



UNITED NATIONS RECOGNIZES PUERTO RICO RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

The United Nations Committee for Decolonization met Monday June 21, 2010 to discuss the decolonization of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has been a territory of the United States since 1898 and Puerto Ricans have been United States' citizens since 1917. Puerto Rico does not have voting representation in the U.S. Congress and Congress retains plenary authority over the island. The Committee unanimously adopted a resolution supportive of Puerto Rico self-determination. It was the tenth consecutive year that the Committee has approved a resolution in support of Puerto Rico self-determination.

PPD Members Urge UN, International Support for Self Determination, Free Association

The Hon. Charlie Hernandez, a member of the pro-sovereignty Free Association wing of the anti-statehood Popular Democratic Party (PPD) addressed the 29-member committee urging them to press for discussion of the issue and support for Puerto Rico self-determination in the U.N. General Assembly. Fellow PPD representative the Hon. Luis Vega Ramos echoed Hernandez' remarks urging the committee to promote self-determination for the Puerto Rican people on non-territorial options.

1960 U.N. Resolution 1541 Clear on Sovereign Self-Government Options

In 1960, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution recognizing the right to self-determination for Puerto Rico. United Nations Resolution 1541 defines the three legitimate options for full self-government as Free Association with an independent State, integration into an independent State (statehood), or independence. The resolution was ratified in 1972 and again in 1973.

Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Socialist International Urge Puerto Rico Independence

Hernandez and Vega Ramos were joined by representatives of the pro-independence party of Puerto Rico and representatives from the Governments of Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador to urge the international body to reaffirm the right of Puerto Ricans to self-determination and to urge their support for the island's independence. Participants included the Cuban Ambassador to the U.N., Pedro Nuñez; Manuel Laguarda, Vice-President of Socialist International and representative for the Socialist Party of Uruguay; former President of Panama, Martín Torrijos; and members of several pro-independence groups from the island. Although Puerto Rico has a small minority that advocates independence from the United States, the Puerto Rico Independence Party enjoys little island support and does not have any elected officials in the island legislature.

Pierluisi, Puerto Rico Government not invited to U.N. meeting

Resident Commissioner Pedro Pierluisi stated that neither the Puerto Rico government nor his office received an invitation to participate in the June 21 meeting of the U.N. Decolonization Committee regarding the status of Puerto Rico. At a press conference in Bayamón, Puerto Rico,

Pierluisi explained that to his knowledge the Government of Puerto Rico did not receive any invitation to participate. When asked his views on the matter, Pierluisi noted his support for the talks in principle, but that the issue is an internal United States matter and should be left to the U.S. Congress. Puerto Rico is subject to the authority of the U.S. Congress under international law and the territorial clause of the United States constitution.