The Philippines and American Imperialism

THE United States Senate, by a decisive majority, has passed the bill granting independence to the Philippine Islands not later than March 4, 1921. All the Democrats present and six Progressive Republicans voted for the measure. A provision, directing the President to induce foreign Powers to "recognize and respect the sovereign independence of the Philippines," was rejected.

The "change of sentiment" regarding Philippine independence is puzzling some of our publicists. The New York *Evening Post* says: "It [the 'change of sentiment'] is not confined to Congress. A few explosive newspapers cry out, in the old style, against the 'policy of scuttle'; but, on the whole, the press seems either indifferent to the bill or favorable to it." The *Post* attributes the change to the realization of the fact that the "far flung islands are a military weakness to the United States"; and also to a "quickened American conscience" in regard to the rights of oppressed nationalities!

But the reasons lie much deeper. The same Senate that passed this bill has just ratified a treaty with Nicaragua that would deprive that country of its administrative independence; and a similar treaty is pending with Honduras. These two treaties are shamelessly and barefacedly Imperialistic, and there is no "quickened American conscience" to denounce their iniquitous proposals. The same administration is behind the Philippine bill that deprived Haiti at the point of the bayonet of its administrative independence.

American Imperialism is not a unit in its objectives; as in Germany, it has various tendencies. German Imperialists have been divided as to whether over-seas colonial expansion or expansion in Europe and Asia Minor was the most desirable and feasible. The passage of the Philippine independence bill again emphasizes the fact that American Imperialists are divided. The Wilson administration conceives an aggressive Imperialism in the Far East a weakness to this country; it believes in concentrating its Imperialistic efforts nearer home, in Latin America,—an Imperialism that benefits larger groups of capitalists than could participate in financial adventures in the Orient. The "concentration of United States foreign investments in South America" was a demand formulated at the recent convention of the National Foreign Trade Council,—of which James A. Farrell, President of the United States Steel Corporation, is chairman. And the profits from this Imperialism appear larger and much more immediate. The motives behind the Philippine independence project are, therefore, both military and economic.

But this does not at all mean that the United States relinquishes all interest in the Far East. It simply changes the *form* of its interest. The United States will press more than ever the demand for the "Open Door" in China as the surest way of "conserving" "our" interests. The danger of war may be modified, but it is not abolished. And, furthermore, it is not at all improbable that the Administration in 1921 may be ultra-Imperialistic and reverse the action of the present Administration.—*F.*