



**James Kelly Morningstar, *War and Resistance in the Philippines 1942-1944*. Naval Institute Press, 2021.**

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In *War and Resistance in the Philippines 1942-1944*, James Kelly Morningstar analyzes multiple resistance movements during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines islands, and points out that local opposition to Japanese authorities influenced policy among Japanese and American elites. The author argues that Japanese leadership under the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere's guise implemented harsh measures directed towards the Philippine population to extract resources needed for the war effort. On the

other hand, before the Japanese occupation, the United States made promises of independence to the Philippines. Furthermore, during the Japanese occupation, the United States stated that it would send military help to restore order. According to Morningstar, these are the two main political factors that fuelled the resistance towards the Japanese regime in the Philippines.

Besides the conflict's political aspect, the author also examines military, cultural, and social aspects that defined the Philippines before and during the Japanese occupation. Morningstar argues that Philippines-United States relations and the United States' cultural influence made the Japanese Empire's occupation of the Philippines harder. In terms of military strategy, the author points out that American troops would not have been able to effectively defend the Philippines from Japanese attacks, because the Philippines lacked favourable geography as well enough number of troops. During the Japanese occupation, due to low numbers and lack of supplies, American troops had to adapt to guerrilla warfare to create opportune moments for a future American landing force. Therefore, the resistance within the Philippines did not consist of American soldiers only, but also native forces. Interestingly, the author examines the different goals each resistance group had, ranging from military objectives given by General Douglas MacArthur to American troops to political objectives espoused by left-leaning groups and various ethnic groups. Morningstar argues that all resistance groups in the Philippines were focused on fighting the Japanese administration due to Japanese economic mismanagement of the Philippines and the brutality inflicted on civilians.

The book is split into seven chapters; the first chapter presents an overview of Philippine society and the Japanese invasion of the Philippines within the Second World War context. The following chapter goes into the tactics and strategy employed by the American and Filipino troops on one side and the Japanese military on the other side. The rest of the chapters follow the exploits of various individuals affiliated with resistance groups, the difficulties they endured on a personal and collective level in their fight against the Japanese regime. These chapters also explore the conflict's political implications, such as the extent of American aid to resistance groups, the Japanese policy of resource extraction and its negative effect on the local population. The last chapter goes into detail about the American relief force and its relationship to resistance groups in driving out the Japanese forces from the Philippines. All the chapters in this book are divided into sub-chapters; the sub-chapters start with the first day of the Japanese invasion of the Philippines and end with MacArthur's return to the Philippines. The

author ascribes events to a geographical component, namely islands where Japanese forces faced armed resistance. The book is valuable for the amount of data it provides on the Philippine conflict. The author relies on dozens of primary book sources written by decision-making leaders and people who lived during the Japanese occupation in the Philippines. Moreover, the author uses many secondary sources as well to complement the lack of a Japanese perspective on the Philippine campaign.

The book is focused on the military events pertaining to this conflict before the Japanese fully occupied the islands, going into detail about where multiple battles took place, where military regiments, divisions and battalions fought and the results of those engagements. To illustrate this aspect, the author uses military maps with drawn attack routes and frontlines. Other maps include the guerrilla activities in multiple areas, which serve the purpose of showing the extent of guerrilla groups' activities. The maps themselves are further supplemented by explanations on how partisan activities developed.

The book has several issues in regards to its structure. The main problem is that it focuses on keeping a timeline instead of dedicating a single chapter or sub-chapter to a particular area or group. Given the multitude of actors within the Philippines, it is hard to follow a single resistance group and distinguish their actions among other armed groups. Furthermore, the author describes individual struggles and their attitude towards this conflict, even if the mentioned individuals did not play a leadership role in resistance groups. The book would have benefited from creating categories to label each group based for example on their tactics, organization, effectiveness, or if it followed Washington's directives. Notable individuals and their deeds could have been mentioned in a separate chapter. It is difficult to follow each resistance group and their factions, given that they are mentioned all over the place in different chapters. Additionally, the author quotes opinions soldiers and guerrillas had on the Japanese, and vice versa Japanese on the Philippine Islands and their residents. However, the author does not conduct policy analysis on Japanese treatment of the Philippines, and the book is limited to descriptive research.

On the content side, the book has few, if any, issues. The author could have explored in-depth the Japanese approach to pacification and the American approach to Philippine liberation within the Pacific theatre. Morningstar argue that resistance groups in the Philippines, for the most part, were effective against Japanese forces; however,

historically speaking, they failed to displace Japanese forces from strategic areas of American interest. The author argues that each resistance group had different objectives from each other; however, given the presence of American soldiers and advisors among many resistance groups, the common goal was to drive out the Japanese forces from areas. It is debatable to what extent the resistance faced by the Japanese was a decisive factor in weakening the overall Japanese war effort and smoothing the American landing in the Philippines.

Overall, the book is a welcome addition in understanding the actors involved in the Philippine campaign, attitudes among political elites, civilians and guerrillas towards Japanese authorities. The book is useful for historians and for social sciences students to understand how the war shaped Filipino national consciousness. It is a well-referenced book, and while the book's scope is large, it provides useful insights into events that might otherwise have been poorly documented due to war.

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