



# The Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago of over 7,000 islands in the western Pacific Ocean near Southeast Asia. Spanish conquistadors conquered the inhabited islands that became the Philippines in the mid-1500s using brutal tactics against the native population to gain control. The name “Philippines” comes from King Philip of Spain who ruled the country at the time of this conquest. The colony became profitable for Spain as a waypoint in the trade between Asia and Europe for luxuries such as spices, porcelain, and silk. Over time the colony also produced tobacco, sugar, and *abaca* (a plant that yields a fiber used in rope and some paper products) for export. Spain controlled the Philippines even as its empire weakened in the 1800s. Rebellions against Spanish authority such as the Cavite Mutiny (1872) were put down.

In 1887 and 1891, Filipino author and doctor, José Rizal, published *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not) and *El filibusterismo* (The filibusterism), novels that criticized the Spanish government’s policies in the Philippines. These books helped awaken a new sense of national identity for people in the Philippines. A secret anti-colonial group known as the *Katipunan* organized a plan for revolution in the 1890s and in late August 1896 the Philippine Revolution began in the capital city of Manila. By August 30, the revolt had spread to eight provinces on the island of Luzon and the Spanish governor, Ramón Blanco, declared a state of war.

By the time the U.S.S. *Maine* exploded in Havana, the rebels and Spanish forces were locked in a stalemate and it was unclear who would prevail. Note: the Philippines are much farther from the United States than Cuba. Any action taken by the United States would be greatly delayed.

## Opening Position:

- The Philippines must be an independent country free of foreign occupation.

## Questions to Consider:

- What kind of relationship should the Philippines pursue with the United States after the Philippines achieves independence?
- What kind of relationship should the Philippines pursue with Spain after the Philippines achieves independence?

## What can the Philippines negotiate with?

*Remember that you don’t have to offer these right away in a negotiation.*

- Create a trade agreement with the United States for “most favored nation” status. This would provide favorable terms on sugar, tobacco, and abaca exported to the United States in exchange for recognition of sovereignty.

- Lease port as a naval base for 50 years.
- Establish a coaling station for U.S. commercial ships.