

AS THE HEAVEN WITNESSED IT ALL¹: A Jeopardy Of American Colonial Pacification In Sulu, 1906

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ABSTRACT

The Bud Dajo massacre has been a topic of interest for a few scholars and writers in the Philippines and in abroad.² Yet, as is the case with non-Manila/Luzon histories, such events are usually non-existent in basic history textbooks.³ The dominant perception on Bud Dajo treats the event as a policy-receptor problem.⁴ This paper explores the points of resistance where the nuances of interaction of two different nationalities both participate in the processes of image-making, power dynamism, and forced cultural heterogeneity, thus, the gradual decimation of the recessive cultural entity's worldview which all led to significant disarray. This research used both primary and secondary sources in which most of which were gathered from open access websites; improvisation of data sifting was meticulously applied to determine highly relevant newspapers to the topic concerned. The paper is generally divided into two clusters: first the narration of the event which encompasses three succeeding subheadings and the fourth and last as the analyses proper.

Keywords: *Bud Dajo, underrepresentation, massacre, Sultanate of Sulu, Mindanao historiography*

¹ An interpretation by the author on Fulton's reimagination during the climax of the Moro-American encounter (p. 291): "For a very brief moment, the firing stopped[,] and all was silent. If one of the magnificent Philippine Eagles had been nearby and bold enough to fly close by overhead, it would have witnessed a dramatic sight."

² A simple Google search would bring you several names of those who write about Bud Dajo but differed in length: Manolo Quezon, Ferdinand Llanes, Stella Estremera, Dee Ayroso, Patricio Abinales, Hannibal Bara, and Michael Hawkins. Those who are in print medium are Samuel Tan, Robert Fulton, and James Arnold.

³ Luckily, Agoncillo spent more than a page and a half in his famous *History of the Filipino People*, 8th Edition (both Garotech Publishing and C & E Publishing versions have it). But still, these situations are being lamented by Kamlian and Caballero (2022) that Mindanao histories are gravely underrepresented.

⁴ Aside from Mindanawon historians which already pointed out the religious differences as one of the viable causes of conflict—Patricio Abinales and Samuel K. Tan.

Introduction

This paper argues that the reason behind Bud Dajo massacre is not a case of a “savage” reaction over the colonial policy implemented in Jolo but a grave mishandling of military logistics and decision making, as well as the apparent neglect of the prevailing *weltanschauung* of the inhabitants of the island. Hence, such actions resulted in a clashing of ideas of contrasting ideal images portrayed by two cultures to each other—the struggle to persist and resist the counterpressure. This paper also offers a fresh insight into the century-old disaster that struck Southwestern Mindanao at the behest of General Leonard Wood. A counter-narrative which redirected its lens, thus viewing the event from a Mindanawon perspective, providing explanations in several viewpoints neglected by those who wrote extensively about this topic with considerable length. The Mindanawon in this sense, is not necessarily a tri-people perspective, but a viewpoint wherein the situation of the Tausugs is seen fairly amidst the American-centric dominating narrative.

The narration of the event heavily relies on the book of Robert A. Fulton, “Moroland: The History of Uncle Sam and the Moros 1899-1920” as shown in the succeeding citations. The author found the book useful because, among all the sources concerning the history of Mindanao during the early American period, it extensively treats the Bud Dajo massacre, allotting three chapters to the context of the event—all in all the book has about 70 pages for Bud Dajo moment: the shorter part is the context on imposing community tax in Jolo and the longer one narrates the consequence of the event to the career of the implementor, General Wood. Aside from its expansive treatment to Bud Dajo, the narration style of Fulton is dominantly descriptive with minimal analysis and perspective imposition. Thus, making it a suitable source for balanced storytelling. James Arnold, too, wrote a book about the Moro yet focused in analysis and less on the specifics.

In terms of finding primary sources especially newspapers, the author located all the broadsheet citations used in this paper at the database of Library of Congress.⁵ The author devised a methodology called the four-by-three-by-three filter system. The filtering process begins by setting the search period: here, the author designated 1906 as lower boundary and 1915 as upper boundary. Thus, the author used the most specific term among the three keywords chosen as markers for source’s relativity to the study. In this case, the author has these words picked for optimal finding: Dajo/Dahu (interchangeable), Jolo, and Moro. For this the author chose “Dajo” as initial

⁵ <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>

keyword. For this, the search would be narrowed down to a few thousands. Then the author would evaluate the thumbnail⁶ and count the number of red rectangles, indicating the presence of the keyword. When the thumbnail has three or more rectangles, the paper would be downloaded for close reading later on. The author would limit the searching process into 200 thumbnails per keyword. Meaning, regardless of scarcity or abundance of the collected documents for a keyword, it would always end at the designated number. The same process will be repeated until all keywords have been searched. Then proceed to close reading. The sources used in this paper yield the most content-rich materials aside from the common news write-up in which had written only the essentials trimming the details; the rest were just repetitive spun over as a byline to another daily. While the primary book sources used here are from hathitrust.org and archive.org. The paper limits only the pre-setting of the Bud Dajo massacre which happened almost a year before until the end of the barrage (March 8, 1906).

The content of the paper is arranged in the following succession. “The Rising Air” addresses the apparent root cause of the event in which most authors identify as the sole reason for the conflict, thus, everything follows or links with it—the charging of community tax to the Moros by the Americans.

The next one is the “Of Winds and Fates” which started at March 4 where the American forces surveyed the place for possible routes of intrusion to the giant fortification culminating in the massacre on March 7, 1906.

Third, “The Mound Shall Crumble.” In this part, the death toll for both sides is counted until the sudden self-appeasement of Leonard Wood over the said event.

The last one is the “Persisting Images, Haunting Memories”—the deconstruction of the event incorporates several perspectives are taken to form a clear perception over the massacre at the heaven’s reach.

The Rising Air: Sparking Vibes of Animosity and A Glimpse of Regret

Major Hugh Lenox Scott was an American officer assigned in Sulu. During 1905, he convened a conference with the sultan and his datus for the subtle implementation of poll tax. Major Scott understood the psyche of the Moros: hastening the poll tax would ensue a conflict, so, by getting the sympathy of the leaders about the logic of levying taxes, he expected that the people would accept the actions gradually. The Sultan affirmed his support

⁶ A smaller picture representation of the original digital piece.

and earned receipt number 1. The datu, in turn, followed the act of the Sultan, though others, half-heartedly. These datu complied the order and disseminated the information to their respective communities. Penny by penny, the datu brought levied money for poll tax to Scott, which had amounted to nearly fifteen thousand pesos (₱15,000.00). Two of the Tausug leaders, namely, Datu Julkarnain and Datu Indanan, convened a protest and led the hike toward Bud Dajo because of the tax set upon them. Their followers went up and could stay indefinitely for the dormant volcano provided ample freshwater.⁷

Scott sent Captain James Reeves to Bud Dajo to find out what was happening there. Reeves returned and told Scott that at least 650 people went there to incite against the Americans. As Scott evaluated this, he dismissed the claim of rebellion as rumor circulating the place.⁸ Scott left the negotiation to the concerned leaders to speak with their men to avoid further agitation from both sides. With the help of Datu Kalbi, Julkarnain, and Indanan, people descended to the plains gradually until twelve of the Moros along with their family opt to remain in the crater and asked the authorities to let them stay until their crops bloomed and ready for harvesting. The three Tausug leaders also brought many rifles with several rounds of bullets that they had confiscated from the Moros who were staying at the top of the volcano.⁹

While Scott left his post for a holiday celebration, another rumor spread rapidly in the community—those who fail to pay the poll taxes would incur the payor dealings with the military, possibly a reprimand or an assault. Nobody dared to question the malicious statement and took the words by heart resulting in the Moros fleeing to Bud Dajo again without hesitation. The Americans had a harder time to convince the Moros to fall back peacefully as remarked by one of Julkarnain's men saying that nobody can make him return to the plains unless he would be forced to, which meant death to him.¹⁰ In this moment, the man's idea was reflective to the sentiment of the people.

⁷ Hugh Lenox Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier* (New York: The Century Company, 1928), pp. 377-80.

⁸ James R Arnold, *The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902-1913* (New York; London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 146.

⁹ Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier*, pp. 377-80.

¹⁰ Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier*, p. 380.

In the absence of Major Scott, Captain James Reeves¹¹ acted as the district governor. Reeves, who had contrasting temperament with Scott, chose to wait the Moros to express a reportable blunder to justify an edict that would summon companies of troops toward the volcano. When Charles Schuck reported an incident, Reeves took a special interest in the case.

Schuck was the chief translator and interpreter of the American government in the island. He told the authorities that one of his belongings was stolen by a certain Moro and the man also participated to the mass ascension to Bud Dajo. Hence, Schuck added that retrieving it by himself or other civilian would be impossible due to the presence of Moros equipped with arms.¹²

Reeves then forwarded a formal incident report and troop request to the upper management concerning the security issue on Bud Dajo. He interpreted the action as a challenge against the sovereignty of the American forces and having a small standby unit would not be enough to combat the dissenters, thus, he requested more men. In addition to the justification, Reeves used the name of Col. Scott where the latter's agreement of peace (though of verbal understanding only and less likely of writing) was violated by the Moros. This letter dated March 1, 1906, was sent to Captain George Langhorne,¹³ the Provincial Secretary of Mindanao and Sulu. Capt. Langhorne forwarded the report to General Leonard Wood, the Governor of the Moro Province at the time, found this event an opportunity to push total neutralization. Wood shared Reeves' contempt on the Moros with Reeves and this was exhibited earlier over his response to Langhorne on February 9 of the same year that the "ridiculous little affair" at Bud Dajo could be stopped by sending a hundred troops to "clean the place out," hence, he was interested about its scheduling, to the point that he wanted to see the ravaging firsthand.¹⁴

Of Winds and Fates: The Clashing of Two Civilizations

On the early morning of March 4, 1906, Sunday, the American forces set out for Bud Dajo to conduct reconnaissance for the next day's simultaneous attack. The forces were composed of two cavalry troops and line officers led by Colonel Joseph W. Duncan. In terms of distance, the troops had to tread

¹¹ Robert A. Fulton, *Moroland: The History of Uncle Sam and the Moros, 1899-1906* (Bend: Tumalo Creek Press, 2009), pp. 210, 522.

¹² Arnold, *The Moro War*, pp. 146-147.

¹³ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 184.

¹⁴ Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 147.

approximately 10 kilometers from their base to the top of volcano. Due to its height, most of the time the mountain can be seen with clouds encircling it. After the first three kilometers of the main trail, a T-shaped trail faced the troops: one path leading northeast and the other southeast. Here the forces divided their troops. The Tausugs' bases near and atop Bud Dajo can be seen at a height of 460 meters above sea level.¹⁵

The team had identified three major trails toward different apexes overseeing the lands below: the Western trail, the Eastern trail, and the Southern trail, of which all of them were perilous to tread. The plan was then visualized through the clay model of the volcano by Captain Reeves and a U.S. Army map of Jolo.¹⁶

Colonel Duncan was assigned to delineate the strategies of offense brought about by General Leonard Wood, Captain James Reeves, and Aide de Camp and Provincial Secretary George Langhorne over the visual aids. As there were three points of offense, the first assault would be on the deadly path, the Southern trail. The plan, as initially thought, was to let the southern forces attack the Tausug forces directly at their base to divide them into two groups, only to be confronted by the western and eastern troops, leading them into a three-pronged trap. But, instead of having a clear grasp of terrain structure and produce an accurate area mapping, the results of surveying lead the American forces into further confusion: the southern and eastern trails had several ambiguous path markers amidst them which led the troops astray. Duncan and his men pursued ascension after noontime despite failing topographical examination. Hence, on the eve of attack, Duncan assigned four columns that would “capture or destroy [,] the malcontents on or near Bud Dajo” still adhering with the three points of entry paths.¹⁷

The 1st Column, Western Trail was headed by Captain Tyree Rivers of the 4th Cavalry along with two troops under the same group, Troops F and G, accompanied by medics. The 2nd Column, Southern Trail was headed by Omar Bundy of the 6th Infantry along with Company E, K and M of the same infantry and the Moro Constabulary, and still with medical team back-up. The Eastern Trail (3rd Column) with diverse troop composition, headed by Captain Edward P. Lawton of the 19th Infantry, had three companies

¹⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 275; Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 148.

¹⁶ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 275.

¹⁷ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 275-76.

supporting the force, Companies B and D of the 19th Infantry and the Company G of the 6th Infantry, along with the three medical personnel.¹⁸

While the “flash force” or the Flying Column was headed by Colonel Joseph W. Duncan—Troops I and K, 4th Cavalry, 28th Artillery Battery, Signal Corps, and Headquarters, and Colonel W.S. Scott—the Moro Constabulary. While everyone was pacing for the event, Major Elon Wilcox stayed at Jolo for further notice. He was responsible for deploying the second back-up to the flying column, supervising the hospital on the ground, and delivering supplies (shells and foods) to troops through horses.¹⁹

The three trails had then been remembered with distinct characteristics: the eastern trail became known for its near-impregnable defense, the southern trail by its challenging terrain—both hard to hike and virtually open for attacks, while the western trail had the farthest mileage and brought the troops to the peak of three apexes. The Tausugs were assumed to have two kinds of artillery: the hand-held and the mounted firearms. Among the hand-helds were Remingtons, Krags and Mausers, then mostly pistols of which amounted to 100 to 150 in number. While the heavy ones were the lantacas (bronze swivel gun), which the Tausugs had at least eight of them.²⁰

Aside from this possession, the Tausugs reinforced their strategy by using the area’s terrain; thus, relying on rocks and stones as perfect avenues for surprise attacks. Along with this technique, the degrees of slope ranging from 45 to 60 degrees somehow helped to level the field for the Tausugs.²¹

A grander structure strengthened the hold of the Tausugs—the *cotta*. Such presence of the structure signified a society susceptible to local skirmishes or foreign invasion. A *cotta* is a paramilitary defense structure built over an elevated terrain or in a strategic area; the *cotta* serves two purposes: an edifice for overseeing an incoming attack from the attacking forces, and as a structured obstacle to delay, hinder or discourage further intrusion to the territory. A *cotta*’s vulnerability was determined upon the circle of influence a leader had. Hence, aside from the structural strength of the fort, the latter half of its defense relied on the people-force, which included the foot soldiers and family members. A *cotta* usually has three parts: (1) a trench in the frontline as preliminary obstacle; (2) a parapet shrouded with planted

¹⁸ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 276; Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 150.

¹⁹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 277.

²⁰ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 277; “Bloody Battle with Natives in The Philippines. Six Hundred Moros And Fifteen Americans Killed in A Fierce Combat,” *Weekly Journal Miner*, March 14, 1906, p. 3.

²¹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 277.

bamboos contiguous enough to serve as natural walling and peeking zone, usually 10 to 12 feet in height; and an escape route whenever the fort is infiltrated or measly defended.²²

The American soldiers, 2000 in count, were issued .30 caliber Krag or .45 to .70 Springfield Model 1889 caliber carbine. Shells and food were reachable whenever one depleted its resources; in the field, a soldier had ration enough for five to seven days and 200 ammunition rounds under its belt. For the 28th Battery, they had four “mountain guns,” then reinforced with three .30 caliber Colt Automatics by the Army (1 piece) and Navy (2 pieces).²³ The American had all the physical and technological advantages, but these would be evened out by the reliance of the Moros to the nature, at least for quite some time.

March 5, 1906. 4:00 a.m. The three columns went to Bud Dajo following Duncan’s plan and General Wood’s latent blessing. Duncan led the 750 strong forces marching toward Bud Dajo. The Eastern forces were the first to arrive. Right after the Tausugs on the proximity of trails saw the forces hiking to the mountain, they shot the first fires over the American troops as the former used the jagged, distributed rock formations as natural defense for an attempted return fire from below.²⁴

A certain Pvt. John Hudspeth of Company L, 19th Infantry was noted as the first injured participant of the clash. He sustained a wound in his leg. While the first officer casualty during the Bud Dajo massacre was the leader of the Western forces, Captain Rivers. He dealt an injury to the same body part as Pvt. Hudspeth two hours after the Western forces arrived over their designated trail. Rivers being handicapped, Captain Lewis M. Koehler led the group moving upward. Among the three columns, the Southern forces progressed the reaching 950 meters away from the top by noon. At that distance, the slope apparently rose, thus, the path seemed to be lost over thick fauna occupying the terrain.²⁵

²² Federico V Magdalena, *The Battle of Bayang and Other Essays on Moroland* (Marawi City: MSU Research Center, 2000). pp. 33-36.

²³ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 277; Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 148.

²⁴ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 277; Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 151; “Battle in the Philippines,” *The Goodland Republic*, March 16, 1906.

²⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 277-278; Vic Hurley, *Swish of the Kris: The Story of the Moros* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1997), p. 97.

The flying column then followed the eastern trail, then reached the 3rd Column by noon. Captain E.F. McGlachlin²⁶ the Commander of 29th Artillery Battery mounted the 75 mm. Vickers-Maxim Mountain Guns beside the eastern trail. McGlachlin then tested the power of the mounted guns, then fired at an angle enough to reach 720 meters. Though as nature implied, the cottas seemed to be unscathed due to their thickness ranging from 1.33 to 2 meters.

Duncan distributed the support artillery then gave all columns mounted guns except for the southern trail, which had two. At this moment, the troops fell victim to the traps made by the Tausugs. Due to the difficulty of establishing a solid placement of the mounted gun, tripping in a highly sloped mountain filled with flora covering the terrain was a common happening. The soldiers dealt an injury from pointed bamboo stakes through tripping.²⁷

Capt. John R. White and his Moro constituents (25 constables) were ordered by Major Bundy to further survey the southern trail; the forces were backed with Captain Samuel Schindel with M Company of the 6th Infantry afterwards. While they keep on advancing upwards, the slope also became less bearable as well. The angle of inclination drastically increased as they moved forward. For them to avoid detection, only three individuals were tasked to probe further to create a manageable trail to follow: White and his two constables endured the harsh weather, the natural floras, and the crawling faunas over them for three hours of gradual crawling. The arduous climbing made them reach the two-thirds of the distance, though the night was also near.²⁸

Aside from the tedious journey brought by the mountain's steepness and presence of shrubs, at last the exhaustion was finally rewarded after they reached the 1500 feet elevation near dusk. Corporal Sayary, one of Capt. White's companions, heard voices nearby that did not belong to their allies.. He then identified them as Tausugs as he tried to make sense of the unfamiliar sound. White was immediately informed by Sayary about this; the former instructed his men to keep quiet. Sayary, upon the affirmation of

²⁶ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 278; Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 102. McGlachlin has its surname misspelt on several secondary and primary sources. Fulton, 's spelling was inconsistent— Mclaughin, McGlachin; the same variations were also seen over the read newspapers.

²⁷ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 278; "Battle in the Philippines." Block-and-tackle pulley leverage system was used to deliver heavy equipment above the necessary height. It requires attaching ropes in a modified bearing, i.e. pulley, thus, the other end of cable should be tied at a firm structure, i.e. tree, for the person/s pulling below to deliver the equipment by only exerting a fraction of force or so compared to the required amount needed.

²⁸ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 278.

White, crawled nearer the source of voices yet in slow and cautious manner. He reported what he saw under that crucial surveillance—key positions of the parapet guards and the characteristics of the trench.²⁹

Captain Langhorne, who was in Zamboanga at the time of attack, received a notification from the Secretary of War, then issued by General Henry Clark Corbin³⁰—the directive provided a detailed instruction for military requests to be approved. For an expedition to be materialized, a request from a District Governor would pass through several levels: Provincial Governor, Military Commander, Philippine Department Commander (PDC), Secretary of War and the General Staff. The first two heads had only served as a channel to district governor’s request then recommend to the rank higher above it. In this case, the 2nd and 3rd rank holder at the time was Wood. His highest position (PDC) had the prerogative to approve the request yet must notify the last two positions through cable, explaining his side and the justification to commence such act. The latter two, which deliberated this scheme to prevent Wood from deciding quickly, had the power to stop, if not suspend, the operation as they deemed logical.³¹

Though such directive did not faze the “General” Wood. Upon such reading the orders, Captain Langhorne, as representative of the Civil Governor Wood, sent a formal request for approval on March 5, 1906, to General Wood, that an uprising has formed in Bud Dajo, and these “lawbreakers” should be addressed by the military forces immediately. Also, to prevent this movement to influence Moros in the plains, they already sent 2000 men marching towards the crater, exchanging fires with the Tausugs. What aggravated such violation was that Langhorne and Wood did not take any measures to inform their superiors despite lines connecting Zamboanga and Washington were able and ready to deliver the message.³²

²⁹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 279; John R. White, *Bullets and Bolos: Fifteen Years in the Philippine Islands* (New York: The Century Company, 1928), pp. 306-7; Arnold, *The Moro War*, pp. 151-152.

³⁰ General Henry Clark Corbin was one of the American generals assigned in Mindanao. He also had written a strong recommendation for Col. Scott for Brigadier General position as initially commended by General Leonard Wood several months before the massacre happened (May 26, 1905). See: Military Record of Colonel Hugh L. Scott, U.S. Army. (1906).

³¹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 279.

³² Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 280.

March 6, 1906. Duncan and his team left Jolo (Tuesday), 2:00 a.m. and came at the southern path starting point by dawn.³³

Duncan went to the trail with Reeves as his assistant, and Charlie Schück³⁴ as the interpreter. Bundy retained White and the earlier team who had crawled the evening before near the enemy line to lead the attack. Behind them were the four sharpshooters deployed by Captain Samuel Schindel.³⁵ Upon arriving at the location where they had previously heard voices, they found nothing. However, the American forces were met with a hail of bullets from the parapets hundreds of yards above and from the trenches as they ascended. White charged forward with twelve troops, while the sharpshooters supported them from behind and slowly heading through, acting as the Moros' contender in continuous volley of metal pellets.³⁶

Due to the *abattis* (crossly erected wooden fence) hindering the path of the Americans, they had a hard time passing the barricade. Private Diukson was the first member of the troop to die in the line when he attempted to climb over the blockade from above. Private Diukson had his jugular vein hit by a bullet causing him to deal with fast yet painful death.³⁷ A certain Private Usama³⁸ also climbed like Diukson did, thus, dealt an injury. A two-hour continuous barrage stopped the forces advancing over the *abattis*. They also had to find a safer space when the force's mountain guns started shooting above them—they were sandwiched between two fires. Hence, a Colonel Duncan who safely observed the efforts from below, devised a new strategy: he sent his order to the three column-masters, instructing them to find a better starting position that would allow their forces to advance toward the volcano rim in 120 minutes by the time they had read his directive. As Major Bundy received the directive, he thought that White's spot marked the right

³³ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 280.

³⁴ Dorothy M. Rogers, "A History of American Occupation and Administration of the Sulu Archipelago, 1899-1920." (MA Thesis, 1959), pp. 25-28. The German lineage of Schück in Sulu can be traced back from mid-19th century when the progenitor, Herman William Frederick Schuck, was assigned in the place due to his responsibility to his country's foreign service. He stayed in the place for several years and had been received by the Sultanate warmly. Later, the patriarch decided to reside permanently in the island close to the royalty. The descendants then became a crucial peaceful mediator during the arrival of the Americans in Jolo—also the official translator-interpreter of Americans on their future activities in the island.

³⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 522.

³⁶ White, *Bullets and Bolos*, p. 308.

³⁷ White, *Bullets and Bolos*, p. 308.

³⁸ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 281. The name Fulton spelt was *Usuama*. Given that this was a Moro soldier, it was probable that it is *Usama* as influenced by Arabic naming patterns.

place. He then contacted Captain McGlachlin for an assistance of a mountain gun for them to push through.³⁹

Koehler remained in advancing the western trail with the help of mountain gun.⁴⁰ The first blockade was pulverized by continuous riddling of the heavy rifle. Casualties on Moro's side were counted four. The next line of defense was a wood blockhouse 229 meters below the crater. While hiking and climbing higher, the presence of shrubs was also getting denser. The forces had to come up with their way of reaching the woodhouse faster, but to no avail. Climbing also became more difficult when the path leading above the crater was either smashed or evened by the Moros, making them to rely holding on sturdy plants enough to withstand the weight of an average American soldier. Both the Moro and Koehler's forces attempted to end each other in two instances: yet the Moros had dealt five deaths while the Americans, none. Koehler then wanted to pursue the main base faster, thus finishing the battle in that day. He then sent his messenger to have his request granted in advance. Yet as Duncan had already sent his courier, Koehler's plan was canceled—it was the same order which Bundy received earlier. Hence, in Koehler's view, he attained what Duncan had ordered them to do so. Hours had passed Koehler and his troops waited for the next move, which they had to receive the day after.⁴¹

Of the three trails, the eastern forces had reached the top first by mid-morning. By the virtue of the column-master, Capt. A.M. Wetherill hiked to the summit along with Companies B and D, 19th Infantry as ordered by Capt. Lawton.⁴² Several troops were harmed not of gunshots, but of rocks skidding above them. Wetherill and his forces spent several hours of treading and climbing, having the same predicament as the other troops in other trails were experiencing.⁴³

Wetherill then contacted Lawton for the opportunity of attacking the base through their trail; Lawton then sent the message to Duncan, explaining the urgency of doing so, thus, to coordinate with all the forces in three trails. Duncan, who was hurrying to form a unified attack, faced several factors which delayed his plan: the paths were steep making the transmission of

³⁹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 281.

⁴⁰ Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 97.

⁴¹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 282.

⁴² Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 97.

⁴³ Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 97; Fulton, *Moroland*, p.282.

messages slower than in a normal terrain and the volatile weather surrounding the crater aggravated the messengers' struggle for hasty exchange of intelligence. The experience was hellish which postponed the simultaneous attacks until the dawn of March 7, 1906.⁴⁴

March 7, 1906. The mountain gun assigned to the southern trail was fired until its remaining bullets, while White and his troops moved still following the southern trail by daybreak. The Tausugs guarding the abattis the day before left the territory; the troops had grabbed the opportunity to position closer to the top. On their attempt to advance over the steep trail, they noticed that the Tausugs had just moved 69 meters from the abandoned abattis, hence, the Americans faced the same predicament as the day before: every time they attempted to go beyond the abattis, the Moro sprayed them with bullets preventing them to push through.⁴⁵

Most of the Moro constables who accompanied White on the trail sustained injuries while attempting to go beyond the abattis through a small hole. They also received gunshots in the process of moving forward.⁴⁶ A *lantaca* was fired at White's forces, resulting in one of his companions losing his right arm instantly. Subsequently, the Tausugs engaged in close-quarter combat, wielding spears, *krises*, and other weapons. The troops who were hiding during that encounter then left the abattis and crawled their way to the *cotta*. White sustained an injury on his left leg after gazing above the wall, then gunned by a Moro from below. Moments later, as White leaned over the trenches, Moros attempted another attack but were neutralized by anticipating American troops.⁴⁷

Capt. Dwight Ryther⁴⁸ and Capt. Samuel Schindel led the Southern forces after White dealt a lesion. Though Major Omar Bundy claimed otherwise that he had done the order as what Pvt. Vinton Hill⁴⁹ narrated. Death befell to the Moros who attacked the troops for southern trail; it only took the soldiers an hour to kill them. While it was a fact that the Moros suffered complete losses, their Moro brothers on the American side had also shared the same fate but of a fraction: thirteen Moros were injured, two died; the

⁴⁴ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 283-85.

⁴⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 285.

⁴⁶ White, *Bullets and Bolos*, p. 309.

⁴⁷ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 285-86.

⁴⁸ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 520.

⁴⁹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 520.

Americans had similar counts—two died in the process, and eighteen bruised.⁵⁰

The western trail troops had reached near the top easily because only five Tausugs were the remaining forces blocking their way. Koehler prepared to launch the final attack by 8:30 a.m. given that he was 18 meters away from the fort. Though he came for a halt when the message of Duncan sent the day before, which was to wait for the supply (i.e. ammunitions) to be sent to them. Thus, Koehler ordered to wait for the delivery 73 meters below his closest distance to the fort.⁵¹

Captain C.O. Farmer had found the lost nexus connecting the south and east paths early that morning in which Troop K, 4th Cavalry accompanied him throughout the inspection. He met a surprise attack from the Moros uphill, then withdrawn his forces back to the starting point. As he arrived from the path-base, a directive from Duncan was waiting for him, thus, called him to report the base the soonest.⁵²

A certain Lt. Gordon Johnston⁵³ was injured along with Col. White on the eastern trail encounter. There had been a switch of forces during this time: the injured were delivered by stretchers to safety, while two machine guns were taken above for the final barrage. After surveilling the peak of southern trail, Major Bundy reported to Duncan through flag-waving telegraph that Lawton had not reached the site, thus, no sign of an incoming assault on the latter's position. Duncan then sent a courier delivering the directive to Lawton for granting permission to charge. Yet a troop of anonymous identification reported to Lawton that he was expected to follow an attack Major Bundy had initiated above earlier at that day; the dubious messenger brought the information to Lawton few minutes before 10 in the morning, but the messenger sent by Duncan had just fled less than hour.⁵⁴

Confused by such happenings, two officers were sent by Lawton to clarify with Duncan that there had been no directives whatsoever received by his

⁵⁰ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 287.

⁵¹ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 287-88.

⁵² Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 288.

⁵³ "Bloody Battle with Natives in the Philippines," *Weekly Journal Miner*. March 14, 1906, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 288.

camp about attacking the summit, let alone a message received few hours before the evening of March 6.⁵⁵

Three hours before noon, Generals Wood and Bliss along with four high-ranking officials and a team of journalist arrived at Jolo by the steamer *Sabah* from Zamboanga; an hour after they docked, they traveled toward the base of Duncan. The same steamer will be of immediate use after Wood seen the final situation and had to write a report for his superiors. Medical supplies and other essentials had to be fetched also from Zamboanga.⁵⁶ At that moment, when they stopped over near the trails' starting point, a soldier spoke about what was happening above, informing Wood about the situation briefly. Communications from Lawton as delivered by two officers and an order from Duncan met at the center, thus, Wood read the papers assessed the situation: there he knew there was a miscommunication between two camps. Wood then decided that the urgency of order needed by Lawton was so crucial he allowed the latter to proceed with the attack, in which the same officers sent by Lawton delivered the directives at the top. When the remaining fellows of Wood reached their site, of which had ridden separate boat—the USS Pampanga—Wood then ordered Lt. Halstead Dory⁵⁷ to lead the forces on western trail. Yet to no opponent had reached their basepoint. The eastern forces then headed by Captain Langhorne were accompanied by the navy, of which two out of 11 were officers—Ensign Cooke and Midshipman Hayward.⁵⁸

By midday Wood and other officers reached the base of Colonel Duncan. Astounded by the aftermath of Duncan's miscommunication, Wood lashed a verbal outrage on the responsible, though it was considerably quiet compared to a common scolding by a higher official. Following the subdued confrontation between Duncan and Wood, Lieutenant Poillon was tasked by Wood to confer with Major Bundy, gather real-time information, and return to headquarters.⁵⁹ The two machine guns had finally arrived at the Southern trail the same at noon. The lighter machine gun was first fired in the direction of Koehler's trail (western trail), followed by the heavier one still raining shells on the same direction. Koehler retreated 137 meters below the rim eschewing the lead showers. But in terms of Tausugs' neutralization, the

⁵⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 288-89.

⁵⁶ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 289; Arnold, *The Moro War*, p. 166, 170; "Official Report of Fight," *The Omaha Daily Bee*, March 10, 1906, 2.

⁵⁷ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 520.

⁵⁸ "The Battle of Jolo," *The Evening Statesman*, July 30, 1906, 4; "Official Report of Fight," 2; Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 289.

⁵⁹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 290.

result seemed unfounded, or better yet a waste of resources.⁶⁰ The back-up forces sent by Wood to eastern trail few minutes before two in the afternoon. The forces, which was led by Langhorne, were naval-trained soldiers with two Colt Automatics: the same lighter machine gun fired by Bundy.⁶¹ Despite the difficulty of placement, the eastern forces had found positions that would fire from both external sides of the cotta. Four companies from 6th and 19th Infantry then advanced near the cotta, reversing the Tausugs on their defensive mode.⁶²

Then everything seemed to be at halt—a momentary quietness struck the place. Everyone knew that in the next few minutes the fate of both sides would be decided: the American troops who were already exhausted, still cling with their arms regardless of what was left on their ammunition stacks under their belt and those who were badly injured were settled in safer ground behind the attacking troops; the Tausugs who were noticeably wore their best dresses, seemed to have readied themselves to meet their death regardless of gender and age—all had arms to bear though most of them had makeshift weapons and blades, while others bore guns.⁶³ Regardless of belonged camps, Lawton, in his historic moment, blew the bugle on one of the bloodiest bouts between Moros and Americans.⁶⁴

The barrage of several machine guns of different round-per-minute capacities along with the handheld rifles by the soldiers swept the entire vicinity of merciless lead pellets boring holes wherever directed. Albeit the Tausugs injured some of the Americans, none of them at the crater had survived. Cottas and houses also received ample attention from the soldiers, thus, showered those at all angles. 400 Moro were killed on that moment and probably the day before, as counted by Lawton after commanding a halt in collective firing. By 4:30 p.m. Bundy received a report from Lawton about their survey on the said place; Duncan then commanded Bundy to lead all American troops at the vicinity, while Lawton was given the responsibility by Bundy of neutralizing the Tausugs lingering the mountain by March 8.⁶⁵

The Mound Shall Crumble: Final Blows to the Troubled Land

⁶⁰ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 290.

⁶¹ Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 97.

⁶² Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 290.

⁶³ “No Wanton Killing,” *The Evening Star*. March 15, 1906, 11; “Hostile Moro Force Exterminated,” *Hilo Tribune*, March 20, 1906, 1.

⁶⁴ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 291.

⁶⁵ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 292.

March 8, 1906. The eastern trail forces forwarded at the northern part of the rim, which was then had not been scouted given the routes the Americans treaded with (east, west, and south). A brief encounter at the northern side of the rim happened when Ensign Cooke was hit by a fire from the cotta. Midshipman Hayward overseen the command, while Lt. H.H. Bissell along with some of the 19th Infantrymen moved on all fours heading the cotta's outskirts. One of the naval forces initiated to check the inside of the cotta by carefully peering through its top, which Bissell had to do but with great reservation. The navy man—Seaman Joseph Fitz—shot the remaining Tausug at the cotta; Koehler had identified bodies amounting sixty-seven Moros, all withdrawn with life.⁶⁶

By the time that all Moros in the vicinity had already been pacified, Wood had arrived at the scene and done several commands over the troops in the crater: Wood did not allow Lawton to count and confiscate any arms used by the Moro at the time, thus, along with others, were ordered to return to the headquarters the soonest; those who remained at the scene were the Moro *cargadores* (24-strong), some of the 6th Infantrymen of the Southern trail and the column-master, Major Bundy, so ordered by Wood to entomb the cadavers and destroy all forts and the like, ensuring that nothing could be utilized whenever a movement as such posed threat to the American rule. Despite of having no hard evidence of the numbers, officers such as Bundy, Lawton, and Koehler mentioned on their written statements that the Moros had only one *lantaca*, forty-four rifles, fifty-five “bolos,” and five spears.⁶⁷ Though those were contrary to several estimates, hence as comparison to Langhorne who said that many of the guns clung over the cadavers while they were being covered with soil. For this, Fulton noted that at least there were hundreds of thrown and flailed weapons, seven *lantacas*, and a hundred to hundred-fifty rifles of different kinds. Some of which were used during the Civil War. As later evaluated on the process, most kills done by the Americans were accounted to their handheld guns, and not the heavy-barraging rifles, in which Fulton also described as “largely ineffective against the cottas and trenches.”⁶⁸

Aside from the inaccurate report on the number of weapons was the dead body count: the 600 figure, which Wood had provided, was too crude. Given the encounters met by the forces from the trails to the rim, one would

⁶⁶ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 293.

⁶⁷ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 294.

⁶⁸ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 294; “Last Confederate Rifle Used in War,” *The Times Dispatch*, August 1, 1907, 12.

estimate that 700 to 800 might be closer to truth.⁶⁹ Casualties on the American side were rather accurate: The Naval troops suffered three casualties which were injured and no deaths accounted, the Army with fifty-six injured and eighteen deaths, while the Moro Constabulary dealt with fourteen injuries and three deaths, which totaled to seventy-three injured troops and twenty-one that laid rest. Thus, contrary to the belief, many Moros had survived the massacre. Most of them might have fled during the nights of encounter, or as the opportunity allowed to do so. Though one could not assure the status of these survivors whether they were combatants that left the battleground or just an inhabitant that happened to be caught by open fire. As record had shown, there should be at least 30 to 200 Tausugs that survived the event.⁷⁰

Wood and the officers arrived at the base at 4 o' clock in the afternoon, while the regular troops two hours earlier. Yet Bundy and his fellows who helped burying the cadavers opt to stay at the southern path by the night, thus, to have a conversation with Colonel Duncan about what had happened.⁷¹ General Wood and his men returned at Zamboanga during that night. Though Wood had sent a letter to Col. Duncan, it did not suffice to explain the actions of Wood during the battle and the inactions (pertaining to decisions such as courtesy to the local leaders, proper burying of the dead, and so forth) after the harsh encounter transpired. A puzzled Duncan kept on thinking about what happened for several days.⁷²

Persisting Images, Haunting Memories

Basically, Gowing treated the governance of Americans in Mindanao, collectively known then as Moroland including Basilan, Sulu, Tawi-tawi and categorically the tip of Palawan, with three phases. The first phase spanned about four years, 1899-1903, where the negotiation of political acknowledgement between two powers and the creation of Moro province materialized. The second one, which was the longest (1903-1913) in which the military ruled the place, while the last and transitory to gradual assimilation to national government affairs (1914-1920) was led by the civilians. At onset of military rule, the Americans had immediately broke their promise with the Moros in the aspect of cultural autonomy and sovereignty, i.e. interfering practices present in the tradition long before the

⁶⁹ Cf. White and Hurley's figures.

⁷⁰ Fulton, *Moroland*, pp. 293, 295.

⁷¹ Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 295; Hurley, *Swish of the Kris*, p. 98.

⁷² Fulton, *Moroland*, p. 296.

Americans came, hence, repealing the deal which the Bates treaty had forged. Then again, Americans eschewed criticism thrown at them, reasoning that any deal made with the “savages” were in the first place invalid; the Americans, being the more knowledgeable one, were burdened over the direction the Moros and their land would head to. If they deemed justifiable their action toward the goal of “civilizing,” they would do so even if it was invasive on socio-religious sphere of the locality. General Leonard Wood, being the first military governor of the Moro Province, acted the same way as described above. What made the situation more polarized was General Wood’s religio-political conservatism, i.e. Calvinist and White ethnocentrism, thus, a perfect mix for chaos waiting to be tested on ground.⁷³

Peeking in a closer view to Wood’s biography, one could expect in a book lauding a person’s career that nothing was written that would defile one’s reputation; for Wood’s case, anything that was related to Bud Dajo massacre and his mismanagement of the crowd were missing. Still in the same book, Sears mentioned that the Spanish empire the failure of the Spaniards in their ability to rule over its dominions, in which as Sears detailed as the usual result to the Spain’s former colonies, the Spaniards mistake was apparent in Mindanao and Sulu because of their religious intolerance. Therefore, apart from the region’s lack of potential as a cash cow for the Spaniards.⁷⁴ What was shrouded in this claim was the Americans, especially Leonard Wood, had failed because of quite similar reasons. Wood did not have the patience as Scott did during his tenure on Sulu. For the price of pragmatism and the thought of the impending conflict in Bud Dajo as petty, Wood decided to wipe out every Moros in the crater. In this case, this pragmatism was rooted to two prevailing idea one can infer to Wood’s actions: the thought of racial-intellectual supremacy and cultural difference and intolerance.⁷⁵

The first reason can be inferred to McKinley’s words as their role to the Filipinos being cultivators of the colonial’s mind leading them to their perceived notion of civilization.⁷⁶ Yet by this time, Wood acted upon showing what was his notion of “educating” by using a forced conditioning to the people of Jolo. This conditioning took place in two ways: the physical and the psychological. The physical conditioning pertained to withdrawing lives

⁷³ Peter G. Gowing, “Muslim-American Relations in the Philippines, 1899-1920,” *Asian Studies Journal* 6, no. 3 (1968): 372–83, <https://asj.upd.edu.ph/mediabox/archive/ASJ-06-03-1968/gowing-muslim-american%20relations%20in%20the%20philippines%201899-1920.pdf>, pp. 372–23.

⁷⁴ Joseph H. Sears, *The Career of Leonard Wood* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1919).

⁷⁵ Scott, *Some Memories of a Soldier*, pp. 375-77.

⁷⁶ Gowing, “Muslim-American Relations,” p. 372.

over the Moro individuals instead of afflicting injuries through a merciless barrage of leads directed at any point if Moros were identified to be present within the vicinity. This can be inferred to his order to deploy three additional machine guns to be fired at the crater. Of both moral and weaponry perspectives, what Wood had done was very disturbing considering that the Moros (given that they were at least 800 people above there) had only few weapons capable of firing, while the rest had blades, would in any sense, could not defeat fully-armed troops (at least not more than 150 people) which were backed by four machine guns even without the back-up sent by Leonard Wood. For short, given that the process of pacifying was not thought to become peaceful, what Wood had done was an overkill.

Leonard Wood, on the other hand, if not clouded by his religion and perceived civilizational superiority over the Moros, was uninformed with Islam's teachings. While Wood's intentions were good considering them through a conservative American perspective, he failed to understand that the idea of separation of church/religion and state in which their banner hails were unthinkable to the Tausugs practicing Islam.⁷⁷ For one, the supreme ruler of Sulu cannot be crowned, as part of the prerequisites, if one could not establish his link to the Muhammad PBUH through reading of the official and royal genealogy, *tarsila*; the way of life of the practitioners, esp. in governance, should be aligned with the Qur'an and the life and works of the Prophet. Thus, analyzing these situations, the worldviews of the Americans and the Tausugs during this time is greatly incompatible and everything in between them, i.e. governance, social practices and norms, are points of contention.

The psychological conditioning was the result of the aftermath: the Americans had instilled great fear to the inhabitants, let alone the commoners, given that by any discomfort or any act the Moros would have done which seemed strange to the strong forces may lead them to their demise.⁷⁸ Yet this remark by Worcester had been brought up into a higher level of inconsideration. Wood did not meet a lesson to ponder, but a verdict

⁷⁷Howard M. Federspiel, "Islam and Muslims in the Southern Territories of the Philippine Islands during the American Colonial Period (1898 to 1946)," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 29, no. 2 (September 1998): 343-44, <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0022463400007487>.

⁷⁸ Worcester (1914) once mentioned about psychological conditioning (634-35):

"In my opinion, if we are to cure them of their evil tendencies, we must first warn them that they will be punished if they misbehave, and then make the warning come true. This had been done, but to another very important part of the programme which I deem essential to success, comparatively little attention seems to have been given. When people who have been punished for misbehavior have had enough, they should be afforded a chance to quit, and indeed should be encouraged and helped to do so."

inducing trauma which transcended generations beyond the time it happened. What transpired in Bud Dajo was a case of mismanagement of people macro-relations (i.e. military-civilian connections and assigned district/local head), deliberate miscommunication at hierarchies of command esp. in planning and executing the killing spree (See: Langhorne and Wood conspiracy), and an idiosyncratic difference of the head, both Reeves and Wood, in dealing with their civilian constituents. There had been an opportunity for peace between the Moros and Americans then, as Scott showed several times in his residency, but the Americans chose to use violence thinking that the effect would be lasting, as this event had birthed another unfortunate episode featuring John J. Pershing and the Battle of Bud Bagsak of 1913.

To worsen the situation, while the Moro civilian became ambivalent over the American rule, their respect to their local leaders waned. The masses gradually became reliant with the American legal system by following due process and ignoring the words and traditions brought about by the *datus*, thus, hurting their pride and expressing it while conversing with the American officials. The *datus* also interpreted the actions of the locals as manifestation of anarchy through describing the situation.⁷⁹

An apparent misunderstanding between cultures while the hegemon took advantage over these nuances, thus, imposed their perceived superiority to the former and endemic culture—killing them was a justification to make them civilized. It was a supposition that the observer had the right to impose ideas over the traditional method, thus, would lead to possible deconstruction of the prevailing system and introduce the brought package as the effective and efficient method of living. A clash between the *etic* and *emic* perspective, hence, can be called as the Ideal-Delusional Stance as exhibited by the American hegemon over the Tausugs.

The Americans created an image of their situation in dealing with the Moros. Hence, the latter was pictured as socially disjointed people without having a glint of unity, had suddenly paced with each other to attain a certain goal—to hate the “white race.”⁸⁰ Well, this was not the case. The Tausugs were among the most exposed Moros to the world in the context of the event. They met and welcomed several people who had visited their lands such as Borneans, technically their neighbors, Germans, Chinese and other

⁷⁹ Cesar Andres-Miguel Suva, “Nativizing the Imperial: The Local Order and Articulation of Colonial Rule in Sulu, Philippines, 1881-1920” (PhD Dissertation, 2016), pp. 159-165.

⁸⁰ Sears, *The Career of Leonard Wood*, pp. 175-76.

nationalities because of its reputation of trading hub.⁸¹ Virtually, one could deduce that the Tausugs were exposed to people at par with the Americans, or more so. The noted hostilities meted by the Tausugs to a foreign power was when the Spaniards imposed their sovereignty over the said island, thus, having the right to charge taxes to the inhabitants until mediated by an amicable mediator, hence a temporary reconciliation which made the Spanish cash out small amount of tax from the Moros.⁸² Of the issue of being disunited, the Moros were already ruled by several leaders of different in scope and level of hierarchy among the royalties in Mindanao since time immemorial.⁸³

Another blunder made the Americans was the primary agreement which justified their presence in Mindanao—the Kiram-Bates treaty:

“The treaty between the United States of America and the Sultan of Sulu already referred to for the preservation of peace and protection of slavery, polygamy[,] and Mohammedanism, under the barbarous rule of his royal highness and shelter of the stars and stripes, provides:

“The rights and dignities of his highness, the Sultan, and his datos, shall be fully respected; the Moros shall not be interfered with on account of their religion; all their religious customs shall be respected, and no one shall be persecuted on account of his religion.

“Article 10—Any slave in the archipelago of Sulu shall have the right to purchase freedom by paying to the master the usual market value.”⁸⁴

The American forces introduced a western legal idea of recognition through paper, yet they were the first one to violate what was said in it. Worcester said that the treaty was just an attempt to negotiate with the one in power, hence the Sultan of Sulu. Yet despite of the practice of slavery being robust in the community, Bates entered a treaty with Sultan Kiram to

⁸¹ See: J.F. Warren’s *The Sulu Zone* published in 1981.

⁸² H.H. van Meter, *The Truth about the Philippines from Official Records and Authentic Sources* (Chicago: The Liberty League, 1900), p. 159.

⁸³ See: Cesar Adib Majul’s *Muslim in the Philippines* printed by University of the Philippines Diliman on several occasions—1973 and 1999.

⁸⁴ Van Meter, *The Truth about the Philippines*, pp. 153-4.

recognize the American forces as sovereign entity, with several degrees of authority to impose orders within the Sultan's land if it did not violate the written edict. The signed documents were dismissed by the higher American officials, which made the agreement null and void.⁸⁵ Bates knew all about this, it was a rudimentary knowledge for the American patriot. The 13th amendment stated that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”⁸⁶ The agreement was a fool's show and the clown was the clueless Sultan, never had been informed about what transpired over the higher echelons of American governance. The Americans at this point had no right to meddle at Jolo's sociopolitical activities yet persisted like nothing happened. Feigning unawareness of the situation and continued to be an active element of the island's business.

In short, the Americans did find ways to frame the Moros as the unruly “savages” ones needed to be civilized by hook or by crook. Yet, in the first place the Tausugs did not invite the Americans to go there, thus, should have kept distance with sociopolitical affairs of the land. The Americans, being concerned with their image to the colonial times, became the same entity they had shed blood to escape with—an empire.

Among the reasons for conflict in Bud Dajo, cultural differences can be pointed out as the most common factor. In power dynamics, the cultures of Americans and Tausugs tend to clash because of the misalignment of traditions, in which nothing had coincide, or if there were, only a few recognizable features which were easily ruled out by their dissimilarities. Yet, in this case of cultural assimilation, the burden of introduction would be on the Americans where they would gradually introduce the nuances of their traditions and the benefits of adapting those to the modern daily life. Hence, a soft power intrusion where the receiving culture would lessen the guard so as erasing the notion of treating the bearers' culture a threat to the former. Yet to fast-track the two-parts assimilation the Moros⁸⁷ would undergo, the

⁸⁵ Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippines Past and Present*, vol. 2 (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1914), p. 682; Van Meter, *The Truth about the Philippines*, p. 153.

⁸⁶ Van Meter, *The Truth about the Philippines*, p. 154.

⁸⁷ The two-part assimilation, as the author analyzed, was the effort to “civilize” the Moro into a similar level with the Christian Filipino counterparts. The first stage of the assimilation would be the acquaintance and gradual reception of the Moros to the basic American culture. Thus, given enough exposure and proficiency to the culture, the Moros then would undergo the second and last part of the assimilation, where the gradual intrusion of Christian population in a Moro community, being the vice versa as implausible, would be the litmus test whether the Moros would be ready to be included in a government where the Christian Filipinos are being ruled.

Americans used hard power, thus, inevitably clashed with several cherished traditions the Moros kept for centuries.

The structure of differences between the American and the Tausugs (Islamic Malay World in general) are defined into two categories: the first one rules on the legal tradition, in which the Americans adapted has its legal system which also the present Philippine ruling is largely based of; while the Tausugs were governed by laws inspired by Qur'an and other authoritative Islamic texts (*Hadith* or traditions from Muhammad PBUH), thus applied in legal situations. The second one is the sociocultural tradition of which are unwritten in nature, where the Americans acted upon situations based on their European-influenced upbringings and philosophies, hence, also affected their crafting their norms, and laws at some extent. The Moros, in turn, were ruled by the *Adat*. The word itself being Arabic in origin, also means culture or tradition in Malayan languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Malaysia, and Sug, etc.).⁸⁸

To illustrate the power dynamics, one should dissect the linear history into several progressing stages. When the Americans “legalized” their stand over the Sulu territory, the Tausug royalty believed that the agreement was only a formalization of political friendship from the whites. Yet as the former rooted in the place, Western legal customs had been infused into the prevailing sociopolitical sphere in such time that the Adat-based authority the sultan and the datu had were depleted into a mere titular, sympathetic leadership. While the latter’s power dynamics hailed a competitive/sanguine-driven authority, the former advocated an equitable sense of sorts, in which for the Moro leaders a disrupting concept they had not anticipated any time soon.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Muki T. Wicaksono, “Institutionalizing Adat Land: A Lesson Learned on Local Government’s Initiative in Recognizing Indigenous People in Indonesia,” (2nd International Conference on Cordillera Studies, n.d.), p. 3; Raihanah Abdullah, Patricia Martinez, and Wirdati Mohd. Radzi, “Islam and Adat,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 38, no. 111 (July 2010): 161–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2010.489349>, pp. 1-2; Taufik Abdullah, “Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau,” *Indonesia* 2 (October 1966): 1–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3350753>; *Adat* has two ambiguous meanings: one as that guides one’s action to associate to the society, hence, considered a violation or in opposition to *Shariah*. Another one is the Adat as the structure of the society itself, wherein ethical and legal idealisms in verdict-making are based. Thus, principles governing the relationship of the supreme to human would be based in Qur’an, but for human-to-human interaction the Adat should suffice.

⁸⁹ Suva, “Nativizing the Imperial,” pp. 158–62. The succeeding citations of work of Suva including this footnote are just references for the idea of chartering the pattern of power dynamics. But the expansion and usage of analogy are nonetheless, of the author of this article.

Moving to the lower stratification a question has been raised—whom shall the people heed to at this point? For the Moro leaders became deprived with former possessed authoritative vigor, of which was left was the respect the people had collectively imagined and passed through generations. Heeding the leaders' call would yield to a half-hearted affirmation, though of course the people would comply but not as lively as then. What replaced them was a foreigner to all their traditions—language, behavior, mentality, and physicality—so this authority seemed to be a blank figure in the air waiting to do something for the Moros to interpret to. Despite their shared hesitance to acquiesce with the new ruler, what struck the people was the fear of the unknown, as every human does so. This confusion of relatability and authority was further by the differing temperaments of Scott, and Reeves and Wood: the first one as a diplomatic leader; while the latter two took no time to understand the complexities which hindered immediate understanding of worldviews.⁹⁰

This was exhibited when the rumor of purging the Moros who eschewed paying taxes would be decimated struck the community, despite the source not being identified, still believed by the folks. A reason to ponder lies in the connection between the orientation of perspectives. As aforesaid, the people met the Americans first as a foreigner before becoming identifiable entity. The symbolic relation accorded to the feeling of the unknown, which instills fear, is more persistent rather than the feeling of the known, where familiarity and security connect. Here, the image of Captain Scott being an amicable and diplomatic leader transformed his status as an identifiable entity to the Tausug, yet exclusive only to the leaders. While the people, though had been acquainted with Scott for quite some, had only a blurred image of knowingness. As such, the rumor spread all over the place and the sense of familiarity had been replaced by fear. The sheer number of people against the chance of quality interaction to be done by Scott, thus, juxtaposed with the cultural differences did really strike the people's psyche right after they heard the news. It was also the reason why the persuading talks of the Datus for the second time did not work—punishment, as what the people believed, was imminent. Hence, aggravated by the attitude of the substitute officer assigned in Jolo over the Moro resulted to disaster.⁹¹

In a comparative note, the coming of the Americans disrupted the sociopolitical and religious order in the place, i.e. Jolo, intruding their practices without even understanding the nuances unlike in Indonesia where the Dutch adapted and formalized a standard Adat, although Adat was

⁹⁰ Suva, "Nativizing the Imperial," pp. 162-165.

⁹¹ Suva, "Nativizing the Imperial," pp. 165-67.

different to almost every other area, which also yielded relative convenience to the ruling the area in contrast with the American-Tausug relationship.⁹²

Conclusion

Despite the common notion of considering Bud Dajo as a situation rooted from the unruly colonial subject, it has been shown that the former can be perceived in multiple ways. The problem lies over the gradual deconstruction of the dominated culture's viewpoint in seeing the world. The colonial pressure of abruptly imposing foreign norm accorded by the Americans to the Tausugs became the fire that lit the wick of a ticking bomb. Yet, as reiterated, this is not the sole reason of resistance as Americans claim. In this idea-demolition where different levels of normative shades are being affected, several realms of the community's psyche are identified to be the deciding factor of the uprising, viz.: the people's ability to deal with the foreign entity which became endemic to their culture as time passed and the power relations governed by religio-cultural norm. The image formation and construction has been used by the Americans to create an image of themselves as a factor for the disjointed Moros to unite—a symbol of collective hate so as claimed by the former. Yet this has been debunked that the Moros did not hate the Americans right after they arrived. They became hated when they crossed the boundaries beyond what was allowable for a foreign “friend” had to do—to disregard the prevailing living culture under its turf. The Americans treated the Moros as savages, thus had no business over the legality of agreement, which made the Kiram-Bates treaty a powerless contract since its inception. Thus, the Americans claim that the Moros were not united was unfounded because the latter were governed under specific sovereignty, i.e. a sultan or datu depending on the place, hence has a model for social structure and order. Lastly, the imposition of the norm the Americans thought as for the better of the community had been defiling the long-cherished tradition of complex Tausug's religio-cultural legality. In the end, despite the lost lives both parties had incurred, a similar event would happen seven years after the Bud Dajo incident—Bud Bagsak massacre of 1913.

Such histories of atrocities like Bud Dajo, painful as it is, should be remembered as part of Filipino collective memory. History plays a part in the politics of representation. For this, narratives of oppression should never be shelved but exhumed for posterity's sake.

⁹² Fasseur in Davidson and Henley, eds., “Colonial Dilemma.” 50, 54; Abdullah, Martinez, and Mohd, “Islam in Adat,” pp. 164-65.

As a final note, the Mindanawon perspective is complex. In this paper, it is considered as Morocentric by reading against the grain of the dominant narrative. But, as time progresses, this perspective would be expanded, hence, considering the other two big groups, the Lumad and the Migrant-Settlers, as part of the dynamic landscape of Mindanao's 20th to contemporary history.

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