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One of many later-captured Japanese photographs, this image depicts "JAPANESE LIGHT TANKS moving toward Manila on the day the city was entered." It is included in "The Fall of the Philippines," by Louis Morton, at [page 237](#). It is part of the series "United States Army in World War II" and is online via the Center of Military History. Withdrawing all American troops was, in fact, suggested by someone outside Washington. [Manuel Quezon](#) (president of the Philippines, sitting to FDR's left in this Library of Congress photograph), was enormously concerned that [his country](#) would soon be overwhelmed by the Japanese.

Quezon sent President Roosevelt a four-part proposal which was endorsed by General MacArthur:

- Grant the Philippines immediate independence instead of waiting until July 4, 1946;
- Declare the Philippines neutral;
- Withdraw American and Japanese forces by mutual consent; and
- Disband the Philippine army.

In his supporting message, MacArthur advised [General George Marshall](#) that half of his men were already casualties. The rest were "badly battle worn" and "desperately in need of rest." Worse:

There is no denying the fact that we are near done.

Mincing neither words nor sentiments, [MacArthur](#) warned Washington that "the complete destruction of this command" could come at any time. Noting the Filipinos had an attitude of "almost violent resentment against the United States," MacArthur expressed his military opinion:

...the problem presents itself as to whether the plan of President Quezon might offer the best possible solution of what is about to be a disastrous debacle.

FDR's reaction was negative and his response-time quick. A day after receiving the proposal, the American president assured Quezon the United States would support the Philippines "until the forces which are now marshaling outside the Philippine Islands return to the Philippines and drive the last remnant of [the invaders](#) from your soil."

Privately, to MacArthur, Roosevelt approved the surrender of Filipinos but forbade American surrender "so long as there remains any possibility of resistance." FDR gave [his reasons](#):

I have made these decisions in complete understanding of your military estimate that accompanied President Quezon's message to me. The duty and the necessity of resisting Japanese aggression to the last transcends in importance any other obligation now facing us in the Philippines.

There has been gradually welded into a common front a globe-encircling opposition to the predatory powers that are seeking the destruction of individual liberty and freedom of government. We cannot afford to have this line broken in any particular theater.

As the most powerful member of this coalition we cannot display weakness in fact or in spirit anywhere. It is mandatory that there be established once and for all in the minds of all peoples complete evidence that the American determination and indomitable will to win carries on down to the last unit.

I therefore give you this most difficult mission in full understanding of the desperate situation to which you may shortly be reduced. The service that you and the American members of your command can render to your country in the titanic struggle now developing is beyond all possibility of appraisal. I particularly request that you proceed rapidly to the organization of your forces and your defenses so as to make your resistance as effective as circumstances will permit and as prolonged as humanly possible.

In short, even the President knew there was little hope for the Philippines.

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Media Stream

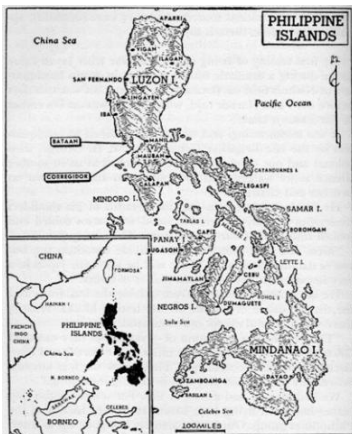


Manuel Quezon with FDR

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Map of Philippine Islands

Image online, courtesy 31stinfantry.org website.

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General George Marshall

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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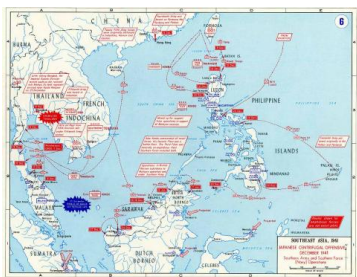


Painting of General MacArthur

Image online, courtesy webdoc.sub.gwdg.de website.

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Map Showing Japanese Offensive December, 1941

Image online, courtesy U.S. Military Academy, [West Point](http://WestPoint) website.

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