

## RESOLVING THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY: ENDING PUERTO RICO'S COLONIAL BURDEN

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**RESOLVING THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY:  
ENDING PUERTO RICO'S COLONIAL BURDEN**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Puerto Rico is a vital partner for the United States. The island's status in the Caribbean region needs to be evaluated and changed within the next six years. How the U.S. strengthens its current economic relationship, support its democratic government, and enhances its military dominance in the region are all strategic security concerns. Historic policies, actions, procedures, and lack of attention from the U.S. by Congress has demonstrated the failure to address and meet the current needs of the citizens of Puerto Rico. Future courses of action must be determined by the will of the people of Puerto Rico. U.S. strategists must consider multiple potential outcomes including statehood, remaining a Commonwealth, becoming an independent nation or maintaining a free association with the United States. This paper will explore the challenges and advantages of each course of action and provide recommendations that best address both Puerto Rico's and the United States' strategic concerns while enhancing the U.S. national and regional strategy.





## RESOLVING THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY: ENDING PUERTO RICO'S COLONIAL BURDEN

Through one hundred years of U.S. colonialism there remains one controversial question between the United States (U.S.) and the people of Puerto Rico. Why can't we resolve Puerto Rico's political status? To the average American citizen, this isn't even an issue worthy of discussion. Given the future volatility in the Caribbean ring from a free Cuba and the rising tide of Latin American influence in the region, is allowing the question to linger and tarnish U.S. credibility worth the risk?

What should the U.S. territorial policy be in Puerto Rico? Should Puerto Rico continue to remain a pseudo territory with an unresolved political status? Currently there are four popular alternatives, including: (a) remaining a commonwealth of the U.S., (b) become the fifty first state, (c) become an independent country or (d) become a free association nation. Each option offers unique benefits for each country. The key is identifying which solution provides optimum benefits for both countries.

This paper analyzes Puerto Rico's political status against current U.S. territorial policy and provides a recommendation that will best meet the U.S. and Puerto Rico's mutual interests. It identifies critical factors impacting and influencing the people of Puerto Rico and geopolitical issues surrounding the Caribbean and Latin American areas of interest. This paper addresses why many individuals on both sides of the debate favor the maintaining the current political status of remaining a commonwealth, but also illuminates why the easy choice may not always be the optimal solution.

To effectively evaluate all sides of debate this paper will briefly review the historical underpinnings that frame the issue including the failures of Puerto Rico to

achieve independence. It will describe the current political relationship between the U.S. and Puerto Rico, the evolution of territorial policy, identify the geopolitical and major security issues entangled in the debate. The analysis will focus on identifying the best possible solution to meet both U.S and Puerto Rico's strategic needs for the future. The author scrutinizes each option weighing them in terms of feasibility, acceptability, suitability and risk. The best options will then be analyzed using Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economy (DIME) form of analysis evaluating both the advantages and disadvantages of each to derive the best policy option. Finally, recommendations are provided as well as key policy objectives needed to execute the plan, and potential solutions to assure successful implementation.

### History - Background

Puerto Rico consists of a small group of islands including Vieques, Culebra, Mona and Desecheo in the Caribbean, located north of Venezuela and east of the Dominican Republic and Cuba. The main island of Puerto Rico is strategically located between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Christopher Columbus discovered Puerto Rico during his second voyage to the New World in 1493. At that time, the only people living in Puerto Rico were the Tainos Indians. Spain claimed the island and later colonized it in the early sixteenth century, installing the beginning of colonial dominion in Puerto Rico.<sup>1</sup>

### Strategic Stronghold

During the sixteenth century, for military and economic reasons, the island became a strategic asset for Spain in the Caribbean ring. In 1521, Spain started constructing the now famous castles of El Morro, San Cristobal and San Geronimo to thwart potential invaders from the sea. The Dutch and British forces all attacked the

island over the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> through 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, each failed to conquer Puerto Rico.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the first three hundred years, Spain controlled all of Puerto Rico's economic, political and religious affairs. To solidify their control and assure the safety of the island, Spain assigned a military official as the governor on the island with complete and sole control over all the colony's economic, social, and military affairs. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, sugar production was the greatest source of income, and most important agricultural product on the island. Tobacco and coffee were also considered critical economic staples during the Spanish realm. By the late 1800's the population of Puerto Rico grew to almost one hundred and thirty thousand people, with a mix of whites, blacks, mulattos and mestizos.<sup>3</sup>

#### EL Grito de Lares (The Cry of Lares) Independence Movement

Changes in self-determination began to occur around the early nineteenth century. Spain was losing control over Central and South American colonies due to the Latin American War for independence. After three centuries of Spanish rule, the native-born Puerto Rican population began to resent the Spanish government and its lack of consideration for their own self-autonomy. In 1868, in the Grito de Lares, a group of activists led by Dr. Ramon Emeterio Betances seized the town of Lares and declared it to be an independent Republic of Puerto Rico.<sup>4</sup> Although the insurrection only lasted a day, it demonstrated a defining moment for Puerto Rico's national sense of identity and forced Spain to eventually abolish slavery on the island in 1873. It also inspired a group of Puerto Rican leaders to press Spain for their own autonomy. In 1897 Spain granted Puerto Rico the Autonomic Charter, which permitted more moderate political policies and administrative autonomy for the island. This agreement gave the people of Puerto

Rico their long sought autonomy. Unfortunately, it was never fully implemented due to the outbreak of the Spanish American War the following year.<sup>5</sup>

### U.S. Control of Puerto Rico

On July 25, 1898, U.S. troops landed at Guanica Bay on the southern coast of Puerto Rico in response to the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine. By December the island officially became part of the U.S. under the Treaty of Paris. While the treaty was signed by Spain, there were no representatives from Puerto Rico who took part in the negotiations. The treaty stated that Spain would give up all rights to Cuba along with Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. The enforcement of the Treaty of Paris ostensibly ended Puerto Rico's bid for autonomy and tied her to a new form of colonialism under the U.S. policy of territorial expansion.<sup>6</sup>

### Territorial Policy (The Northwest Ordinance Model)

During the eighteenth century, the U.S. Congress implemented the Northwest Ordinance model as the first territorial policy of the United States.<sup>7</sup> The model served as a process for admitting new states to the union. The Northwest Ordinance model for the incorporation of territories into states was established by the U.S. in 1787.<sup>8</sup> The Northwest Ordinance model did not provide enough flexibility to adequately administer over first-time territorial policy issues at the end of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the U. S. Congress and federal courts were both divided on how the U.S. should manage these island territories. Some of the new territories such as Cuba and the Philippines were preparing for independence rather than following the Northwest Ordinance model (statehood).<sup>9</sup>

According to Mr. Thornburgh, during the same period, the islands of Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto

Rico were defined as “unincorporated territories”. The U.S. government permitted these territories a limited level of self-sufficiency, but enforced federal laws without any strategically clear direction toward the goal of statehood or independence. Unlike the previously mentioned unincorporated territories, Alaska and Hawaii were admitted using the Northwest Ordinance model to statehood. “Meanwhile, the unincorporated territories remained subject to the supreme sovereignty of Congress under the Territorial Clause of the Constitution.”<sup>10</sup> This clearly demonstrated the lack of concern Congress had for these unincorporated territories, unlike the protection of federal laws that were provided to the new states of Hawaii and Alaska. In addition, these unincorporated territories were only allowed minimal control of their local governments. Specifically, they and their citizens were not allowed to directly influence the development of U.S. policy, participate in the U.S. election process, and received no federal recognition in support of independence or statehood.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Foraker and Jones Acts

Once Spain surrendered its control over Puerto Rico, the United States enjoyed total dominion over the island territory.<sup>12</sup> In the early twentieth century, Congress endorsed a series of legal policies for partially increasing Puerto Rico’s autonomy but never fully extended those policies to form a completely self-sufficient government.<sup>13</sup> In 1900, Congress passed the first statutory policy, the Foraker Act, with the purpose of establishing a capable civil administration in Puerto Rico headed by a presidential appointee.<sup>14</sup> The Foraker Law allowed Puerto Ricans to elect only minor political members of the newly established lower house of the legislature. It also permitted a resident commissioner to represent the island in Washington, D.C., where he could speak out, but not vote in the House of Representatives. It also failed to grant any

Puerto Rican U.S. citizenship. In the end, the Foraker Act afforded Puerto Rico less autonomy than the Autonomic Charter of 1897.<sup>15</sup>

It wasn't until 1917 when Congress passed the Jones Act that U.S. citizenship was granted to the people of Puerto Rico.<sup>16</sup> The law also increased self-government and the participation of the people in matters of island administration. Still the governor, key members of the cabinet, and all Supreme Court justices were still appointed by the U.S. President. Additionally, English was declared the official language of the islands, and Puerto Ricans were eligible to be drafted into the U.S. Armed Forces since they were now U.S. citizens.<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, the Jones Act did little to resolve the political status of Puerto Rico. Instead the act strongly reaffirmed the island as a U.S. colony.<sup>18</sup> In 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld that status in the case of *Balzac v. Porto Rico* ruling Puerto Rico was to remain a U.S. territory and not be recognized as a state.<sup>19</sup>

### Local versus Federal Rule

In 1950, thirty-four years after the Jones Act, Congress approved Public Law 600, giving Puerto Rico the right to establish a government with a proper constitution.<sup>20</sup> A year later, in 1952, Puerto Rican voters approved a new constitution establishing the island as a Commonwealth of the United States Congress.<sup>21</sup> Although the final constitution was remarkably different from the previous civil administration, "the local constitution's reservation of sovereignty to the people under Article I, Section 2, relates to local matters not governed by federal law".<sup>22</sup> In addition, "Under the Supremacy Clause (Article VI) of the U.S. Constitution and Section 734 of Title 48 of the U.S. Code, federal law nullifies incompatible local law, not vice versa."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the application of federal law continues, to this day, to take precedence over the local law enacted by the government of Puerto Rico.<sup>24</sup>

## United Nations

In 1953, the United Nations (UN) implemented UN Resolution 748 relieving the United States of the requirement to submit a report to the UN regarding the island's status as a non self-governing region. In addition, UN Resolution 748, acknowledged that the U.S. and Puerto Rico ought to look after their own particular constitutional procedures for "changes in federal-territorial relations or Puerto Rico's political status."<sup>25</sup> The island government conducted a series of plebiscites in 1967, 1993, and 1998 but none were officially recognized by the U.S Congress.<sup>26</sup> Despite all the effort by the commonwealth government to establish a constitution enhancing its autonomy, the island remains a territory of the U.S. and expose to the preeminence of federal law.<sup>27</sup>

On December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2000, President Clinton issued executive order 13183 establishing "the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status".<sup>28</sup> The purpose of the order was to clarify the Commonwealth's future status and outline the options for the people in determining their preferred form of government.<sup>29</sup>

## Analyzing the Options:

The U.S. Congress and people of Puerto Rico have four options to ponder when deciding the best option for both States, including: (a) remaining a commonwealth (status quo), (b) statehood, (c) full independence or (d) national free association.

*Commonwealth (Status Quo)*. This option represents the continuation of the current political status of the island. In terms of feasibility, this option has already been in place for the past fifty years, so little change is required. With regard to resources, this option changes nothing and assures the same amount of federal benefits will continue with few restrictions and assistance. However, when looking at the island's economy this option is considered to fall short. Despite being an improvement to Puerto

Rico's self-determination during the fifties, sixties and seventies, this option inhibits economic growth and ties the island to continued dependence on U.S. federal funds such as payment to individuals (social security, Medicare, unemployment compensation, federal retirement, disability, and veterans benefits), grants to state and local government (community development and housing subsidies, Department of Education programs, Customs Bureau rebates, and social services and welfare), food stamp program, wages and salaries for federal personnel in Puerto Rico .<sup>30</sup>

These funds develop a reliance on welfare and government subsidies. The island continues to economically decline as a result of budget cuts and elimination of tax exemptions by the U.S Congress. Federal laws override local taxation or revenue policy which adversely affects the economic environment. Since Puerto Rico only has one Resident Representative, it is difficult to highlight the political and economic issues of the island.

The lack of stable jobs and investment creates a huge strain on the island's income levels and is fueling an increase in poverty. Today, Puerto Rico has the lowest income level per capita compared to every state in the union.<sup>31</sup> This lack of income means spending and reinvestment back into the Puerto Rican economy is not adequate. The by-product is a never ending cycle of increased unemployment forcing the U.S. to spend more on subsidies and other welfare programs. Since the nineteen eighties nearly half fifty percentage of all families received food stamps.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, the economic uncertainty is forcing its best and brightest young adults to migrate to the U.S. to find jobs and a future.<sup>33</sup> Given Puerto Rico's greatest resource is its own



people, this brain drain of the islands' best educated further retards any future economic growth as young adults leave and invest their talents abroad.

In terms of suitability, this preference does not support U.S. policy objectives. For this reason this option, for the citizens of Puerto Rico, is only a temporary political arrangement. It does not provide finality like the other two permanent solutions (statehood/independence) that affords legitimate autonomy as a sovereign state or nation.<sup>34</sup>

As for acceptability, Puerto Ricans have accepted commonwealth status for more than a half century. This is true despite the inequity of benefits every legitimate state in the union receives. In addition, it does not provide Puerto Ricans the same rights as other incorporated territories like Hawaii and Alaska. This alternative is also not in compliance with international law and the United Nations regarding colonialism. Other countries and the United Nations continue to show concern over this option, as it does not allow a complete and final agreement on the island's political status.<sup>35</sup>

*Statehood.* This option was originally introduced back in the early sixties. An advantage of statehood includes the right to vote for the President / Congress and equal representation (afforded other citizens) in Washington D.C. With representation comes oversight and credibility to assure Puerto Rico receives the same federal benefits offered to all other states in the union. In terms of feasibility, this option may be one of the most easily attainable because the process is known, tried and true. Although this preference may also demand more resources in the short run, the long term advantages benefit both parties. Additional resources will be needed for changes in essential

programs like infrastructure, education, language adaption, law enforcement, and electing new political leaders (Senate / Congress).

The building of a new state is filled with advantages. Stable state and federal roles will ensure stable economic environment and increased business development. Benefits of statehood were evident when Alaska and Hawaii transitioned from commonwealth to statehood. Both states demonstrated a significant increase in economic growth the first decade following statehood. In the case of Alaska, state and local hiring served as a contributing factor in rapid economic growth in the areas of oil exploration, fisheries, construction activities and tourism.<sup>36</sup> According to Jenkins, the state of Hawaii's economy developed much faster as a state as opposed to being a U.S. territory given they were integrated into a mature U.S. economy.<sup>37</sup> Hitch reported that external investment in Hawaii increased "from 311 firms in 1955 to 1,916 in 1971."<sup>38</sup> According to Hitch, statehood expedited external investment in a matter of years that otherwise "would have taken a generation or two to achieve."<sup>39</sup> In addition, the ability for Puerto Ricans to earn social security benefits is a big incentive to remain on the islands to work. This would help prevent the current brain drain Puerto Rico is experiencing among its most educated citizens. The biggest asset available to Puerto Rico is the love everyone shares for the island. Hence, this option is likely to have a lot of support from the local population as many Puerto Ricans will believe they have a sacred obligation to make this work, and will likely work hard to see this option succeed.

In terms of suitability, this option is in full alignment with current U.S. policy objectives. This choice is appropriate and already encapsulated in Executive Order 13183. This order fully delineates the Commonwealth's future status and the options to

facilitate the people determining their preference.<sup>40</sup> As for acceptability, this choice was accepted by just less than half the people of Puerto Rico in the 1998 plebiscite. The issuance to all the citizens on the island of equal rights is very acceptable to the people.<sup>41</sup> This alternative will also be in compliance with international law and United Nations by bringing an end of colonialism in Puerto Rico.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of domestic politics, the U.S. Congress will expand slightly and Latino influence on the political landscape will rise. Based on the current population of four million people, Puerto Rico will add two new Senators and six new seats to the House of Representatives.<sup>43</sup> This will require a permanent increase in the size of Congress. Franchising all Puerto Ricans will increase Latino political power and influence. As Hispanics are now the largest and fastest growing minority, there is large political benefit for any politician who supports the effort.

This option can also re-establish the cooperation and use of military bases. With proper U.S. representation and concern for both national security and health and environmental concerns, it is likely that a workable solution can be accommodated. There is increasing demand in Puerto Rico for military assistance in the Caribbean and a stronger effort against counter-drug and counter-terrorism within the region. A U.S. military resurgence will also provide a huge economic benefit to the island, the people and the thousands of Puerto Rican military veterans.

In terms of risk, the change will require time for language implementation, representation in Congress, and steady changes of tax accountability.<sup>44</sup> Negative effects on the people of Puerto Rico could include a loss of cultural identity, impact on language over time and even resistance to a few of the federal laws. The

implementation of these changes may be met with some resistance since there is an embedded and strong independence movement. Both the U.S. and Puerto Rico will need patience to allow the transition or adjustment to statehood to take hold.

*Independence.* This third choice represents another age-old option. The primary advantage of independence is that Puerto Rico attains complete national-cultural identity and recognition that the island is a self-governing sovereign nation.<sup>45</sup> In terms of feasibility this alternative is the most feasible with U.S. policy objectives in terms of resources. This choice could demand less U.S. economic assistance after the island fully completes the transition from commonwealth to an independent sovereign nation. In addition, this choice would no longer demand additional resources such as federal benefits, military support, and key political leader representation.

In terms of suitability, this decision also supports U.S. policy objectives. It is suitable based on Executive Order 13183 which fully spells out the current Commonwealth's future status and emphasizes the choices to help the people to determine their preference.<sup>46</sup> As for acceptability, this alternative was accepted by fewer than five percent of the people of Puerto Rico in the last plebiscites. This alternative will not provide any of the benefits that each of the states nor the current political system receives. In addition, Puerto Ricans would almost certainly be forced to select between U.S. citizenship and Puerto Rican citizenship.<sup>47</sup> This choice would also be in compliance with international law by ending colonialism in Puerto Rico.<sup>48</sup>

The U.S. Congress would be able to assist Puerto Rico in developing a stable economy and enabling the island to be recognized as a sovereign nation. As for the military, this option will end any agreements regarding the use of military bases in

Puerto Rico. Through negotiation there is the possibility of continuing the use of military bases for the purpose of U.S. interests and national security in the Caribbean, but it will be an added unprogrammed cost.

In regard to domestic and international political costs, this option could be positive for the U.S. and the international community. Puerto Ricans will be able to develop closer ties to Latin American countries while continuing trade relations with the United States. The economic costs for many Puerto Ricans will result in financial hardship due to a lack of U.S. benefits and loss of close ties with their families on the U.S. main land. This option will no longer allow unrestricted travel into the U.S.<sup>49</sup>

In terms of risk, time will be a factor. The U.S. Congress will need to allow a transition period for Puerto Rico to fully prepare as a sovereign nation. Due to current economic problems, the island will likely continue to struggle; it has no history managing its economy without a patriarch like Spain or the U.S. Deteriorating economic problems will likely bring higher rates of crime, increased immigration from other Caribbean islands, drug trafficking and potentially import terrorism.<sup>50</sup> In addition, during the transition process, even more Puerto Ricans will try to migrate to the U.S. and potentially affect relations with these new allies. The loss of U.S. citizenship and lack of federal benefits will also bring great disappointment and affect any implementation of this option.

The negative effects for the U.S. will be the closure of federal institutions that now provide limited support to the people and environment including: the U.S. National Forest Service, the U.S. Department of Agricultural, the Federal Bureau Investigation, Drug Enforcement Agency, Health and Human Services and other Federal agencies.

Joining U.S. military base closures will be all U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Stations and any opportunity to serve in the U.S. military. For almost one hundred years, Puerto Ricans have served and fought with valor and distinction in every U.S. war and military conflict since World War I.<sup>51</sup> This option will immediately disenfranchise thousands of veterans. Currently, thousands of young Puerto Rican men and women support the Department of Defense on active duty and in the reserve components. Anything less than respecting the honor these service members have earned is not palatable to Puerto Rican culture and would be a potential deal breaker.

*Free association.* This policy option represents the newest choice. It would set up the island as a sovereign nation detached from the U.S., however it will still be legally bound to her.<sup>52</sup> In terms of feasibility this choice may be one of the most feasible in regard to resources. This option would demand less U.S. economic assistance as the island completes its transition from a commonwealth to a semi-sovereign nation. This alternative is similar to the freely associated states (sovereign states) of the Republics of the Marshall Islands, Federal States of Micronesia and Republic of Palau.<sup>53</sup> This preference will also reduce the amount of required resources, although the federal government will need to continue to provide certain services during the transition period.<sup>54</sup> In terms of suitability this option supports U.S. policy objectives. This preference is suitable based on Executive Order 13183.

This option was the least accepted of all choices offered in 1998 during the plebiscite. The option only earned a 0.3 percent acceptance rate.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, this alternative is not supportable by the people of Puerto Rico. This choice is similar to independence as a course of action. Puerto Ricans will again be forced to choose

between U.S. or Puerto Rican citizenship.<sup>56</sup> This option will be compliant with international law by meeting the United Nations referendum ending colonialism in Puerto Rico.<sup>57</sup> In terms of international politics, the U.S. and Puerto Rico could annul this option at any time after its inception.<sup>58</sup> The United States and Puerto Rico can begin negotiating this option at any time. These negotiations will be critical to decide all economic assistance, trade, security and exchange agreements.<sup>59</sup>

Regarding moral cost, the vast majority of Puerto Ricans will not tolerate this option. The combination of a false impression of independence, lack of U.S. federal benefits and uncertain access to their families on the U.S. main land will thwart public support. In terms of risks, this option is very similar to the independence in that it may be extremely risky from an economic perspective.

In closing, based on analyzing the four potential options, the independence and free association options do not meet the criteria for attaining support of the Puerto Rico populace. As previously discussed, the last three plebiscites held clearly demonstrated that Puerto Ricans would not support these options, voting with less than five percent support for independence and just 0.3% for free association. The primary factor behind Puerto Ricans not backing these options is the loss of economic support and identity they currently receive from the U.S. Therefore, this paper will analyze the two viable options, Commonwealth and Statehood, using the DIME model to determine the best solution for the U.S and Puerto Rico.

#### Diplomacy/Information/Military/Economy (DIME) Analysis: (Pros & Cons)

##### Commonwealth

*Diplomacy.* In terms of diplomacy, Puerto Rico's leaders have been a partner with the U.S. for more than one hundred years. Since then, Puerto Rico attempted by

diplomatic means, (through the U.S. Congress) to solve the status issue and gain the right to vote for its people through three plebiscites. Neither proved successful and the question remains as to which option is truly in the best interest of both nations.

The advantage of the current commonwealth option allows the U.S. to meet its obligation appearing to give Puerto Rico the ability to control or manage its own affairs, however the U.S. still maintains total control due to the supremacy clause. Puerto Ricans are allowed to continue to maintain their national identity (culture and primary language). In addition they are allowed one congressional representative who represents the island for internal/local affairs. Other advantages include the ability to participate independently as a nation in any regional and international sports competitions including the Olympic Games.<sup>60</sup>

The main disadvantage for the U.S. by keeping Puerto Rico in its current commonwealth status is the continuing label of colonial bully by other countries and the United Nations, Regional allies and competitors, the United Nations and the Hispanic people of the U.S. all know Puerto Rico has neither the same freedom as other sovereign nations or the equivalent status enjoyed by U.S. states. For example, despite having a representative in Congress, the position is mostly ceremonial and appointed, The Puerto Rican member is unable to vote on any legislation and therefore has little political clout or ability to influence law that supports the island's needs. Additionally as previously pointed out the people cannot vote for U.S. President. In a nation where the political influence of its largest minority, Latinos, continues to grow significantly, it would appear a huge mistake to continue restrain and disenfranchise Puerto Rico.



Perhaps the most distressing is Puerto Rico's inability to forge their own diplomatic or foreign relations with neighboring countries in Latin America without the consent of the U.S. Congress. This almost assures the isolation of the island and a continued patriarchic existence. The shared heritage of Latin America countries is a very strong and real bond. This stronghold can only be seen negatively by its fellow Latino nations and not good diplomacy for the U.S.

*Information.* Solving this issue or at least allowing a final measure of self-determination will be an extremely positive information campaign for the U.S. The key is to do it correctly and not allow the current Commonwealth government to manage the result to its own favor. In the past, Puerto Rico's commonwealth leadership, comprised of all political parties (commonwealth, statehood, independence), utilized three non-binding plebiscites to take the message of Puerto Rico's status to Congress. These were not well run and the majority party had a clear advantage in the process. The issue is complex and requires a neutral party to assure all audiences in both Puerto Rico and the U.S understand all options and their consequences.

The advantage to the Commonwealth is it will answer some UN concerns for a public decision and in some measure show good faith with regional neighbors of an attempt to resolve the issue. As for disadvantages, the continuation of the status quo will do little to dismiss critics of U.S. colonial prowess and will not quell the internal concerns of Puerto Ricans and other Latino U.S citizens. At a time when a potential "Free Cuba" is looming, how can the U.S. credibly lead the effort to democratize that nation, when it holds Cuba's neighbor under colonial rule? A likely very ugly political scenario will be both Cuban and Puerto Rican Americans clamoring for freedom and

self-determination over the powerful U.S. That's not an information campaign the U.S. can possibly see as positive for itself or the region.

*Military.* In terms of military assistance, Puerto Rico continues to play an important role in supporting the U.S. National Security policy in the Caribbean region. In terms of human resources, over 200, 000 Puerto Ricans have served in the U.S. Armed Forces since World War I and currently support combat operations in Afghanistan and several other operations around the globe.<sup>61</sup> Military bases in Puerto Rico had always been a critical strategic strongpoint, and supported U.S. military units for more than a century. However, during the last decade, the U.S. reduced the number of active military bases on the island to one.<sup>62</sup>

The current Commonwealth status for the U.S. offers some military advantages. The U.S. government can use or re-open any military bases, and all recruiting stations, reserve duty stations, Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) regional offices and other Federal installations or training sites whenever it wishes through previously negotiated settlements. Though it will require properly coordinating with the local government, there are few obstacles given the power of the supremacy clause over the island's government. The island offers security, realistic training sites and resupply points in the Caribbean ring. These bases can be critical for conducting anti-drug and humanitarian relief operations anywhere in the Caribbean and Latin America.

In reality, re-opening any base in the current environment will prove difficult given recent history on Vieques. In 2004, Puerto Rico demanded the U.S. Navy close the Vieques firing range due to health issues due to elevated rates of lead, uranium, mercury and other pollutants nearby in the top soil, and the resident's bodies.<sup>63</sup> In

addition, the accidental death of a civilian security guard during the firing range exercise, prompted more concern.<sup>64</sup> These concerns and subsequent protest elevated to such a high level, the current Commonwealth government negotiated directly with the U.S. President and his staff rather than the U.S. Navy. The result terminated all live ordnance firing at the Vieques range and closure of the base.

The reaction by U.S. Navy Vice Admiral William Fallon and several U.S. Senators cautioned that if the Vieques firing range could not be used, then the U.S. Naval Base Roosevelt Road in Puerto Rico should also be closed.<sup>65</sup> It was summarily closed too and resulted in an obvious reduction in military capability and wake-up call for the U.S. and its neighbors.

The success of the protesters in closing the Vieques firing range established the confidence to negotiate successfully with the U.S. government and established a new found level of political leverage. Puerto Rico also negotiated an agreement to allow the option to re-open these military facilities but only under mutual agreement; again a newly recognized level of political might for the Commonwealth. The tiny island impacted the weight of U.S. national security in the Caribbean and potentially weakened its options for Latin American support.

Unfortunately, this measure of strength also came at a huge economic cost. In 1997, the U.S. Defense Department spent over one billion dollars on wages and procurement on the island.<sup>66</sup> The closure of these military bases across the island came at large losses in jobs and injections of dollars to the local economy. The Commonwealth government has yet to offer any other means to make up for this key means to fuel the economy.

*Economy.* In terms of economic advantages for the U.S. the current commonwealth status places Puerto Rico at the lowest level for receiving federal funds. Their status is significantly less than the rest of the states in the U.S. A little understood fact is that not all federal programs, currently given to all U.S. states, are provided to the Puerto Rican Commonwealth. For example, the federal Supplemental Security Income program, which pays money to low-income and/or disabled people, does not apply to the people of Puerto Rico.<sup>67</sup> Still, Puerto Rico (the commonwealth option) receives \$13 billion dollars in federal funding to sustain the people of Puerto Rico which is more than any other Latin American country.<sup>68</sup>

Economically the disadvantages are many. According to the GAO, the island's commonwealth resident income per capita is far below that of any U.S. resident.<sup>69</sup> Puerto Rico is also struggling with excessive debt which has increased over the past decade to approximately \$45.9 billion dollars.<sup>70</sup> The unemployment rate of 15.7% in the commonwealth is a much higher percentage than the U.S. and labor force participation has been lower in the last decade.<sup>71</sup> According to GAO, "Puerto Rican economy has failed to generate jobs that fit the educational qualifications of the Commonwealth's population."<sup>72</sup>

The U.S. federal government spends approximately \$13 billion dollars a year on Puerto Rico in order to maintain the island's current political status (commonwealth) and they are not getting a good return on their investment.<sup>73</sup>

### Statehood

*Diplomacy.* If Puerto Rico becomes a U.S. state the island would become the fifty-first state. This option will be in compliance with international law by ending colonialism in Puerto Rico.<sup>74</sup> In terms of the advantages for the U.S., the statehood

option could support building a stronger U.S. and Cuba relationship when Cuba's current government collapses. When Cuba regains its freedom and works toward democracy, the U.S. will be poised to be a good ally and Puerto Rico can be a huge advantage.

According to Ms. Julia Sagabien, Cuba and Puerto Rico share similar characteristics such as culture, history, language, music, food, and geography. In addition, there are about nineteen thousands Cubans that lived in Puerto Rico.<sup>75</sup> Puerto Rico can assist with stabilization and help them embrace strong democratic-economic principles.

Other advantages, based on its Hispanic background, the state of Puerto Rico can be a great tool to implement U.S. national interest and partnership in Latin America and the Caribbean. This can and will strengthen diplomatic, economic and security strategy in the region.

In terms of advantages for Puerto Rico, the statehood option will align their rights and sovereignty with those U.S. states currently enjoy. Puerto Rico will be able to vote for and have its own Senators and Representatives in the Congress with the full privileges and political abilities of U.S national leaders. Finally, Puerto Rico can vote for its President of the United States.

In terms of disadvantages for the U.S., the statehood option may create some political friction with other states. More federal funding may be directed toward Puerto Rico to assist temporally with the establishment of a federal system and dense levels of poverty. This will not be popular with states already seeking political aide for their own economic difficulties.

Statehood also has some politically sensitive disadvantages. Puerto Rico will no longer be able to participate in any international sports or Olympic Games as an independent nation. This is not a large loss as all athletes already enjoy the option as citizens to play for the U.S. A slight concern is the change to the official language on the island to English.

Although the Jones Act already stipulates this, the use of English language is a fallacy and changing is a concern for Puerto Ricans. Still, English is already taught in all schools as required second language and everyone knows the power of speaking English. The use of English language will also improve Puerto Rico's economic growth and synergy with U.S business and investment. The statehood option will simply move Puerto Rico to the similar status of other Latino states who continue to use Spanish as secondary language.

*Information.* In 2000, former President Clinton issued an executive order that initiated the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Political Status.<sup>76</sup> The intent of the order was to develop recommendations to the President regarding the island's status. For many, as discussed, the issue remains un-resolved.

As with the commonwealth option, the key is an information campaign that informs and educates every stakeholder about the processes and the options. An informed population will ensure an educated, credible vote and buy in from all parties on any transition.

The advantages are for statehood are essentially the opposite of commonwealth status. Incorporation fully into the U.S. does answer every UN, international and regional concern over U.S colonial policy. It also sets the U.S and Puerto Rico in the

best position to help a “Free Cuba”. The disadvantages in the information realm are hard to determine but certainly a few regional adversaries will try to paint the action as paternal and insensitive to the desires of the minority who wish full independence.

*Military.* The advantages for the U.S. supporting statehood are the potential military resurgence on the island and new focus on security in the region. The U.S can now use all military options for basing on the island. This will immediately increase security in the region and establish a renewed presence in the Caribbean. Certainly military recruiting will continue. Puerto Ricans are extremely loyal and patriotic people. It is possible for a renewed increase in patriotism to result in a like increase in volunteers.

Additionally, federal law enforcement and other agencies will have access and opportunity to bolster the current counter-drug and counter-terrorism efforts in the Caribbean and Latin America. This advantage cannot be understated. Puerto Rico is not resourced to fight this effort and desperately needs help. This is a regional and national threat that requires the full capabilities of the U.S. government to succeed. Puerto Rico cannot continue to fight this with the few resources it now has. It requires access and resources other border states now enjoy.

The disadvantage for the U.S. supporting the statehood option is as discussed the potential increase in federal funds for military installations and federal agencies on the island. In addition, a similar situation like Vieques could occur again if the U.S. does not implement safety and environmental measures on these military bases. The initial potential for protest will be high, but this will likely be overshadowed by the happiness of new jobs and economic impact back to the island.

*Economy.* Statehood will allow Puerto Rico to contribute over two billion dollars to the U.S. economy every year.<sup>77</sup> In addition, Puerto Rico, a major importer of U.S. goods, could increase its imports as the economy grows. The increase in exports by the U.S. can mean more jobs both in Puerto Rico and the mainland U.S.<sup>78</sup>

The island's economy will grow faster as a state due to the modern growth analysis "convergence theory."<sup>79</sup> According to Jenkins and Hexner, "recent studies on economic growth indicate that states grow two percent faster than territories because of their full integration with the U.S. economy and political system."<sup>80</sup> Hawaii demonstrated similar growth during the first decade after statehood. Other advantages include more security and stability which is good for business, increase investment by companies and spur economic growth on the island. According to Jenkins and Hexner, "making Puerto Rico a state would actually cost the federal government less and reduce the deficit."<sup>81</sup> Additionally every Puerto Rican citizen will now pay Federal income taxes. Statehood will result in a net benefit to the U.S. Treasury and to the island's population in real economic stability and growth.

Statehood offers Puerto Rico the same federal benefits as every state in the union. Beyond the assurance that representation provides through elected influence, Puerto Rico will receive equal amounts of federal funding that like size states receive. The true economic value of full membership in the U.S government affords is inestimable. Beyond adherence to a new tax code, there are few disadvantages economically for Puerto Rico. Certainly the advantages will outweigh the perceived disadvantage of full participation in the federal income tax.



## Conclusion

Puerto Rico's political status remains unsettled when it comes to determining its greater sovereignty. Puerto Rico has a long history of colonization lasting four centuries under the authority Spain and more recently the United States. During this entire period, there have only been three challenges to their status. First, in 1867, Ramon Emeterio Betances led the first unsuccessful attempt to free Puerto Rico from Spain. Second, in 1937, Pedro Albizu Campos led another unsuccessful attempt to free Puerto Rico from the United States. Third, when Luis Muñoz Marin introduced the "Commonwealth" status to the island in 1952 temporarily resulting in a successful change in status. However, the effort to free Puerto Rico from U.S. constraints still continues today. The current "Commonwealth" does not appeal to the Puerto Rican people and does not resolve the issue of ending colonialism.

The U.S. is opening up the possibility of a change in Puerto Rico's status as a territory. This year, the President's 2010 Task Force Report documented President Obama's executive order asking for a status report regarding Puerto Rico. The advantages and disadvantages brought about by each option make it increasingly more important, and yet difficult, for Puerto Ricans to decide their destiny. The U.S. Congress is also challenged to resolve this complex territorial policy issue. While Commonwealth status did provide a degree of economic prosperity and security to Puerto Rico, it does so at the cost of dependence to the U.S. and its monopoly on the rules and laws. While Puerto Ricans will enjoy additional economic benefits through statehood, there are concerns they may lose their strong cultural and nationalistic identity, like language. Based on all the conflicting factors such as political, economic,

military, cultural, security, and historical, Puerto Ricans remain undecided about their political status.

After a review of all the options, both independence and free association are not feasible, acceptable or suitable. Only continued commonwealth status or statehood are viable options. Each carries its own advantages or concerns when weighed against one another. Regardless, the U.S. Congress needs to comply with the guidance of the Presidential Executive Order (13183) in order to expedite the process so the people of Puerto Rico can decide on the right option.

### Recommendation

The United States must continue to enforce Executive Order 13183. This order clarifies the current Commonwealth's possible future status and also helps to clarify the options for the people of Puerto Rico in determining their preference. Based on the analysis of all options, the author believes Statehood offers the best outcome for the future. Per the last three plebiscites, almost half of people of Puerto Rico supported this option. There is a strong consensus to become part of the U.S. and the right way to affect this change is to do so while assuring the people retention of their Puerto Rican identity. This is both doable and possible.

The major benefits for selecting the statehood option are clear. Diplomatically, Puerto Rico would no longer be a U.S. territory or a U.S. colony and assure increased regional and international credibility. Joining the greatest democracy in the world is a statement of unquestionable resolve to democratic principles. Puerto Rico will also enjoy all the benefits and rewards enjoyed by the other states of the union. Finally, the State of Puerto Rico will be a key player in assisting any future transition of a free Cuba to democracy. This will be a huge regional victory for the U.S.

In the information arena incorporation is a tremendous story for the U.S. as it serves as the beacon of freedom. Ending the colonial era by full inclusion is simply democracy in action. This is preferred by a huge audience including the people of Puerto Rico, the Latino community in the U.S. and the international community.

Under military advantages, statehood will allow a review of the use all military bases and installations on the island and assures a continuing key source for recruits in the U.S. Armed Forces. This option will also increase access and opportunity for federal law enforcement agencies to support of the counter-drug and counter-terrorism efforts in the Caribbean region; an effort in need of help.

Economically, the statehood option will permit Puerto Rico to contribute a minimum of two billion dollars to the U.S. economy every year. The economic advantage for Puerto Rico is the expectation of real growth economically upon incorporation with the U.S. economy and increased investment by U.S. companies. Every Puerto Rican citizen will also now add to the federal coffers by paying federal taxes. Beyond just an inspired and stable work force, both the U.S and Puerto Rico stand to gain economically from this change.

The Puerto Rican government and Congress must join forces in the next plebiscite to provide the same strong effort the U.S. puts forth in fair elections abroad. The use of social media and other information options will enhance understanding and assure and informed population. The single greatest source of support for statehood is the promises of economic growth and access to security federal agencies provide the population against the global war on terrorism, drugs and crime.

Resolving Puerto Rico's status is in both the island and U.S. national interest. Doing so strengthens both parties' security in the region, sets the conditions for U.S. influence over a free Cuba and establishes even greater U.S. credibility in the region. There is great power in guaranteeing equal rights and complete U.S. representation to its own citizens. In addition, with Puerto Rico as the fifty-first state, the U.S. will strengthen its strategic role in the Caribbean. The resurgent drug trade and continuing influence of global terror networks in its own back yard is reason enough for concern. The great news is the simple act of completing Puerto Rico's journey to democracy can assure the United States' its continued position of strength and hope in a region on the verge of a dubious future.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kal and Olga Wagenheim, *"The Puerto Rican: A Documentary History,"* Markus Wiener Publishers Princeton, 1996, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Olga Jimenez de Wagenheim, *"Puerto Rico: An Interpretive History from Pre-Columbian Times to 1900,"* Markus Wiener Publishers Princeton, 1998, 59. In 1510, serious disputes arose between the Spaniards and Tainos as the Spanish people attempted to enslave the native Indians. In addition, the Tainos recognized the Spaniards introduced diseases to the island that began annihilating the Indian population. In 1511, the Taino Indians rose up against the Spaniards but were overmatched by the European's advanced weaponry. After several thousand Tainos died, the survivors fled the island. The few hundred Tainos that remained that were mostly women, escaped to the central mountains. Years later, these women were finally allowed by the Spanish government to marry Spanish men. In 1513, due to a lack of Taino slaves, the Spaniards began importing slaves from Africa to populate the island. It is from this combination of Taino Indians, Spaniards, and African people that formed the current mixture of the Puerto Rican people as well as the basis of its culture.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 89-91.

<sup>4</sup> Kal and Olga Wagenheim, *"The Puerto Rican: A Documentary History,"* 61-62.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>6</sup> Dick Thornburgh, *"Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide,"* Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C. (2006), 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Keith Bea & R. Sam Garrett, "*Political Status of Puerto Rico: Options for Congress*", Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (19 May 2010), 12.

<sup>13</sup> Thornburgh, "*Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide*," 15.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph R. Rudolph Jr., "*Modern Ethnic Conflicts*" Library of Congress, Greenwood Press, Westport, CT (2003), 321.

<sup>15</sup> Kal and Olga Wagenheim, "*The Puerto Rican: A Documentary History*," 116.

<sup>16</sup> Rudolph, "*Modern Ethnic Conflicts*," 319.

<sup>17</sup> Nancy Morris, "*Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics, and Identity*", Publisher Praeger, Westport, CT (1995), 33.

<sup>18</sup> Jose Trias Monges, "*Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World*", Yale University Press, (1997), 76.

<sup>19</sup> Rudolph, "*Modern Ethnic Conflicts*," 319.

<sup>20</sup> Thornburgh, "*Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide*," 16.

<sup>21</sup> Trias, "*Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World*", 115.

<sup>22</sup> Thornburgh, "*Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide*," 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>26</sup> Bea & Garrett, "*Political Status of Puerto Rico*," 16-18.

<sup>27</sup> Thornburgh, "*Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide*," 17.

<sup>28</sup> President William J. Clinton, "*Executive Order 13183: Establishment of the President's Task Force on Puerto Rico's Status*, the White House, (23 December 2000), 1. [http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayEO.cfm?id=EO\\_13183](http://nodis3.gsfc.nasa.gov/displayEO.cfm?id=EO_13183) Ex. Ord. No. 13183, Dec. 23, 2000, 65 F.R. 82889, as amended by Ex. Ord. No. 13209, Apr. 30, 2001, 66 F.R. 22105; Ex. Ord. No. 13319, Dec. 3, 2003, 68 F.R. 68233, provided: By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including Public Law 106-346

[see Tables for classification], it is hereby ordered as follows: Section 1. Policy. It is the policy of the executive branch of the Government of the United States of America to help answer the questions that the people of Puerto Rico have asked for years regarding the options for the islands' future status and the process for realizing an option. Further, it is our policy to consider and develop positions on proposals, without preference among the options, for the Commonwealth's future status; to discuss such proposals with representatives of the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress; to work with leaders of the Commonwealth and the Congress to clarify the options to enable Puerto Ricans to determine their preference among options for the islands' future status that are not incompatible with the Constitution and basic laws and policies of the United States; and to implement such an option if chosen by a majority, including helping Puerto Ricans obtain a governing arrangement under which they would vote for national government officials, if they choose such a status.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Aaron Gamaliel Ramos, *"Islands at the Crossroads: Politics in the Non-Independent Caribbean,"* Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Boulder, Colorado (2001), 7.

<sup>31</sup> James L. Dietz, *"Puerto Rico: Negotiating Development and Change,"* Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Boulder, Colorado (2003), 5.

<sup>32</sup> Susan M. Collins, *"The Economy of Puerto Rico,"* Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C., (2006), 91.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Offices (GAO), *"Puerto Rico: Fiscal Relations with the Federal Government and Economics Trends during the Phase-out of the Possessions Tax Credit,"* (2006), 72.

<sup>34</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 22.

<sup>35</sup> Trias, *"Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World,"* 139.

<sup>36</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, Report to the Congress of the U.S., *"Experiences of Past Territories Can Assist Puerto Rico Status Deliberations,"* (1980), 34.

<sup>37</sup> Glenn P. Jenkins and J. Tomas Hexner, *"Puerto Rico: The Economics of Status,"* The Citizens Educational Foundation, (1994), 13.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Kemper Hitch, *"Islands in Transition: The Past, Present, and Future of Hawaii's Economy,"* First Hawaiian Bank, Honolulu, HI, (1992), 181-182. Statehood had tremendous economic importance to Hawaii. Statehood was worth a billion dollars of advertising and promotion for Hawaii. Suddenly we were the fiftieth state, and thousands upon thousands of national business firms with activities all over the country began asking themselves why they were not doing business in Hawaii.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Clinton, *"Executive Order 13183,"* 1.

<sup>41</sup> Thornbugh, *"Puerto Rico's Future: A Time to Decide,"* 11.

- <sup>42</sup> Trias, *"Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World,"* 139-140.
- <sup>43</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 30.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-31.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>46</sup> Clinton, *"Executive Order 13183,"* 1.
- <sup>47</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 29.
- <sup>48</sup> Trias, *"Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World,"* 139-140.
- <sup>49</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 29.
- <sup>50</sup> House of Representatives, *"H.R. 2499: Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2009"* (28 April 2010), 2, <http://www.gop.gov/bill/111/2/hr2499>.
- <sup>51</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 29.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.
- <sup>56</sup> Trias, *"Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World,"* 139-140.
- <sup>57</sup> Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 29.
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.
- <sup>60</sup> Nancy Morris, *"Puerto Rico: Culture, Politics, and Identity,"* 164.
- <sup>61</sup> Manuel A. Casiano, *"Vieques: Politics Aside,"* Caribbean Business, (1999), <http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/vol3n45/CBPoliticsAside-en.html>.
- <sup>62</sup> Department of Defense, *"Base Structure Report,"* (2010), 71.
- <sup>63</sup> Catherine Lutz, *"The Bases of Empire: The Global Struggle Against U.S. Military Posts,"* New York University Press, NY (2009), 87.
- <sup>64</sup> Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *"Island in Limbo: The Case against Puerto Rican Statehood,"* Foreign Policy Research Institute, (2001), 416.
- <sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 417.

<sup>66</sup>J. Thomas Hexner, *"Puerto Rican Independence: The Economic Implications for the U.S. and Puerto Rico,"* Citizens Educational Foundation, (1998), 14.

<sup>67</sup>Jenkins, *"Puerto Rico: The Economics of Status,"* 24.

<sup>68</sup>U.S. GAO, *"Puerto Rico: Fiscal Relations,"* 28.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>70</sup>Angel Perez Otero, *"Public Debt Report,"* Government Development Bank for Puerto Rico, (2007), 3.

<sup>71</sup>National Conference of State Legislatures, *"State Unemployment Rates for December, 2010,"* (2011), 1. <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=13308>.

<sup>72</sup>U.S. GAO, *"Puerto Rico: Fiscal Relations,"* 72.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 28.

<sup>74</sup>Trias, *"Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World,"* 139.

<sup>75</sup>Julia Sagebien, *"Pirates or Partners? Cuba-Puerto Rico Commercial Relations in a Post-Embargo Scenario,"* Cuba in Transition, ASCE, (1999), 82.

<sup>76</sup>Bea & Garrett, *"Political Status of Puerto Rico,"* 19.

<sup>77</sup>Jenkins, *"Puerto Rico: The Economics of Status,"* 42.

<sup>78</sup>Hexner, *"Puerto Rican Independence,"* 6.

<sup>79</sup>Jenkins, *"Puerto Rico: The Economics of Status,"* 41.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 42.