**The Spanish-American and Philippine Wars**

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**Spanish-American War #1 (Slide 2)**

**US Strategy**

The US Strategy for the Spanish American war was primarily a naval one. The Navy wanted to concentrate its main fleets in the Caribbean to blockade the primary objective of Cuba (Puerto Rico and the Philippines were both secondary objectives) and destroy any Spanish Fleet sent to try to break this blockade. The Army’s responsibility would be to man coastal defenses and occupy Cuba once naval supremacy had been achieved and the Spanish garrisons, cut off from the mother land, were prepared to capitulate. Several factors helped to further shape this strategy:

* American Army readiness: Unlike the Navy, which was well prepared to defeat its poorly equipped/trained Spanish counterpart, the Army would need a great deal of time to gather appropriate manpower and equipment and train this greatly enlarged force. Any type of initial invasion that would require major combat was therefore not considered as an option. Thus, the Army’s inability to react quickly, did not seem to be a limiting factor in the US’s overall strategy. This, however, would later become a liability as the situation changed and the Navy was forced to rely on Army success at Santiago Harbor.
* Public opinion: The US coastal cities, uninformed of the inadequacies of the Spanish fleet, called for protection of the Atlantic Coast. The US Navy, however, knew that the Spanish Navy posed very little threat to the coast and that the best use of their fleet would have been a concentrated effort with all their battleships operating as one unit. But, as any military organization must often do, the Navy was forced to bow to political pressure and address the public’s need for a visible protection effort. Thus, instead of the most optimal, tactically sound course of action, the Navy, was forced to compromise: it had to divide the North Atlantic Squadron into two parts. The major portion of the fleet remained at Key West under Acting Rear Admiral Sampson to conduct a blockade concentrating on Havana. The smaller part, dubbed the “Flying Squadron” under Commodore Schley, was deployed to Norfolk to serve as a roving mobile fort for the rest of the Atlantic seaboard, up to the Delaware Capes—which were covered by a smaller grouping of older coastal defense vessels.

(Potter, 176-178, 180-185; Millett & Maslowski, 286-289)

**Spanish-American War #2 (Slide 2)**

**Spanish strategy in Cuba**

If American strategy was ham-strung by ill-informed and fearful public sentiment, Spanish strategy was hampered by poor and untimely diplomatic and political decision making. Additionally, the Spanish Navy was outclassed, outgunned, poorly maintained and forced to operate across long sea lines of communications with poor logistic support (i.e. foul-bottomed/slowed vessels, dubious coal supplies, poorly maintained boilers and engines).

Under these conditions, Cervera’s task to defend Spanish Caribbean holdings was unenviable and all but impossible. The best that Cervera could hope to do was to try to mask his intentions and give the American fleet the slip. This might derail American plans to come to the all-out military aid of the revolutionaries and buy the Spanish government time to find more amenable diplomatic solutions, before his fleet was inevitably caught and decisively engaged. For a time he managed to keep the American forces searching for him, but it was not long enough for the Spanish government to leverage it a better diplomatic advantage. Under the circumstances, Cervera did the best that he could, given his inferior force, the impossibility of his mission and the overwhelming odds against him.

(Potter, 401-403, 406-410.)

**Spanish-American War #3 (Slide 3)**

**The “joint” effort between the Army and the Navy and the pitfalls they experienced in Cuba**

The US Army and Navy efforts in Cuba can best be described as “ad-hoc” and not very joint at all. The campaign was plagued by “no common superior below the level of the President of the United States.” The lack of joint planning for the campaign also stemmed from a poor understanding by the President and senior military leadership of what was required to secure the island. Initially the campaign was conceived solely as a naval operation, on which once Spanish naval forces were defeated and marines secured the major port cities, it was believed that Spain would agree to American demands. These expectations of a one-service show filtered down to the operational commanders which resulted in poor coordination between the Army commander, Shafter and the Navy commander, Sampson.

At their one coordinating meeting, Shafter apparently understood that his objective was the batteries above Santiago harbor, but once ashore, his forces headed to the city of Santiago, five miles inland, without aggressively taking up the mission the Navy had requested of him- seizing the batteries overlooking the mouth of the harbor. As the campaign progressed, it became increasingly clear that Shafter and Sampson had very different views of the priority of objectives and how the campaign was to be conducted.

Army and Navy coordination was not much better for the deployment itself. The Navy had already purchased or leased all suitable vessels for Caribbean operations and left the Army scrambling to find remotely acceptable vessel for transport service. Those that they did find were in poor shape and required extensive modification for service as troop and equipment transports. On arrival, the Army was once again dependent on the Navy for lighter and off-loading support at landing sites at Siboney and Daiquiri, which was grudgingly and minimally provided. At another point, when the Army advance inland could have benefited from the reach of naval gunfire support on Spanish positions on Kettle Hill, Shafter did not request it.

When the Spanish Army commander, Toral, surrendered all his forces on July 17, Shafter’s actions were petty when he tried to keep all the glory for himself and left the Cuban revolutionaries who had helped him and the senior US naval officers of campaign out of the surrender negotiations and ceremonies.

As an example of a “joint” operation, the Cuban campaign left much room for improvement from the beginning to the very end. In many ways, the Americans prevailed not because of flawless inter-service cooperation, but because of the greater ineptitude and poorer coordination of their Spanish adversaries.

(Potter, 409; Millett & Maslowski, 294-296; Huston, 282-285.)

**Philippine War #1 (Slide 5)**

**US strategy for the occupation of the Philippines**

**Background:** Dewey’s quick victory over the Spanish in the Philippinesand the rapid hand over of the entire archipelago to the US at the peace table in December 1898 placed the Army in a situation that it had done little planning for. Suddenly the Army was faced with the mission of controlling and administering a vast and diversely challenging region whose people had been nursing numerous schemes for insurgency and independence for decades and saw no reason to set these aspirations aside for the latest colonial overseer. While the Army had no specific plans or written doctrines to guide this newest mission, it did have a fair amount of relevant experience in its institutional memory of how it handled hostile populations during the Civil War forty years prior and more recently, the Indians on the frontier.

Initially the Army pursued more benevolent policies, but by the mid-1900 it was clear that they were not having the desired results. With the upcoming US elections, the guerillas were becoming more emboldened (using the elections as an objective – attempting to sway the American public to elect the anti-imperialist candidate – Bryan) Thus, with the arrival of a new, more aggressive commander in the Philippines, MacArthur, the Army was now more willing to try new and harsher measures. What the Army discovered in the Philippines was that a mixture benevolent and punitive practices eventually yielded the desired results, though the sequencing and method of application was certainly dependant on the local cultural and circumstantial conditions.

**Benevolent Assimilation**

**(a.k.a. the “policy of attraction”)**

**Elements of benevolent assimilation:**

Inspired by “Progressive ideology” popular at the turn of the century i.e. improvement of mankind’s condition was possible by the application of good governance rooted in Protestant ethics. It also incorporated to some degree prevailing beliefs in Social Darwinism, racial stereotypes, and the “white man’s burden.”

Core elements required “social change”; education reform and programs seen as key to nation-building and disbanding “colonial oligarchies”

Heavy emphasis on improving quality of life for population through infrastructure development; road construction, telegraph lines, hospitals, schools, encouragement of local governance

**Why “attraction” did not work:**

Never overcame local elites suspicions of US intentions

Did not adequately make linkages between programs and the local elites nationalistic aspirations; therefore continues to be viewed suspiciously and subverted

Its main proponent (Otis) underestimated the depth of the rebellion and its leaders’ aspirations

Undermined by “good natured condescension” coupled with unhelpful racial attitudes; not all soldiers tasked with implementation were committed to the policy’s goals

Had no effective means to counter the guerrillas’ use of violence and terror to coerce non-support for US efforts

Essence of program went against deeply embedded and generations deep social and class structures

Many elements of the civilian population viewed benevolent policies as a sign of weakness

**Philippine War #2 (Slide 5)**

**Punitive Measures**

**(a.k.a. the “policy of chastisement”)**

**Elements of punitive measures:**

Attempted to target punitive measures to only those segments of the population supporting or participating in the insurgency.

Most measures taken were calculated to regain positive control of populations supporting or controlled by the insurgents and to deny logistical support to the insurgents and guerrillas.

Other measures were calculated to fracture guerrilla networks and shadow governments, demoralize guerrilla supporters and convince them their cause was hopeless

Supported the development of intelligence collection through the use of aggressively interrogated prisoners

Utilized extensive “sweeps or hikes,” patrols, flying or mobile columns into the country side to target guerrilla bases and support; utilized carefully cultivated Philippine scouts to cross linguistic and cultural barriers

Examples of punitive measures: targeted crops and property supporting the rebels for destruction “burning”; movement of problem populations to “zones of concentration” or “colonies” which were euphemisms for concentration camps or protected stockades where greater military control was possible or alternately, the population inside more easily defended.

**Summary:** Whether “attractive” or “punitive” measures were employed, it was above all most important that they were carefully applied to address specific local conditions. Misapplication of positive incentives could fuel the insurgency just as indiscriminate meting out of punishments could breed resentments and drive more supporters into the guerrilla camp. The most successful applications of these measures were carefully tailored to specific *missions*, the local *enemy* situation, the *terrain* and weather, *troops* and support available, *time* constraints and *civil* considerations—what today is know as the “METT-TC” tactical mission analysis tool. (See FM 6-0)

**Philippine War #3 (Slide 5)**

**Batangas and Samar: The Case For and the Cautionary Example of Punitive Measures**

**Background:** Batangas and Samar were the last two Philippine provinces to be brought under military through the use of punitive measures. The task of subduing the guerrillas under the command of Miguel Malivar in Batangas fell to BG Franklin Bell. The task of eliminating the opposition under Vincente Lukban on Sumar was assigned to BG Jacob Smith. Both men employed punitive measures to eliminate support for the guerrillas. Even though both campaigns ultimately achieved their objectives suppressing the opposition and capturing the leaders, Bell’s applications were better coordinated, nuanced, and more carefully applied. Smith’s campaign on the other hand got out of control and was marked by allegations of atrocities that resulted in his eventual court-martial.

**Batangas**

As the situation deteriorated in Batangas province, the only thing that Chaffee and Taft could agree upon was that the man to rescue the situation was BG Bell. Having held a wide variety of previous assignments in which he had performed masterfully, Bell was know for his tendency to err on the side of humanitarianism, having little tolerance for wanton cruelty, while being quite willing to employ “hard war” methods when and where appropriate. In keeping with his preference of measured assessments, Bell determined that local loyalty would from then on be tested by deeds, not words. Mere protestation of loyalty to the American program was not enough, now locals had to prove it through active meaningful and measurable support of anti-insurgency efforts. To put his ideas to effective practice, Bell reorganized and resourced his command to conduct useful investigations into guerrilla networks and to promptly act upon information so obtained. While his deprivation campaign in the interior of Batangas destroyed thousands of tons of foodstuffs, Bell remained concerned that it did not go too far and sought ways to impose checks on its devastating effects. Even so, he was not spared bad press when the devastation contributed to cholera and fever epidemics that killed thousands of Filipinos. When dealing with his adversary, Malvar, he was stern but fair in his dealings and accomplished his mission of getting Malvar to end his opposition. More than anything else, Bells success with “hard war” methods stemmed from his willingness to judiciously blend them with more “attractive” inducements when required.

**Samar**

The circumstances heading into the Samar campaign suggested that the *troops* assigned to the mission of bringing island province under control might not be up to the task, starting with the questionable background of their leader—BG Smith, a man not known for his self-control. In the aftermath of a massacre of over forty member of C Company, 9th US Infantry at Balangiga by the duplicitous townspeople, it was hard to find any troops not spoiling for punitive fight. Smith’s record was such that he was clearly not the man to keep a potentially uncontrolled situation in hand. Smith’s preference for participating low level operations at the expense of his command oversight duties led to several derelictions including his failure to emplace a clear and consistent pass system that his subordinates and the supporting Naval officers could effectively implement. While towns on Samar filled with hungry people, Smith’s inconstant pass policy made it impossible for local commander to use the passes to bring in food to support cooperating locals. Other arbitrary abuses of soldier and locals alike conducted by subordinate officers in Smith’s name resulted in several embarrassing court-martials including one for Smith himself and more seriously damaged the Army’s reputation for years to come.

**Summary:** By the end of the war, the Army had settled the debate as an institution as to the proper sequencing and linkage of punitive and attractive measures. Both clearly had their place in counter-guerrilla warfare. Based on the Army’s cumulative experience in the Philippines, the “stick” and positive control must be clearly established, but tempered with the reward of the benevolent “carrots”. Additionally, the amount and type of stick and carrot all depended on local conditions and abilities of the local commanders and troops. Unfortunately, the “seamier” punitive measures required to bring the war to a conclusion left the Army disenchanted with the whole notion of counter-guerilla warfare and the immediate post-war leadership declined to capture any of these unpleasant lessons in any formal doctrine or subject it official historical analysis.

(Birtle, 108-139; Linn, 219-220, 295-305, 306-312)