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Mr. Thom Beanal
Acting Chairperson
Presidium of West Papua Council
Chairperson
The National Council of Tribal Chiefs

Dear Mr. Beanal:

I am writing to congratulate Professor Pieter Drooglever who has finally completed a comprehensive five-year study commissioned by the Dutch Government relative to the historical events that led to the implementation by President Suharto and his military regime of the so-called Act of Free Choice which now is seriously questioned by the international community on how, when, and why only 1,022 West Papuans were "selected" to vote on behalf of some 800,000 West Papuans in favor of joining with Indonesia rather than becoming an independent nation.

The outcome of the so-called vote was unanimously in support for Indonesia. However, there was clear evidence that these elders' lives were threatened if they had opted for independence. Following the vote, the UN Ambassador sent to observe the elections, Fernando Ortiz-Sans, criticized the electoral process and the actions of the Indonesian government in his report.

In spite of the Ambassador's reservations and protests from several countries including the Netherlands and neighboring Papua New Guinea, the issue was brought up before the United Nations General Assembly just days after many delegations received Ambassador Ortiz-Sans' report. Several African countries expressed dismay over the pending vote on Resolution 2504. In this resolution, the UN Assembly only "took note" of the Act of Free Choice but never gave official approval to this matter.

Recently, the United States Congressional Committee on International Relations passed H.R. 2601, the State Department Authorization Act for FY 2006 which passed the

House by a vote of 351-78 on July 20, 2005. Included in this bill is historic language submitted by Congressman Payne and myself regarding the situation in West Papua and the human rights abuses that continue to occur. This historic legislation sends a message that the United States Congress will no longer tolerate the human rights abuses perpetuated by the Indonesian military in West Papua. This matter is now pending in the Senate.

It is my sincere hope that the Indonesian Government will take serious steps to improve its relationship with the people and the leaders of West Papua and I am looking forward to receiving a copy of Professor Drooglever's work on this important matter. I believe this will shed more light on how the people of West Papua have suffered for so many years. Enough is enough, and I wish you and your associates all the best for a successful conference.

Sincerely,


ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
Member of Congress