Questions to discuss:

1. How does this historical piece fit with the contemporary view expressed in the readings from the beginning of the week? Provide specific examples where you find commonalities or differences.

We have to deal with a territory ten thousand miles away, twelve hundred miles in extent, containing ten million people. A majority of the Senate think that people are under the American flag and lawfully subject to our authority. We are not at war with them or with anybody. The country is in a condition of profound peace as well as of unexampled prosperity. The world is in a profound peace, except in one quarter, in South Africa, where a handful of republicans are fighting for their independence, and have been doing better fighting than has been done on the face of the earth since Thermopylæ, or certainly since Bannockburn.

You are fighting for sovereignty. You are fighting for the principle of eternal dominion over that people, and that is the only question in issue in the conflict. We said in the case of Cuba that she had a right to be free and independent. We affirmed in the Teller resolution, I think without a negative voice, that we would not invade that right and would not meddle with her territory or anything that belonged to her. That declaration was a declaration of peace as well as of righteousness; and we made the treaty, so far as concerned Cuba, and conducted the war and have conducted ourselves ever since on that theory—that we had no right to interfere with her independence; that we had no right to her territory or to anything that was Cuba’s. So we only demanded in the treaty that Spain should hereafter let her alone. If you had done to Cuba as you have done to the Philippine Islands, who had exactly the same right, you would be at this moment, in Cuba, just where Spain was when she excited the indignation of the civilized world and we compelled her to let go. And if you had done in the Philippines as you did in Cuba, you would be to-day or would soon be in those islands as you are in Cuba.

But you made a totally different declaration about the Philippine Islands. You undertook in the treaty to acquire sovereignty over her for yourself, which that people denied. You declared not only in the treaty, but in many public utterances in this Chamber and elsewhere, that you had a right to buy sovereignty with money, or to treat it as the spoils of war or the booty of battle. The moment you made that declaration the Filipino people gave you notice that they treated it as a declaration of war. So your generals reported, and so Aguinaldo expressly declared. In stating this account of profit and loss I hardly know which to take up first, principles and honor, or material interests—I should have known very well which to have taken up first down to three years ago—what you call the sentimental, the ideal, the historical on the right side of the column; the cost or the profit in honor or shame and in character and in principle and moral influence, in true national glory; or the practical side, the cost in money and gain, in life and health, in wasted labor, in diminished national strength, or in prospects of trade and money getting.

What has been the practical statesmanship which comes from your ideals and your sentimentalities? You have wasted nearly six hundred millions of treasure. You have sacrificed nearly ten thousand American lives—the flower of our youth. You have devastated provinces. You have slain uncounted thousands of the people you desire to benefit. You have established reconcentration camps. Your generals are coming home from their harvest bringing sheaves with them, in the shape of other thousands of sick and wounded and insane to drag out miserable lives, wrecked in body and mind. You make the American flag in the eyes of a numerous people the emblem of sacrilege in Christian churches, and of the burning of human dwellings, and of the horror of the water torture. Your practical statesmanship which disdains to take George Washington and Abraham Lincoln or the soldiers of the Revolution or of the Civil War as models, has looked in some cases to Spain for your example. I believe—nay, I know—that in general our officers and soldiers are
humane. But in some cases they have carried on your warfare with a mixture of American ingenuity and Castilian cruelty.

Your practical statesmanship has succeeded in converting a people who three years ago were ready to kiss the hem of the garment of the American and to welcome him as a liberator, who thronged after your men when they landed on those islands with benediction and gratitude, into sullen and irreconcilable enemies, possessed of a hatred which centuries can not eradicate.
The practical statesmanship of the Declaration of Independence and the Golden Rule would have cost nothing but a few kind words. They would have bought for you the great title of liberator and benefactor, which your fathers won for your country in the South American Republics and in Japan, and which you have won in Cuba. They would have bought for you undying gratitude of a great and free people and the undying glory which belongs to the name of liberator. That people would have felt for you as Japan felt for you when she declared last summer that she owed everything to the United States of America.

What have your ideals cost you, and what have they bought for you?

1. For the Philippine Islands you have had to repeal the Declaration of Independence For Cuba you had to reaffirm it and give it new luster.

2. For the Philippine Islands you have had to convert the Monroe Doctrine into a doctrine of mere selfishness. For Cuba you have acted on it and vindicated it.

3. In Cuba you have got the eternal gratitude of a free people. In the Philippine Islands you have got the hatred and sullen submission of a subjugated people.

4. From Cuba you have brought home nothing but glory. From the Philippines you have brought home nothing of glory.

5. In Cuba no man thinks of counting the cost. The few soldiers who came home from Cuba wounded or sick carry about their wounds and their pale faces as if they were medals of honor. What soldier glories in a wound or an empty sleeve which he got in the Philippines?

6. The conflict in the Philippines has cost you six hundred million dollars, thousands of American soldiers—the flower of your youth—the health and sanity of thousands more, and hundreds of thousands of Filipinos slain.

Another price we have paid as the result of your practical statesmanship. We have sold out the right, the old American right, to speak out the sympathy which is in our hearts for people who are desolate and oppressed everywhere on the face of the earth.
This war, if you call it war, has gone on for three years. It will go on in some form for three hundred years, unless this policy be abandoned. You will undoubtedly have times of peace and quiet, or pretended submission. You will buy men with titles, or office, or salaries. You will intimidate cowards. You will get pretended and fawning submission. The land will smile and seem at peace. But the volcano will be there. The lava will break out again. You can never settle this thing until you settle it right.