.²⁶

The army lacked stockpiles of arms, ammunition, clothing, and supplies of all kinds. In America's first major conflict to be fought outside the North American continent, the country did not possess a single troopship, and had no plans or preparations to move large groups of soldiers by water. Despite three years of rising tensions with Spain, the army had failed to make mobilization plans. In fact, "there was no organization within the War Department specifically responsible for mobilization planning."²⁷

Supplying and equipping 200,000 volunteers was merely the first problem the army faced. The United States lacked a pool of trained reserves or volunteers. The quality of the National Guard, as many state militias were now called, varied considerably. Although Congress had doubled the amount of funding for firearms for the militias in 1887, most units were still equipped with single-shot, breech loading, black powder Springfield rifles.²⁸ While the regular army was generally well led, trained and equipped, the roughly 100,000 National

²⁶Kreidberg, DA PAM 20-212, pp. 156-61.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 150-52.

²⁸Elsberg, American Military History, p. 287, and p. 323.

Guardsmen were poorly trained and disciplined and suffered from indifferent leadership.²⁹

The Guard had experienced the same problems as the Regular Army with under-strength units. However, thousands of young men caught up in the wave of patriotism sweeping America quickly filled the vacancies. The result was that, despite having experienced Guard units, the Volunteers, who comprised the vast majority of the forces serving in the Philippines, "were inexperienced and untrained recruits."³⁰

The debate over the legality of the Guard serving overseas also compounded problems. Additionally, many state militias also objected to serving under the control of the Regular Army. The Guard rejected an alternative solution, which would have created federal volunteer units with officers appointed by the President.³¹ The states and the federal government reached a compromise when Congress passed an act on April 22, 1898 creating the Volunteer Army, in which soldiers could enlist for one year or the duration of the War with Spain. The Volunteer Army would also consist of the state militias while in Federal Service, meaning that, if the soldiers from a state unit

²⁹Cosmas, An Army for Empire, p. 9.

³⁰Ibid., p. 12.

³¹Elsberg, American Military History, p. 323.

volunteered *en masse*, they would be kept together as a federal volunteer unit. This "ensured that the Philippine War would be fought with two distinct organizations, Regulars and Volunteers."³²

A product of its experiences from the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, and the Indian Campaigns, the regular army on the eve of the Spanish-American War was an extremely experienced force, with an informal pacification doctrine, based on the provisions of General Orders 100, that sought to balance conciliation and repression. Well versed in small units tactics, and familiar with securing local towns and villages, the officers understood the importance of separating belligerents from noncombatants. Officers had no qualms about dealing "the hard hand of war" to those who continued to resist.³³ The destruction of crops and homes, imprisonment, expulsion, and death were all proven techniques of dealing with unruly opponents in Mexico, the American South, and on the western frontier.

The army had evolved by combining the best elements of the old world armies with those of the new world. By imposing "European style discipline, organization, and

³²Linn, The Philippine War, p. 10.

³³Ibid., p. 7.

firepower" on small, mobile units capable of Indian style raiding, the regular army was well equipped to fight insurgents.³⁴ Unfortunately, the majority of the regular army initially deployed for combat in Cuba. The Volunteers heading to the Philippines would have to rely on trial and error.

³⁴Birtle, U.S. Army, p. 9.

CHAPTER 3

CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS AND BENEVOLENT ASSIMILATION

With the nation focused on events in Cuba, the second front that Dewey's victory had opened in the Philippines became an afterthought. President McKinley and his advisors devoted little time or thought to what to do with the Philippines after victory over the Spanish, and gave little guidance to military commanders. McKinley's ignorance of the situation in the Philippines would cause significant problems for his commanders attempting to implement his policies, and would plunge the United States into a costly four-year struggle.

The choice for commander of the Philippine Expedition was Major General Wesley Merritt. A graduate of West Point in 1860, he had served with distinction in the Civil War. Cited six times for gallantry, Merritt was one of the officers who accompanied General Ulysses S. Grant to Appomattox. Merritt was also a veteran of the Indian campaigns, having served briefly with George Custer and

under Philip Sheridan during the Ute campaign. General William Tecumseh Sherman recognized Merritt's ability and had lobbied for his promotion.¹

Merritt requested a force of 14,400 men, half of whom were to be regulars. However, General Nelson A. Miles, the Commanding General of the Army, disagreed, preferring to send only two regular infantry regiments and 13,000 men from the new Volunteer Regiments.² Merritt quickly began to train, drill, clothe, and equip the ragtag groups of volunteers that descended on San Francisco. Merritt's orderly formation and deployment of 8th Corps was a model of efficiency. Assisting him in that monumental endeavor was his capable second in command, Elwell S. Otis.³

Prior to departing for the Philippines, Merritt attempted to get more detailed instructions from President McKinley in a meeting on May 12, 1898. Still not clear afterwards about his mission in the Philippines, the general sent McKinley a letter on May 15, in which he

¹Stanley Karnow, In Our Image (New York: Ballentine Books, 1989), p. 117; Robert M. Utley, Frontiers Regulars (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), p. 338, and p. 367.

²United States, Department of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain, April 15, 1898 to July 30, 1902, (2 vols., Washington, D.C., Center of Military History, 1993), II, 637, 643-44, 647-48. (hereafter cited as Correspondence). This is a reprint edition of the 1902 original.

³Graham A. Cosmas, An Army for Empire (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), pp. 195-6.

astutely noted that "it seems more than probable that we will have the so-called insurgents to fight as well as the Spaniards." Merritt was also not sure if he was to "subdue and hold all Spanish territory in the islands, or merely to seize and hold the capital."⁴ General Miles confused the issue by issuing conflicting sets of orders to Merritt. In a May 14 directive, he ordered Merritt to "occupy such part of the islands" as he was able to do with the force available. However, two days later, he told Merritt that not to conquer extensive territory, but simply establish "a strong garrison to command the harbor of Manila."⁵

McKinley helped little when he ordered Merritt to "complete the reduction of Spanish power" and give "order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States."⁶ The President did not state whether or not the possession of the Philippines would be permanent or temporary, a decision he did not reach until October 25.⁷ McKinley also failed to give Merritt instructions as to what relationship, if any, he was to have with the

⁴Wesley Merritt to William McKinley, May 15, 1898, Correspondence, II, 645-46.

⁵Nelson Miles to Merritt, May 14 and 18, 1898, Correspondence, II, 640, 649.

⁶McKinley to Merritt, May 19, 1898, Correspondence, II, 676-78.

⁷Stuart Creighton Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation" (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 24

Filipino insurgents.⁸ McKinley's failure to consider seriously what impact the presence of Filipino revolutionaries might have on Merritt's mission would haunt the United States for several years.

After his victory in Manila, Dewey realized that the Filipino insurrection against the Spanish forces "was not sufficiently developed to be advantageous to the Americans in their war against Spain."⁹ Dewey decided it might be beneficial if Aguinaldo were present, so he directed one of his ships to bring the rebel leader and his staff from Hong Kong to the Philippines. Aguinaldo arrived on May 19, and immediately set about organizing the revolutionary army and a government.

In the months preceding the outbreak of the Spanish-American war, the Spanish commander in the Philippines had raised numerous Filipino militia regiments to help defend against an American invasion. When Aguinaldo now issued his call to arms, approximately 10,000 Filipinos from those units deserted to join him, accompanied by all but one of their commanders.¹⁰ Aguinaldo divided his army into two groups. He called the regular forces the Army

⁸John Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 6.

⁹Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁰Ibid.

of Liberation, while the Revolutionary Militia "consisted of all [others] who wished to assist in the fight for liberation."¹¹ Aguinaldo also divided each of the Philippine provinces into zones, commanded by an officer loyal to the *jefe superior politico-militar* of that province. In some cases, Aguinaldo merely conferred military ranks to local chiefs, but he did send loyal officers and experienced soldiers to each province to ensure that his interests were represented.

With a force of 15,000 regulars, Aguinaldo laid siege to the Spanish garrison defending Manila and began to consolidate power in the provinces. The Spanish commander unwittingly aided Aguinaldo's efforts by dispersing his forces in small, isolated garrisons rather than concentrating them at Manila. The result was that Aguinaldo's units were able to capture these Spanish outposts and surround Manila, the last major Spanish garrison in Luzon.¹²

The first group of Merritt's forces departed from San Francisco on May 25, 1898 for the month-long voyage to the Philippines. The last group of Americans under Brigadier

¹¹Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 22.

¹²Kenneth Ray Young, The General's General: The Life and Times of Arthur MacArthur (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), p. 192.

General Arthur MacArthur arrived in the Philippines on July 31, landing near Pasay. By this time, Aguinaldo had declared himself dictator, issued the Philippine Declaration of Independence, and proclaimed a revolutionary government. After the American forces had disembarked, "a curiously triangular contest" resulted among the besieged Spanish garrison in the Intramuros (the old walled section of Manila), the insurgents under Aguinaldo, and the American 8th Corps.¹³ Under orders not to form alliances with the revolutionaries or to recognize Aguinaldo's government, Merritt faced the dilemma of how to defeat the Spanish without provoking an open conflict with the insurgents. McKinley's "failure to define political objectives created complex difficulties for the generals in command in Manila."¹⁴

The solution Merritt arrived at was a secret agreement with the commander of the Spanish garrison in Manila. A carefully choreographed attack would take place with enough blood shed to satisfy Spanish honor and avoid a court-martial for the Spanish commander.¹⁵ The Americans convinced Aguinaldo to keep his forces outside the city, supposedly to prevent the Filipinos from looting Manila

¹³Linn, The Philippine War, p. 23.

¹⁴Cosmas, An Army for Empire, p. 113.

¹⁵Linn, The Philippine War, p. 24.

and carrying out retributions against the Spanish. Aguinaldo also moved a portion of his forces aside, clearing the way for the Americans to attack. The battle for Manila took place on August 13, 1898.

Merritt's troops quickly defeated the Spanish, and secured Manila with a loss of seventeen Americans killed and 105 wounded. Everything had gone almost in accordance with the pre-arranged plan; however, to keep secrecy not all of the commanders informed their subordinates about the agreement between Merritt and his Spanish counterpart. On one American warship, the gunners realized they had received erroneous firing data, made corrections and scored several direct hits on Manila.¹⁶ Ironically, President McKinley had signed the armistice with Spain the previous day.

The Americans now found themselves in the same position as the Spanish garrison they had just defeated - surrounded by Aguinaldo's insurgents, who still occupied their trenches around the city. Merritt, his initial mission successful, departed from the Philippines at the end of August 1898. Despite having spent less than a month in the islands, Merritt would help determine the fate of the Philippines at the Paris Peace Conference.

¹⁶Karnow, In Our Image, p. 124.

Merritt's successor, Major General Elwell S. Otis, assumed command on August 29, 1898. Like Merritt, he was a veteran of the Civil War and the Indian Campaigns, most notably against the Sioux. Otis had served with Nelson A. Miles during the pursuit of Sitting Bull after George Armstrong Custer's defeat at Little Big Horn, and had founded the army's staff school at Fort Leavenworth.¹⁷ Otis initially would lead the fight against the insurgents and shape the U.S. counterinsurgency policy in the Philippines. Early on, he "recognized the importance of civil as well as military policies."¹⁸ While every one of Otis' campaigns was successful, and his forces were never defeated in battle, he relied too heavily on civic actions and failed to end the insurrection.

Otis was an extremely capable administrator and his first step was to establish a military government in Manila. He also directed a clean-up of the city, which was in squalor after six weeks of siege. The population of Manila had swelled to seven times its normal size and the revolutionaries had cut off the city's water supply. The schools and the courts in Manila had been closed, and

¹⁷Karnow, In Our Image, p. 132; Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), p. 269.

¹⁸Linn, The Philippine War, p. 29

"rubbish and garbage, accumulated during the siege, lay strewn about the city."¹⁹

Otis' clean-up of Manila not only dramatically improved the living conditions for his soldiers; it made Manila a symbol of "the benefits of American rule."²⁰ To restore order, he established a provost guard force of 3,000 soldiers, along with a criminal court system. The Americans quintupled the number of open schools and rebuilt or repaired roads and bridges. Sanitation quickly improved as soldiers supervised the removal of trash, set up health clinics, and revamped the city's lighting and water systems. Inspectors checked "dwellings, markets, slaughterhouses, drugstores, and any other establishment that could possibly affect the health of the community."²¹ Health officials averted a smallpox epidemic by vaccinating over 80,000 people. To further insure the health of the soldiers, "doctors inspected known prostitutes weekly, and issued certificates of good health to those found free of disease."²² Many Volunteer soldiers, only a few months removed from their civilian

¹⁹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 54-55.

²⁰Linn, The Philippine War, p. 31.

²¹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 58.

²²Ibid.

jobs, found themselves resuming their old occupations as accountants, clerks, and schoolteachers.²³

While civic actions in Manila occupied the Americans' attention, Aguinaldo was busy deploying his troops and seizing territory in Luzon. By September 7, Otis was reporting that Aguinaldo had "captured all Spanish garrisons in Luzon."²⁴ Aguinaldo reorganized the Army of Liberation along European lines, giving each conventional unit a nomenclature and organization. The Filipino infantry was tough and hardy, requiring few supplies, and had demonstrated its competence by easily defeating Spanish garrisons. However, it was relatively poorly trained, the officer corps was weak, and lacked sufficient quantities of weapons.²⁵

Aguinaldo also created a formal government, with a constitution and an elected assembly. On September 15, 1898, the assembly elected him president. He established his capital in Malolos, twenty-five miles northeast of Manila. Otis now faced a delicate situation. He was still surrounded by Aguinaldo's forces outside Manila, but could not negotiate with them since the United States did

²³Linn, The Philippine War, p. 31.

²⁴Elwell S. Otis to Henry C. Corbin, September 7, 1898, Correspondence, II, 788.

²⁵Linn, The Philippine War, p. 35

not recognize Aguinaldo's government. Otis was still operating under the guidance that Merritt had received, which was that "the insurgents and all others must recognize the military occupation and authority of the United States."²⁶ Otis requested more detailed instructions from Washington in a telegram on September 12, 1898. Still wishing to avoid open confrontation with the insurgents, he was clearly becoming concerned about the growing strength of Aguinaldo's forces, now estimated at 30,000. The Filipinos had acquired several thousand rifles and rounds of ammunition from captured Spanish forces and from Chinese smugglers.²⁷ In fact, many of Aguinaldo's troops were better armed than their American counterparts. The .28 caliber Spanish Mausers had much better long-range accuracy than the Springfield rifles issued to the volunteer units. Fortunately for the Americans, the Filipinos turned out to be incredibly poor marksmen.²⁸

American and Spanish delegates signed the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898 officially ending the Spanish-

²⁶Corbin to Merritt, August 17, 1898, Correspondence, II, p. 754.

²⁷Otis to Corbin, September 12, 1898, Correspondence, II, pp. 804-805.

²⁸Thomas A. Crouch, A Leader of Volunteers: Frederick Funston and the 20th in the Philippines, 1898-1899 (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1984) p. 108.

American War. Spain gave up sovereignty over Cuba, which became an independent state, and ceded Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States. America agreed to pay the Spanish \$20 million for the Philippines.

Now that the future of the Philippines was ascertained, McKinley finally responded to Otis' request for guidance on December 21, 1898 with what became known as the benevolent assimilation proclamation. In his proclamation, McKinley announced that "the future control, disposition, and government of the Philippine Islands are ceded to the United States" and the military government of Manila "is to be dispatched to the whole of the ceded territory."²⁹ Otis edited McKinley's original proclamation, toning down the language by deleting references to American sovereignty, and issued it in the Philippines on January 4, 1899.³⁰ Brigadier General Miller, however, had sent the original version to the residents of Iloilo the previous day. The original eventually reached Aguinaldo, who at once realized the United States did not intend to create an independent Philippine state.

²⁹McKinley to Otis and Russell A, Alger, December 21, 1898, Correspondence, II, 858-59.

³⁰Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation", p. 52.

McKinley's proclamation showed how out of touch he was with the true situation in the Philippines.³¹ He ignored the fact that the Americans controlled only the city of Manila, while Aguinaldo and his forces now controlled virtually the rest of the Philippines. McKinley thus had placed Otis in an impossible situation. He expected Otis to tell Aguinaldo, in a manner that would not provoke a fight, that American sovereignty of the islands had been already decided. Otis sent commissioners to meet with Aguinaldo on January 11, but they resolved nothing because "the Americans could not recognize the Filipino government and the Filipinos would not recognize American sovereignty."³²

Tensions, which had been rising between the Americans and Filipinos for several months, increased and negotiations broke down. Hostilities erupted when Private William Grayson from Nebraska fired on an insurgent patrol on the night of February 4. The Filipinos returned fire, and the ensuing skirmish spread along the American lines as other Filipino patrols, real and imagined, made contact with the nervous Americans. The following morning, 8th Corps, led by Arthur MacArthur's 2nd Division, attacked

³¹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 36.

³²Ibid., p. 41.

and routed the insurgent forces in the largest battle of the war.³³

Otis now turned his attention from civic policies to concentrate on planning and executing military operations against Aguinaldo's forces. Otis no doubt believed that he could end the war quickly by capturing any one of three strategic targets: Aguinaldo himself, the revolutionary capital at Malolos, or the Philippine Army. All of these objectives were located north of Manila. MacArthur began to advance north along the rail lines in an attempt to trap the insurgents at Malolos. He took the rebel capital of Malolos in March, but the bulk of the Army of Liberation managed to escape. Aguinaldo's forces had learned to dig "get away" trenches, up to a half-mile long, at the rear of their lines, which allowed them to escape before the Americans stormed their fortifications.³⁴

While MacArthur advanced north, Otis sent a brigade of Regulars under Brigadier General Lloyd Wheaton south from Manila to secure the Pasig River, which effectively severed the rebels' lines of communications between north and south Luzon.³⁵ By May, troops under the command of

³³Linn, The Philippine War, pp.46-52.

³⁴Crouch, A Leader of Volunteers, p. 109.

³⁵John Elsberg, ed., Army Historical Series, rev ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1989) pp. 338-39.

General Lawton secured Santa Cruz, while other units captured Tagbilaran (the capital of Bohol), and the port cities of Iloilo, Cebu, Bacolod, and Jolo. All of these victories required garrisons to prevent the guerrillas from reclaiming the towns.

Despite the relatively easy victories, Otis was cautious and feared that his lines would become over extended. Of the 20,000 troops at his disposal, 3000 served in Manila as the provost guard, while 15,000 were Volunteers eligible for discharge once the War with Spain ended on February 14.³⁶ Although Otis was receiving additional forces from the United States, they did little more than replace the thousands of homeward bound Volunteers.³⁷

The good news was that the replacement troops were the newly created U.S. Volunteer Regiments. Trained and equipped in the States before deployment, and generally led by high-quality officers, these regiments would serve with distinction in combat as well as in pacification and counter-guerrilla operations.³⁸ Brigadier General Samuel B.M. Young wrote that the new volunteer units were "a better body of volunteer soldiers than I have seen during

³⁶Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 78-80.

³⁷Ibid., p. 102.

³⁸Cosmas, An Army for Empire, pp. 313-4.

my service of nearly forty years."³⁹ Otis also formed two additional Volunteer Regiments with officers and men from the volunteers who chose to remain in the Philippines after their enlistments had expired.

On April 29, 1899, Otis met with Florentino Torres, a representative from Aguinaldo, who requested a cessation of hostilities for three weeks in order to allow the Filipino Congress to "decide whether to continue prosecution of the war or propose terms of peace."⁴⁰ Otis rejected the offer and insisted on unconditional surrender, with full amnesty. By declining the truce, "Otis committed the Americans to a military solution" despite the fact that he lacked the ability to achieve it.⁴¹ At a time when he wanted to keep pressure on Aguinaldo, Otis did not have sufficient forces to do so. Furthermore, the start of the rainy season at the end of May precluded even limited offensive operations.

Since American troop strength did not permit control of the entire archipelago, Otis continued to focus his efforts on conventional attacks on Aguinaldo's forces. Insufficient manpower forced the Americans to abandon

³⁹Young letter to Corbin, n.d. [1900] Samuel B.M. Young Papers, Box 12, U.S. Army Military History Institute Research Collection, Carlisle, PA. [hereafter cited as Young Papers]

⁴⁰Otis to Corbin, April 29, 1899, Correspondence, II, 978.

⁴¹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 101.

many of the towns they had conquered in order to maintain pursuit of the insurgents. In fact, in August 1899, Otis was unable to campaign on the islands of Panay and Cebu due to lack of troops.⁴² As soon as the Americans left an area, Aguinaldo's forces would reoccupy it and punish any inhabitants who had supported the Americans. Otis summed up his frustrations in his annual report that same August:

Little difficulty attends the act of taking possession and temporarily holding any section of the country. A column of 3,000 men could march though and successfully contend with any force which the insurgents could place in its route, but they would close in behind it and again prey upon the inhabitants.⁴³

The fact was that he could win battles or hold territory, but not both. Otis was partly to blame for his lack of manpower because he consistently provided Washington with "rosy reports of progress," thus undermining the legitimacy of his requests for more troops.⁴⁴

Another challenge Otis faced was that he not only had to defeat the revolutionaries decisively, but also

⁴²Otis to Corbin, August 27, 1899, Correspondence, II, 1060.

⁴³Otis, Annual Report, War Department, 1899, U.S. House of Representatives Document 2, 56th Congress, 1st Session, V, 162, cited in Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 102.

⁴⁴Karnow, In Our Image, p. 145.

had to do so in a manner that would facilitate permanent pacification in the future. Implied in this task was the requirement to establish a colonial government based on the idea of benevolent assimilation as outlined by President McKinley. In mid-1899, therefore, Otis issued orders to establish municipal governments in occupied towns.⁴⁵ The man who developed the general plan for implementing that order was Colonel William A. Kobbé, regarded by many as the most capable American officer in the Philippines. Kobbé's plan called for a representative municipal council to elect a president (mayor) to serve for one year. The president would be responsible for establishing a police force, collecting taxes, enforcing sanitary measures, and opening schools.⁴⁶ The entire army soon adopted the model Kobbé developed for use in the whole archipelago.

Two of the commanders charged with attempting to implement the policy of benevolent assimilation were Brigadier General James F. Smith and Marcus Miller. Otis appointed Smith as the military governor of the sub-district of the Negroes, in the Visayan Military

⁴⁵Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 78, 89.

⁴⁶Kobbé letter dated July 18, 1899, William A. Kobbé Papers, Box 3, U.S. Army Military History Institute Research Collection, Carlisle, PA.

District. A Catholic lawyer and an experienced politician, Smith set out to make the Negroes a model of American rule. He raised a local 200-man constabulary that, in addition to its police functions, served as guides for the Americans. By August 1899, the force had been renamed the Battalion of Native Reserves and went on to become one of "the most successful scout-police forces the U.S. Army raised, without a single deserter or lost rifle in its entire existence."⁴⁷

Miller had occupied Iloilo on February 11 and immediately issued a proclamation that established a military government with local officials maintaining their posts, except when evidence of misconduct was present. Miller also promised to respect the inhabitants' private property and religious beliefs. After opening the port of Iloilo for trade, Miller issued a second proclamation declaring that, "the Americans have not come to the island of Panay as conquerors or invaders, but as friends to protect all Filipinos in their homes, in their employment, and in their personal and religious rights."⁴⁸ Unfortunately, Miller had only enough troops to secure the area around the city of

⁴⁷Linn, The Philippine War, p. 76.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 69.

Iloilo, while the insurgents controlled the rest of the island of Panay.

Miller's replacement, Brigadier General Robert P. Hughes, shaped "the American pacification campaign in the central Philippines" more than any other officer did.⁴⁹ Hughes quickly began to control the movement of food out of the city of Iloilo in attempt to deprive the guerrillas of support from sympathizers in the city. People who lived outside the city were allowed a daily ration for their families. Delgado, the insurgent commander on Panay, responded by imposing his own blockade; his plan backfired however, and the population in the American-controlled area more than doubled.⁵⁰

After the rainy season ended in the fall of 1899, Otis resumed his conventional offensive operations with a three-pronged drive in north central Luzon, designed to trap the elusive Army of Liberation. General Lawton attacked in the east, recaptured San Isidro, and then continued to San Fabian on the Lingayen Gulf. General MacArthur followed the rail line on the western side of Luzon, seized Tarlac, and then marched to Dagupan. General Lloyd Wheaton moved by ship and captured San

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 72.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Jacinto. To complete the grand maneuver, Wheaton then moved his forces to Dagupan in order to serve as a blocking force for MacArthur.⁵¹ The operation began well, but soon bogged down as the rough terrain, hot climate, and resupply problems slowed the American advance. Some units reported as many as 50 percent of their men unable to move due to sickness or exhaustion. The tortuous pursuit of Aguinaldo nonetheless continued throughout October and November, and eventually left the Army of Liberation broken "into small bands scattered through these provinces."⁵² Aguinaldo and a number of his followers managed to escape, but Otis had accomplished his goal. The Filipino army had ceased to exist as a regular fighting force.⁵³

⁵¹Elsberg, p. 339.

⁵²Linn, The Philippine War, p. 159.

⁵³Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 112.

CHAPTER 4

A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR

Otis departed the Philippines on May 6, 1900 convinced that the policy of benevolent assimilation, civic actions, and conventional military operations had won the war. He had always underestimated the magnitude of the rebellion and overestimated the appeal of benevolent assimilation, however, and failed to detect Aguinaldo's shift to guerrilla war, preferring to believe that the Army of Liberation had disintegrated. General Arthur MacArthur, Otis' successor, eventually realized that the insurrection was far from over, and that defeating Aguinaldo would require sterner measures. Throughout his first six months in command, MacArthur continued the policies of benevolent assimilation and the civic programs instituted by Otis. Facing increasing guerrilla activity and pressure from his subordinates, MacArthur implemented a tougher pacification policy in December 1900, based on the provisions of General Orders 100. This new policy, combined with coordinated military

operations, successfully weakened or ended the insurgency in most areas of the Philippines.

After their inability to defeat the Americans in conventional battles during the first few months of 1899, several of Aguinaldo's followers realized that a new strategy might be in order. As early as March 1899, General Antonio Luna had come out in favor of adopting a strategy of guerrilla warfare in order to harass the Americans until they abandoned the islands. Other guerrilla leaders voiced similar sentiments to Aguinaldo as their forces suffered defeats at the hands of the Americans.¹

Aguinaldo remained unconvinced until November 13, after Otis' offensive effectively destroyed the Army of Liberation's ability to fight as an organized force. Belatedly acknowledging the futility of engaging the Americans in set-piece battles, Aguinaldo officially changed his strategy to guerrilla warfare. Despite the fact that Otis had predicted a guerrilla war months earlier, he did not notice Aguinaldo's change of strategy. Assuming that the U.S. forces were close to victory and the revolutionaries were near defeat, Otis

¹John Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 97.

continued to wage a conventional campaign during the first half of 1900 designed to "extend American authority as rapidly as possible."²

Aguinaldo reorganized the Philippine Army of Liberation to fit his new strategy of guerrilla warfare directing his forces to switch from large battalions to smaller, more mobile units. To control these units, he divided the Philippine Islands into guerrilla districts, provinces, zones, and sub-zones. A general officer commanded a district; colonels, the provinces; lieutenant colonels, zones; and Majors, sub-zones.³

Aguinaldo instructed his subordinates to fight only when they had a numerical advantage over the Americans. He did that partly to preserve the insurgents' dwindling supply of arms and ammunition - a testimony to the growing effectiveness of the American naval blockade. The main reason Aguinaldo told his forces to avoid decisive battle, however, was because his primary objective was no longer the military defeat of the United States Army. Instead, he hoped to weaken America's will to fight by prolonging the struggle.

²Elwell S. Otis to Henry C. Corbin, April 19, 1899, United States, Department of the Army, Adjutant General's Office, Correspondence (2 vols., Center of Military History, 1993) II, 968. [hereafter cited as Correspondence]. Quote from Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 128.

³Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 157.

Aguinaldo was aware of a growing anti-imperialist movement in America. The year 1900 was a presidential election year, and William Jennings Bryan was running on an anti-imperialist platform against President McKinley. Aguinaldo encouraged his subordinates to increase their efforts, hoping to influence the outcome of the election. A victory by Bryan in November, he thought, could mean an American withdrawal from the Philippines. In the six-month period following the defeat of the Army of Liberation, American casualties increased over 40 percent.⁴

The tactics used by the insurgents included ambushing American supply columns and attacking sentries with bolos (long knives similar to a machete, easily concealed under clothing). American patrols encountered traps consisting of concealed pits filled with sharpened stakes, or bows and arrows triggered by tripwires strung across a path. The guerrillas also tore down telegraph lines and ambushed the parties sent to repair them.⁵ One such engagement on September 22, 1900 was typical of this new type of war. First Lieutenant Alfred Aloe, Commander of Company E, 12th U.S. Infantry Regiment, led a thirty-

⁴Ibid., p. 171.

⁵Ibid., p. 159.

three-man detachment to repair a telegraph wire that had been cut by the insurgents. As the American troops approached, an estimated 500 insurgents opened fire at ranges from five to one hundred yards. The fighting raged for four and one-half hours, until a platoon of reinforcements arrived from the nearby garrison and forced the insurgents to flee.⁶

Both Aguinaldo and the Americans realized that the success of this new guerrilla war depended on the support of the Filipino people. The insurgents relied on the villagers for food, money, shelter, recruits, and information. The insurgents also hid among the people, playing the role of a friendly amigo as the American patrols passed through the villages. The Americans captured several guerrillas wearing civilian clothes underneath their military uniforms. Through his 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 hot American soldier again hove

⁶Alfred Aloe to S.B.M. Young, Sept 23, 1900, Young Papers, box 13, U.S. Army Military History Institute Research Collection, Carlisle, PA. [hereafter cited as Young Papers]

into sight."⁷ Two companies from the 15th Infantry Regiment had a similar experience on September 17, 1900. After pursuing a force of 800 guerrillas, waist-deep water forced the Americans to halt. The Americans retired for the evening after trading shots with the insurgents for over an hour. The next morning the Americans discovered that the insurgents had escaped, "most of them no doubt going back into contiguous barrios to appear for the time being, or until called to fight again, as peaceful amigos."⁸ General Young, commander of the 1st District, Department of Northern Luzon, summed up the frustrations experienced by most U.S. commanders fighting the guerrillas in a letter to Theodore Roosevelt two months later:

To pursue a force of 200 or 300, more or less, into a jungle where my troops have to slash the growth to get through and keep together for self-protection, and then to emerge and find nothing but peasants scantily clad and hard at work harvesting rice - apparently innocent and knowing nothing whatever of any insurgents - is discouraging.⁹

⁷Robert Lee Bullard Diary, Book 1, March 8, 1900, Robert Lee Bullard Papers, cited by Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 158.

⁸Arthur MacArthur to Corbin, September 19, 1900, Correspondence, II, 1211.

⁹Young to Theodore Roosevelt, November 26, 1900, Young Papers, Box 12.

To insure continued support from the villagers, the insurgents waged a propaganda campaign, spreading rumors and exaggerating American crimes of rape, looting, and murder. The guerrillas also magnified reports of American casualties and defeats. At one point, they even claimed to have captured General MacArthur. Aguinaldo attempted to keep the Filipinos' spirits high by appealing to patriotism, nationalism, and hopes of foreign intervention in the conflict. However, his agents working to secure assistance from Japan failed, and assistance from Germany and other European powers never materialized.¹⁰

In areas where support for the rebellion had never been very strong, the insurgents were forced to rely on terror to assure support from the populace. By the middle of 1900, "a full scale campaign of terrorism had begun, and terror became the primary weapon of the revolutionaries."¹¹ The insurgents fined or beat people guilty of minor offenses against the revolution. More severe penalties included having one's property confiscated, house burned, being buried alive, or

¹⁰Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 160-61.

¹¹Ibid., p. 164.

decapitation.¹² The insurgents murdered local municipal officials put in place by the Americans as a warning to other *Americanistas*. The fear of reprisals obviously undermined the United States effort to establish municipal governments. Since the Americans lacked the manpower necessary to garrison every village, the insurgents would merely reoccupy the town after the U.S. troops had left, and punish anyone suspected of having helped them.¹³

The Filipinos had reason to fear the insurgents. By the end of 1900, there had been 350 assassinations and 442 assaults recorded by the Americans.¹⁴ The insurgents' strategy initially worked; by setting fire to occupied towns and assassinating local officials who collaborated with the Americans, the guerrillas received grudging support from the people. However, these practices were destined to fail in the long run. Major General Pantaleon Garcia, Aguinaldo's Chief of Staff, realized that "if we do not endeavor to gain the goodwill of the people our efforts will have been in vain."¹⁵ By relying on terror and extortion to gain support, intelligence,

¹²Ibid., pp. 165-66.

¹³Ibid., p. 102.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 166.

¹⁵Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 268.

and supplies from the Filipino people, the insurgents actually drove many Filipinos closer to the Americans. This was especially true in occupied towns where the interaction between the Filipinos and the Americans convinced many locals of the benevolent purposes of the Americans. Unfortunately, even with 60,000 troops occupying over 400 garrisons, the Americans could not protect the entire population of the Philippines.

Major A.L. Dade summed up the difficult position of the Filipino people, who very reasonably feared "the vengeance of the insurgents, who do not hesitate to murder or torture them for any suspected leanings towards us." The Filipinos naturally worried more about the insurgents than "any punishment that we are likely to inflict upon them for failure to be actively or passively friendly."¹⁶ Villagers would not support the Americans until they had protection from the insurgents, and the penalty for not helping the Americans was as severe as the penalty imposed by the insurgents.

As American frustrations mounted, it was clear to many officers that a change of policy was necessary. However, MacArthur failed to provide new guidance to his subordinates until December 19, 1900, long after many had

¹⁶A.L. Dade to Young, May 7, 1900, Young Papers, box 12.

implemented their own policies. Throughout 1900, several officers had responded to the rise of insurgent terrorist tactics with their own calculated acts of violence and brutality. The Americans burned barrios adjacent to places where ambushes or acts of sabotage had occurred. The use of the "water cure" increased after the middle of 1900, as soldiers attempted to gain intelligence on the whereabouts of the insurgents.¹⁷

General Lloyd Wheaton was one officer who adopted sterner pacification measures long before MacArthur officially sanctioned them. Wheaton assumed command of the Department of Northern Luzon on April 19, 1900. While he publicly supported the official policy of benevolent assimilation, privately Wheaton expressed doubt. "You can't put down a rebellion," he wrote, "by throwing confetti and sprinkling perfumery."¹⁸ Wheaton did promote a few civic programs - his troops constructed of more than 1,000 miles of roads - but in one of his first orders, he directed his subordinates to arrest, imprison, or deport anyone who aided the insurgents. Convinced that "the solution to guerrilla warfare was aggressive military

¹⁷The water cure was a mild form of torture in which a large amount of water was forced down a prisoner's throat until he talked. Another technique was to dunk the victim's head under water repeatedly until he provided information. See Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 175.

¹⁸Quoted in Linn, The Philippine War, p. 256.

operations,"¹⁹ he continuously maneuvered his 25,000 soldiers around the department in an attempt to control over two million inhabitants. Mounted infantry, led by local guides, pursued the guerrillas for weeks at a time. Telesforo Carrasco, a local insurgent leader, wrote in his diary that his units were unable to rest because the Americans ambushed them during movement, both day and night. Furthermore, the Americans drove his units out of supply depots and towns, burned their supporters' homes, and destroyed their crops. After a few months, Carrasco's company simply ceased to exist.²⁰ A combination of forced resettlement, crop destruction, and active military operations allowed Wheaton to pacify the department by the middle of May 1901.

In 1900, one of Wheaton's subordinates, Brigadier James M. Bell, Commander of the 3rd District, Department of Southern Luzon, implemented his own counterinsurgency policies in an effort to pacify his sector on the Bicol peninsula. Major General Vito Belarmino, the insurgent leader, initially attempted to oppose American landings in January 1900. After his forces suffered heavy losses, he retreated to the interior, and ordered all civilians

¹⁹Ibid., p. 258.

²⁰Ibid., p. 265.

to leave the occupied towns. His strategy initially worked; however, it proved impossible to feed the insurgents and the people living in the hills. The American naval blockade and destruction of crops and storehouses also decreased the supply of food to the insurgents. As more and more civilians returned to the occupied towns, Belarmino was forced to collect food by levying sanctions against the people in the villages. This caused a backlash against the insurgents and the towns eventually became "centers of pro-American sentiment."²¹

Bell had only 2,600 soldiers under his command to control 5,600 square miles of territory and a population of over 600,000 people. While his troops could garrison the major towns, they were unable to make the enemy stand and fight. After a few abortive attacks against garrisoned towns, Belarmino's guerrillas were content to snipe at supply columns and patrols, and build booby traps and snares. The first half of 1900 was thus largely a stalemate, with the Americans controlling the towns, and the insurgents free to roam the interior.

²¹Ibid., p. 281.

Neither side was able to inflict a decisive defeat on the other.²²

Lacking troop strength, Bell and his staff realized that new counterinsurgency policies were necessary in order to isolate the guerrillas from the local population. Dissatisfied with Kobbé's model for municipal government, Bell developed his own plan, in which the garrison commander and the town mayor created a town council and a local police force. By providing security, business contracts, and a great deal of autonomy, the Americans ensured the loyalty of the mayors. When the insurgents attempted to kill local officials, it only served to drive the people closer to the Americans. One town mayor even formed his own militia, which raided insurgent supply depots. Local police identified guerrillas hiding in the towns and, in some areas, conducted joint patrols with the army. Several post commanders had armed the police and auxiliaries with whatever weapons they had available. Through persistent nagging, Bell eventually overcame MacArthur's reluctance to arm the Filipinos and in

²²Ibid., pp. 281-82.

February 1901, created the Bicol Scouts, a military unit composed of native Filipinos.²³

In addition to the creation of municipal governments and police forces in occupied towns, Bell implemented other civic programs. By October 1900, every occupied town had a school, and by March 1901, the Camarines province had fifty schools with 12,000 students.²⁴ Additionally, army doctors provided medical care to the local civilians.

To complete the isolation of the insurgents from the townspeople, Bell imposed travel restrictions. Anyone traveling outside a village required a pass from the post commander. Additionally, commanders restricted the amount of food leaving towns or required an armed escort to accompany to food. One commander directed that all rice be stored inside the towns, while patrols destroyed food and crops found in the hillsides. By August 1900, Bell's policies had forced Belarmino's guerrillas to curtail military operations in order to search for food. With the towns now secure, Bell sent out numerous small patrols to pursue the insurgents. Over the next several months, the combination of relentless military pressure

²³Ibid., pp. 283-284.

²⁴Ibid., p. 284.

and a lack of food forced over 1,200 guerrillas to surrender between January and March 1901. In May, a final three-week campaign brought the death or capture of another 1,050 guerrillas and Belarmino finally surrendered to the Americans on July 4.²⁵

Another of Wheaton's subordinates, Brigadier General Samuel B.M. Young, Commander of the 1st District, Department of Northern Luzon, initially supported civic action and the policy of benevolent assimilation. By June 1900, his forces had established 203 schools with an enrollment of 10,714 students. Young expected the enrollment to more than double to over 25,000 the following year, encompassing more than half of all the school-age children in his district.²⁶ He also established municipal governments, held elections, and built roads to demonstrate the value of benevolent American rule. As guerrilla attacks increased in his district, Young countered by applying "the remedial measures that proved so effective with the Apaches."²⁷

Guerrilla leaders Manuel Tinio and Juan Villamor opposed Young in northern Luzon. On March 20, 1900, Major

²⁵Ibid., pp. 285-86.

²⁶Young to Military Secretary in Manila, June 28, 1900, Young papers, box 12.

²⁷Young to Roosevelt, Nov 26, 1900, Young Papers, box 12.

Dade wrote a report about a captured document issued by Tinio. Under penalty of death, Tinio required local presidents, civil authorities, and barrio leaders to report immediately to the insurgents the movement, direction, plan, and number of the enemy. Those who told the Americans the location of insurgent camps, stopping places, or insurgent movements were subject to be put to death, regardless of their sex and age. Finally, it was punishable by death to act voluntarily as a guide for the Americans, unless it was to lead them in the wrong direction.²⁸

In the fall of 1900, Young's department was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in the Philippines as Tinio and Villamor launched an offensive attempting to influence the American presidential election. Young, "his patrols ambushed, supply lines raided, his communications destroyed, and his contacts among the population kidnapped and killed," retaliated.²⁹ He restricted all civilian travel, moved people living in rural areas into protected zones, destroyed crops, confiscated property, and burned homes of insurgent sympathizers. Young also dispatched columns to sweep the mountains, destroying insurgent

²⁸Young enclosure to MAJ Dade's report, dated March 20, 1900, Young Papers, box 12.

²⁹Linn, The Philippine War, pp. 261-62.

supplies and forcing them to scatter. His campaign was successful, and Villamor surrendered on April 29, 1901, followed in May by Tinio.³⁰

At the end of 1900, MacArthur finally issued a comprehensive counterinsurgency strategy, months after Wheaton, Bell, Young, and numerous others had developed and executed their own. In response to requests from his subordinates to implement more effective policies to counter the insurgents' fall offensive and their increasing violations of established laws of war, MacArthur declared martial law and directed the use of more stringent pacification measures. MacArthur based these new severe measures on General Orders 100.

Experiences with the guerrillas in 1900 convinced MacArthur that the "most important maxim of Filipino tactics was to disband when closely pressed and seek safety in the nearest barrio."³¹ He also concluded that the major reason the insurgents were able to continue their resistance was because they controlled the towns and villages. MacArthur believed that pacification would only occur once the Americans isolated the guerrilla from his civilian base, thereby depriving them of supplies,

³⁰Ibid., pp. 262-63.

³¹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 167.

information, and refuge.³² MacArthur, therefore, targeted not only the insurgents, but also those civilians who aided them. In his proclamation to the Filipinos on December 20, 1900, MacArthur made it clear to the people living in occupied areas that, if they aided the insurgents, they would be considered "war rebels, or war traitors, according to the nature of their overt acts," and would be punished by the army.³³ Furthermore, MacArthur put the insurgents on notice that, if they failed to follow established laws of war, they would be denied the previously lenient treatment they had received as prisoners of war. Earlier, MacArthur had commuted death sentences and turned disarmed rebels loose after they took an oath not to take up arms against the Americans. But now, invoking Francis Lieber's definition of guerrillas, MacArthur decreed that

men who participate in hostilities without being part of a regular organized force, and without sharing continuously in its operations, but who do so with intermittent returns to their homes and vocations, divest themselves of the character of soldiers and if captured are not entitled to privileges of prisoners of war.³⁴

³²Ibid., p. 197.

³³Ibid., p. 206.

³⁴United States Senate Document 167, 56th Congress, 1st Session, p.3, cited by Stuart Creighton Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation" (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 163.

MacArthur timed the implementation of his new policies perfectly. Insurgent morale had hit an all time low after news of Bryan's defeat in the presidential election reached the Philippines. At the end of 1900, U.S. troop levels reached 70,000, the highest of the war. In conjunction with the dry season offensive, MacArthur hoped to "isolate the guerrilla from his civilian base" by applying General Orders 100.³⁵ To deny the insurgents access to the villages, MacArthur used the additional troops to man a total of 502 garrisons. In areas where commanders lacked sufficient troops to guard the villages, MacArthur supported the concept of concentrating the people into towns they could secure.

Another important development that greatly aided the Americans in their fight against the insurgents was the creation of the Division of Military Information in Manila on December 13, 1900. The division's primary mission was the collection and dissemination of military intelligence.³⁶ This division pored over numerous captured documents, gleaning valuable information as to what the guerrillas were doing and planning. In the field, some officers had succeeded in determining how the insurgents

³⁵Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 205-206.

³⁶Ibid., p. 209.

established shadow governments in towns controlled by the Americans and even used occupied towns as bases for their activities.³⁷ The Division of Military Information was able to collect this information from one area and provide it to commanders all over the Philippines. This new unit also compiled lists and photographs of known rebel sympathizers, which helped identify and dismantle the insurgent supply network in many areas.³⁸

The creation of local police forces and military units composed of native Filipinos increased after December 1900 as well. The most famous was the Macabebe Scouts, created in 1899 under the command of Captain Matthew Batson. The Macabebes were long-time enemies of the Tagalogs, and the army was quick to capitalize on this animosity. In some cases, the mere threat of using the Macabebes was enough to restore order. From January to June 1901, the number of Filipinos serving in military units increased from 1,402 to over 5,400. Additionally, over 6,000 Filipinos served as police officers.³⁹ The police provided invaluable assistance by identifying insurgents and their sympathizers hiding in the villages.

³⁷Ibid., p. 195.

³⁸Linn, The Philippine War, p. 265.

³⁹Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 214.

The growth of the Filipino Federal Party demonstrated the weakening influence of the revolutionaries over the Filipino upper classes, whose support had been so very critical to the movement. Between January and June of 1900, 250 Federal party committees appeared, and by June 1901 the party claimed a membership of over 150,000 people. William Howard Taft, head of the Second Philippine Commission, wrote that it was "spreading like wildfire throughout the islands." After the war, insurgent General José Alejandrino acknowledged, "that the campaign of the Federal Party [had] subtracted men and resources almost daily from the revolutionary cause."⁴⁰

In retrospect, it appears that MacArthur's new strategy caused a rapid breakdown of the insurgency; however, signs of the insurrection's imminent collapse were already present. Aguinaldo denounced MacArthur's policies on January 17, 1901, and exhorted his men to capture more Americans to trade for imprisoned Filipinos. However, it was too late. Relentless military pursuit denied the guerrillas sanctuary in the interior areas. The widespread destruction of food and crops outside the villages starved the insurgents. The more stringent pacification policies and the increased number of American

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 228.

garrisons, combined with more effective intelligence, severed the tie between the insurgents and the villagers, preventing the guerrillas from obtaining supplies and information from the towns.⁴¹

The number of Filipino leaders and units surrendering increased almost exponentially after a combination of McKinley's reelection, MacArthur's new strategy, and Frederick Funston's daring capture of Aguinaldo in March 1901 completely demoralized them. The following table shows the dramatic increase in the number of insurgents who surrendered from August 1900 to July 1901.⁴²

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Number of Insurgent Surrenders</u>
August-October, 1900	500
November-December 1900	2,600
January-February, 1901	1,650
March-April, 1901	13,000
May-July, 1901	4,500

MacArthur was eager to capitalize on Aguinaldo's capture, hoping it would cause "the complete and immediate collapse of the revolution."⁴³ He billeted Aguinaldo in a spacious villa and treated him exceptionally well. MacArthur visited Aguinaldo daily for the next three weeks, during which time, Aguinaldo's "wife, mother, sisters, and numerous prominent Federal party members"

⁴¹Ibid., p. 210.

⁴²Data for table extracted from *ibid.*, p. 229.

⁴³Ibid., p. 234.

also lobbied for his cooperation.⁴⁴ In return for MacArthur's promise to release 3000 prisoners, Aguinaldo issued a proclamation to the Philippine people, accepting the sovereignty of the United States and labeling an end to hostilities "absolutely essential to the welfare of the Philippines."⁴⁵

Aguinaldo's capture no doubt removed some of the stigma of surrender. In the following months, the surrender of senior insurgent leaders such as Simon Tecson, Mariano Trias, and Martin Delgado virtually ended resistance in northern Luzon, southern Luzon, and Panay respectively.⁴⁶ On April 10, 1901, MacArthur wrote that he thought Aguinaldo's address and another offer of amnesty "would almost instantly terminate hostilities throughout the archipelago, insure delivery of several thousand guns still held by insurgents, and establish peace."⁴⁷ MacArthur was mistaken: it would take another year before the Americans subdued the last strongholds of the rebellion.

⁴⁴Kenneth Ray Young, The General's General (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), pp. 287-8.

⁴⁵Aguinaldo's address enclosed in MacArthur to Corbin, April 10, 1901, Correspondence, II, 1268.

⁴⁶Linn, The Philippine War, p. 230.

⁴⁷MacArthur to Corbin, April 10, 1901, Correspondence, II, 1268.

CHAPTER 5

THE FINAL CAMPAIGNS

Aguinaldo's capture and the surrender of numerous other guerrilla leaders resulted in a widespread feeling among the Americans that the insurrection was nearing an end. However, optimism quickly faded as the war entered a particularly brutal phase, marked by atrocities committed by both Filipinos and Americans. Secretary of War Elihu Root replaced MacArthur with Major General Adna R. Chaffee on July 4, 1901; that same day William H. Taft began his new job as the civil governor of the Philippines and the Philippine Commission assumed legislative and judicial authority on the islands. Root had picked MacArthur's replacement in February, realizing that MacArthur opposed implementing civilian rule of the Philippines before the war ended. Root informed Chaffee that one of his primary concerns was the turnover of civil duties from the military to the civil government.

Chaffee began his military career as a private, but he won a battlefield commission at Gettysburg and later served as a cavalryman under General Sheridan. Chaffee earned a well-deserved reputation as a tough Indian fighter, campaigning against the Cheyenne and the Apaches. Leading his troop in a charge against the Cheyenne, he had inspired his men by yelling, "Forward, if any man is killed, I will make him a corporal!"¹ Most recently, Chaffee had served in Cuba and led American forces to Peking during the Boxer Rebellion. Two months after he took over from MacArthur, the massacre of an American company in the village of Balangiga on the island of Samar would lead him to direct the implementation of the most repressive counterinsurgency policies seen in the Philippines.

Samar was the largest island in the Visayan group with a population of over 250,000 concentrated along the coast. Samar was well suited for guerrilla warfare and the Spanish had never been able to control the island completely. Geographically, the interior was a dense jungle with no roads and only a few trails. From 1899 until the middle of 1901, the Americans were unable to

¹Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1973), p. 223.

devote much attention to Samar, allowing insurgent General Vicente Lukban to establish a formidable resistance movement. The few American units controlled only the major towns along the coast, while Lukban and his insurgents retained freedom of movement in the interior.² After a visit to Samar, Brigadier General R.P. Hughes, commander of the Visayan military district, commented that the American forces "know nothing beyond gun shot range of their stations."³

Assuming responsibility for Samar on May 13, 1901, Hughes extended the naval blockade of the island and began active military operations, combined with extensive food and property destruction, tactics he had used effectively on Panay in 1900. He ordered his subordinates to "clear the country of all insurgents, capture the necessary guides and compel them to do such service and generally speaking, make the region untenable by the insurgents." By September 11, Hughes was reporting, "the enemy [on Samar] has been in hiding for two months, and are liable to stay so."⁴ Under the mistaken impression that he had successfully pacified the island, Hughes moved on to the

²John Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 253.

³Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 306.

⁴Ibid., pp. 309, 310.

islands of Cebu and Bohol, ending resistance there after three months of aggressive campaigning.⁵

What Hughes failed to take into account was that his policy of extensive population resettlement - some villages more than tripled in size - and the destruction of food and crops left the Samarenos unable to support themselves and probably stiffened their resistance.⁶ Facing the prospect of starvation and possible famine, the guerrillas became increasingly desperate. As Hughes thinned his forces on Samar in order to pacify Cebu and Bohol, the insurgents also became increasingly bold.

On the morning of September 28, 1901, the insurgents and residents of Balangiga, armed with bolos and led by the town mayor, massacred forty-eight Americans from C Company, 9th Infantry Regiment. Of the thirty-five Americans who managed to escape, fifteen later died of wounds sustained in the attack. Captain Edwin Bookmiller, leader of the initial force sent to Balangiga after the incident, found that the natives had mutilated the victim's bodies, beheaded the company commander, Captain Thomas Connell, and gouged the eyes out of a dog that had

⁵Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 251.

⁶Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902, p. 310.

served as the company's mascot.⁷ The Americans' anger increased even more when they uncovered evidence that the mayor, Pedro Abayan, had planned the entire affair prior to C Company's arrival. In a letter to General Lukban, Abayan had described how he would ask for protection from the Americans and, at a "favorable opportunity, launch an uprising against them."⁸ Chaffee responded by sending Brigadier General Jacob H. Smith, commander the 6th Separate Brigade, to Samar. This would prove to be "one of the gravest blunders of the entire war."⁹

Smith led an emotionally charged group of soldiers and marines in what many perceived to be a retaliatory campaign against the inhabitants of Samar. Smith, who Captain Henry T. Allen concluded was insane, issued orders telling his subordinates to carry out the campaign with more severity and more killing.¹⁰ The general allegedly instructed Major Littleton Waller, commander of a battalion of Marines on Samar, to "take no prisoners" and "kill and burn, the more you kill and burn, the better you will please me." Additionally, Smith told Waller to make

⁷For a more detailed of the Balangiga massacre see Stanley Karnow, In Our Image, America's Empire in the Philippines (New York: Ballentine Books, 1989), pp. 189-191 and Stuart Creighton Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation" (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), pp. 201-205.

⁸Karnow, In Our Image, p. 189.

⁹Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902, p. 312.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 314.

the interior of Samar a "howling wilderness" and to kill "all persons who are capable of bearing arms against the United States." When Waller asked "to know the limit of age to respect," Smith replied that males ten years of age were to be designated as capable of bearing arms.¹¹ As the Judge Advocate General of the Army later observed, "only the good sense and restraint of the majority of Smith's subordinates prevented a complete reign of terror on Samar."¹²

Three months of widespread destruction accomplished little to pacify Samar. Forced to reevaluate his strategy, Smith issued new guidance to his subordinates on February 13, 1901. His new policies were a copy of those successfully implemented by Brigadier General J. Franklin Bell in the Batangas province. An American patrol captured General Lukban five days later, but his successor and his followers continued fighting until the end of April, capitulating only after Smith had toned down his approach. His surrender ended the "longest and most brutal pacification campaign of the entire war."¹³ The pacification campaign on Samar contrasted sharply with the

¹¹Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation", p. 220.

¹²Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 255.

¹³Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902, p. 321.

one conducted by Brigadier J. Franklin Bell in the Batangas province.

The Batangas and Taybayas provinces had been under revolt against Spanish rule since 1896. The insurgency was well organized and highly developed, and the dense tropical vegetation and mountainous terrain favored the insurgents.¹⁴ Several prominent revolutionary leaders came from this area, including one of the most capable, Miguel Malvar. Long an advocate of a strategy of attrition, Malvar assumed command of the revolutionary forces after Aguinaldo's capture and attempted to revitalize the revolution. Chaffee, unhappy with the efforts of General Wade and General Sumner, placed Bell in charge of the province on November 19, 1901.¹⁵

In the words of Brian Linn, "Bell outlined the most coherent and well-organized pacification of the war."¹⁶ Bell commanded the 3rd Separate Brigade, which consisted of 10,000 men. Garrison duty occupied 6,000 soldiers, leaving him a force of 4,000 men for operations in the field. Malvar commanded a force estimated at 8,000 active rebels, who were supported by a large number of

¹⁴Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, pp. 257-59.

¹⁵Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902, pp. 299-301.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 301.

sympathizers from the province's population of well over 500,000 people.

Bell communicated his counterinsurgency plan to his subordinates through a series of thirty-eight circular telegrams. The foundation of his plan was the separation of the insurgents from their base of supply, the village. Bell first ordered his commanders to concentrate the population into protected zones by December 20. After that date, the Americans would consider hostile any person found without a pass outside a protected zone and confiscate or destroy any food found outside the zones. By consolidating food and people, Bell ensured the welfare of the villagers, while forcing the insurgents to live off the land. Eventually, over 300,000 people lived in the protected zones.¹⁷

Additionally, Bell directed that an intelligence network consisting of spies, loyal police, and native scouts be used to "discover, apprehend, and punish all agents, collectors, organizers, contributors, and sympathizers who secretly aid or assist" those in arms. He also exhorted his young officers to "hunt for, pursue, and vigorously operate against armed bands of insurgents

¹⁷Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags, p. 261.

wherever they be found."¹⁸ Bell's mounted cavalry patrols, led by native scouts, were ready to move quickly to capitalize on intelligence leads such as the location of a guerrilla band or supply base.¹⁹ The general also directed that locals who did not turn over insurgents be arrested or imprisoned.

Bell's forces pursued Malvar's insurgents so relentlessly that they were unable to remain in place for more than twenty-four hours at a time. One revolutionary soldier reported that the guerrillas were completely "disorganized and demoralized" by Bell's campaign.²⁰ Malvar, who had sworn to fight to the death, surrendered on April 16, 1902 after "finding himself without a single gun or clerk."²¹

¹⁸J. Franklin Bell, *Telegraphic Circulars*, James Franklin Bell Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute Research Collection, Carlisle, PA.

¹⁹Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p. 302.

²⁰Gates., *Schoolbooks and Krags*, pp. 261-62.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 262.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The United States declared the Philippine Insurrection officially over on July 4, 1902. In his message to the Army in the Philippines, President Theodore Roosevelt thanked the officers and soldiers for "their courage and fortitude and the indomitable spirit and loyal devotion" with which they put down the insurrection against "the lawful sovereignty and just authority of United States." However, the "peculiarly difficult and trying task" was not complete.¹ Hostilities continued in some areas until 1903, and the United States would fight against the Moros in the Sulu archipelago and on the island of Mindanao until 1913.

It is important to note that no single factor led to American victory. While superior military skill, equipment, and tactics helped defeat Aguinaldo's forces in

¹General Orders No. 66, July 4, 1902, U.S. Army, Adjutant General's Office, Correspondence (2 vols., Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1993), II., 1352.

the field and civic projects and social reforms persuaded many Filipinos to throw their allegiance to the Americans, it was the development and implementation of a comprehensive counterinsurgency policy that addressed the political, social, and military aspects of the situation in the Philippines that eventually ended the insurrection. General Otis mistakenly believed that civic action such as the establishment of schools, sanitation and medical measures, and the institution of local governments would be enough to convince the Filipinos of the benevolent intent of the Americans. These actions alone, however, were not sufficient to end the conflict. The insurgents' use of terror proved to be a stronger incentive than the policy of attraction initially practiced by the Americans to gain the support from the Filipino people. The Filipinos stopped supporting the insurgents only when the Americans provided protection or imposed severe penalties, under the provisions of General Orders 100, for failing to cooperate.

Department and district commanders, such as J. Franklin Bell, Franklin M. Bell, Robert P. Hughes, and Samuel B.M. Young, realized that the insurgents must be separated from the population; otherwise, they would be able to continue resistance indefinitely. MacArthur

belatedly acknowledged this and implemented martial law, allowing his commanders to isolate the insurgents from the people. The newly created intelligence system enabled commanders to disrupt the insurgent support network in the villages by identifying and apprehending rebel sympathizers. Once U.S. troop strength reached an appropriate level, the increased number of garrisons provided physical protection to the villagers. Additionally, the policy of population resettlement into protected zones completely severed the ties between the insurgents and their civilian base. Finally, the widespread destruction of food and crops outside the protected zones, combined with aggressive military patrolling led by local guides or scouts, denied the insurgents sanctuary.

American commanders also recognized the importance of balancing the policies of conciliation and repression, or as Major Allen so succinctly wrote, the best policy was to treat "the good man very well indeed and the bad man very harshly."² When commanders employed these policies in the correct proportion, as J. Franklin Bell did in the Batangas, the result was an effective, quick campaign.

²Andrew J. Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations, 1860-1941 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), p. 136.

Bell believed that a "short and severe war creates, in the aggregate, less loss and suffering than benevolent war prolonged indefinitely."³ However, measures that were too brutal or severe led to stiffened resistance. As Captain John R.M. Taylor wrote, "It is not sufficient to kill and to destroy; a desert is not necessarily at peace."⁴ This was especially true on Samar, where Jacob Smith's brutal pacification campaign offered the insurgents no alternative but to continue fighting.

The general weakness of the rebellion's leaders also aided the Americans. Aguinaldo and his staff were generally inept, with a few notable exceptions. They had little experience with conventional warfighting, other than a few years of fighting against the Spanish. Although they lacked formal training in conducting guerrilla warfare, Aguinaldo's subordinates waged a relatively effective campaign against the Americans. For his part, Aguinaldo was able to exert very little direct control over his fractious subordinate commanders since he was on the run for the better part of 1900. The rugged geography of the Philippines also hampered his efforts to

³J Franklin Bell, Telegraphic Circulars #5, James Franklin Bell Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute Research Collection, Carlisle, PA.

⁴John Gates, Schoolbooks and Krags (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 288.

command and control the insurgency as much as it hindered the Americans pursuing him.

The social, tribal, and class divisions present in Filipino society prevented Aguinaldo from successfully uniting the people, as ethnic rivalries overcame the fledgling Filipino nationalist spirit, dividing the insurgency into a series of regional conflicts. The Americans helped split the revolutionary movement by providing the Filipinos with the very things the insurgents were fighting for, namely, "individual liberty, religious freedom, protection of personal property, an honest and competent administration, tax reform, and the equality of all races before the law."⁵ The only thing the revolutionaries offered that the Americans did not provide was independence. Aguinaldo's attempt to appeal to the masses by offering independence failed in the long run, because he did not offer the social, economic, and land reforms that many Filipinos cared about more than independence

None of these factors, however, guaranteed American success. Aguinaldo's forces outnumbered the Americans at least two to one, an extremely unfavorable ratio in a guerrilla war, where a relatively small number of

⁵Ibid., p. 276.

insurgents can tie up enormous amounts of friendly troops. Additionally, the Boxer rebellion in China drew much-needed troops out of the Philippines during the critical period of June 1900 - July 1901.

American success ultimately depended on the men who implemented the counterinsurgency policies developed by the generals - the junior officers, or in some cases sergeants, who served as some of the 600 garrison commanders. These men were responsible not only for leading their soldiers in forays against the insurgents, but they were also charged with the establishment and supervision of the town government, schools, and local police force. In addition to preventing the townspeople from giving supplies or information to the guerrillas, the garrison commanders were responsible for protecting the town and his command against insurgent attacks. They also acted as the provost judge and performed all military staff duties, as well as the multitude of administrative tasks required by the army.⁶ Most importantly, however, those men battled the insurgents for the allegiance of the Filipino people, whose support would determine the success

⁶Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War, 1899-1902 (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 284.

or failure of the insurgency. As Captain John R.M. Taylor wrote that

it was not the allure of democratic ideology or even the promise of a bright and prosperous future that won over the people in the barrios. Rather, it was the local garrison commander's force of character that won or lost the day. Only when they were convinced the American officer had the character, the will, and the means to protect them did they begin to submit themselves to his authority.⁷

⁷John R.M. Taylor, The Philippine Insurrection Against the United States (5 vols., Pasay City, P.I.: Eugenio Lopez Foundation, 1971) p. II, 306, cited in Andrew J. Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1998), p. 122.

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