



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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August 26, 2008

Shelley Moorhead
African-Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Alliance
P.O. Box 8027
Christiansted
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands 00823

Dear Mr. Moorhead:

I am writing this letter to you with the intention of making it public upon delivery to you at your present location on the steps of Government House on St. Croix, where you have been located over the past week continuing your peaceful demonstration. The objectives of African-Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Alliance ("ACRRA") and its goal of seeking reparations from Denmark for the enslavement of persons in the Danish West Indies prior to Emancipation in 1848 are topics that you and I have discussed, most recently at our meeting on Thursday, June 26th at Government House. Although I believe I have made clear my position on the several issues you are raising with your present demonstration, I believe it valuable that there be a public statement of my position, with respect to the matters we continue to discuss with the Government of Denmark, as we work to build a more constructive relationship between the United States Virgin Islands and Denmark.

However, I am also writing at this time for an additional and more personal reason. Out of concern for your health and well-being, I do not wish you to extend the period of your demonstration any longer than you deem necessary to make your positions known to our community. I believe our conversations have clearly established what the Administration can and will do both as a matter of financial ability as well as the broad outlines of our policies in this area. Your continued stay in the peaceful fashion that you have maintained is, by and large, up to you to decide. But I am sure that you do not believe that the length of your demonstration will materially affect the financial condition of this Government and its ability to pay over to your organization the monies you seek to have released, any more than it will affect the timing or the priority of the items that I

will be discussing with the Danish Government whenever my trip to Denmark is scheduled. I view my trip to Denmark to be driven by objectives that will enable us to communicate with government officials to ensure that successes on social, political and economic fronts can be openly discussed and, with all probability, be attained.

As to the issue of the appropriation for ACRRA. We all know that \$35,000 was appropriated for the organization. But you are acutely aware, as are most people in Territory, of the difficult financial circumstances we find ourselves in during this period of economic recession – the impact of which normally lags the U.S. market by several months and is now coming to reality here within the Virgin Islands. Our revenue collections and projections are down significantly from what had been assumed would be the case this fiscal year. The ACRRA appropriation, just like the appropriations of many other deserving community organizations and projects has not, and cannot be, funded unless and until there are available funds, i.e. actual collected revenues that permit the release of funds at a time and in an amount that will not disrupt the orderly operation of the government. It would be irresponsible to release funds we do not have and may be unable to collect. Most everyone in the community is aware of these fiscal realities, and they, too, must exercise patience and understanding. I will take this opportunity, however, to remind you that ACRRA's ability to fundraise to further its objectives is not constrained and is strongly encouraged as you continue to broaden your outreach. I will use as an example the recent trip of eleven students from the U.S. Virgin Islands that went to Rwanda for fourteen days and invited my wife, Cecile, to accompany them. They did not request or utilize government monies, but rather fundraised to achieve their goals. I believe all who participated will agree the trip broadened their perspectives on how much more we are alike than different, but more importantly that acceptance of individual responsibility is what binds a community to achieve its potential.

As to the issues of demanding reparations from the Danish Government for the enslavement of so many of our ancestors in the then Danish West Indies. I know that we share a full understanding of the horrors and injustice of this past; on this point there is no difference in our opinion. In fact, the Government of Denmark issued a statement on this topic. What you and I do not fully share, I believe, is a view of how to face the future and how and what to seek from a future relationship with Denmark -- its people and its government. I believe that it would be impossible to place a monetary value and determine proper compensation for the past of suffering, lost opportunity, and destruction to the moral and social fabric of enslaved Africans and their descendants caused by slavery. I do not believe we could even accurately determine the chain of responsibility -- does it rest with the Danish people or with the then Danish monarch; do we attach it to the merchants and captains of the seas or the kings of certain tribes in certain countries in Africa? At our June 26th meeting I inquired on your reparations policy to see if a synergy existed in our viewpoints in order to travel the same road. You stated that it would be premature to release it to me at that time in order not to compromise what you believe to be your negotiating position.

However, the histories of the islands of the Caribbean and the former colonial powers that perpetuated the institution of slavery are permanently inter-woven. I believe that this shared past can lead to a very constructive dialogue on matters of culture, history, technology, and economic development and small business opportunities. It is on this premise that my Administration has pursued broadening our relationship with Denmark. Beyond the obvious economic opportunities of tourism and trade, to encompass education, non-governmental organization funding linkages, health care and energy. While we may not be able to place an exact monetary value on the institutionalized injustices of past actions, we can utilize current day institutions of the public and private sectors to improve the lives of the descendants.

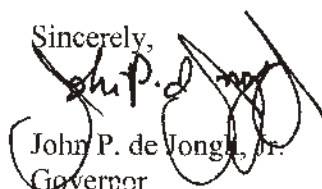
There is much that I believe we can gain from building a strong relationship with Denmark. There is much I believe the Daues can gain, too. And chief among these possibilities is a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of our shared history and the legacy of slavery. I am confident that you and your organization will have much to offer, and I am hopeful that at some point you will outline your position to me. Yet, I continue to maintain that the discussions with Denmark will be government to government, and your stance once shared in greater detail with me will be considered.

Whether or not your goal of reparations is ever satisfied in a material sense I cannot predict, but I am confident that the goal of a better relationship and better understanding can and will be achieved.

I invite your continued participation in these efforts as we move ahead.

With continued concern for your well being,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. de Jongh, Jr.", written over a printed name and title.

John P. de Jongh, Jr.
Governor