

ther exposition of your view about what international law is so that we may have it in the record.

I would invite you to do that rather than taking the time this morning to do that. I just wanted you to know that I am more impressed with the aspect of freely-expressed will of the people than I am with the nicety of the debate over what international law is or should be.

I have reached a kind of bottom line in my own mind. I hope I am not mistaken; if indeed I am, I hope you tell us in that submission which you will provide to the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Gentlemen, thank you very much. You have been a very good panel. We appreciate it.

Our third panel is a group of private citizens who support independence. Dr. Aida Montilla, Mr. Juan Antonio Agostini and Dr. Jose Rivera Colon.

Dr. Montilla, welcome to the Committee. We welcomed you to our press conferences in the past as well, and we are always glad to see you.

#### STATEMENT OF DR. AIDA N. MONTILLA

Dr. MONTILLA. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Senator McClure and staff members. May I make two introductory remarks before presenting my paper?

The CHAIRMAN. Yes.

Dr. MONTILLA. Spanish is my vernacular. I am not a bilingual person, but I have two reasons for using English in my presentation.

The first reason is an act of courtesy towards you. The second reason, not so generous after all, is that no matter how efficient a translation process could be, the translated word usually does not convey the real meaning that the speaker wants to give to his words. That is the first clarification.

The CHAIRMAN. If I may interrupt at that point to say that is undoubtedly true, but I want to commend our translators for the excellent work they have done. It is a very difficult job, but they have done an excellent job.

Dr. MONTILLA. I am not questioning the translation service, sir. I am only saying that the best translation process does not guarantee that the speaker's word conveys the translated word.

The second clarification is that I was a professor at the University of Puerto Rico for 32 years and, after retirement, I began doing some reporting for the news media. At this very moment, I am speaking for myself, not for the station for which I do some political analysis. After all, I am just a student of our political situation and in the last years I have done some work in that relation.

I would like to share with you just a clipping that proves that I have been a student of our political situation. Would you like to see it?

Now I will use 7 minutes for my presentation.

The plebiscite legislation that this Committee will eventually present Congress on Puerto Rico's status problem will either represent the beginning of a new era in the relations between the United States and Puerto Rico, or it might unhappily become the

most ignominious event in the history of a nation identified as the founder of liberty in America.

The difference between one historical event and the other rests primarily on the implementation of a most important process, the decolonization process of Puerto Rico. It is not an easy task. It needs courage, both on your side and on ours. But if we fail to accomplish it, the generations to come will never forgive us.

Thus, it is in your hands. You have both the responsibility and the authority to provide for a decolonization process through the approval of a sound, honest and mutually-beneficial plebiscite legislation. By now you have already gathered all the data needed to make a good decision.

I feel certain, also, that by now you must have reached a consensus as to one undoubted fact characterizing Puerto Rico's reality—the plain and simple truth that after 91 years of political subordination of one kind or another Puerto Rico needs the tools, the instruments, to eliminate the colonial mentality and its corollary, the ideology of dependency.

Once you internalize the colonial mentality, the ideology of dependency permeates the whole body politics and it tends to grow in geometric progression. Very few people in Puerto Rico are totally immune to this malignancy. Thus, the elimination of the ideology of dependency can only be achieved through independency.

The antidote of dependency is independency. But, as all types of addictions, it is not easy, within the present structure, to disintoxicate a people that has become addicted to dependency. And, of course, there is a sociological explanation that helps to understand this most unfortunate situation.

For five centuries, the people of Puerto Rico have been conditioned to act in a particular way, responding submissively to anything that is foreign and rejecting anything that is authentically ours—conditioning; I am using the term like the Pavlov experiment, remember—the dogs that began using the salivary glands as soon as they heard the noise of the bell.

We have been conditioning in the last nine decades. And we have been taught to overestimate anything that comes from the USA or is typically American. And, simultaneously, we have been taught to underestimate anything that strengthens our cultural identity.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Montilla, I apologize for cutting you off at that point. Your statement is an excellent one. I have read your statement. I know Senator McClure has as well. If we may move on to Dr. Juan Antonio Agostini, and then we will have time for questions.

Dr. MONTILLA. The introductory remarks were used as my time? I did not know that. I am sorry.

The CHAIRMAN. We let you go over a bit.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Montilla follows:]

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BY DRA. AIDA N. MONTILLA BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, AT THE HEARINGS ON PUERTO RICO'S STATUS PROBLEM HELD AT SAN JUAN PUERTO RICO ON JUNE 19<sup>th</sup> 1989, PRESIDING SENATOR BENNETT JOHNSTON

THE PLEBISCITE LEGISLATION THAT THIS COMMITTEE WILL EVENTUALLY PRESENT TO CONGRESS ON PUERTO RICO'S STATUS PROBLEM, WILL EITHER REPRESENT THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND PUERTO RICO, OR IT MIGHT UNHAPPILY BECOME THE MOST IGNOMINIOUS EVENT IN THE HISTORY OF A NATION IDENTIFIED AS THE FOUNDER OF LIBERTY IN AMERICA.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONE HISTORICAL EVENT AND THE OTHER, RESTS PRIMARILY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MOST IMPORTANT PROCESS= THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS OF PUERTO RICO. IT IS NOT AN EASY TASK. IT NEEDS COURAGE, BOTH, ON YOUR SIDE AND ON OURS. BUT, IF WE FAIL TO ACCOMPLISH IT, THE GENERATIONS TO COME WILL NEVER FORGIVE US.

THUS, IT IS IN YOUR HANDS, YOU HAVE BOTH THE RESPONSIBILITY AND THE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE FOR A DECOLONIZATION PROCESS, THROUGH THE APPROVAL OF A SOUND, HONEST, AND MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PLEBISCITE LEGISLATION. BY NOW, YOU HAVE ALREADY GATHERED ALL THE DATA NEEDED TO MAKE A GOOD DECISION.

I FEEL CERTAIN THAT BY NOW YOU MUST HAVE REACHED A CONSENSUS AS TO ONE UNDOUBTED FACT, CHARACTERIZING PUERTO RICO'S REALITY, THE PLAIN TRUTH THAT AFTER 91 YEARS OF POLITICAL SUBORDINATION, OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, PUERTO RICO NEEDS THE TOOLS TO ELIMINATE THE COLONIAL MENTALITY AND ITS COROLLARY, THE IDEOLOGY OF DEPENDENCY. ONCE YOU INTERNALIZE THE COLONIAL MENTALITY, THE IDEOLOGY OF DEPENDENCY PERMEATES THE WHOLE BODY POLITICS AND IT GROWS IN GEOMETRIC PROGRESSION. VERY FEW PERSONS IN PUERTO RICO ARE TOTALLY IMMUNE TO THIS MALIGNANCY. THUS, THE ELIMINATION OF THE IDEOLOGY OF DEPENDENCY CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH INDEPENDENCY. =THE ANTIDOTE OF DEPENDENCY IS INDEPENDENCY= BUT, AS ALL TYPES OF ADDICTIONS, IT IS NOT EASY, WITHIN THE PRESENT STRUCTURE, TO

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DESINTOXICATE A PEOPLE THAT HAS BECOME ADDICTED TO DEPENDENCY. THERE IS A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION THAT HELPS TO UNDERSTAND THIS SITUATION.

FOR FIVE CENTURIES THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED TO ACT IN A PARTICULAR WAY, RESPONDING SUBMISSIVELY TO ANYTHING THAT IS FOREIGN AND REJECTING ANYTHING THAT IS AUTHENTICALLY OURS. IN THE LAST NINE DECADES WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT TO "OVERESTIMATE" ANYTHING THAT COMES FROM <sup>THE U.S.A.</sup> OR IS TYPICALLY AMERICAN AND SIMULTANEOUSLY "UNDERESTIMATE" ANYTHING THAT STRENGTHENS OUR CULTURAL IDENTITY. THE TERM "LOCAL" SUBSTITUTES THE TERM "NATIONAL" AND THE "FATHERLAND" IS THE METROPOLITAN POWER. WE HAVE HAD TO CLING TO OUR SPANISH LANGUAGE AS A MEANS OF SURVIVAL, AMID ALL THE ATTEMPTS TO DISPLACE IT, SOMETIMES FORCEFULLY SUBSTITUTING OUR VERNACULAR FOR THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, UNDER ORDERS FROM WASHINGTON BUREAUCRATS.

THUS, IT IS REALLY AN OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT, ALMOST A MIRACLE, THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RESIST THE AGGRESSIVE TRANSCULTURATION PROCESS AND SURVIVE AS A NATIONAL ENTITY. ONLY THE HOMOGENEOUS ELEMENTS OF GEOGRAPHICAL, RACIAL AND LANGUAGE UNITY, AS WELL AS A LITERARY AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE, HAVE WORKED TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION OF OUR CULTURAL ETHOS. IN SPITE OF ALL THE NEGATIVE FACTORS WORKING AGAINST IT.

ONE OF THOSE NEGATIVE FACTORS HAS BEEN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM. RIGOROUS RESEARCH WORK <sup>\*</sup> HAVE PROVED THAT SCHOOLS IN PUERTO RICO HAVE BEEN EFFICIENT INSTRUMENTS OF COLONIAL INDOCTRINATION. OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM LACKS AUTHENTICITY . IT DOES NOT RESPOND TO OUR NEEDS, BECAUSE THE WHOLE SET UP IS THE RESULT OF COPYING AND TRANSPLANTING THE FEATURES OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL. CURRICULUM CONTENT, TEXTBOOKS, SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, EVALUATION SYSTEM, METHODOLOGY, TEACHERS PREPARATION, THE SCHOOL CALENDAR, ARE ALL CARBON COPIES OF CONTINENTAL U.S.A. SCHOOLS. AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORST WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FORMULATE A CLEAR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION THAT COULD PROVIDE DIRECTION AND GOALS TO OUR SYSTEM.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT STUDENTS COMING

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OUT OF THAT SYSTEM, WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, EXHIBIT A MOST HARMING AMBIVALENCE AND A LOW SELF ESTEEM. THE INDOCTRINATION PROCESS, PRODUCING THIS BEHAVIOR, HAS BEEN BOTH AN OVERT <sup>AND</sup> COVERT ACTION. THAT IS, WE HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO BOTH THE COERCITIVE TYPE AND THE PERSUASIVE TYPE OF INDOCTRINATION, SKILLFULLY DESIGNED BY THE POWER STRUCTURE, TO INCULCATE A PARTICULAR WAY OF THINKING, FEELING AND BEHAVING, IN OUR PEOPLE. THAT IS WHY ~~THE PEOPLE'S~~ <sup>THE PEOPLE'S</sup> KNOWLEDGE OF OUR HISTORY IS EITHER, TWISTED OR FRAGMENTED: THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR GEOGRAPHY IS EITHER, MISLEADING OR DISTORTED. (OTHER EXAMPLES COULD ALSO BE GIVEN)

THE RESISTANCE THAT OUR PEOPLE HAVE HAD TO DEVELOP, IN ORDER TO FACE THAT "DENATURALIZATION PROCESS", COMING NOT ONLY FROM THE UNSOUND USE OF OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BUT ALSO FROM CONVERGING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES, ALL AIMING AT THE DISOLUTION OF OUR PUERTO RICAN PERSONALITY, IS INDEED A RESISTANCE OF A SPIRITUAL NATURE, THAT CAN ONLY BE EXPLAINED IN TERMS OF A DIVINE, PERHAPS MYTHICAL OR TRASCENDENTAL GUIDING FORCE.

THIS SPIRITUAL STRENGTH, THAT WE HAVE USED IN DEALING WITH THIS ADVERSITY, IS WHAT HAS BROUGHT US UP TO HERE. NOW, WE NEED THE TOOLS TO CONSTRUCT THE RIGHT KIND OF SOCIETY WE ARE LONGING FOR. A TRULY DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, ABLE TO PRODUCE A MAN, HARDWORKING, INDUSTRIOUS, CREATIVE, PEACE-LOVING, PROUD OF BEING A PUERTO RICAN BUT HUMBLE AND SENSITIVE TO THE PROBLEMS OF MANKIND, ALWAYS WILLING TO EXTEND A FRIENDLY HAND TO U.S.A. AMERICANS, AS WELL AS TO OTHER PEOPLES OF GOOD FAITH AROUND THE WORLD.

IN THIS TYPE OF PUERTO RICAN, WE ALL HAVE A GREAT FAITH. AND THE PIECE OF PLEBISCITE LEGISLATION APPROVE BY YOU, WILL MAKE IT COME THROUGH.

DEFINITIVELY, INDEPENDENCY AND NOT DEPENDENCY WILL SUCCESSFULLY PROVIDE FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THIS NEW MAN.

*Aida N. Montilla*  
AIDA N. MONTILLA

\* TWO EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH WORKS RELATED TO OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM:

RODRIGUEZ BOU, ISMAEL, A SURVEY OF PUERTO RICO'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PUERTORICAN LEGISLATURE, 1959.

MONTILLA AIDA N., AMERICANIZATION IN PUERTO RICO AND THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM 1900-1930, UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO PRESS, 1976 (Doctoral Dissertation)