Read AND Annotate:
The Annexation of the Philippines

In the spring and summer of 1898 the United States went to war with Spain. In the hills of Cuba and on the waters of the Philippines, the Americans were victorious. They won. The U.S. was able to get new territory from the Spanish after winning including Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The United States had suddenly become a major world power.

The most complicated territory for the U.S. was the Philippines. It is located across the Pacific Ocean, near China, about 7,000 miles from Washington DC. After the destruction of the Spanish fleet (boats) in Manila Bay, 11,000 American sailors and soldiers marched into the capital of Manila. It was not clear whether they had come to liberate (free) or occupy (control) the Filipino people.

Filipino insurgents (rebels) had been fighting for independence against the Spanish for several years. These Filipinos believed that the Americans were coming to liberate. Their general, Emilio Aguinaldo, expected to march into Manila hand-in-hand with the US troops. When the Americans would not allow this, Aguinaldo felt betrayed. He was hurt.

In October 1898 a conference was held in Paris to write a peace treaty (agreement). Because America had won the war with Spain, America had most of the power. The US had three choices regarding the Philippines - hand the islands back to Spain, give the Philippines its independence, or annex the Philippines under some kind of American government. The United States decided on the third option and chose to annex (control) the Philippines.

A treaty was signed on February 6, 1899. The decision to annex the Philippines was not popular with the insurgents (rebels) in Manila. Aguinaldo and his men now turned their guns on the Americans, starting a very bloody war. A war that led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos as well as over 4,000 Americans.

Back home, some Americans were equally unhappy. Anti-imperialists like Andrew Carnegie, ex-President Grover Cleveland, and author Mark Twain spoke out strongly against the decision. They feared taking the Philippines was a step towards creating an American empire. Others, led by President William McKinley and war hero Teddy Roosevelt, argued strongly that the US had no choice but to annex.

Use your main ideas to summarize what happened with the Philippines?

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