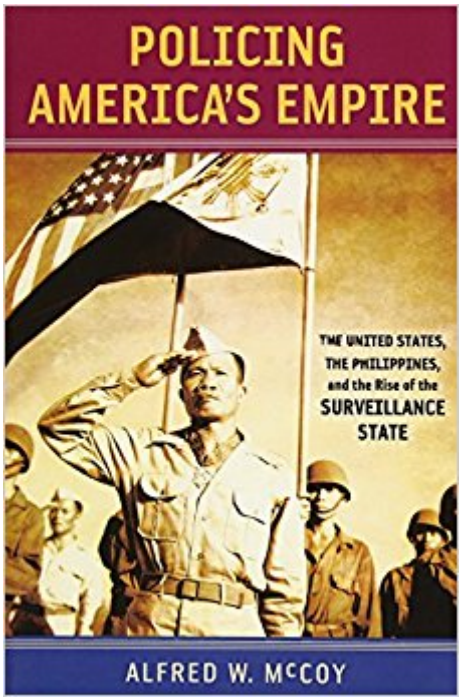
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Policing America's Empire: The United States, The Philippines, And The Rise Of The Surveillance State (New Perspectives In Se Asian Studies)



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Synopsis

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the U.S. Army swiftly occupied Manila and then plunged into a decade-long pacification campaign with striking parallels to todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s war in Iraq. Armed with cutting-edge technology from AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s first information revolution, the U.S. colonial regime created the most modern police and intelligence units anywhere under the American flag. In Policing AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Empire Alfred W. McCoy shows how this imperial panopticon slowly crushed the Filipino revolutionary movement with a lethal mix of firepower, surveillance, and incriminating information. Even after Washington freed its colony and won global power in 1945, it would intervene in the Philippines periodically for the next half-centuryÃ¢â ¬â •using the country as a laboratory for counterinsurgency and rearming local security forces for repression. In trying to create a democracy in the Philippines, the United States unleashed profoundly undemocratic forces that persist to the present day.Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â But security techniques bred in the tropical hothouse of colonial rule were not contained, McCoy shows, at this remote periphery of American power. Migrating homeward through both personnel and policies, these innovations helped shape a new federal security apparatus during World War I. Once established under the pressures of wartime mobilization, this distinctively American system of public-private surveillance persisted in various forms for the next fifty years, as an omnipresent, sub rosa matrix that honeycombed U.S. society with active informers, secretive civilian organizations, and government counterintelligence agencies. In each succeeding global crisis, this covert nexus expanded its domestic operations, producing new contraventions of civil libertiesÃ¢â ¬â •from the harassment of labor activists and ethnic communities during World War I, to the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, all the way to the secret blacklisting of suspected communists during the Cold War.Ã¢â ¬Å“With a breathtaking sweep of archival research, McCoy shows how repressive techniques developed in the colonial Philippines migrated back to the United States for use against people of color, aliens, and really any heterodox challenge to American power. This book proves Mark TwainÃ¢â ¬â„¢s adage that you cannot have an empire abroad and a republic at home.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Bruce Cumings, University of ChicagoÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“This book lays the Philippine body politic on the examination table to reveal the disease that lies withinÃ¢â ¬â •crime, clandestine policing, and political scandal. But McCoy also draws the line from Manila to Baghdad, arguing that the seeds of controversial counterinsurgency tactics used in Iraq were sown in the anti-guerrilla operations in the Philippines. His arguments are forceful.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Sheila S. Coronel, Columbia UniversityÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“Conclusively, McCoyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Policing AmericaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Empire is an impressive historical piece of research that appeals not only to

Southeast Asianists but also to those interested in examining the historical embedding and institutional ontogenesis of post-colonial statesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ police power apparatuses and their apparently inherent propensity to implement illiberal practices of surveillance and repression.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Salvador Santino F. Regilme, Jr., Journal of Current Southeast Asian AffairsÃ Â Ã¢â ¬Å“McCoyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s remarkable book . . . does justice both to its authorÃ¢â ¬â„¢s deep knowledge of Philippine history as well as to his rare expertise in unmasking the seamy undersides of state power.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •POLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology ReviewÃ Â Winner, George McT. Kahin Prize, Southeast Asian Council of the Association for Asian Studies

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“This remarkable study provides a meticulous analysis of the novel colonial system developed by the U.S. in the Philippines after the murderous conquest, with startling implications for the shape of the modern world.Ã Â As McCoy demonstrates, the U.S. occupation developed a major innovation in imperial practice, relying on the Ã¢â ¬Ëœinformation revolutionÃ¢â ¬â„¢ of the day to establish intense surveillance and control of the occupied population, along with violence when needed and privileges to obedient elites. This Ã¢â ¬Ëœprotracted social experiment in the use of police as an instrument of state powerÃ¢â ¬â„¢ left a devastating legacy for the Philippines, while also contributing substantially to the modes of suppression of independence and social change elsewhere, and returning home to lay the foundations for a national security and

surveillance state.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Noam Chomsky, MITÃ¢â ¬Å“A stunning, exemplary, and hair-raising fusion of colonial and metropolitan histories. McCoy shows how the Philippines served as a laboratory subject for experiments in policing, intelligence, surveillance, and Ã¢â ¬Ëœblack-operationsÃ¢â ¬â„¢ that were then repatriated to shape the American domestic surveillance state from World War I forward. This is history at its most powerful and most subversive of imperial self-hypnosis. The term magnum opus applies both to its ambition and its comprehensiveness.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •James C. Scott, Yale UniversityÃ Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬Å“In this stunning book, McCoy reveals how empire shapes the intertwined destinies of all involved in its creation. Written with deft strokes, this is an instant classic of historical writing.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Lloyd Gardner, Rutgers UniversityÃ¢â ¬Å“Alfred McCoy has written the most thorough account of America relations with the Philippines that the reader is likely to come across.Ã Â ItÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a history with meticulous detail, the product of an academic career thatÃ¢â ¬â„¢s concentrated on the torturous story of the connections between the US and Southeast Asia.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Peace ResearcherÃ¢â ¬Å“[S]hows how the dark underworld of crime, subversion, vice and drugs in the Philippines has been linked to the bright, public world of politics. The link? The police and security forces, particularly their shadowy side: spies, undercover agents, specialists in covert operations, assassins. The currency passed up and down the system? Information, particularly incriminating information, scandal, graft, murder.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •John J. Carroll, Philippine Daily InquirerÃ¢â ¬Å“McCoyÃ¢â ¬â„¢s monograph will be the starting point for any future historical study of control and dissent in the Philippines. Summing Up: Highly recommended.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •ChoiceÃ¢â ¬Å“An eye-opener of a book, this should be must reading for concerned Filipinos, not only to be able to understand their own police forcesÃ¢â ¬â •and criminal world, as well as their politiciansÃ¢â ¬â •better, but also to see deeper into the United States design and policies.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â • Ricardo Trota Jose, Philippine StudiesÃ¢â ¬Å“Provocative. . . . raise(s) important issues regarding the impact of empire, as home as well as abroad, a dialectic of ill effects wrought by an imperial system bottom lined by domination and coercion, force and violence.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Allen Ruff, Against the Current

Alfred W. McCoy is J.R.W. Smail Professor of History at the University of WisconsinÃ¢â ¬â œMadison. His books include The Politics of Heroin and A Question of Torture.

What a terrific book. McCoy manages to merge rigorous historical research, insightful analysis, comprehensive summaries and overviews, and good story-telling in this master study of the modern

Philippines.The book is focused on the critical position of policing in Philippines society, as conveyed in the title. In the first chapter, McCoy discusses and justifies a focus on policing: he discusses the often overlooked but still important matters of policing and scandal in any general society, why policing (and scandal) maintains an uncharacteristically central role in Filipino society, and how the Filipino history is also crucial for an understanding of US history - in summary: empire affects both the colony and the imperial country.When recounting a historical event, McCoy tells the story in an entertaining yet neutral manner. Perhaps, since truth is stranger than friction, he is aided by the sheer absurdity often inherent in scandals and instances of blackmailing, bribery, and general corruption; but nevertheless I found many parts of the book to be quite amusing. Another great aspect of this book if the "Conclusion" section at the end of each chapter: as this subsection title suggests, McCoy concludes each chapter by giving a rough summary of the history covered in that chapter, and he describes how and why these events connect to the larger themes mentioned above - policing, government legitimacy, and the consequences of imperial conquest.Again, McCoy does a particularly excellent job of making connections between specific historical events (often police scandals), and larger historical and political questions. In particular, in Chapter 9, McCoy breaks from the Philippines temporarily to discuss policing in the US in the period of approximately 1905 - 1975. He illustrates how policing innovations in the US in fact have roots in the US policing of the Philippines - a historical aspect of US society that is by no means common knowledge. He also describes (in 9 and in other chapters), how the Philippines continues to be a testing ground for new US police and military strategies, and how US innovations in the Philippines are still filtering back into the US. Several aspects of recent history and current events (Iraq, Afghanistan, and the so-called War on Terror) are also analyzed from the viewpoint of surveillance advancements on the fringes of empire finding their way back to the US mainland.Highly recommended.

This is a fascinating account laying out the importance of unintended consequences of imperial behaviour. All who advocate regime change interventions should be made to read this book.

No easy job to police 700++ military bases off U.S. soil

[Disclaimer: I haven’t finished reading it yet; thus a streamlined review] A well-reasoned, well-researched, and well-written work that is destined to become a foundation stone in the study of the development (or metamorphosis) of the American nation since the invasion of the Philippines in 1898. The work is formidable and highly enlightening for both academics and for all those who have

struggled to understand the stark discrepancy between the mythical America as imagined by citizens indoctrinated with the ideologies of Jefferson, Lincoln, and the contemporary ideologues on the one hand, and the America as manifest in its heavily armed and brutal police forces, its global military, its advanced and ever-advancing weaponry, its global surveillance network, and its CIA.Strongly recommended.

McCoy’s book is history based on fact, not "history based on patriotism". For the latter, one will find many, many political tracts masquerading as "books" (John Phillip Souza marches to be played in the background as one reads the latter must be purchased separately, however). For the latter purpose, perhaps some high school "history" books from the 1950s are still available ?McCoy’s analogies to the current use of surveillance techniques are eye-opening, as well; but his history (here) is solid as a stand-alone. As usual, those who prefer patriotism to facts will not like this book or any fact-based history book at all.

This was so compelling I could not put it down. I have recommended it to all my students. After reading this I have further insight into the US democratization and colonialization of the Phillippines. The modern day parallels between the Phillippines and our current wars are striking and McCoys book helps contextualize this.

A must read for anyone interested in not just Se Asian but America’s presence elsewhere on the globe, now and in the future. Mccoy manages to craft his factual narrative to ensure compelling thoughts seem like they came from your own mind, just before he answers them succinctly for you not a second later.

This book gives a fair detailed analysis which i felt was well researched and thought provoking. I really do think its worth a read so if your considering it just go ahead and get it. It certainly is a must read as I was thoroughly impressed. The best compliment I can give it is this positive review.

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