

SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Pacific Regional Seminar on the implementation of the Second
International Decade for the Eradication of
Colonialism: priorities for action

Yanuca, Fiji
28 to 30 November 2006

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(ORGANIZATION OF PEOPLE FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS)

(GUAM)

(DISCUSSION PAPER)

OPI-R

STATEMENT BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DECOLONIZATION (C-24)
2006 Pacific Regional Seminar
“Implementation of the Second International Decade for the
Eradication of Colonialism: Priorities for Action”
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CHAMORU SELF-DETERMINATION PA'GO

I. INTRODUCTION

Manana si Yu'os! Your Excellency Mr. Chairman Anthony Bryan Severin, and gracious members of the Committee thank you for convening this important seminar. On behalf of the indigenous Chamorro people of Guam and the NGO OPI-R, allow me to extend a warm "Hafa Adei" (Greetings) to the beautiful people of Fiji for hosting us and a heartfelt "Dangkolu na si Yu'os Ma'ase'" (Sincere thank you) for the opportunity to join you at this special seminar. I am Hope Alvarez Cristobal, a Chamorro wife and mother of five children from the island of Guam in the Chamorro archipelago of the Mariana Islands in the Northern Pacific. I am a former Senator of the Guam Legislature and the author of the law that created the Guam Commission on Decolonization and the Chamorro Registry.

Hafa Adei, Your Excellency Mr. Chairman, Excellencies and Members of the Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24), Seminar Delegations, UN Staff and Seminar attendees.

II. BACKGROUND

It has been over 20 years now from the time I first appeared as the first Guam NGO delegate before the UN Special Committee on Decolonization seminar, hosted in March 1985 the time in Port Moresby by the good people of Papua New Guinea and their esteemed UN Ambassador and former C-24 Chairman, His Excellency Mr. Renagi Renagi Lohia. I recall U.S. Ambassador Harvey Feldman then, at a breakfast meeting in Guam, requesting that I defer to the administering Power on issues of decolonization and that I not attend that first seminar. It seemed an odd request at the time; but as the years passed, I am convinced that had it not for our persistence at the time, Guam would have been removed from the List of NSGT by now and colonialism would have succeeded in erasing and forever denying our people's rights. At the seminar, I was impressed by Ambassador Lohia's leadership commitment to the decolonization process at a time of some national struggles occurring. Later, venues of these seminars shifted between the Pacific and the Caribbean as the representatives themselves either moved on or left.

For us in OPI-R, our astute chairman, Mr. Ronald Flores Rivera, the man basically responsible for taking Chamorro self-determination to new heights locally, nationally and internationally, was able to participate first, as OPI-R delegate and later, as the Vice-Chair of the government's Guam Commission on Decolonization in some of your seminars. Mr. Rivera was a dedicated advocate for our Chamorro people. He believed that the United Nations' forum offered a reasonable and objective way to focus upon the political relationship between Guam and the United States. He passed away on September 27, 2001, just at the beginning of this Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, although it has been five years ago since his passing, I wanted to take this opportunity of my return to these forums, to remember and pay tribute to such a man of quiet but great dignity who was loved by our people and respected by those who worked with him on the issues related to our people's quest for

political dignity, self-determination and decolonization. I am sure that there are many delegates in this room who remember him in his trademark Panama hat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and delegates.

Since its inception, the C-24, and the United Nations as a whole has performed an admirable job in overseeing the process of decolonization. From almost 100 entities in 1946 and subsequent, to the handful of non-self-governing territories that remain today, the evidence of success is clear. To be sure, however, so long as there remain territories under the rule of another nation, the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization in the United Nations decolonization process is not complete. Sixty years later, we gather to find ways to set priorities for action with respect to the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

And once again, I come to reiterate our concerns about political and social development on Guam and to restate our support for the Second Intl Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. We also value the work of this Committee, the Secretariat and the working groups.

Our organization has existed to protect the right of the Chamorro people of Guam to self-determination; to see the exercise of this right and to promote decolonization in Guam in accordance with the UN Charter, UN resolutions 1514 and 1541, other supporting UN resolutions and UN documents. However, as long as the act of indigenous Chamoru self-determination is not exercised, the resolution to this cardinal principle in the NSGT of Guam remains.

Over the years, through OPI-R's educational efforts, Chamorro self-determination has generally been accepted and viewed as a necessary foundation that is not necessarily antithetical to our collective purposes as a people of Guam. It is only in some quarters that resistance is evident. The media, for example, continues to characterize our inalienable human, legal and political right to self-determination as discriminatory by referring to it as "Chamorro only vote." Talk shows on radio reveal the intensity of opposition that has been created by this negative reference. Ex-patriots entrenched in Guam, have made their intentions known that there will be legal challenges to the implementation of the exercise of Chamorro self-determination to decolonize a colonized people, under the perceived threat of discrimination and disenfranchisement.

The tragic irony is that it is the administering Power's immigration policies in Guam that had created a situation which is now conveniently interpreted as discriminatory. It is the administering Power who controls the floodgates and had admitted thousands of settlers each year and now it is the colonized Chamorro people who are discriminatory when it is time to determine Guam's decolonized political status. The UN must remind the administering Power of its responsibilities it had accepted as a sacred trust under the United Nations Charter. Along with the creation of the Guam Commission on Decolonization is also, the Chamorro Registry wherein all Chamorros are required to register in order to vote on the three decolonizing status choices for Guam.

My people's history in the Mariana Islands spans over 4,000 years. We were a seafaring society who perfected the 15 to 40 feet long flying proa and traversed Oceania regularly navigating to the Caroline Islands through Micronesia and regularly to the southern islands of the Philippines and back to Guam in 21 days back in the 17th century. Of the 4,000 years, 338 years were/are under colonial systems comprising much of our recorded history. The first 28 of these years were spent defending our sovereignty against Spain. Our 17th century orator and hero, *Maga'lahi* Hurao, stood defiantly in front of the church in the ancient capital city of Hagatna in 1672 as he rallied over 2,000 Chamorro warriors to resist the Spaniards and to fight for liberty—one that Hurao described as having been handed down by our ancestors. Hurao knew the concept of peoplehood and he sought to protect his people, the homeland and our way of life. But it was not to be. Our ancestral leaders, craftsmen and people became subjects of Spain, and you know the rest of the story. Your Excellencies, it is this sovereignty that we, during this Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism seek to restore for upcoming generations of Chamorro.

The last 108 years of this colonial history under the administering Power, have been one of struggles against a rising tide of cultural genocide. Of these 108 years, 60 years has been under the C-24 with the U.S. as our administering Power. Mr. Chairman, I will be 60 years old on the 60th anniversary of the date when the United States placed Guam on the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories. But, there will be no celebration on this obscure day.

III. OBSTACLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION

This seminar to review **priorities for action** at just above the half-way mark of the Second International Decade holds some hope that my Chamorro people would someday experience that “triumphant dismantling of colonialism” as referred to by Under-Secretary General Shashi Thadoor. Because as it is today as in years past, under our administering Power, the question of Guam's decolonization appears to be simply one of engagement in anticipation that the effect of colonial policies and law would wear our people down to the point of extinction.

The assimilationist immigration policies of our administering Power continue to erode our right to self-determination in Guam. The nearly unmitigated influx of migrants to Guam since the 1960's remain a serious social as well as an economic concern. Most migrants do not intend to stay in Guam and thus lack the sense of commitment necessary to engender the desired level of social stability. Cultural changes that these migrants experience often add to their sense of alienation and adjustment and thus social integration. By comparison, immigration to Guam is far greater than that witnessed in western Europe or the south western United States.

The surge of undocumented immigrants that arrive along Guam's shores have been a concern. These immigrants while incurring several million dollars for detention-related costs to the local government without reimbursement from the United States serve to significantly increase the immigrant population on Guam.

Guam is only 212 square miles in size with a population of some 160,000. Any increase in population has significant social and financial repercussions. The dire situation on Guam is a result of a number of factors: Guam's proximity to Asia; the insistence by the administering Power that one, single federal immigration policy, makes sense for places like Guam which lie some 9,000 miles away from the metropolitan government without the consideration of Guam's status as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and the administering Power's obligations under the UN Charter and Resolutions 1514 and 1541; the exploitation of asylum protection afforded by the Immigration and Nationality Act; and the tenacity of criminal organizations with legal and economic incentives for their unlawful activities. U.S. immigration policies as it applies to Guam are not only insensitive to the social and political conditions of the Chamorro people, they are a violation of our rights as a non-self-governing people.

Six young petitioners from the Chamorro Diaspora in the United States appeared before the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (UN 4th Committee) just last October 4th petitioning the United Nations on behalf of our people to hold the U.S. accountable as Guam's administering Power to its moral and legal responsibilities to ensure basic human rights and the right to self-determination under the UN Charter, Resolutions 1514 and 1541, the UN Declaration on decolonization and the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Today, I reiterate the concerns and request of these young Chamorros at the 4th Committee meeting.

The U.S. military occupies 1/3rd of Guam and invests so much of its military might into our island that Guam is often called "the tip of the spear." Current plans are to establish a Global Strike Force on Guam involving 12 KC-135 tankers, 4 unmanned Global Hawk surveillance aircrafts; rotating 48 F-22 and F-15E fighter jets, six B-1, B-2 and B-52 bombers; and adding as many as 6 nuclear submarines to the three that Guam already houses. The U.S. military plans to homeport 60% of its Pacific fleet on Guam increasing military exercises in the Pacific. Recently, Operation Valiant Shield took place over several days in the Pacific. Called a "massive armada" by the Navy, the war games which will now become a biannual event comprised 20,000 personnel, 28 ships and 290 aircraft. The Department of Defense expects the current population of military personnel and dependents to increase to 40,380 due to relocation of the III Marine Expeditionary Force from the (Ryukyu Kingdom) Okinawa, Japan to Guam.¹ (GAO Questions for Guam Community Officials October 27, 2006). Furthermore, our people have no legal recourse in which to contest the administering Power's militarization and toxic pollution of our island home.

The influx of over 40,000 U.S. military personnel and dependents between Year 2008 to 2012 represent over one-fourth of Guam's 2000 census population of 154,805; close to 50% of whom were not born in Guam. A decade earlier, the 1990 census indicated another set of over 40,000 new colonizers allowed into the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Guam by the same immigration policies and law. This number represented one-third of the 1990 census population of 133,000 over half of whom were not born in Guam. Of that 50% not born in Guam, 63% came to Guam after 1985! The

administering Power continues to oversee a process of assimilation of my people—a process that will ultimately be paramount to genocide if it is not halted. This is a flagrant violation of accepted standards in the U.S.'s fiduciary responsibility that must be addressed forcefully by the United Nations.

The sheer number of eligible voters connected to the military, their dependents and contractors is of great concern when implementing the exercise of our inalienable right to self-determination in NSGT Guam. It was on Sept. 13, 2006 at a meeting with Lt. General Daniel Leaf the deputy commander of the U.S. Naval Forces Marianas in Hawaii in response to my question relating to voting on political status for Guam that he stated that military personnel are allowed to vote under the laws of Guam as they do under the U.S. Constitution. In other words, personnel who are on Guam for military purposes may and can vote. This is absurd because by virtue of their status as U.S. military personnel, it would be treasonous to opt for "independence" as a viable political status option for Guam, therefore, rendering that option as invalid and unattainable. Even more disturbing is the military's attitude that they, too, can vote to decolonize a non-self-governing territory! To be sure, the military can surely determine a U.S. favorable outcome of any election.

The news of the increased militarization of my homeland broke out a year ago in October 2005. Since then, most all news related to the military is featured in constant positive light by the media. On the other hand, as you will know it, the local people bear the brunt of the negative reporting. It is a regular occurrence to hear on radio or read in the papers, that with respect to criminal activity, "the suspect appears local" and other such characterizations. Apparently, we are to believe (internalize) that we are suspect in our own home. And, our guests are the better people. While this may sound somewhat innocuous; on a daily basis, it is dehumanizes a colonized people as they internalize their own racism. Racial characterizations of possible suspects in criminal activities serve only to stimulate negative appetites. Moreover, the media and outside interests in Guam serve to promote and sustain American hegemony in the non-self-governing territory of Guam at a time when the administering Power should be concentrating on the development of a constructive programme of work under the UN's Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Mr. Chairman, if efforts have been redoubled, it appears to be in contravention to UN resolution A/56/61.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S. military has the full support of business interests and the media in Guam. A rosy picture of the impact of the U.S. military build-up on Guam's economy has been filling media and other reports (2006 Economic Forecast, First Hawaiian Bank.). In an economy that's been lagging, the U.S. military has been made to appear as the major outside injection that makes for "a brighter outlook" in Guam's economy and that will take the lead among Guam's major growth engines. However, while the Guam Chamber of Commerce, comprised mostly of outside business interests and military supporters are banking on anticipated economic gains, at least two major federal contracts have already been awarded to companies based in San Diego, California and another, in the state of Virginia.

Contrary to perceptions promoted by media interests, the people of Guam are not unified around the issue of the U.S. military build-up. The very presence of the Guam delegation of six NGOs at the 4th Committee meeting in New York last month illustrates the expanding opposition, uncertainty and most especially “insecurity” of this military build-up.

Last May 2006, a women’s group responding to a call by Senator Judith WonPat was formed in response to Guam’s increased militarization and the potential of acts of violence against women as has been reported in Okinawa and other communities outside military bases. This young organization is called *Fuetsan Famalao ‘an* (Power of Women). The mission of this voluntary, non-partisan group is to be “an advocacy group of concerned citizens committed to the inclusion of the needs and concerns of girls and women in official plans for the increased US militarization of Guam.” As a member of this group, we intend among other things, to participate in and monitor any and all meetings having to do with the planned military build-up and to continue to make recommendations on behalf of girls and women in Guam..

At a recent meeting in Guam with officials of the U.S. General Accountability Office, an independent arm of the U.S. Congress, many issues were discussed including the unresolved decolonization of the Chamorro people and Guam’s political status; women’s health and safety concerns; environmental concerns and the need for a social-cultural impact study. It remains to be seen if the administering Power will follow its own edicts and laws as it is under no obligation (or purview) by the local government to do so. Also, as we have been informed by Lt. Gen. Daniel Leaf at his 9/13/06 visit to Guam, the status of forces agreement having to do with conduct of the military and of its personnel in a foreign country does not apply to the NSGT of Guam.

The U.S. military has an indisputable history of environmental pollution on Guam inclusive of PCBs found in Apra Harbor and Cocos Lagoon. The island serving as a decontamination site following the clean-up efforts of the Marshall Islands in the 1970s resulting in exposure to radiation to the presence of agent orange and purple in places like the future site for a school. Such health hazards have resulted in health disparities among Chamoru people that is disproportionately higher than other ethnic groups on the island in incidence and prevalence of conditions such as cancer.

In a study of cancer from 1971 to 1995 in Guam by Haddock and Naval, it was found that cancer incidence rates on Guam have, in general, increased during this period. Mean annual incidence rates were age-adjusted to the W.H.O. standard population for each village for total cancers. Guam’s cancer incidence rates increased substantially, particularly with reference to the more mature US population. This revealed some startling results. Chamorros appear to have significantly higher rates of cancer than other ethnic groups on Guam. Moreover, the village of Yigo close to Andersen Air Force Base and the village of Santa Rita close to the U.S. Naval Magazine base had higher incidence rates of cancer than other villages. Location is apparently a factor in the incidences of cancer in Guam.

Mr. Chairman, our people live with the administering Power's labels, "possession of the United States" or, "Unincorporated (permanent colony) territory of the US". The US, obviously, holds its security interests above any other concerns present in Guam and thus the scope and breadth of military activity on Guam is a result of a unilateral and arbitrary US policy rather than from mutual agreement. Consequently, all processes along political, social and economic lines are allowed only within the parameters established by the US. The United Nations must forcefully engage the administering Power; and, the military on Guam must not be an excuse for the subjugation of a people's right to self-determination. The United Nations must fully address and underscore the specific nature of this deplorable condition in Guam when reviewing resolution A/56/61 on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Failure to do so will ultimately result in our beautiful island home being overrun by settlers, migrants and military personnel with the Chamorro people struggling to retain power over the destiny of their homeland. In a like manner, the role of the U.S. bases and installations pose a considerable restraint on Guam's future development and the maximization of our people's true potential.

Last year, a University of Guam professor released a book he co-authored entitled, The Secret Study. As required reading at the university level, this book is being promoted in an attempt to resurrect the issue of the draft Guam Commonwealth Act that was rejected by the administering Power. Ex-patriots at the University of Guam are popularizing the idea that the United States is willing to initiate talks on Commonwealth status with the government of Guam. At a news report interview on 11/23/06, Dr. Robert Rogers, political science professor at the UOG, indicated that "we do not have to have a 'Chamorro only vote' in order to have Commonwealth status." Dr. Rogers was interviewed because he merely wanted to incorporate this 1977 study authorized by U.S. President Gerald Ford into his book, *Destiny's Landfall*. These well-entrenched ex-patriots from the United States have consistently taken opposing views in public against the right of the Chamorro people to self-determination. And, to say that there can be a political status change in Guam without decolonizing a colonized people through the exercise of our inalienable right of self-determination is dishonest and misleading. As a process of decolonization, the exercise of Chamorro self-determination must necessarily occur outside the influences of the administering Power and with the cooperation of the United Nations. It is dishonest for representatives of the administering Power to mislead our people over the restoration of their sovereignty and the exercise of their inalienable and inherent right to self-determination.

IV. THE ADMINISTERING POWER'S VOTING RECORD

Mr. Chairman, we, the Chamorro people of Guam have been plagued by the historical resistance and lack of formal cooperation by our administering Power with regard to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (UNGA resolution 1514(XV) of 14 December 1960. It is with sadness that we observe our administering Power year after year, abstain or vote against UN resolutions addressing the Question of Guam and/or resolutions reflecting the work of the UN on decolonization including the recent resolution on the Second International Decade for the

Eradication of Colonialism! This non-support by Guam's administering Power, however, in no way represents the sentiments of our people. On the other hand, we appreciate the annual UN GA resolutions--we look forward to it, read it, study it and use it as a learning tool (for those of us who teach). The UN process continues to energize us to become more involved in our quest for Chamorro self-determination and to fully contribute our talents towards the well-being of our Chamorro people under the circumstances. On this note, we fully support and highly recommend the UN resolution A/RES/60/119 Sec. 5 calling upon the administering Power to cooperate fully with the Special Committee to finalize, in our case, a programme of work on the case of NSGT of Guam to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special Committee and relevant resolutions on decolonization.

V. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Since there remain so few colonial territories on the List that is being considered by the UN and the population in the remaining areas is relatively small, I would suggest that at least in the case of Guam, the only information that is received by the press in Guam about the activities of the C-24 and the General Assembly on the issue of the Question of Guam is provided by groups such as OPI-R and in some instances, the government of Guam. I would recommend, as we have done in the past, that the Special Committee, the Department of Political Affairs and other pertinent offices at its disposal, and the UN public information offices aggressively disseminate information on the decolonization process in both general and informational ways as well as on the specifics of the UN consideration of the question of each territory. Information dissemination should be broadly based, utilizing governments, NGO's, media outlets in the territories and through a higher profile of the Committee and Secretary-General in the territories on the issue of decolonization.

I appreciate that there are protocol issues in relation to administering Powers that Members of the UN consider. However, the plight of people under colonial governance must be the paramount issue. Let me be candid: if the niceties of protocol result in the absence of the peoples affected from receiving adequate information about the process of decolonization—particularly in this Second Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism—the United Nations and the Committee must adopt a more aggressive posture. Information is not arms, it is the basic ingredient of an open and free society which makes informed decisions. No limit on information should be established, unless those choosing to limit it are willing to admit their intention to not abide by the process of freeing people under colonial domination.

VI. CLOSING

Mr. Chairman, it is deep regret that the Government of Guam representative is not here today to speak on the progress or lack of progress in Guam's quest for decolonization through the Commission on Decolonization and the Chamorro Registry. It is a very important component of the realities in Guam today.

Mr. Chairman, due to the dire situation in Guam today, I highly recommend that this Seminar pass a resolution denouncing military activities and all its implications as impediment to decolonization and the exercise of self-determination in a non-self-governing territory such as Guam. I also highly recommend that this Seminar pass a resolution to include a category under the List of Non-Self-Governing Territories called "threatened ^{people's} societies" as a way to double efforts toward accomplishing the goals of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, *see insert below.*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and delegations for the opportunity to make this presentation and for bearing with my vituperation. My people's journey towards decolonization is once again at a crucial juncture. I will be happy to respond to any question that you may have.

Hope A. Cristobal - Nov. 28, 2006
HOPE ALVAREZ CRISTOBAL

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- This Seminar pass a resolution to include a category under the List of Non-Self Governing Territories called "threatened peoples/societies" as a way to double efforts toward accomplishing the goals of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.
- Appoint an independent expert to conduct independent analyses on the progress and extent of achievement towards decolonization and self government in each of the NSGT with emphasis on the economic and social situation of the peoples in the NSGT including GUAM; further, this expert would conduct an independent analysis of the implementation of decolonization resolutions with reference to the 1st and 2nd International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. This expert shall report all findings in a formal presentation including printed form to be made accessible to the peoples in NSGT.
- Aggressively pursue UN Visiting Missions to Guam and other NSGTS.
- Pertinent UN bodies aggressively disseminate information on the decolonization process.
- Forcefully engage administering Powers to fund decolonization efforts in NSGTs.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Hope R. Alvarez Cristobal", written over a horizontal line.

MS HOPE ALVAREZ CRISTOBAL

28 November, 2006

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