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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

**Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International
Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: the United Nations at 70: taking
stock of the decolonization agenda**

**Managua, Nicaragua
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DISCUSSION PAPER

PRESENTATION

BY

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Presentation
Of
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Title: "2020 and Beyond – Arresting the Decolonization Dilemma"

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Executive Summary

The lack of progress in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories towards self-determination can be attributed primarily to one common denominator, an all-pervasive fear of venturing into the unknown. This common denominator permeates the very mindset of colonized people, and has done so for centuries.

When one considers the adverse effects of globalization on small states – increasing problems of illegal immigration, climate change, resource depletion, and the global treat of terrorism, this fear is not completely unfounded.

In this presentation I will outline various options that are worthy of examination as viable routes to Self-Determination for the NSGT's. These are –

- (i) Full Internal Self Government
- (ii) Full Independence
- (iii) Integration
- (iv) Closer Association

I will elaborate on the option of 'Closer Association' as the preferred pathway to self determination in the context of the Turks and Caicos Islands at this time.

The relevant recommendations that I am proposing herein is a review of the apparatus of a Referendum as a pathway to Self-Determination – establishment of the office of a United Nations High Commissioner to the NSGT's and finally, an aggressive dissemination of information by the UN in the NSGT's inclusive of the distribution of pamphlets, flyers, and by way of workshops – to educate people about the benefits of striving towards the noble ideal of Self-Determination. A recommendation for the Turks and Caicos islands concludes this presentation.

Acknowledgements:

It would be remiss of me not only to simultaneously offer thanks to the Special Committee on Decolonization (The Committee of 24) for extending this invitation to participate in this august Seminar, but also to say how pleased I am to partake of the wonderful charm and hospitality extended to us by our hosts the Government and people of the great country of Nicaragua.

Introduction:

Five years from hence, the world is destined to celebrate the platinum anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. It will be a celebration of achievement for freedom loving people all around the globe; but in the world of the Dependent Territories, there will be bitter/sweet memories. Sweet, because we would have arrived at a time and place when hopes of complete freedom from the colonial yoke still reign supreme; and bitter, because seemingly,

after memories of the slave trade, the Holocaust, Apartheid, two World Wars continue to recede into our conscious recollection of past history, colonialism remains ever present with us.

Presentation Paper

What really is the problem?

As recent as 2012, some three years ago, I made the following comment during a meeting of the United Nations Fourth Committee in New York City:

[Quote]

“ The populations of the dependent Territories continue to subsist on the crumbs of Freedom that fall from our masters’ table.” [Unquote]

This, then in a nutshell is the Decolonization Dilemma: Do we continue to maintain and follow the status quo, when it comes to revisiting and possibly revising the ideas and programmes needed to accelerate and advance the cause of Freedom in the Dependent Territories, or do we devise and adopt a more aggressive, proactive approach – a Final Solution – as it were, to this age old monster?

It is a cause worthy of our total time and energy. When we think of the histories of those men who fought for and won the right to govern their own countries – the Simon Bolivares of South America, the George Washingtons of the United States, the Ghandis of India, or the Nkrumahs and Kenyattas of Africa, the Bustamantes and Manleys of Jamaica, Williamses of Trinidad, the Pindlings of the Bahamas –

Or when we consider the sacrifices endured by the world’s illustrious freedom fighters - the Nelson Mandelas, Martin Luther Kings, Fidel Castros, and yes, Daniel Ortigas – one cannot help but realize that the cause for which these men fought , suffering unspeakable hardships, must be kept alive and well, until final victory is achieved in the quest for Decolonization.

Surprisingly enough, one of the main enemies against whom these men had to fight, and against whom they had to persevere and conquer, exist to this very day. This enemy knows no boundaries, has no respect for ethnic origins, no regard for gender, race, color or creed. Whether high or low, rich or poor, it affects us all.

This implacable enemy goes by the name of FEAR. It is the common denominator which not only links but binds all people under the grip of Colonialism. And it affects not only what is known, but almost of equal intensity – what is unknown. It breeds in us a ‘herd’ instinct, oblivious to reason, common sense and even absolute truth. It is the bane of progress, the arch-enemy of civilized society. In every single Dependent Territory, it is a thriving omnipresent organism. Fear, however, has a most resourceful and powerful arch-enemy. That arch-enemy is education. And once fear succumbs to education and is vanquished, that victory is not only complete, but it is final and irreversible.

Is This Fear Real Or Imagined?

Taken together, international, regional and local problems do indeed pose significant challenges (even for Independent countries). Add the up and downs of the global economy, global warming and health crises, terrorism, financial meltdowns, and consider local problems such as, illegal immigration, crime, natural disasters (hurricanes etc.), natural resource depletion, health, education and the infrastructure, population growth and control, then one begins to appreciate what drives the emotion of the average person – be he dependent or independent.

The world however, is beginning to respond in two ways to these phenomena –

- (i) There is an increasing movement to develop a sense of interdependence.
- (ii) All states and mini states are consequently seeking to forge alliances, groupings, pairings etc., to better develop to their fullest potential, under the most optimum of conditions.

Conclusions and Suggestions

The UN seemingly keeping in pace with the times, have reiterated and underscored their ideal for Self Determination in the NSGT's. These continue to be by –

- (1) Full Internal Self-Government
- (2) Full Independence
- (3) Integration
- (4) Closer Association

Certain of the Administering Powers have reduced these options from four to two, recognizing only – Full Internal Self-Government to be followed within an eighteen to twenty four month period by Full Independence.

These two options by and of themselves run counter to UN mandates, and we wish to say now that any and all participating UN members (particularly Charter Members) should be expected to respect and observe U.N. mandates, particularly when those mandates are designed to develop and encourage the orderly and proper development of the more vulnerable members of the global community.

Administering Powers, be they signatories or not, to the UN Charter, should not have to be reminded that their actions are not consistent with the Aims, Objectives and Mandates of this organization, and could be regarded as being inimical to the proper growth and development of the very entities they have pledged to support.

The second point that I would wish to emphasize is that even at the risk of being accused of interfering in the affairs of a Member State, the time has certainly come when the U.N. as a responsible body should be more proactive in monitoring the situation in the Dependent Territories. The welfare of the peoples of the Territories is far more important than any pronouncement by any of the Administering Authorities that their oversight and overview are being questioned.

Towards this end, and thirdly, the U.N. would do well to look to upgrading and further empowering the Office of the Decolonization Unit from its current status to one of having appointed as its head – a High Commissioner to the Dependent Territories. The function of the Commissioner would be more or less on a footing of equal importance with that of the current High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N. H C R).

Such a Commissioner would be tasked with the responsibility of (but not limited to) promoting in the Dependent Territories –

- (a) The dissemination of information regarding UN activities, particularly as they relate to health, education, welfare, human and civil rights etc. Such programmes should be geared to impact on schools, government and non-governmental bodies and organizations, civic and professional groups, religious bodies and service organizations etc. The intention being that this activity would have a trickle down effect to the 'man in the street'.
- (b) This could be achieved by –
 - (i) Pamphlets
 - (ii) Flyers
 - (iii) Workshops

And could be geared at creating a positive mindset of self determination, its various forms, and its potential benefits.

Finally, the U.N. needs to revisit the question of Referenda as the only means of ascertaining the wishes of the people with respect to the move towards Independence.

From a practical and historical perspective it is a fact that throughout the course of recorded history, the decision to move to such a status has never been decided by Referendum. A Referendum whilst it is laudable and a most transparent, and a representative method of arriving at the position, has no legal or constitutional precedent to wholly support it, should not stand in isolation, and should be accompanied by a second alternative. Such an alternative could be crafted thus:

[Quote]

“The U.N. recognizes and respects the rights of all citizens to exercise their option to determine in open, free and fair Referenda, whether or not their country should move to a status of Full Independence.

However, where the situation exist that the question of Full Independence has been thoroughly and sufficiently immersed in an Election campaign, and the outcome of such a campaign is representative of, and demonstrates the expressed wishes of the electorate, then the authorities should accept such an outcome as being a mandate from the people”.

[Unquote]

Finally, in concluding this narrative, the recommendation to the U. N.. our country and our people is that – of the four options previously enunciated, after careful consultation with as many stakeholders in the country as possible, it is the belief that as an immediate consideration in the Self-Determination Debate, we should begin to examine the question of a possible 'closer association' as the next move legally and constitutionally for the Turks & Caicos Islands. Such a move could be either the subject of a Referendum (if absolutely necessary) or alternatively the

subject of an Election Campaign, (or both) and could be affected during the upcoming General Election scheduled to take place by the end of November of 2016.

It is the belief that while the territory would be expected to seek a 'Closer Association' with the United Kingdom (in normal circumstances) nevertheless, at this point in time such a move is less desirable than one which would align us with a Regional or Hemispheric entity, and one in which a true symbiotic relationship could be developed, with both countries contributing meaningfully to each other's economies and well-being.

The recommendation as of this writing, is that of the four countries with the most meaningful potential and greatest eligibility, these are –

- (1) The United Kingdom as the current Administering Territory
- (2) The United States
- (3) The Bahamas
- (4) Canada

With, as previously indicated, the most optimum choice being of Regional or Hemispheric importance.

My belief is that given all the information and facts currently at hand, the country of Canada would be the first choice, not only because of historic, cultural, social and economic ties currently prevailing, but also because of the tremendous potential that such a "Closer Association" relationship brings to the table for both countries. This conclusion is buttressed by a Publication authored by a Canadian M.P., Peter Goldring, published in 2009, titled 'Canada's Atlantic Trade With The Caribbean: A Platform Approach'.

The benefits that could accrue from such an association include, but are not limited to for Canada:-

- (i) A Canadian location in the Region for trade, economic development and humanitarian assistance initiatives
- (ii) A reliable deep water port in the Caribbean for transshipping and distribution of Canadian exports
- (iii) A vacation paradise for Canadian tourists
- (iv) A partner with the Turks and Caicos Islands, an Associate Member of CARICOM
- (v) A physical market presence in the Region
- (vi) A Canadian platform for DART and Security deployment
- (vii) Ability to better compete with the world much more directly in the Caribbean, Central and South America
- (viii) Ability to access training facilities year round for Canadian athletes in virtually all sporting activities.

The benefits that would accrue from such an Association for the TCI:-

- (i) Possible help in the creation of a deep water port
- (ii) Access to Canadian heavy deep water shipped goods
- (iii) Direct access to Canadian emergency aid, if needed (both TCI and neighboring countries)

- (iv) Diversified economy by non-tourism related employment year round
- (v) Possible help with causeway road construction – linking the TCI archipelago.
- (vi) Lower cost of goods and services made possible by the creation of a free zone area as an off shoot of the proposed deep water port
- (vii) Increased direct air travel to Canada (with increased tourist airlift
- (viii) Potential for improved hospital and medical facilities
- (ix) Increased potential for post secondary education (and vocational training)
- (x) Increased security for fisheries, immigration and the war on illicit drug trafficking (External Defense Posture)
- (xi) Development of Aquaculture and other industries (xii) Development of Sports Tourism.

It should be noted that our ideal is specifically a “Closer Association” and not an Eleventh Province, re-colonization, or any attempt to institute neocolonialism.

Such an association has been a subject of discussion and consideration on and off for the preceding forty plus years. It is time for consummation. This could be best achieved ideally by the utilization of a trilateral agreement, the principals of which would be – The Governments of the TCI, UK and Canada.

A refined constitution embodying the legal, economic and financial arrangements would have to be enough cover for all three entities. While this might appear to be difficult to achieve, let us rest assured and be encouraged by the notion that nothing with such potential for the greatest good will come easy. Can we accomplish this? Yes we can!!

References

Goldring, Peter, (Member of Parliament: Canada). Canada’s Atlantic Trade With The Caribbean: A Platform Approach. 2009