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David J. Sibley, *A War of Frontier and Empire: The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007. Pp. xvi, 254. ISBN 978-0-8090-7187-6.

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David Sibley (Alvernia College) has written a compact, well-researched book on a minor war with large consequences for both the Philippines and the United States. It contains an Introduction (“The Urgency of the Asking” [xiii–xviii]), a body of six chapters plus a conclusion, a short annotated bibliography, footnotes, index, some interesting photos, and three maps—one of the Philippines, one of Emilio Aguinaldo’s wanderings as a fugitive before his capture by American forces, and a third of the U.S. Navy’s attack on Manila Bay. However, it sorely lacks a large map indicating the locations of the guerrilla war on Luzon and other islands.

Chapter One, “A War of Frontier and Empire” (3–29), provides the background, beginning with a brief introduction to the geography of the Philippines archipelago, the history of its discovery and colonization by Spain, and the conversion of most of its inhabitants to Roman Catholicism. Because Spain valued the Philippines mainly as an entrepôt for trade with China, where it exchanged silver from the Americas for Chinese luxury goods then shipped to Europe, the colonial government maintained only a light presence outside capital-city and main port Manila. The Catholic Church, however, played a significant role in most of the colony because, except for Mindanao and several small islands where Muslims predominated, most Filipinos had converted to Catholicism. As Spanish power decayed, revolutions broke out among several of its remaining colonies in the 1890s. In the Philippines, which lacked a sense of nationhood, the rebels were disunited, and by 1897 Emilio Aguinaldo, the defeated leader of a major rebel faction, was in exile in Hong Kong.

Chapter Two, “McKinley and American Imperialism” (30–66), shifts to the United States, where a post-Civil War era of neglecting the navy was ending due to public demand for a modern fleet commensurate with growing American power on the world stage. Advocates of a strong navy often cited Admiral Alfred Mahon’s *The Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660–1783*, published 1890, as did British and German military strategists. Congress appropriated funds to build a navy to match those of the great European powers. In the 1896 presidential elections, the anti-imperialist Democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, lost to the pro-expansion Republican, William McKinley.

When a revolution against Spain broke out in Cuba (1897), the revolutionaries and their cause enjoyed considerable American sympathy, and the blowing up of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor in February 1898 enflamed American public opinion and helped precipitate war with Spain. Fearing that Spain might re-deploy its Philippines naval squadron, stationed at Manila, to Cuba, Washington dispatched seven ships under Commodore George Dewey to prevent it. En route to the Philippines, Dewey took control of a Spanish naval base on the island of Guam whose commander did not even know Spain and the United States were at war. On 1 May 1898, Dewey’s flotilla sank all Spanish war vessels at Manila Harbor with no American losses. At this point, Aguinaldo returned to the Philippines, formed an informal alliance with Dewey, and proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of the Philippines under his presidency. Because Spain still controlled Manila city and nearby outposts, U.S. army units, consisting of volunteers from western states, began to arrive in anticipation of a struggle for control of the islands. In the end, there was no battle because the Spanish governor, with about fourteen thousand troops in Manila and very few anywhere else, chose to surrender with honor.

What would the United States do with the Philippines? Turning it over to its untried “ally” Aguinaldo seemed as unrealistic and ill-advised as restoring it to Spain. Could an independent Filipino government hold off Germany, which had already sent a large fleet to the region? What were the intentions of Great

Britain, France, and Russia? By the terms of the Treaty of Paris (December 1898), which formally ended the Spanish-American War, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States in return for \$20 million, arrangements that accorded with U.S. voter sentiments in the 1898 congressional elections.

The remaining four chapters—“At the Cannon’s Mouth” (67–104), “A New Army Arrives” (105–25), “One War Ends, Another Begins” (126–69), “Satisfactory and Encouraging” (170–206)—treat the ensuing conflict between the United States and Filipino forces called the Army of Liberation (AOL) with its predictable outcome. After six months of conventional warfare, the original U.S. volunteer units plus thirty newly arrived regiments (including several of black soldiers), all volunteers, had thoroughly defeated the AOL. Hampering the badly outclassed AOL were poor training, antiquated European guns, and inferior, locally manufactured ammunition and light artillery. Additionally, AOL troops labored in the context of old-fashioned patron-client relationships with their officers. The Filipino soldier “had a different cultural conception of what war meant and how far to take the fighting. Combined with difficulties of logistics and training, and coming up against a Western army unified by a potent nationalistic ideology, such cultural preconceptions created serious difficulties for the Army of Liberation” (77).

Despite superior training and weaponry, U.S. forces also faced formidable obstacles—dense jungles, a lack of roads, torrential rainy seasons, and diseases that claimed many more soldiers than did war wounds. Still, the casualty ratio between AOL and American troops was approximately ten to one. Compared with other wars, the numbers of troops deployed was low: for example, during a month of campaigning that ended on 31 March 1899 with the capture of Aguinaldo’s capital Malolos in the interior of Luzon Island, General Arthur MacArthur lost fifty-six men killed and 478 wounded. Emilio Aguinaldo was himself partly responsible for his forces’ defeat. He was a poor leader, who insisted on maintaining personal control, envied his able lieutenants, and may even have ordered a top commander assassinated. In contrast, the experienced and charismatic MacArthur and Charles King maintained high troop morale and re-enlistment rates.

By December 1899, the Philippines Republic essentially ceased to exist. AOL commanders who surrendered with their men were rewarded with appointment to responsible positions in the U.S. administration. General Elwell Otis, commander-in-chief of U.S. forces, quickly organized new local governments in pacified regions. Normal economic life resumed by early 1900. Many changes and reforms followed: an American-style legal system replaced complicated and archaic Spanish laws, tax reforms now favored the middle class and poor, new schools were built, and local property owners elected municipal governments. Otis and his successor MacArthur, by encouraging local leaders to form political parties to contest future elections, made allies of many Filipinos and thereby denied Aguinaldo potential supporters.

In desperate straits after a year on the run, Aguinaldo was captured in April 1901: “I had known for some time that our resistance was doomed to failure. Now it is over and I was alive” (179). Brought to Manila, he was treated as an honored guest rather than a prisoner. In return, he cooperated fully, telling his supporters that “The complete termination of hostilities and a lasting peace are not only desirable but absolutely essential to the welfare of the Philippines.... By acknowledging and accepting the sovereignty of the United States throughout the entire Archipelago, as I now do without any reservations whatsoever, I believe that I am serving thee, my beloved country” (179).

Those who ignored Aguinaldo and continued fighting were called “insurrectos” or guerrillas. Secretary of War Elihu Root ordered U.S. commanders to enforce General Order 100 (issued during the Civil War) in fighting the insurgency. This guaranteed fair treatment to regular enemy soldiers and civilians in occupied areas, but stipulated punishment for captured guerrillas and their supporters, who were to be treated as prisoners of war. At camps set up in disputed areas for civilians suspected of sympathizing and aiding the guerrillas, there were outbreaks of disease, including a cholera epidemic in 1902 that killed some 120,000–150,000 civilians, in part due to the unsanitary living conditions. There were also retaliations against local peoples suspected of aiding rebels in ambushing American soldiers.

Although reports of U.S. military excesses caused a backlash at home, most Americans favored President McKinley’s policy in the Philippines and he won a second term in 1900 by a larger majority than he

had had for his first term. His assassination in 1901 brought Vice President Theodore Roosevelt to the presidency. An enthusiastic supporter of U.S. expansion, Roosevelt continued McKinley's Philippines agenda. In July 1902, Congress passed a bill that ended military operations and granted amnesty to guerrillas who surrendered. Military rule ended and power was transferred to civilians under Governor (later President) William Taft, although some units remained to conduct mopping up operations. The last insurgents on Mindanao Island surrendered in 1913.

Sibley's Conclusion, "A Most Favored Race" (207-18), appraises the largely successful outcome of U.S. rule in the Philippines. It is difficult to imagine Aguinaldo, given his incompetence, succeeding as president of an independent Philippines or even to envision the country surviving at all in the international climate of 1900. But accommodation between U.S. authorities and Filipinos was smooth, and the latter gained "most favored race" status in American eyes. Reforms proceeded along many fronts, Filipinos increasingly participated in their government, and for many the war became "something of a lost history during most of the twentieth century" (210). The Filipinos' gratitude to the United States was definitively proved by their staunch resistance against the Japanese during World War II, continuing right up to their liberation by General Douglas MacArthur, son of the general who had earlier pacified the islands. Liberation from Japan was followed by full independence and good relations between the two countries.

In the end, it was a war of crossroads for all involved. For the Spanish, it was, along with the war in Cuba, the end of an empire long past its days of glory. For the Americans, it was the final war of a frontier ethos that had driven them across a continent and the first war of a global ethos that would send them over the oceans. For the Filipinos, it was a defeat that looked, in later decades, a lot like victory. A collection of islands, fractured by culture and society, became, largely because of a shared experience of revolution, war, and insurgency, a self-conceived nation (218).

*A War of Frontier and Empire* should be read by students of colonial and military history and American diplomatic history, since the war so plainly presaged the growth of U.S. influence in Asia and the Pacific. This fascinating book's clear organization and economic and smooth prose style make it accessible to a general readership as well.