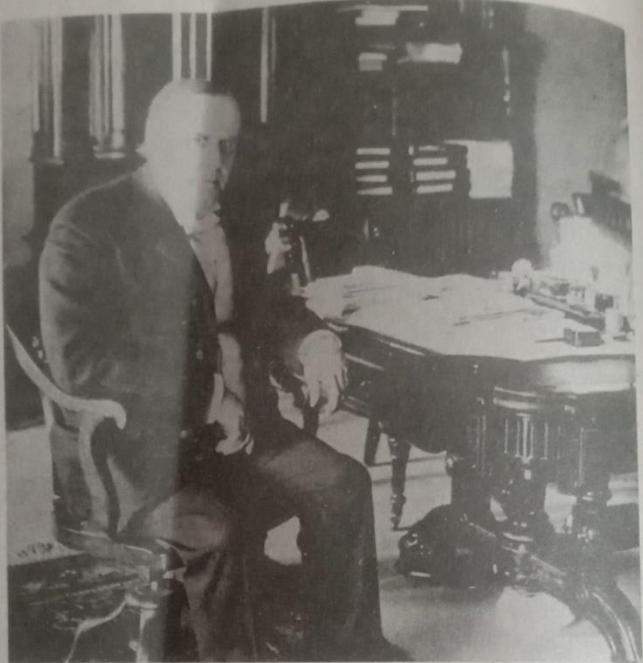


Cuba is a country contemporary Filipinos associate with cigars, Fidel Castro, and Che Guevara. We only hear of Cuba in relation to the United States. Memory does not go far back enough to see that the Philippines and Cuba are like twins. We have a shared history. Both were colonized by Spain, both were briefly occupied by the English in the eighteenth century, and both were taken by the United States at the turn of the century. We even share the same villains in history.

The so-called "Butcher of Cuba" Valeriano Weyler who made the (in)famous policy of "reconcentration" also wielded his iron hand in the Philippines. It was during his term that unruly tenants were evicted from Dominican land in Calamba—these included the Rizal family. Weyler was replaced as governor-general in Cuba by Ramon Blanco who was governor-general in the Philippines. Camilio de Polavieja also served in both Manila and Santiago de Cuba. The sharing of chief executives did not end with the Spanish period. William Howard Taft served in the Philippines before becoming special governor in Cuba and later president of the United States. Leonard Wood was in charge of the military occupation of Cuba before he was sent to Manila—only to cross swords with Manuel Luis Quezon. If one were to look for parallels in Philippine history, one would find it easily in the history of Cuba.

The Spanish-Cuban War began on February 24, 1895, in what is now known as the Grito de Baire. We would have our own Grito of Balintawak in August 1896. The Cuban national hero Jose Marti was killed very early in the war in an ambush on May 19, 1895. By April 1896, the United States had offered its good offices to end the fighting in Cuba, which was practically its next-door neighbor. Towards the end of 1897 U.S. President McKinley condemned "reconcentration" as a policy and dropped hints that the United States would intervene in the conflict.

Theodore Roosevelt, then undersecretary of the Navy, worked for the appointment of Commodore George Dewey as commander of the Asiatic Squadron. The telegrams sent from Washington to Dewey are telling parts in the slowly unfolding history of the Philippines in 1898.



US President William McKinley at his desk

On January 27, 1898, Dewey received this telegram: "Retain until further orders the crew of the squadron whose terms enlistment have expired."

On February 25, 1898, Navy Secretary Long took the afternoon off, leaving Theodore Roosevelt his undersecretary in charge of the office. Roosevelt then took the liberty of sending the celebrated telegram to Dewey that reads: "Order the squadron, except the Monocacy, Hongkong. Keep full of coal. In the event declaration of War Spain, your duty will be to see that Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic Coast, and then offensive operations in Philippines keep Olympia until further orders."

Next day, February 26, 1898, Navy Secretary Long ratified Roosevelt's cable by ordering Dewey to: "Keep full of coal—the best that can be found."

Events were running to a climax. The USS *Maine* blew up in Havana harbor under circumstances that remained mysterious to this day. At that time Spain was blamed for the loss of the ship and its crew. Spain

tried to avert war by resorting to developments, the U. S. Navy Long informed Dewey: "The Hongkong, upon arrival of the Asiatic Squadron." On April 1, 1898, the ready. Washington again purchased on station: The hand? How much soap are in Washington should inquire April 11 President McKenna. Eight days later, Congress U.S. military intervention that a state of war exists no official declaration Dewey was instructed commenced between Philippines Islands. C Spanish fleet. You may endeavors."

The U.S. Asiatic before the U.S. Congress retroactively that the How did this happen with Spain, which Queen Victoria who hopelessly declared left their posts! It is

tried to avert war by resorting to diplomacy; but while waiting for developments, the U. S. Navy continued to fortify her Asiatic Squadron in preparation for war with Spain. On March 21, 1898, Navy Secretary Long informed Dewey: "The Baltimore has been ordered to proceed to Hongkong, upon arrival of the Mohican at Honolulu with ammunition for the Asiatic Squadron."

On April 1, 1898, the Asiatic Squadron was again reminded to be ready. Washington again cabled Dewey: "Fill up with provisions purchased on station: Then how many days provision have you on hand? How much soap and tobacco shall I ship?"

It is intriguing that instead of asking about arms and ammunition, Washington should inquire about the supply of soap and tobacco. By April 11 President McKinley had sent a "War Message" to Congress. Eight days later, Congress acted by passing a Joint Resolution approving U.S. military intervention in Cuba. By April 23, 1898, Spain recognized that a state of war existed with the United States of America. Although no official declaration of war had been issued by the U.S. Congress, Dewey was instructed on April 24, 1898, as follows: "War has commenced between the US and Spain. Proceed at once to the Philippines Islands. Commence operations at once particularly against Spanish fleet. You must capture vessels or destroy them. Use utmost endeavors."

The U.S. Asiatic Squadron had already been dispatched to Manila before the U.S. Congress declared on April 25, 1898, that it recognized retroactively that the state of war with Spain began on April 21, 1898. How did this happen? It appears that the United States wanted a war with Spain, which was something not lost on many people, including Queen Victoria who wrote in her diary on April 21, 1898: "War seems hopelessly declared, and the respective Spanish and US Ministers have left their posts! It is monstrous of America."

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US consul opens negotiations with Aguinaldo

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When Isidro Artacho sued Emilio Aguinaldo in a Hongkong court to get what he claimed to be his share of the Biak-na-Bato money, Aguinaldo was advised to become scarce and avoid scandal. Aguinaldo slipped out of the crown colony with Gregorio del Pilar and J. Leyba. While cooling their heels in Singapore in April 1898, Aguinaldo was contacted by U.S. Consul General E. Spencer Pratt and invited to discuss the situation in the Philippines. Unknown to Aguinaldo at the time, the U.S. Asiatic Squadron was on its way to Manila to destroy the Spanish fleet. On April 27, 1898 Consul Pratt sent the following coded dispatch to Washington narrating his meeting with Aguinaldo.

SIR: I have the honor to report that I sent you on the 27th [April 1898], and confirmed in my dispatch No. 211 of that date, a telegram, which deciphered read as follows:

Secretary of State, Washington:

General Aguinaldo gone my instance Hongkong arrange with Dewey cooperation insurgents Manila. Pratt.

The facts are these: On the evening of Saturday the 23rd [April 1898], I was confidentially informed of the arrival here, incognito, of the supreme leader of the Philippine insurgents, General Emilio Aguinaldo, by Mr. H[oward]W. Bray, an English gentlemen of high standing, who, after fifteen years residence as a merchant and planter in the Philippines, had been compelled by the disturbed condition of things resulting from Spanish misrule to abandon his property and leave there, and from whom I had previously obtained much valuable information for Commodore Dewey regarding fortifications, coal deposits, etc., at different points in the islands.

Being aware of the great prestige of General Aguinaldo with the insurgents, and that no one, either at home or abroad, could exert over them the same influence and control that he could, I determined at once to see him, and, at my request, a secret interview was accordingly arranged for the following morning, Sunday, the 24th, in which, besides General Aguinaldo, were only present the General's trusted advisers [Gregorio del Pilar and J. Leyba] and Mr. Bray who acted as interpreter.

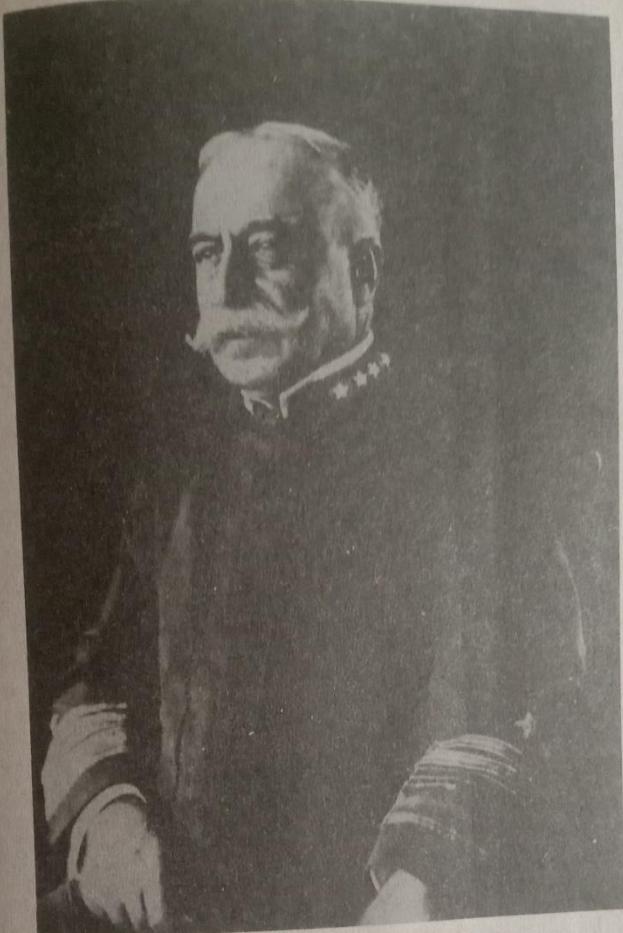
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George Dewey, victor of the Battle of Manila Bay.
The present Roxas Boulevard was first named after him.

At this interview, after learning from General Aguinaldo the state and object sought to be obtained by the present insurrectionary movement, which though absent from the Philippines, he was still directing. I took it upon myself, whilst explaining that I had no authority to speak for the government, to point out the danger of continuing independent action at this stage; and, having convinced him of the expediency of cooperating with our fleet, then at Hongkong, and obtained the assurance of his willingness to proceed thither and confer with Commodore Dewey to that end, should the latter so desire, I telegraphed the Commodore the same day as follows, through our consul general at Hongkong: "Aguinaldo insurgent leader, here. will come hongkong arrange

with commodore for general cooperation insurgents manila if desired. telegraph
pratt."

The Commodore's reply reading thus: "Tell aguinaldo come soon as
possible. dewey."

I received it late at night, and at once communicated to General
Aguinaldo, who, with his aide-de-camp and private secretary, all under
assumed names, I succeeded in getting off by the British steamer *Malacca*,
which left here on Tuesday the 26th.

Just previous to his departure, I had a second and last interview
with General Aguinaldo, the particulars of which I shall give you by next
mail.

The general impressed me as a man of intelligence, ability, and
courage, and worthy the confidence that had been placed in him.

I think that in arranging for his direct cooperation with the
commander of our forces, I have prevented possible conflict of action
and facilitated the work of occupying and administering the Philippines.

If this course of mine meets with Government's approval, as I trust it
may, I shall be fully satisfied; to Mr. Bray, however I consider there is due
some special recognition for most valuable services rendered.

How that recognition can best be made I leave to you to decide.

This is the beginning of the alliance between Aguinaldo and the
United States. When the Americans occupied the Philippines,
Aguinaldo cried foul, claiming that he was promised independence
for his aid against Spain.

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Hototai sometimes spelled "Hototay," is a noodle-and-soup dish often served in panciterias. It is the favorite dish of National Artist for Literature N.V.M. Gonzalez. We would not normally associate hototay with the Philippine centennial, but under the innocent Chinese-sounding name is actually the title of the hit song of the Spanish-American War, "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" Compress the whole title into one word and you get "Hototay," one of the songs the Americans sang when they occupied Manila in 1898. Imagine American soldiers and sailors singing or humming this tune in carinderias as they slurped the noodles soup that soon became famous as our centennial dish. "Hototay" was also played by the band on the American squadron on their way to Manila.

As soon as Consul Pratt received the cable, "Tell Aguinaldo come soon as possible. Dewey" he arranged for Aguinaldo, Gregorio del Pilar, and J. Leyba to board the ship *Malacca* for Hongkong under assumed names. Aguinaldo left for Hongkong on April 26, 1898, thinking that he would return to the Philippines on board Dewey's flagship *Olympia*. Dewey left without him.



Dewey's flagship *Olympia*, 1898

Dewey could not wait because he was ordered out of Hongkong. When it became official that war had been declared between the United States and Spain, a position of neutrality was immediately taken by Great Britain. Part of this neutrality meant that all U.S. and Spanish warships then docked in Hongkong were to have been ordered out by Major General Wilsone Black, governor of the crown colony not later than 4 P.M. of Monday, April 25, 1898. Yet Britain was not all that neutral—or at least Governor Black wasn't because he softened the official message with a personal note scribbled underneath that read, "God knows, my dear Commodore, that it breaks my heart to send you this notification."

Beating the 4 P.M. deadline on April 25 Dewey moved the squadron thirty miles away to Mirs Bay, confident that the Chinese government would not make a fuss about it. Dewey dropped anchor and waited for instructions. He had seven warships under his command: *Olympia* his flagship; the protected cruisers *Raleigh*, *Baltimore*, and *Boston*; the gunboats *Concord* and *Petrel*, and the revenue cutter *McCulloch*. Dewey also had two unarmed ships *Zafiro* and *Nanshan* that would later be made to enter Manila before the warships to test the waters for mines.

At around 7 P.M. of April 25, Dewey received the following dispatch: "War has commenced between the United States and Spain. Proceed at once to Philippine Islands. Commence operations particularly against the Spanish fleet. You must capture vessels or destroy. Use utmost endeavor."

Despite his orders, Dewey did not leave right away because he was waiting for the arrival of the U.S. consul to Manila Oscar Williams, who had left the consulate and the Americans in the care of Her Britannic Majesty's consul in Manila. Williams was one of the chief sources of intelligence information for Dewey. Under diplomatic immunity, the consul went around Manila and reported on the fortifications of the city and its environs. The problem was that being a civilian Williams only reported what he saw and could not give more detailed information as to the type of guns and ships guarding Manila. He could not give the type of ammunition used or the range of these Spanish guns and cannons. Before being ordered out of Hongkong, Dewey had sent his aide F. B. Upham to interview all crew members of boats arriving in Hongkong from Manila. Disguised as a tourist interested in nautical matter, Upham was able to gather more information on the defenses at Manila.

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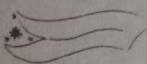
Dewey's order were to "proceed at once" and destroy the Spanish fleet in Manila, but he had to wait two more days for the arrival of Consul William because he might have more useful intelligence reports on the defense of Manila. The Asiatic Squadron left for Manila on the afternoon of April 27, 1898, after Dewey conferred with Williams. Aguinaldo was still enroute to Hongkong. According to Dewey in his memoirs:

The prevailing impression among even the military class in the colony was that our squadron was going to certain destruction. In the Hongkong Club it was not possible to get bets, even at heavy odds, that our expedition would be a success, and this in spite of a friendly predilection among the British in our favor. I was told, after our officers had been entertained at dinner by a British regiment, that the universal remark among our hosts was to this effect: 'A fine set of fellows, but unhappily we shall never see them again.'

American victory in Manila Bay may have been unsure when they left Hongkong in 1898, but Hototay in Manila in 1998 shows that we can also find traces of history in food.

'Hell ain't hotter than this'

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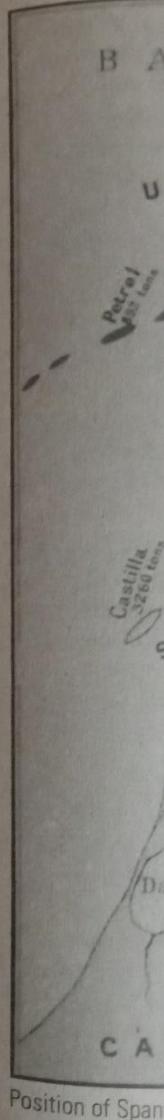
Dewey was disappointed by the news Consul Williams brought with him from Manila. It was not worth the wait on Mirs Bay. After a short meeting Dewey ordered the squadron to lift anchor and proceed to the China Sea. Williams warned Dewey about submarine mines that had arrived in Manila from Madrid, but Dewey presumed that the path he was to take had waters too deep for submarine mines to be useful. Besides, mines placed too early in the tropical sea water had a tendency to corrode and be ineffective when needed. Actually, the request for mines to seal the entrance to Manila Bay was never met. Spanish Admiral Patricio Montojo was advised by Madrid to make up for these deficiencies with "zeal and activity."

Although Dewey's orders were to "proceed at once" to the Philippines, he took his time by waiting for Consul Williams. He did not hurry to Manila either but ordered the squadron to travel at a stately and dignified pace of eight knots. Combat drill was regular, and so were the Sousa tunes played by the military band for the crew on deck. "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight" was a favorite that Filipinos would later corrupt into the name of a soup—*Hototay*.

In the days without planes or missiles the only way for an outside hostile force to approach Manila was through the sea. Thirty miles north of the entrance to Manila was Subic, a bay protected both by nature and a Spanish naval station. Dewey worried that if the Spanish fleet decided to engage him in Subic there was a possibility that they could repel the Americans. Admiral Patricio Montojo had the same thing in mind when he moved the Spanish fleet to Subic.

As fate would have it, however, Montojo had to move the fleet back to Manila when he realized that Subic was ill-prepared to meet the enemy. Only five of the fourteen submarine mines were in place. He was confident that the bay was already covered by four 5.9 inch guns—only to discover that these were still lying on the beach when he arrived. Worse was that these guns could not be installed in time for the battle. On April 28, 1898, Montojo received a warning from the Spanish consul in Hongkong that the American squadron was on its way to Subic and would fight its way to Manila.

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

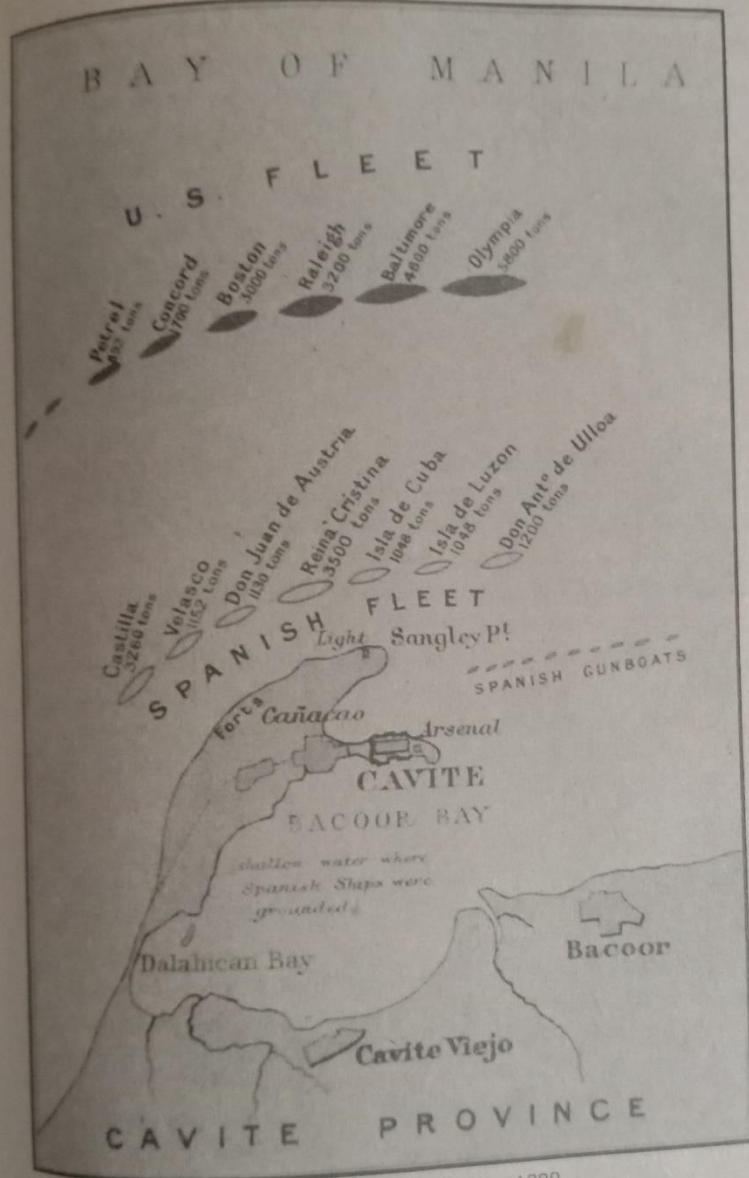


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Position of Spanish and US fleets, Battle of Cavite, 1898

The cruiser *Castilla* needed repair for a leak near its propeller, which was remedied with cement in Subic that left the propeller useless. Towed, the *Castilla* was a dismal sight, and Montojo decided to move the Spanish fleet back to Manila. Not wanting to see the fleet sink in the 40 meter deep Subic Bay, he moved to shallow waters closer to Manila.

Dewey cautiously entered Subic. When he found out that the Spanish fleet was nowhere to be found, he was beside himself with joy. They proceeded to Manila and passed the fortified Corregidor and El Fraile islands, expecting some action. Again they were disappointed. Only three useless shots were fired from El Fraile and they replied limply. Nothing was heard or felt from Corregidor. It was too good to be true.

From El Fraile it was 22 miles to Manila. Because night had overtaken them, Dewey ordered that the squadron reduce speed. He was in no hurry to reach Manila because he knew he would encounter Montojo's fleet at dawn. Montojo was in no hurry either (or maybe he was fatalistic about his defeat)—he went out to dinner that evening to relax before battle.

By daylight Dewey and the squadron could already see Intramuros, but the Spanish fleet was not there. They looked around and finally spotted the Spanish fleet six miles away to the southwest in Cavite. Dewey went on to meet them and described his first day in Manila as follows: "A typical tropical day, scarcely a breath of air and a haze that resembled that which one observes arising from a hot steel plate; a fireman coming on deck for a breath of air described it perfectly when he remarked to a seaman: 'We people don't have to worry, for Hell ain't no hotter than this.'"

Montojo had a better chance of getting cover from the artillery in Manila, but knowing that he did not stand a chance against a superior enemy, he decided to spare Intramuros from enemy fire. To save the Pearl of the Orient, this distinguished and ever loyal city of Manila, Montojo had moved his fleet to Cavite where they dropped anchor in shallow water and waited for disaster.

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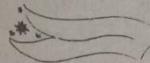
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Battle of Manila a mismatch

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Two hours after the Battle of Manila began, at 7:35 A.M., the American squadron moved northward, away from the engagement. There was too much smoke from the gunfire that both sides did not know who had the upper hand. Dewey was warned that he only had 15 rounds of ammunition left for his 5-inch rapid-fire battery. If the American flagship *Olympia* was left with roughly five minutes of firepower, Dewey worried that the ammunition on the rest of his ships were just as depleted. He was thousands of miles away from home, and it would be frightfully embarrassing for the American squadron to leave the battle unfinished.

Dewey met with the officers of the other ships and discovered that he was misinformed—the *Olympia*'s 15 rounds of ammunition were the ones fired and not the ones left. The other ships had enough ammunition to finish off the disabled Spanish fleet. With this welcome news, Dewey ordered that his men eat breakfast before they resumed the battle.

During the lull, the Americans had their corned beef (*Carne norte*) breakfast amidst the background noise of exploding cartridges on the burning Spanish ships, as well as cannon fire from the batteries at the Pasig, Luneta, and Malate. Although these batteries were out of range, creating nothing but useless little splashes on the water, they seemed so insolent that the irritated Dewey lost no time in sending a message to the Spanish governor-general in Intramuros, warning him that if the Manila batteries did not cease firing he would shell Intramuros. This silenced the Manila cannons.

In his report to Madrid, Rear Admiral Patricio Montojo narrates:

At 10:30 the enemy returned, forming a circle to destroy the arsenal and the ships which remained to me, opening upon them a horrible fire, which we answered as far as we could with the few cannons which we still had mounted.

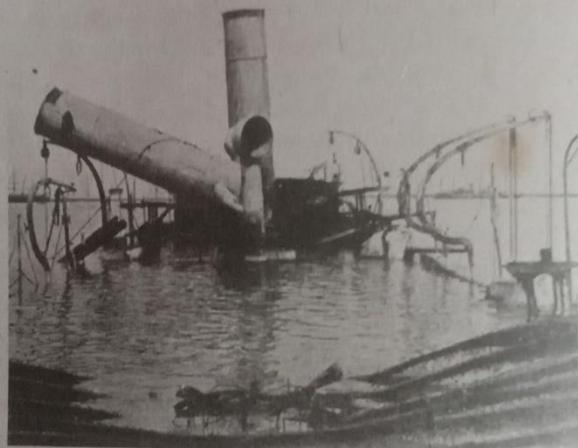
There remained the last recourse to sink our vessels, and we accomplished this operation, taking care to save the flag, the distinguishing pennant, the money in the safe, the portable arms, the breech plugs of the guns and the signal codes.

In his report to Washington, Dewey described the extent of the destruction as follows:

Sunk—Reina Christina, Castilla, and Don Antonio de Ulloa.

Burnt—Don Juan de Austria, Isla de Luzon, Isla de Cuba, General Lezo, Marques del Duero, El Correo, Velasco, and Isla de Mindanao (transport).

Captured—Rapido and Hercules (tugs) and several small launches.



What was left of *Reina Cristina*, flagship of Spanish Admiral Montojo, after the Battle of Manila Bay, May 1, 1898

"I am happy to report," Dewey continues, "that the damage done to the squadron under my command was inconsiderable. There were none killed, and only seven men in the squadron slightly wounded....several of the vessels were struck and even penetrated, but the damage was of the slightest, and the squadron is in as good condition now as before the battle."

The Battle of Manila Bay was a mismatch. One can see this clearly by comparing the destruction and casualties of the Spanish fleet with the negligible damage done on the American squadron. The Spanish counted 381 men killed and wounded, while the Americans only had seven men slightly wounded. In fact, there was only one American casualty in the Battle of Manila, a stout engineer who lacked exercise

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on the revenue cutter *McCulloch* and died of heat stroke! He did not even become a statistic in the war because he died before the battle began. As the squadron was entering the Boca Grande, this man was working in the engine room with 170 degrees of heat. He collapsed and died a day later.

Montijo excused his dismal performance by blaming the superiority of the enemy in terms of ships and trained men. He concluded his report to Madrid as follows:

It remains only to say that all the chiefs, officers, engineers, quartermasters, gunners, sailors and soldiers, rivalled one another in sustaining with honor the good name of the Navy on this sad day.

The inefficiency of the vessels which composed my little squadron, the lack of all classes of the personnel, especially master gunners and seaman gunners; the inaptitude of some of the provisional machinists, the scarcity of rapid-fire cannon, the strong crews of the enemy, and the unprotected character of the greater part of our vessels, all contributed to make more decided the sacrifice which we made for our country and to prevent the possibility of the horrors of the bombardment of the City of Manila, with the conviction that with the scarcity of our force against the superior enemy we were going to certain death and could expect a loss of all our ships.

It would not be an exaggeration to describe the Spanish fleet as "sitting ducks." If Dewey's victory was like taking candy from a baby, how did it go down in history as a glorious naval battle?

McKinley: 'We must keep all we want'

Dewey's victory in Manila Bay set the tone and context for Emilio Aguinaldo's return to the Philippines. Unknown to many people, Dewey was as good a diplomat as he was an admiral of the U.S. Navy. In his dealings with Aguinaldo he took care to make him feel like an ally, and yet he stayed clear of giving the slightest hint of U.S. recognition of the Philippine government.

Aguinaldo's cooperation was critical to further the so-called "large policy" adopted by the United States. In the euphoria following the American victory in Manila Bay, Dewey informed Washington of his position in a cable that said, "I control [Manila] bay completely and can take the city at any time, but I have not sufficient men to hold." This small detail was overlooked in Washington, and Dewey waited anxiously for additional arms and men that could not be sent immediately since the U.S. was preoccupied with Cuba. Dewey's ammunition was depleted following the battle and he needed soldiers to occupy Manila. Dewey found the Manila heat oppressive and was worried about the outbreak of disease on board the fleet. He needed help and Aguinaldo was the quick solution.

Dewey held Manila Bay and threatened Intramuros with bombardment. He needed Aguinaldo to keep the pressure on the Spaniards holed up in Intramuros. And he needed the Filipinos to keep the Spaniards at bay until American soldiers arrived to occupy Manila.

Adding to Dewey's headache was the fact that he was cut off from the outside world because he cut the underwater cable connecting Manila to Hongkong. Without direct communication to Washington, Dewey had to send a ship, usually the revenue cutter *McCulloch*, bearing a message for Hongkong to be transmitted to the United States. It took about one week for the ship to travel from Manila to Hongkong and another week to come back with the reply. This explains why the official news of Dewey's May 1, 1898, victory reached Washington only on May 7 after the *McCulloch* carried the news from Manila to Hongkong.

When the U.S. consul in Singapore helped Aguinaldo board a ship for Hongkong, he was acting on Dewey's cabled instructions, "Tell Aguinaldo come soon as possible." From his self-imposed exile,

Aguinaldo expected to return to the Philippines on board the American flagship *Olympia*. On April 27, 1898, Consul Pratt in Singapore sent a cipher cable to the secretary of state saying, "General Aguinaldo gone my instance Hongkong arrange with Dewey cooperation insurgents Manila." This early the consul was already taking credit for bringing Aguinaldo into the picture, which would turn out to be his undoing.

By the time Aguinaldo arrived in Hongkong, the American Squadron had already left. He had to wait until after the battle of Manila Bay when the revenue cutter *McCulloch* arrived on May 7 with news of the American victory. Despite Dewey's earlier cable to Singapore asking Aguinaldo to "come immediately" he was not allowed to board the *McCulloch* because there were no specific orders to take Aguinaldo back to Manila. Thus Aguinaldo had to wait for the next trip on May 17 for his free ride home. Aguinaldo arrived in Cavite on May 19, 1898, and began to reorganize his government.

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US President McKinley who said of
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War "we must keep all we want."

Unknown to Aguinaldo, at around the same time that the U.S. consul to Singapore was arranging for Filipino cooperation with Dewey, there was another U.S. diplomat to Siam (now Thailand) who said in a press interview: "It is of the greatest importance that the United States should take the Philippine islands. Their value is not realized at home. They are richer and larger than Cuba, and in the hands of a strong power would be the key to the Far East."

Perhaps it was a case where one hand did not know what the other was doing. U.S. policy on the Philippines at this time was vague. After the Battle of Manila Bay, the United States was unsure whether to keep the Philippines or not. As there was no clear-cut policy, U.S. President McKinley acted swiftly. Before he even received official word of Dewey's victory in Manila, he issued verbal orders to send an expeditionary force to the Philippines. Unfortunately, the Philippines was not protected by anything similar to the Teller amendment that prohibited American annexation of Cuba. Despite late denials to the contrary, McKinley was keen on keeping the Philippines. Found in his personal papers was a handwritten memo that said: "While we are conducting a war and until its conclusion we must keep all we get; when the war is over we must keep what we want."

Aguinaldo, "Dictator of the Philippines"

Emilio Aguinaldo arrived in the Philippines on May 19, 1898, on board the U.S. revenue cutter *McCulloch*. Upon his arrival in Cavite, Aguinaldo lost no time regrouping those loyal to him. He sought to reestablish the revolutionary government that had lain dormant since the signing of the Pact of Biak-na-Bato in December 1897.

On his way home, Aguinaldo carried with him a draft constitution prepared by Mariano Ponce in Hongkong that was to establish a federal government. This stillborn constitution clearly separated and defined the powers of the state into three branches, namely, Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary. However, the constitution was set aside in favor of a decree establishing a dictatorial government drafted by Ambrosio Rianzares Bautista. Aguinaldo was uneasy with the title "dictator"—as are tyrants in today's world—but then Aguinaldo was convinced by his advisers to see his administration in the context of the renewal of hostilities. The troubled times called for a leader who could move decisively without being hampered by the checks of a legislative and judicial body.

The decree establishing the dictatorial government, dated May 24, 1898, reads in part:

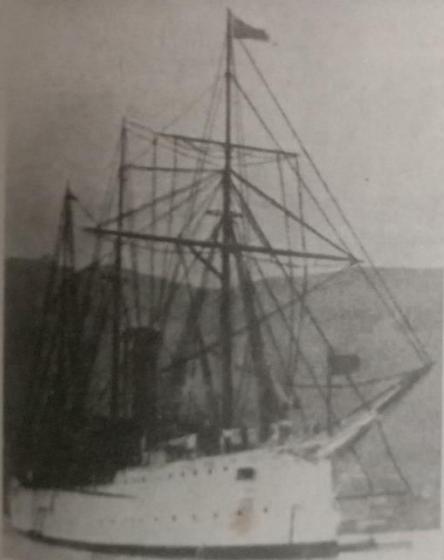
My Beloved Countrymen:

I accepted the agreement of peace proposed by Don Pedro A. Paterno after his consultation with the Captain-General of the islands, agreeing in consequence thereof to surrender our arms and disband the troops under my immediate command under certain conditions, as I believe it more advantageous for the country than to continue the insurrection, for which I had but limited resources, but as some of the said conditions were not complied with, some of the bands are discontented and have not surrendered their arms. Five months have elapsed without the inauguration of any of the reforms which I asked in order to place our country on a level with civilized peoples—for instance, our neighbor Japan, which in the short span of twenty years has reached a point where she has no reason to envy anyone, her strength and ascendancy being shown in the last war with China. I see the impotence of the Spanish government to contend with certain elements which pose constant

obstacle to the progress of the country itself and whose destructive influences have been one of the causes of the uprising of the masses...

Having explained away the end of the ceasefire, Aguinaldo then makes public what was, in Singapore, a secret alliance between him and the United States:

...as the great and powerful North American nation has offered its disinterested protection to secure the liberty of this country, I again resume command of all the troops in the struggle for the attainment of our lofty aspirations, inaugurating a dictatorial government to be administered by decrees promulgating under my sole responsibility with the advice of distinguished persons until the time when these islands, being under our complete control, may form a constitutional republican assembly and appoint a president and cabinet, into whose hands I shall then resign command of the islands.



The US Cost Guard Revenue cutter *McCulloch* brought Aguinaldo back to the Philippines from exile in Hongkong on May 19, 1898.

Aguinaldo

Clearly, the dictatorial government was temporary in nature. Just like the Biak-na-Bato constitution, the Aguinaldo dictatorship was provisional since there was not much time in war for fine tuning that which makes a government and constitution established in peace stable, flexible, and efficient. Thus, on the same day, May 24, 1898, Aguinaldo, signing himself as "Dictator of the Philippines," issued another decree that consolidated his powers:

Now that all my countrymen understand that the government of the Republic of the Philippines in the past insurrection has come to an end and that its constitution is without force...I hereby decree the following:

Article 1. All orders of the Philippine Republican Government of the past insurrection, not only those contrary to this decree, but also those in accord herewith, are hereby revoked.

Article 2. All commissions issued to the officials of the army, provinces and towns are likewise annulled.

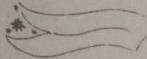
Article 3. To take effect on the day of the issue of this decree, our government shall cease to be styled the 'Revolutionary Republic of the Philippines', and will be called the 'Dictatorial Government of the Philippines,' whose system of laws shall be promulgated in succeeding orders to be published in the shortest time possible.

Article 4. Nevertheless, the form of the government adopted by me, the Dictatorial, shall merely be considered as provisional in character, so that, when peace shall have been re-established and our legitimate aspiration for unrestricted liberty attained, it may be modified by the nation, in which rests the principle of authority.

Article 5. All officials shall, in due time, receive their appointments to office from the Dictatorial Government, for their own information and in order that they may be acknowledged in the offices which they occupy.

Now Aguinaldo is ready again to take on the world he temporarily left behind.

Aguinaldo's one-on-one with Dewey



Memoirs, correspondence, and autobiographies are some of the main sources for historical research. Emilio Aguinaldo authored two: *Reseña Verídica de la Revolución Filipina* (1899) and *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan* (1964). Another work, *A Second Look at America* (1957) co-authored by Vicente Albano Pacis, was repudiated in a December 1957 telegram to Robert Speller Sons Publishers, New York that reads: "HAVE NOT AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION MY BOOK SECOND LOOK AT AMERICA STOP AM PROTESTING AGAINST BOOK PUBLICATION AS REPORTED MANILA NEWSPAPER GENERAL EMILIO AGUINALDO."

The "unauthorized" biography where Aguinaldo was made to appear as "co-author" was a retraction in a sense that Aguinaldo's second look at America during the Cold War made him appear appreciative of U.S. intervention in areas threatened by communism. Aguinaldo declared that words were put into his mouth and he immediately sat down to recollect and published *Mga Gunita ng Himagsikan*. He planned this to be a two-volume work: the first covering his birth to the Pact of Biak-na-Bato and the second beginning with the second phase of the Philippine Revolution and including a detailed treatment of his dealings with the United States. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to work on the second volume. In today's countdown, we use his 1899 memoirs where he narrates his first meeting with George Dewey:

The *McCulloch* started at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 17th May [1898] for the Philippines, we anchored, between twelve and one o'clock on the afternoon of the 19th, in the waters of Cavite, and immediately the launch of the Admiral—with his aide and private secretary—came to convey me to the *Olympia*, where I was received, with my aide, Sr. Leyba, with the honors of a general, by a section of marine guards.

The Admiral received me in a salon, and after greetings of courtesy I asked him "if all the telegrams relative to myself which he had addressed to the Consul at Singapore, Mr. Pratt, were true, he replied in the affirmative and added, that the United States had come to the Philippines to protect its natives and free them from the yoke of Spain."

He said moreover, that "America was rich in territory and money, and needed no colonies," concluding by assuring me, "to have no doubt whatever about the recognition of Philippine Independence by the United States." Thereupon he asked me, if I could get the people to rise against the Spaniards and carry on a rapid campaign.

I replied that events would give proof of it, but while the expedition of arms entrusted to Consul Williams in one of the ports of China did not arrive, nothing could be done, for without arms each victory would cost many lives of brave and daring Filipino revolutionaries. The Admiral offered, aside from the orders he had given Consul Williams, to send a steamer to hasten said expedition of arms, immediately placing at my disposal all the guns which there were on the ships of the Spanish Squadron, and 62 Mauser rifles, with much ammunition, which were on the *Petrel*, brought from the islands of Corregidor.

I then expressed in him my profound acknowledgement for the generous help which the United States was giving the Filipino people, as well as my admiration for the magnificence and goodness of the American people. I also stated to him that "before leaving Hongkong, the Filipino Colony had held a meeting, at which was discussed and considered the possibility that—after defeating the Spaniards—the Filipinos might have a war with the Americans, if they should refuse to recognize independence, who were sure to defeat us because they should find us tired out, poor in ammunitions and worn out in the war against the Spaniards," requesting that he pardon my frankness.

The Admiral replied that he "was delighted at my sincerity, and believed that both Filipinos and Americans should treat each other as allies and friends, clearly explaining all doubts for the better understanding between both parties," and added that, "so he had been informed, THE UNITED STATES WOULD RECOGNIZE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE, guaranteed by the word of honor of the Americans,—more binding than documents which may remain unfulfilled when it is desired to fail in them as happened with the compacts signed by the Spaniards, advising me to form at once a Filipino NATIONAL FLAG, offering in virtue thereof to recognize and protect it before the other nations, which were represented by the various squadrons then in the bay: although he said, we should conquer the power from the Spaniards before floating said flag, so that the act should be more honorable in the sight of the whole world, and above all, before the United States, in order that when the Filipino ships with their national flag should pass before the foreign squadron they should inspire respect and esteem.

Again I thanked the Admiral for his good advice and generous offers, informing him that if the sacrifice of my life was necessary to honor the Admiral before the United States, I was then ready to sacrifice it.

I added that under such conditions I could assure him that all the Filipino people would unite in the revolution to shake off the yoke of Spain; that it was not strange that some few were not yet on his side on account of lack of arms or because of personal expediency.

Thus ended this first conference with Admiral Dewey, to whom I announced that I would take up my residence at the Naval Headquarters in the Cavite Arsenal.

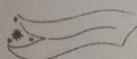
When Manila, and later the entire Philippines, fell into enemy hands Aguinaldo claimed that his government and authority was recognized by Dewey. American accounts say otherwise. Who is telling the truth? That is one of the challenges facing a historian with conflicting sources.



Emilio Aguinaldo in full regalia photographed in a Hongkong studio

US underestimated Filipinos

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Conflicting source abound on the exact relationship between Aguinaldo and the United States. Was he indeed promised independence or not? There was no written agreement to that effect, no signed memorandum of understanding to wave about and therefore everything is conveniently vague. However, it cannot be denied that the Americans approached Aguinaldo to keep the Spaniards holed up in Intramuros while they waited for their land troops to arrive in Manila. Surely, something was exchanged for Filipino support against Spain.

On May 12, 1898 one week before Aguinaldo arrived in Cavite, the U.S. consul in Manila Oscar Williams was busy enlisting the support of the Filipinos against Spain. Dewey conveniently kept his distance, displaying greater tact and diplomacy than the consul. Because Williams could not return to his Intramuros hotel nor reopen the consulate that was in the able hands of Her Britannic Majesty's consul in Manila he wrote the State Department from the cruiser *Baltimore* that was anchored in Manila Bay opposite Cavite. In this dispatch Williams gave "assurance of the friendliness of the Philippine natives to our country and to me as its representative." He continues thus:

During the period of my residence in Manila, every week was a history of barbarities by Spaniards, and of efforts often futile, of the natives to obtain rights and protect their homes.

Scores of times I have heard hopes expressed that either the United States or Great Britain would acquire these islands. In all this foreign residents, other than Spanish, concurred; and all such classes are most friendly to me.

In the struggle between Spain and the insurgents, the deaths have been many and greater among the natives. First, because the Spaniards have been much better armed. Second, because the Spaniards killed many noncombatants, old men, women and children, while the natives refrained from such barbarities.

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Ambeth R. Ocampo



Filipino soldiers

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Filipino soldiers relaxing outside a Cavite theater

Williams was in contact with Filipinos who were allowed to board Dewey's flagship *Olympia*. One of these was a certain Major Gonzales who reported, presumably to Dewey or his aide in the presence of Williams that "they [the Filipinos] had 37,000 troops under arms, good and bad, surrounding Manila, endeavoring to cooperate with the U.S.

Unfortunately, Williams is not very reliable on military matters. At most he sent the State Department a layman's view of the situation in Manila, which would surely be different from military reports sent to the War Department and the White House. Dewey diplomatically left little in writing that could be used by Aguinaldo to claim promises of independence later on. Perhaps Dewey's reports were destroyed after being read in Washington.

"In the main they are very poorly armed," observes Williams in his report, "but have about 6,000 rifles taken from the Spaniards. They have captured the entire railroad line and the river Pasig thus cutting off supply lines, while we by cutting off supply by bay and sea can soon starve Manila into surrender."

A mix of condescension and superiority marks Williams' observation that, "these natives are eager to be organized and led by United States officers, and members of their cabinet visited me and gave assurance that all would swear allegiance to and cheerfully follow

our flag. They are brave, submissive and *cheaply provided for...* [emphasis supplied]. Few United States troops will be needed for conquest and fewer still for occupancy."

The reason for Williams' optimism was his experience with the people of Cavite when he brought the British consul on a guided tour of the remains of the Spanish fleet. He reported:

To show their friendliness for me as our nation's only representative in this part of the world.... as soon as natives found me out, they crowded around me, hats off, shouting *Viva los Americanos* thronged about me by hundreds to shake either hand, even several at a time, men, women, and children striving to get even a finger to shake. So I moved half a mile shaking continuously with both hands. The British Consul, a smiling spectator, said he never before saw such evidence of friendship. Two thousand escorted me to the launch amid hurrahs of good feeling for our nation.

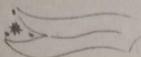
This is one example of a foreigner misinterpreting Filipinos. The Filipinos were congratulating Williams' for the Battle of Manila Bay which did not mean that they wanted to be under the United States. History proved Williams' observation wrong. Filipinos were not as subservient as he claimed. People studying maps and reports in Washington thought taking the Philippines was like taking candy from a baby. But the Philippine campaign exceeded all estimates and became a costly undertaking. As soon as the Filipinos realized that they had been fooled, they fought bravely for the defence of her hard-won but short-lived freedom in the Fil-American War.

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Aguinaldo secretly met with the U.S. consul in April 1898 to discuss his cooperation with the American naval squadron against the Spanish in Manila. The first of these secret meetings was held in a certain place known as "The Mansion" on River Valley Road and the second in the Raffles Hotel. Present were Aguinaldo, his aide de camp Gregorio del Pilar, and J. Leyba his secretary. As none of them spoke English, an Englishman, named Howard Bray, acted as interpreter with U.S. Consul E. Spencer Pratt. One other Filipino witness was a certain Dr. Marcelino Santos, a resident of Singapore. While these negotiations were supposed to be secret, Aguinaldo had the good sense of meeting with the editor of the *Singapore Free Press* shortly before his departure for Hongkong and giving a press interview. This resulted in an article on May 4, 1898, that concluded: "General Aguinaldo's policy embraces the independence of the Philippines, whose internal affairs would be controlled under European and American advisers. American protection would be desirable temporarily, on the same lines as that which might be instituted hereafter in Cuba."

Some points in Aguinaldo's policy seem strangely contemporary. Some of his aspirations worded differently sound like campaign speeches of presidentiables in 1998. When history becomes relevant, it shows that Filipinos have not changed much in a hundred years. Aguinaldo's policy in 1898 continues:

The ports of the Philippines would be free to the trade of the world, safeguards being enacted against the influx of Chinese aliens who would compete with the industrial population of the country. There would be a complete reform of the present corrupt judicature of the country under experienced European law officers. Entire freedom of the press would be established, as well as the right of public meeting. There would be general religious toleration, and steps would be taken for the abolition and expulsion of the tyrannical religious fraternities who have laid such strong hands of every branch of civil administration. Full provision would be given for the exploitation of the natural resources and wealth of the country by roads and railways, and by the removal of hindrances to enterprise and investment of capital.

Always known as a magnanimous victor, Aguinaldo made the following provisions for the defeated enemy: "Spanish officials would be removed to a place of safety until opportunity offered to return them to Spain. The preservation of public safety and order, and the checking of reprisal against Spaniards, would, naturally have to be a first care of the government in the new state of things."

Caught off-guard by the newspaper article, the U.S. consul in Singapore had to assure Washington in a dispatch that this "annoying" press release was nothing to worry about and that the consul "should rather congratulate myself that the secret possessed by such a number was kept so long." This secret kept for about one week, however, was confirmed by the consul as factual, although he complained that "the dates are not quite accurate and a certain amount of conjecture has been indulged in." He reiterated the position he took in engaging Aguinaldo's cooperation with the U.S. forces as follows:

In the second and last interview I had with General Emilio Aguinaldo on the eve of his departure for Hongkong, I enjoined upon him the necessity, under Commodore Dewey's direction, of exercising absolute control over his forces in the Philippines, as no excesses on their part would be tolerated by the American government, the President having declared that the present hostilities with Spain were to be carried out in strict accord with modern principles of civilized warfare.

To this General Aguinaldo fully assented, assuring me that he intended and was perfectly able, once on the field, to hold his followers,

the insurgents in check and lead them as our commander should direct. *The general further stated that he hoped the United States would assume protection of the Philippines for at least long enough to allow the inhabitants to establish a government of their own, in the organization of which he would desire American advice and assistance.*

These questions I told him I had no authority to discuss. [Italics supplied]

It is apparent from the U.S. consul's dispatches that Aguinaldo's ultimate objective was independence of the Philippines and the establishment of a Filipino government. This much he told the *Singapore Free Press* at the time, as well as the U.S. consul. Aguinaldo's position and policy was clear-cut. How come the U.S. consul did not insist that he did not have the authority to discuss such matters? Why didn't he stop Aguinaldo from returning to the Philippines on board a U.S. revenue cutter until this question of eventual independence of the

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Philippines was settled? The U.S. consuls in Singapore, Hongkong, and Manila should have disabused Aguinaldo of his plans for Philippine independence, but they did not. George Dewey should have cleared this matter before taking Aguinaldo as an ally against Spain, but he did not. Nothing was placed in writing and Aguinaldo was left with no support for his story.

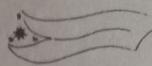
History gives us a fresh view of the past not found in our textbooks, which is why every generation should rewrite its own history. It is obvious that the United States through its representatives took advantage of Aguinaldo's trusting character, used him to keep the Spaniards in check, and eventually took the Philippines and Philippine independence from Aguinaldo and the Filipinos. This much we should not forget on June 12.



Aguinaldo's headquarters at Cavite, 1898

Prophesies of Rizal and Mabini

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Psychics, feng shui experts, and fortune tellers always make the news every January when they cast their predictions for the rest of the year. Good news being bad for circulation, what is emphasized is usually disaster, death, and doom. How come no one reviews the events of the year in December—if only to record the hits and misses of our prophets? This way those who make a living out of the future will be driven out of business. In a similar way, we should reread political analysts, columnists, and those who conduct opinion polls after the May elections to see how accurately they read the signs of the times. Unfortunately, the dustbin is left for historians and archeologists to sift through.

Jose Rizal, in an age without cable TV, the Internet, *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *The Economist*, was able to analyze the future of the Philippines in the context of the other world powers in a long and rambling essay, "Filipinas dentro de cien años" (The Philippines Within a Century) that appeared in installments in *La Solidaridad* from September 1889 to January 1890. That Rizal made mention of America makes him relevant in the countdown to the Philippine centennial:

If the Philippines secure their independence after heroic and stubborn conflicts, they can rest assured that neither England, nor Germany, nor France and still less Holland, will dare to take up what Spain has been unable to hold...Perhaps the great American Republic, whose interests lie in the Pacific...may some day dream of foreign possession. This is not impossible, for the example is contagious, covetousness and ambition are among the strongest vices....the European powers would not allow her to proceed...North America would be quite a troublesome rival, if she should once get into the business. Furthermore, this is contrary to her traditions.

Against her tradition of liberty and independence for all, America did come and take the Philippines. The European powers did not stop America from entering the colonial club either. Was Rizal prophetic or just a good political analyst?

Apolinario Mabini was sharper than Rizal but is unfortunately less read. Imprisoned in San Juan de Dios hospital from October 1896 to

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

June 1897, he took an interest in the Cuban war, drew parallels between Cuba and the Philippines, and published an open letter to the Filipino revolutionaries in April 1897 that, by hindsight, is more prophetic than Rizal's essay:

The war between Spain and the United States of North America having been declared, it is very probable that within a few days a North American squadron would land on our shores and would, by force, take possession, as an act of offensive hostility towards Spain, of one or various seaboard points that it may consider necessary to the execution of the plans and instructions of its Government.

Although the real cause of the war is not and cannot be other than the helplessness of Spain to crush the revolution in Cuba, where the North Americans have big interests to protect, should the outcome of the war be unfavorable to Spain as it is to be expected, given the relative strength of the two combatants, and if because of this the Spanish Government should find itself having the necessity of asking the North American Government for peace, it is very probable that the latter would impose as a condition the independence of Cuba, and, as an indemnization of war, some portion of the Spanish peninsula or of this beautiful Archipelago.

Should the last contingency take place, our situation would be extremely difficult because, bound by duty and by our own honor and advantage to watch over the independence of our country, we should never consent to the dismemberment of this part and parcel of our own lives.

But, not having enough means or strength to oppose formal resistance to either one of the warring parties, we should have recourse to skill and astuteness, restraining the impetuosity of our hearts and subordinating our actions to cool reasoning.

Literally an armchair revolutionary, Mabini gave ten suggestions on how to survive the crisis. Eight suggestions dealt with Spain and two with our dealings with America:

It may be said that attacking the Spaniards and weakening them would make the triumph of the North Americans certain; but as we do not know what these people have in mind, should they happen to covet the possession of these islands, then, we shall have unwittingly helped them, as if we had voluntarily opened to them the doors of our house to let them rule over it.

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And do not deceive yourself. The North Americans, like the Spaniards and all other European powers, covet this most beautiful pearl of the Orient Seas. But we prize it more ourselves, not only because God has given it to us as a present, but also because we have already shed so much blood for it.

But when those colossi of ambition and of power shall be convinced that there exists here a strong and organized people who know how to defend the laws of justice and their honor, they shall be forced to restrain themselves and to seek just sentiments in order to get the best terms possible.

Mabini saw through the American designs, but his mistake (like that of Aguinaldo and Rizal) was in believing that America represented a power that would help oppressed people like Cuba gain their independence from Spain. Mabini did not know that though America declared she would not annex Cuba, there was no such restriction nor qualms of conscience regarding the Philippines.



Jose Rizal with the other pillars of *La Solidaridad*: Marcelo H. del Pilar and Mariano Ponce

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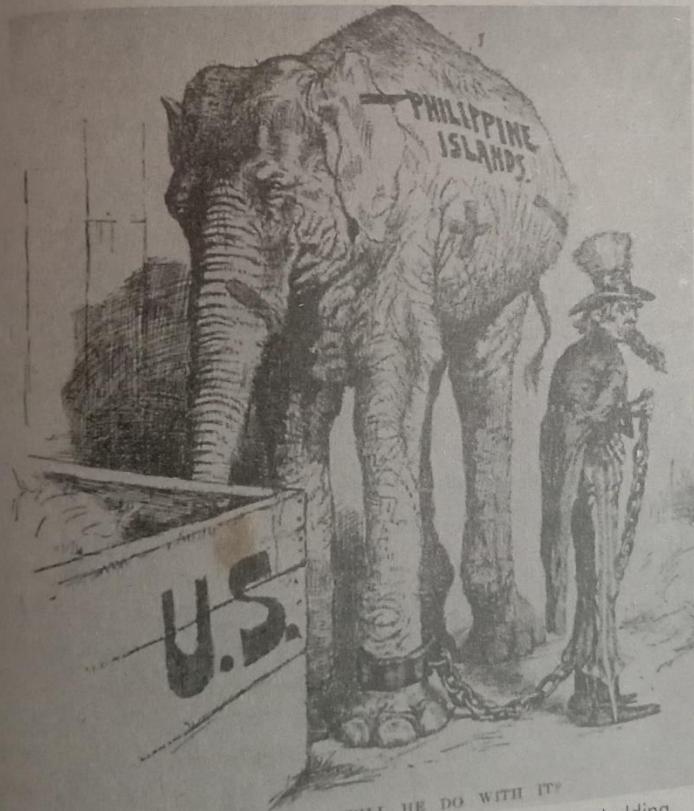
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Aguinaldo blinked

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Why Aguinaldo did not take Manila when he could and when he should has remained a troublesome question in Philippine history. It is very easy for people today, armed with hindsight, to catalogue Aguinaldo's mistakes and take him out of context. To see Aguinaldo in his time is to appreciate the fact that he was fighting with insufficient arms, and that, though unsure of American intentions, he gave them nonetheless the benefit of the doubt.



Cartoon from *New York Herald*, 1898, showing Uncle Sam holding the Philippines in shackles and wondering what to do with it.

Aguinaldo did not lack advisers perhaps there was even too many of them, both able and otherwise. After all the meetings, consultations, and unsolicited advice, Aguinaldo decided in the way he saw fit. Unfortunately, history has proven him wrong.

The correspondence of "Respe" (pseudonym of Felipe Agoncillo) in Hongkong and "Mr. Rost" (E. Aguinaldo) in Manila is fascinating because Agoncillo not only gives a lot of unsolicited advice, but also reports on the (mis)conduct of the members of the Filipino Junta in Hongkong. For example he reported that Maximo Cortes gave the U.S. consul 10,000 pesos not for the purchase of arms for Aguinaldo but as a bribe so that the consul would tell Dewey not to bombard the Cortes real estate in Manila! It appears that the U.S. consul was peddling influence on the side. "I will not state at length everything that has happened here," Agoncillo sighs, "because I do not wish you to become disgusted. But I can tell you that there are many here with great and selfish ambitions."

When Agoncillo received Aguinaldo's manifesto establishing a dictatorial government, he commented, dictatorial government is, under the present circumstances, most desirable, but said form of government does not conform to modern ideas of civilization." There was very little Agoncillo could do about what was already established, so he politely suggested that Aguinaldo wait for an opportunity to change the form of government. He also advised Aguinaldo to issue "your orders... as decrees, in such form as they may be used as the basis of the code in the future." Being a lawyer, Agoncillo wanted everything to be legal and orderly.

He warned Aguinaldo to "make a careful selection of the persons who are to assist you. Both of us have received many disappointments. We must be very cautious." Caution and vigilance was the theme of a letter Agoncillo wrote on May 27, 1898, that was received by Aguinaldo a month later together with his military uniform. The mail was sent through the U.S. consul in Hongkong who in turn sent it through a Japanese cruiser headed for Manila, Agoncillo says:

According to a Reuter telegram published by the local newspapers of this city, it is said that two American cruisers, 15,000 soldiers and General Merritt will soon arrive there. General Merritt will be Governor-General of the Philippines if Manila surrenders. You should therefore be watchful and try to find out the real intentions of the Americans towards our unfortunate country. You should not, however, disclose to them our

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desires. You should endeavor to become intimate with them so that they may furnish you with everything we need, and once we have strengthened ourselves, we can properly adjust the matter.

Elsewhere in the letter he repeats, "It is necessary for the time being to accumulate a large amount of supplies etc., to be used in the future."

That the Filipinos trusted the Americans is evident in this bit of advice:

If Manila be captured and they establish a government, you should not at once protest against it, as it might be a mere form for the purpose of afterwards turning it over to us. Therefore, after the surrender of Manila and after they have established a government, the diplomatic negotiations should then, I think commence with a view of ascertaining our political status.

Dewey allowed the small launches in the bay to fly Filipino flags, which made Agoncillo's advice on flags redundant:

In regard to the flying of our flags, you should not do it unless you have made an arrangement with them about it, because otherwise it might be the cause of conflict. We have duly informed them that we will aid them for the sake of our independence; hence, if they obtain victory through our assistance, and as an early result of the negotiations, they refuse to give us independence and they show intentions either of enslaving us or of selling our country, we have the right in the eyes of the world to fight against them for the welfare of our country.

Felipe Agoncillo was one of the sharpest minds of his generation. He was the first Filipino diplomat, but his deeds are overshadowed in the popular mind as his wife Marcela, who sewed the first Philippine flag, has become—like the flag—a national icon.

Manila blockaded by Dewey

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As soon as the Spanish-American War was declared, the other powers—France, Britain, Japan, Germany, etc.—sent ships to Manila for the protection of their respective subjects and interests. Before the Battle of Manila Bay, many foreigners fled Manila for Hongkong. Those who remained were advised to get out of Intramuros and move into the suburbs of Malate and Ermita where they were within reach of the capital and close to the bay, if they had to escape at all. The suburbs were safe from the enemy fire expected to rain on Intramuros.

On April 27, 1898, the British consul reported to London that "Great consternation is reigning here among many of the foreign subjects as it is expected that Manila will be bombarded by the US Ships of War. I have strongly advised [British nationals and those under British protection like Indians and Chinese] to leave by first opportunity for Hongkong or take refuge on the British ships lying in Manila Bay."

On May 1, 1898, Edward H. Rawson Walker, Her Britannic Majesty's consul sent this short cipher telegram to London: "US Ships of War commenced bombardment of Spanish squadron at Cavite at half past five this morning—one hour and a half Spanish fleet destroyed."

Although Dewey won the Battle and held Manila Bay, the capital had not yet surrendered. The red and yellow standard of Spain still flew over Intramuros. Dewey could have bombarded the city into submission, but he had no land troops to occupy Manila and maintain American control of it. Dewey had to wait.

Due to the war, the American consulate in Manila was closed and American nationals were placed in the care of the British consul, a rather sickly man who would expire before the American occupation of Manila on August 13, 1898. "I have had a most disagreeable time," Rawson-Walker complained to London on May 26, 1898, "I had my life threatened and it is given out that when Manila is bombarded by the Americans the Spanish low class will shoot me." This type of threats the American consul ate for breakfast, and it was the same fare he handed to his unsuspecting British colleague. Speaking of food, Rawson-Walker reported: "The blockade still continues and provisions are running up to an exorbitant price, a fowl that cost formerly ten

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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Carabao meat must have been disagreeable though not as bad as dog meat when beef was impossible to get. For Englishmen, cara-beef and azucena must really be the worst. By June 17, 1898 Rawson-Walker was reporting to London and giving details on what he had done for people seeking the protection of the consulate. Arrangements had been made with Admiral Dewey to move British, Indian, and Chinese people in the consulate to Cavite and place them under American protection. Rawson-Walker also commended Dewey for allowing Chinese refugees to leave on British ships for Hongkong, but he complained about the Spanish officials who delayed papers so that their hands could be greased with bribes. The consul also complained about a Chinese head man who “frightfully squeezed” the departing refugees.

The surprising thing about the consul's June 17 report is that it did not mention anything about the Declaration of Independence in Kawit on June 12, 1898. One wonders if the consul heard about it but chose not to transmit the news officially to London. However, this small notice on the war was given:



Enemy soldiers firing from captured Filipino-built trenches and breastworks.

The rebels are gradually drawing into Manila. Cavite province having insurrectionist forces may at any moment now enter the new town of Manila and surround the old walled city where His Excellency the Captain General and his staff have retired. It is expected that the first contingent of US troops will arrive here about the twentieth of this month.

[On June 30, 1898] the first contingent of US invading army arrived here by the hired transports: *City of Pekin*, *City of Sydney*, Australia convoyed by the US Ship of War *Charleston*. The number of regular troops and volunteers these vessels brought amounted to 3,500 officers and men—the greater portion were raw recruits and even students from Stanford College... These men will require a good deal of drill to make them soldiers and the time that elapses before the other troops arrive will give time for them to be 'licked into shape'... the troops were landed the following day in the arsenal of Cavite which fell into the hands of the Americans the same day the Spanish fleet was destroyed and there is very good accommodation for officers and men. It is not so far expected that hostilities will commence until the arrival of the third contingent.

The preparations for the attack on Manila were slowly falling into place. American troops took over Aguinaldo's position, and Manila would soon fall not into Filipino hands but to the American "allies".

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How Aguinaldo was deceived

April 24, 1898:

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By the middle of June 1898, Washington began to clarify its position towards Aguinaldo. The correspondence between the State Department and the U.S. consuls in Manila, Hongkong, and Singapore, as well as that between the Navy Department and Admiral Dewey, reveals that there was no intention to share the taking of Manila with anyone. Aguinaldo was led to believe that the Americans entered the picture with the aim of giving the Philippines independence. The delicate dealings with Aguinaldo in 1898 were all reported to Washington.

The U.S. consul in Singapore E. Spencer Pratt seems to have been the one who wanted to take full credit for bringing Aguinaldo back to the Philippines. On June 6, 1898, he sent a gushing cable that reads in part:

Considering the enthusiastic manner General Aguinaldo has been received by the natives and the confidence with which he already appeared to have inspired Admiral Dewey, it will be admitted, I think, that I did not overrate his importance and that I have materially assisted the cause of the United States in the Philippines in securing his cooperation.

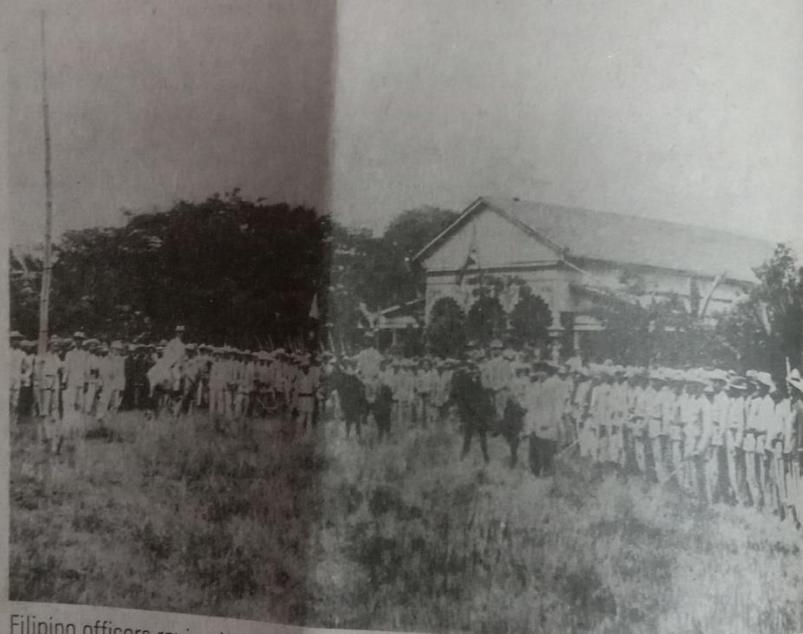
He then casts a very diplomatic slur against his colleague in Hongkong by saying: "Why this cooperation should not have been secured to us during the months General Aguinaldo remained awaiting events in Hongkong, and that he was allowed to leave there without having been approached in the interest of our Government, I cannot understand."

What he did not know was that as early as December 1897 the U.S. consul in Hongkong had been warned against entering any negotiations with the Filipinos. The U.S. consul was also instructed not to encourage the Filipinos in this respect. But the U.S. consul in Singapore did not have the same instructions. Pratt concluded his June 2 dispatch:

No close observer of what had transpired in the Philippines during the past four years could have failed to recognize that General Aguinaldo enjoyed above all others the confidence of the Filipino insurgents and

the respect alike of Spaniards and foreigners in the islands, all of whom vouched for his high sense of justice and honor.

Horrified, the State Department replied to Consul Pratt on June 16 and instructed him to, "avoid unauthorized negotiations with Philippine insurgents." This was only the short cable, as the longer reprimand signed by the secretary of state himself was sent through the mail. The secretary of state wanted to know what role Pratt played in bringing Dewey and Aguinaldo together:



Filipino officers reviewing the troops near Calumpit, 1899

The Department observes that you informed General Aguinaldo that you had no authority to speak for the United States; and, in the absence of the fuller report which you promise, it is assumed that you did not attempt to commit this Government to any alliance with the Philippine insurgents. To obtain the unconditional personal assistance of General Aguinaldo in the expedition to Manila was proper, if in so doing he was not induced to form hopes which it might not be practicable to gratify. This government has known the Philippine insurgents only as discontented and rebellious subjects of Spain, and is not acquainted with their purposes. While their contest with that power has been a matter of

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public notoriety, they have neither asked nor received from this Government any recognition. The United States in entering upon the occupation of the islands, as the result of its military operations in that quarter, will do so in the exercise of the rights which the state of war confers, and will expect from the inhabitants, without regard to their former attitude toward the Spanish Government, that obedience which will be lawfully due from them.

If, in the course of your conferences with General Aguinaldo, you acted upon the assumption that this Government would cooperate with him for the furtherance any plan of his own, or that, in accepting his cooperation it would consider itself pledged to recognize any political claims which he may put forward, your action was unauthorized and cannot be approved.

The U.S. position is very clear in this dispatch: she wanted to occupy the Philippines and did not commit herself to Aguinaldo's dream of Philippine independence. But then nobody disabused Aguinaldo of his misconceptions regarding his alliance with Dewey. It was not until Manila fell to the Americans on August 13, 1898, that Aguinaldo would begin to see that he was deceived.

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US consul charmed Aguinaldo

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On June 10, 1898, E. Spencer Pratt, U.S. consul general in Singapore, wrote Aguinaldo, addressing him as "His Excellency" and encouraging him to cooperate with Admiral Dewey against the Spaniards. This personal letter to Aguinaldo, together with the correspondence with Dewey and the consuls at Hongkong and Manila, was printed by the revolutionary government in 1899 and sent to the members of U.S. Congress to support the claim that Aguinaldo was indeed promised Philippine independence under a temporary American protectorate.

Pratt said confidently:

All is coming to pass as I had hoped and predicted and it is now being shown that I was right in arranging for your cooperation with Admiral Dewey, and equally right in asking that you are given the support and entrusted with the confidence of the American Government.

I trust that I shall have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the capture of Manila and when that occurs let me ask that you will send me some historic memento of the place and the incident, such as the flag or keys of the Ciudad or principal fortress, in souvenir of our meeting at Singapore and of the important results which have ensued.

It is clear that Pratt encouraged Aguinaldo to take Manila, which was exactly what the Americans in Manila tried to avoid. They did not want Aguinaldo and the Filipinos to enter the city after it surrenders because then they would have legal claim to victory.

The next day, June 11, 1898, Pratt dashed off another short note to Aguinaldo saying, "I wrote fully to Admiral Dewey concerning you and to the American Government, have pointed [out] that you and you alone, were equal to the occasion. Write me fully and believe me. Your true friend. E. Spencer Pratt."

While there are no written promises in Pratt's letters, the State Department noted rightly that Aguinaldo was allowed to form ideas regarding the U.S.-Philippine alliance that would be impossible to fulfill in the future because Aguinaldo was not told that the U.S. had decided to occupy the Philippines.

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On June 20, 1898, Pratt had to reply to an order that he "avoid unauthorized negotiations with the Philippine insurgents." He explained that he did not negotiate with Aguinaldo, having left that matter entirely with Dewey:



Filipino troops in formation

My action in the matter was indeed limited to obtaining the assurance of General Aguinaldo's willingness to cooperate with our forces, communicating this to Commodore Dewey, and, upon the latter's expressing the desire that he should come on as soon as possible, arranging for the general to do.

I shall anxiously await the instruction your telegram refers to for the Department's opinion of my above course, but can scarcely believe, in view of the motives which prompted it and the excellent results which have ensued, that it can be altogether disapproved.

Not content with this, Pratt sent another dispatch to the State Department on June 21, 1898, saying:

I beg to state that if, in regard to General Aguinaldo I arranged directly with Commodore Dewey without obtaining the Department's previous authorization it was because of the little time there was in which to act and the practical impossibility of explaining by cable to the Department the value of the general's cooperation, of which I felt the commodore would already be in a position to judge from what he must have learned of the situation while at Hongkong.

I beg further to state that it was not only on account of the material aid I was confident he could lend us that I regarded the cooperation of General Aguinaldo as so desirable, but also because, as the recognized leader of the insurgents, he was, I considered, the one best able to direct and influence them, and therefore the one most important for our commander to have under immediate control, both as concerned the present and future policy of our government in the Philippines, whatever that policy might be.

Had it not been arranged for General Aguinaldo thus to cooperate with us it is more than probable that he would have returned to the islands of his own accord and undertaken independent operations, which might, I fear, have caused us serious embarrassment. I am not having, nor do I propose to have, any further dealings here with the Philippine insurgents.

The State Department on June 25, 1898, reassured Pratt that it was "pleased to learn that you did not make political pledges to Aguinaldo." Pratt was later dismissed from the U.S. consular service. Undaunted, Pratt asked Aguinaldo to appoint him Philippine representative to the U.S. where he would work for recognition of the Philippine government. Aguinaldo was not only disposed to this suggestion, he also planned to offer Pratt a lucrative position at the Philippine Customs and promised him commercial privileges as soon as his government was recognized.

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The two-faced U.S. consuls who dealt with Aguinaldo in 1898 reminded me of a saying that a diplomat is a person who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you actually look forward to the trip. Charm and diplomacy worked wonders with an unsuspecting and trusting soul like Emilio Aguinaldo. The letters written by Rounseville Wildman, U.S. consul in Hongkong, are marvels of contradiction. While Aguinaldo was made to promise that he would conduct the war in a "civilized" manner, he was also encouraged to be harsh with the Spaniards.

On June 21, 1898, Wildman deals with the release of prisoners of war: "...do not let any of your prominent prisoners leave or escape. Keep them as hostages. You may need then to redeem some of your Generals. Never mind about feeding them a meal everyday. Rice and water will be a good diet. They have been living too high for the last few years."

On June 28-29, 1898, Wildman told Aguinaldo: "Now in so much as the Spanish want more bloodshed in the Philippines I trust you will let them have a taste of real war. Do not be so tender with them, handle them as they would treat you."

Like Consul Pratt in Singapore, Wildman seems to have entertained the idea that Aguinaldo would take Manila. Again, both consuls did not know that Admiral Dewey had no intentions of sharing the victory for the fall of Manila with Aguinaldo and the Filipinos. Wildman said, "I suppose you have taken Manila by this time, I hope so." On July 14, 1898, he reiterated this idea: "I am very anxious that Manila should fall before Peace negotiations come on. It looks very much now as though Spain is going to sue for peace, and that a truce will be declared within another two weeks. Manila should be taken before that time."

These letters to Aguinaldo were supposed to be personal letters from Consul Wildman. As these were not official letters, the consul claimed to be speaking for himself and not for his government. How else could Aguinaldo tell the difference between a "personal" and "official" letter from a U.S. consul? How is he to interpret or misinterpret Wildman's letter of July 25, 1898, that reads in part:

Your work and your ability has been fully recognized by not only the people of the United States, but by the entire civilized world. Since the Cuban leaders have fallen to quarreling among themselves, and their General Garcia has declined to have any further dealings with the United States to free Cuba and the Philippines from the cruel yoke of Spain. It all remains with you to retain this proud position. If you stand shoulder to shoulder with our forces, and do not allow any small differences of opinion and fancied slight to keep you from the one set purpose of freeing your Islands from the cruelties and robberies under which it has been groaning for so many hundred years, your name in history will be a glorious one, and your reward from my own great country will be sure and lasting.

Wildman, who had access to news straight from the wire services, informed Aguinaldo that:

...all the great powers of Europe (except Great Britain) have arrived at an agreement that the Philippines cannot become a part of the United States, but will be divided up among themselves as has been the case with China. Should this prove to be true, you will have a greater battle on your hands than you have already had, and it will require all the power of the United States and Great Britain to keep your Islands intact and to hold you, as the first man in them.

I have vouched for your honesty and earnestness of purpose to the President of the United States and to our people, and they are ready to extend their hand to you as a brother, and aid you in every laudable ambition. There are greater prizes in the world than being the mere chief of a revolution. I look to you to bear me out in all my promises, and I give you my assurance that you can always call upon me to act as your champion should any try to slander your name.

While no promise of independence was given Aguinaldo on paper, how was he—or even we in the late twentieth century—to understand the conclusion of Wildman's letter that declared:

Do not forget that the United States undertook this war for the sole purpose of relieving the Cubans from the cruelties under which they were suffering, and not for the love of conquest or the hope of gain. They are actuated by precisely the same feelings towards the Philippinos[sic]. Whatever the final disposition of the conquered territory

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may be, you can trust the United States that justice and honor will control all their dealings with you. The first thing is to throw off the Spanish yoke. Do not let anything interfere with that. I believe in you, do not disappoint me.

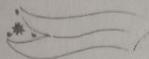
Aguinaldo was so trusting he took the U.S. consul's word at face value. He presumed the consul spoke for and behalf of his government. Aguinaldo was not prepared for the polite double-faced meaning, we call diplomacy.



Filipino troops photographed near Bacolor, Pampanga, 1899

US consul changed view of Aguinaldo

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U.S. Consul Rounseville Wildman in Hongkong was not dismissed from the consular service like his colleague in Singapore. Wildman had greater instinct for self-preservation. Going through Wildman's correspondence with Aguinaldo and the State Department, one can detect a marked change in his attitude towards Aguinaldo and the Filipinos after August 6, 1898. Before this date, he was openly pro-Filipino, but when the State Department instructed him not to make pledges or discuss policy he turned around completely.

Earlier, Wildman had assured Aguinaldo that he could rely on him as his champion "should anyone slander your name." But then in his dispatch to the State Department dated August 9, 1898, Wildman described Aguinaldo's letters as "childish" and "sulky." He added that Aguinaldo was:

far more interested in the kind of cane he will carry or the breastplate he will wear than in the figure he will make in history...He is a man of petty moods, and I have repeatedly had letters from Consul Williams requesting me to write to Aguinaldo a friendly letter congratulating him on his success, and reminding him of his obligations.

Wildman not only changed attitude towards Aguinaldo but towards the Filipinos as well. In August 1898, Wildman described the insurgents as a "necessary evil"—although merely a few weeks before he had said:

I have lived among the Malays of the Straits Settlements and have been an honored guest of different sultanates. I have watched their system of government and have admired their intelligence, and I rank them high among the semi-civilized nations of the earth. The natives of the Philippine Islands belong to the Malay race, and while there are very few pure Malays among their leaders, I think their stock has rather been improved than debased by admixture.

I consider the forty or fifty Philippine leaders, with whose fortunes I have been very closely connected, both the superiors of the Malays and the Cubans. Aguinaldo, Agoncillo, and Sandico are all men who would

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all be leaders in their separate departments in any country, while among the wealthy Manila men, who live in Hongkong and who are spending money liberally for the overthrow of the Spaniards and the annexation to the United States, men like the Cortes family and the Basa family, would hold their among bankers and lawyers anywhere.

I believe I know the sentiments of the political leaders and of the moneyed men among the insurgents, and inspite of all statements to the contrary, I know that they are fighting for annexation to the United States first, and for independence secondly, if the United States decides to decline the sovereignty of the islands. In fact I have the most prominent leaders call on me and say they would not raise one finger unless I could assure them that the United States intended to give them United States citizenship if they wished it.

In my opinion, Spain with the aid of the entire world can never re-establish herself, outside of a few of the large cities. An attempt at reconquest would reduce the islands to a state of anarchy... The insurgents are fighting for freedom from Spanish rule, and rely upon the well-known sense of justice that controls all the actions of our Government as to their future.



Filipino soldiers firing at the enemy.

Dewey

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In conclusion, I wish to put myself on record as stating that the insurgent government of the Philippine Islands cannot be dealt with as though they were North American Indians, willing to be removed from one reservation to another at the whim of their masters. If the United States decides not to retain the Philippine Islands, its 10,000,000 people will demand independence, and the attempt of any foreign nation to obtain territory or coaling stations will be resisted with the same spirit with which they fought the Spaniards.

Like Oscar Williams, the U.S. consul in Manila, Wildman claimed that they had to win Aguinaldo's confidence. Their actions, their "personal" letters to Aguinaldo were all done to further U.S. occupation of the Philippines. But then quotations from Wildman's correspondence given above prove that the situation in Manila was not clear to him. Perhaps he did not know that the U.S. wanted to occupy the Philippines. When Aguinaldo became an obstacle to U.S. imperialism, his "friends" the U.S. consuls in Manila and Hongkong became instant enemies. Such was the state of diplomacy and deception in Manila in 1898.



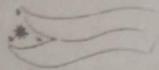
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Dewey told: Avoid alliances

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On May 26, 1898, when the Navy Department in Washington sent this cable to Dewey in Manila, the unsuspecting Aguinaldo had been in the Philippines barely a week:

You must exercise discretion most fully in all matters, and be governed according to circumstance which you know and we cannot know. You have our confidence entirely. It is desirable, as far as possible and consistent for your success and safety, not to have political alliances with the insurgents of any faction in the islands that would incur liability to maintain their cause in the future.



Line of defense at Malolos to protect the capital from enemy attacks, 1898

Since Dewey had cut the cable connecting Manila to Hongkong, and later another underwater cable from Bolinao, all communications from Manila had to be brought to Hongkong by ship, with the reply taking another week back. Before Dewey could receive the above cable from the Navy Department, he sent on May 30, 1898, this piece of information to Washington: "Aguinaldo revolutionary leader, visited the *Olympia* yesterday. He expects to make general attack in May 31. Doubt ability to succeed. Situation remains unchanged."

Manila was held in check. While Dewey controlled Manila Bay and threatened Manila with his guns, Aguinaldo was still organizing his forces and surrounding the city by land. Intramuros had not yet surrendered. A week later on June 6, 1898, Dewey said:

Receipt of telegram of May 26 is acknowledged, and I thank the Department for the expression of confidence. Have acted according to the spirit of Department's instructions therein from the beginning, and I have entered into no alliance with the insurgents or with any faction. The squadron can reduce the defense of Manila at any moment, but it is considered useless until the arrival of sufficient United States forces to retain possession.

On June 12, 1898, Dewey sent a cable that made no reference to the Declaration of Independence. Dewey was invited to Kawit, but he politely declined and sent a minor representative. Dewey reported simply that, "Insurgents continue hostilities and have practically surrounded Manila."

Despite Dewey's assurances, the Navy probably conferring with the State Department and the White House, was worried about press releases in Hongkong and Singapore from Aguinaldo's representatives regarding an alliance between Aguinaldo and Dewey. So the secretary of the navy, through the U.S. consul in Hongkong, requested Dewey on June 14, 1898, to "Report fully any conferences, relations, or cooperations, military or otherwise, which you have had with Aguinaldo and keep informed the Department in that respect."

On June 27, 1898, Dewey reported to the Navy secretary:

Receipt telegram of June 14 is acknowledged. Aguinaldo, insurgent leader, with thirteen of his staff, May 19, by permission on Nanshan. Established self Cavite, outside arsenal, under the protection of our guns and organized his army. I have had several conferences with him, generally

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of a personal nature. Consistently I have refrained from assisting him in any way with the force under my command, and on several occasions I have declined requests that I should do so, telling him the squadron could not act until the arrival of United States troops. At the same time I have given him to understand that I consider insurgents as friends, being opposed to a common enemy.

He has gone to attend a meeting of insurgent leaders for the purpose of forming a civil government. Aguinaldo has acted independently of the squadron, but has kept me advised of his progress, which has been wonderful. I have allowed to pass by water recruits, arms and ammunition, and to take such Spanish arms and ammunition from the arsenal as he needed. Have advised frequently to conduct war humanely, which he has done invariably. My relations with him are cordial, but I am not in his confidence. The United States has not been bound in any way to assist insurgents by any act or promise, and he is not, to my knowledge committed to assist us. I believe he expects to capture Manila without my assistance, but doubt ability, they not having many guns. In my opinion, these people are far superior in their intelligence and more capable of self-government than the natives of Cuba, and I am familiar with both races.

By June 30, 1898, the American transports arrived with 2,500 men to reinforce Dewey's fleet. By July 17, the second contingent of U.S. troops arrived in Manila. On July 4, Dewey reports to Washington that "Aguinaldo proclaimed himself President of the Revolutionary Republic July 1." Wasn't this June 12?

On July 30, 1898, Dewey reports that the cozy alliance between the Filipinos and the Americans had begun to develop friction:

Meritt arrived yesterday in the newport. The remainder of the expedition is expected within the next few days. Situation is most critical at Manila. The Spaniards may surrender at any moment. Meritt's most difficult problem will be how to deal with insurgents under Aguinaldo who have become aggressive and even threatening to our army....

By the first week of August 1898, the Americans were in position and ready to take Manila.

US consul had his price

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On May 24, U.S. consul to Manila, Oscar Williams, on board the USS *Baltimore* on Manila Bay, reported to the State Department that Aguinaldo had over 4,500 Mauser rifles taken from Spaniards and 37,000 men, and that some 500 to 1,000 men were waiting outside Aguinaldo's headquarters ready to enlist. Williams had executed power of attorney from Aguinaldo authorizing release of the 400,000 pesos deposited in Hongkong for 3,000 stand of arms to be sent to Cavite. This purchase of arms, however, was thwarted by the U.S. consul in Hongkong. Williams reports that "My relations with [Aguinaldo] are cordial, and I manage to keep them so pro bono publico."

By June 16, 1898, Williams sent reports on the military situation in Manila, saying that Aguinaldo:

... is not permitted by his people to personally lead in battle, but from headquarters governs all military movements. He has told me today that since his return his forces had captured nearly 5,000 prisoners, nearly 4,000 of whom were Spaniards and all of whom had rifles when taken. General Aguinaldo has now about 10,500 rifles and eight fieldpieces, with 8,000 more rifles, two Maxim guns and a dynamite gun bought in China and now in transit. The insurgents have defeated the Spaniards at all points except at fort [San Antonio Abad] near Malate, and hold not only North Luzon to the suburbs of Manila, but Batangas province and the bay coast entire, save the city of Manila.

Williams concluded by assuring the State Department that, "for future advantage I am maintaining cordial relations with General Aguinaldo, having stipulated submissiveness to our forces....." Williams also makes reference to the event at Kawit on June 12, 1898, but does not mention (officially at least) that Aguinaldo had declared the Philippines independent of Spain. Williams reported that: "Last Sunday...they held a council to form provisional government. I was urged to attend, but thought best to decline. A form of government was adopted, but General Aguinaldo told me today that his friends all hoped that the Philippines would be held as a colony of the United States of America."

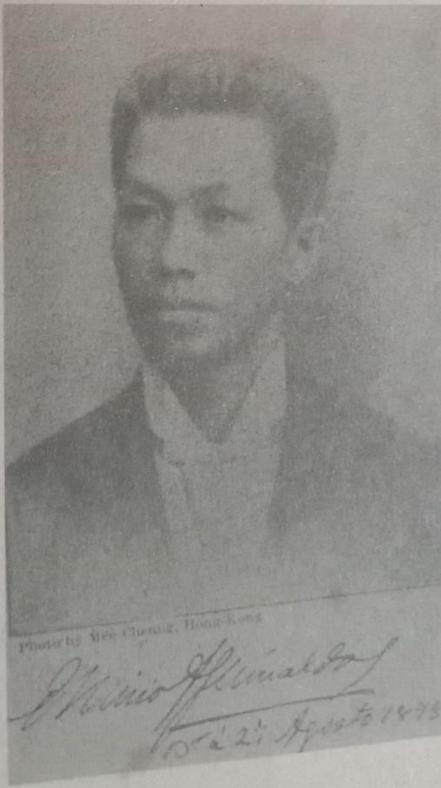
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As usual he closed assuring Washington that, "It has been my effort to maintain harmony with insurgents in order to exercise greater influence hereafter when we reorganize government." Williams shows his true colors when he reported that: "Manila is at the mercy of our fleet, and I believe its capture may be effected...without the loss of [American lives] or disabling a vessel... Dewey only awaits troops to insure order and good government once we are in possession. We fear the city may fall too soon [into Aguinaldo's hands]." Williams was so optimistic that he ended his dispatch: "I expect that on July 4 we will celebrate in Manila under the folds of *Old Glory*, and write in living letters a page of history that this magnificent insular empire has become a part and parcel of the United States of America."

Washington was pleased and cabled Williams on August 4, 1898: "Your course, while maintaining amicable relations with the insurgents, in abstaining from any participation in the adoption of their so-called provisional government, is approved."



A studio portrait of Emilio Aguinaldo by Mee Cheung taken during his exile, Hongkong, 1898.

This is getting boring, but on August 4 Williams yet again stated:

It has been my study to keep on pleasant terms with General Aguinaldo for ultimate objects. By so doing I have avoided certain troubles and aided our forces. Admiral Dewey says I have planted the seeds of cordial cooperation.

My argument with General Aguinaldo has been that the conditions of government by U.S.A. in the Philippine Islands would be vastly better for him and his people in honor, advancement, and profits than could exist under any plan fixed by himself and Filipinos. I have traversed the entire ground of government with him in council, and he has called his officials from fifteen provinces to meet me for their discussion, all stated as friendly but unofficial on my part. Our relations are cordial, while certain antagonisms have arisen between the general and certain other Americans.

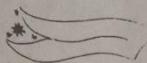
I hope to bring about harmony and cooperation for mutual good.

By August 5, 1898, Williams sought the reward for his service to the nation. Since Manila would soon fall into American hands, which would mean the end of his duties as U.S. consul, he thus applied for new jobs:

Could I be appointed general commissioner of customs of the Philippine Islands, light-house inspector, or general commissioner of agriculture, I should be honored and pleased. For many years I have made special study of tariffs and economic questions; have translated Philippine tariff and so have a measure of fitness...I was reared as a farmer...Am a graduate of Cornell University, and for above 20 years was a teacher, lecturer and author, and might well serve as superintendent of public instruction.

Everyone has his price. Consul Williams left his own assessment of his self-worth to history. He did not get any of the positions he requested.

Flag's colors: RP gratitude to America



If one takes the trouble of going through a facsimile copy of the Philippine Declaration of Independence from Spain (in the original Spanish *Acta de la proclamacion de independencia del pueblo Filipino*, one can plainly see the long and circuitous text. Since loudspeakers did not exist in 1898, one wonders how many in the crowd listened to those words that make history.

Even if one cannot read Spanish, it is still an experience to leaf through the facsimile copy of the Declaration of Independence (distributed cheaply by the National Historical Institute), particularly the last seven pages filled with the signatures of the men (in those sexist times, no women, not even Mrs. Aguinaldo or even Katipuneras who carried arms and fought in the revolution were allowed to sign the document considered as the founding fathers of this nation. Filipinos signed differently in those days: they signed and placed complicated rubrics under their names. Others were not content with rubrics, like Felipe Buencamino who, knowing that he was making history, stated that he signed "at the age of 50 and on the 23rd year of his profession as a lawyer." Somebody whose signature I cannot decipher signed "for" Emiliano Riego de Dios. Was Mr. Riego absent? Did he send a proxy? Was something wrong with his hand? Surely the man was not illiterate.

Philippine independence from Spain was declared on June 12, 1898 from a window of the Aguinaldo home in Kawit, Cavite. Admiral Dewey and U.S. Consul Williams were invited as honored and special guests, but they politely declined. However, one American entered the history of our centennial simply because he was there! This obscure American now forgotten by history is specifically mentioned by name in the conclusion of our Declaration of Independence. A certain L. M. Johnson, colonel of the artillery, is supposed to have signed the document or was present at the meeting when the Declaration of Independence was drafted. His signature, however does not appear with our founding fathers. Perhaps, he was instructed to keep his attendance "personal" and reminded not to commit his government or discuss policy regarding the future of the Philippines.

This is the highlight of this long-winded declaration:

And summoning as a witness of the rectitude of our intentions, the Supreme Judge of the Universe, and under the protection of the mighty and humane North American Nation, we proclaim and solemnly declare, in the name and by the authority of the inhabitants of all these Philippine Islands, that they are and have the right to be free and independent; that they are released from all obedience to the Crown of Spain; that every political tie between the two is and must be completely severed and annulled; and that, like all free and independent states, they have complete authority to make war, conclude peace, establish treaties of commerce, enter into alliances, regulate commerce, and execute all other acts and things that Independent States have the right to do. Reposing firm confidence in the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge for the support of this declaration, our lives, our fortunes, and most sacred possession, which is our honor. We acknowledge, approve and confirm, together with the orders that have been issued therefrom, the Dictatorship established by Don Emilio Aguinaldo, whom we honor as the Supreme Chief of this nation, which this day commences to have a life of its own, in the belief that he is the instrument selected by God, inspite of his humble origin, to effect the redemption of this unfortunate people...

June 12, 1898, also gave us our national flag—give or take a few shades of blue, and the missing eyes, nose, and mouth from the sun with eight rays. As we get closer and closer to the centennial independence day, we should review the symbolism given to our flag in our Declaration of Independence:

And finally, it was unanimously resolved that this Nation, independent from this day, must use the same flag used heretofore, whose design and colors are...the white triangle represents the distinctive emblem of the Katipunan, which by means of its compact of blood urged on the masses of the people to the insurrection; the three stars represent the principal islands of this Archipelago: Luzon, Mindanao, and Panay [Visayas], in which this insurrectionary movement broke out; the sun represents the gigantic strides that have been made by the sons of this land on the road of progress and civilization, its eight rays symbolizing the eight provinces of Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bataan [Tarlac], Laguna, and Batangas, which were declared in a state of

tion:

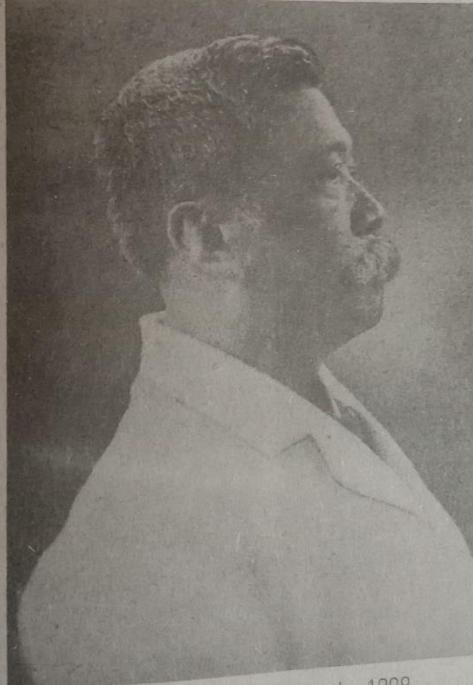
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war almost as soon as the first insurrection movement was initiated; and the colors blue, red, and white commemorate those of the flag of the United States of North America, in manifestation of our profound gratitude towards that Great Nation for the disinterested protection she is extending to us and will continue to extend to us...

If we put this declaration in its proper historical context, we can see that our independence in 1898 cast a shadow that was America poised to occupy the Philippines as soon as American troops arrived to augment Dewey's men. Our independence was short-lived because Aguinaldo believed the Americans came as friends.



Felipe Buencamino, signatory to the 1898
declaration of independence

US consul urged isles be annexed

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Then as now dictatorship was not an acceptable form of government. Six days after the Declaration of Independence, Aguinaldo was advised by Mabini to change from a dictatorial to a revolutionary form of government. It was understood from the beginning that the dictatorial government was resorted to because of the abnormal conditions of the time and that it was intended to be only provisional. On June 18, 1898, Mabini drafted a decree that placed the following words in the outgoing dictator's mouth:

To the Philippine Republic

Circumstances have providently placed me in a position for which I cannot fail to recognize that I am not properly qualified; but since I cannot violate the laws of Providence nor decline the obligations which honor the patriotism impose upon me, I now salute you, my beloved people.

I have proclaimed before the face of the whole world the aspiration of my whole life, the final object of all my efforts and strength, is nothing else but your independence, for I am firmly convinced that that constitutes your constant desire, and that independence signifies for us redemption from slavery and tyranny, regaining our liberty and entrance into the concert of civilized nations.

I understand, on the other hand, that the first duty of every government is to faithfully interpret popular aspirations; with this motive although the abnormal circumstances of the war have compelled us to institute this dictatorial government which assumes full powers, both civil and military...

Thus on June 23, 1898, Aguinaldo established the revolutionary government that replaced the month-long dictatorial government. By establishing the revolutionary government anew (the first revolutionary government was established in Tejeros in 1897 with Aguinaldo as president), Aguinaldo entered the fourth and final phase of his administration.

However, one week after the inauguration of the revolutionary government, on June 30, 1898, American troops numbering 2,500 men arrived in Manila. Seeing this, U.S. Consul Oscar Williams realized that occupation of Manila and the Philippines was imminent; so he requested more than soldiers from Washington:

If long occupation or possession on the part of our government be considered, I believe early and strenuous efforts should be made to bring here from the United States men and women of many occupations—mechanics, teachers, ministers, shipbuilders, merchants, electricians, plumbers, druggists, doctors, dentists, carriage and harness makers, stenographers, typewriters, photographers, tailors, blacksmiths, and agents for exporting—and to introduce American products, natural and artificial, of many classes.

He assured Washington that:

To all such I pledge every aid, and now is the time to start. Good government will be easier the greater the influx of Americans...I hope for an influx this year of 10,000 ambitious Americans, and all can live well, become enriched, and patriotically assist your representatives in the establishment and maintenance of republican government on these rich islands so extensive in area as to form an insular empire...

While Aguinaldo was trying to establish his revolutionary government, the U.S. consul was already looking forward to establishing a republican government run by Americans in the Philippines. By establishing a Filipino government, Aguinaldo complicated the U.S. occupation of the Philippines. When the U.S. troops arrived in the Philippines, the first of many small frictions began that, unknown to both sides, would soon escalate into the Filipino-American War in 1899.

On July 16, 1898 for example, General Noriel sent a telegram to Aguinaldo reporting that, "An American has come here who says that he is a colonel of the army whom we should obey, and that it is your desire. We did not listen to him. Awaiting your orders."

"You should not obey," Aguinaldo replied on the back of this telegram. "What this American Colonel says is a lie. Be cautious so as not to be deceived. You should require proof from him. Be vigilant always, but upright. Also our officers and soldiers must be strict and not timid."

This was the awkward period in our history between the U.S. naval victory in Manila Bay and the actual taking of Manila in August 1898. The Filipino and American soldiers stood eyeball to eyeball—allies, supposedly, but mistrusting the other.

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Aguinaldo appealed for US recognition

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All foreign ships were ordered out of Manila Bay and out of the line of fire by noon of August 9, 1898, when Dewey planned to bombard Manila. British steamers filled with refugees moved eight miles south to Cavite, followed by Japanese warships. French and German ships trooped towards the mouth of the Pasig, northwest of Manila. German ships with refugees pulled out to Mariveles Bay twenty miles southwest of Manila. The British and Japanese ships anchored alongside Dewey's fleet, indicating that England and Japan were on the side of the United States.

As a result of these developments on the bay and the growing friction between the Filipinos and the newly arrived U.S. land forces, Aguinaldo sought to clarify the status of the alliance between the United States and the Philippines. He wrote two letters on August 7, 1898, and sent these to Hongkong. One letter was for Felipe Agoncillo, the other for U.S. Consul Wildman. Aguinaldo assured Wildman that:

I will do all in my power to avoid the rupture of friendly relations which should exist between the United States and the Philippines, convinced as I am that said rupture would be to the last degree prejudicial to both.

I understand that the Philippines would gain much with the support and aid of the United States of America, and at the same time the power and wealth of the latter would be considerably increased by a close union with the former; but you with your ability and your great experience, will understand the necessity of clearing up and defining those relations by means of a formal convention.

Aguinaldo had always asked for U.S. commitment on paper in his talks with U.S. consuls, Dewey, and other American military personnel. This time he insisted on it:

It is true that the North American forces have made protestations of friendship and accord to the people, but the officials act as though these protestations did not exist, performing acts of government and coercion

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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in the name of their leaders. The people observe such acts with real displeasure and ask for the convention which is to serve as a guide of conduct, and I am not able to say that it does not exist, fearing that I will not be able to restrain the popular excitement... I request that you bring to bear on your government all your power and influence, so that it will realize that it would not be advisable to decide the fate and future of the Philippine people without considering their will duly represented by my government.

The United States refused to recognize the Aguinaldo government because it would complicate matters when the disposition of the Philippines was put on the bargaining table. To recognize the Philippine Republic or its representative would have placed another unwanted factor in the way of taking the Philippines from Spain. In any case, Aguinaldo sent Felipe Agoncillo to Washington as his representative

so that McKinley's government may know our true situation. Make him understand that our country has its own government, that civil organizations exist in the provinces already taken and soon the Congress of representatives of these provinces will meet. Tell them that they cannot do with the Philippines as they wish, because many misfortunes may happen both to us and to them if we do not come to an agreement as to our future relations.

From the voluminous correspondence of the Aguinaldo government now in the National Library in Manila, one can see the workings of a young but stillborn republic. By sending Agoncillo to Washington, the Aguinaldo government attempted to resort to diplomacy. A budget was drawn up for this too, as Aguinaldo told Agoncillo:

You can first take with you the sum of US\$10,000 for transportation and expenses during the first months of your residence there until we appoint your personnel and provide for your salary corresponding to an ambassador... A letter for President McKinley is herewith sent to you so that he may recognize you as my representative and make himself acquainted with the true state of the revolution and the events in the Philippines.

Mabini's cautious and legal hand is evident in Aguinaldo's letter when he instructs Agoncillo not to establish himself as an ambassador until all "arrangements" have been made. He adds, "When Congress shall have been assembled...I will send you your proper credentials." To conclude this letter of instruction, Aguinaldo reiterates that Agoncillo should:

Make [the Americans] understand that whatever may be their intentions toward us, it is not possible for them to overrule the sentiments of the people represented by the government, and they must first recognize it if we are to come to an agreement. Do not accept any contracts or give any promises respecting protection or annexation, because we will see if we can obtain independence first...once we are independent we will be able to make arrangements with them.

Aguinaldo's correspondence provides us with a closer look at the campaign for recognition and makes us appreciate the complex and changing situation he was in.



Festive air in Malolos, 1898



While Aguinaldo seems to have trusted too much the enemy and their vain promises, there were some Filipinos who saw through the so-called "allies." At 8:30 A.M. on August 8, 1898, a certain Fernando Acevedo of Santa Ana wrote Pio del Pilar about the scheduled bombardment of Manila from Dewey's ships in the bay:

The Americans will bombard Manila tomorrow, and they say that they will attack; now see what the revolution has done. You are the ones who have done the fighting and they are the ones who will carry off the victory. When they take Manila, all of you and ourselves here will be their slaves; Manila and the entire Philippines. Remember this well. They will not give way to the Filipinos, because the Americans are very bad. All that I have told you before and which I am telling you now is about to happen today; and yet you do not heed me. Pity! Pity, for all your struggles as well as mine. Woe, to our country, just at the moment when we might receive many liberties, if we but ask for self-government.

Obviously, Acevedo did not trust the enemy. That they would be taking over Filipino positions with the consent of Aguinaldo made things worse. Despite the lack of news from abroad due to the disabling of the underwater cable connecting Manila to Bolinao to Hongkong, Acevedo was able to analyze the situation thus:

Peace preliminaries between America and Spain are already completed, and in order that their advantages be greater and their profit more, they try to take Manila first; and be assured that such is what is going to happen, incidents of politics and of the laws of war. But if this peace is not consummated all of us will be slaves forever of the Americans, because they can demand if they wish that this, our beloved country, shall be theirs.

There could be no republic here, even though the Americans should consent, because according to the treaties, the Filipinos are not in a condition for a republic. Besides this, all Europe will oppose it, and if it should be that they divide our country as though it were a round cake, what should become of us and what would belong to us?

Acevedo unsuspecting a massacre—when the Filipinos in a U.S. base and convince have taken a s assured Del P trust it will, i But then hist being sent to cordial relatio



Aguinaldo salutes his captors upon boarding the Vicksburg, 1901.

Not one to brush his modesty aside, Acevedo said: "You know that I am thoroughly informed in the *ins and outs* of what they call politics, and I am still studying it, as it is necessary that one like I should know." More importantly Acevedo did not give his analysis of the situation but also suggested a very radical—or should we say bloody—solution:

I wish to set forth, as I have already stated above, what must happen, and here is the solution, the preventive of this danger which threatens us, and of which I can warn you: If we love this land where we were born, besides your not helping in the day of the attack by the Americans, it is requisite and necessary before their attack takes place tomorrow, that you tomorrow or tonight annihilate them, sparing none, for the way they have deceived us and will again without fail in the contract signed by Sr. Emilio; and convince yourself, my friend, that it is necessary to do this, and when it is done the entire world will wonder and will say that we have done well, and will not be able to give out that the people here are fools spending the time sucking their fingers.

Acevedo was right to advise that the Filipinos should strike the unsuspecting enemy while she was weak. This was what made Balangiga a massacre—the enemy was just out of bed and preparing for breakfast when the Filipino struck. Now the bells of Balangiga church are kept in a U.S. base as war booty. If Pio del Pilar heeded Acevedo's advice and convinced Aguinaldo to agree to the attack, our history would have taken a sharp turn. There would have been no Balangiga. Acevedo assured Del Pilar that, "You already know that if this succeeds, as I trust it will, it will be for the good of us all...Believe me this is true." But then history is full of what-ifs. With unsolicited advice like this being sent to Aguinaldo from other sources, why did he maintain his cordial relations with the enemy that double-crossed him?

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US, Spain planned mock battle

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Towards August 13, 1898, events started to speed up. The enemy, after negotiating secretly with the Spaniards in Intramuros, planned a mock battle to insure the surrender of Manila to the Americans and not to the Filipinos. On August 12, 1898, this cable was sent to Dewey regarding the protocol of peace signed by Spain and the United States: "The protocol, signed by the President today, provides that the US will occupy and hold the city, bay, and harbor of Manila pending the conclusion of a Treaty of Peace which shall determine the control, disposition, and government of the Philippines. This is most important."

However, due to the time difference between Washington and Manila, such news of the protocol of peace between Spain and the United States did not get here on time. The cable sent on August 12, 1898, came after the Stars and Stripes was already flying over Manila. The assistant secretary of the U. S. Navy, through the U. S. consul in Hongkong, sent the following cable to Dewey:

The President desires to receive from you any important information you may have of the Philippines; the desirability of the several islands, the character of their population; coal and other mineral deposits; their harbor and commercial advantages, and in a naval and commercial sense which would be the most advantageous. If you have other information which would be of value to the Government in their negotiations the President may desire your presence here. If he should request you to come, take the quickest route of travel.

Three days before the fall of Manila and the surrender of the Spaniards to the Americans, a letter of instruction was sent to Hongkong clearly stating the policy of the Aguinaldo government as follows:

First. To struggle for the Independence of the Philippines as far as our strength and our means will permit. Protection or annexation will be acceptable only when it can be clearly seen that the recognition of our Independence, either by force of arms or diplomacy, is impossible.

176
Ambeth R. Ocampo

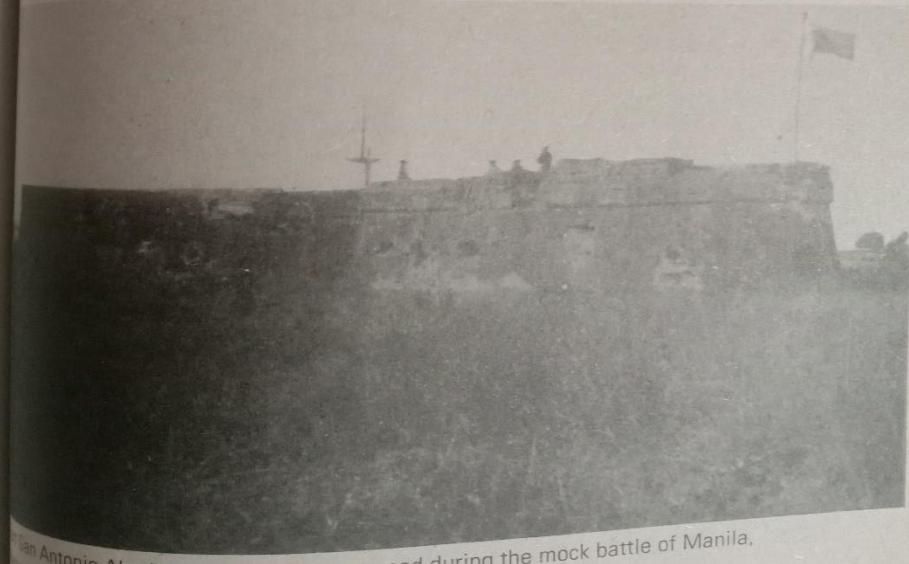
Fort San Antonio A
August 13, 1961.

Second. The Filipino Government and its representatives will attempt as far as possible to be on good terms with the government at Washington, entreating the recognition of the Filipino Government under pret  t that such recognition constitutes a *sine qua non* before any terms of agreement between the United States and the Philippines.

Third. The Filipino Government and its representatives will attempt to form an alliance even if the Caroline and Marianas [islands] have to be sacrificed." [These groups of islands form a tail on the southern end of the archipelago and are labelled the "new Philippines."]

Fourth. To be in communication with the correspondents appointed in Paris and London in order to inquire of them if they are in conformity with the Government's policy and to send them the necessary papers in case they answer in the affirmative.

Fifth. To negotiate with foreign commercial houses for the exportation of Philippines products, chartering ships for the purpose."



San Antonio Abad showing damage caused during the mock battle of Manila.
Aug 13, 1961.

It is clear that Aguinaldo fought for nothing less than independence, but that is precisely the issue that is muddled in the sources. The enemy insisted much later when they occupied the Philippines that independence was not promised to Aguinaldo at any time, or, if it was discussed at all that there was no official word from Washington.

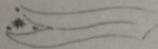
The correspondents mentioned in the fourth item and their respective posts were detailed in a separate document. Pedro P. Roxas and the painter Juan Luna were designated diplomatic correspondents in Paris. The lawyer Antonio Ma. Regidor and Rizal's cousin Sixto Lopez were assigned for London. Felipe Agoncillo, now known as the first Filipino diplomat, was assigned to Washington. Mariano Ponce and Faustino Lichauco, residents of Japan, were appointed correspondents for that country while Herivero Zarcal was named for Australia.

Unity was a consistent problem for the Filipinos. Aguinaldo and his advisers were worried that some prominent Filipinos in Hongkong were hedging their bets by declaring their allegiance to the United States, Germany, and other powers. Aguinaldo ordered Sandico "to look for the best means to persuade those who have contrary opinions and induce them to cooperate with the policy of the Government or at least not to oppose it by imprudent behavior, which would be to our discredit with the powers."

The revolution had not yet ended and some people in the Aguinaldo camp were already switching allegiances or window-shopping for the best deal available.

Insurgents yielded posts

40



The fall of Spanish Manila on August 13, 1898, clearly defined the relationship between the Filipinos and the Americans. Changes in attitude began as soon as enemy troops started arriving in Manila. On July 4, 1898, General Anderson wrote Aguinaldo this hypocritical appeal for cooperation:

I have the honor to inform you that the United States of America, whose land forces I have the honor to command in this vicinity, being at war with the Kingdom of Spain, has entire sympathy and most friendly sentiments for the native people of the Philippines.

For these reasons I desire to have the most amicable relations with you, and to have you and your people cooperate with us in military operations against the Spanish forces.

In our operations it has become necessary for us to occupy the town of Cavite as a base of operations. In doing this I do not wish to interfere with your residence here and the exercise by yourself and other native citizens of all functions and privileges not inconsistent with military rule.

I would be pleased to be informed at once of any misconduct of soldiers under my command, as it is the intention of my Government to maintain order and to treat all citizens with justice, courtesy, and kindness.

I have therefore the honor to ask Your Excellency to instruct your officials not to interfere with my officers in the performance of their duties and not to assume that they cannot visit Cavite without permission.

By the third week of August 1898, this same General Anderson could then "demand" the withdrawal of Aguinaldo's guard from Cavite. But that is getting ahead of our story.

At the end of June 1898 when all three groups of reinforcements totalling over 10,000 men had arrived, the Americans began to show their true colors. On July 28, 1898, in preparation for the attack on Manila, General Greene negotiated with General Noriel to move the Filipino troops out of their trenches along Tambo, Pasay, Baclaran, and Parañaque to about 400 yards from the shore. They wanted to take over the strategic Filipino positions.

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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Greene got Noriel to agree by noting that the Filipinos had antique artillery in their trenches. If they moved out, Greene promised to replace the obsolete artillery with new and modern ones. Before moving his men, Noriel asked for time as he needed to consult with Aguinaldo. Greene agreed and gave Noriel the rest of the day. Aguinaldo replied positively to Greene's suggestion but asked that the request be made in writing. If Greene complied, then it would clearly show that the Filipinos and Americans were allies in the war against Spain. Greene thus promised to send his written request to Aguinaldo *after* the Filipinos had evacuated their positions. Noriel gave in and was moved to tears when the Stars and Stripes began to fly over what were once Filipino positions. In tears he reported to Aguinaldo, warning him that, "If we don't watch out, the enemy will be replacing our flags with their own all over the country!"

Despite this incident and the warnings about U.S. intentions, Aguinaldo still maintained his amicable attitude towards the Americans. Aguinaldo was thus surprised to receive this telegram from General Anderson on the morning of August 13: "Do not let your troops enter Manila without permission from the American commander. On this side of the Pasig River you will be under fire."

The marked change in tone from the once friendly Anderson was merely the prelude to the *moro-moro* that was to take place that morning just before the surrender of Spanish Manila to the Americans. The night before, Aguinaldo had received a cipher telegram from Felipe Buericamino that said:

I must tell you that I feel as you should feel in regard to our government not having officially participated in the capitulation of Manila. Accordingly the war must be continued with Spain, because if we attack tonight, the Americans, acting upon the request of the Spaniards and foreigners, in addition to those who took part in the capitulation, will have to ask us to suspend operations, hence we shall be included in the negotiations and this will work to our advantage.

Tonight at 2 am you will attack without fail in order that we may be included in the capitulations which the Americans made today. You must not stop the attacks because they do, and this is also the opinion of our partisans among the foreigners.

There were suggestions that the Filipinos continue to attack Manila as planned in order to assert their right to enter the capital when it

surrendered; others advised that the Filipinos attack first the American lines, sensing a double-cross in the making. Aguinaldo in his headquarters in Bacoor had to make sense of all the inputs—solicited and otherwise—from the field and from his closest advisers. The final decision always rested with him. In order to understand how history had judged Aguinaldo, we should see him in his proper context in 1898.



The enemy plants the Stars and Stripes over Fort Santiago Abad after the mock battle of Manila, August 13, 1898.

Madhouse is the only word to describe the communications room at Bacoor on August 13, 1898. Coded telegrams from the Filipino positions outside Intramuros were flooding in, with each telegram needing to be decoded before being sent to Apolinario Mabini who then handed it to the president with a draft reply. Aguinaldo either signed the reply or added his own text to Mabini's draft, and these were encoded and sent out to the field.

A sampling of the numerous telegrams sent to Aguinaldo's headquarters in Bacoor gives us an idea of the day Manila fell to the Americans. More importantly, these telegraphic reports, though piecemeal, provide first-hand accounts of the war from a Filipino point of view.

General Artemio Ricarte at 10:22 A.M. reported:

American troops rearguard our trenches Mabolo and San Jose warn us that they will fire on us when the time comes. Impossible to remain there without disagreeing with them. Since five this morning we have been furiously attacking. Americans firing incessantly. Spaniards silent. No losses yet...

At 11:05 A.M. General Riego de Dios in Cavite reported to Aguinaldo:

Most urgent. Araneta and Buencamino having been consulted in regard to your telegram of today, they confirm capitulation, and in regard to the telegraphic note of General Anderson they are of the opinion, first, that we should continue hostilities while we ask for an explanation, second, that explanations should be in the following terms: Inquire reasons for note and ask why our troops are not to enter Manila without permission of the American commander; third, in case the capitulation is given as the reason, to answer that we do not suspend our attempt to enter Manila.

This capitulation is not favorable to our independence. General Anderson is not here. General Merritt is probably in Manila. Only Admiral

Dewey is in the bay. We ask authorization to express our explanation in the proposed terms and to have a conference with Admiral Dewey in order to have our claims reach General Merritt.

The above telegram comes with the following endorsement in the handwriting of Mabini and signed by Aguinaldo:

I authorize every assertion of right, but state that we believe that we have the right to enter Manila without permission as we have a part in the surrender of the Spaniards. They would not have surrendered if our troops had not cut off their retreat to the interior. Besides, were it not for us the landing of troops would have cost them much blood. Obtain an answer as soon as possible in order to lay a protest before the consuls in case it is necessary.

Aguinaldo did not resist the landing of three contingents of enemy troops in July. He even made sure they got proper accommodations, food, and even horses. All this was forgotten in August 1898. Ricarte gives the position of his men—mostly Caviteños—as he reports to Aguinaldo at 1:30 P.M. that: "Second Noveleta, First Salinas, Fifth Malabon camped in view of Singalong. Americans wish to put us out. Give directions."

Riego de Dios reports from Cavite at 2:15 P.M. that:

At this moment the bombardment of Manila is taking place, and we are not able to see even the shadow of an American General. In such a situation Buencamino advises go ahead with our attack. Half an hour ago I sent Araneta to you for a conference. [Antonio] Luna and Genato will accompany Araneta to offer their services in the trenches to advise our generals. Such is my loyal opinion.

Gen. Artemio Ricarte

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Conflict with the enemy begins as Ricarte reports to Aguinaldo at 3:52 P.M. that:

General Pio del Pilar informs me of the following: 'Come here, if possible, as our soldiers at the Barrio of Concepcion are not allowed to go out and we are prohibited to move any farther. We it was who succeeded in capturing the place. Come here or there will be trouble, since they are driving me away and refusing to listen to what I say.'

"I am at this very moment," Ricarte tells Aguinaldo, "going to aforesaid place."

At five in the afternoon, we hear from Ricarte again who reports:

Colonel San Miguel here from Ermita. Regional Exposition, Agricultural College and other buildings are ours. Our flag flies already at Ermita. Colonel Agapito Bonzo with his troops in the Perez Building, Paco. Colonels Julian Ocampo and Isidoro Tolentino are in the convent of Ermita. All houses without flag are guarded by our soldiers.

From the telegrams it is evident that the suburbs or *arrabales* of Manila/Intramuros were in Filipino hands. From Ermita, Ricarte reports at 6:15 P.M.:

I inform you that the chiefs of our troops have reported to me that our flag at Singalang church was removed by the Americans and they hoisted theirs instead, not allowing us to approach thereto. General Pio del Pilar is at present in the barrio of Concepcion. Americans prohibited him to move any farther. How can he enter Manila?

Filipinos were effectively excluded from the surrender of Manila. And by nightfall, it had become painfully clear that the Americans transformed from "ally" to "enemy."

Aguinaldo trust in US unshaken

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Towards the end of August 1898, the urgent telegrams sent to Aguinaldo's headquarters began to reflect the growing friction between the Filipinos and the Americans. The movement of the American troops and the incursions into Filipino lines were tolerated under a cloud of great suspicion. That the Filipinos were excluded from the fall of Manila was the source of much resentment that underlined the deteriorating relations with the foreign "ally" who was soon to become an enemy.

On the morning of August 23, Pio del Pilar reported to the president: "I have received information that we should watch the Americans since they want to deceive us. Six thousand Americans have arrived and a vessel laden with ammunition. I inform you so you can be on your guard."

Before the deciphered telegram got to the desk of the president, it had to pass through Mabini. To spare Aguinaldo from all the cables, Mabini cleared what was handed to him and sometimes gave just a summary. On Del Pilar's telegram can be found this endorsement in Mabini's handwriting:



I have received four telegrams: two from General Pio reporting the landing of 5,000 Americans with much ammunition. He asks for rice, as the Covadonga was not able to bring any from Biñan. Montenegro reports that the pumping machines [in Marikina] have been at work since 4 P.M. yesterday, he showing the American engineers much politeness. Lt. Col. Pilar states he has given the orders to the director of the railroad concerning transportation of foreign troops without consent of the government.

Gen. Riego de Dios

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Then on August 24 tragedy struck. General Riego de Dios who was governor of Cavite reported: "As a result of the occurrence an American was killed by a revolver in the hands of one of them. We shall await result of investigation. Both drunk."

Informed of the incident, the secretary of war immediately ordered an investigation. He reported to the President: "The Governor of Cavite reports two drunken Americans have been killed by our soldiers. I tell him to have an investigation immediately and report the fact to the American commander."

By 7:00 in the evening of the same day, General Riego de Dios reported:

Most urgent. General Anderson informs me in a letter that, 'In order to avoid the very serious misfortune of an encounter between our troops, I demand your immediate withdrawal with your guard from Cavite. One of my men has been killed and three wounded by your people. This is positive and does not admit of explanation or delay. I ask you to inform me of your decision.'

A month before, the same General Anderson has politely requested Aguinaldo for cooperation, stating that he did not wish to interfere in the affairs of Cavite, which was then in Filipino hands. After the fall of Manila, the general's tone changed. He now demanded that the Filipino governor of Cavite and his guard withdraw from Cavite!

Mabini wrote the following endorsement on the telegram:

To Commanding General American forces, General Merritt, from the Commanding General Philippine Forces: I have received the information of the death of one American and the wounding of three. I have been told that being drunk they at first fired in the air, then they fought with each other. General Anderson says that said death was caused by my people, on which account I have ordered an investigation to ascertain the truth, and to show that the Filipinos endeavor to remain in harmony with the Americans. If it should appear that any of my people are guilty, I shall impose a severe punishment.

Not satisfied with this terse reply, Aguinaldo added his own endorsement on the telegram.

Telegram received. Do not leave the post, and say you cannot abandon the city [Cavite] without my orders, and say that [enemy soldiers] was not killed by our soldiers, but by themselves since they

were drunk, according to your telegram. Give up your life before abandoning that place and investigate matter.

By August 26, as a result of the Cavite incident, Filipino officers and commanders were being disarmed when they crossed enemy lines. The president received this report: "Conference with Gen. MacArthur, and he asks me to tell you that they have disarmed Spanish officers and their own not on guard, and asks that we disarm our officers and commanders who enter Manila or the American military lines, so as to avoid trouble."

Around the same time a telegram from Marikina reported: "Most urgent. I inform your excellency that the Americans are beginning to put up a telegraph line between the Deposito and Manila. I did not permit it. I await an answer."

Mabini replied, "They can put up a telegraph line, but they cannot send troops."

Aguinaldo sent a map to the Americans describing the Filipino lines. This was delivered, and on August 30 at 5:00 in the afternoon this telegram was received from Caloocan:

Have had conference with General Merritt. Delivered your Excellency's letter, and after describing military line that your Excellency desires, I also verbally carried out all that your Excellency directed. General Merritt replied as follows, 'Within three or four days I will send an officer to Bacoor with a map and answer to letter. I request that commanders and officers, and particularly that the president, convey to Philippine troops friendship with Americans.'

I am certain the Americans will obstruct the efforts of the people to obtain liberty and independence.

Will these reports from the field, why did Aguinaldo maintain his trust on the "alliance" with the Americans?

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Revolution perished at Malolos meet

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To gain recognition for his government, Aguinaldo had to show that his country had all the requisites of a modern nation: executive branch, legislature, and an army. If the independence of the republic of the Philippines could be recognized worldwide, the plans of the United States to annex the islands would be effectively countered. After all, President McKinley had assured the American people that the Spanish American War was fought for humanitarian reasons—to liberate Cuba and not to take overseas territories.

Although Aguinaldo sent diplomatic notes and representatives to foreign nations requesting formal recognition of the Philippines as a free and independent nation, these were ignored. Representatives of Spain and the United States were in Paris threshing out the details of a peace treaty. Aguinaldo's advisers warned that the issue of the future political status of the Philippines would surely be raised, and if the revolutionary government did not have a voice in those negotiations, both Spain and the United States would decide on the Philippines as they wished. Filipinos stood to lose the independence she had recently won and fought for.

Aguinaldo's advisers pushed for the convening of the revolutionary congress, the ratification of the Declaration of Independence from Spain, and the establishment of a constitutional republic. Aguinaldo acted quickly and ordered that the delegates to a revolutionary congress convene in Malolos on September 15, 1898. By then he had already moved the revolutionary government from Cavite to Bulacan. The assembly was to discuss the steps to be taken to secure the recognition of Philippine independence and the republic.

Malolos was in a festive mood. Unfortunately, few people realized that this was only the calm before the storm.

Textbook history, yearly government commemoration, and the back of the current five-peso bill make us remember Aguinaldo standing by the window of his Kawit home during the declaration of Philippine independence on June 12, 1898. Nobody remembers September 29, 1898, when the Malolos Congress ratified the June 12 Declaration of Independence. It is unfortunate that in recent years much more has

been written in the popular press about the Malolos banquet thrown on September 29, 1898, than about the laws enacted by the congress in its short but eventful life.

We can see from the printed invitation and the menu what the founding fathers ate for lunch on that hot September day. Some academic historians who cannot see through the food think that dwelling on the gastronomic is trivial and irrelevant. Is it? Food served that day reveals the ideology behind the Malolos Congress and the true sentiment regarding the revolution.

On top of the printed menu was a triangle with the date September 29, 1898, and on the two side panels were written—in Spanish—Liberty and Fraternity. Obviously, there is an allusion to the French Revolution. Running down the center of the menu is "Igualdad," but then equality was farthest from the minds of many members of the elitist Congress. The historic independence banquet was for the *ilustrados*, the government officials, military officers, and their invited guests—the *sosyal* of the time. The Malolos banquet was definitely *not* for the common soldier or the common *tao* who actively supported the war. These ordinary citizens forgotten by history were not invited to the meal that Filipinos then and even now would find difficult to swallow.

For starters they had oysters, prawns, buttered radish, olives, Lyon sausages, sardines in tomato sauce, and Holland salmon. The main courses consisted of: Crab in the shell, *Vol-au-vent a la financiere*, chicken giblets *a la tagale*, mutton chops with potato straws, truffled turkey *a la manilloise*, *filet a la Chateubriand* with green vegetables, and finally cold ham with asparagus. For dessert there were: cheese, fruits, frozen strawberry preserves, and ice cream. To wash down the seven appetizers, seven courses, and assortment of four desserts, one progressed from Bordeaux, Sauterne, and Sherry, to Champagne, Chartreuse, and Cognac, and finally to coffee or tea. France was the inspiration. Our founding fathers not only took the French revolution to heart, but found French gastronomy to their taste as well.

National Artist Nick Joaquin once wrote that "the menu is a culmination like Malolos itself, and should stand side by side with the Malolos Constitution." The opposite view however is that the banquet was nothing more than a tasteless, unfeeling display of wealth and contrived culture in the midst of a revolution. Mabini, who strongly opposed the Malolos Constitution, writes about the architect of this Malolos fiesta, Pedro Paterno, who:

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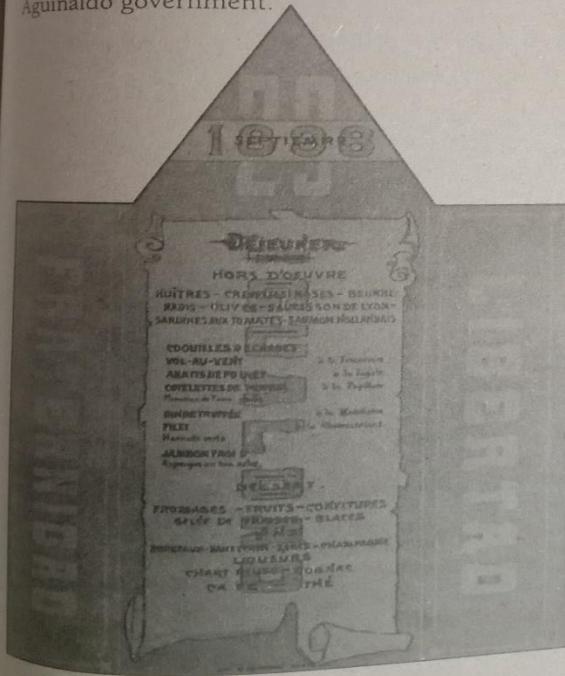
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has always distinguished himself for his love of premature fiestas. When he was elected President of the Malolos Congress he occupied himself primarily with the organization of a fiesta he labeled *popular* to celebrate Philippine independence even if it was not yet officially recognized. We have seen that this fiesta, instead of accelerating the advent of the independence we pine for, did not seem to do anything but frighten it away. Anyway, pursued by bad luck Paterno's fiestas result in funerals....we know that these Paterno-inspired fiestas solemnized the decomposition of the Government and Armed Forces of the Philippines.

A historian is always confronted by the question—what should we remember? The Malolos Congress is something to be commemorated but not glorified. Perhaps, this is why the late Teodoro A. Agoncillo entitled his landmark book *Malolos: Crisis of the Republic*. Malolos saw the death of the revolution and marked the ruin of the Aguinaldo government.



Menu of the Malolos
Banquet (lunch)

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The Centennial Countdown

None of the delegates to the Malolos Congress left letters or memoirs describing the men and women who partook of the famous banquet whose menu has come down to historians of the late twentieth century. Fortunately, an American news correspondent Frank Millet gave us his, rather unflattering, view of the people at Malolos on that humid day in September 1898:

Every man was dressed in full black costume of more or less fashionable cut, according to his means or tastes. Many of them wore full evening dress, some of them had silk hats of quaint shape and well-worn nap, others bowlers of the season of 1890, but all, to a man were in black. It was a sweltering hot day too, and they suffered for their adherence to the etiquette of the new Filipino government.

Although our biased American correspondent could not list the names of the people in attendance and could only recognize Aguinaldo, he tried to distinguish the statesmen from the politicians by their clothing. The heat was the acid test:

But statesmen all do have to suffer in hot weather, if one may take as true the difference between a statesman and a politician, which is that a statesman always wears a buttoned-up black frock-coat, and a politician a sack-coat or cut-away, or any coat he likes. That difference came to mind at once when I saw these statesmen fanning themselves vigorously with their hats, just behind them the natives, politicians all of them, in cool, almost diaphanous, garments [with their shirts untucked].

Equating statesmanship in Filipinos with European clothing, he notes that if one was not in black and came in a comfortable barong, then one was merely a politician. Imagine wearing stuffy, heavy evening dress at a daytime event in the tropics! The only positive thing the American correspondent noted was the youth of the delegates who were described as:

Dark-skinned and with strong growing black hair; scarcely a sign of the frost of age showed on the head of any delegate. Few among them would have escaped notice in a crowd, for they were exceptionally alert, keen, and intelligent in appearance, and, as a mass, much superior to the native as one sees him in ordinary life. I will not be sure, however, that the dress was not a little responsible for the impression they made on me.

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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Was Malolos, its Congress, Constitution, and trying-hard banquet
really the highlight of 1898? History textbooks tell us it is so, but a
closer look reveals that Malolos was the end of the revolution.

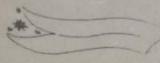
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The Centennial Countdown

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Fast-tracked Constitution

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National Artist Nick Joaquin once wrote that in the Malolos banquet "the menu is a culmination like Malolos itself, and should stand side by side with the Malolos Constitution." If Mabini were alive today he would surely take exception to Joaquin. Mabini's writings clearly show that he did not approve of either banquet or constitution. Contrary to popular belief (and to a documentary produced by the National Centennial Commission) Mabini was rabidly against the promulgation of the Malolos Constitution; however once it was in force he yielded.

According to textbook history, next to the ratification of the Declaration of Independence by the Malolos Congress on September 29, 1898, its most challenging task was to draft and promulgate a constitution that would reflect the will of the people. The deadline was rather close because Spanish and American Peace Commissioners were already in Paris discussing the disposition of the Philippines. A government and a constitution by Filipinos would complicate the Paris Peace talks.

Represented by its spokesman Felipe Calderon, the Malolos Congress held the opinion that with a constitution and a government the Philippines was in a better position to press for formal recognition not only from Spain and the United States but from the other world powers as well. Mabini countered that the Malolos Congress was not a constituent assembly and was not therefore authorized to adopt a constitution. Under the law that created it, the Malolos Congress was merely a consultative body that would propose ways to advance the revolutionary government. Mabini says it better in his own words in an undated memorandum on the constitution:

The proclamation of the Republic presupposes a Constitution even if only analogous to those already in force in other nations. The one voted by Congress is not acceptable at this time for two reasons: first, because the constitutional guarantees it establishes to protect individual liberties cannot be upheld at present, precisely a time when the necessity of the predominance of the military element has been indicated; and, secondly, because in these difficult times it would not be convenient to

establish openly the separation of Church and the State, as it would give the supporters of the religion of the State cause to leave the Government.

Neither would it be convenient for said Constitution to govern the organization and function of the three powers. The ship of State is threatened with great dangers and terrible tempests, and the actual state of things would require, in my opinion, the advantage having, in some way, the three powers centered for the time in one hand so that it can guide the ship of State with the necessary strength and be able to elude all the perils on the way.

The "one hand" Mabini wanted to guide the "ship of State" was Emilio Aguinaldo. Naturally, behind Aguinaldo was a group of "advisers" (this sounds strangely contemporary again!), the most influential being Mabini. Not very well known is the fact that Mabini submitted a draft constitution of his own to Aguinaldo. Unfortunately, the Mabini constitution was rejected by his critics in the Malolos Congress. Felipe Calderon in his *Memorias sobre la revolucion Filipina* stated:

Mabini had written a proposed constitution based on the Constitution of the Spanish Republic with slight variations, and, after studying it, I became convinced that it was not suitable to our country. Pedro Paterno on his part, had given me a constitutional draft of his own which has patterned much after the Spanish Constitution of 1868. Paterno's draft, like Mabini's, proved unsatisfactory to me... I, therefore decided to write one that would be eclectic... I spent a few days studying the constitutions of other countries... Using as a basis... the constitutions of the South American republics... particularly that of Costa Rica, I prepared my own draft... One day in the drugstore of Juan Cuadra in Ermita, I wrote down the draft of the constitution, or rather had a clean copy made of the draft.

It is amazing to have one man, Felipe Calderon, single-handedly draft an entire constitution using the constitutions of other countries as cribs. The Calderon draft was then:

Submitted to the committee [in the Malolos Congress], the draft was approved with slight changes; but we encountered opposition from Mabini's partisans who wanted Mabini's own plan to be adopted... The draft having been approved by the committee, copies thereof were printed

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and distributed among the delegates. Thereafter it was submitted to Congress where it was taken up in debate, from the closing days of October until November when it was approved by Congress.

How come people are made to believe that Mabini was for the Malolos Constitution? History has to be sanitized if only to hide the blemishes in what is promoted as a glorious revolution.



Delegates to the Malolos Congress walking from the residence of Aguinaldo in Malolos down Calle Real to Barasoain Church

Mabini strongly opposed Malolos Constitution



Mabini's constitution was rejected by the Malolos Congress. If it was any consolation, the body likewise rejected the constitution drafted by Felipe Calderon. Failing to get either the whole or just parts of his draft constitution accepted by the Malolos Congress, Mabini wrote several letters to Aguinaldo advising him against approving the promulgation of the constitution. As a concession, however, Mabini agreed to such a promulgation provided certain amendments proposed by him are incorporated into the constitution.

From the tone of his letters and memoranda sent to Aguinaldo, it seemed that Mabini objected strongly against the empowerment of the Malolos Congress over the president. Aside from its legislative functions, the Malolos Congress also took executive and judicial powers unto itself. The diminished power of the president, in Mabini's view, was detrimental to the continuation of the civil, military, and diplomatic efforts to gain the independence of the Philippines. Concluding a letter to the president on January 14, 1899, Mabini saw other interests at work:

If our Constitution becomes effective, the Americans will be cautious about giving recognition to our cause because our desire for independence will be very evident to them.

We cannot tell whether this is a political move of the annexationists, who desire our Constitution to take effect so that the Americans will lose their confidence in us and have every reason not to recognize us because we have prevented them from tampering with our Constitution.

You can say that these reasonings are vague, and that they spring from my displeasure towards Congress, I leave them to you to ponder over and decide what is best to do.

Mabini worried, for example, over the power of the Malolos Congress to check Aguinaldo's appointments of department secretaries. He was concerned that although Aguinaldo was constantly assured of his veto power over laws passed by the congress, in reality the constitution, once promulgated, would give the congress much power. Aguinaldo could not dissolve the congress without its consent, neither

Aguinaldo could he indict any of its representatives without its permission. Aguinaldo could not impede congress. Mabini scrutinized the constitution and found out that whatever powers it gave Aguinaldo in one article, it neutralized or took away in another. Thus in a letter to Aguinaldo on January 14, 1899, Mabini warned:

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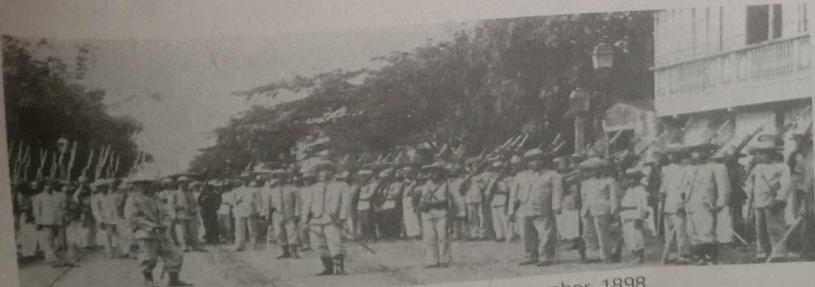
In my opinion, if you approve the Constitution without the amendments, you will be contributing to the failure of our country and of our ideals. I can see it all too clearly now. That is why I find no other solution except to do one of the following:

1. Change the Representatives appointed by the Government.
2. Veto the Constitution.
3. Accept the Constitution and change the Council of Government.

Mabini ended this letter thus:

Please do not believe in the promises of the Representatives to the effect that when the Constitution should be in force, you can do whatever you want, because what will happen will be the opposite—you shall have to do what they want. If now that we have as yet no Constitution they are already pushing you down, what will they not do when you are tied to them?

May God enlighten you in these times of serious crisis.



Filipino troops awaiting the arrival of Aguinaldo, September, 1898.

Mabini foe on syphilis

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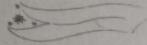
Although the syphilis rumor reached Congress, On the wealthy members of the constitution to delay the proposed amendments if they would lose popularity countered by s...

Mabini lost out to the Malolos Congress. He was isolated from the president and eventually eased out of office. This may partly explain why in his memoirs, *La Revolucion Filipina*, Mabini painted Aguinaldo in the worst possible light. Historical research teaches us not only how to read from the primary sources, but more importantly to put the sources in their proper context.

Changes in Mabini's outlook can be seen in his extant correspondence and writings. When Mabini was in the Aguinaldo Cabinet, for example, he wrote a number of letters and memoranda against Antonio Luna; but in his memoirs, Mabini turns around completely. Aguinaldo, his former boss, is painted as a villain and Luna becomes the hero. Such are the difficulties that confront historians. It is one thing to find a document and quite another to place it in context. Even rumor can be understood once it is placed in its proper context. A closer look at the intrigue and power struggles in Malolos sheds light into the wild rumors that Mabini was afflicted with syphilis.

How the Philippines became part of US map

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If we are to believe the historical sources, the U.S. decision to take the Philippines as the "insular possession" was not made overnight. Much thought and reflection went into it. U.S. President McKinley even resorted to prayer on his knees to get divine guidance on what to do with the Philippines, which at first he could not even locate on a map.

In November 1899 as a group of Protestant clergymen stood up at the conclusion of a courtesy call on McKinley, they were asked to stay awhile longer as the president gave these thoughts on the Philippines:

Before you go I would like to say just a word about the Philippine business. I have been criticized a good deal about the Philippines, but don't deserve it. The truth is I didn't want the Philippines, and when they came to us, as a gift from the gods, I did not know what to do with them.

When the Spanish war broke out, Dewey was in Hongkong, and I ordered him to go to Manila, and he had to; because, if defeated, he had no place to refit on that side of the globe, and if the Dons [Spaniards] were victorious they would likely cross the Pacific and ravage our Oregon and California coasts. And so he had to destroy the Spanish fleet, and did it! But that was as far as I thought then. When next I realized that the Philippines had dropped into our lap, I confess I did not know what to do with them.

I sought counsel from all sides—Democrats as well as Republicans—but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila; then Luzon; then the other islands, perhaps, also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight; and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed almighty God for light and guidance more than one night.

And one night it came to me this way—I don't know how it was but it came: *(1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) That we could not turn them over to France or Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) That we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4)

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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That there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and, by God's grace, do the very best we could by them, as our fellowmen for whom Christ also died.

And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States [pointing to a large map on the wall of his office]; and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President!



The American Peace Commission at their hotel in Paris. (L to R): Whitelaw Reid, Senator Gray, John Bassett Moore, Judge Day, Senator Davis

In 1898 McKinley appointed a five-man peace commission that would meet with their Spanish counterparts in Paris to negotiate the terms of peace that marked the end of the Spanish-American War. Before the commissioners left Washington for Paris on September 18, 1898, they met with McKinley. Fortunately, one of the commissioners, Whitelaw Reid, recorded the following in his diary on Friday, September 16, 1898:

Finally the President indicated his desire to begin business and motioned us to seat about the table...he began by a reference to the [peace] protocol, and to the wide divergence of opinions that seemed to exist in the country as to unsettled questions concerning the Philippines. He

said he had prepared some instructions covering the main points of our duty, but had left the final decision as to the Philippines to be filled out after the present consultation. He then asked Senator [Cushman K.] Davis to express his views.

Senator Davis said his general impression was that we certainly should retain coaling stations in the Ladrones and also in the Carolines, if that were practicable. As to the Philippines he believed it to be a great opportunity for the United States with reference to trade in the East, as well as with reference to its naval power. He thought Manila of the utmost importance, but believed that the proper defense of Manila would require the territory back of it. He also thought that the islands adjoining would be found rich and desirable, and though it would be a mistake to abandon them.

As to the islands in the extreme southwestern portion of the archipelago occupied by Mahomedans, namely Mindanao and the Sulu group, he was not clear. He thought he should be willing to let Holland take them, as she had possessions in that neighborhood, was a friendly power, and not likely to be an unfriendly neighbor.

Publicly, McKinley was against the annexation of the Philippines. That the Philippines became an American colony proves that actions do speak louder than words.

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Amber R. Ocampo

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Historians writing on the American intrusion into our history usually use a Senate document printed in 1899 entitled *Message from the President of the United States transmitting a Treaty of Peace between the United States and Spain, signed at the city of Paris on December 10, 1898*. Since the so-called Treaty of Paris required ratification by the U.S. Senate, papers were attached to the document to guide the senators in making their decision for or against the treaty. Negotiations between the U.S. and Spanish commissioners are given, as well as U.S. consular and military reports on Aguinaldo and the Philippines.

Aside from the Treaty of Paris and its accompanying papers, another source of information on the U.S. decision to take the Philippines is the diary of commissioner Whitelaw Reid. His pro-expansionist viewpoint gives us an idea of what the Americans saw in the Philippines.

During the White House briefing shortly before the peace commissioners left for Paris, Reid expressed these views:

I spoke of the great importance of the Philippines with reference to trade in China, of the difficulty morally of taking one part and abandoning the rest to Spain, and of the political difficulties flowing from the same policy, which, it seemed to me, would be merely organizing in a worse shape exactly the trouble we have been suffering from in the West Indies for the past three quarters of a century...I believed it too difficult to hold Manila alone without the island to which it belonged, or to hold any other harbor on Luzon. The hinterland seemed to be a necessity.

I believed also that the commerce of the Philippines themselves with the United States would be very considerable. Our possession of them would give us an enormous advantage in the vastly greater commerce that might be cultivated in China. I believed their possession valuable to the country, but especially important to the Pacific Coast.

We were at present at a disadvantage in commerce on the Atlantic Ocean, and could hardly expect in our time, or in that of the next generation, to catch up with Great Britain. We already had, however, an enormous advantage on the Pacific Ocean. The acquisition of the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii] greatly strengthened us in this field. If to this

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we now added the Philippines, it would be possible for American energy to build up such a commercial marine on the Pacific Coast as should ultimately convert the Pacific Ocean into an American lake, making it far more our own than the Atlantic Ocean is now Great Britain's. Such a possession therefore would tend to stimulate our shipbuilding industry and commerce, and could not but add immensely to the national prosperity.

I strongly deprecated the idea of making two bites of the cherry. I was not so much concerned about whether it would be immediately popular or not, though on this point I had little doubt of the popular tendency. What concerned me more was whether it should be left to the people of a succeeding generation to dwell on the magnificent opportunities that Providence had thrown in our way, and to record that the men in charge of public affairs at that time were unable to comprehend or grasp their opportunities, and had thus thrown away the magnificent future that should have belonged to the nation.



State carriage of Aguinaldo, Malolos, 1898-1899

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....Our true national interest, therefore was to seek a development for our commerce particularly with countries who needed what we had to sell and could not produce, and who could offer us in exchange what we needed and could not produce. The Philippines seemed to me to meet these conditions; so did China. The control of the Pacific Ocean pointed almost exclusively to a commerce under these conditions and seemed to me therefore to offer the largest and best commercial future of the country.

The suggestion that we should take any part of the Philippines as a war indemnity, though plausible, seemed to me unnecessary. We had taken the capital of the country, the center of its administration, the point from which it was controlled. In doing so we had taken prisoner practically the whole Spanish army of occupation and destroyed the whole fleet. The war left us masters, therefore, not only of Manila, but of the archipelago. It was ours, therefore, by right of conquest.

I deprecated undue alarm about the difficulty of administering these distant possessions. What Great Britain had done successfully, a kindred people need not be less skillful in [doing]. No doubt it would involve material reforms in our civil service, which would be an advantage anyway. The Constitution interposed on obstacles and there would be little difficulty in so modifying our present territorial system as to adapt it to any of these islands whenever it might be thought best to relieve them from military rule. But they should be governed permanently as colonies, never with the remotest idea of permitting their admission as states in the Union.

All the talk of liberating Cubans and Filipinos offered by Spanish (mis)rule was but a grand excuse to take over from Spain.

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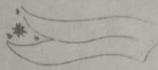
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The skyline along Roxas Boulevard continues to change as every inch of space with a view of the postcard-pretty Manila Bay sunset is turned into commercial buildings or plush high-rise condominiums. Eventually, "development" will move inward and eat into the genteel district of Malate. One of the casualties of land development might be a small house on 2200 M.H. del Pilar behind the present Hotel Sofitel (still called Silahis by many) where Felipe Agoncillo, the first Filipino diplomat, and his wife Marcela, who made the first Philippine flag in Hongkong in 1898, used to live. Felipe died in 1941 and Marcela in 1946, but they continue to live even as names in textbook history.

One of the little-read documents of 1898 is the "Memorandum addressed by Felipe Agoncillo Minister Plenipotentiary of the Philippine Revolutionary Government to His Excellency William McKinley President of the United States of North America concerning the situation and aspirations of the Filipino People. October 3, 1898" written in Washington where he vainly worked for recognition of the First Philippine Republic. The memorandum is worth rereading today in the context of Spain's cession of the archipelago to the United States. Some of the points taken were:

1. Immediately after the Spanish War, the American representatives and officers at Singapore, Hongkong, and Manila invited the natives of the Philippines Islands to second the action of the American armed forces which action they seconded with pleasure and loyalty, as allies, in the conviction that their personality and their political autonomous and sovereign rights would be recognized.
2. In order that such action be efficacious and executive it was necessary (a) to organize the army of the Philippines; (b) to organize their military staff and headquarters; and (c) to organize a government independent from America and Spain....
3. All this was done with the consent of the admiral in command of the fleet and of the generals and military political officers of the United States of America in the Philippine Islands, who aware of it, not only did not object to it but accepted it as a consummated fact and maintained official relations with the new organization, utilizing the same for their

subsequent activities and for carrying on the campaign which was consequently brought to a successful conclusion.

4. In the Protocol between the United States of America and Spain...both nations [were] to negotiate and conclude the Treaty of Peace in which it would be determined who was to control the Philippines, and what was to be the form of government.

5. Neither one State nor the other apparently gave attention to the right of the Filipinos to participate in this determination which will affect their destiny in history.

6. The Lawful government of the natives now functioning in the Philippine Islands has been sanctioned by the only legitimate authority and representation it has, and it has in fact been recognized, not objected to and utilized by the American nation...

7. The present lawful Philippine Government, of which the invincible leader General Emilio Aguinaldo is the President, also believes that the moment has come to remind and even to notify, if proper, in a formal and precise manner, the illustrious President and Government of Washington of its existence and normal and regular functioning, as well as of its relations of reciprocity with the authorities of the American Republic in the Philippine Islands.

8. It desires to state (in the same manner), that the Filipino people unanimously confirm their independence and confide that the American people will recognize the same, mindful of the offers made and obligations contracted in its name, proclaiming the principles of liberty, justice, and right expressed in its famous, sacred Declaration of Independence for the benefit of the new nation which logically rises in that part of the globe under the impulse of its present beneficent and humanitarian action.

9. And the Filipino people hope that pending a permanent understanding for the evacuation of their territory their lawful *de facto* government will be accorded the rights of a belligerent...

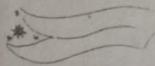
10. The Filipino people and their aforesaid Government and legitimate representatives pray and urge the noble president of the United States of America and the public powers thereof to be guided by the aspirations, recognize the rights, sanctions, and proclaim, imbued by their sentiments of justice, honor that which was offered by their international representatives, as set forth in this document.

All of Agoncillo's efforts were in vain. His memoranda and letters were ignored by the White House and the peace commission in Paris. The existence of a functioning Filipino government complicated the U.S. bid to take the Philippines from Spain.



Copy of a portrait of Felipe Agoncillo by
Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo

Filipinos never a factor in talks



Hostilities in the Spanish-American War should have stopped upon the signing of a peace protocol in Washington on August 12, 1898. History, however, is filled with unexpected twists. On the next day, August 13, 1898, Spanish Manila fell to the Americans and the Stars and Stripes flew over Intramuros. News of the peace protocol had not reached the American naval and military force before the attack because of the time difference between Manila and Washington. Communication by cable was not direct from Manila to the rest of the world.

One issue later debated on the bargaining table in Paris between the Spanish and American peace commissioners concerned "the control, disposition, and government of the Philippines." Spain insisted on the peace protocol signed on August 12 and demanded the return of Manila from the U.S. forces. The United States replied that they held Manila by right of conquest and would occupy and hold the city, bay, and harbor of Manila pending the conclusions of the Treaty of Peace in Paris. Spain later asked that Manila be returned pending the conclusion of the Treaty of Paris. Naturally, the United States refused.

Before the American commissioners left for Paris in September 1898, they were briefed in the White House by President McKinley who gave his position on the Philippines. Whitelaw Reid records the conclusion of this White House briefing in his journal:

The President then remarked that he believed the acquisition of territory was naturally attractive to the American mind...but thought it would probably be more attractive just now than later on, when the difficulties, expense and loss of life which it entailed, became more manifest. He thought we could not possibly give up Manila, and doubted the wisdom of attempting to hold it without the entire island to which it belonged. Beyond this he did not seem inclined to go.

He thereupon read the instructions which were explicit on other points, and indicated that he would fill out the gap with reference to the Philippines in the sense of the opinions he had just expressed. He closed the meeting after some remarks about the satisfaction he had in enlisting our services. [He desires] that we should use our best judgement on the

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Philippine question, and accumulate all possible information. [He suggested] that, after hearing from Merritt and Dewey (to the opinion of the latter of whom he seemed to attach great importance), we might find it necessary for the safety of Luzon to provide also for acquiring some of the smaller islands near it.

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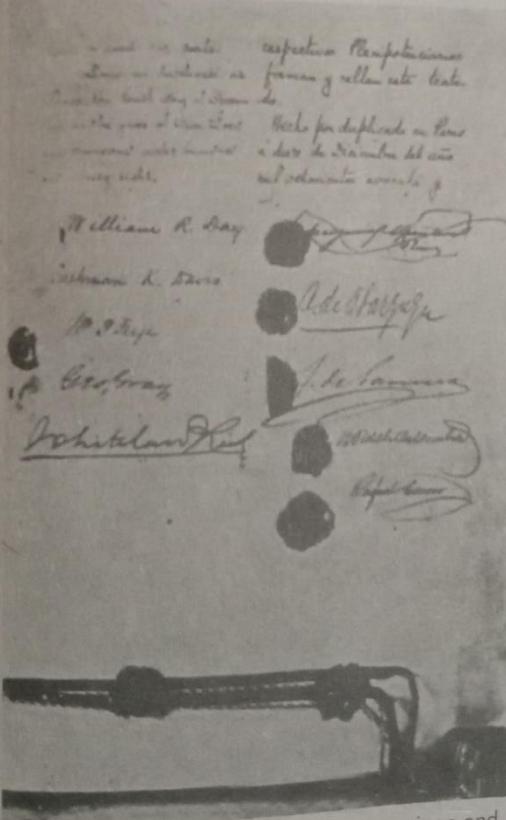
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McKinley's position as of September 13, 1898, was only to take Luzon, pending the opinion of Dewey that for him carried the most weight. By October 20, 1898, McKinley cabled instructions to the peace commissioners in Paris through the Secretary of State John Hay. McKinley had changed his mind and instructed the commissioners to demand the cession not only of Luzon but of the entire Philippine archipelago:



Treaty of Peace signed in Paris by American and Spanish commissioners

Fil-A

While the Philippines can be justly claimed by conquest, which position must not be yielded, yet their disposition, control, and government the President prefers should be the subject of negotiation, as provided in the protocol. It is imperative upon us that as victors we should be governed only by motives which exalt our nation. Territorial expansion should be our last concern; that we shall not shirk the moral obligations of our victory is of the greatest [concern].

It is undisputed that Spain's authority is permanently destroyed in every part of the Philippines. To leave any part in her feeble control now would increase our difficulties and be opposed to the interests of humanity. The sentiment in the United States is almost universal that the people of the Philippines, whatever else is done, must be liberated from Spanish domination. In this sentiment the President fully concurs. Nor can we permit Spain to transfer any of the islands to another power. Nor can we invite another power of powers to join the United States in governing them. We must either hold them or turn them back to Spain.

Consequently, grave as are the responsibilities and unforeseen as are the difficulties which are before us, the President can see but one path of duty—the acceptance of the archipelago...The terms upon which the full cession of the Philippines shall be made must be left largely with the Commission. But as its negotiations shall proceed it will develop the Spanish position, and if any new phase of the situation arise, the Commission can further communicate with the President. How these instructions shall be carried out...the President leaves to the judgement and discretion of the Commissioners.

Morality was used to cover up the issue of territorial expansion. For McKinley, returning the Philippines to Spain was "immoral." However, nowhere in McKinley's instructions do we Filipinos enter the picture.

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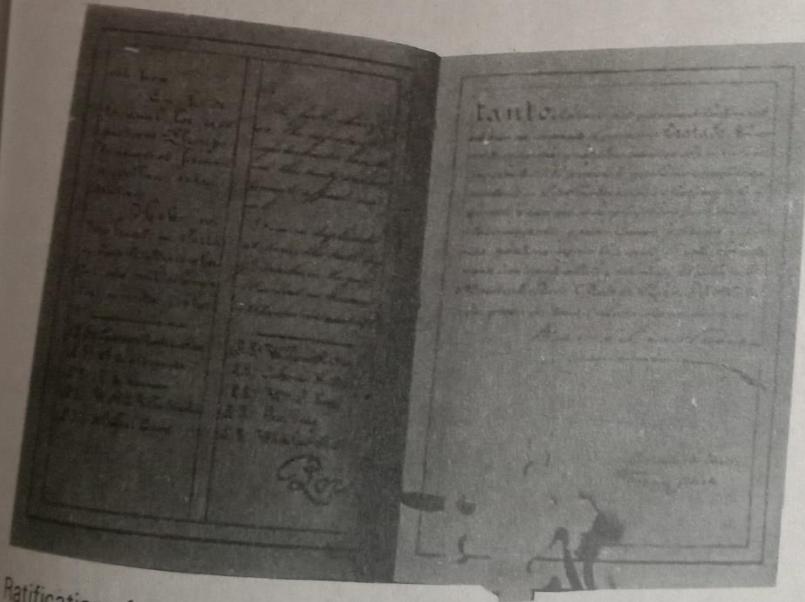
Fil-Am war cost US \$300 million

19



If you avoid the traffic at the crossing of Aurora Boulevard and Araneta Avenue and travel towards Nagtahan you will probably pass the narrow San Juan del Monte bridge that is so ordinary you probably will not notice the historical marker installed on it to recall that tense evening on February 4, 1899, when the Filipino-American War broke out.

Our textbooks agree that on this bridge an American private, William Grayson, fired the historic shot that triggered the war. To complicate matters we are not told that at the time of the shooting, Grayson was actually a British subject. We are not supplied the name of the unfortunate Filipino whose death was only the first of a thousand deaths (including those of senior citizens, women, and children) that would result from the Filipino-American War. Come to think of it, many Filipinos and Americans are not even aware that there was such a thing as the Filipino-American War.



Ratification of the Peace Treaty of Paris between the U.S. and Spain by the Queen-Regent Maria Cristina

On February 6, 1899, the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War. One of the articles of this treaty provided for the cession of the Philippines to the United States by Spain who was paid the magnificent sum of US\$20,000,000 as *consuelo de boba*. Needless to say, both countries that signed the treaty ignored the Declaration of Philippine Independence on June 12, 1898 and the establishment of the Malolos government. They also ignored the representatives Aguinaldo sent to them. In late 1898, Spain could not give away what she did not own nor control anymore, and the United States (or at least its leaders who believed in the policy of overseas expansion) coveted the Philippines.

Three of the senators who negotiated the treaty signed the ratification. None of the U.S. senators who ratified the Treaty of Paris had ever been to the Philippines. Many of them, initially, could not even place the archipelago on a map. Some, like their constituents, even wondered aloud if "them Philippians were the folks St. Paul wrote the epistle to?" Ratification of the treaty was a vote for imperialism since the Senate was divided between the expansionists who wanted to take the Philippines and the anti-imperialists who argued that the United States should not take overseas colonies. At the beginning of February when the treaty was debated in the Senate, the vote was still uncertain—until news of hostilities broke out. By then the fact that U.S. Private Grayson had fired the first shot was conveniently forgotten.

Of the eight-four senators present that day, fifty-seven voted for ratification and twenty-seven against. The ratification of the treaty was settled with a slim margin of one vote, yet Senator Thomas Reed sneered, "We have bought ten million Malays at \$2.00 a head unpicked and nobody knows what it will cost to pick them." At the time the vote was counted, unknown to the U.S. Senate, fifty-nine Americans were dead and two hundred seventy-eight have been wounded in the Philippines. This was only the downpayment.

George Dewey was later quoted as saying that:

the delegates to the Peace Conference scarcely comprehended that a rebellion was included with the purchase. We were far from being in possession of the property which we had bought...Now, after paying twenty million for the islands, we must establish our authority by force against the very people whom we sought to benefit.

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Dewey was not alone in his reservations about taking the Philippines. Henry Adams wrote Theodore Roosevelt to express his alarm that the United States was poised:

to plunge into an inevitable war to conquer the Philippines, contrary to every profession or so-called principle in our lives and history. I turn green in bed at midnight if I think of the horror of a year's warfare in the Philippines...where...we must slaughter a million or two of foolish Malays in order to give them the comforts of flannel petticoats and electric railways.

To downplay the negative image of imperialism, U.S. President McKinley claimed that the Philippines was to undergo a "Benevolent Assimilation" process—in short, the United States had decided to civilize and Christianize the Filipinos who were not exactly barbarians when the Americans arrived. The twenty million dollars bargain price did not include the Fil-American War that lasted officially from February 4, 1899, to July 4, 1902, when Theodore Roosevelt declared the Philippines "pacified." A guerilla war, however, continued long after 1902.

The Philippines had been compared with the apple in the garden of Eden—beautiful, tempting, desirable, but dangerous. The cost of picking that apple included 4,234 Americans dead; 2,818 soldiers wounded, and hundreds more who returned home to die of service-related diseases, like malaria, dysentery, or venereal disease. American records dismissed the Fil-American War as a mere "insurrection" or a simple "Tagalo revolt" that they could end in a short period. What many people do not realize is that when the United States paid \$20 million for the Philippines, she unwittingly bought with it a \$300 million war.

American troops used 'most humane' torture

18

Faded photographs of atrocities during the Fil-American war are creeping out of the woodwork. Three of these show an American soldier pouring a pail of water into a Filipino whose mouth is held open with a stick. This helpless Filipino was being given the water cure. To supplement the photograph, one merely has to leaf through the detailed testimonies given in 1902 before a U.S. Senate committee investigating atrocities committed by American soldiers on Filipinos.

American officials covered up "individual incidents" of water cure by stressing that this was more widely practiced by the Spaniards. William Howard Taft was even quoted as saying, "There are some rather amusing instances of Filipinos who came in and said they would not say anything until they were tortured; that they must have an excuse for saying what they proposed to say." Reality was not as humorous as Taft pictured it to be.

U.S. senators interviewed Sgt. Charles Riley who left us a vivid description of water cure applied on the town *presidente* of Igbarras, Iloilo, in November 1900. The anonymous *presidente* refused to betray information about the Filipino forces fighting in the area and was:

...stripped to the waist, he had nothing on but a pair of white trousers and his hands were tied behind him...[he was] placed on his back under a water tank holding probably 100 gallons. The faucet was opened, and a stream of water was forced down or allowed to run down his throat. His throat was held so he could not prevent swallowing the water...he had to allow the water to run into his stomach.

[He was] directly under the faucet, with his mouth held wide open. When he was filled with water, it was forced out of him by pressing a foot on his stomach or else with the hands; and this continued from five to fifteen minutes...A native interpreter stood directly over this man as he lay on the floor, and kept saying one word which I should judge meant 'confess' or 'answer.'

At this point, Riley was asked if he understood what was being said by the Filipino and he replied, "No sir, I could not understand the native tongue at all." So, what was the point of this man's agony? Why

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torture someone if you cannot understand his language? After numerous applications of water cure failed to loosen the Filipino's tongue, the torturers decided to change tactics. Riley continues:

One of the men of the 18th Infantry went to his saddle and took a syringe from the saddle bag, and another man was sent for a can of water, what we call a kerosene can, holding about five gallons. He brought this can of water down from upstairs, and then a syringe was inserted one end in the water and the other end in his mouth. This time he was not bound, but he was held by four or five men and the water was forced into his mouth from the can, through the syringe.

The syringe did not seem to have the desired effect, and the doctor ordered a second one. The man got a second syringe, and that was inserted in his nose. Then the doctor ordered some salt, and a handful of salt was procured and thrown into the water, two syringes were then in operation. The interpreter stood over him in the meantime asking for this second information that was desired. Finally, he gave in and gave the information that they sought, and then he was allowed to rise.

The water cure described above was supervised by an American contract surgeon named Dr. Lyons and an officer, Capt. Glenn, who was judge advocate general for the Visayas. The doctor went against the code of his sworn profession while Glenn reacted to the Senate



The enemy posing for photographs over the dead bodies of Filipino soldiers

investigation by asking, "Did my sticking the heads of these treacherous, lying native office-holders into a pail of water, thereby washing away an impediment in their speech, constitute a greater crime than treason against the flag and the soldiers who defend it?"

This painful detail of the Fil-American War is definitely left out of our history textbooks. After reading Riley's account, will you agree with the statement of U.S. Judge Advocate General in the Philippines Groesbeck who said: "I believe the water cure, as practiced by the American Army in the Philippines, to be the most humane method of obtaining information from prisoners of war that is known to modern warfare."

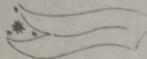
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Reconcentration is supposed to be a barbaric Spanish invention. The hamletting of Cubans during their fight for independence was condemned by the United States but practiced in Southern Tagalog during the Filipino-American War. Reconcentration is more popularly known in the Philippines as *zona*. We see a form of it in the movies. The *bida* (from the Spanish word *vida* or "life"), a Robin Hood type, takes refuge in a ghetto at night when pursued by the police or the military, many of whom are in plainclothes and wear headbands. Unable to find the fugitive, they rouse the whole neighborhood with gunfire and shouts of *zona!* Everyone is forced out of their homes and all adult males are separated and made to take off their shirts to reveal tattoos. As they crouch they are inspected by the *kontrabida* (from the Spanish root *contra* "against" and *vida* "life"), usually a corrupt official. *Zona* is designed to flush out the fugitive. Anyone running from a *zona* is considered fair game.

Some people who have survived the last war remember being brought out of their homes for a similar *zona* when guerillas are suspected to be hiding in the area. A *kempeitai zona* is something modern Filipinos see only in the movies. Again, all the men are separated from the women and children and lined up for inspection. Most memorable in the Japanese period *zona* is the *kontrabida* with a *bayong* on his head who goes around the suspects and points out the guerillas to the Japanese *kempeitai*. If the succeeding scenes of torture or execution were not so tragic, the pot-bellied man with the *bayong* on his head would actually be funny.

The kind of *zona* we have not experienced nor even seen in movies is the type inflicted on Filipinos during the Filipino-American War. Nobody seems to have made a film about this mainly because the Americans can never be the *kontrabida* in the eyes of many Filipinos. The object of the operation is to flush out Aguinaldo's guerillas, but unlike the later *zona* that lasted but a few hours, the American version went on for months! We know this American type of *zona* under a new name these days—hamletting.

American documents in 1901 referred to hamlets and concentration camps in a less negative way—these were either "garrisons" or "zones"

of protection" or "zones of peace." From 1900 to 1901, the military situation seemed relatively quiet although the fight was not yet over. No American nor any Filipino (even if he was associated with the enemy) could venture out of a "garrisoned town" without an escort. The four-mile stretch from Batangas to Bauan, for example, may be short geographically, yet it was so dangerous that no American officer was allowed to make the trip alone and unarmed.

Aside from soldiers and enemy sympathizers, supplies were also subjected to attacks. Americans were in constant fear of ambush by the Filipinos that the enemy generals Bell and Chaffee declared the situation "without a parallel in the history of any country long occupied by an invading and conquering army." To be secure in January 1901 in Cavite, Mindoro, Laguna, Batangas, and Tayabas, the Americans required 7,622 American troops and an additional 680 native troops in the area.

Unfortunately, the Americans could not tell Filipino guerillas from ordinary civilians. Besides, the guerillas under Miguel Malvar counted on the support of the civilian population. General James Bell got so fed up with this state of affairs that he decided to take drastic measures. First, he claimed that most Filipinos were being fleeced by the guerillas through forced contributions. Second, he proposed to cut off Malvar's supplies of food and arms by destroying what he could in the field and moving the people into hamlets.



Enemy soldiers with Filipino Prisoners of War

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Batangueños were given until Christmas day of 1901 to move into "zones of peace." Anyone inside was "protected" from the guerillas while those who remained outside after the deadline were to be considered guerillas. On December 10, 1901, the ports of Batangas and Laguna were closed to further curtail Malvar's food supply. As a result of all this, there was a shortage of food in Batangas and Laguna.

Considering that around 300,000 people were in these zones, one begins to doubt the American claim that no one died of starvation within these districts. If the people did not die of starvation, surely they fell prey to disease in their weakened state—given the serious sanitation problem in these zones. Biased military historian J.R.M. Taylor says there was "no reason to believe that anyone suffered serious hunger." Four thousand troops were kept in the field by Bell burning Filipino camps and supplies.

Some eight to ten thousand Filipinos were arrested and made to swear an oath of allegiance. No one could enter or leave the zone; food houses, livestock, and everything else outside was destroyed such that after the zoning there was nothing to return to:

The policy of concentrating the people in protected zones and destroying the food which was used for the maintenance of guerilla bands was not new. There had been precedents even in the United States...The American commanders in the Philippines had adopted no new method of procedure in dealing with war traitors; they had, however, effectively employed an old one.

Malvar, Sakay, and many Filipino patriots have been branded as bandits and *ladrones* and they have never lived that down. Filipino historians who write about American atrocities and hamletting are branded as communists and liars even if they narrate truth from American sources. The centennial gives us an occasion to look squarely into our past and learn from it.

Reynaldo Clemeña Ileto is probably the most brilliant Filipino historian of his generation; unfortunately, he has spent the best years of his life in Australia. Too bad he has not compiled the occasional essays he has presented at international academic conferences or published in obscure academic journals in the past two decades as these would have given fresh insights and perspectives to the Philippine centennial.

In 1989 his essay "Cholera and the Origins of the American Sanitary Order in the Philippines" appeared in *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies* forming part of the series *Studies in Imperialism* published by the Manchester University Press. The blurb on the book's cover reads:

"Medicine," declared a French imperialist, "is the sole excuse for colonialism." If colonial rule had its harsh and negative side, the work of the doctor ennobled and justified it. Historians, even nationalist writers, have echoed this view. The white man's medicine at least was always welcome. But was it as rational and humanitarian as it is commonly supposed, one of imperialism's 'undeniable benefits'? Might it not in fact have been another weapon in the armoury of alien rule?

With this framework Ileto weaves his story establishing the blurred distinction between "sanitation" and the military "pacification" of the Philippines in the early years of American colonial rule. Ileto looks behind the altruistic motives connected with the imposition of American health standards on the Filipinos. Ileto cites one of U.S. General Bell's circulars in 1901 dealing with the "pacification" of the Philippines and points out that Bell actually uses sanitary terms in a military way. Terms used in fighting the cholera epidemic of 1902-1904 take on a different meaning when placed in the context of the Filipino-American War:

I expect to first clean out the Looboo Peninsula. I shall then move command to the vicinity of Lake Taal and sweep the country westward to the ocean and south of Cavite, returning toward Lipa. I shall scour and clean up the Lipa mountains. Swinging northward, the country...will be scoured...Swinging back to the right the same treatment will be given all the country...[Ileto's italics]

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Ambeth R. Ocampo

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The war against the disease and the Filipinos dovetail. In 1902 a Hongkong vessel brought cholera to Manila, which quickly spread to neighboring towns, barrios, and provinces. Despite Aguinaldo's capture in 1901, there were still pockets of resistance around the Philippines led by revolutionary generals still in the field.

Cholera had taken an estimated 109,461 lives—4,386 of these in Manila alone. One of the initial measures to counteract the disease was the burning of the Farola district in the mouth of the Pasig river on orders of Dean Worcester. Houses were burned and infected persons were detained in quarantine camps. What appears to be a harmless sanitary measure in Manila takes on a military face when applied to areas resisting American rule.

Hamletting, or reconcentration or *zona* was very much in use in Batangas during the Filipino-American War. Miguel Malvar was active in the area where Filipinos could not tell the difference between the war against the guerillas or the war against cholera. Batangueños were forced into concentration camps that were known as "zones of protection" or "zones of peace." Houses and fields that could be used to support Malvar were burned as "unsanitary native dwellings."

Infected persons were forcibly taken from their homes and families and detained in quarantine camps. Filipinos who were not infected by



Results of the pacification of the Philippines—dead Filipinos in their trenches
after an engagement with the enemy

cholera in 1902 could not understand why they were not allowed to be with their cholera-stricken relatives. *Herbolarios* and other local healers were declared "quacks," and Filipinos were not allowed to consult them. Traditional herbal medicine which is now making a comeback in the late 20th century was then still considered primitive or superstitious as compared to "modern" Western medicine. For many Filipinos in these "zones of peace," the war against cholera was synonymous to "pacification" of the Philippines.

Because people could not return to work in their fields, quarantine camps contributed to the famine occasioned by the Filipino-American War. Suspecting that the guerillas were being supplied by the Filipinos, fields were often torched to starve out Malvar and his men. Social life was disrupted since cholera victims were not given the usual wake and funeral procession. Only two adult members of the family were allowed to accompany their dead to the cemetery.

Burial in the ground was discouraged for fear of infecting the water tables. Only persons buried in hermetically sealed metallic coffins were allowed. Again the poor suffered: many had to bury their dead secretly in their backyards; some threw their dead in rivers to escape the cremation required by the American sanitary officials regardless of the Filipinos' Roman Catholic beliefs.

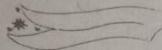
Americans imposed their "superior" medical technology on these "poor, uneducated, superstitious natives." By 1904 typhoons and the rains have washed the rivers of the already expended cholera germs, people have gained immunity, and Philippine history has recorded how American sanitation and medicine had triumphed against cholera.

Ileto asks whether the war against cholera was separated and distinct from the "pacification" of the Philippines. Was "sanitation" a way to harass sympathetic Filipinos and force the surrender of Malvar and other Filipino generals? In the rewriting of history, Ileto points out much for reflection.

Aguinaldo: A promise unfulfilled

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Drawing from opinions aired during the 1993 discussion on heroes, NHI Director Serafin D. Quiason wrote then Education Secretary Armand Fabella to reaffirm the place of Rizal in the pantheon of heroes. This was done in response to the general suspicion that the president or congress, given guidelines for the naming of heroes, was going to proclaim heroes by legislation or decree to replace Rizal. Thus, with Rizal's preeminent place secured, Quiason concluded by stating that:

A hero in history is that of a powerful character whose talent and inclination happen to coincide with the society's most pressing needs of the moment. Dependent upon circumstances and upon strength of his own will, he may either modify the course of history or himself be altered by it.

Heroes differ from ordinary mortals in their natural endowment or in terms of their traits. They possess the high order of power—one of leadership—or they may be individuals of extraordinary talents. One of the commonplaces of our day makes such a distinction between the virtue of doing and the virtue of being. What is the test of greatness then, what a man achieves or what he is?

Unfortunately, the Quiason summary leaves nothing settled, one way or the other. Can this criteria be used for Emilio Aguinaldo? It is ironic that the central figure in the centennial celebration is also the center of historical debate. Was he a hero or a heel? While most people aspire and wish for a long life, longevity in Aguinaldo's case was both a blessing and a curse. There is an ancient Chinese curse that applies to Aguinaldo and goes, "May you live in interesting times."

By living long and well, Aguinaldo managed to outlive all his friends as well as his enemies. He saw the Philippines develop from the early days of the Katipunan, through the Philippine revolution, the Filipino-American War, the American military and civil occupation of the Philippines, the Commonwealth of the Philippines, the Japanese Occupation, and the recognition of Philippine Independence on July 4, 1946—an independence he proclaimed much earlier on June

12. 1898. During this long and eventful life, Aguinaldo committed many blunders, mostly political, that gave a checkered texture to an otherwise glorious career. The Philippine centennial of 1998 gives Filipinos an opportunity to see Aguinaldo in his proper context and at his zenith.

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Aguinaldo back in Manila after his capture by the enemy, 1901