

Nishna Aerabati - Independence and American Ideals

The United States' involvement in the Philippines and Cuba's attempts for independence did not live up to the ideals written by the founding fathers in the American Declaration of Independence. When the United States military arrived in the Philippines, their purpose was to help support the Filipino's attempt to become independent from the Spanish monarchy. However, The Filipino Revolutionary leader Emilio Aguinaldo wrote in *True Version of the Philippine Revolution* (1899), "abuses which the American soldiers committed on innocent and defenseless people in Manila, shooting women and children simply because they were leaning out of windows...defenders of the humane doctrines of the immortal Monroe, Franklin, and Washington; unless the race of noble citizens, glorious founders of the present greatness of the North American Republic, have so degenerated that their benevolent influence has become subservient to the grasping ambition of the Expansionists". Aguinaldo mentions the extreme misconduct of the American military in Manila, which is hypocritical because the Declaration of Independence states that when governments are destructive, the citizens have a right to enact change in government. Also, the Americans kept pursuing and killing the Filipino Revolutionists and ordinary citizens like on the Island of Samar when General Jacob Smith ordered the American soldiers to kill any Filipino who could bear arms after the Battle of Balangiga. These actions exemplify how the United States has become as oppressive to the Filipinos as the British were to the Americans in the American Revolutionary War, which Aguinaldo points out. The U.S.'s actions in the Philippines revealed that the U.S.'s choice to support the Philippines in removing the Spanish was not motivated by wanting to spread the ideals of democracy and independence but rather to take advantage of the Philippines' resources and impose themselves

as the new militaristic government power. Nonetheless, some people may say that the U.S. was upholding its beliefs by granting freedom to Cuba from Spain in the Treaty of Spain, but the Platt Amendments in the Cuban Constitution contradict this. The Platt Amendment allows the US to intervene in Cuba's affair with or without the consent of the Cuban people, which represents more of the U.S.'s lack of care for holding up the beliefs written in the Declaration of Independence.