

Colonies in Question

Supporting Indigenous Movements in the US Jurisdictions

A Report from the
**FUNDING
EXCHANGE**

Written by Surina Khan

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ABOUT THE FUNDING EXCHANGE

The Funding Exchange is a national network of publicly-supported, community-based foundations. A unique partnership of activists and donors, the Funding Exchange is dedicated to building a base of support for progressive social change through fundraising for local, national and international grantmaking programs. The national office of the Funding Exchange network is located in New York City. Funding Exchange programs serve its member funds along with donors and grantees around the country. The grantmaking program of the Funding Exchange includes three activist advised-funds:

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The OUT Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation supports organizing projects working to build community among lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and transgender people. The OUT Fund seeks projects that address the politics of race, class, gender and sexuality as integral to systems of oppression while working to develop lasting coalitions with other progressive causes.

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In addition, the Funding Exchange has special funding initiatives and also publishes an annual docket which features organizations that are seeking funding. For more information about the Funding Exchange or to learn more about how to support organizations through the Funding Exchange grantmaking programs, contact the national office.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Surina Khan is a longtime progressive activist and writer. She has written extensively about right-wing movements, progressive movement building, sexual rights, immigration, and transnational organizing. Her research and writing have been published in many publications including *AsianWeek*, *Trikone*, *The Boston Phoenix*, *The Gay and Lesbian Review*, *The Hartford Advocate*, *Boston Magazine*, and *Sojourner* and her essays have been anthologized in several books. She is currently a consultant to a number of social justice organizations including the National Center for Human Rights Education, Political Research Associates, and the Funding Exchange, providing assistance in the areas of research and writing, organizational and project development, strategic planning, and fundraising. From 2000-2002 Surina served as the Executive Director of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission, and prior to that she was a research analyst with Political Research Associates, a think tank and research center that studies, analyzes and publishes on the political Right. From 1996-2002 Surina served on the OUT Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation and is a former board member of the Funding Exchange.

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METHODOLOGY

Research for this report was conducted from February to August of 2003. During this time, I reviewed literature including books, magazines, newspapers, and selected articles about the history and current realities of the jurisdictions. Extensive research on the internet helped to identify community organizing efforts in the jurisdictions. I corresponded with approximately 25 activists who work in the jurisdictions specifically in Puerto Rico, Guam, US Virgin Islands, Palau and others who work with the entire region of the Pacific but from outside the jurisdictions in places including Hawai'i, Fiji and the US mainland. Contacts with activists on the other islands was difficult to make, which underscores the need for further work in building relationships with people in the region, best done by meeting people in person and traveling to the jurisdictions, which I was not able to do.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2002 the Funding Exchange activist-advised funds (the Saguaro Fund, the OUT Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation, and the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media) held a joint meeting in Puerto Rico, one of fourteen territories held by the US.

That meeting continued discussions initiated earlier by activist members of the Saguaro Fund about the importance of increasing the Funding Exchange's grantmaking in Puerto Rico as well as expanding it to include the other US jurisdictions, which are made up of the fourteen US territories and three freely associated states, and planted the seeds for this report. Neither a comprehensive history nor a complete survey of political organizing efforts, the aim of this report is to identify the complexity and range of issues in these island nations particularly as they relate to the current forms and implications of US colonization, militarization, and cultural hegemony.

This report examines the strategic US militarization of the jurisdictions and the impacts of this militarization on land use, local communities, environment, health, and the economy. It looks at local economies and industries in relation to modernization, development, and globalization. This report surfaces some of the different community needs as well as existing organizing efforts in the jurisdictions and points to the enormous need for greater financial resources to support community organizing efforts.

Early discussions in the conceptualization of this report also surfaced connections between the current US jurisdictions and the Philippines, a former US colony. An appendix to this report looks at the history of US colonization and its impact in the Philippines especially as it relates to the current links between organizing in the US jurisdictions and to the US realignment of its military forces in Asia and the Middle East, repositioning forces around the world to be closer to areas it considers unstable.¹ With the current neocolonialist policies of the Bush administration in Iraq and Afghanistan, it seems prescient to explore the consequences of US colonialism in relation to the territories and freely associated states.

Colonies in Question expands upon the discussions amongst the Funding Exchange activist-advised funds to examine the history and effect of colonization in the US jurisdictions, particularly in the Pacific region where indigenous movements have a long history of resisting foreign control and yet receive little recognition and few financial resources from US mainland foundations or individual donors to support those efforts.

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OVERVIEW OF THE JURISDICTIONS

While Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, both in the Caribbean, are widely recognized as US territories, there are several others in the Pacific region that also have a long history of colonization.

American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) have similar political status and relationships with the US as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.² Eight of the nine other uninhabited US territories are also in the Pacific.³

In addition to these territories there are three US freely associated states in the Pacific: the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These jurisdictions are independent nations that have signed a compact of free association with the US, which outlines economic, political, and military relationships between these jurisdictions and the US.

Population, Income, and Geography

Each island has very distinct populations, geographies, cultures, languages, and economies. Many of the island nations are predominantly Catholic, Baptist or Protestant. All are predominantly rural. Most of the jurisdictions have a majority of youth and young adult populations. Of the Pacific jurisdictions, **Guam** has one of the largest populations (163,941, July 2003 estimate) on a single island, with a \$21,000 per capita annual income (2000 estimate); in contrast, the **Republic of Palau** has the smallest population (19,717, July 2003 estimate) with a per capita annual income of \$9,000 (2001 estimate). **The Republic of the Marshall Islands** also has a small population (56,429, July 2003 estimate) spread out on 31 atolls,⁴ with \$1,600 per capita annual income (2001 estimate). **American Samoa** has a population of 70,260 (July 2003 estimate) with a per

capita annual income of \$8,000 (2000 estimate). **The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands** has a population of 80,006 (July 2003 estimate) and a per capita annual income of \$12,500 (2000 estimate). **The Federated States of Micronesia** has a population of 108,143 (July 2003 estimate) and a per capita annual income of \$2,000 (2000 estimate). In the Caribbean, **Puerto Rico** has a population of 3,885,877 (July 2003 estimate) with an \$11,200 per capita annual income (2001 estimate) while the **Virgin Islands** has a population of 124,778 (July 2003 estimate) and a per capita annual income of \$15,000 (2001 estimate).

All the jurisdictions are very small. In the Pacific, the largest is the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, which at 293 square miles of land mass (not all of which is inhabitable) is smaller than the state of Rhode Island and yet is spread out over more than one million square miles of the Pacific Ocean ranging 1,700 miles from east to west. The largest of all the jurisdictions in the Pacific and Caribbean is Puerto Rico which is still only three times the size of Rhode Island.

A Range of Issues: Tourism, Environment, Labor, and Immigration

These island nations share complex histories of colonization by Spain, Germany, Japan, Denmark, Britain and/or the US, which have affected a wide range of issues from immigration and the economy to culture and religion. Tourism has a significant impact on all the islands, both its increase in the 1990s as well as its present decline. The economies of these island nations remain dominated by foreign interests and rarely do people native to the islands benefit from the tourist trades or other industries. In addition, US laws that protect labor standards and the environment are not equally applicable in the territories, which negatively affect labor and environmental issues. For example, in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana

Islands, sweatshops continue to employ foreign workers subjecting them to poor working conditions to produce “Made in the USA” clothing. Meanwhile, island populations continue to suffer from the impact of hazardous waste left unattended by the US military, including chemical warfare agents—some military debris cleanup dates as far back as World War II.

Immigration and migration issues also have an enormous impact on the jurisdictions. US federal immigration laws do not apply to the territories, and the Compact of Free Association with the three freely associated states, (Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) granted citizens of these island nations free access to the US and its territories which has resulted in an unprecedented outflow from the freely associated states to the territories. The explanation of the outflow is simple—citizens of the freely associated states, disappointed at the lack of employment at home, leave in search of jobs available in the US territories, which are closer to home than the US mainland. For example, the decrease in population in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the span of one year, between July 2002 (73,630) and July 2003 (56,429) is instructive in understanding the cause and effects of migration. Migration to and from the islands is an issue that has far reaching effects on families, jobs, healthcare, housing and education. Migration from the freely associated states has an impact on indigenous families and cultures as people move away in search of jobs while migration to the territories comes at a cost, putting a strain on local economies. For example, Guam estimates its unpaid migration costs to be \$187 million since 1986.⁵

All of the island jurisdictions suffer from a wide range of infrastructure issues including limited access to power, sewage control, paved roads,

water, food, healthcare and other basic needs. Natural disasters (typhoons, cyclones, earthquakes, and tsunami) have continued to devastate the Pacific islands and have recently had a negative effect on the largely tourist-driven economy as well as the region’s access to reliable basic necessities. These infrastructure issues have a direct impact on the viability and sustainability of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in advocacy work, of which there are few. Few NGOs are able to address the social, cultural, economic, environmental, labor, health and other issues faced by the island populations.

For more information on the demographics and political status of the jurisdictions, please see appendix I on page 22.■

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A LEGACY OF COLONIZATION

The US jurisdictions have endured and resisted hundreds of years of colonization.

Contemporary realities of the US jurisdictions include legacies of colonization by Spain, Germany, Japan, the US, Denmark, and Britain. Over the years, Catholic missionaries from colonizing nations ranging from Germany to Spain have had a lasting effect. The ambitions of the missionaries went far beyond religious conversion to transforming the territories into lands where white foreigners could exert political, economic, social, and cultural supremacy. From the time of the early missionaries, native cultures were systematically targeted for extinction through direct policies of forced assimilation and acculturation.

The early missionaries helped shape the foreign domination that would continue with the end of the Spanish-American War of 1898, one of several historical events that shaped present day realities of the countries that came under US control as a result of the war. On December 10, 1898, the US and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War and gave control of the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico to the US. The annexation of Hawai'i and American Samoa by the US was also closely related to the war and also occurred in the same period.⁶ As a result, hundreds of millions of lives in large parts of the globe were deeply affected and continue to be severely exploited.

During this period, the US was not alone in its efforts for colonial domination. Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Belgium carved up Africa, Asia, South and Central America and the Caribbean. And in the east, Japan tried to exert control over China and Korea. For the US, after occupying and acquiring land in North America while displacing and desecrating Native American tribes, overseas territories represented new land, new markets, and new sources of raw materials. For example,

industrialized nations including the United States, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom have utilized lands and waters in island regions, against the wishes of indigenous peoples, to dispose of radioactive waste, as well as violated the right of indigenous peoples to control the traditional fishing waters of their countries, which have been over-fished by mechanized fleets from Japan, the United States and elsewhere.⁷

The Role of the United Nations

After World War II, in 1947, the United Nations was established, replacing the League of Nations.⁸ The islanders were once again robbed of their autonomy. As the spoils of war were being divided up amongst the victors, the United Nations, without consultation or it seems conscience, handed the lives of the people inhabiting several of the Pacific islands, including the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands to the US. These islands were bound together as the US-administered UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which, until 1994, was a system of UN control for territories that were not self-governing.

The United Nations Charter mandated the Trusteeship Council to promote the political, economic and social advancement of the 11 original United Nations Trust Territories and their development towards self-government or independence. The Charter of the United Nations was signed in June 1945, in San Francisco, at the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, and came into force in October 1945 with ratifications by the Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States, and by a majority of the other signatory states.⁹ Chapter XI, Article 73 mandates UN administration of non-self-governing territories.¹⁰ According to a 1998 UN press release, "Trust Territories were those Non-Self-Governing Territories held under mandates

established by the League of Nations after the First World War; Territories detached from enemy States as a result of the Second World War; and Territories voluntarily placed under the System by States responsible for their administration.”¹¹

In November 1994, the Security Council terminated the United Nations Trusteeship Agreement for Palau—the last of the original 11 Trustee Territories on its agenda—stating that the objectives of the Trusteeship System had been fulfilled.¹² As author and activist Zohl De Ishtar noted in her 1994 book, *Daughters of the Pacific*, “The trusteeship system was intended to promote the welfare of the indigenous populations and to advance them towards self-government. Instead, the UN allowed the Pentagon free reign over these island territories.”¹³

The jurisdictions have been forced into a US plan to establish military facilities from Alaska to the Antarctic. The Pentagon has deliberately and carefully undermined these island economies, forcing an economic dependency that has allowed the US government to use many of the Pacific Islands as well as Puerto Rico in the Caribbean as testing grounds for nuclear weapons, delivery systems and space warfare technologies. The Pacific jurisdictions are positioned on the sea routes to Africa and the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean, and are coveted for their strategic potential as a fall-back zone from the Asian mainland.

Social Consequences of Colonization

In theory preparing the islands for self-sufficiency, the US has actually been tying them closer to the mainland system through aid and economic programs. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau ratified constitutions in 1980 and made choices for either Commonwealth status, Free Association or Republic status; choices

which guarantee a continued aid package from the United States while leaving the US in control of the strategic use of the islands’ land. Though self-chosen, these forms hardly constitute independence.¹⁴

Meanwhile, indigenous people in the territories are over-represented in correctional facilities, probation rolls, and in rates of family violence, teenage suicides, school drop-outs, and other social problems typical of subjugated peoples.¹⁵ As a consequence of US colonization and domination, the jurisdictions are facing a number of problems including issues of self-determination, land rights, high rates of poverty, declining educational infrastructure, US militarization, nuclear weapons testing and related waste clean-up and illnesses, immigration policies, and labor conditions.

The Hawai’i Connection

The experience of indigenous Hawaiians who have for many years been struggling for their physical survival, economic well-being, and cultural and linguistic heritage, is instructive when looking at the issues affecting the populations of the current Pacific and Caribbean jurisdictions. As author Jose Luis Morin has noted: “Rather than an archetype to be replicated, the Hawai’i example, in view of the indigenous Hawaiian experience, should signal another message: it serves as an illustration of what a people of a different nationality, culture, and linguistic tradition can lose in the process of incorporation into the United States.”¹⁶

Like the current US jurisdictions, Hawai’i was coveted by the US as integral to the consolidation of global economic and military power. Meanwhile, the Kanaka Maoli, or indigenous Hawaiian population, has been decimated. Once a society that was entirely self-determining, self-governing, and self-sufficient with a system of communal land tenure which provided for the needs of their people, indigenous Hawaiians were colonized and their society restructured to the political and economic advantage of the US. The

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Kanaka Maoli people experienced a harsh intensification of racial discrimination, alienation from their lands, social and economic deprivation, suppression of their native language, traditions and customs, and forced and systemic assimilation into Anglo-American ways.¹⁷

Historically Hawai'i, much like the current US jurisdictions, has been exploited for land, labor, resources and an expansion of military power which has served the US in maintaining native subservience. The experience of the Kanaka Maoli is an important connection to the status of the populations of the current US jurisdictions and their efforts to maintain and protect their cultures. Activists in the jurisdictions can make important connections and learn important lessons by sharing information and resources with activists from Hawai'i who have a similar history of exploitation by the US. ■

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THE EFFECTS OF MILITARIZATION

The US has a military presence in all the jurisdictions with the exception of the US Virgin Islands. Nuclear testing in the Pacific and the Caribbean by Western powers has emerged as another lasting legacy of the region's militarization and a key issue for regional sovereignty and environmental movements.

In the Caribbean, the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico has endured decades of bombing exercises by the US Navy which displaced the population and inflicted severe environmental damage as well as life-threatening illnesses.

Hundreds of nuclear explosions have taken place in the Pacific, starting with the US Navy's tests in 1946 on Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands. From 1946-1958, when the Marshall Islands were administered by the US as a UN Trust Territory, the US conducted sixty-seven atmospheric atomic and thermonuclear weapons tests. This large-scale nuclear test program had a sudden, lasting, and far-reaching impact on the environment, language, economy, politics, social organization and health of the population of the Marshall Islands.

In 1954, the United States launched the "Bravo Test" on the Bikini Atoll. This nuclear detonation was one of the largest and most deadly tests in the Pacific. Philippine activist Baltazar Pinguel has written about the effects of US militarization in the Pacific jurisdictions and has described in detail the effects of the Bravo Test. "This test involved the atmospheric detonation of a hydrogen bomb at a time when those responsible for the tests knew that winds were blowing in the direction of inhabited atolls. Tests of various sizes continued, irreversibly contaminating many islands and uprooting their populations. Residents became known as 'nuclear nomads,' forcibly removed from their homes and shuttled from one island to the next due to contamination. Once-healthy people became sick, babies were miscarried or born with deformities, and thousands of people were

displaced from their homes.”¹⁸ Thousands of Marshalese remain dislocated from their homelands to this day.

The Kwajalein missile testing range, also in the Marshall Islands, is currently the primary testing center for the accelerated American missile defense program. In April 2003 the Compact of Free Association between the Marshall Islands and the US was amended, extending use of the missile testing range to 2066, with an option to extend access to 2086.¹⁹

In the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Farallon de Mendinilla, a 200-acre island 150 miles north of Guam, the US has been testing live-fire bombs, missiles, and gunfire since 1976 under an agreement between the United States and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands which allows use of the island until 2075.

Guam has been used as a military port for US ships, airplanes, and employees traveling in the Asia Pacific region. In 2003, as a warning to North Korea, the Pentagon ordered further military build-up in Guam with the deployment of B-1 and B-52 bombers to the island.

Community Response to Militarization

Increased military presence on Guam and other islands is a complicated issue. Local governments and some segments of the population often support a US military presence because of the effect military spending has on local economies. In a June 2003 article in the *Guam Pacific News Daily*, officials celebrated the increased military build-up. “Increased military on Guam would mean a great deal more employment for the people of Guam,” noted Carl Peterson, chairman of the Guam Chamber of Commerce’s armed service committee.²⁰ Peterson said the island and its ailing economy need the military to spur more jobs.

Shawn Gumataotao, a spokesperson for Guam Governor Felix Camacho, said the island and its people welcome an increased military

presence. “Our strategic location is strengthened by the fact that Guam is U.S. soil and our people welcome the military as a permanent part of our island community.”²¹

But a number of community and local groups are resisting the presence of the US military in Guam including the Chamoru Nation and the Pacific Concerns Resource Center (PCRC). PCRC has actively campaigned for the close down of foreign military bases in the Pacific and a halt in military activities both by foreign and internal military forces in the region for the past twenty years. In a statement opposing the recent US military build-up in Guam, PCRC points to the arrogance and racism of the US: “While it appears the US is using the planned military build-up as a threatening tactic to North Korea, for those who call the Pacific home, it portrays the sheer arrogance and racist attitude of the US authorities for trampling on the sovereignty and dignity of Pacific peoples.”²²

PCRC’s Demilitarization Campaign notes that no amount of military can guarantee the security of any country. “If anything, it only contributes to further insecurity as US enemies (and there are many) may consider key US bases in the Pacific as strategic targets. This was the case during World War II when islanders were plunged and exposed to a war between foreign powers that had nothing to do with them and as a result has permanently transformed the history of our island nations.”²³

Environmental Activists Respond to Militarization in CNMI

In Farallon de Mendinilla, the military has been locked in a legal battle with the Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund, formerly the Sierra Club, over its bombing exercises. Activists have expressed concern over the safety of birds and the island’s surrounding reef—one of the largest in the Western Pacific.²⁴ The island is an important nesting site for more than a dozen species of migratory birds, including some that are endangered. Environmental groups are seeking to stop live-fire training on

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the grounds that migratory birds are harmed in violation of the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), which prohibits harm to migratory species without a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In 1996 The Navy asked the Service for a permit to use the island as a range, but was refused. The Navy continued to use the range, saying the treaty did not apply to federal agencies. The US military had no intention of abiding by environmental regulations affecting Farallon de Mendinilla.

Earthjustice filed a lawsuit in December 2000 following a decision by the Federal Court in the District of Columbia which declined to follow precedent and applied the 85-year-old act to Federal agencies. The suit claims the Migratory Bird Treaty Act applies to the Navy and Defense Department and its use of the range. According to Earthjustice, in June 2002, the federal district court for the District of Columbia issued an injunction enjoining the Navy, and the Navy appealed. Although that appeal is pending, after the November 2002 elections, Congress stepped in and gave the Defense Department a broad exemption from the MBTA. However, the bill that passed did not contain the exemptions for other environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which the Pentagon had also been seeking.²⁵

And yet, many residents, lacking resources, jobs and basic necessities, support increased military activity because of the impact increased military activity has on the struggling economy. The CNMI appealed the US federal court ruling halting US military training exercises on Farallon de Mendinilla – including bombing. CNMI officials are concerned about the loss of revenue because Navy ships visit CNMI and generate revenue en route to Farallon de Mendinilla.

The US Navy and Vieques

In 1938 the US Navy began using the island-municipality of Vieques, off the eastern coast of Puerto Rico, for military bombing practices. In 1941, during the height of World War II, the Navy initiated a campaign of forced expropriation of territory, taking over two thirds

of the island's most arable land and displacing thousands of families. The effect of these policies was the clustering of the entire civilian population of Vieques into a small strip of land in the middle of the island. Until earlier this year, the US Navy controlled seventy-five percent of the land on Vieques. After decades of organizing by a coalition of groups including ViequesLibre and the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, which participated in a mass-based movement to oppose the US Naval occupation of Vieques, the success of the protest movement led to the US Navy's withdrawal in May 2003.²⁶

Many problems remain in Vieques, however. Environmental destruction has ravaged the land, which has yet to be returned to the people of Puerto Rico. Rather, it has been transferred to the US Department of Fishing and Wildlife, so that an environmental assessment can be obtained. Early Puerto Rican estimates have produced a figure of \$400 million necessary to clean up the land used by the US Navy, but only \$23 million has been allocated so far. Activists say that the US Fish and Wildlife Service is another intruder.

Global Implications of US Militarization

There is an important connection to be made between the legacy of US colonization in the jurisdictions and the current neocolonialist policies of the Bush Administration. The effect of US militarization is intense, both in the jurisdictions which suffer from the destruction resulting from bombing exercises and the proliferation of regional conflicts, many of which are fanned by racism and ethnic hatred, and in the US, where the demonization of “enemy” nations continues to rest in thinly-veiled racial stereotypes.

As Baltazar Pinguel has noted, “In many areas of the world, including the Philippines as well as Central and South America, and more recently Afghanistan and Iraq, the elimination by the US government of brutal dictatorships has led neither to democratization nor to true independence but rather to deepening violence and impoverishment, coupled with growing dependence on the global market economy. Even in the US, sustained economic growth

has not brought shared prosperity, but rather a widening gap between rich and poor and an overall loss of economic security for a large majority of the population.²⁷ This is especially true for those who live in the jurisdictions.” ■

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ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

The economies of the jurisdictions are fragile. US government and corporate interests control local economies, diverting resources for external consumption and profit which has had a devastating effect on local subsistence economies. The “modernized” cash economy is in sharp contrast to the traditional land-based system that was once the foundation of each of the jurisdictions. The bedrock of island economies had long been based on the land and the sea and the products they yielded to islanders. But nationhood in the modern world is founded on economic development – a conversion of the traditional economy to a modern cash economy. Money becomes the measure of growth in such a system, and the goal is to encourage as many people as possible to participate in the cash economy, which in turn accelerates the breakdown of traditional indigenous lifestyles.²⁸

The relatively small size and isolation of each of the jurisdictions does not allow them to sustain economies of scale in the production of goods and services in a global market economy. Many of the jurisdictions face similar problems, including a dependence on the declining tourism industry and a reliance on US government assistance.

In addition, the jurisdictions are vulnerable to external shocks and natural disasters; they have difficulty receiving private foreign capital; they are remote from markets; their domestic markets are fragmented; they encounter shortages of domestic capital resources for investment; and they have populations that are often highly dispersed among numerous, distanced islands and atolls. Economic difficulties are compounded by a high need for

These exceptions have made CNMI an attractive location for garment manufacturers who exploit workers with poor wages and poor working conditions—Saipan's hourly minimum wage is \$3.05. Garment manufacturers have set up more than 30 factories in Saipan and ship several hundred million dollars' worth of garments to the US annually without falling under US import quotas while allowing them to label their products “Made in the USA.”

government services including access to public education and healthcare in addition to growing populations.

The tourism industry, an economic mainstay for many jurisdictions, has declined significantly in recent years. The weakening tourist industry has been due primarily to a decline in tourist travel after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001 as well as the SARS outbreak in 2003 and a general global economic downturn. Because of this decline, the island jurisdictions have been faced with a narrow economic base which results in fewer jobs and a greater dependence on the US government for economic assistance.

For example, American Samoa's economy is heavily dependent on Federal expenditures and its two tuna canneries—Starkist, Inc. and Samoa Packing. In fact, 93 percent of American Samoa's economy is based directly or indirectly on US federal expenditures and the local tuna canning industry. The remaining seven percent stems from a small tourism industry and a few small businesses.²⁹ Typically, local businesses are small, owned by local people, and sell exclusively to the local market. Costs are high due to limited access to resources and the need to import most goods and raw materials, making them vulnerable to competition from neighboring islands' lower wage levels or from larger corporate structures from the US mainland.

Effects on Local Economies

Several factors effect local economies. For example, as a commonwealth, the CNMI is under the sovereignty of the US. In general, federal law applies to the CNMI with certain notable exceptions: the CNMI is not within the customs territory of the US; federal minimum wage provisions do not apply; federal immigration laws do not apply; the CNMI can establish its own tax laws; and the Jones Act, which requires goods shipped between US ports to be carried on US-registered ships, does not apply. These exceptions have made CNMI an attractive location for garment

manufacturers who exploit workers with poor wages and poor working conditions— Saipan's hourly minimum wage is \$3.05. Garment manufacturers have set up more than 30 factories in Saipan and ship several hundred million dollars' worth of garments to the US annually without falling under US import quotas while allowing them to label their products “Made in the USA.”³⁰

The World Trade Organization's new trade regulations, which went into effect on January 1, 2003, will likely have an impact on garment factories operating in CNMI who will lose the economic advantage offered by "duty-free" rights to the American market under the terms of the covenant.

The tourism industry in some of the Pacific jurisdictions including Guam, CNMI, and Palau experienced enormous growth in the 1980s and 1990s. Much of the tourist population is largely Japanese and much of the industry is Japanese-owned. But the trend of growth has experienced several interruptions. Since 1998 the Asian economy has declined and the Pacific jurisdictions dependent on this revenue source have suffered accordingly. Tourist spending leveled off, real estate transactions dropped, and the local construction industry went through a sharp downturn as new construction almost ceased. In addition, more recently, the SARS outbreak and the September 11 attacks have also negatively impacted the industry. In the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, tourism is also a key industry and has also experienced a decline since the late 1990s.

Impact of Economy on Organizing

These economic stresses have a significant impact on local populations and local politics. Faced with basic needs, it is understandable that local support is in favor of increased militarization because of the relationship between the military and increased economic growth. These complexities have a direct and negative impact on the sustainability of political organizing as people struggle to meet their basic financial needs. There are few non-governmental organizations in all areas of

health and social services to address the growing needs experienced by the realities of people's daily experiences.

The primary organization working on economic justice issues in the Pacific jurisdictions is the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG), which is a network of individuals and organizations promoting viable sustainable Pacific communities. PANG's program priorities include the impacts and pressures arising from the Pacific free trade area agreements, economic reforms and privatization, and the role of transnational corporations in the Pacific. The network of organizations that make up PANG include the Pacific Concerns Resource Center (PCRC), Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO), the Ecumenical Centre for Research Education and Advocacy (ECREA), the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), and Development Alternatives for Women (DAWN).³¹

PANG arose from a regional consultation on "Globalisation, Trade, Investment and Debt" that was held in May 2001 in Fiji. The coalition of organizations that attended the regional consultation agreed to take collective action to achieve its goal of information sharing to facilitate learning and action on economic justice issues.

Other organizations addressing economic justice issues in the Pacific include the International Gender and Trade Network, a network of women involved in research, advocacy and economic literacy around issues of trade and development³² and the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN). APRN was established in 1999 to develop cooperation among alternative research centers, NGOs, and social movements in Asia and the Pacific in order to strengthen local advocacy. Though neither of these organizations specifically address issues in the US jurisdictions, they could be useful to activists in the jurisdictions, either as an organizing model or as partner organizations should they choose to expand their reach to the US jurisdictions.³³ ■

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

The jurisdictions have long histories of community-based organizing which is rooted in a cultural context that sets organizing work apart from traditional notions of social justice activism on the US mainland primarily because the populations in the jurisdictions are faced with a wide range of basic needs. Community-based organizing efforts in the territories and jurisdictions face many challenges. Financial resources are scarce and local populations are faced with crucial infrastructure needs—electricity, sewage control, paved roads, food, and water among them—all of which effects progressive work and makes political activism difficult to sustain.

Activists say they feel geographically isolated and their organizing efforts are excluded and/or overlooked by funding sources. There exists a great need to seed the development of organizing efforts, and to build the capacities of existing community-based organizations and organizing efforts. "Because we are islands, we feel isolated from the US mainland," notes Alex Silverio, an HIV/AIDS activist living in Guam. "People use that as an excuse for the limited capacity of community organizing but the emerging attitude is that we are not separated by oceans, we are connected by them."

Political organizations have emerged to address decolonization, environmental issues, anti-poverty and sustainable human development, human rights, cultural preservation, and sexuality and health issues including HIV/AIDS. But the reality is that on most of the islands, with the possible exception of Puerto Rico, it's difficult to find organizations that are able to sustain community-based organizing for the long haul. For example, the Pacific Islands Association of

Activists say they feel geographically isolated and their organizing efforts are excluded and/or overlooked by funding sources. There exists a great need to seed the development of organizing efforts, and to build the capacities of existing community-based organizations and organizing efforts.

NGOs (PIANGO), founded in 1990 in Samoa, was active in the late 1990s on issues of decolonization in the Pacific region including the US jurisdictions but seems to have done little since 2000. A network of 17 NGOs, PIANGO worked to facilitate communication; provide a common voice at regional and international forums on the collective rights of indigenous peoples; strengthen Pacific identities, unity, cultures and social action to improve the communities it serves.

PIANGO used a collaborative model to call international attention to a radical perspective that called for decolonization. In preparation for a regional seminar of the United Nations Decolonization Committee meeting in Fiji in June of 1998, PIANGO issued a discussion paper authored by Kekuni Blaisdell, the convener of the PIANGO Indigenous Rights Working Group. Blaisdell and PIANGO called on the UN Committee to respond to the “persistent violations of decolonization principles by the US” and affirmed its support for the indigenous Chamoru people’s quest for full self-determination in Guam.

In addressing the neocolonialist policies of the US, Blaisdell and PIANGO note: “The Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands are conspicuous examples of neocolonialism. Although officially ‘decolonized’ as post-World War II trust territories, they continue to be the victims of US-designed economic dependence, growing transnational corporation, global, exploitation, nuclearism, militarism, political domination, and coercive assimilation. The result is Third World social, economic and health conditions in these small, widely-dispersed and unevenly populated Pacific Islands.”³⁴

PIANGO worked with other Pacific NGOs including the Pacific Concerns Resource Center (PCRC). Located in Fiji, PCRC works to coordinate, articulate and disseminate information about the concerns and struggles of peoples of the Pacific (including, but not limited to US jurisdictions) in their desire to exist free from exploitation, from the threat of

environmental degradation and from both foreign and internal forms of subjugation. Program areas include demilitarization, decolonization, environment, sustainable human development, human rights and good governance.

Meanwhile, the only AIDS service organization in the Pacific jurisdictions, Coral Life Foundation, closed its doors in late 2002 after ten years of operations due to poor fiscal management. For a region with no comprehensive continuum of HIV care services within any of the jurisdictions, the closing of CLF leaves a major void. Activists note that “although the numbers of reported HIV/AIDS cases are relatively low, there are several factors that emphasize the need for HIV prevention in the region: very young and sexually active populations, with some of the highest fertility rates in the world; significant migration within the region and between the region and Asia and the continental U.S.; rapidly expanding tourist industries, including commercial sex; and dramatic increases in foreign workers, especially from Asia.”³⁵

Since CLF’s closing, activists in Guam have begun to form the Guam HIV/AIDS Network Project (GUAHAN Project), which works to address issues of HIV/AIDS prevention and care on Guam. The Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF) and the Asian and Pacific Islander Wellness Center (APIWC), two San Francisco-based organizations, are working to provide technical assistance as the GUAHAN project gets established. One of the goals of the GUAHAN Project is to establish a Gender Institute that will address sexuality and marginalized populations affected by sexuality issues through discrimination, violence, lack of support, and social injustices.

In 2001, representatives from six Pacific Island Jurisdictions (American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam and Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) came together to form the Pacific Island Jurisdictions AIDS Action Group (PIJAAG) to address the state of HIV prevention and care services in their

respective jurisdictions. PIJAAG advocates for the provision of quality HIV prevention and care services in the region; advises national, international, and local policy entities on HIV/AIDS; and strengthens and coordinates AIDS activities through the sharing of information and resources within the region.

Indigenous Rights Work in Guam

Indigenous rights work in Guam has a long history and has been able to support itself despite access to limited resources. In Guam the Chamoru people's determination to reclaim their sovereignty grew at a rapid pace during the 1990s. In 1991 a group of activists calling themselves the United Chamoru Chelus (which translates as brothers and sisters) for Independence declared the Chamoru Nation into existence.³⁶ Organizations included the Organization for People for Indigenous Rights (OPIR), Protehi I Tano'ta (Protect Our Land), Achaot Guahan (Chamoru Artists' Association) and the Guam National Party. According to the late Senator Angel Santos, a founding member of the Chamoru Nation the coalition "agreed to work together under the same banner. Not as one organization. An attempt to form one organization would be an insult to our mission—we are an entity higher than any organization. We have a god-given right to exist as a people."³⁷

Santos, who died of Parkinson's disease at the age of 44 earlier this year, noted that United Chamoru Chelus for Independence was considered radical at the beginning. "Our people are not accustomed to standing up against the government, to speaking out. Indeed, after four hundred years of colonial domination the Chamoru people have been intimidated to the point of passivity." Santos noted that people have not been used to protest; civil disobedience; non-conformity; challenging the system. Since its inception the Chamoru Nation has helped to mobilize the Chamoru people into action. The Chamoru Nation continually lobbies and organizes around redefining Guam's political status and decolonizing the island and was instrumental in getting the Chamoru Land Trust Act passed in 1994 when they protested on the grounds

of the governors office in Adelupe. Several weeks later the Governor agreed to sign the Chamoru Land Trust Act which provides Chamoru people with plots for farms and houses.

Cultural Preservation

Cultural preservation is a particularly important issue as local populations are faced with challenging hundreds of years of cultural dominance by colonizing powers. For example, in the early 1900s, the US naval government regulated the cultural practices in Guam. The matrilineal system was eliminated and replaced with a patrilineal system. The US required all parents to give their children their father's name, and anyone who refused to comply would be fined. "Three thousand years of living under a matrilineal system was done away with in one day, at the whisk of a pen. Our culture was almost destroyed," noted Santos. In 1922, naval Governor Dorn imposed the California school system on the people of Guam and students, upon entering school at the age of five or six, were immediately taught American history, instructed to memorize the Pledge of Allegiance to the US, and identify the four seasons (which Guam does not have). The US methodically set out to dismantle the Chamoru culture, language, and identity.

Organizing Infrastructure

The reality is that there are few organizations that are able to address the social, cultural, economic, environmental, labor, health and other issues faced by the jurisdictions. Of all the jurisdictions, Puerto Rico has the strongest infrastructure of community-based organizations engaged in progressive movement work which include a range of organizations working on LGBT rights, feminist and women's rights, and anti-militarization. The following Funding Exchange grantees are examples of this range: Taller Lésbico Creativo is an LGBT organization working in rural areas of Puerto Rico using popular theater techniques and workshops to promote the discussion of issues amongst lesbian and bisexual women and the larger LGBT community in Puerto Rico. Movimiento

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Ecuménico Nacional de Puerto Rico is another example of an organization working for LGBT rights in Puerto Rico. Movimiento works specifically with churches, religious leaders, professional and academic groups, individuals, and families of the LGBT community to provide education that makes the links between human sexuality and human rights.

Feminist and women's rights organizations in Puerto Rico include Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora, a feminist collective which works to improve women's living conditions, promote women's rights and development, and eradicate gender discrimination in Puerto Rico. Another example includes Casa Pensamiento de Mujer del Centro, Inc. which works to promote human rights for the women of Puerto Rico's central island towns by building access to legal, educational and social services.

In the US Virgin Islands, women's advocacy groups include the Family Resource Center of St. Thomas, Safety Zone of St. John and Women's Coalition of St. Croix. These organizations work together collaboratively on a number of issues and primarily provide services and support to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including battered women and children. Of these organizations, the Women's Coalition of St. Croix has moved in the direction of advocacy by promoting "equality for freedom through the oppressions of sexism and racism – through education and advocacy for women's rights."

Another organization in St. Croix, The Virgin Islands Perinatal Partnership (VIPP) is a community development organization that works to create solutions to infant mortality and morbidity in the Virgin Islands, especially on the island of St. Croix. VIPP's community development process creates a space for the community to collaborate and be more directly involved in identifying and realizing solutions. For example, VIPP has begun a training process for local women to gain skills to assume leadership.

These are not new issues, but like all advocacy and service organizations the

organizations in the jurisdictions need support in addressing the issues and services that the community needs. Without being able to meet basic needs, NGOs in the jurisdictions will be hard-pressed to empower the community to advocate for themselves.

While local organizations in the jurisdictions need to identify problems and solutions in their communities themselves, organizations on the US mainland can provide technical assistance and capacity-building assistance. The Guam Communications Network (GCN), based in Long Beach, California, is one such organization that provides technical assistance to organizations in the Pacific jurisdictions. GCN was established in 1993 as a community-based organization and multi-service agency serving the Chamoru population in the Los Angeles area. It works to facilitate increased public awareness of the issues concerning the people, island, and culture of Guam through education, coalition building, and advocacy. While GCN focuses its efforts in the Chamoru community, they also collaborate with other Asian and Pacific Islander service organizations in an effort to foster solidarity and work towards common goals. GCN's outreach efforts extend to the Pacific regions and throughout the US mainland.

Gaining a comprehensive understanding of organizing needs to address the range of issues in the jurisdictions will require resources to convene activists so that they can define their own political agenda and share resources with each other.

Understanding the landscape of organizing will also require those on the US mainland who are interested in supporting this work to travel to the jurisdictions to meet with local people and activists, develop trust, and build relationships to get a more accurate picture of organizing efforts and needs.

Philanthropic Support

Issues and solutions are interconnected. Activists interviewed for this report all agree that resources for people to gain access to education, employment opportunities, housing, healthcare, and social services would create

spaces for people to collaborate and be more directly involved in identifying and realizing organizing strategies and solutions. But without a base of financial support, this will be a difficult task.

Philanthropic support to the US jurisdictions is extremely limited, especially from US funders. And yet, all the territories and freely associated states have been facing economic and social challenges more often seen in third world countries. Foundations that fund progressive movement work in the US have done little to no funding in any of the US jurisdictions with the exception of Puerto Rico. Reviews of annual reports and web searches of the largest progressive funding sources found no grants made to any of the jurisdictions except Puerto Rico.

The lack of funding directed to the jurisdictions from US-based foundations can be attributed to a number of factors. Foundation staff who responded to queries for this report noted that they are not receiving many requests from the jurisdictions. The lack of requests, however, is directly related to the lack of strength of the NGO sector in the jurisdictions, which in turn is related to inadequate outreach by foundations to the jurisdictions. In addition, foundations may need to review their funding guidelines to make them more relevant to issues faced by populations in the jurisdictions. Community-based organizing in the jurisdictions is directly related to providing services to address the wide-range of needs faced by local populations. The very real need for services, often a precursor to advocacy work, will require funders to look at innovative and different ways of supporting social justice work in the region.

Some funders, including the Funding Exchange, have recognized the need to shift their grantmaking priorities to address the growing need in the jurisdictions. Strategic Philanthropy, Ltd., a philanthropic advisory services firm based in Chicago is in the early stages of working to develop the philanthropic infrastructure in the US Virgin Islands by gathering data and bringing together local residents to determine a workable process and

outcomes.

Other funders have directed resources to individual organizers in the jurisdictions. The Bannerman Fellowship and the Petra Foundation have both supported individuals who have worked on indigenous rights issues in the Pacific territories. The Petra Foundation, a non-profit charitable organization that supports individuals who work for racial justice, the autonomy of individuals, groups, families, or communities, or the defense of freedom of speech and expression, recognized Kekuni Blaisdell, a member of PIANGO, with a fellowship in 1996.³⁸ Blaisdell was recognized by the Petra Foundation for his advocacy for the rights and fundamental freedoms of Kanaka Maoli and other indigenous peoples including those in the Pacific jurisdictions.

The Alston Bannerman Fellowship, which works to advance progressive social change by helping to sustain longtime activists of color with resources for activists to take sabbaticals, recognized Eddie Benavente in 2002.³⁹ Benavente has been a leader of the fight for self-determination of the Chamoru people. Benavente is the elected Maga'lahi, or chief, of Nasion Chamoru, whose victories include legislation requiring all students in Guam's schools to take courses in Chamoru language and history. ■

ACTIVIST ADVICE TO FUNDERS

In order to develop strategies for supporting community-based organizing efforts in the jurisdictions, funders should consider these next steps suggested by activists in the jurisdictions who were interviewed for this report:

- 1** Build relationships and trust with local activists by visiting the jurisdictions to gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the issues faced by local people.
- 2** Acknowledge organizing within the context of services that address basic health and well-being needs in the jurisdictions.
- 3** Fund convenings of activists in the US jurisdictions, perhaps by region, to network, identify issues, and share resources.
- 4** Commission the research and publication of a comprehensive directory of NGOs working in the jurisdictions that will both map the NGO landscape and provide a networking tool amongst activists, NGOs, and funders.
- 5** Engage a broader base of funders about the needs in the jurisdictions to promote further funding of organizing efforts and increase the financial resource pool for long-term movement-building.
- 6** Identify opportunities for capacity building and work with organizations already engaged in such work to develop a capacity-building initiative.

CONCLUSION

The interconnected issues that have been the hallmark of the Funding Exchange since its inception—the promotion of social, economic, environmental, and racial justice for all—are central to the issues facing the jurisdictions along with modern-day colonialism, imperialism, militarization, and corporate and cultural domination. The people of the jurisdictions have suffered a range of environmental, health, cultural, and economic damage and destruction as a result of US colonialism—a situation that is parallel and similar to issues faced by communities of color in the US.

In order to examine and address the implications of US government, military, and corporate institutional practices around the world, the Funding Exchange recognizes the connections between US dominance in the jurisdictions and current US aggression, both at home and abroad. In the past year, the Funding Exchange's national grantmaking programs have focused on international funding in two areas of the world: the Middle East, and the Philippines. This focus is motivated in large part by concern over areas of the world, like the Philippines, that are former US territories, and the Middle East, which is the current target of the neocolonialist policies of the Bush administration.

The connections between former US territories and current US territories are significant and point to a need to address issues of race, class, and gender in the larger context of supporting organizing efforts in the jurisdictions. By recognizing this need, the Funding Exchange is taking a leadership role in the philanthropic world as it works to develop a new grantmaking initiative that will focus on programs and organizations within the US jurisdictions. This initiative will fortify the future work of the Funding Exchange just as it will strengthen progressive movement-building within and across borders.

It is crucial that a broad base of funders join these efforts to support and seed the various needs for community-based organizing in the jurisdictions. In order to responsibly address the many issues in the jurisdictions, follow-up work to this report must include a comprehensive analysis to map the NGO landscape in each of the jurisdictions and determine the needs and capacity for response based on local perspectives. By supporting leadership efforts to organize and convening local activists to engage in these discussions and build relationships, funders can assist in the development of a long-range sustainable vision to address systemic change to the many issues faced by people who live in the jurisdictions. Local communities in the US jurisdictions need spaces and resources to engage each other in identifying problems and solutions so that they can advocate for themselves and shape the policies that impact their lives. ■

Philanthropic support to the US jurisdictions is extremely limited, especially from US funders. And yet, all the territories and freely associated states have been facing economic and social challenges more often seen in third world countries.

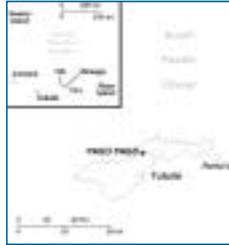
APPENDIX I

US TERRITORIES AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

US TERRITORIES

AMERICAN SAMOA

A group of islands in the South Pacific slightly larger than Washington, DC, American Samoa is an unincorporated and unorganized territory of the US and is administered by the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of the Interior. American Samoa elects one nonvoting representative to the US House of Representatives. The people of American Samoa are considered US nationals but not US citizens. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 70,260 (July 2003 estimate)

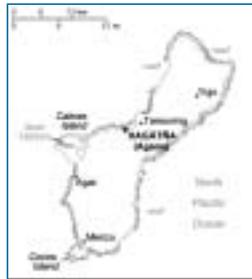
Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 37.5% (male 13,557; female 12,818); 15-64 years: 57% (male 19,712; female 20,346); 65 years and over: 5.4% (male 2,081; female 1,746) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Samoan (Polynesian) 89%, Caucasian 2%, Tongan 4%, other 5%

Religions: Christian Congregationalist 50%, Roman Catholic 20%, Protestant and other 30%

GUAM

An island in the North Pacific about three times the size of Washington DC, Guam is an organized, unincorporated territory of the US. Guam was ceded to the US by Spain in 1898. Captured by the Japanese in 1941, it was retaken by the US three years later. The military installation on the island is one of the most strategically important US bases in the Pacific. Policy relations between Guam and the US are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Insular Affairs, US Department of the Interior. The people of Guam are US citizens but cannot vote in US presidential elections. Guam elects one nonvoting representative to the US House of Representatives. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 163,941 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 35.1% (male 30,334; female 27,264); 15-64 years: 58.4% (male 50,258; female 45,538); 65 years and over: 6.4% (male 5,269; female 5,278) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Chamoru 37%, Filipino 26%, white 10%, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other 27%

Religions: Roman Catholic 85%, other 15%

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS (CNMI)

A group of islands in the North Pacific about 2.5 times the size of Washington, DC, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is a commonwealth in political union with the US. Negotiations for territorial status began in 1972. A covenant to establish a commonwealth in political union with the US was approved in 1975. A new government and constitution went into effect in 1978. It is self-governing with a locally elected governor, lieutenant governor and legislature. The indigenous people of CNMI are US citizens but cannot vote in US presidential elections. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 80,006 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 23.3% (male 9,483; female 9,168); 15-64 years: 74.8% (male 27,839; female 32,041); 65 years and over: 1.8% (male 748; female 727) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Chamoru, Carolinians and other Micronesians, Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean

Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic majority)

PUERTO RICO

A group of islands between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, slightly less than three times the size of Rhode Island, Puerto Rico is a commonwealth in political union with the US. Populated for centuries by aboriginal peoples, the island was claimed by the Spanish Crown in 1493 following Columbus' second voyage to the Americas. In 1898, after 400 years of colonial rule that saw the indigenous population nearly exterminated and African slave labor introduced, Puerto Rico was ceded to the US as a result of the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917 and elected governors have served since 1948. In 1952, a constitution was enacted providing for internal self-government. In plebiscites held in 1967, 1993, and 1998 voters chose to retain commonwealth status. Puerto Rico elects, by popular vote, a resident commissioner to serve a four-year term as a nonvoting representative in the US House of Representatives. The indigenous people of Puerto Rico are US citizens but cannot vote in US presidential elections. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 3,885,877 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 22.9% (male 454,908; female 434,555); 15-64 years: 65.2% (male 1,212,764; female 1,322,356); 65 years and over: 11.9% (male 200,669; female 260,625) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Latino (mostly Spanish origin) 80.5%, black 8%, Amerindian 0.4%, Asian 0.2%, mixed and other 10.9%

Religions: Roman Catholic 85%, Protestant and other 15%

US VIRGIN ISLANDS

68 Islands (St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas are the three largest) between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean, twice the size of Washington, DC, the Virgin Islands are an organized, unincorporated territory of the US with policy relations between the Virgin Islands and the US under the jurisdiction of the Office of Insular Affairs, US



Department of the Interior. They were purchased from Denmark in 1917 for \$25 million because of their strategic position alongside the approach to the Panama Canal. The people of the Virgin Islands are US citizens but cannot vote in US presidential elections. Virgin Islands elects one nonvoting representative to the US House of Representatives. Defense is the responsibility of the US.

Population: 124,778 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 26% (male 16,685; female 15,794); 15-64 years: 64.4% (male 36,241; female 44,157); 65 years and over: 9.5% (male 5,078; female 6,823) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: black 78%, white 10%, other 12%

note: West Indian 81% (49% born in the Virgin Islands and 32% born elsewhere in the West Indies), US mainland 13%, Puerto Rican 4%, other 2%

Religions: Baptist 42%, Roman Catholic 34%, Episcopalian 17%, other 7%

US FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

An island group in the North Pacific Ocean about four times the size of Washington, DC, the Federated States of Micronesia is a sovereign, constitutional, self-governing state in free association with the US. The Compact of Free Association entered into force on 3 November, 1986. An amended 20-year agreement was signed in May 2003. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 108,143 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 38.4% (male 21,163; female 20,335); 15-64 years: 58.5% (male 31,746; female 31,477); 65 years and over: 3.2% (male 1,558; female 1,864) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: nine ethnic Micronesian and Polynesian groups

Religions: Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 47%

REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

A group of atolls and reefs in the North Pacific Ocean about the size of Washington, DC, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is a sovereign, constitutional, self-governing state in free association with the US. The Compact of Free Association entered into force on 3 November, 1986. An amended 20-year agreement was signed in April 2003. Compensation claims continue as a result of US nuclear testing on some of the atolls between 1947 and 1962. The Marshall Islands have been home to the US Army Base Kwajalein (USAKA) since 1964. Under the amended agreement the compact extends the use of missile testing range on Kwajalein until 2066. Defense is the responsibility of the US.



Population: 56,429 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 39.1% (male 11,233; female 10,819); 15-64 years: 58.2% (male 16,857; female 16,003); 65 years and over: 2.7% (male 726; female 791) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Micronesian

Religions: Christian (mostly Protestant)

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

A group of islands in the North Pacific Ocean slightly more than 2.5 times the size of Washington, DC, Palau is a sovereign, constitutional, self-governing state in free association with the US. The Compact of Free Association was approved in 1986, but not ratified until 1993. It entered into force in 1994 when the islands gained independence. Defense is the responsibility of the US. Under the Compact of Free Association the US has access to the islands for 50 years.



Population: 19,717 (July 2003 estimate)

Age Ranges: 0-14 years: 26.7% (male 2,714; female 2,552); 15-64 years: 68.7% (male 7,352; female 6,197); 65 years and over: 4.6% (male 429; female 473) (2003 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Palauan (Micronesian with Malayan and Melanesian combination) 70%, Asian (mainly Filipinos, followed by Chinese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese) 28%, white 2% (2000 est.)

Religions: Christian (Roman Catholics 49%, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Assembly of God, the Liebenzell Mission, and Latter-Day Saints), Modekngei religion (one-third of the population observes this religion, which is indigenous to Palau)

Appendix I information taken from: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook We include these statistics for general information purposes only. Note that population statistics do not necessarily reflect self-identification of the communities addressed.

APPENDIX II THE PHILIPPINES: COLONIZATION, INDEPENDENCE AND CONTINUED MILITARIZATION

In 1896, the people of the Philippines challenged Spanish imperialism in the first Asian revolution against a Western colonial power. They were largely successful when two years later in 1898, the US, fixated on joining the ranks of Western imperialist nations, declared war on Spain. The three-month-long Spanish-American War ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1898 and for \$20 million Spain ceded the Philippines (along with Guam and Puerto Rico) to the US.

The Philippine-American War followed in 1899, in which hundreds of thousands of mostly civilian Filipino lives were lost, an early example of the severe cruelty of American military campaigns. American colonization of the Philippines lasted until 1946, when the Filipinos finally realized formal independence. But by then, as author Luis Francia has noted, this group of islands had become the cornerstone of US imperial dreams and military expansion in the east: the US government based two of its largest overseas military bases, Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, as Francia notes, the Philippine-American War is referenced in textbooks and encyclopedias as the “Philippine Insurrection” as though it was the simple and violent refusal of a few people unhappy with the US occupation. In fact, a large number of people rose up against American colonialism and participated in the fight for Philippine independence.

Today, with increased US troops, military and economic aid to the Philippines, Filipinos are once again reminded of a time when their aspirations to self-determination were hijacked by the US. In March 2003 Philippine president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo justified the country joining the US-led “coalition of the willing” against Iraq by claiming that Iraq’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction” might end up in the hands of Abu Sayyaf or the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Since 1978 the MILF, which has been fighting for self-determination for the Muslim Moro people, and Abu Sayyaf, a fundamentalist group battling against the Philippine authorities have been targeted by the Philippine government causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. As writer Aziz

Choudry has articulated, “The Armed Forces of the Philippines have razed villages, destroyed people’s crops and killed their livestock, in a campaign rife with human rights violations, death and destruction.” These experiences of violent destruction and displacement highlight the connections between US colonization especially as it relates to the current military assault on Iraq and the subsequent impact on Filipinos.

For example, Choudry notes that “an estimated one and a half million Filipino migrant workers in the Middle East face an uncertain future. More than 46,000 Filipino workers, many of them from Muslim communities, were displaced during the Gulf War. Labor unions and migrant workers’ organizations have struggled for over a decade to obtain compensation for many of these Filipino overseas contract workers. With the government’s official labor export policy, high unemployment, and growing poverty, an estimated 2000 Filipinos leave the country daily to work overseas. Remittances from overseas Filipinos are the country’s largest single source of foreign exchange. With so many in the Middle East, and with the effects of the last war in the Gulf painfully fresh for both workers and their dependent families, these are particularly worrying times.”

“It is clear that the Pentagon sees these exercises as a strategic opportunity to reinforce a critical alliance with the Philippines,” writes Choudry. “The Philippines provides the US with a foothold in Southeast Asia, a jump-off point for operations in Asia where it has markets, investments and other geopolitical interests to protect, and where it can use ‘war on terror’ rhetoric to do so.”

For many years, Filipinos, much like the people of the US jurisdictions, have courageously struggled to rid themselves of US military presence. They deserve increased support as they resist a new wave of colonial occupation which will have regional, if not global, consequences.

See: Shaw, Angel Velasco and Francia Luis H., *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-America War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream 1899-1999*, New York University Press, 2002; Choudry, Aziz, *ZNet Commentary "Groping For The Exact Term: Semantics, US Soldiers and The Philippines,"* March 27, 2003; Francia, Luis H., “Brown Man’s Burden,” *The Village Voice*, January 29-February 4, 2003.

APPENDIX III

A SELECTED GLOSSARY OF COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

The following is a selected list of community-based organizations working in the territories and freely associated states. It is not a comprehensive list, but rather a beginning effort in identifying organizations engaged in addressing the range of issues faced by the US jurisdictions. Address and contact information is included where available.

Pacific Concerns Resource Center

83 Amy St
Toorak
Suva, Fiji
(679) 330-4649
pcrc@connect.com.fj
www.pcrc.org

Works to coordinate, articulate and disseminate information about the concerns and struggles of peoples of the Pacific (including, but not limited to US territories and jurisdictions) in their desire to exist free from exploitation, from the threat of environmental degradation and from both foreign and internal forms of subjugation. Program areas include demilitarization, decolonization, environment, sustainable human development, human rights and good governance. PCRC is located in the Fiji Islands.

Pacific Island Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (PIANGO)

P.O. Box 17780, Suva, Fiji
(679) 330-2963
piango@connect.com.fj
www.piango.org

PIANGO is a network of Pacific NGOs, existing to facilitate communication; provide a common voice at regional and international forums; and assist NGOs to strengthen and develop Pacific identities, unity, cultures and forms of social action, as well as to improve the well being of the communities they serve. Was most active in the late 1990s advocating for decolonization efforts at the United Nations. Located in Vanuatu.

Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG)

(679) 330-7588, econjust@ecrea.org.fj

PANG is a campaign network of concerned individuals and organizations responding to economic justice issues and promoting viable sustainable Pacific communities. PANG aims to facilitate effective coordinated action on economic justice issues towards just development in the Pacific as defined by Pacific peoples, and is guided by a number of founding principles, values and goals. The overall objectives are to: raise awareness and increase knowledge; actively network with individuals and organizations; conduct research and disseminate information; advocate for policy changes and monitor impacts; and mobilize resources and build skills.

Pacific Island Jurisdictions AIDS Action Group (PIJAAG)

PIJAAG is a network of representatives of the US-affiliated Pacific Island Jurisdictions that works on issues of HIV/AIDS in the island communities. Advocates for the provision of quality HIV prevention and care services in the region; Advises national, international, and local policy entities on HIV/AIDS. Strengthens and coordinates AIDS activities through the sharing of information and resources within the region. PIJAAG strongly advocates for changes in the response to the AIDS epidemic in the Pacific region, both internally as a region and externally from federal agencies like the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). PIJAAG sees the need to develop a regional model of HIV prevention and services.

Nasion Chamoru

<http://hometown.aol.com/magastodu/mayot.htm>

The Nasion Chamoru is an unaligned, nonpartisan, non-governmental nation of people which works to establish a forum for Chamorus to unite and perpetuate the sovereignty of the Chamoru people. Located in Guam.

Guam HIV/AIDS Network Project (GUAHAN Project)

P.O. Box 20640
Barrigada, Guam 96921
(671) 632-6815

The GUAHAN Project addresses issues of HIV/AIDS prevention and care on Guam. Works closely with the University of Guam Social Work program to present discussions and presentations that address social problems on Guam, particularly with respect to HIV/AIDS. Has also been instrumental in developing a case management Care Plan for people living with HIV/AIDS on Guam. GUAHAN Project's approach to the social work community is one of progressive empowerment for positive change. Program areas include establishing a Gender Institute that will address sexuality and marginalized populations affected by sexuality issues through discrimination, violence, lack of support, and social injustices.

Guam Communications Network (GCN)

4201 Long Beach Blvd., Suite 218
Long Beach, CA 90807
(562) 989-5690
info@guamcomnet.org

GCN is the only Chamoru multi-service agency serving the Chamoru population in Los Angeles County. Outreach efforts also extend to the Pacific and throughout the US. GCN facilitates increased public awareness of the issues concerning the people, island, and culture of Guam through education, coalition building, and advocacy.

Safety Zone

P. O. Box 1700
St. John, VI 00831
(340) 693-SAFE (7233)
safetyzone@viaccess.net
<http://www.zoneauction.org>.

The Safety Zone provides direct services to the victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including battered women, children and all victims of violent crime. Provides education on the causes of domestic violence and recognizes the need to organize community efforts in order to eliminate the social conditions that allow domestic violence to continue. Located in St. John.

The Women's Coalition of St. Croix

7 East Street
Christiansted, St. Croix, VI
(340) 773-9272
wscstx@worldnet.att.net
<http://www.wcstx.com>

The Women's Coalition of St. Croix provides a number of services for battered women, men and children and engages in advocacy and education. Programs include referrals, advocacy and support; temporary safe housing, emergency aid, food and clothing; a battered women's shelter; specialized training seminars to sensitize police, hospital and social service agencies; and community education on the subjects of domestic violence, child molestation, conflict resolution and sexual assault.

Virgin Islands Perinatal Partnership

3012 Vitracó Mall
St. Croix, VI 00820
(340) 719-7286

A community development organization that works to create solutions to infant mortality and morbidity occurring in the Virgin Islands, especially on the island of St. Croix.

Taller Lésbico Creativo

P. O. Box 9021003
San Juan, PR 00902-1003
(787) 722-2814
tallerlc@aol.com

Taller Lésbico Creativo is an LGBT organization working in rural areas of Puerto Rico using popular theater techniques and workshops to promote the discussion of issues amongst lesbian and bisexual women and the larger LGBT community in Puerto Rico.

Movimiento Ecuménico Nacional de Puerto Rico

menpri@fuerzahumana.org

Movimiento Ecuménico Nacional de Puerto Rico works for LGBT rights in Puerto Rico. Works specifically with churches, religious leaders, professional and academic groups, individuals, and families of the LGBT community to provide education that makes the links between human sexuality and human rights.

Organización Puertorriqueña

Organización Puertorriqueña de la Mujer Trabajadora is a feminist collective which works to improve women's living conditions, promote women's rights and development, and eradicate gender discrimination in Puerto Rico.

Casa Pensamiento de Mujer del Centro, Inc.

PO Box 2002
Aibonito, PR 00705
(787) 735-3200

Casa Pensamiento de Mujer del Centro, Inc. works to promote human rights for the women of Puerto Rico's central island towns by building access to legal, educational and social services.

Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques

P.O. Box 1424
Vieques, PR 00765
(787) 741-0716
bieke@prdigital.com

The Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques is a grass-roots organization of residents of Vieques who, in coalition with a number of groups, were successful in advocating for the withdrawal of all US military forces from Vieques. The Committee advocates to allow the residents of Vieques to live normal lives in a climate of peace, and promotes and plans for the sustainable development of the island for their use and enjoyment.

ENDNOTES

- See Schraeder, Esther. "U.S. to Realign Troops in Asia," *Los Angeles Times*, p. 1, May 29, 2003.
- Four different types of territories are held by the United States: *Commonwealth territories* (Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico) are in political union with the United States and are self-governing with a locally elected governor, lieutenant governor and legislature; *Unincorporated Organized territories* (Guam, Virgin Islands) are *unincorporated* because not all provisions of the US constitution apply and are organized because the US Congress has provided these territories with an organic act which organizes the government much as a constitution would, but unincorporated organized territories may not become states and only fundamental rights apply, as distinguished from formal or procedural rights, such as the right to trial by jury; *Incorporated territories* may become states and all rights guaranteed by the US constitution apply in incorporated territories; *Wholly unorganized or unincorporated territories* (American Samoa) are controlled by executive branch officials and not all provisions of the U.S. Constitution apply. All the territories have an administrative relationship with the Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior: Federal funds for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico are administered by the Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior; Policy relations between Guam, the Virgin Islands and the US are under the jurisdiction of the Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior; and American Samoa is wholly administered by the Office of Insular Affairs, Department of the Interior. See *The World Fact Book 2002*, published by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) available online at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html. See also *Fact Sheets 2002*, published by the US Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs, available online at www.doi.gov/oia/facts2000.html#usvi.
- In addition to American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands, there are nine uninhabited US territories: Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Islands, Navassa Island, Palmyra Island, and Wake Island. Of these, all are in the Pacific except for Navassa Island, which is in the Caribbean.
- An atoll is a coral island or islands, consisting of a belt of coral reef, partly submerged, surrounding a central lagoon or depression.
- DePledge, Derrick, "House to Discuss \$280 Million," *Guam Pacific Daily News*, September 6, 2003, www.guampdn.com/news/stories/20030906/localnews/198732.html.
- For a good overview, history and analysis of US colonization of the territories and jurisdictions see Deborah Wei and Rachael Kamel, eds., *Resistance in Paradise: Rethinking 100 Years of U.S. Involvement in the Caribbean and the Pacific*, published by American Friends Service Committee and Office of Curriculum Support, School District of Philadelphia, 1998.
- Resistance in Paradise*, p. 88.
- The League of Nations was established by the peace treaties that ended World War I. Like its successor, the United Nations, its purpose was to promote international peace and security. The original membership of the League of Nations included the victorious Allies of World War I (with the exception of the United States, whose Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles) and most of the neutral nations.
- In 1945, when the UN was founded, there were 51 members; 191 nations are now members of the organization.
- See the Charter of the United Nations, www.un.org/abhoutun/charter. "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories," Article 73: Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end: a. to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses; b. to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement; c. to further international peace and security; d. to promote constructive measures of development, to encourage research, and to cooperate with one another and, when and where appropriate, with specialized international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic, and scientific purposes set forth in this Article; and e. to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General for information purposes, subject to such limitation as security and constitutional considerations may require, statistical and other information of a technical nature relating to economic, social, and educational conditions in the territories for which they are respectively responsible other than those territories to which Chapters XII and XIII apply.
- United Nations Press Release TR/2425, "Trusteeship Council Elects New Officers," October 26, 1998, www.un.org.
- There are 17 remaining non-self-governing territories: Western Sahara in Africa; American Samoa (United States), East Timor (Portugal), Guam (United States), New Caledonia (France), Pitcairn (United Kingdom), and Tokelau (New Zealand) in Asia and the Pacific; Anguilla (United Kingdom), Bermuda (United Kingdom), British Virgin Islands (United Kingdom), Cayman Islands (United Kingdom), Falkland Islands/Malvinas (United Kingdom), Gibraltar (United Kingdom), Montserrat (United Kingdom), St. Helena (United Kingdom), Turks and Caicos Islands (United Kingdom), and United States Virgin Islands (United States) in the Atlantic. See United Nations Press Release GA/COL 2998, "Special Decolonization Committee to Hold Caribbean Regional Seminar on Non-Self-Governing Territories from 25-27 May," 19 May 1999, www.un.org.
- See De Ishtar, Zohl. *Daughters of the Pacific*, Melbourne, Australia: Spinifex Press, 1994.
- See Hempenstall, Peter and Rutherford, Noel, *Protest and Dissent in the Pacific*, Apia, Western Samoa: University of the South Pacific, 1994, p. 15.
- UN Press Release GA/COL/3034, "UN Committee Takes Up Question of Guam," 11 July 2000, www.un.org.
- See Morin, Jose Luis, "Indigenous Hawaiians Under Statehood: Lessons for Puerto Rico," *Centro Journal*, Volume XI, Number 2, Spring 2000.
- Ibid.*, p.12.
- Resistance in Paradise*, p. 12. See also, Republic of the Marshall Islands' Compact Negotiation Issue #6, The Changed Circumstances Petition.
- Johnson, Giff and Wortel, Olivier. "Marshalls Sign, FSM Signs Later FSM Slowed by Immigration," *Pacific Islands Magazine*, June 2003. Available online at www.pacificislands.cc/pm62003/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid=0011. See also DePledge, Derrick, "House to Discuss \$280 Million," *Guam Pacific Daily News*, September 6, 2003, <http://www.guampdn.com/news/stories/20030906/localnews/198732.html>.
- Crisostomo, David C. "More Troops Coming?" *Guam Pacific Daily News*, June 10, 2003.
- Ibid.*
- PCRC Media Release, February 6 2003: "U.S. Get Your Arsenal Out of the Pacific: PCRC." www.pccr.org.
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- Pacific Islands Magazine*, July 12, 2003, "Marianas: US Navy to assess Marianas waters before bombing."
- See, "Suit Filed to Halt Navy Bombing of Migratory Birds on Pacific Island," December 12, 2000 www.earthjustice.org.
- See Rabin, Robert, "Five Centuries of Struggle and Resistance," www.vieques-island.com/board/navy/rabin.html#ENGLISH. See also www.viequeslibre.org and www.prorescatevieques.org.
- Resistance in Paradise*, p. 12-13.
- See Hezel, Frances X., "The Cruel Dilemma: Money Economies in the Pacific," *Journal of Pacific Theology*, Series 2, No. 8 (1992) 11-22. www.micsem.org/pubs/articles/justice/frames/crueldilfr.htm.
- State of the Islands Report, Office of Insular Affairs.
- See Magnier, Mark "Courts: Companies in Saipan are ordered to identify workers for a class-action suit," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 2001.
- See "A Critical Response to PICTA, PACER and the Pacific Islands Forum's Social Impact Assessment," Issued by the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG).
- See www.genderandtrade.net
- See www.aprnet.org
- See Blaisdell, Kekuni, "Decolonization: Unfinished Business in the Pacific," Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organizations (PIANGO) discussion paper for the regional seminar of the United Nations Decolonization Committee. See also Blaisdell, Kekuni, "The Indigenous Rights Movement in the Pacific."
- See Chow, Prescott and Bau, Ignatius, "HIV Prevention in the Pacific: A Technical Assistance & Training Workshop, August 1998, Guam.
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- Daughters of the Pacific*, p. 80-81.
- See www.petrafoundation.org.
- See www.alstonbannerman.org.

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