

AMERICA'S PROCONSULS IN MINDANAO, 1899-1913

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This essay focuses on the efforts of the United States Government to impose its rule upon the Muslim Filipino population of Mindanao and Sulu in the period 1899 to 1913. We will begin with a brief description of the Moros at the time of the American arrival in Mindanao and Sulu in 1899. Next, we will characterize each of the four U.S. Army generals who, as America's proconsuls in Moroland, both shaped and implemented evolving policy towards the Muslim population. We will then presume to offer a judgment on the achievements and shortcomings of the American proconsuls of that era. And, finally, we will close by asking the questions which this history naturally poses with regard to our contemporary situation in the Muslim regions of Mindanao and Sulu.

The Moros in 1899

American occupation forces did not appear in Mindanao and Sulu until May of 1899 when they were sent down to replace departing Spanish soldiers in those few places where Spain had maintained garrisons among the Moros. At that time the population of Mindanao and Sulu was perhaps 650,000, with an estimated 230,000 people, mostly Christians, living in the northeastern third of Mindanao in a region soon divided into the provinces of Misamis and Surigao. The indigene population of Mindanao, that is, the interior hill people who were neither Christians nor Muslims, number roughly 80,000. The rest of Mindanao and Sulu and southern Palawan had a population of around 300,000 Moros among whom lived a minority of Christians estimated at 40,000 (cf. Jornacion, 1973:42; and Thompson, 1975:2-3).

For over a century and a half prior to the coming of Legaspi to Cebu in 1565 many of the southern Filipinos had foresworn their previous paganism and adopted Islam. In the course of time, influenced by foreign Muslims who came to settle in their midst and by contacts with the wider Islamic world, the new Muslims in the Philippines developed a civilization whose laws, social organization, government, alphabet, system of education, navigational skills, extensive trade, innumerable

boats, forts and firearms set them apart from all other Filipinos in this Archipelago. The Spaniards very quickly came to recognize the difference between the Muslim Filipinos and the other Filipinos, and so accorded the former the name *Moros* while all the others were designated *Indios*.

The *Indios*, except for the Igorots of the Luzon mountains, were unable to effectively resist their subjugation by the Spanish forces. The *Moros*, except for those who had only a recent and tenuous hold in the Manila area, were able to offer stiff and more or less successful resistance to the Spanish conquerors. For over three centuries Spain sent expedition after expedition to subdue the *Moros* and never permanently succeeded in doing so. For 270 years, from 1578 to 1848, the natural advantages were mostly on the side of the *Moros* who, while they had no standing armies or mighty naval forces, nevertheless were skilled in the lightning attack, the evasion maneuver and the blood-chilling buccaneering raid. They were the masters of most of the Mindanao and Sulu terrain and their swift sail craft and knowledge of every inlet and estuary made them the Lords of the southern seas. The Moro fighter knew no fear and was as reckless with his own life as he was unsparing of the lives of his enemies. He fought ferociously and valiantly for nothing less than his home, land, honor and religion—the very highest of human causes.

Spain was not a weak foe—she would and did launch large, well-armed expeditions to Mindanao and Sulu to kill thousands of *Moros* and level hundreds of their towns and villages. But the *Moros* preferred death to surrender.

After 1848, however, the introduction of steam-driven war vessels in the Spanish navy and modern artillery in the army gave Spain the upper hand in her long warfare with the *Moros*. From then on, the *Moros* were on the defensive as the Spanish navy swept their swift sail-driven war-boats from the seas and the Spanish army destroyed their inland towns and forts with deadly effectiveness. Even so, as Najeeb Saleeby pointed out (1913:8):

Moro resistance . . . continued with unabated tenacity and the Spaniards paid too dearly for every point of vantage they won.

Not an inch of ground was gained without fighting, and not a year passed without bloodshed.

By what we would call today "wars of attrition," the Spaniards did wear down Maguindanaon resistance to the point when in 1860 they found it possible to impose a politico-military "Government of Mindanao." In 1876, they did seize the town of Jolo and two years later obliged the Sultan of Sulu to sign a treaty acknowledging Spanish sovereignty over his domain. And in 1895 (after an aborted effort in 1891) the Spaniards even succeeded in penetrating to the Lake Lanao area and establishing a garrison at Marawi. In spite of all this, however, the Spaniards were unable to gain anything more than nominal control of Moro affairs by the end of their regime in the Philippines. Moro political organization, laws, internal administration, religion, social conditions and customs were entirely unaffected by the Spanish presence in Moroland. The Spaniards did not try to introduce schools or any programs of social or economic reforms whatever.* No taxes or tribute were collected from the Moros—on the contrary, the Spaniards were obliged to pay Moro Sultans and datu regular emoluments so as to secure their cooperation in carrying out treaty provisions.

Of course, the centuries of struggle against the Spanish invaders exacted a price from the Moros. The Spaniards exploited Moro weaknesses including their internal rivalries. It was all the Moros could do to maintain their independence, and the effort in the end left them exhausted and divided. They suffered a few Spanish garrisons in their midst and lost the revenues of a few ports such as Jolo and Siasi. But never did they regard themselves as a conquered people and as part of Spain's Philippine colony. Right to the end of the 19th Century they came and went as they pleased in their sea commerce, and they carried on with their pearl fishing and other economic activities unhampered, and they even continued to practice slavery and slave trading. In short, after more than three centuries of effort at conquest, the writ of Spain's colonial government in Manila had little sway in Moroland.

This was "The Moro Problem" faced by the American who succeeded to the Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines: how to succeed where Spain had failed in bringing the 300,000 Moros effectively under the control of the government seated in Manila and to incorporate them meaningfully into the Philippine state system. In 1899 the Moros were no more ready to welcome American colonial masters than they had

been to welcome the Spaniards. An estimated 19,000 Moro fighters in Mindanao stood ready to resist an American incursion at that time with another 10,000 ready in Sulu and 5,000 on Basilan (Jornacion, 1973:43). Into that situation the United States Government sent its proconsuls—military officers with unusually extensive powers to impose American government in Moroland. There were four such proconsuls who served successively in this enterprise, and from the point of view of most Americans at that time they served successfully. They were Brigadier General George W. Davis, Commanding General of the 7th Separate Brigade (1901-1902); and then the three general officers who served as Governors of the Moro Province: Major General Leonard Wood (1903-1906), Brigadier General Tasker H. Bliss (1906-1909), and Brigadier General John J. Pershing (1904-1913).

George Davis—Applying Lessons from the Indian Experience

From 1899 to 1901, the Americans had a more pressing problem than imposing their government on the Moros and that was putting down the so-called "Philippine Insurrection" which raged mostly in Luzon and the Visayas. So, for two years the Americans were content to simply relieve the small scattered Spanish garrisons in Moroland and to hammer out an agreement with the Sultan of Sulu which more or less resembled the Treaty of 1878 between the Sultanate and Spain. The agreement, negotiated by General John Bates and Sultan Jamalul Kiram II in August, 1899, and popularly called "The Bates Treaty," secured Sulu's acknowledgment of American sovereignty but left the Moros pretty much alone in the management of their internal affairs. Indeed, the Americans were eager to persuade the Sultan of their goodwill and peaceful intentions and for his part the Sultan was relieved to learn that his position was no worse and, indeed, it was a little better (he received a higher monthly allowance) under the Americans than it had been under the Spaniards. America's assurances of peaceful intentions and her non-interference policy were likewise communicated verbally (not in written treaties) with Moro leaders in Mindanao and Basilan, and likewise were received with relief. The Bates Agreement and the verbal assurances achieved the desired effect: they neutralized the Moros during the Philippine Insurrection. The attempts of the Filipino *insurrectos* to recruit the Sultan of Sulu and other Moro leaders to the revolutionary cause met with no response whatever.

By July 1901 the Philippine Insurrection had been sufficiently subdued to permit the establishment of Civil government in the Archipelago in place of government under a U.S. Army general as Military Governor. Judge William Howard Taft was appointed the first American Civil Governor of the Philippines. Earlier, as head of a special Commission to investigate conditions in the Philippines, he had visited several places in Mindanao and Sulu where he met with military officers and civilians, including Moro leaders in Jolo, Zamboanga and Cotabato. The Taft Commission decided on the establishment of civil provincial government, under Filipino governors, for Surigao and Misamis where a large Christian population was concentrated. However, Taft himself felt that the rest of the island of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago should become a single province under an American governor.

Less than a month after becoming Civil Governor, Taft wrote the Secretary of War, Elihu Root, that Brigadier General George W. Davis would be going to Mindanao and that the administration would be glad to create a government on that island with the idea of having General Davis made Civil Governor as well as Military Commander there (Jornacion, 1973:49). It was Taft's opinion that "in dealing with the Moros military authority accompanied by civil authority seems to be most effective." As it happened, this opinion accorded well with views which General Davis himself held and which were confirmed after a period of service in Mindanao from August 1901 to July 1902.

Davis was assigned initially as Commanding General of the U.S. Army's Department of Mindanao and Jolo, but by November 1901 the designation of the Department was changed to the 7th Separate Brigade. While General Davis was not officially named military governor of the territory embraced by his Brigade, nor did he himself use that title, nevertheless he exercised the powers of a military governor over the civilian population, believing that he derived his authority from that of the Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines who was responsible for all territory not provincially or municipally organized under the Civil Government (*ibid.*, p. 69). In effect, General Davis was America's first proconsul in Mindanao. In July 1902, having been promoted to Major General, he was recalled to Manila and given Command of the Division of the Philippines. He was greatly influential in shaping American governmental policy regarding the Moros.

General Davis was a Civil War veteran and served in the Army first

as an infantry officer and then as an engineer. A good portion of his Army career prior to the Spanish-American War was in service against hostile Indians of the American West. He fought in the Spanish-American War and served as Military Governor of Puerto Rico prior to his assignment to the Philippines.

More than anything else, Davis' experience in dealing with the American Indians colored his perception of what was required in governing the Moros of the Southern Philippines. From his headquarters in Zamboanga, he saw it as his first responsibility to pursue peace and order among the Moros and to protect the "civilized" inhabitants of the region (i.e., the Christian Filipinos) from Moro hostilities. In his report for 1902, Davis compared himself to the commander of an Indian reservation:

The authority of the military commander of this vast non-Christian reserve is the same as that of the present commanding officer at Fort Sill (in Oklahoma) who now has under his control on the military reservation at that post some hundreds of Apaches—men, women and children—all of whom are restrained of their liberty, i.e., they are nominally prisoners. If one of them is bad and intractable, or violates the post orders, he is incarcerated, and if necessary ironed, just as was done the other day to a Moro sultan by the commanding officer at Camp Vicars near Lanao

(U.S. War Department, 1902:560-561).

Had General Davis been content merely to maintain peace and order all might have been well, for the Army had done little more than that prior to his coming to Mindanao and there had been minimal difficulty with the Moros. But General Davis, and many other American officers at the time, were not satisfied with the non-interference policy and were anxious to get on with a sort of civilizing mission. In General Orders No. 12 which he issued on March 4, 1903, Davis commented on the fact that the Moros by and large were isolated from the American government and declared that the Army ought to make contact with them and should begin by exploring their country. He also wanted to secure provisions and labor services from the Moros, establish market places in their midst and impress upon them that slavery was forbidden by American law and that the Army would protect any slaves wanting to leave their masters (Jornacion, 1973:69-70). The implementation of Davis' policy of bringing the American government and the Moros into

direct contact through Army exploring parties into the interior of Mindanao resulted in the shattering of the generally peaceful relations between the Army and the Moros which had prevailed since 1899.

On March 15, 1902, an Army cavalry detachment was on a reconnaissance mission from Parang in north Cotabato to the Lake Lanao country when it was suddenly attacked by a force of some 200 Maranaos. In the fight, one soldier was killed and the detachment was obliged to retreat through the thick jungle back to Parang, leaving behind their horses, pack mules and the dead soldier. The Maranaos had been alerted to the coming of the soldiers by friendly runners sent by the Army to notify Maranao chiefs that the detachment was passing through their country "on a peaceful mission of exploration, observation, and better friendly acquaintance" (U.S. War Department, 1902: 483). The Maranaos, proud of having kept out the Spaniards until 1895, apparently were determined to bar their land to American intruders who, despite assurances of peaceful intentions, might threaten Maranao independence and way of life. The attack on the cavalry detachment was the first concerted armed challenge to American sovereignty in Moroland. It elicited a response in the form of a full-scale military operation culminating in the battle of Bayang on May 2, 1902, in which 300-400 Moros were killed as well as one American officer and ten enlisted men.

General Davis gave his approval to the punitive campaign against the Maranaos saying:

If we are to be respected by the Moros of Lake Lanao, we must show them that we are not lacking in the means or the will to enforce our authority If we do not do this, the north central portion of Mindanao must be considered as closed to Americans and to all civilized people A single effective blow delivered against those who are not in great numbers will be all that is required (quoted in Jornacion, 1973:72).

Alas, the "single effective blow" was not at all that was required and the U.S. Army was obliged to campaign in Lanao for two years, notably under Captain John J. Pershing and then General Leonard Wood.

Reflecting the ethnocentrism of many, perhaps most, White Americans of his day, General Davis was absolutely persuaded that it was the White Man's "burden" to bring enlightenment and civilization (conceived in Euro-American terms) to wild, savage peoples. In his

opinion the North American Indians and the Moros resembled each other in being, at that time, incapable of civilized and enlightened self-government. Davis acknowledged that the Moros differed markedly in many respects from the Indians. In his view, the Moros were more intelligent, were further advanced in the mechanic arts, had a written language, and adhered fanatically to centuries-old and deep-seated religious convictions. But for all that, the Moros like the Indians were savages and would require a long period of restraint and supervision to bring them to the point where they could participate fully in national life as civilized, self-governing citizens. Davis was convinced that the duty of the American government with respect to the Moros was to treat their religion and customs with respect but, at the same time, to win over the datus and use them to lead their people away from slavery, polygamy, piracy and despotic rule. Davis did not expect that much success would be obtained in the generation of the Moros he knew. "Our only hope," he said, "is with the rising generation and those to follow . . ." (Jornacion, 1973: Appendix II).

While he served as Commanding General of the Philippine Division headquartered in Manila (1902-1903), Davis regularly counselled Governor Taft on the form which the government of the Moros and other "wild tribes" of Mindanao and Sulu should take. Much of his advice was summarized in a remarkable paper written in August, 1902, entitled "Notes on the Government of the Country Inhabited by Non-Christians in Mindanao and the Neighboring Islands" (*ibid.*, Appendix III). In this paper he affirmed that Americans came to Mindanao to teach and convince the Moros and other Non-Christians that all men are born free and equal, and that there is no such thing as inherited caste or privilege. "The working out of this doctrine and the enforcement of it," he wrote, "means the up-setting of the whole system of tribal and patriarchal government among the Moros." In the face of this task, a government backed by an active armed force was required to overpower the fanatical resistance with which the Moros will confront all efforts to change them. Davis believed that the U.S. Army ought to be used for this purpose. He advocated the continuation of a military government in Mindanao and Sulu, subject to superior civilian authority in Manila. The commanding general would have control of all the functions of government in the Moro country including the administration of justice and the appointment of Customs, Internal Revenue and Forestry Agents

and School Superintendents. In effect, Davis contemplated a government in Mindanao and Sulu which would make that region virtually a colony of the Philippine Government. He envisaged that the United States Army would be the advance guard of civilization in Mindanao and Sulu (as it had been in the Indian country of the American West) and he believed that under capable leadership the Army would be able to provide effective and humane administration of Moro affairs. A government able to back its policies and laws by force was the only kind of government which the Moros understood—"a government by the military for the present," he wrote, "but which, as these fanatical people show peaceful and reasonable tendency, may be relaxed and a freer one substituted as they show their capacity for it."

Governor Taft heeded much of General Davis' counsel and in the end emerged with a plan which incorporated some of the General's ideas. Still, the plan was somewhat different from what Davis had in mind. It called for the establishment of a civil government in Moroland but one headed by an Army officer as Governor who was concurrently the Commanding General of the Department of Mindanao. On June 1, 1903, the Philippine Commission created the Moro Province.

Leonard Wood—American Imperialist

Except for the northeastern third of Mindanao where the Misamis and Surigao provinces were located, the new Moro Province included the island of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. In size, the Moro Province was more than a fifth of the land area of the Philippines but held only one twentieth of the population. It was the only province ruled by the military after 1903 and it was divided into five districts (Davao, Cotabato, Lanao, Zamboanga and Sulu) each with an Army officer in charge as District Governor. The Governor of the Moro Province throughout its ten-year history was always an Army general who combined in his person civil authority as Governor and military authority as Commanding General of the Department of Mindanao. His military jurisdiction was, in fact, more extensive than his civil authority because it covered the whole of Mindanao and also the island of Palawan. If the civil governor of Misamis, Surigao and Palawan so requested, the Commanding General of the Department could intervene in those provinces.

Major General Leonard Wood was the first Governor of the Moro Province. A thorough-going New England Yankee, Wood graduated as a

medical doctor from Harvard University in 1884 and became a surgeon in the U.S. Army. Assigned to duty in the American Southwest, he participated in campaigns against Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches not only as a doctor but also as an officer of the line commanding troops. His dash and bravado attracted much attention and eventually he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for bravery in the Geronimo campaigns. Eventually Wood became White House physician to Presidents Cleveland and McKinley and so came to know many of the leading political figures of the day including the future President Theodore Roosevelt. Wood began to harbor grand ambitions of his own in those years and the Spanish American War gave his fortunes a great boost. He and Roosevelt organized the 1st Volunteer Cavalry (the famous "Rough Riders"), and while it was Roosevelt who led the regiment on the celebrated charge up San Juan Hill, Wood was promoted to Major General of Volunteers with a commission in the regular Army as a Brigadier General before the end of the war. From 1898 to 1902 he served as the Military Governor of Cuba where he did really distinguished work but made many enemies. From Cuba where he was assigned to the Philippines and at the same time was nominated by his friend Theodore Roosevelt, by then President, for promotion to Major General. While the promotion was eventually confirmed by the Senate, the hearings were controversial and acrimonious with Wood's enemies whispering that his rapid rise in the military (he was 43 years of age) was due to his political connections.

General Wood wanted very much to become Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines, succeeding General Davis. But Governor Taft was not pleased at the prospect of working with such a controversial and strong personality as Leonard Wood and urged the Secretary of War to appoint Wood as commander of the Department of Mindanao. As it happened, President Roosevelt also thought it a good idea to have his controversial friend in Mindanao while the Senate debated his confirmation as Major General. Thus it was that Wood was assigned to Mindanao as Commanding General and also as first Governor of the Moro Province. He reluctantly accepted these appointments with the understanding that after only a short while he would be moved to Manila to the assignment he preferred. As it turned out, he remained in Mindanao for three years after which he finally went to Manila as Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines.

If "imperialism" is understood to mean the urge to extend the power and dominion of one nation over the political and/or economic life of another nation or territory, then Leonard Wood was the very model of an American imperialist. He was absolutely convinced of the moral, political and cultural superiority of the American way of life and firmly believed that it was right and proper to establish it among benighted savages for their own good. His opinion of the Moros was uniformly negative. "They are nothing more or less than an unimportant collection of pirates and highwaymen, living under laws which are intolerable," he wrote (quoted in Gowing, 1977:110). He had special contempt for the Sultan of Sulu, Jamalul Kiram II, whom he once described to President Roosevelt as "a run down, tricky little Oriental degenerate with half a dozen wives and no children" (quoted in Thompson, 1975:36). From the beginning of his administration he advocated the unilateral abrogation of the Bates Agreement which he regarded as incompatible with the rights of complete and indivisible sovereignty acquired by the United States from Spain in the Treaty of Paris. Besides, it interfered with the civilizing mission he felt that Americans should undertake in Moroland. President Roosevelt concurred, and the Agreement was abrogated. The Sultan was not pleased, of course, and had not been consulted, but General Wood in a conversation with him afterwards told the Sultan: "I am going to be frank with you. At present your rights as a nation are nothing . . . I believe we are here forever, unless some greater country comes and drives us away; we do not know of any such country."

Wood undertook the organization of the Moro Province with enthusiasm and considerable administrative skill. Supported by a small Legislative Council made up of American soldiers and civilians, he instituted a civil form of government which was able to attend to public matters in accordance with the convenience and necessities of the people and the conditions of each locality. He began organizing municipalities along lines laid down in the Municipal Code in force elsewhere in the Philippines. Indeed, the whole purpose of the Moro Province was to provide a framework wherein traditional Moro political and social structures could be gradually changed into the structures adopted generally in the other provinces of the Archipelago. Roads were constructed; health and sanitation facilities were provided; a public school system was organized; customs, revenues and taxes were

collected; and even the legal apparatus was changed. The Bates Agreement had formally recognized the Tausug legal code, and Governor Taft's Organic Act for the Moro Province called for the maintenance of a separate Muslim legal system. Despite this, Wood was determined to impose a more or less uniform legal system. He had looked over the compilation of Moro laws and his New England Puritan mind could find in them nothing worthy of respect or worth preserving. Over the objections of Najeeb Saleeby, the only member of the Legislative Council who understood and respected the Islamic basis of Moro law, the Legislative Council approved a legal apparatus which applied, in a general way, the laws in force elsewhere in the Philippines.

Wood also adopted and enforced strong anti-slavery measures. This aroused some Moro datus to rebellion, especially Datu Ali in the Upper Cotabato River Valley. General Wood brooked no opposition to his laws or policies and he put down armed resistance vigorously and thoroughly—and sometimes he was personally present in command of troops on punitive campaigns. His imposition of the *cedula* or “head tax” led directly to the tragic battle of Bud Dajo on Jolo Island in 1906. More than 600 Moro men, women and children were killed in that totally unnecessary battle which has to go down as one of the darkest stains on the honor of the U.S. Army. A quick tally of some figures which Wood himself revealed in various reports and private correspondence with regard to the combat his troops had with Moros reveals that *at the very least* 3,000 Moros were killed resisting his civilizing efforts in the course of three years, while the number of Americans killed was less than seventy (Gowing, 1977:164).

General Wood did not have much respect for Moros, but he had a great deal of respect for their land. He saw Mindanao as a large, pleasant, fertile island with a low population density which ought to be settled by whites, preferably Americans. Mindanao held out the promise of great wealth for those who had the intelligence, energy and capital to develop its potential. Experiments in the production of hemp, rubber, sugar and coconuts were very successful and Wood urged white settlers to come and claim available land for plantations and farms. He pleaded unsuccessfully that the land laws be amended to give settlers not 40 but 200 or more acres and corporations up to 20,000 acres so as to attract big capital investment in plantation crops. He hoped that “a good class” of American settlers would come who would not only contribute to the

economy of the Province but would be an example to the native inhabitants as well. "What is needed here," he wrote, "is an influx of such people as built up the West. The natives would be stimulated by their example and educated by their work and the possibilities of these Islands would soon be apparent" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 126). Few American settlers responded to Wood's call, however, and in the entire decade of the Moro Province, there were never more than 5,000 whites living there, four fifths of whom were military and many of the rest military dependents. At the peak, in 1907, there were only about 100 white planters in the Province—clustered mainly in the Davao and Zamboanga areas—and some of them left when white soldiers began to leave Mindanao towards the end of 1913 (Thompson, 1975:100).

Always seeking his destiny somewhere else other than Moroland, Leonard Wood finally became Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines in 1906 and later went on to become Chief-of-Staff of the U.S. Army. Defeated for the Republican nomination for President in 1920, he was appointed Governor General of the Philippines in 1921 and served controversially in that post until his death in 1927.

Tasker H. Bliss—Peacemaker and Educator

The proconsul who succeeded Leonard Wood as Governor of the Moro Province was quite a different sort of person. Brigadier General Tasker Bliss had never before in his Army career had a field command. Indeed, he was eventually to rise to become Chief-of-Staff of the Army—the very top of his profession—but he never in his life led troops in combat or fired a gun in anger. After his death in 1930, his biographer, Frederick Palmer, in searching for an appropriate title which would summarize the life of his subject, settled on *Bliss, Peacemaker*. Bliss' primary role as a ranking Army officer was to find ways to end war. As Military Attaché in the American Legation in Madrid, he worked very closely with General Woodford, the American Minister to Spain, in efforts to avert the war which came. He served General Wood in Cuba as Chief of the Cuban Customs Service and in 1902 he negotiated and drafted the treaty of reciprocity between the United States and the young Republic of Cuba. During World War I he served as the American representative on the Supreme War Council and when the war ended he was a member of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace. In the latter post, he supported the formation of the German Republic, favored

the League of Nations, urged international limitation of armaments and unsuccessfully advocated less severe reprisals against the defeated Axis Powers. And even after he retired from the Army in 1920, he wrote articles and made speeches urging America's entry into the World Court and pleading for a general reduction of armaments in the interest of world peace.

Born in Pennsylvania and a graduate of West Point, Bliss was more of a scholar than a soldier, though he was both proud of and secure in, his profession. But his passion was ancient history and he was able to read Greek and Latin texts in the original. Prior to coming to the Philippines he was Commandant of the Army War College in Washington which he had helped to found.

As Commanding General of the Department of Mindanao and Governor of the Moro Province, General Bliss displayed all of his gifts as a peacemaker and educator.

He assumed command at a critical time in the history of the Province. True, there was no open rebellion, and all but a handful of outlaw Moros were pursuing peaceful occupations. But the Battle of Bud Dajo, fought the month before, had not improved American-Moro relations and there was seething resentment not only in Sulu but in Lanao and Cotabato as well. It was an explosive situation requiring firmness and tact on the part of the Provincial government. It was a measure of Bliss' sensitivity to that sort of situation and his skillful handling of it that earned his 42 months in Moroland the epithet "peace era" (Hurley, 1936:188).

General Bliss had a healthy respect for military power and believed in its importance for maintaining peace and order. But he saw the difference between army work and police work. Whereas Wood would mount Army expeditions in pursuit of criminals, Bliss thought it better for peace and order that a crime which implied no resistance to the Government should go for a time unpunished while an effort was made to arrest the criminals. He favored the scattering of Army units and Constabulary posts throughout the Province rather than concentrate them in larger communities. Smaller units, he believed, were more mobile and efficient in following bands of Moro raiders into the interior. Bliss' ideas received all the vindication they required by the mere fact that during his time as Governor of the Moro Province there was no major grouped rebellion of the Moros anywhere, and no major military

campaigns were mounted. The principal peace and order headache he suffered was the Sulu pirate Jikiri whose depredations for two years ranged both in Sulu and Borneo with Moros, Chinese and Americans all equally his victims. Bliss needed fast gunboats to deal with Jikiri, and when after a long delay they arrived they helped substantially in making short work of Jikiri and his band.

Tasker Bliss, the sometime Professor at the Naval War College and the founder of the Army War College, the avid reader of books and keen student of history, had a teacher's interest in education. He had complete faith that the Provincial school system in which the Moros and other Non-Christians were learning their ABC's would eventually mould them into capable citizens of a future democracy patterned on the American model. He gave considerable attention to the school system, especially to its curricula and quality of instruction. Some of the longest sections of his annual reports dealt with education. He was persuaded that the Moro Province, in the final analysis,

... was established to put the Moro on "all fours" with the inhabitants of the rest of the islands and its ultimate success will depend upon the extent to which we can train, develop and civilize him. (Quoted in Gowing, 1977:195).

He argued that if the school enrollment of Moro children was not high during the time of General Wood it was because the Moros had had to receive the first and bitter lesson which in all history has been the savage's preliminary instruction: that civilization is physically stronger than barbarism. The Moro having learned that first lesson from the American Army at the cost of many lives, was probably now ready to learn further lessons in the schools which a civilized government was providing.

Bliss was distressed that out of some 30,000 school-age children in the Moro Province in 1906, only 4,231 were actually in school and of those only 570 were Moros. He then called for more emphasis on education for the Moros, urged that it be relevant to their actual needs and that it be in the Moro languages initially and that preference be given to native teachers. "In time," he said "the teaching of English to the great mass of pupils will naturally come, but it should be the last thing taught them instead of the first."

Bliss also advocated government support for the traditional "pandita" schools of the Moros. In 1908, the Province began supplying

books, paper, blackboards and other supplies to these schools whose curricula was limited almost entirely to the reading and writing of Arabic and the Arabic rendering of Moro languages. Bliss thought government support was worthwhile if only to win the goodwill of the Moros who would appreciate the government's interest and learn that its attitude was friendly and not hostile. "In time," he wrote, "there will be a natural transition from the pandita schools, to the lowest grade of the public school" (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 198).

In the end, the General was not satisfied with what he had accomplished in the field of education. The need was so great and the resources available were so inadequate, to say nothing of the great reluctance of the Moros to send their children to the public schools. Nevertheless when he left the Province the overall attendance at Provincial schools had risen appreciably and the proportion of the Moro and other Non-Christian enrollment had jumped to one fourth of the total (*ibid.*, pp. 196-197).

The contrast between Bliss and his predecessor Wood can be seen in the matter of his attitude towards encouraging settlers in Mindanao. Early in 1907 a group of American businessmen applied for a ten-year rubber and gutta-percha concession covering the entire Rio Grande valley in Cotabato. Bliss strongly and successfully opposed the concession (though Wood from Manila supported it) on the grounds that the Moros in that area would resort to violence to defend their lands. The Legislative Council backed Bliss in this view and passed a resolution opposing the concession (Thompson, 1975:104).

Many people, particularly Americans, saw the contrast between Wood and Bliss, and tended to judge Bliss harshly. He was criticized for not getting around enough, for spending too much time at his desk, for frequently choosing to do nothing when others thought he should be taking more decisive action. He lacked the dash and flamboyance of Wood and did not seek publicity or court politicians. Consequently, while people recognized his abilities, many—again, mostly Americans and other whites—thought him ineffective as Governor of the Moro Province as Pershing himself was to have that post (*ibid.*, pp. 130-184). And thus it happened that early in 1909 General Bliss was promoted to Commanding General of the Division of the Philippines, leaving Col. Ralph Hoyt in charge of the Moro Province as Acting Governor until November of that year when Pershing arrived in Zamboanga.

John J. Pershing—The Perfect Instrument of Policy

The fourth and last of our proconsuls in Moroland owed much to the Maranaos of the Lake Lanao area for giving his up-to-then rather lack-luster military career a boost. Born in Missouri in 1860, he graduated from West Point in 1886 and spent much of the period until 1898 fighting Indians. At one time he commanded a cavalry unit of Black troops, and some have suggested that he earned the name "Black Jack" at that time, but actually it was born of his fondness for card-playing. During a tour as a military instructor at the University of Nebraska, Pershing earned a law degree. He was teaching tactics at West Point when the Spanish-American War broke out. He went to Cuba and fought with distinction as a first lieutenant with the 10th Cavalry. In 1899 he was assigned to the Philippines and was based at first in Zamboanga. He considered resigning from the Army because promotions were so slow in coming (he was 40 years old and still a lieutenant) but in 1901 he was made a Captain. He proved very adept in dealing with the Moros in whom he took a genuine interest even though he regarded them as savages.

After the Bayang campaign of May 1901, Pershing became commanding officer of Camp Vicars, which had been established near the site of the battle. From there in 1902 and 1903, he directed a series of short campaigns in the Lake Lanao area which brought him to national attention in America by virtue of vivid newspaper accounts of his exploits against the fierce, wild Maranao Moros. Returning to the United States in mid-1903 for reasons of health, he was lionized by Washington society (where he went to lobby for a promotion). He had the admiration and support of President Theodore Roosevelt who tried to persuade the Army to make Pershing a Colonel. When the Army refused, on the grounds that there were many more senior officers awaiting promotion, Roosevelt used his Presidential prerogative to nominate Pershing for the rank of Brigadier General. This irritated many of the 862 officers who were being passed over by Pershing's promotion and some of them resorted to whispering about Joaquina Ignacio and the little children Pershing allegedly left behind from his days in Zamboanga. In December 1906 the Senate confirmed his promotion anyway, and it did his cause no injury that the chairman of the Senate's Military Affairs Committee handling debate on the promotion list was Senator Francis Warren, whose daughter Pershing had married nearly two

years previously. While some suggested that the marriage was evidence of the lengths Pershing would go to get promoted, it was in fact a love-match and whatever might be said in criticism of Pershing's personality it cannot be denied that he proved to be a devoted husband and doting father of three daughters and a son (Thompson, 1975:169-181; Smythe, 1973).

John J. Pershing returned to the Philippines late in 1906 and for over two years was commanding officer of Fort McKinley near Manila—all the while hoping for an eventual assignment as Governor of the Moro Province. Finally that appointment was granted and after a few months on sick leave in the United States he assumed the post in November, 1909. The four years of his administration marked, in the light of American policy, the finest period in the history of the Moro Province—and the last. In keeping with American policy goals, the Province prospered so well economically and the Moros had developed sufficiently along the lines of “civilization” that it became possible to abolish the Moro Province altogether by December 1913 and substitute a purely civil form of government for the region which more closely approximated structures established in the rest of the Philippines.

John J. Pershing was the perfect instrument of American policy in Moroland—and this was perhaps his most distinguishing characteristic as a career Army officer. He was a good, efficient, courageous soldier but not one noted for fresh and independent ideas. His gift was in carrying out the policies of his superiors not only in letter but in spirit (Thompson, 1975:188). As Governor of the Moro Province, the policies Pershing pursued were in large measure those of Governor-General W. Cameron Forbes whose administration (1909-1918) almost exactly coincided with Pershing's tenure in Mindanao. The Governor-General tended to keep Pershing on a rather tight rein, especially in civilian matters; and unlike his predecessors Wood and Bliss, Pershing found that he had little independence of action. Indeed, both the Moro Province Governor and the Legislative Council became, under Cameron Forbes, merely advisory appendages of the Philippine Commission and particularly of the Governor-General. While some of his subordinates found this irritating, General Pershing himself seems to have accepted the situation without complaint (*ibid.*, 190-191).

When the Governor-General suggested that a number of Moroland communities were rather dirty for white habitation, especially in view

of the danger from cholera, General Pershing acted to "sanitize" the towns and villages where whites lived. When he next visited Zamboanga and Jolo, Forbes was delighted with the change. "General Pershing is a whirlwind, and I told him how much I appreciated his work," he wrote (quoted in *ibid.*, p. 189). When Forbes suggested that the interests of the Province would be better served if white administrators were encouraged to stay for extended terms, Pershing saw that such a policy was carried out, and, indeed, his own term as Governor was the longest in the Province's history. And when Forbes thought that the time had come to increase the proportion of civilian to military administrators, Pershing obliged. Whereas up to 1912 nearly all important administrative posts in the Province and in its five districts were held by Army officers, by July of 1913 there were only two Army officers in the Moro Province occupying civil offices: Pershing himself as Governor and an Army doctor as Provincial Health Officer (Gowing, 1977:248).

Governor-General Forbes' policy that the administration of the Moro Province be gradually civilianized prompted General Pershing to advise that the Moros be disarmed. Wood, when he was Governor, had advised against Moro disarmament on the grounds that Moro weapons were so bad and the Moros so divided that in any trouble they could be easily defeated and it simply would not be worth the trouble to collect their arms. General Bliss had been in favor of disarmament though he believed that it would rouse the Moros to fierce resistance and there would be a "disarmament war." But it would be a war to end war, and would result in real peace. Bliss did in fact begin the disarmament of Basilan Island and he believed his success there could be repeated in Jolo—but he left before he could test that notion (Thompson, 1975: 201-202). Pershing persuaded Governor-General Forbes that Moro disarmament was feasible, especially if the *datus* were allowed to keep their arms for law enforcement purposes. With Forbes' consent, Pershing issued his disarmament order in September 1911 decreeing that fire-arms were to be surrendered to the authorities by December 1st. There was some opposition to the policy in Lanao and Cotabato which local authorities were able to handle, but resistance on Jolo Island almost resulted in a second battle of Bud Dajo. The battle was called off at the last moment only by the intervention of the Acting Governor-General who wished to avoid embarrassing the Republican Party and especially President Taft who was up for renomination (*ibid.*, 203; Gowing,

1977:237). No such considerations, however, prevented the terrible Battle of Bud Bagsak in June 1913 in which several hundreds at least, and possibly a couple of thousand, Moros lost their lives defying the disarmament policy (Pershing kept the battle under a tight "news management"—see *ibid.*, 238-242). The Battle of Bud Bagsak was the last large-scale action fought by the Americans against the Moros until their final withdrawal from the Philippines.

In effect the Moros had been militarily defeated, and deprived of the weapons with which to continue their resistance against the American invader. They would find other means to maintain their selfhood, but they were prepared to some extent for the "policy of attraction" which civilian administrators, Americans and Christian Filipinos, devised for them in the period which began when the last of the proconsuls departed.

General Pershing went from the Philippines to San Francisco, California where he took command of troops at the Presidio. There, in a tragic fire which burned his quarters while he was away on a campaign against Pancho Villa on the Mexican border, he lost his beloved wife and his three daughters. Only his son was saved. Even so, he went on to great heights of fame and glory as Commander of the American Expeditionary Force in France in the First World War. Once, when Pershing asked President Woodrow Wilson why he, long associated with Republicans, had been appointed to that Number One command when there were other more senior officers who had wanted it, Wilson replied "General, when you were down in Mexico you showed you could obey orders" (Smythe, 1973:279).

A Judgment and Some Questions

Dr. Najeeb M. Saleeby was an Arab Christian who had been born in the Lebanon and became a naturalized American citizen. He had trained as a physician and came to Mindanao initially as an Army doctor. Because he read and spoke Arabic and had a good knowledge and respect for Islam, he won many Moro friends. He became Superintendent of Schools in the Moro Province under the Governorship of General Wood. Wood did not care for Saleeby for he "has a good deal of the Oriental about his way of doing business," he said (quoted in Gowing, 1977:112). For his part, while he treated his American colleagues with courtesy and cordiality, Saleeby felt that they were ill-

prepared to really understand the situation of the Moros. Their attitudes towards the Moros and their way of life simply exhibited their ignorance of Islam, to say nothing of Moro languages and culture (which Saleeby made it his business to study thoroughly). And Saleeby found repugnant the idea of the American military men that the best and quickest way to civilize and modernize the Moros was by casting aside their traditional leaders and trampling on their customs and institutions and simply overwhelming any opposition with armed might.

In January 1913, having long since left the service of the Moro Province, Dr. Saleeby read an academic paper before the Philippine Academy in Manila which was published as a monograph entitled: *The Moro Problem*. In his paper, Saleeby pointed out that the "Moro Problem" was the same for the Americans as it had been for the Spaniards: how to bring the Moros under the government of the Philippines and incorporate them into the general provincial organization of the Philippine Islands (p. 14). The Spaniards had sought to use force—and for over three centuries fought the Moro Wars, but they failed to attain their goal. As he looked back on the short history of America's handling of the Moro Problem, Saleeby concluded that the American occupation resembled the Spanish and even when differences in details and minor actions were recognized, "the main general policy is the same" (p. 6). And it failed. Said he:

The Moro Province was . . . the first bold attempt to break through the fence and take a hand in the administration of Moro internal affairs. This attempt has not yet accomplished much, and the Moros are still outside the fold of the main Philippine family of tribes. They still have their *datus* and *panditas*, and they still have their own laws and courts (p. 14).

Saleeby was not an anti-imperialist. He believed that the Moros needed "progress" and "development" in order to take their place in the general family of civilized Filipinos and to occupy a respectable position in the family of nations. But the way to bring this about was not to force change upon them by imposing policies and laws backed by arms—though the use of force to maintain peace and order was justified. The most effective and lasting method was to work through the *datus* and *datuship* structure of Moro Society and allow it to gradually introduce constructive change. Saleeby advocated strengthening the *datu's* hand rather than undermining his power, and thus win

him as an ally in bringing about reforms and development in Moro Society. His conclusion, in this writer's view, pronounced an eloquent judgment on American policy in the era of the proconsuls:

. . . it may be briefly said that in our conduct of Moro affairs we are bound to follow one of two courses. We have to either be tolerant and accept present conditions and institutions as they are and gradually reform them, or be intolerant and introduce radical changes from the start. The first course begins with unity and proceeds with patience and makes slow but permanent progress with telling effect. The second course is bound to begin with enmity and proceed with opposition every step of the way. The latter course has been tried for over three hundred years. History has declared its failure and humanity has condemned its principles. The growth of nations, like that of individuals, is governed by natural laws and can not advance by leaps and bounds. Reformation can be fostered by patient instruction and good example, but it cannot be forced into being by command and threats. A few evil national customs may have to be checked by force, but force applied as the sole agent of national reform is cruel and harmful (pp. 30-31).

And what of today? Is it not pertinent to ask whether the direction that has been followed since the Moro Province has been pretty much a continuation of the second course described by Saleeby—albeit with some diversions and some constructive experiments here and there? Are not the rebels in the Moro National Liberation Front the reincarnation of the Maranaos at the Battle of Bayang, and the men of Datu Ali, and the warriors of Bud Dajo and Bud Bagsak? And what of the Commanding General of the South Command—is he not today squarely in the tradition of the American Proconsuls, especially Wood and Pershing? Is not the Government seated in Manila still trying to do what the Spaniards and the Americans of bygone ages tried to do: to bring the Moros forcibly under the writ of its laws and policies?

When will it ever end?

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RECENT URC PUBLICATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

Ferdinand Blumentritt, *An Attempt at Writing a Philippine Ethnography* (Trans. from the Original German Text by Marcelino N. Maceda). Marawi City: University Research Center, Mindanao State University, 1980, 238 pp., with Appendices, Bibliography, Notes, and a Map.

Earlier unavailable to different English-reading publics, this work is translated and now published for them and for the purpose of a wider circulation. Prof. Ferdinand Blumentritt, an Austrian citizen, was a great friend of Filipino national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal. Their friendship marked the start of Blumentritt's interest in writing about the Philippines during the Spanish period, a country he never saw or had the opportunity to visit. This ethnographic document is one such product. Although regarded as a kind of "armchair anthropology," the present work is no small measure of contribution to the growing social science literature on the Filipino society and culture; it serves, in a way, to validate Spanish sources, and has been partly validated in turn by recent ethnological researches.

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