

The So-Called Plebiscite – A Deception On Puerto Rico

Escrito por Rafael Anglada López and Olga I. Sanabria Dávila*
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Through the annexationist colonial government of Puerto Rico, the government of the United States has imposed a plebiscite in Puerto Rico scheduled for next 6 November 2012.

The wording of the plebiscite, legislated by the majority legislature of the present colonial government favors the integration of Puerto Rico to the United States as its 51st state.

Despite its constant statements that it would respect the political status option chose by the majority of the Puerto Rican people, Washington has never respected previous “plebiscites” since the first one which took place in 1967 and which resulted in a majority in favor a expanded powers for the “Free Associated State” status of Puerto Rico. Further, since its first resolution on Puerto Rico in 1972, the United Nations Decolonization Committee has never validated the results of any plebiscite consultation in Puerto Rico.

On the contrary, the United Nations Decolonization Committee has repeatedly reiterated the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to its self determination and independence in conformity with UN General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV) which calls for “the transfer of power to the people of the territory.” That is to say that processes related to decisions of the Puerto Rican people regarding its future should take place in conformity with International Law and the pertinent resolutions, in particular, resolution 1514(XV). That is not case of the consultation which will be carried out next 6 November. Nor does this supposed plebiscite respond to “the debate in Puerto Rico on the search for a procedure that would make it possible to launch the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,” (quote from the Special Committee resolutions which take note of that debate taking place in Puerto Rico on the subject.)

On the other hand, the Puerto Rico Bar Association, a pluralistic and respected entity and Puerto Rico’s oldest civil society institution has called for a Constitutional Assembly on Status that would deliberate on the future relation of Puerto Rico with the United States and then negotiate the results with Washington.

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But the most annexationist and corrupt colonial government in Puerto Rico's history has imposed the upcoming so-called plebiscite without any in-put whatsoever from the electoral majority or the political or civil society institutions of Puerto Rico regarding the decolonization mechanism that should be implemented to solve the colonial status of Puerto Rico which has been broadly rejected in the country and by the international community.

For all of the above, the 6 November plebiscite which, strangely, will take place the same day as Puerto Rico's general elections, should be rejected. It should be noted that the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, by its Spanish acronym), in its statement during the recent General Debate of the Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly, stated that "the question of Puerto Rico has been considered for more than 35 years in the [United Nations] Special Decolonization Committee, as a result of which 31 resolutions and decisions have been adopted; and these have been adopted by consensus during the last 13 years."

During this debate, in which as its Pro Tempore President, Chile spoke on behalf of the CELAC the Latin American and Caribbean Community also recalled that "Among other aspects, these resolutions reaffirm the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514(XV)." The CELAC concluded that "Similarly, [these resolutions] reiterate that the Puerto Rican people constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own unequivocal national identity, and they request the General Assembly to consider the question of Puerto Rico comprehensively in all its aspects."

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