

Assistant Secretary John Berry

c/o Document Management Unit

Department of the Interior

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Washington, DC 20240

RE: NATIVE HAWAIIANS

Dear Assistant Secretary Berry,

I have just completed reading the report as posted on the Internet and have some comments.

First I do not feel that the Hawaiians should be recognized as a sovereign nation similarly to the Native American Indian or Eskimo for several reasons, mainly because the United States is not dealing with a united front of Hawaiians but a number of fragmented groups that do not share a common opinion of what they want as a sovereign nation. To make this work I believe that a 2/3 majority of the Native Hawaiian people must determine what they want and present it to the United States. Also the definition of Native Hawaiians is determined by any proportion of being Hawaiian apparently up to 1/500th. I think that this needs some more limitations.

America was not the first peoples to have contact with the Hawaiians. Hawaiians themselves do not have a long history prior to Western European contact with the islands, a mere 1,000 years or so as compared to the Native American Indians who migrated to America possibly during the last Ice Age. Nor were we the only one's to have land given to any of our peoples by any of the Kings and Queens of past. It is true that the United States did have some role in the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893, however, as noted in the report several things happened to

these people prior to that time which were much more significant in the holdings of land by anyone, including the United States and the State of Hawaii. Also one must be aware of the make up of the United States at that time which was mostly Western European. This I do not believe is the case today. My ancestry is of Eastern European and they were not in the United States at the time as is the same for many other Eastern European American citizens along with other races that are already and would be footing the bill for what is perceived as past transgressions by a few.

First King Kamehameha established a "United Kingdom" by force and with the use of Western, i.e., European weapons upon other chiefs and then controlled their land that he took mainly by force. There is even the bloody story of a tribe that after they lost the battle they were not just held captive but were forced off of a cliff. This was not noted in your report.

Second in 1850 the Kuleana Act allowed Hawaiians to own land and they did not take advantage of this for several reasons one of which was the "fear of the chief's reactions." As stated in the report in Puna alone of 894 men who paid taxes only 15 chiefs and 4 Maka'ainana claimed land. Therefore the people who should have protected their own, that being the chiefs, did not. They only took care of themselves. As far as the statement that the word did not get out in rural areas, Puna is as rural as it gets yet the chiefs took advantage of the free land. They also took advantage of anything that was owed them by their Maka'ainana so there was contact by the chiefs to the rest of the population, it is the chiefs who were at fault not the United States, especially since the Hawaiian Islands were not even annexed by then.

Once the Hawaiian Islands were annexed everyone had the right to vote, unlike the rules of the provisional government, and the majority of voters were Hawaiian over any other ethnic group. This is why the Republicans convinced Prince Kuhio to run as liaison to the United States.

He, wanting to become governor of the islands, accepted and sold out his own people. Is the United States responsible for his actions? I do not believe so.

More recently in July 1996, 81,507 ballots were mailed out by SHEC to Native Hawaiians for a Hawaiian constitutional change and only 30,423 (37%) were even returned. This shows me a lack of desire for sovereignty by even the Hawaiian people themselves especially when in 1999 Ha Hawaii mailed 101,000 ballots out for delegates and only 8,868 (9%) were returned to elect delegates. So who is the government of the United States trying to negotiate a reconciliation with but a handful of Hawaiians, therefore, the rest of the Hawaiians may or may not agree with what is determined and disregard any and/or all of the decisions made. Plus they "ask the United States to assist them in improving economic opportunities, educational attainment, health status, and housing." And assist them with the creation of a "Native Hawaiian entity that may apply for recognition" while on the other hand they want "increased self-determination concerning Native Hawaiian affairs, resources and lands." I see two diametrically opposed requests: help me v.s. let me determine my own affairs. Also as far as health care goes, I know of no other state in the Nation where a family can earn up to \$3,270.00 per month, up from \$1,538.00 per month and receive FREE health care for their children as stated by Governor Cayetano in a letter to the editor in Hawaii Tribune-Herald, 8/25/00. Also stated in this letter "Hawaii already has the highest percentage of people with health insurance."

Also more recently this year on the march on Washington, D.C. there were only 75 people who actually marched. I find this a poor showing and lack of interest for a peoples wishing to become a sovereign nation, certainly no where near a majority of even 51%.

In conclusion, in making any kind of legislature regarding reconciliation, including sovereignty, I feel that it is the responsibility of the majority of the Native Hawaiians to come

together, decide what they really want and feel is fair, present this to the government and start working from there. The United States cannot nor should not make the decision of what the Native Hawaiians want because they do not know. It can only cause future problems that will only need to be rectified again and again. It would be a costly mistake.

Unfortunately I must submit this letter anonymously, however, we (my husband and I) hope that these views will be taken into consideration.

Sincerely,

A concerned Hilo Citizen