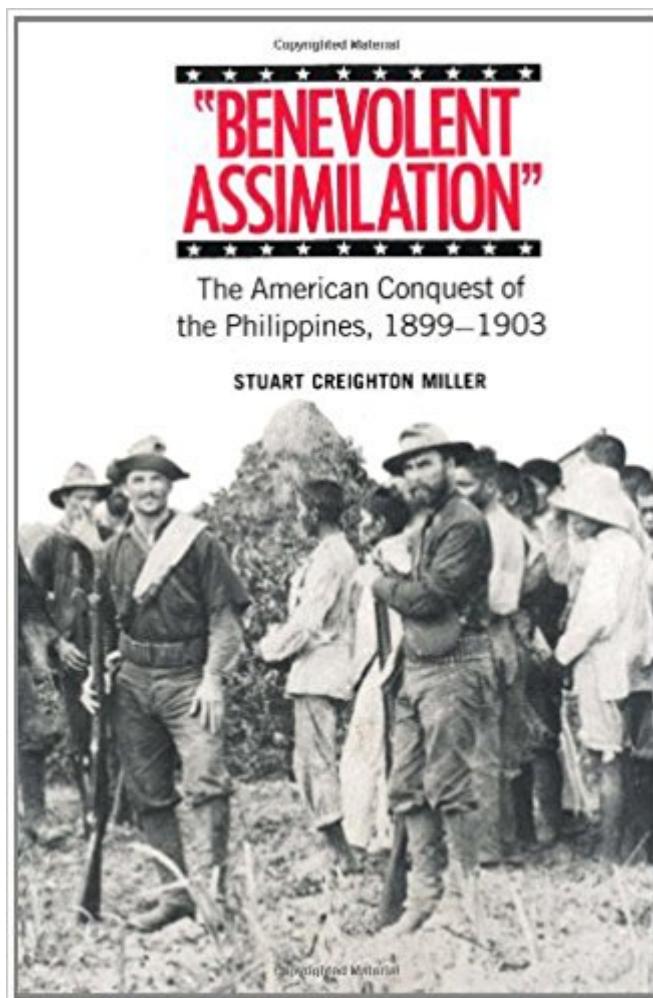


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Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest Of The Philippines, 1899-1903



Synopsis

American acquisition of the Philippines and Filipino resistance to it became a focal point for debate on American imperialism. In a lively narrative, Miller tells the story of the war and how it challenged America's sense of innocence. He examines the roles of key actors—the generals and presidents, the soldiers and senators—in America's colonial adventure. "The most thorough, balanced, and well-written study to date of America's imperial adventure in the western Pacific and the most persuasive analysis of the varied reactions of the American people to the military subjugation of the Filipinos. . . . [Told] with clarity, wit and a talent for the apt quotation."—Richard E. Welch, Jr., *The New York Times Book Review* "A triumph of research, synthesis and storytelling, this is the wisest book on its subject and, implicitly, a significant cultural critique of the United States at the turn of the century."—Peter Stanley, *Asia* "The author's balanced summary of the historiography of imperialism and the epilogue, which considers the Philippine/Vietnam analogy, are valuable features of the work. . . . Should remain the definitive account of these events."—Library Journal "Written with clarity and argued with passion from a wealth of primary sources."—Jack C. Lane, *The Journal of American History*

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Customer Reviews

As someone old enough to remember the Vietnam War, this book was intriguing as to its insights about imperialistic attitudes stretching back as far as 100 years. However, the author wrote very little about the Philippine side of the story; there aren't even any opinions quoted from Philippine historians. The research is too one-sided, although the narrative recounted isn't.

This book reviews the politics and media surrounding the actions by the US in the Philippines following the Spanish-American war. It gives great insight into the propaganda used to sell the war to the American public and to obfuscate the atrocities that American soldiers committed there. Miller paints a fascinating picture of egocentric American political and military commands steeped in duplicity and self-delusion; these patterns will be interesting and familiar to any student of the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. The material is sourced mainly from newspaper editorials, political speeches, congressional inquiries and the letters of politicians and high ranking military figures. This book will not tell you anything about what the war was like for the soldiers on the ground, American or Philippino. It won't tell you much about tactics. It won't teach you anything about Philippine culture of the time, either.

An excellent telling of a period that most Americans and Filipinos know little or nothing about. With America's new ownership of the Philippines, we were drawn into a second conflict once the Spanish were routed. The insurrectionist movement against America brought about a bloody and savage war that cost tens of thousands of lives. The third phase was the attempt to subdue the Moros, some of the toughest and most fearless warriors on the planet. The troops involved thought they would only be fighting Spanish regulars and then sent home. Rather, many spent years fighting in jungles and swamps against a clever and determined foe, and many were then shipped off to fight the Boxer's in China in 1900, only to be returned to battle the often fiendish inhabitants of places like Sibago Island, Jolo and Samar. A classic account and ranks with "Muddy Glory" and "Little Brown Brother" to name but a couple. There isn't much written about this conflict, but the information is out there. These lessons should have taught America about getting involved in smaller nations affairs.

I sent it to the Bacolod Public Library, Bacolod City, Negros. Philippines.

Good insight into the political dynamics of war on the home front as well as the military actions in the islands.

I cannot recommend this book enough to those who wish to understand the roots of American imperialism and what motivated it. The author presents an honest look at both sides of what was then a burning political question. He quotes not only from media sources but also letters and interviews of soldiers who fought on both sides, court documents, diaries, memoirs and legal

papers. He spares no uncomfortable fact and provides a vivid account of both the atrocities and the brutality of guerrilla warfare. He also delves into the arguments of congress, the press and the White House for how and why decisions were made (which were mostly due to the political winds of the prevailing election cycle). It's a great eye-opener for those that have never been confronted with the fact that the United States often acted with both greed and callousness. And yet the book is not a condemnation of the United States, rather a look back to what really transpired from 1899-1903 under Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt and America's ill-conceived attempt to enter what it thought was an elite club of nations that practiced third world colonialism.

While many scholars and "military analysts" (Linn) have written up this war, none have done a more exhaustive job than Miller in detailing the rapacious American conquest of the Philippines, at the high and middle policy making levels. Also richly detailed is the political conflict among Americans, between hate-spewing war-mongering politicians and media voices and opponents of the war. As Miller aptly points out, the war served as the very template of later wars in Vietnam, and, frighteningly, today's "war on terrorism". Highest possible recommendation for anyone wanting a better understanding of the world, and human conflict.

I am in agreement with the other reviewers that this is a very good history of the US/Philippine War that should be more broadly read. Parallels with Vietnam and the present oily Iraqi War are eerie: attacks on the patriotism of war critics to silence them, support of the wide spread use of various tortures against the adversary including "The Chinese Water Treatment" (aka "Chinese Water Torture"--from which "Waterboarding" is only a variation), the excusing of massacres of civilians by American soldiers, etc. There truly is nothing new under the sun when it comes to these dirty little 3rd world wars. I'm reminded of the poet Robinson Jeffers' poem "Blood Lakes." So many blood lakes and we always fall in--with apologies to Jeffers' spirit if I've essentially misquoted him. Perhaps we can overcome our national "Alzheimer's" on the issue of these 3rd world colonial/neo-colonial wars and stay out of them when the next opportunity presents itself. In the meantime, I would settle for our exit from the present Iraqi mess with all due and reasonable speed. America's moral force and image in the world is not improved by our involvement in such bloody horrors.

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