

Testimony by
Hope A. Cristobal
August 13, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
University of Guam Lecture Hall
Mangilao, Guam

DELIVERY STATEMENT

Honorable Donna Christensen, M.C.
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Insular Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
U.S. Congress

Buenas dias Chairwoman Donna Christensen and Members of the
SubCommittee on Insular Affairs:

Si Yu'os ma'ase for this opportunity to be heard. I am
Hope A. Cristobal former Senator, retired school
administrator and community activist on issues related to
the Chamorro people. I have been an adjunct professor at
UOG teaching History of Guam. I appear before you today on
behalf of the Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice as a
member representative of Fuetsan Famalao'an (2006), the
Coalition for the Protection of Ancient Cemeteries (2007),
OPI-R (the Organization of People for Indigenous Rights)
(1981), and The Chamorro Studies Association (1987). I am
a Chamorro wife, mother, and grandmother; I have lived most
all my life on Guam. As of late, I have been working to
save pre-colonial and colonial Chamorro burials, cemeteries
and sacred grounds.

It has been over 30 years since a congressional hearing has
been held on Guam. As a witness, I feel that the
limitations and restrictive list of today's hearing is
another example of what Congress thinks of its subject
people; you owe us no allegiance nor time and our people's
voice really do not count. Although I would remind you,
that unilateral decisions about our lives and our homeland
perpetuate the historical denial of our human rights. This
hearing is a reminder of the inconsistencies between the
principles and the practices of democracy in a U.S. 21st
century colony.

Madam Chairwoman, Guam remains a colony of the United
States today. It is a *non self-governing territory* by

international standards and an *unincorporated territory* within the framework of the U.S. Constitution.

While suffering the indignities of labels such as: a "possession", "property" or "colony", we bear the brunt of restrictive interpretations in the application of federal statutes, rules and regulations by U.S. representatives with an eye towards maintaining the status quo; in the process, diminishing Congress' authority and responsibility to provide for the "civil rights and political status of the native inhabitants" of Guam under the guidance of the U.S. Constitution, the Treaty of Peace (1899) and the UN Charter.

Just three days ago, a Pentagon spokesman referenced Guam as "U.S. asset" with respect to an encounter with Russian bombers in the Valiant Shield war games. Recently, Vice President Cheney openly commented on the fact of the troops being here in Guam so that they won't have to fight a war in the streets of America.

A 1945 secret memo (dtd 11/21/45 by Vice Adm. G.D. Murray Commander of the Marianas Navy Force) reveals the US's real intention for Guam which is military control for its military value. The 3-page memo recommended the Navy's control of Guam and other western Pacific islands.

There is no question that U.S. military interests take precedence over our people's interests and that the status quo, better described as a status of dispossession, is directly related to the issue of the Pentagon's planned militarization of our homelands.

- 1st: Guam is taken as a colony during the Spanish-American War for its U.S. military and strategic value.
- 2nd: Guam's resultant status is that of a colony, or as determined in the Insular Cases (1901-22), "a possession of but not a part of the U.S."
- 3rd: Guam's value is again misunderstood during/after WWII when vast amounts of land were taken and decisions about disposition were made unilaterally (Organic Act of 1950.)
- 4th: Guam's status under the U.N. Charter is that of Non Self-Governing Territory or colony.
- 5th: Nothing has been done by Congress or otherwise, to change Guam's fundamental colonial status. The Organic Act of 1950 reaffirmed Guam's status as a

possession and Guam remains a Non Self-Governing Territory under the U.N.

6th: Current discussions about how Guam would be used by the U.S. military are discussions within a decision; the decision to use Guam is not one made in Guam or by Guam but by those who possess Guam and its people.

Neocolonialist policies and the deliberate and careful undermining of an unincorporated Guam has allowed the use of our lands for military delivery systems, storage for nuclear weapons, home porting of nuclear war ships and space warfare technologies. The militarization of our homeland has had devastating effects on the health and welfare of our people.

With all due respect to you as a Member of Congress, Madam Chair, the people of Guam also need to be heard by actual voting representatives who sit on the Armed Forces Committee. An investigation of the Pentagon's build-up plan having an EIS for the ISR/Strike capability at Andersen AFB and another EIS by the Navy is in order. Further, we reiterate the need for a holistic EIS with requisite social-cultural impact assessment, subsequent and cumulative impacts, impacts from connected actions, timely public disclosure/public alerts about depleted uranium and nuclear weapons in the EEZ and coastal waters and one that ensures objective environmental information with a genuine "No Action Alternative".

The impact of thousands of new residents and military assets within the context of a colonial relationship is self evident in a small island society. Furthermore, this influx is in contravention to relevant UN resolutions on decolonization and the US's obligations as Guam's administering Power. UN Plan of Action A/RES/60/120 (1/18/2006 Sec V.18) states that "administering Powers should refrain from using NSGTs for military bases and installations."

We unequivocally object to our people being excluded in the federal government's deliberations relating to this build-up and we ask that a separate process be engaged for the colonized people of Guam to make an informed and explicit decision about whether or not they want this military build-up.

It is vital that decisions related to the U.S. military's plan be framed from the point of view of a dependent people living within a non-self-governing territory that is struggling to protect our inalienable right of self-determination and preserve our national identity. This must be the guiding principle of major decisions by the U.S. Congress relative to Guam. My people deserve nothing less.

In closing, I leave you with an old Chamorro proverb: *Isaona i tumungo' ya ha sedi, ki ayo i mismo umisagui hao.* Greater is the fault of he who allows the injustice upon himself.

Sincerely,

Hope A. Cristobal
August 13, 2007