

# PUERTO RICO STATUS

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

### COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

#### **H.R. 856**

A BILL TO PROVIDE A PROCESS LEADING TO FULL SELF-  
GOVERNMENT FOR PUERTO RICO

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the United States, which would decolonize it because they accepted it as decolonizing at the United Nations, that allowed there to continue to be American citizenship of the nationals in Puerto Rico in that relationship, what is changed today that will not allow, in your opinion, for there to be such a status, or proposal maybe, for the people of Puerto Rico that would continue to allow American citizenship as a guarantee under that status?

Mr. ROSSELLÓ. Congressman Gutierrez, if you look at the records of Congress, it amply supported and was very clear that Congress never intended changing the basic relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, that what Congress did—and this is in all Congressional records. What Congress did was to statutorily allow the people of Puerto Rico to adopt a constitution for internal affairs and internal government. External relation between Puerto Rico and the United States was not changed. In no—it is stated in a positive way in every area of the Congressional record, and in no place can you see where Congress said that it would be renouncing its power under the territorial clause.

An interesting thing happened on the way. Both at the United Nations and to the people of Puerto Rico a different story was taken. And I think it is time that we look at that, and it is time to reconcile what was actually done with what was projected.

Having said that, I must say that I do not wish to enter into a war of recriminations, who was right, who was wrong. But let us start from here and let us solve the problem. Let us say what are the alternatives that are valid internationally under the United Nations. And I have been to the United Nations with many of my colleagues here. And let us forget about the interpretation, because for me it is very clear. However, if we are really committed to solving this, let us go forward and not so much look backwards.

In looking forward, the United Nations is very clear as to what options can be offered territorial jurisdictions. One is integration, full integration, which is statehood. The other is full independence. And the third is a form of free association, which has to be, again, under two separate sovereignties that reach an agreement. So again, I go back to my initial position that the basic question we have to answer is whether we want to be within U.S. sovereignty with U.S. citizenship or without U.S. sovereignty and U.S. citizenship. Very simple. And that is totally consistent with what the international community accepts today as ending colonialism.

If you go to the United Nations and you say that you have a jurisdiction which does not participate and does not elect representatives that have a major decisional power over the inhabitants of that jurisdiction, they will tell you that that is a colony. And that is the real situation in Puerto Rico today.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Governor, thank you for your answers. And I will, after this meeting, evaluate them very carefully so that I can continue to work with the members of this Committee to see if we can't foster a relationship that will end the colonial situation in Puerto Rico. And I look forward to working with you once again. Thank you so much.

Ms. CUBIN. The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Velázquez.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Thank you Chairlady. Mr. Governor, thank you being here and welcome. You know, it is really very troubling for