

Options in Brief

Option 1—Grasp an Empire

Just as the courage of our founding fathers opened the door to taming the North American continent, the heroism of our soldiers and sailors in Cuba and the Philippines has revealed a new horizon of expansion and possibility. This is our God-given mission. We must grasp the empire that our brave young men have won and fulfill our national destiny. We have been chosen by God for greatness. We must look overseas, particularly to the Far East, to continue advancing. With their safe harbors and strategic location, the Philippine islands are the gateway to all of Asia. Of course, our role in the Philippines must go well beyond economics. Now that we have rescued the Filipinos from Spanish misrule, we owe it to them to bring the benefits of American civilization to the islands. Let us seize our national destiny and move bravely forward.

Option 2—Walk Away from Empire

We know that ruling over another people without their consent is tyranny. Imperialism flies in the face of our core values of individual freedom and self-government. The imperialists are asking us to annex a far-flung collection of islands half a world away with nearly ten million people. We are being asked to step into the role of colonial master in the Philippines, just as the Spanish before us. Imperialism is a disease that, if permitted to enter our system, would eventually infect our entire society. The burden of administering an empire would swell the power and cost of our central government at the expense of individual liberty. Do we want to exchange the values of a democratic republic for those of a military dictatorship? We must grant the Philippines independence and walk away from the dangerous illusion of empire.

Option 3—Establish Control over Manila

A careful assessment of our national interests will surely lead us to the conclusion that the United States should acquire the harbor of Manila and establish a temporary protectorate there. Plunging headlong down the path of reckless imperialism would inevitably bring us into conflict with the imperial powers of Europe and Japan. We need to be steadfast in our determination to prevent a European domination of the Far East. Our economic success is dependent on establishing ports and bases from which to continue our overseas commercial expansion. We should also press for an “open door” to trade in Asia. Our values and our people are best suited to trade and industry, not to conquest and empire.