

## **After Independence, What's Next?**

By Jim Dator

For the Ka Lei Maile Alii Hawaiian Civic Club forum series

Palolo Olelo Studio

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I will not consider whether independence for Hawaii is good or bad. I am going to assume independence will happen. So I am here to ask us to think about Hawaii after independence.

It is very important for people interested in and struggling for Hawaii sovereignty, or any kind of new relationship with the US, to think about what challenges and opportunities Hawaii might have after sovereignty or some similar political status is achieved. Over the years I have observed that far too many movements fail not because they did not achieve the aims of their struggle, but because they did. However, they put all their time and effort into achieving their aims and so failed to ask, and answer, "what's next?" I call that the futurists curse: "May your dreams come true." Once they do come true, then what?

If you don't have an answer for that you probably will see your dreams shattered even though your goal was achieved. You may be very much like the person who stood on the deck of the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003 with a sign in back of him proclaiming "Mission Accomplished!" The aims of the US invasion of Iraq had been achieved; announced in triumph. And that war still goes on, five years later.

I learned a similar lesson very bitterly in the years I was president of the World Futures Studies Federation from the mid1980s to the early 1990s.

(Brief reason for the creation of the WFSF--western civ not so great; bridge for E and W)

I was invited to many socialist countries--in Eastern Europe, China, the Soviet Union, even North Korea--by people who wanted to talk about a future different from the one they were then headed for.

I spent most of my time in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Estonia, and China. I was invited by there by people in very high positions of power who wanted a different future. While they were not allowed to criticize the present, it was possible for them, as futurists, to contemplate alternative futures, and because of my role as president of the major international association of futurists, they invited me to talk with them about it.

It was a fantastic experience for me in many ways. I got to see the transformation of those systems close hand. I got to be a part of one of the most incredible changes in world

history--incredible in the swiftness of the change and incredible because it was done with almost no bloodshed at all.

(Bulgaria, Sophia University "Futures of Democracy", May 22, 1989. Three days later the students were in the streets with the biggest rallies in November 1989. The Bulgarian Communist Part formally gave up power in January 1990, and free elections. were held in June. Alexander Tomov, chief advisor to President Todor Zhivkov, "father of the Bulgarian Freedom")

Not always successful: (Li Peng, Prime Minister of China, September, 1988, Hwang Jang-Yop, second in command to Kim Il-Sung in NK in December 1989. Opposed Kim Jong-Il, and so defected to SK in 1997. I visited him in Seoul in March 2006)

How was it possible for the Evil Empire that US military policy had been wholly focused on for most of my life just suddenly to disappear without a struggle? It is still miraculous to me even now. An incredible success!

But in many ways, also a very horrible failure. Because the transformation did happen so quickly and peacefully, few in those countries were prepared for self-government when they had the responsibility so suddenly given to them. They had spent so much time dreaming and scheming for change that they were entirely unprepared for it when the change swiftly came.

And so for the most part while the transformation was peaceful, the aftermath was bloody indeed.

Certainly the worst situation was in Yugoslavia where old animosities long suppressed and, most thought, extinguished by Soviet rule, quickly reignited. and destroyed one of the most wonderful multicultural and humane nations in the world, Yugoslavia, leaving behind seething old ethnic groups that are still fighting and killing.

(Mihailo Markovic, Belgrade 6, "Socialism with a Human Face" became the chief ideolog defending Slobodan Milosevic's barbarisms)

The situation in Russia itself was not much better after the collapse of its communist system as various ethnic groups that had been part of the USSR separated into their old nations, and mafia-like gangs came into power--a bloody process still going on that might very well ignite into a real war between the US and Russia without or without the participation of the countries of Europe as well.

Even in places like Hungary and Bulgaria, while ethnic divisions still plague them now, their big failure was their inability to withstand the forces of global capitalism that quickly marched in and took them over wholly against their will and intentions.

Many people, especially in Bulgaria, are very nostalgic for the good old days of communism in comparison, and the same is true of many in the former Soviet Union as well.

Leaders in none of these countries had thought about what might happen after they got rid of communism, and so when they did find themselves free so quickly, old prejudices immediately reemerged, on the one hand, and external economic forces moved in on the other, so that their long desired future vanished as quickly but not as peacefully as it had come.

I do not want that to happen here. Since I believe there is a very strong chance that Hawaii will obtain independence fairly quickly, peacefully, and soon, it is important that all concerned have thought very carefully about how to continue to live peacefully and freely after independence is obtained.

So for tonight's discussion let's assume secession proceeds peacefully. For one of any number of possible reasons, let's assume that the US says OK to Hawaiian independence, perhaps with reluctance, but at least without violence on either side.

This is completely possible under many scenarios, but by no means assured. Still, that is the assumption I would like to have us make now. As I have said many times since 1989, it is not that the capitalist economic system of the US won and that the communist economic system of the USSR failed. Rather, both were unsustainable, and that of the Soviet Union fell before that of the US did. But, as anticipated, both have failed now.

*Some other things at the outset.* My talk tonight is not focused at all on the internal governance of Hawaii. I am simply assuming that Hawaii has obtained independence from the US, and has been recognized as independent by the US and the global community.

But in fact there is another story to be told about Russia and other formerly socialist countries concerning their very unstable dictatorships now, and the role the US played in creating them--against the advice and struggle that some of us at the University of Hawaii and elsewhere, under the leadership of Fred Riggs, put up. So one of the most important things you need to think about before and after sovereignty is obtained is the structure of the government you create--but I do not intend to discuss that tonight.

So tonight, I am assuming Hawaii will not be like the Indian nations within the United States. Nor is Hawaii some kind of a state within the State of Hawaii.

I am assuming that Hawaii is no longer a State of the American union, and it is entirely possible the Union itself has dissolved into seven or more smaller nations--but that is another story as well.

Moreover, I am not going to talk at all about whether Hawaii is a monarchy or not, and if so who the monarch is; or whether it is a representative democracy, or some kind of new

form of government based upon indigenous Hawaiian values and institutions and not on western forms as the present government is. I will totally ignore all of those important issues.

I also am not going to discuss whether one must have "Hawaiian blood" to be a citizen, or whether Hawaiian citizenship is open to all who wish to pledge their allegiance to Hawaii (or perhaps to have some kind of dual citizenship with Hawaii and some other nation).

I am ignoring all those extremely important issues on the basis that, on the one hand, it is not proper for me to enter into that debate and, on the other, that I do not have enough information to discuss it in any event. These issues must be discussed and decided, but that is not my task tonight.

Finally, by way of an introduction, let's set the discussion some years in the future. Let's say the year 2033. Why then?

First of all, it is the roughly 25 year time span that futurists often like to talk about. It is far enough away to image change is possible, and yet close enough in time for most of us to care about what actually happens.

Which brings up my second reason which is that in 2033 I'll be 100 years old and as interested in the issue then as am I now.

Now with those things in mind here are some of the things about Hawaii and the world that I think we should consider.

For the last several years, I have been going around town giving talks to local community groups titled "The Unholy three plus one"

(Explain why Trinity. And point out that since I began, two of the three Persons have already entered the consciousness and conversation of some people here, though much more is coming and so there needs to be a lot more conversation and action.

But the third Person and the "Plus One" have so far remained invisible to most people though they are very apparent to me:

Oil, Environment, Economics, Weak Govt (strong nation/weak state)

Another metaphor that I have been using for some time is that Hawaii needs to learn how to surf some oncoming tsunamis. The end of oil; looming environmental challenges; the collapse of the global economic system; and the inability of the US government to do anything about these issues are among the tsunamis I have been discussing. Here are some other "Tsunamis" you need to consider:

### **Changing demographics**

Global population still growing dangerously; but declining in many regions. Decline is also a challenge, but a better one than continued growth.

Ethnic changes: from 50-50 in 1900; to 15-85,;now, to 1-99 by 2050?

Lesson: Don't look backward when contemplating the futures. Population ratios will be much different.

Hawaii:

Ethnicity (even though percent of whites growing recently, I suspect many will flee as sovereignty approaches, so there will be less whites and more Pacific islanders; less Asians than now or recently)

Fertility (currently generally down--but become like Japan/Korea? Or will fertility increase as need for agricultural labor increases?)

Age distribution (Currently getting older (because of Boomers) but may get younger again)

Environmental refugees from vanishing Pacific islands; few tourists and not many from US.

**Changing political-economy:**

Possible end of global neoliberal capitalism of past 30 years, but replaced by what? More Japanese- or European-style capitalism?or by local self-sufficiency?

End of US hegemony? Europe still but not global hegemon. Has its own internal challenges because of immigration from south.

Rise of Asia? (Likely in short run, but China and India have huge energy and environmental problems too. May lead to collapse of China and maybe India)

Rise of Southeast Asia and South America?

Rise of Islam? (not so tied to global fiscal system; but oil running out and much internal dissension. But could have an Islamic Reformation and Renaissance. Keep your eye on this).

Conclusion: No single nation or culture rules in future as it has in recent past.

**Changing technologies:**

Artificial Intelligence; genetic engineering, nanotechnology; space settlements (?)  
All slowed/stopped by Unholy Trinity Plus One?

Bottom line: Hawaii will have had to become much more self-sufficient by then compared to now

But there are still many options in how Hawaii relates to the rest of the world and that is what I want to touch on briefly for the rest of my discussion:

1. Hawaii is the "Best little backwater on the planet"

(This is the title given in derision by Bud Smyser, former editor of the Star-Bulletin, to the idea that Hawaii could or should try to restore the more quiet and enjoyable lifestyles of the 1950s--a scenario that many people in Hawaii say they prefer. So I have adopted his sneer as a slogan!)

Hawaii is almost entirely self-sufficient for food and material goods.  
Trade and communication is largely within and among the Hawaiian islands with only slight reference to the rest of the world.

There is no significant US military presence in Hawaii

## 2. Hawaii is part of pan-Pacific island community

Hawaii is a member of a federation of at least Polynesian and perhaps also Micronesian communities

Focus of life and activities is on Pacific island concerns and ways.

There may or may not still be a small US military presence

## 3. Hawaii is under the protection of China

China controls the Pacific, replacing the US which is no longer a world power.

Considerable tourism comes from China mainly.

There is no US military presence, and may or may not have much Chinese military as well.

## 4. Hawaii is in Free Association with the US

Hawaii has a relationship with the US somewhat like Free Association in Micronesia--Hawaii is locally independent but relies on US military protection.

There is some economic aid from the US, but not much.

Hawaii is largely self-sufficient in food and material goods but still more oriented to the US than anywhere else.

## 5. Hawaii is a node in what is rapidly becoming a high tech, decentralized, inner planetary network of local communities.

The world is swiftly moving beyond the nation-state system and beyond old-fashioned concepts like "sovereignty".

Each community, including in Hawaii, can protect and expand local ways, within a regional, global, and--soon--inner solar-system (Moon, Venus and Mars) planetary electronic network.

High tech solutions to most of the problems of 2008 have been found or are well on the way of solution.

### **Summary:**

1. Ask What's Next and be prepared for dealing with what comes after sovereignty.

Everyone should do this, but maybe form a group of people who's special responsibility is to do nothing but looking ahead, ready to be part of the team that governs after sovereignty

2. Issues of internal governance very important as part of "what's next", but so is relation to external forces.

So don't just focus inward; need to keep monitoring changes in political and economic power in the Pacific and world--and space

(Does Hawaii want to be part of space or focus only locally??)