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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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**(PACIFIC CONCERNS RESOURCE CENTRE)**

**(DISCUSSION PAPER)**



THE UNITED NATIONS DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE,  
PACIFIC REGIONAL SEMINAR TO CONSIDER PRIORITIES FOR ACTION  
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL DECADE  
FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Shangri-La Fijian Resort, Yanuka, Fiji Islands,  
28–30 November 2006.



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STATEMENT FROM THE PACIFIC CONCERNS RESOURCE CENTRE

Presented by Rex Rumakiek, the Decolonization Desk.

MR. CHAIRMAN, EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- First of all, as an Indigenous person it is my duty to pay respect to the owners of this land before I could address the Seminar. Vinaka Vekalevu (Than you very much) Government of Fiji Islands for your hospitality and for providing the Venue for this very important Seminar.
- Secondly, Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge your leadership in facilitating this Meeting.
- I would also like to acknowledge Tokelau and the Administering power, New Zealand for the successful process still unfolding on that Territory.

Mr. Chairman, we were invited I believe not to present a paper but rather to contribute ideas based on our expertise and experience to enhance your plan of action in the implementation of the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. We are happy to comply because Decolonization had been one of the two major concerns and reason for the establishment of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Movement here in Fiji in 1975. The other concern being, Demilitarization including, the ratification of a Nuclear Free Pacific Treaty.



### Introduction

Mr. Chairman, PCRC is the Secretariat of the (NFIP) Movement. It is a Civil Society based Non Governmental Organization (NGO) registered here in Fiji under the Charitable Trusts Act. PCRC has General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).<sup>1</sup> It acts as the regional secretariat for 150 affiliate non governmental and community organizations that engaged in campaigning, advocacy, information dissemination and research work. The mandate to carry out these activities derived from resolutions passed in the Triennial Conferences of the NFIP Movement and as directed by the regional board. PCRC works to facilitate and coordinate participation by the civil society in national, regional and international forums, especially on issues of sustainable human development, human rights, demilitarization, decolonization, environment, land rights and sovereignty for indigenous peoples. In a nutshell so to speak, PCRC's mission is simply, to coordinate, articulate and disseminate information and take action on the concerns and struggles of the people to fulfill their desire to exist free from exploitation, from the threat of environmental degradation and from both foreign and internal forms of subjugation. In its capacity as an advocacy organization it may also act as catalyst to affect changes for the benefit of the Pacific people. Because of this proactive approach policy PCRC has to be critical when implementation of policies or lack of it will affect the lives of many. PCRC has been consistent with its policy of being independent so that it could criticize when necessary without fear of denial of resources for its operations. But, as a responsible member of the Pacific community, PCRC supports democratic institutions and abide by the constitutions of the Nations in the region.

### PCRC position on Decolonization

Mr. Chairman, PCRC together with its affiliated members spreading across the Pacific from Japan to Rapa Nui (Easter Island), from Aotearoa (New Zealand) to North America, from West Papua to Tahiti and from Australia to Ka Pa'e Aina (Hawaii) shared one common desire and that is, *a Pacific that is free from Colonialism and all its manifestations*. This is the legacy that we would like to leave behind for the future generations. Unfortunately when you get down to the details of how to address this complex issues, you will find that beyond official rosy picture of stability, peace and progress there are serious issues brewing ever closer and closer to explosion. We have seen that in Vanuatu, New Caledonia, East Timor and Bougainville. On the nuclear issue, those supporting the industry claimed that it is save but that is far from the real life experience by the Indigenous peoples who's lands and islands being used for testing weapons and dumping wastes. Our approach on these issues has always been in the area of prevention to eliminate violence if possible if not to reduce the impact to manageable level. We were there with the Vanuatu people when they struggled to claim their independence, we were with the Kanak when they push for re-inscription; we were there with Eat Timor when they defied the odds and acceded to independence, the same thing for the resolution of the Bougainville issue, we had our hands full with the lobby for a nuclear free treaty and the list goes on. But Colonialism is still here and there is still much more to be done. As a Civil Society based organization our agenda for Decolonization is inclusive. We want all the colonized territories in the Pacific to be included in the process of decolonization otherwise anti colonial struggles and conflicts will still continue after the end of International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

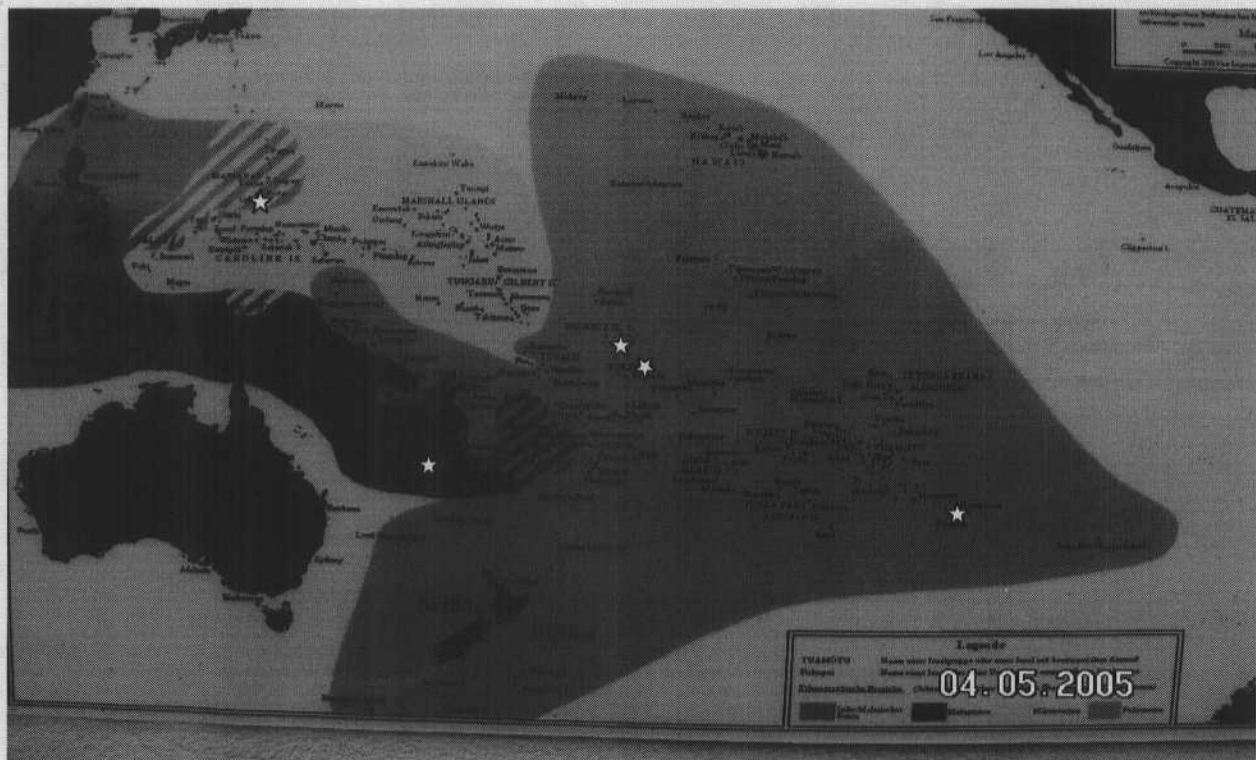
Mr. Chairman, the 3 principal criteria's or choices under which self determination could be achieved namely, *"integration with the administering power, self governing with free association or commonwealth status with the administering power or full political independence"*<sup>2</sup> are very clear to us. We believe they could be implemented across the board. Under the same criteria's and thanks to the hard work of this Committee, the former Trust

<sup>1</sup> PCRC 1999/2000, Annual Report.

<sup>2</sup> GA. Res.742.UN-GOAR 8<sup>th</sup> Sess.No.17.at 22 UN Doc. A/2630 (1953), Appendix B.

Territory of Micronesia became, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau. What we don't understand is why American Samoa and Guam still remain Non Self governing Territories even though their economic, social and political conditions are not much different from the former. We have our concerns for the 5 remaining Non Self governing Territories in the Pacific not very much on the criteria's as outlined but on the strict conditions for their implementation.<sup>3</sup> But, I shall leave it to their respectful representatives who are present here with us. However, I like to stress that our position on this process is very clear and that is,

"When a people made a choice, whether for integration with the administering power, self governing with free association status with the administering power or full political independence, that is their choice and PCRC will respect that decision because that is what we always wanted. Provided, the choice made follows the procedures of democratic process, voter fully aware of the consequences of the choice made and the freedom to make that choice without intimidation of any kind." Tokelau had been through that process recently, the numbers did not add up for a conclusion but the intention was clear and they were fully aware of what they were voting for.



Legend: (See, Tables.1-2)

Table.1. THE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPINGS OF THE PACIFIC

● MELANESIA	● MICRONESIA	● POLYNESIA
Fiji Islands, Kanaky, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Maluku, Torres Strait Islands	Nauru, Kiribati, Palau, Marshall Islands, Guam, Fed. States of Micronesia Marianas	Rapa Nui, Pitcairn Island, Aotearoa, Tonga, Nue, Te Ao Maohi (Tahiti), Samoa, Cook Islands, Tuvalu, Wallis & Futuna, American Samoa, Tokelau, Ka Pa'e Aina (Hawaii)

<sup>3</sup> UN Charter - Art.73, (Appendix C)





Table.2. NON SELF GOVERNING TERRITORIES IN THE PACIFIC

No	Country	Administering Power	Status
1.	American Samoa	United States of America	Non Self gov.Territory
2.	Guahan (Guam)	United States of America	Non Self gov.Territory
3.	Tokelau	New Zealand	Non Self gov.Territory
4.	Pitcairn Island	United Kingdom	Non Self gov.Territory
5.	Kanaky	France	Non Self gov.Territory

PCRC's position on UN Decolonization Committee's Action Plan

Mr. Chairman, agenda item number 3 clearly spelled out the whole purpose of this Seminar and that is I quote, "to review progress achieved in the plan of action on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism," unquote. From this review I assume, the Committee would have a clear idea of what more have to be done for the Non Self governing Territories in the Pacific. The Committee would then I quote,"define priorities for follow-up and intensified action in the remaining years of the Decade," unquote.

PCRC and others present here I believe are to contribute ideas to this plan which is indeed a count down plan of action within the remaining 4 years of the Decade. We from PCRC and affiliate members, giving our dedication to the elimination of Colonialism in the Pacific would like to state that we want to do more than just contributing ideas. We would like to be partners in any action plan for the next 4 years. We have the advantage of flexibility, we are with the people, have the time and above all we have the commitment. With adequate resources, armed with clearly defined, realistic and achievable objectives and cooperation from across the region we can still succeed by 2010. Mindful of the fact that we are 4 year away from the end of the Decade, I propose that the action plan should also include the following,

Recommendations

1. The existing 5 Non Self governing Territories, American Samoa, Guam, Tokelau, Kanaky and Pitcairn Island be given a definitive time table to proceed with a vote on their political status.
2. The Committee to sponsor awareness campaigns in all these territories by involving Governments and Civil Society Organizations including Religious Institutions.

In closing I would like to reiterate PCRC's position once again. We are committed and stand ready to participate in the Plan of Action to eliminate Colonialism in the Pacific.

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your attention.

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The history of subjugation sets in motion a process of its own negation,  
"A history of resistance." (Ngugi Wa Thiongo: Aman Saba Saakana, 1987)