

Statement to the United Nations, 1982

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OPI-R presentation to the special committee on the situation with regard to the implementation of the declaration of the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

A very warm Hafa Adai from the people of Guam. We are the official representatives of a group called the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights. Our group's main reason for existence is to insure that the rights of the Chamorro people are understood, respected and most importantly, honored by the political entities which currently exercise some measure of control or influence over the future of the Chamorro people. These entities are namely the Government of Guam, the Government of the United States and your Committee on behalf of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

There were many alternative paths available to us in structuring our presentation today. We want to be sure that the information, ideas and sentiments which we present are accurate and reflective of a significant portion of the population of Guam. We are also concerned that we do not take up your valuable time by presenting information which is readily available to you. However, we do not wish to miss this important opportunity to present much of the relevant information regarding our position. Consequently, we have organized our presentation into three distinct parts. We hope that you will bear with us while we present to you the Chamorro perspective on the question of political self-determination for Guam. We can state without exaggeration that it is the perspective of those who are the true people of Guam.

Our statement is divided as follows:

- I. The Chamorro People, Colonization and Self-Determination**
- II. Efforts to Exercise Guam's Political Self-Determination**
- III. Obstacles to Chamorro Self-Determination and Some Solutions**

Please recognize that this is a particularly emotional time for us and if we appear vituperate toward anyone, we apologize for it in advance. It is a particularly critical juncture for us in the history of the Chamorro people and the failure of any agency to act at this time cannot be interpreted by us as anything less than an uncaring or insensitive attitude. We believe this to be the first time any individuals from Guam (who are not connected with the US government) have made a presentation before a United Nations body. We, as individuals, have risked much in making this journey to New York, including the scorn of those who misunderstand our position and those who see us as agitating to undo the harmonious relationship between Guam and the United States.

We cannot help but have the feeling that in making this presentation, US government representative may interpret our statements in a negative light. For many on Guam, the idea of going to the UN is seen as dangerous and likely to rankle the US government. Trusting in your good judgment and the characteristic American belief in fair play, we know that all officials will be sympathetic once the situation on Guam is perfectly understood.

Before we go into the substance of our presentation we would like to make clear three points upon which we have developed this extended statement. First and foremost, OPI-R as an organization does not advocate independence or political separation from the United States. As individual members of the organization, we have our individual preferences and opinions about Guam's future political development. However, the organization is firmly united by one belief. This belief is that political self-determination for Guam inheres in the people of Guam who have been denied political self-fulfillment for over three hundred years. Self-determination does not inhere in residence in a non-self-governing territory, especially when that residence is made possible by the existence of colonial structures. Secondly, the organization is not

interested in making a blanket indictment of the administering power, the United States of America.

The US has given much to Guam and continues to be supportive of the Chamorro people in many direct and indirect ways. The US, as a rule, is a generous and democratic nation whose intentions are usually beyond reproach. However we do feel strongly that there exist certain blind spots about the political self-determination process on Guam as a result of the strong military posture of the US in the Western Pacific. Guam plays a major role in its military presence.

Lastly, we are convinced that OPI-R represents a majority opinion of the Chamorro people. If we were not firm in this conviction we would not have made this journey to New York. The Chamorro people are culturally reticent to express sentiments openly and the mass media is dominated by non-natives or temporary residents on the island.

Consequently, our position may not be favorably reported in the island's media, from which much of your information about Guam is extracted by your Committee's researchers.

Our trip was made possible by donations from the people of Guam. We continue to receive personal messages of congratulations and support.

Furthermore, we are convinced that should your Committee respond positively to our suggestions, more people will appreciate this issue at hand. Whether you recognize it or not, a statement from you on this issue will receive much coverage on Guam and provide a new basis upon which the issue will be further understood.

I. The Chamorro People, Colonization and Self-Determination

Over 4,000 years ago the Mariana Islands were settled by a group of people who eventually came to be known as the Chamorros. In their isolation from the rest of the world, the Chamorro people developed a complex caste social structure and lived in relative harmony with their environment and each other. Their existence was rudely awakened by their "discovery" by Europeans and eventual settlement of their islands by foreigners.

Spanish missionaries came in 1668 and brought a garrison of soldiers for the purpose of protection. Thus, the Chamorro people have the dubious distinction of being the first group of Pacific Islanders to be colonized by the West.

In the short thirty year period from 1668 until the end of the 17th century, war and new disease had caused the depopulation of the Marianas to a few thousand natives. Estimates of the pre-contact population have ranged as high as 100,000 for the entire chain. The islands were governed as a unit in the Spanish Empire until the Spanish-American War in 1898.

During most of Spanish rule over the Marianas only the islands of Guam and Rota were inhabited. The natives had been concentrated on those two islands to make them more manageable. Saipan was eventually re-populated in the latter part of the 19th century with natives from Guam.

As a result of the Spanish occupation, the people endured many changes and eventually developed a hybrid culture by blending the ancient traditions with Roman Catholicism and the practices of the Hispanic world. However, there was never any doubt that the identity of the Chamorro people remained intact. They were distinct in language and manners, and despite Spanish efforts to the contrary, the people of the Marianas never thought of themselves as Spaniard or as a Hispanic group of people. In fact, one of Spain's last governors lamented the fact that despite over 200 years of Spanish rule, the natives remained very unlike the inhabitants of the rest of the Empire.

At the conclusion of Spanish rule, the Chamorros had remained an identifiable ethnic, cultural and national group with historical roots to a time long before they were conquered by the

Europeans. They defied the fact that they were the first Pacific Islanders to experience the pain of foreign domination.

We present this historical perspective not to inspire you with the story of the survival of a small, but proud group of people. This story is repeated in many parts of the world and is not unique in its plot nor its cast of characters. Rather we present it to you so that you may understand how the forces of colonialism may work on the psychology of an entire people. Without the opportunity to control the social institutions which they lived under, the Chamorro people were not merely subjected to the perspective of the outside world. They eventually internalized it. For many generations the Chamorro people were told that to be Chamorro was to be inferior, ignorant and backward. Moreover, they were advised by foreign historians and administrators with suspect motives, that the Chamorro people did not in fact exist. The people of Guam were told that the Chamorro had been effaced from the face of the earth and, unfortunately, many of our people believed it.

Despite academic evidence to the contrary and, more importantly, the sheer tenacity of a group of people who continued to defiantly proclaim themselves to be Chamorro, many refuse to acknowledge the existence of the Chamorro people. Some of us are beginning to harbor the suspicion that this denial of the existence of the Chamorro people is calculated to facilitate the denial of their inalienable rights. It has certainly made some of the past colonial practices regarding the insensitivity to Chamorro language and culture easier since some doubt was cast on the very existence of the Chamorro people.

The islands and the Chamorro people were divided after the Spanish-American war with Spain ceding Guam to the United States and selling the remainder of the island chain to Germany. Germany subsequently lost the Northern Marianas to Japan as a League of Nations Mandate as a result of World War I. The US eventually occupied the Northern Marianas as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands subsequent to World War II.

Although the people were split apart by the fortunes of international politics, the Chamorros were a unified cultural and national group with many individuals having close relatives on the other side of the political boundary. The pre-World War II Naval Government of Guam recognized the identifiability of the Chamorro people repeatedly as did both the Japanese and American administrations of the Northern Marianas.

The Chamorros were the legitimate heirs of the political destiny of the islands which they inhabited and even the most imperialistic nations in past history have recognized their distinct status and legitimate right to exist, albeit begrudgingly.

For Guam, political life under the US umbrella meant uncertainty, neglect and inattention to basic human and civil rights for most of the time since 1898. Guam languished under a Naval Government from 1898 to 1950, except for a three year occupation by Japanese forces during World War II. The status of Chamorros before World War II is best characterized by the Navy Department's Court Martial Order No. 1923 issued on April 30, 1923. It read:

Held: While a native of Guam owns perpetual allegiance to the United States he is not a citizen thereof nor is he an alien and there are no provisions under which he may become a citizen of the United States by naturalization.

While this action gave the Chamorro people no particular status, it is still instructive. If nothing else, it recognized that the Chamorros were an identifiable group for political purposes. Decisions regarding the political status of Guam were obviously questions involving the future of the native inhabitants.

This concept had been made clear earlier in the treaty which ceded Guam to the United States. In the Treaty of Paris of 1898, the following provision applied to Guam:

The civil rights and political status of the native inhabitants of the territories hereby ceded to the United States shall be determined by the Congress.

Since 1898, the ultimate political status of Guam has yet to be decided either by Congressional action or otherwise.

During the course of naval rule over Guam, the US relationship to the people of Guam was one of guardian to ward. This fiduciary relationship can be seen in the following comments drawn from various documents regarding Guam:

The Secretary of the Navy will take such steps as are necessary to give (the Territory of Guam) necessary protection and government. (Presidential Executive Order No. 108A, 1898)

As a result of the unique interest of the Navy in the island of Guam, the natives...have been considered wards of the Navy....The inhabitants of the island have been under the special and sole protection of the Navy Department. (H.R. Report No. 1125; letter from Acting Secretary of the Navy H. Struve Hensel to Speaker Sam Rayburn, June 9, 1945)

The general policy of the Naval Government is to guard (the inhabitants of Guam) from exploitation by outsiders and protect their lands... They are not self-supporting and require not only federal economic assistance but also careful training and supervision from their paternal island government. (Letter of Secretary of the Navy Claude Swanson to US Senate, 1937)

It is clear from these documents that the US recognized their obligations to the people of Guam as a dependent people. Moreover, it is also rather obvious that the terms “inhabitants of Guam”, “people of Guam,” “natives of Guam,” and “Chamorros” are all synonymous. Both in official reports and in common usage, the people of Guam were the Chamorros and no one else.

Out of the ashes of World War II, the world was swept by new trends which recognized the sanctity of self-determination and which brought new meaning to the concept of human rights. Although these ideas have not always prevailed many of them are embodied in the United Nations Charter, one of the legacies of World War II.

Both new nations and the old colonial powers recognized that dependent peoples should no longer be subjected to the whims of the nations which governed them. These new ideas gave birth to the Trusteeship system and the Declaration of Non-Self-Governing Territories. Recognizing its responsibilities on the matter, the US voluntarily placed Guam on the list of non-self-governing territories in 1946. By Guam’s continued presence on that list, the US continues to recognize the existence of a pendent status for the people of Guam and acknowledges that self-determination has not yet been exercised.

In the administering power’s first report to the United Nations in 1946, the report describes the people of Guam in the following manner:

People - *The natives of Guam are called Chamorros. The origin of the ancient Chamorros is obscure, but it is probable that they were a group that became detached and isolated in the Mariana Islands from the proto-Malays (sic) in their migration eastward from the mainland of Asia.*

Later in the report, the US states that the 1901 “Guamanian” population was 9,630 and that the 1946 Guamanian population was 22,689. The 1946 report further states that although the Guamanians are conversant in English, “they continue to use the ancient Chamorro tongue.” It also lists the civil status of the “inhabitants of Guam” as nationals of the United States.

On the basis of this initial report by the US to the United Nations, it is obvious that the people of Guam being discussed for the purpose of fulfilling the obligation under Article 73, are, in fact, the Chamorro people. The term “Guamanian” which was invented after World War II was

and is synonymous with the term Chamorro. Today the common use of Guamanian as being an ethnic marker (as being identical with Chamorro) is still prevalent on Guam. Of even greater significance, the fiduciary status (readily acknowledged to exist under Naval administration) had become the non-self-governing status as described under Article 73. We need not remind you that the Charter is a treaty and as such, functions as law within the US as provided for in the US Constitution.

Part of the difficulty of those who wish to pursue legalistic arguments, has been the term Guamanian. After World War II, the term Chamorro fell into disuse for official purposes and the term Guamanian was used instead. In recent years, the term Chamorro has become increasingly used for purposes of identification on Guam. However, the federal government still utilizes the term Guamanian as a national origin term for Chamorro. In the 1980 Federal census, Guamanian was included as the term embodying those who are Chamorros, (except for the Northern Mariana Chamorros). It is time that UN resolutions and US reports make it clear what is meant by the term Guamanian people. From the historical record, it is obvious that it is the Chamorro people that are in a dependent status to the US and consequently, have not yet engaged in an act of self-determination.

The document which most clearly acknowledges the separate political existence of the Chamorro people is the Organic Act of 1950. When it was first passed by the US Congress, it included a provision which gave Chamorros preference in government promotions and appointments. Aside from being further evidence of this fiduciary relationship, it gave legitimacy to the notion of special rights for the natives of Guam. It read:

The Governor...in making appointments and promotions, preference shall be given to qualified persons of Guamanian ancestry. With a view to insuring the fullest participation of Guamanians in the Government of Guam, opportunities for higher education and inservice training facilities shall be provided to qualified persons of Guamanian ancestry.

In a more significant part of the Organic Act, the US citizenship provision declared the people to be US citizens according to two criteria. One required being native-born and the other required ancestry on Guam from before 1898. Failing that, it amended the Nationality Act of 1940 to include a new subparagraph: "Guamanian and persons of Guamanian descent."

In the only Congressional act that ever openly altered the political status of Guam, it is clear that it was on behalf of the Chamorro people that legislation was being passed. However, they were officially called the Guamanian people. It is instructive to note that despite the Organic Act, the US continued to submit reports on Guam to the UN in recognition of the fact that full self-determination had yet to be exercised. Indeed, how could such an assertion be made when the Organic Act originated in the halls of the US Congress and was not even given the benefit of a perfunctory referendum.

Since 1950, both provisions have been repeated from the Organic Act without the knowledge or agreement of the people of Guam. However, this does not alter the reality that the Chamorros are a distinct national people with political legitimacy to pursue self-determination.

Guam has changed significantly since 1950. The Chamorro proportion of the civilian population has continued to drop rapidly to the point where the natives are approximately 50 percent of the population. The fact that the US government controls entry into the territory from foreign nations through its Immigration and Naturalization Service and allows free access from the US through so-called rights of US citizens to travel freely within US borders, has contributed to this reality. Moreover, the application of US Supreme Court decisions regarding residency for voting has meant that any US citizen can come to vote in any Guam election as soon as they get off the plane.

Historically, many US citizens came to Guam as a result of military activities and decided to stay. The US military also employed large numbers of Filipinos and other aliens in constructing the numerous military bases built after World War II. Huge camps of foreign workers and the application of US immigration laws to Guam has meant a continual stream of immigrants which

threatens to make Chamorros strangers in their own land. Many of the newcomers to Guam have made fine contributions to the island and have lived in peace and harmony with the Chamorro people. We do not wish to deny them the respect and dignity which people all over the world deserve by being a fellow human being. However, we do ask that our right to determine our political destiny be recognized and that as long as we have not exercised our option, Guam's ultimate status has yet to be determined.

An inalienable right to self-determination has yet to be exercised fully on Guam because the people of Guam (the Chamorro people) have been denied their rights in the past. Immigrant citizens, US citizens from Wisconsin or Indiana, have no right to self-determination of Guam. It is illogical and unfair to allow them to move to Guam and participate in Guam's self-determination because the Chamorro people have yet to exercise their self-determination.

One of the greatest ironies of history in the Pacific is the fact that the US has allowed other Chamorros to exercise their right to self-determination while Guam's Chamorros wait. The Northern Marianas have now become a US Commonwealth. It is problematic whether you will ever receive a report from the US on their political, social and economic progress once the Trusteeship of the Pacific is finally dissolved. If the US decides not to submit any reports, they may have legal justification. The people of the Northern Marianas have decided in legally binding plebiscites what their fate will ultimately be. In their elections, only the natives of the Marianas were allowed to vote. It is a tragic irony indeed that due to the misfortunes of colonial power politics, one set of Chamorros exercised their right to self-determination whereas the Chamorros of Guam may be swallowed up in some other process. The greatest irony of all is that both groups of Chamorros were administered by the same nation.

We have given you this information regarding the history of the Chamorro people not just for the purpose of providing a historical framework. It is an important component of beliefs regarding the right to self-determination. Our organization believes that the concept of "self-determination" belongs to people who have a special historical relationship to a given area. It is crucial for the powers that be to recognize that peoples have the right to self-determination, not pieces of land. Land enters the picture when it can be determined through reasonable interpretation of historical factors that a given group of people have a special claim to the area in question. For the sake of clarification, it is pure folly to say that Wake Island has the right to self-determination because it is a dependency of the US and its status is unclear. Wake Island has no inhabitants, no individuals with a special relationship to the island and no history, because it has no people to remember it.

All of the individuals who currently live on Wake are there because of American ownership and sovereignty, not in spite of it. This was clearly acknowledged in President Carter's administration's Task Force on the territories in 1979. It read:

Also excluded are those islands over which the United States exercise sovereignty, but which have no native populations, e.g. Palmyra, Wake, Midway. They are "territories" as a matter of law, but they represent no policy problems of the sort dealt with herein.

II. Efforts to Exercise Guam's Political Self-Determination

Since the passage of the Organic Act in 1950, the administering power has not taken any major steps towards the resolution of the question of self-determination for Guam. Instead, it has been curiously cautious and only under the Carter Administration has there been an attempt to draft a comprehensive policy statement on the political status of America's off-shore territories. However, even this commitment to self-determination was limited. In Carter's message to the US Congress on February 14, 1980, the former President stated:

In keeping with our fundamental policy of self-determination, all options for political development should be open to the people of the insular territories as long as their choices are implemented when economically feasible and in a manner that does not compromise the national security of the United States.

The administering power has taken three steps which affect the political development of the island, but do not directly address the question of political status and self-determination. These were the granting of elective governorship in 1968, the creation of the non-voting Guam delegate to the US Congress in 1972 and the authorization given to the island to write a constitution in 1977. The latter step had an enabling act (PL 94-584) which narrowly defined the powers that a Guam Constitution Convention had. Among the many restrictions that the US placed were the recognition of US sovereignty and the establishment of a three branch system of government patterned after the American model. A Constitution drafted under such restrictions, even if approved by the people, could hardly be called an exercise in self-determination.

The administering power has not taken any major steps toward legally recognizing Guam's inherent right to self-determination nor has it encouraged the political status process. Instead, it has been the Government of Guam which has taken significant steps toward the resolution of political status and the exercise of self-determination. Spurred on by political developments in the surrounding islands, the Guam Legislature established the first Political Status Commission in April 1973. In PL 12-17, the Guam Legislature took it upon itself to state that various alternatives were available to Guam, including incorporated territory, statehood, independent affiliation with another nation, commonwealth and disassociated free state. The Guam Legislature appropriated \$150,000 from Government of Guam operating revenues to carry out the task of investigating the status question.

During the course of their efforts, the first political status commission under the direction of Guam Senator Frank Lujan issued numerous bulletins which discussed the denial of self-determination to the Guamanian people. Placed within a historical framework, this could have meant only the Chamorro people. In one of Senator Lujan's articles, he urged that the granting of US citizenship "has merely served to deny us the right to draft our own constitution by subjecting us to the provisions of the US Constitution and the sovereignty of the US Congress."

One year later, the Guam Legislature passed the first of numerous resolutions regarding political status and self-determination. Resolution 326 made special mention of the Special Committee of 24 and UN Resolution 1514 of 14 December 1960. The resolution not only extended the Legislature's support of the Special Committee's report on Guam in 1974, it requested the US Government to allow the Special Committee to come to Guam for the purpose of establishing a dialogue on the issue of political status.

In the 13th Guam Legislature, the Political Status Commission was restructured to reflect the Legislature's new membership. Acting again on its own, the Government of Guam authorized a referendum to accompany the primary election in September 1976. The results were not binding on anyone and since the US did not authorize it, the administering power was not obligated to respond in any fashion. Furthermore, the administering power ignored numerous requests from Government of Guam officials to discuss and negotiate the question of political status.

Instead, the US Congress authorized the development of the Guam Constitution under the provision of a narrow enabling act. In the bitter debate over the ratification of the proposed Constitution, it became clear that the opponents wanted a resolution of the political status question. After the sound defeat of the document by 5 -1 margin, the President of the Constitutional Convention, Carl Gutierrez, acknowledged that the status question led to the document's defeat. Governor Paul Calvo proclaimed that the defeat indicated that the people are "ready to consider our status with the United States."

The administering power's response to the mandate to fulfill the promise of self-determination was the aforementioned White House Task Force Report issued in 1979. Interestingly, the Report acknowledged the applicability of the UN Charter to the US territories in terms of the right to self-determination. However, while acknowledging the US responsibilities to its dependent peoples, it studiously avoided advocating binding plebiscites and instead offered only the possibility of discussion. Moreover, it seemed to foreclose the possibilities of statehood (full integration into the American system) and independence. In relationship to the

latter, the report read that “independence, at least for Guam, would be so disadvantageous to the United States as to raise the possibility of US resistance.”

As the issue of self-determination became more serious, the question of whose self-determination was at stake became similarly serious. A Pacific Daily News editorial on 2 October 1979 asked the question of who the people of Guam are? Although the answer for purposes of self-determination was hinted at, it refused to take a clear stand. At least the question had surfaced openly. Continual in-migration in the 1970s had made the issue important, but volatile.

It was in this situation that the latest step to resolve the issue of self-determination was engaged in by the Government of Guam. In 1980 the local legislature’s PL 15-128 established the Commission on Self-Determination and appropriated \$150,000 toward Commission operations. Although there are doubts about the value of the strategy advocated in the law for the resolution of Guam’s political status, it represents yet another attempt by the Government of Guam to take unilateral action.

In the Commission’s first meeting in 1980 one of the members, Richard Taitano, asked about the right of the Chamorro people to determine their fate. The other members were not ready to take up the question and Senator Taitano refused to attend any other meetings in protest. Taitano, as a former Director of the Office of Territories in the US Department of Interior in the early 1960s, was well acquainted with the issue of self-determination.

The Commission on Self-Determination avoided the question of Chamorro self-determination until 21 May 1981 when it was openly discussed at a Commission meeting. Two of the task forces developed under the aegis of the Commission recommended that the law regarding self-determination be clearly specific in its definition of the people of Guam. Despite the fact that some opponents ridiculed the subject, it became clear that the right to self-determination was becoming a major issue in its own right, occasionally dwarfing the particular options which the planned “plebiscite” was offering.

In village meeting after village meeting, forceful advocates of the Chamorro right to self-determination presented their case. Eventually the Commission on Self-Determination recommended to the Guam Legislature on 12 November 1982 that the “indigenous right to self-determination” be recognized. However, because of the political risks of such a position in the election for governorship and legislative seats in 1982, the very same politicians who supported the Chamorro right to self-determination began to soft-pedal their stance immediately after.

Even the Pacific Daily News which was suspicious in the beginning began to understand the issue in a historic framework. On 18 November 1981, editor Joe Murphy wrote:

"Each people should, in my opinion, have a chance to vote for their own self-determination. The Guamanian people have never had that chance. The US moved here to Guam with the USS Charleston, a gang of cannon, and some Marines and physically took the island. That takeover was endorsed later by the Treaty of Paris. The island people have never had an opportunity to vote for self-determination, or to be Americans."

From the island’s only daily newspaper, the social definition of Guamanian is obvious. It means the Chamorro people.

The bill to recognize the right of the Chamorro people to self-determination died for lack of majority support in the Guam Legislature’s Committee on Criminal Justice on 19 January, a scant 11 days prior to the scheduled “plebiscite.” The following day, attempts to bring the bill to the floor proved futile. Our organization consequently filed motions in the Superior Court of Guam and US District Court in order to postpone the election. Interestingly, the Courts refused the motion for legal technicalities. Our attorney general argued that the “plebiscite” was not

binding since it was not authorized by the US Congress, the body which has US Constitutional jurisdiction over American territories.

OPI-R also sent a two man delegation to the UN office in Tokyo under the mistaken assumption that such office was more than an information center. We expressed our dissatisfaction with Guam's political status process to your Committee at that time through telegrams. We also sent a telegram to the President of the United States.

The election occurred on 30 January and only 37.2 percent of the registered voters participated. In our opinion, two factors contributed to this low turn out in an area which always brings out 80 percent of the electorate in elections. The first was the general confusion about the political status options which was prevalent among the population and the second was the indigenous right to self-determination issue. Although there was no organized boycott of the election, it was clear that the people wanted a firm decision on the right of the Chamorros to self-determination and needed further clarification of the political status options. The grassroots leaders of Guam, the village commissioners, attempted to make this clear to the Guam Legislature. Essentially the same statement has been made by the Commissioners to this Committee. We are submitting that statement along with this report. It is signed by all but one of the village commissioners.

Throughout this process, the US government has not acted decisively. Officials of the Department of Interior have not recommended that US Congress pass legislation on the self-determination question for the people of Guam. Instead, they have written letters and made statements which say that the people of Guam will be listened to. A good example of federal insincerity on the issue was the January 1982 visit to Guam by Pedro San Juan, Interior's officer for territories. San Juan stated that the Reagan administration will do its best to support Guam in its status choice. He also assured the public that he would look into the possibility of securing federal funds for the self-determination process. In reference to indigenous rights, he told OPI-R members that he would request the US State Department to look into the question. To date, none of those have occurred.

In the meantime, the Guam Delegate to the US Congress, Antonio B. Won Pat, has introduced two resolutions in the House of Representatives. The first H. Con. Rs. 172 reads:

Whereas the people of Guam have never freely chosen the form of their present association with the United States having been ceded to this country by the Spanish government in 1898; and

Whereas successive United States administrations since that time have continued to be publicly committed to the fundamental principle of self-determination for the people of Guam; and...

With the historical context set by the resolution, it is clear who the people of Guam are. The resolution's intent was to have the Congress take the "opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to respect and support the right of Guam to determine their own political future through a peaceful, open and democratic process."

It has not been passed by the US Congress. A second resolution (HR Con. Res. 114) was again introduced by Won Pat. It is essentially identical to the first. No action has been taken on either to date.

This brief review of the steps taken to resolve the political status question indicates that the US has not seriously lived up to its commitment to give the process legal legitimacy within the Constitutional framework of the US system. Moreover, as the population of Guam continues to be altered under current federal laws and regulations, the issue of Chamorro self-determination becomes more urgent.

A fiduciary relationship exists between the dependent people and the administering authority. The dependent people of Guam need the cooperation of the US to exercise their inalienable

right to self-determination. It is unrealistic and a violation of the obligations outlined under Article 73 to expect a dependent people to unilaterally engage in self-determination without the support of the administering power. Yet this is precisely the situation on Guam.

Since the first request by Delegate Won Pat to President Nixon in the early 1970s to discuss political status, the people of Guam through their elected representatives have asked for negotiations, consultations or statements relative to the political self-determination of Guam. The Guam Legislature has passed numerous resolutions during the administrations of Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter and Reagan relative to political self-determination. In return, the US has acknowledged only the receipt of such documents, but never made a firm commitment to get the process underway.

Until such time as the administering power recognizes openly the right of Chamorro self-determination and engages in serious discussions of the topic, nothing can occur. The Commission on Self-Determination on Guam has fallen on hard times and is currently inactive. It has lost the financial support of the Legislature and the run-off election scheduled for September is in question. The reasons for this unfortunate reality are many and varied. However, the overriding condition is the fact that the United States has not lived up to its responsibilities by recognizing legality, in accordance with its own Constitutional provisions, the Chamorro right to self-determination. Moreover, it has not educated the people on the options available to them and has not assisted the process in a serious and concerned manner. The administering power may hide behind the logic that it does not wish to unduly interfere in the political status process on Guam. However, the reality is that the US has Constitutional provisions for such an eventuality and the US is obligated to facilitate the process by its own democratic ethos and signature to the UN Charter.

III. Obstacles to Chamorro Self-Determination and Some Solutions

In this section we will outline the main impediments to the free and unfettered exercise of Chamorro self-determination.

The most significant obstacle to the right of the Chamorro people to engage in an act of self-determination is the lack of seriousness attached to the question by the administering power. Under the Treaty of Paris, and Article Four of the US Constitution, the US Congress has plenary power over the territories of the United States. Their legal jurisdiction on the issue is not in dispute. Rather, we are hopeful that they exercise it by recognizing the right to self-determination of the people of Guam. In keeping with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, Article 73, such recognition should be specifically related to the people who are historically a non-self-governing people. This cannot be interpreted in any reasonable fashion as meaning any other people than the Chamorros when discussing the case of Guam. This is based on documents and reports issued by the administering power itself. To date, the administering power has failed to take the political status process seriously by failing to legally recognize this inherent right in accordance with its own constitutional provisions.

Part of the problem is that the island of Guam simply does not have enough presence in the psychology of American politics to require serious attention. Outside of the Pentagon, there are only a few people in Washington circles who are actively concerned about Guam's future. It is simply too small and too insignificant to worry about. Yet, it is precisely for these kinds of reasons that the Non-Self-Governing Territory system was organized. The review process which you represent is designed to give the small dependent people of the world an opportunity to be taken with greater seriousness.

Of even greater significance is the presence of military bases on Guam. Guam's image to the world is not that of an island society struggling to survive as a political and social entity. Rather it is tied up with overwhelming reality of the presence of the US military in large numbers. Your Committee has taken the stand that the presence of military bases should not be an impediment to the exercise of self-determination on Guam. Yet, any serious student of politics would recognize that it ultimately has a great deal of bearing on the question.

Approximately one-third of Guam's current acreage is devoted to military purposes. Guam represents an especially important component of American's advance defense posture on the Pacific and extension of political and military influence in the region. Viewed from the US point of view, it would be foolhardy to jeopardize all the current benefits which accrue to the nation's foreign and military policy for the sake of Chamorro self-determination. Even if the eventual outcome were sure to be favorable, such a risk would simply be unusual to take for the sake of political principle. For example, the slim possibility of Guam's independence was categorically rejected on this basis by the White House Task Force Report in 1979 when it suggested that independence would be resisted by the US. It was noted in the report that this was especially applicable to Guam's case because of its strategic location. Geography and international intrigue have played a cruel trick on the Chamorro people. By virtue of having been born on a strategic piece of property, they apparently must be denied the right to self-determination.

The administering power has also contributed to the general state of confusion on Guam by failing miserably in the past to advise the Chamorro people of their inherent right to self-determination. The administering power has studiously avoided the question of any inherent or residual sovereignty on the part of the Chamorro people, by discussing self-government within the American political structure as if it were a foregone conclusion that the island must always be a part of the American political framework. Actions such as the Organic Act and the enabling legislation for the Guam Constitution of 1977 are indicators of this tendency. To behave legally in this fashion and then to make pronouncements to this world body that Guam does have a right to full self-determination is clearly contradictory and confusing.

The people of Guam have never been apprised of their rights under the UN Charter nor has the US government made it abundantly clear what their obligations are. Consequently all discussions of political status are clouded in a nexus of contradictory statements and anxiousness about the future. The end result has been a variety of unilateral actions on the part of the Government of Guam and entreaties to the federal government. The net result of this activity has been minimal. It is naive for anyone to assume that the Government of Guam can decide for itself the parameters of the political status process and then implement it without the open and active concurrence and support of the US government.

In this last part of our presentation, we wish to present some ideas as to how the process of Chamorro self-determination can finally be undertaken with the seriousness and concern that it deserves. Please bear in mind that the rather haphazard treatment that Guam has received from the US in the area of political status has led to our presence here today and made the following steps necessary in our opinion.

In view of the lack of federal encouragement to the political status process in Guam and the fact that full US legal authority is needed to make the process a serious and solemn one, your Committee should encourage the administering power to:

Authorize and make legal a plebiscite of self-determination in accordance with the treaty obligations of the US by being a signature to the UN in accordance with US Congressional plenary power over the territories as outlined in the US Constitution.

In view of the failure of the administering power to make clear to the people of Guam their inherent right to self-determination and inform them of their status options and UN statements on the issue, your Committee should encourage the administering power to:

Fund and assist in conducting a thorough educational campaign on the available status options.

In view of the historical record of Guam, the establishment of a fiduciary relationship between the Chamorros and the US and the countless documents which indicate that the Guamanian people referred to as having a right to self-determination are in fact the Chamorro people, your Committee should encourage the administering power to insure:

That all binding plebiscites and referendums relative to the question of Guam's ultimate political status must recognize that it is the Chamorro people who have not yet engaged in self-determination and it is only they who shall be allowed to participate.

We urge the strongest possible terms in this matter and fully believe that no political status of Guam which does not proceed from an act of self-determination by the Chamorro people alone is valid.

Our last recommendation relates to the operations of your Committee. In view of the fact that the people of Guam are generally confused and uninformed about the role of the United Nations, your Committee should:

Make every effort to visit Guam and to advertise your availability to hear the concerns of individuals, organizations and perspectives from whatever source on the political and social development of Guam.

We recognize that this lengthy statement contains many items of information which you may already have. However, we felt compelled to deliver our statement in this manner so that you can understand the depths of our sentiments regarding this issue. We have not come to you as a court of last resort. Instead we come as representatives of a small group of people which Article 73 is designed to protect. We trust that our presentation has made the point amply well that self-determination inheres in people and not land. In the case of Guam, those people are obviously the Chamorro people.

In sosohyo' hamyo na en rekognisa i direchon i Chamorro. Pot fabot, na'fanmana'e' i Chamorro chansa para u madetitmina gi kabales na manera hafa i destinon-niha para i tano'-niha. Si Yu'os ma'ase' pot i atension-miyu yan si Yu'os infanbenendisi.

Thank you and we will be happy to answer any questions.

(We urge you to recognize the rights of the Chamorro people. Please allow the Chamorro people the opportunity to determine in a complete fashion their destiny for their land. Thank you for the attention you have given us and may God bless you. – English translation of the Chamorro)