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HEADQUARTERS • SIEGE NEW YORK, NY 10017
TEL.: 1 (212) 963.1234 • FAX: 1 (212) 963.4879

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THIRD INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF COLONIALISM

Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade
for the Eradication of Colonialism: first quarter review of developments and trends

Quito, Ecuador
28 to 30 May 2013

DISCUSSION PAPER

PRESENTATION

BY

MR. PETER CLEGG

relations and future decolonisation prospects

This paper considers the nature of the relationship between the UK and its

The 2012 White Paper

This was published to set out the Coalition government's approach to the territories.

The UK wanted to do two things: to promote a positive overall agenda while making clear the responsibilities and high standards of governance the territories must maintain

Thus on the one hand the White Paper talks about "renewing and strengthening" the relationship; promoting a "very strong positive vision"; and referring to the UK-Overseas Territories link as a "troubled partnership".

Political and Economic Issues

The purpose of this study is to...

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Attitudes towards the present constitutional relationship

From the UK government, the view is that the constitutional position is largely settled – at least for the time being. Over the last few years new constitutions

have been agreed for all the territories except for Anguilla.

For the territories the picture is mixed. In the BVI, the Cayman Islands, and Montserrat there is general satisfaction with the status quo.

However, in Anguilla and the TCI the rhetoric against the constitutional link is quite critical. Premier Rufus Ewing in the TCI has talked of independence, but in a rather non-committal way.

In Anguilla, Chief Minister Hubert Hughes has called for complete internal self-government, and more recently full independence. In April 2013 Hughes said he wanted a referendum by the end of the year to consider two options: “complete internal self-government or independence”. Note, moderate reform was not offered as an option.

Future decolonisation prospects

From the outset it can be stated that neither the UK nor the territories want a closer and more formal constitutional relationship that might involve direct representation for the territories in the UK parliament.

Similarly, the possibility of independence appears only a distant possibility

Then what about free association? As intimated above the UK has little enthusiasm for free association at present. There is also reluctance on the part of the territories.

of the local (Montserratian) population? Without some kind of vote or referendum it is difficult to gauge what the view of the population is – they might not want independence but they may wish to have greater autonomy

Final thoughts

It is clear that at the present time the routes towards decolonisation are limited.

Independence, incorporation, and free association are not favoured by either the

One option is to de-list territories that request it, but as we have seen this is