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Mr. John Berry
Assistant Secretary-Policy Management and Budget
The Department of the Interior
c/o Document Management Unit
1849 C Street, N.W. Mailstop - 7229
Washington D.C., 20240

Dear Mr. Berry:

SUBJECT: Hawaiian Reconciliation

General Observations

I attended your first neighbor island session on Kaua'i and want you to know that the behavior and sentiments expressed by certain Hawaiians that day were definitely not representative of my views and the views of many of my friends who are also part-Hawaiians. I suppose we represent the "silent majority" that has given up going to such meetings, because we find ourselves out-numbered and out-shouted by people who are displaying anger over past and present injustices, don't know how to express themselves civilly even towards fellow Hawaiians, and are promoting extreme, unrealistic or overly simplistic solutions to Hawaiian dilemmas. I left the Kaua'i meeting early, because I felt it was a waste of my time to listen to hours of out-of-control, sometimes irrational tirades. I've heard that you and other U.S representatives were subjected to more abuse and insult as you traveled to the other islands. I can only express my shame and deep sadness over what I see as lost opportunities to Hawaiian people.

Know that this disrespectful behavior is coming from people who represent themselves as *kanaka maoli*, true native Hawaiians, but who are behaving in ways that are culturally non-Hawaiian and contrary to Hawaiian values. These values too often receive lip service but are not translated into culturally appropriate behavior. I wonder how Queen Lili'uokalani would regard these modern Hawaiians' conduct and approach. She was a model of dignity and rationality as she endeavored to set right the wrongs committed by the U.S. towards her personally and towards the Hawaiian nation. Sadly, one could point out that the Queen's dignity and grace yielded nothing...

Time is running out for reconciliation.

Here we are, over 100 years later without redress, and it took the U.S. more than 6 years to get around to following up on the pledges contained in the Apology Resolution. The timing of your follow-up in the last year of Clinton's administration and during an election year seems precarious. We Hawaiians have had over 100 years to steam and hurt. It's no wonder that the proposed solutions are becoming more extreme and drastic. The wound has been festering for over 100 years and now requires major surgery. It is not in anyone's best interests to further drag out and delay redress. The stereotypic image of Hawaiians to the world doesn't help impress upon outsiders the urgency of our situation. Perpetuated by the visitor industry, we're viewed as a happy people, living in a tropical paradise, filled with aloha, and sitting on a palm-frilled, sunny beach, flirting with tourists.

Methods need to be developed that will promote compromise and agreements among Hawaiians.

The disunity and dissent among Hawaiians is widely recognized and demonstrated. ***Until Hawaiians clearly define and agree on the form of redress that is desired and to what sovereign entity those reparations should be given, there is little that can be done by the U.S. government to reconcile past wrongs.*** While there is widespread agreement that the solutions for Hawaiians need to come from Hawaiians, bitterness and in-fighting impede this process. I believe it would help to involve professional, outside mediators with more objective, less emotional, personal involvement in the issues who can promote orderly progression of negotiations and respectful dialogue. Hawaiians insist, "Just give us back the land you stole!" Who is "us?" Currently, even if lands were designated for a return, there is no agreed-upon entity to entrust them to. The result would be anarchy! I'm concerned that without outside help, many more years will pass without an agreed-upon model for sovereignty.

The enclosed article speaks of a method that is being tried to promote communication and understanding between Hawaiians and non-Hawaiians over the issues of sovereignty and redress. Unfortunately, it implies that communication amongst Hawaiians is proceeding adequately. If that were so, there would not be the deep division that is apparent when looking at the "*Hā Hawaii*" effort to move sovereignty forward and the dysfunction within the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). A method is needed that will engage the "silent majority" Hawaiians in the process. As it is, the same people show up for meetings, loudly proclaiming their viewpoints. These people tend to rise to the top, emerging as the so-called leaders. None of these leaders represent me.

Lack of Leadership

It doesn't help to make excuses for poor behavior and choices. Our leaders should be held accountable just like anyone else. Hawaiian "leaders" have been apprehended on firearms violations and drug possession and have continued to be followed as leaders. Mililani Trask, leader of the largest sovereignty organization, *Ka Lāhui Hawai'i*, and trustee of OHA, should feel the consequences of her recent racist remarks regarding our Senator and veteran, Daniel Inouye. Instead, there are many defending her and making excuses for her behavior, leading me to question the value system operating among certain Hawaiians. Ms. Trask, although well-educated and intelligent, has never learned the importance of self-restraint, apology, and the effectiveness of diplomacy. In traditional Hawaiian society there were strict rules of conduct and severe consequences for violations. I'm not advocating a return to those practices, but feel that standards of leadership behavior need to be raised if we are to have good leaders. Agreeing on a model for a sovereign nation is only the beginning. Building a new nation will require dedication, hard work, and leaders worthy of respect and trust.

Resolution and clarification of legal questions will help guide choices regarding the best model for Hawaiian self-determination and nationhood.

- ◆ What lands should be returned to the Hawaiian people? Is it all or a portion of the ceded lands?
- ◆ In determining Hawaiian land rights, how far back do we go? In the absence of clear, legal guidance, Hawaiians are claiming and attempting to exercise rights to live on beaches and to have access and use of lands that were once granted to ancestors (and shown in old deeds) but have in the passage of time fallen into the control of government or other private landowners.
- ◆ People are also declaring that they are not subject to state and federal laws because they do not recognize the laws (and land transactions) that have occurred since the

illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy. People have actually lost their only home after trusting in the advice of "Perfect Title," a title company that subscribed to this belief and has since been put out of business by the state. However, there are still people who firmly believe that Perfect Title is correct.

- ◆ Hawaiians need to fully understand the consequences of their choices regarding sovereignty. If Hawaiians choose to return to a monarchical form of sovereignty or some other form of complete independence from the U.S., must they revoke their American citizenship? In revoking American citizenship, what would the Hawaiian be giving up? E.g., the "Lawful Hawaiian Government" widely publicized elections held on November 6, 1999. In order to vote, you needed to revoke your American citizenship. Was this done officially? If so, are they still entitled to receive welfare, medical, food stamp, social security, and unemployment benefits? Without American citizenship, are they entitled to hold American jobs? How is the State of Hawai'i notified of those who revoke their citizenship and are no longer eligible for these benefits?

In closing, where do we go from here? We don't have the luxury of time. Let's get on with the process of settling past wrongs. Specific tasks and dates for a process that would lead to the "bargaining table" need to be negotiated by Federal and Hawaiian representatives. Outside professional mediators acceptable to Hawaiians should be offered. People will be encouraged when it is clear that a process is in place and progress is being made. America has been resolute and faithful in its brokering of peace in the Middle East and Ireland. Surely peaceful settlement of its own internal affairs with Hawaiians deserves at least as much commitment. *Mahalo* for listening to my *mana`o* (thoughts).

Me ka pono,

Deborah L. Chang