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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative  
2022 Volume II: American Global Power from Empire to Superpower

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## **Creating Filipino Nationality: Race and Hierarchy in the Context of Empire (1886-1916)**

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### **Introduction**

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This High School World History unit is based on the Yale National Initiative seminar: U.S. Global Power from Empire to Superpower 2022. The unit will focus on the Philippines as a case study for the manner in which the United States functioned as an Empire in the early 20th century.

The unit provides an expanded understanding of the ways European Imperial powers operated in Africa and Asia through the example of the U.S. in the Philippine Islands. The goal is for students to expand their critical thinking skills and give them practice “reading against the grain” of sources that do not always include the Filipino perspective. They will make comparisons to other empires across time, space, and place. And they will grapple with the concept of identity-making, the creation of imagined communities, and growing nationalist movements in the early 20th century.

This unit fills a gap in the narrative of World History classes between units on Colonialism in Africa and the start of the World Wars. It presents the history of the Philippines and U.S. imperialism as a case study in the context of European imperialism. The Filipino experience is both an example and counterexample of the common imperial assumptions of missionaries, Progressive politicians, nationalists, and the racialized ideas of pseudoscience popular at the turn of the twentieth century. Students will compare the Filipino perspective to the experience of other colonized peoples outlined earlier in the course through the creation of their own “newspaper” accounts of the events in question.

Modifying the existing narrative of World History as presented in our textbook is always a challenge. Including the subaltern, colonized, and otherwise ignored voices requires additional work for everyone. However, including these perspectives makes our understanding of the past more complete. Through my readings for this project I have come to appreciate how much we have the power to reshape our students’ understanding of the past by changing the information that they have access to.

Historian Noelani Arista works with the history of Hawai'i and the U.S., but her thoughts apply to the Philippines as well. In her study of U.S. mainland missionaries to the islands of Hawai'i she emphasizes “understanding the sociopolitical and historical antecedents” to the settlement of U.S. and other outsiders can “empower a more finely calibrated understanding of Hawai'ian actions and choices.”<sup>1</sup> Our unit here shows that

this applies to Filipino actions and choices as well.

In adapting Arista’s approach, this unit allows students to make comparisons between U.S. and Filipino voices, reasoning, and actions to come to a more complete understanding of the Filipino experience in the twentieth century.

This unit is composed of several “evidence gathering” classes where there is instruction in four different phases of Philippine history. Lecture and discussion are followed by document analysis activities, which enables students to grapple with primary source documents directly. The last day of the unit is a time for students to synthesize their learning and combine their knowledge into imagined first-hand newspaper accounts of the historical events as if they were there.

Evidence for historical study is often sourced from the voices of the “victors” or the dominant group. Hearing the voices of non-elite Filipinos through the filter of the U.S. American sources is difficult. In attempting to build a coherent understanding of the events we will study, it is worth considering the example of American Indians. The approach the U.S. government used in their “negotiations” with American Indians was similar to the approach they used to dominate the Philippines. By comparing what we know about events on the mainland to the evidence we have about events in the Philippine Islands, we can properly account for the perspective of non-elite Filipinos. As Jeffrey Ostler says, “although treaties [with Amerindians] were ‘negotiated,’ it was not an equal plane. To gain consent, U.S. officials employed a range of tactics including issuing ultimatums, threatening war, and offering bribes.”<sup>2</sup> The U.S. government felt responsible for the Filipino people, and wanted to control the Philippine islands, but continued their approach of bribing elites, and bullying the population into compliance. The manner and mode of interaction was not altogether different from treatment of Amerindians.<sup>3</sup>

To access the non-elite perspective, we can use the same strategy historians use to access the perspective of Amerindians. As Jeffrey Ostler points out, “although treaties [with Amerindians] were ‘negotiated,’ it was not an equal plane. To gain consent, U.S. officials employed a range of tactics including issuing ultimatums, threatening war, and offering bribes.”<sup>2</sup> U.S. nationals “negotiated” in a similar way when interacting with Filipinos at the turn of the century. The U.S. government felt responsible for the Filipino people and wanted to control the Philippine islands, but continued their approach of bribing elites and bullying the population into compliance. The manner and mode of interaction was not altogether different from treatment of Amerindians.<sup>3</sup> This is why this unit specifically includes Filipino sources wherever possible, and asks students to carefully read other sources “against the grain”.

## Rationale

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Many students at my school are of Filipino background, children of immigrants, and/or recent immigrants themselves. History classes at our school site do not teach the history of the Philippine Islands in either of the required history courses: U.S. History and World History. This is especially unfair when most non-Filipino students (and adults) are unaware that the U.S. ever claimed the islands as part of our nation. Rather than teaching twentieth century colonialism as if it were something that happened somewhere else, this unit foregrounds the Philippines as part of the U.S. and the world.

Our understanding of the past is shaped by the way we tell it. By including Filipino perspectives in the narrative of World History, my hope is to empower my Filipino students to see their ancestors as historical actors, and more broadly, to empower all of my students (especially my students of color) to see themselves in history. Like the Hawai’ian proverb “I da wā ma mua, ha wā ma hope” which means “the past is made possible by the future,”<sup>4</sup> my students can become agents of historical action in giving voice to Filipinos in history.

Filipino immigrants have made a tremendous impact on the culture of the city I live in. My students are endlessly proud of the local roots of the United Farm Workers, for example. But many of these same students are unaware of Filipino contributions to that organization. While this unit ends before the First World War, my hope is that students will use the skills from this unit to hear Filipino voices in their future study of history.

## Teaching Strategies

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This unit invites students to imagine the diverse perspectives of people living through the events we study in history. To that end, the assessment at the end of the unit is not an exam or essay. Instead, after examining primary sources spanning thirty years of Filipino history, students will synthesize what they learned by putting themselves in the place of different witnesses, imagining what their experience would be like, and reporting on this experience in the form of newspaper articles. Students will imagine what it would be like to live through momentous events and catastrophic change in the lives of the Filipino people who experienced multiple empires, multiple wars, and much hardship over the span of just one generation.

There are few Filipino-perspective sources available from the early days of the Spanish colony. More and more records from the Filipino perspective become available as time goes on. Unfortunately, these records largely center the perspectives of the elite, educated, and mostly male population of the islands—a narrow portion of the population as a whole. To tell a complete story, therefore, we must proactively seek out information about the experiences of the rest of the population—women, Indios, Chinese migrants, non Christian Igorots, Moros, and many other people. We must, in other words, do history.

In this unit, students will take on the role of historians in filling in these missing voices. This will require them to “read against the grain” of the dominant narrative in a written source, an approach historians use all the time. The organization “Learning for Justice” explains how students can participate as well: “students analyze the dominant reading of a text and engage in alternative or ‘resistant’ readings. Resistant readings scrutinize the beliefs and attitudes that typically go unexamined in a text, drawing attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions.”<sup>5</sup>

In our class we use the International Baccalaureate “O.P.V.L.” method to gain an understanding of the biases and unstated goals of a historical document. The initials O.P.V.L. stands for “Origin, Purpose, Value, Limitations.” With O.P.V.L., a student begins by reading a given document for its nominal content. But this is only the beginning of the process. They then go deeper by taking into account where the information came from, the purpose the creator had in making the document, and its value to us in understanding the events of the past. Students are encouraged to examine all potential limitations of the document such as the identity or biases of the author, the information that person had available to them at the time, and that person’s ability to understand or transmit the information reliably enough to be trusted without question. Whatever the

limitations and biases of the document, students will be equipped to frame it in the appropriate context, extract information about the creator of the document, and use their analysis of the document as legitimate historical evidence.

## Classroom Activities and Resources by day

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### Part One: Philippine National Identity

On day one of the unit my students will examine the ways in which race and nationality evolved as a concept in the Philippine Islands while they were a possession of the Spanish Empire. The complexities of race and nationality in the Philippines are nuanced. The source I used to better understand the intersectionality of Philippine identity is a book called *The Latinos of Asia* by Anthony Christian Ocampo. His approach is to examine present day Filipino identities and their place between Asia, Latin America, the Pacific Islands and the United States.<sup>6</sup>

To help students construct an understanding of the unique position of Filipino identity, we will examine several population groups in the 16-19th century context. Students can observe the nascent nationalist movement that came out of this new imagined community, through primary source images from two major sources. The Boxer Codex of 1590 and the *Tipos del País* of 1841. This way students can compare changes in material culture over time in its representation in a similar art form. We will avoid comparisons to photographs in this activity, because comparing photos to drawings may cause unnecessary cognitive stress, translating from one medium to another.

The Boxer Codex is a set of illustrations of “types” of people produced in the 1590s by an unknown Spanish author and Chinese Illustrator. These illustrations of Tagalog nobles, Visayan nobles, Sangley (Chinese) Migrants in the Philippines, and others give us a sense of the people living in the islands before Spanish culture and religion were layered on top of existing norms and habits. By contrast and comparison, the source entitled *Tipos del País* is an 1841 set of watercolors depicting different “types” of people from the islands. Those depicted include “Mestizos,” Sangleys,” “Mestizo Hispaniola,” and “Filipina Mestiza.” The goal of this image analysis is for students to grapple with the concept of racial categories, in the Spanish Empire and the intersections between race, nationality, and the way a person defined their own identity may have changed over the course of time.

### Rizal, Bonifacio, and the Ilustrados

We will then take those new identities and make connections between the visual culture to more political and literary evidence. One way to understand this period in history is to read the works of Jose Rizal noted author and member of the Ilustrado class. He was a social activist and some call him the father of the Philippine Revolution. His book *Noli Me Tángere* (1887) had a huge impact on the educated Filipinos and their perspective on their own experiences under Spanish control. He gave voice to the things they were feeling and the crisis of identity that they were undergoing. This novel is required reading for all students in the Philippines today. It continues to be an important part of the country’s sense of identity and seems important to include.

We will not be reading the novel; however, we will analyze 4-5 quotes from Rizal to try to get a sense of his

frustration with the power of the Catholic Friars, the Spanish government, and the domination of Peninsulares in the islands. Rizal's quotes also speak to the relative lack of power and opportunity for Filipinos, Mestizo, Indios and any other people deemed to be lower status by the ruling Peninsular elites.

The Spanish Empire was shrinking. Colonies in the Americas were becoming independent throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Spanish bureaucrats who had run the colonial governments in Latin America turned to the remaining colonies for continued employment, many moved to the Philippines. This new influx of government employees coincided with the end of the Galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco. Both changes led to cultural change in the Philippine islands. Changes in economics, immigration, and tax law meant that elite Filipino people started to see themselves as a single group.

We will complete this lesson with a look at the Katipunan—a more active, less intellectual answer to the frustrations Rizal wrote about. The Katipunan were led by Andres Bonifacio in the 1890s. They were a violent anti-colonial group. They declared nation-wide revolution and created several secret societies, and violent groups that fought for independence as a sort of insurgency against the Spanish Empire. One of their leaders was a man named Emilio Aguinaldo, who we will study more later in the unit.

At the end of part one of this unit, students will consider the impact three major changes to Filipino life. Firstly, increasing international contact. Secondly, elite Filipinos' cultural experiences studying abroad in Europe and America. And thirdly, changes to economic influences in the rural countryside as the Philippines were less connected to the Americas and more connected to trade in Asia via Chinese “Sanglay” mestizos in the islands. These three major changes to economics and perspective will contribute to a new sense of Filipino identity.

## **Part two: War against Spain 1898**

### **Origins in Cuba**

The Spanish American War is commonly included in the U.S. History curriculum for high school, although it is told from a very U.S. favored perspective. In reading about the war of 1898 from the perspective of Spain, the war had its beginnings a generation beforehand in Cuba and the Philippines. This portion of the unit does not contain much in the way of Filipino or Cuban voices, however it does include a comparison of perspectives between the U.S. and Spain on what to do.

In my research for this unit, I wanted to make connections between the Atlantic Revolutions of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (France, Haiti, and Latin America) and the independence movements of Cuba and the Philippines. The French Revolution and its aftermath sparked nationalist movements and fights for independence across Latin America. Places such as Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico had their own individual revolutions and reasons for fighting to separate themselves from the Spanish Empire.

In the case of Cuba, independence fighters had attempted rebellion twice before. In 1868-78 and 1879-1880 the Cuban freedom fighters had failed. However, in 1895 they had greater success. Cubans were so successful that Spanish colonial forces led by General Valeriano Weyler resorted to tactics of terror, execution of civilians and a policy of reconcentrado (concentration camps) for civilians who were suspected of supporting the rebels. The textbook explanation for what happened next is that the U.S. public, shocked at the atrocities committed on behalf of the Spanish government, demanded intervention in the name of human rights. The more complex reason for U.S. involvement has to do with race and hierarchy, and the Philippines.

Students will examine reasons for U.S. involvement in the war against Spain in an activity involving political cartoons. This activity compares political cartoons from the perspective of the U.S. and Spain published in 1896-97, prior to U.S. involvement in combat. Over half of my students are native Spanish speakers who will be able to grapple with the original text of the Spanish cartoons. The remainder will rely on translations of Spanish text to interpret the cartoons.

Using the O.P.V.L. method explained above, students will analyze the cartoons to better understand the perceptions and perspectives of the newspaper reading public in both countries. In one cartoon the U.S. public is depicted as reaching out towards the “poor” Cuban people to “save” them from Spain’s cruelty and murder. In another, a Spanish author depicts Uncle Sam as trying to grab the Cuban island before it can get its freedom.

### **Congressional Testimony about U.S. promises to Aguinaldo**

Even while the events were happening, U.S. Americans were concerned about the morality and legality of military actions in the Philippines. People at the time were trying to understand what happened, and whether it was the “right” thing to do. In January of 1902 a Committee on the Philippines convened to investigate the war in the Philippines and to decide what should be the fate of the islands. I will give students excerpts from the interview with Admiral Dewey to investigate for themselves. The full text of the interviews is available in the public records.<sup>7</sup>

Questions posed to Admiral Dewey that warrant special focus include: “When did you first hear from Aguinaldo and his friends?” “Could the Filipino forces under Aguinaldo have taken Manila without your assistance?” This lesson will encourage students to focus on Dewey’s answers and comments regarding the Filipinos and their fight for freedom. Students will analyze his perception and statements using the O.P.V.L. method (explained above).

At the end of Part Two of this unit, students should compile their notes and impressions from the Congressional testimony to create a newspaper article about the war against Spain. This article should be from the perspective of the Filipinos. It should include mention of the goals of the U.S. and how that appears from the outside.

### **Part Three: Filipino war against the U.S.A**

Historian Daniel Immerwahr poses a question in his book *How to Hide an Empire*. At the start of chapter 5 he says “having seized Spain’s empire, what should the United States do with it? Explain your answer with reference to economics, geostrategy, and the prevailing racial ideologies of the late nineteenth century.”<sup>8</sup> Part three of this unit focuses on this question. Students will grapple with the idea that historical events were not inevitable and that the choices individuals made changed the course of events.

President McKinley grappled with the decision of if he should “put the Philippines on the map of the United States” because he did not know what to do with the islands. He expressed doubt that the Filipinos could govern themselves, but he also did not want to take responsibility for control and protection of the islands. Students will examine the trilemma President McKinley faced in 1899. Students will debate and decide: if you were the president of the U.S.A in 1899, what would you do about the Philippines?

Students will consider three potential options from the perspective of the U.S. Option one, Respect the request of Filipino leaders like Aguinaldo, and grant them full independence. This might leave the Philippines

vulnerable to attack and annexation by other European and Asian powers. It also looks weak for the U.S. in the eyes of other imperial powers, which might be bad for our reputation globally. But it would respect the wishes of the vocal Filipino independence leaders. Option two would integrate the Philippines fully into the U.S. as a state or potential state. This would give the Filipinos full citizenship rights, and the ability to participate equally with those in the mainland. Like what eventually happened in Hawai'i and Alaska, it would be a gradual but eventual fully equal status for the people of the islands. The major drawback to this option would be that Filipinos are mostly non-white, and many Mainland Americans favor Jim Crow segregation. It is not clear how easy it would be for such a state to coexist with an overtly racist U.S.A. Additionally it is unclear whether this is what Filipinos themselves want. The third option is a kind of middle path/compromise. Giving the Philippines a status like the colonies in the other major world empires. This would be new and strange for the U.S., but it would be a way to include and exclude the Filipinos at the same time. It would also have the advantage of making the U.S. seem like a more fully "mature" nation in the eyes of other Imperial powers such as Britain and Germany.

Students will select the option they most favor and to defend that choice in discussion with their classmates. Because there was a real debate in 1899, there is no wrong answer for students to choose. The evidence they select to support their opinion is the most important part of this activity. After students have presented and recorded their choice, they will read and examine the perspectives of people at the time.

People in the US were opposed to annexation or colonization of the Philippines for a variety of reasons, those who were in favor were more unified. After the treaty of Paris signed possession of the Philippines over to the U.S.A, it was not immediately clear what to do with the islands. There were many in America who were opposed to taking on the Philippines as a sort of colony. There were some who were in favor of U.S. territorial imperialism. Part of the reason the pro-imperialists had their way was because Anti-Imperialists could not agree on a single set of reasons to be opposed.

The reasons to oppose U.S. imperial possession of the Philippines ranged from the far right to the far left. An explanation of these varied positions can be found in Jacobson's work *Barbarian Virtues*, where he explains how groups as diverse as labor unions, socialists, civil rights leaders, and racists opposed the takeover of the Philippines.<sup>9</sup> Labor union leaders like Samuel Gompers worried about "an inundation of Mongolians" migrating to the U.S. mainland and overwhelming white labor. Many blue-collar workers feared Filipinos as the next group of immigrants willing to work for exceptionally low wages. Socialists opposed U.S. possession of the Philippines from an economic perspective. Eugene Debs, a prominent socialist politician, opposed the Philippines as a colony because it was as if we were making a market for U.S. goods by force. John Mitchell, a prominent African American newspaper editor, believed the U.S. should not export its race prejudice across the Pacific. He saw U.S. racism as a problem unsolved in the continental U.S. and believed the U.S. would transfer that racism to overseas possessions. Similarly, but conversely racist South Carolina Senator "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman, was afraid any association with the Philippines would lead to an increase in immigration of people of color to the U.S. He opposed the immigration of "any more colored men into the body politic" out of white supremacist beliefs.

One interesting aspect of the debate within the U.S. over what to do with the Philippines is that it did not include Filipino opinions. That information was available at the time. Admiral Dewey had commissioned two naval officers to travel around Luzon to gather information about Filipino opinions. After two months of interviews, it was clear that 1. Aguinaldo had wide support, 2. Most Filipinos wanted full independence, and 3. Many Filipinos welcomed U.S. protection, but not full annexation. The results of this survey were transmitted to Washington but were archived without being read by anyone in government.<sup>10</sup> At the time, Filipino

people's opinions were ignored.

In order to remedy the erasure of Filipino perspectives from the US debate, the second half of this lesson focuses on the Filipino perspective on the U.S. decision to take over their nation. Filipino Revolutionaries who had been fighting Spain were quick to declare themselves independent and free as soon as the Spanish had been defeated. From the perspective of Filipino freedom fighters like Emilio Aguinaldo, the fight was over. They had won, and independence was theirs.

While the U.S. and Spain were hashing out who would continue to control what islands, Filipino people declared their own independence from any outside control. In Malolos, Bulacan, on January 23, 1899, the inauguration of Aguinaldo as the first President of the Philippine Republic took place. In his inaugural address Aguinaldo explained "We are no longer insurgents; we are no longer revolutionists; that is to say armed men desirous of destroying and annihilating the enemy. We are from now on Republicans; that is to say, men of law, able to fraternize with all other nations, with mutual respect and affection. There is nothing lacking, therefore, in order for us to be recognized and admitted as a free and independent nation."<sup>11</sup> Except that there was something lacking –the U.S.A did not recognize the Philippine Republic.

Aguinaldo was eager to highlight the irony of the U.S.A trying to take control of the Philippines as its own colony. His speech continued to make direct connection to the American's own independence struggle "in the same manner that God helped weak America in the last century, when she fought against powerful Albion (England), to regain her liberty and independence; He will also help us today in our identical goal, because the ways of Divine Justice are immutably the same in rectitude and wisdom." This overt comparison of the Philippines and its desire for independence with the U.S. and its own independence struggle calls out the apparent hypocrisy of the idea of American Imperialism. How could a nation that prides itself on freedom, deny freedom to another nation?

### **White Man's Burden**

McKinley decided to annex the Philippines in a combination of what Stanley Karnow calls "contingent necessity" --the idea that if the U.S. didn't take over the islands, some other imperialist power would--and a sense of duty to uplift the Filipino people otherwise known as "The White Man's Burden."<sup>12</sup>

The White Man's Burden is a phrase associated with the poem by Rudyard Kipling of the same name. In it he outlines in poetic form the supposed obligations members of the Anglo-Saxon race have to those who are racially, and (by implication) evolutionarily inferior people. Students will analyze the text of this poem and look for examples of white-supremacist ideology hidden behind pseudo-benevolence.

Historian Paul Kramer frames the Philippine War against the U.S.A as a war of "race-making." He explains that American Imperialists labeled themselves as "Anglo-Saxon" to rationalize their mission as civilizing and uplifting. At the same time, Americans labeled the Philippine Republic as a disunified set of warring "tribes" who were unable to unify into a single nation because of their fragmented nationalities. Kramer sums up the contradictions in American perspectives nicely, "The heart of the United States' emerging imperial racial formation was rich in contradictions: the people of the Philippines did not possess enough of what Gen. Arthur MacArthur would call 'ethnological homogeneity' to constitute a nation-state, but they did have enough to be made war upon as a whole."<sup>13</sup>

The Filipinos were not considered to be a single national group, so the US and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris without input from any Filipinos. This sparked a new outburst of nationalism and a renewed fight for



independence among Filipinos--against the U.S.A. The war for Philippine Independence (*Digmaang Pilipino–Amerikano*) was fought from February 4, 1899, to July 2, 1902. The U.S. Called it an “Insurrection.”

In order to study this second war, Students will compare the perspectives of soldiers fighting for the Philippine Republic, and soldiers fighting for the U.S.A. Those on the Filipino side were fighting for a brand-new national identity. The Republic was a new construction, but individual loyalties continued to lie in very local connections. Like the way the U.S. Continental Army under George Washington struggled to overcome state loyalties in favor of the nation as a whole, Filipino commanders held the loyalty of their troops based on intensely local and personal connections.

Client-patron relationships that had been crucial under Spanish colonial rule continued to dominate Filipino society. I have found the explanation offered by David Silbey to be illustrative in explaining the mindset and approach of individual Filipino soldiers. He explains that

“The Army of Liberation was, in essence, a collection of patrons along with their clients, the ordinary soldiers. Aguinaldo’s control over them was limited, but more importantly, there were certain distinct limitations to how much each patron could demand of each client. For many, death was not one of these demands. The result, in many instances of combat, was that the insurgents would fight fiercely for a certain amount of time, and then make individual retreats when they felt that they had done their duty by their patron.”

This obligation to an individual and not to a nation explains the very different approach to combat the Filipinos took, as compared to the Americans. For one thing Filipino troops were eager to retreat as soon as the Americans got within firing range of their entrenchments. This constant retreat worked well as a strategy to minimize deaths. But it did not work to obtain Filipino victories in battle.

The leaders of American troops on the other hand were veterans of the U.S. Civil War and the junior field officers were trained in the Indian wars on the western frontier. Stanley Karnow puts it this way: U.S. troops who arrived in the Philippines found it “to be a terrain alien to their experience; many, once there, were to act as if they were still pursuing Apaches”<sup>14</sup> C.J. Einolf agrees in his history of America in the Philippines. He explains further that: strategies such as “pursuit, starvation, and the destruction of civilian population formed the army’s basic strategy for forcing tribes to comply with the army’s commands...” Frontier warfare had trained the U.S. Army to be adaptable and to rely on their individual initiative and aggressiveness. In many ways because the Filipino enemies were non-white it may have been easy for experienced soldiers to transfer their experiences in the Indian wars to the fight in the Philippines.<sup>15</sup>

Racist attitudes transplanted from America created even more tensions. American troops constantly referred to Filipinos as the N-word, or later as “Gugus” after the scent of the Gugo tree-bark derived shampoo that was widely used in the Philippines.<sup>16</sup> One story that epitomizes the racial tension within in the U.S. military is the (possibly apocryphal) story from a member of the segregated African American, Twenty-fifth Infantry Unit. Upon arriving in the Philippines 31 July 1899, a white onlooker yelled “what are you coons doing here?” The African American soldiers replied: “We have come to take up the White Man’s Burden.”<sup>17</sup>

For a long time, the Filipino Army of Liberation attempted to fight a conventional war against the Americans. Emilio Aguinaldo and his fellow freedom fighters believed that humane treatment of prisoners, and battles fought in conventional formations would earn the respect of the Americans. When this proved to be unsuccessful, Filipinos adopted guerilla tactics. This switch in strategy confirmed the racial biases of some

Americans who believed guerilla warfare to be the strategy of “lower races” and it prompted U.S. troops to increase their savagery in response.

From this point on U.S. troops determined the war to be one of “racial exterminism” where “Filipino combatants and noncombatants were understood by U.S. troops to be legitimate targets of violence.”<sup>18</sup> Aguinaldo realized that the Filipinos could not possibly win in a conventional war against the U.S., and because the U.S. troops were unlikely to respect the Philippine army in any case, switched to a strategy of guerilla warfare. The new strategy was to avoid conventional battles with the better armed and better supplied Americans. Instead, the strategy was to harass and demoralize the Americans whenever possible.

### **Guerilla Tactics**

The Filipino people were not fully unified behind the fight either. Ordinary people of the islands largely wanted to be left alone to go back to their farms and peaceful lives. Illustrados and other economic elites began to wonder if a full revolution would remove some of their position of privilege.<sup>19</sup> These two groups presented an opportunity to the Americans to drive a wedge between them. At the same time, Aguinaldo realized that the best way to convince the Americans to leave would be to make the islands “ungovernable.” He revived the Katipunan, and eventually an even more extreme group called the Magdudukts or “Secret Avengers.” These groups sought out traitors to the revolution and punished them, in addition to fighting the Americans. It was at this same time that Aguinaldo gave instructions to abandon uniforms for soldiers to better blend in with civilians. This had the inevitable effect of causing the U.S. to target civilians. U.S. soldiers used the racist excuse that “all ‘gugus’ look alike.”<sup>20</sup>

Americans labeled this new period “Amigo Warfare” because by day the same Filipinos would act like friends, whereas by night they might ambush and kill. From 1899 to 1902 the war devolved into a series of hyperlocal conflicts.<sup>21</sup> Each skirmish and battle was relevant only to the people in the immediate area. As part of this many U.S. troops resorted to the use of torture to try to obtain intelligence and to sort the combatants from civilians. Individual groups of soldiers made decisions based on what they thought was needed for their local circumstances, not for the broader context of the Philippines as a whole. Many forms of torture were used. Beatings, threats, and the “water cure” were some of the ways Filipinos were forced to give up the identities of their collaborators, the location of hidden weapons and more.<sup>22</sup>

The “water cure” was like what is today known as “water boarding.” It is a torture method that simulates drowning. To sooth their conscience American troops either hired Filipino collaborators to administer the torture, or when they committed the violent acts, themselves blamed the brutality on the conditions created by the Filipinos themselves. Elihu Root, the U.S. Secretary of War claimed the use of the “water cure” was symptomatic of “the barbarous cruelty common among uncivilized races.” Implying the U.S. troops had no choice but to respond to the alleged brutality of Filipinos with equal or greater violence.<sup>23</sup>

### **Primary Source Evidence Analysis**

At this point in the lesson students will read from selections of Congressional Testimony on the use of torture in the Philippines, the record of a Court Martial of a soldier named Thomas, *A Life Magazine* cover from May 22, 1902 showing the Water Cure, and a *New York Times* article entitled “Brutality in the Philippines” about torture by U.S. troops against Filipino “insurgents.”

In pairs students will annotate and analyze the texts and record their reactions to them. This portion of the

lesson is to make it clear to students that the events of the war were apparent to people in the U.S. mainland contemporarily with their occurrence. One thing students always ask about tragic or violent events in history is “why did no one stop them?” Looking at a newspaper article and some public testimony from that time helps U.S. understand that people did know what was going on. Some did try to stop it, and in the case of torture, the public seemed to believe it to be wrong. Just because something happened does not mean most people approved of it. We can tell from these records of events, that many people felt the behavior described was beyond acceptable conduct even in a war against people of a different “race.”

Then we will analyze an account written by Carlos P. Romulo who was a small child during the war. “I Hated Those Blue-Eyed Foreign Devils” is his 1961 recounting the events of the war from his childhood. His family were members of the elite and continued to hold positions of power even after American control, however his father was a secret guerilla fighter.

“I remember, as distinctly as if I were that child again, lying in my bed at night and hearing the creak of the kitchen door and my mother and father whispering together. Then I knew my anonymous soldier-father had crept into his home again after days spent fighting the American soldiers in our hills...

I learned to fear for my father’s life and the presence of his enemies. I learned who they were. They were the ‘bad men,’ the American soldiers who were bivouacked in the Plaza, not four blocks away from our home. I hated those blue-eyed foreign devils, with a child’s helpless hatred.”

Students will then use these primary source documents and the information from the lesson above to construct a newspaper article as if they were living through some of the events. Students will pay special attention to the reasons behind the choices made to use guerrilla tactics, torture, and other styles of resistance or combat.

#### **Part Four: U.S. Occupation 1903**

In 1903 the St Louis International Exposition contained exhibits of Filipinos. The U.S. government funded this exhibition of a variety of Filipino people to show the islands as a peaceful and productive place for business investment. It would also show symbolic control of the islands at a time when the fighting was not quite actually over. <sup>24</sup>

The Exposition organizers promised Filipino business community that participation in the exposition was an economic opportunity to show their goods to a U.S. market.<sup>25</sup> Promises were made to Filipino craftspeople and scholars that the anthropological collection of artifacts and objects related to farming or art would be sent back from the exposition, to establish a museum in Manila. These promises largely fell through, and the objects exhibited in St Louis were never returned to the Philippines.<sup>26</sup>

The St Louis Exposition invited three very different groups to the U.S. to “perform” as part of the exhibits. Non-Christians, Hispanized tradespeople, and military scouts. The Philippine Archipelago was home to a wide variety of cultural and ethnic groups. Some who were more hispanized than others. Some who were Catholic, and others in the far north and south who maintained their traditional religions. The Igorot and Moro “tribes,” especially attracted the attention of the Americans for their alleged savagery. Exhibits of fake villages full of Igorot and Moro people were built in St Louis to show how “backwards” Filipinos were. At the same time, Hispanized Filipinos who had been Catholic for generations came to participate in the Exposition, where it was implied that the U.S. missionaries and teachers had “civilized” them. Filipino people who had been literate participants in global markets for generations were condescendingly praised for their achievements under the

U.S. colonial effort.<sup>27</sup>

Displays of Igorot people from the mountains of northern Luzon showed them as savage cannibals. Their contract with the exposition required them to perform a “dog eating ceremony” each day for visitors.<sup>28</sup> Igorot children also attended a model school in front of spectators as an advertisement for the U.S. civilizing mission.<sup>29</sup> These exhibits were among the most popular with white fair goers and left an indelible impression on them. Later white Americans would express surprise when meeting a Filipino who wore pants, assuming all Filipino people were savage, wild, and heathen.

Urban Catholic Filipinos were also brought to St Louis to show the arts and handicrafts of the islands. These people were presented to the U.S. mainland public as the result of U.S. presence in the islands. Filipinos in this setting were recruited by Fair organizer Gustavo Niederlein to show the islands as a place of productive workers who were available for exploitation. Filipinos were set up to demonstrate how to “make sinamay, tinampipi, piña, and jusi cloth, while others would demonstrate the making of ‘hats and mats and other fine braided ware...cordage, essential oils, cigars and cigarettes, pottery, wood carving, gold and silver smith work etc.’”<sup>30</sup>

The St Louis Exposition organizers purposely did not make it clear that Christian, literate Filipinos wearing European style clothing were already like this when the U.S. arrived. 300 years of Spanish colonialism had made them Catholic, attend school, and participate in commercial trade. Not three years of U.S. occupation.

A third group at the Exposition from the Philippines was the “scouts” or members of the U.S. military from the Philippines. In St. Louis, they were exotic looking security guards with excellent manners and training. These men were mostly experienced members of the constabulary in the Philippines prior to U.S. control. Filipino scouts charmed American audiences with their discipline, cleanliness and devotion to duty. The Fair information booklet erroneously explained the scouts thus: The “Igorot represents the wildest races of savages; the scouts stand for the results of American rule—extremes of the social order in the islands.” This was not true, but from the perspective of fair visitors it seemed to be so.<sup>31</sup>

The last group of Filipinos at the exposition were guests. This group were the “pensionados” who were college students studying abroad on the American mainland. These –mostly male– students visited the park as regular guests and behaved much as you would expect college students to act. They got into trouble though when they attracted the attention of white women. These young men with their stylish clothes, exotic accents, and exciting perspective made mainland white men jealous. Riots and fights broke out on multiple occasions. The Exposition might be international, but St Louis was still part of the Jim Crow era U.S.A.<sup>32</sup>

### **Primary source Analysis**

As a conclusion to this section of instruction students will examine publicity materials from the Fair. Images from “The Philippine Peoples,” *World’s Work*, August 1904 showing “the Filipino of Yesterday” as a “Negrito” wielding a bow and arrow, alongside a picture captioned “And of Today” showing a smartly uniformed military “scout”. Students will imagine what the men in the images were thinking, how they felt, and what this transformation of clothing and posture would have meant to them at the time. How they would feel if they were in a similar situation. Then they will analyze the information in a drawing from the *St Louis Dispatch*, July 3, 1904 that highlighted the assimilationist ability of Filipino Scouts to attract white American women. The headline reads “St. Louis Color Line Problem at the Fair” and has a sub-header that reads: “Little Brown Men are Popular.”<sup>33</sup>

Back in the islands, U.S. progressive politicians wanted to “civilize” and uplift the Filipino people through education. The White Man’s Burden seemed to be that the U.S. was obligated to “serve [their] captives’ need” by educating the “new-caught, sullen peoples” whether they wanted it or not. Progressives in the U.S. believed in the power of education, and the establishment of public –non parochial schools was a major part of this mission.

Originally the intent was instruction in native languages, but there were not enough teachers, so the decision was made to import teachers from the mainland and do all instruction in English. The long-term legacy of this is that Filipinos across all islands and locations learned a common language. Over 300 years of Spanish control, most people hadn’t learned to speak Spanish in the remote areas. The Friars who were in charge of remote areas thought it unwise. But after a generation of English language instruction, most places in the Philippines were at least partially English speaking.

### **Health/Nursing**

Healthcare was part of the Progressive mission alongside education. Health reforms, changing toilet habits, and eliminating troublesome diseases were part of the social building process of the U.S. colonial mission. Nursing as a profession was still new in 1900. A generation of pioneering women nurses in the U.S. since the Civil War had made the profession one of militant discipline and crisp anesthetic hospitality. Mainland nurses traveled to the Philippines to recruit women from elite families to adopt American style feminine roles. In order to educate Filipinos in U.S. ideas about hygiene, gender roles, and hierarchy, teaching hospitals were built in the Philippines.

Nursing in the U.S. was gendered and was undergoing an image shift. It was no longer associated with women at the end of their working life but was becoming professionalized. Nursing schools in the Philippines operated almost the same as schools in the mainland. Nursing students lived on the premises, were always chaperoned, and had to adhere to strict military discipline with regards to uniform, hairstyle, and behavior. One difference is that nursing in the Philippines never became a profession exclusive to women. Men became nurses in almost equal numbers to women. Mainlanders thought this was strange but ultimately allowed it because of the potentially unchaperoned jobs nurses would have to take in more remote areas. American moral sensibilities were willing to accept a break in gender roles because it was accepted that women nurses in remote areas would not be physically as safe as men nurses would be.

Mainland Americans claimed the education and nursing reforms were for the benefit of the Filipino people. These things also had a secondary benefit for mainlanders visiting the islands. The prevalence of English language made administration of the Philippines easier for U.S. officials and visitors. And the ability to use the same language everywhere throughout the islands facilitated connections across previously divided populations. The expansion of medical knowledge, vaccinations, and treatment for health concerns made the islands a healthier place for mainlanders to visit. With less risk of catching tropical disease, U.S. government officials could do their work with significantly less fear of their own well-being.<sup>34</sup>

The International Exposition, public school instruction in English, and the multitude of nursing education programs had their effect on Filipinos. These three things changed culture and lifestyle in the islands. Education, healthcare, and increased association with U.S. culture changed Filipino society. If the goal was to change life to be more like the mainland it was beginning to work.

In contrast though not all mainlanders wanted Filipino equality. Racist descriptions of “our little brown brothers” and the need for racial hierarchy among Jim Crow era segregationists led to tension.<sup>35</sup>

## Paradox of Uplift and Racism

If the US were to achieve its White Man's Burden to "civilize" the Filipinos, and the Filipinos were successfully lifted up to the "level" of Anglo civilization, it would conflict with Anglo-American racist ideas of hierarchy. On the other hand, if Filipinos were inherently inferior as racist Mainlanders insisted, then the task of educating them and improving their society would never be complete. This paradox became more and more apparent as an increasing number of Filipino students completed school in English, and nurses completed their training. Elite, educated, and politically literate Filipinos continued to argue for independence from the U.S. As time went on it became more difficult for the U.S. to claim Filipinos needed help to become "civilized".

By 1916, the U.S. had controlled the Philippines for over ten years. The Jones Act- otherwise known as the Philippine Autonomy Act of 1916- was passed to give Filipinos some control over their internal operation. Eventually this would pave the way for independence. But unfortunately, that would not come until after another bloody and violent war in the islands-World War Two.

Students will write their final newspaper article from the perspective of a nursing student, or a Pensionado college student. For many, who are immigrants or the children of immigrants, the motivations of the people of the past will not be very different from that which they know first-hand.

## Resources for teachers

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Brands, H. W. *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992. This is a good overview and detailed source for information across a wide range of time periods and from a variety of sources. His bibliography is a great place to find additional sources.

Choy, Catherine Ceniza. *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. This is a good source for information about nursing training programs and the connections between them and Filipino emigration. Mostly in the later 20th century.

Christian Ocampo, Anthony. *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016. This book is mostly about the 21st century Filipino identity in the USA, however it provides valuable insights into the way people think about identity and the historical sources of that identity as geographic, cultural, and political.

Einolf, C.J. *America in the Philippines 1899-1902*: Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014 This book is easy to read and focuses on the scandalous torture programs carried out under and sometimes by US military occupiers.

Graff, Henry F. *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection (Testimony of the Times: Selections From Congressional Hearings)* Little, Brown and Company, 1969 This book contains transcripts and introductions about each of the people interviewed after the Philippine American War.

Immerwahr, Daniel. *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States*. London, UK:

Vintage UK, 2020. This is a easily readable overview of the US Territorial Empire. Only a small portion focuses

on the Philippines, however the rest provides context for the US perspective.

Karnow, Stanley. *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines*. New York: Random House, 1989. This book mostly focuses on combat, and military strategy. It makes some comparisons to the Vietnam war in terms of the manner and outcomes of the wars.

Kramer, Paul A. *Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines*. Harder to read, but a good source because of its detailed analysis of complicated topics. Issues such as the paradox of uplift and civilization of a population thought to be irredeemable are analyzed in detail.

Silbey, David, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008) An easy to read and accessible narrative of the events of the war, and the US perspective on them.

## Resources for use with Students

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*Excerpts from the testimony of Admiral Dewey in front of a Congressional Committee investigating the Naval operations in Manila in 1898.* Excerpts from pp1-14 to be reproduced for student use from Graff, Henry F. *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection (Testimony of the Times: Selections From Congressional Hearings)* Little, Brown and Company, 1969

*Excerpts from the testimony of Robert P. Hughes, U.S. Army, commander of the First Military District of the Philippine Islands in 1899, and in 1900 of the Department of the Visayan Islands.* His testimony on the brutality of the war including the use of the Water Cure. Excerpts from pp64-72 to be reproduced for student use from Graff, Henry F. *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection (Testimony of the Times: Selections From Congressional Hearings)* Little, Brown and Company, 1969

*Images from the St Louis Exposition.* The three images I plan to use are available in the Public Domain for reproduction, photographs and advertisements. They can also be found in p 272 and 277 of Kramer, Paul A. *Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, & the Philippines*.

*Images from The Boxer Codex* circa 1590s by an unknown Spanish author and Chinese Illustrator. Focus on illustrations of Tagalog nobles, Visayan nobles, Sangley (Chinese) Migrants in the Philippines. Public Domain

*Images from Tipos del País.* 1841 set of watercolors depicting different “types” of people from the islands. Public Domain

Text of the poem *The White Man's Burden* by Rudyard Kipling: (first published in *The Times* (London) on 4 February 1899, and in *The New York Sun* on 5 February 1899.)

Take up the White Man's burden—

Send forth the best ye breed—

Go bind your sons to exile

To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain.  
To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
The savage wars of peace—  
Fill full the mouth of Famine  
And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper—  
The tale of common things.



The ports ye shall not enter,  
The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go make them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead!

Take up the White Man's burden—

And reap his old reward:

The blame of those ye better,

The hate of those ye guard—

The cry of hosts ye humour

(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—

"Why brought ye us from bondage,

Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—

Ye dare not stoop to less

Nor call too loud on Freedom

To cloak your weariness;

By all ye cry or whisper,

By all ye leave or do,

The silent, sullen peoples

Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—

Have done with childish days—

The lightly proffered laurel,

The easy, ungrudged praise.

Comes now, to search your manhood

Through all the thankless years,  
Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!<sup>11</sup>

## Appendix

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My school follows the International Baccalaureate guidelines for instruction in History. The focus of our classes includes “a strong focus on inquiry and investigation.” History students in the IB programs are encouraged to “develop their identities as individuals and as responsible members of local and global communities.” The goal of history classes in this program is to develop empathy and international-mindedness “including the idea that “other people, with their differences, can also be right” (IB mission statement). Additionally, California State Standard 10.4.3 for World History says: “Explain imperialism from the perspective of the colonizers and the colonized and the varied immediate and long-term responses by the people under colonial rule”.

By combining these two sets of academic standards and goals, this unit gives students the opportunity to synthesize their understanding of the Philippines as a colony of the U.S., and to understand the perspectives of the different groups of people involved without judging one or another group as “right” or “wrong” in its perspective.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai'i and the Early United States* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019). P92
- <sup>2</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson and Jay Sexton, “Ch 3 Settler Colonialism,” in *The Cambridge History of America and the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).p81.
- <sup>3</sup> Christopher J. Einolf, *America in the Philippines, 1899-1902 the First Torture Scandal* (New York, N.Y: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). p32
- <sup>4</sup> Lilikalā Kame'eiehiwa, *Native Land and Foreign Desires: Pehea Lā E Pono Ai?* (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1992, pp 22-23) *as quoted* in Noelani Arista, *The Kingdom and the Republic: Sovereign Hawai'i and the Early United States* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) p91.
- <sup>5</sup> “Reading against the Grain,” Learning for Justice, accessed August 5, 2022, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/teaching-strategies/close-and-critical-reading/reading-against-the-grain>.A project of the Southern Poverty Law Center ©1991-2022 accessed 17 July 2022
- <sup>6</sup> Anthony Christian Ocampo, *The Latinos of Asia: How Filipinos Break the Rules of Race* (Stanford: Stanford

University Press, 2016).

<sup>7</sup> See Library of Congress, or Proquest for the full text of the Congressional Testimony. Excerpts are published in Graff, Henry F. *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection* (Testimony of the Times: Selections From Congressional Hearings) Little, Brown and Company, 1969

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States* (London: Vintage, 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Frye Jacobson, "Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917," in *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2005). P229-230

<sup>10</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989). P129

<sup>11</sup> "Inaugural Address of President Aguinaldo, January 23, 1899: Govph," Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, January 23, 1899, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1899/01/23/inaugural-address-of-president-aguinaldo-january-23-1899/>. Accessed 23 July.

<sup>12</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989). P125

<sup>13</sup> Kramer, Paul A. The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines. p89-90.

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989). P118

<sup>15</sup> Christopher J. Einolf, *America in the Philippines, 1899-1902 the First Torture Scandal* (New York, N.Y: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). p30-32

<sup>16</sup> Karnow, *In Our Image* P 130

<sup>17</sup> David Silbey, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008). P107.

<sup>18</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government. P90

<sup>19</sup> Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). p323

<sup>20</sup> H. W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992). P53-56

<sup>21</sup> C.J. Einolf *America in the Philippines 1899-1902* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Einolf p41

<sup>23</sup> H. W. Brands, *Bound to Empire: The United States and the Philippines* (New York, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 56.

<sup>24</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government p237-238

<sup>25</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P241

<sup>26</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P244

<sup>27</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P254

<sup>28</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P266

<sup>29</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P273

<sup>30</sup> Niederlein “Outline of the Proposed Exhibit” p 24-25 as quoted in Kramer, Paul A. *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines.* p 241

<sup>31</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P262

<sup>32</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government P 158

<sup>33</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government p 272 and 277, Also available in the Public Domain for reproduction.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A Short History of the Greater United States* (London: Vintage, 2020). P102

<sup>35</sup> Kramer, Blood of Government p 269

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