

DELUSIONAL NONSENSE SPEAK: Beddoes slams Tikoitoga's claim military "last bastion of defense for the people of Fiji and that there is an enveloping comfort that the force exists to deal with both internal and external threats"

STATEMENT

Mick Beddoes, President, United Peoples Party

Former Opposition Leader Mick Beddoes has labeled as 'delusionary nonsense' the Land Force Commander's claim that the military are quote *'the last bastion of defense for the people of Fiji and that there is an enveloping comfort that the force exists to deal with both internal and external threats'*

Beddoes said that the truth is, since independence there has only been one clear and present danger to our people, their lives, rights and liberties, property and economic prosperity and that **'threat is internal'** and our people have been subjected to its **brutal imposition on three separate occasions in 1987, 2000 and 2006** and this 'threat' comes from the very institution that the Land Force Commander would have us believe is our last *'bastion of defense'*. It is hypocrisy of the highest order when the very institution that carried out or supported the forceful removal of our elected governments of 1987, 2000 and 2006 should attempt a cosmetic makeover in an attempt to represent itself as quote *'the last bastion for law and order in Fiji'* unquote.

Beddoes said in fairness, our Fiji Military Forces were certainly at one time our *'last bastion of defense'* and it was a role they performed for the people of Fiji with great pride and commitment for more than 75 years and in return they won the respect and admiration of almost every citizen in Fiji, including himself. Their international reputation as a disciplined and professional force in times of war and peace placed them at the very top of military institutions in the world. Many of our service men and women made the ultimate sacrifice for Fiji, the Commonwealth and the Queen and as a grateful nation we remain forever in their debt as well as their family's debt. Sadly however all that changed in 1987, when certain military officers within the command decided to **'abandon' their oaths and obligations to the people, in favor of serving 'vested interests'** and since that fateful day on **May 14th 1987** until the present day, the FMF have on 3 separate occasions turned their weapons on the very people they claim today to be protecting?

Beddoes said the people played no part in the military decisions that led to the over throw of the governments of 1987, 2000 and 2006. It was the military and military alone that made the decision that changed their role from being a **'constructive' guardian and defender** of the people to one that was **'destructive'** costing the country and the people according to some economists, more than **\$10 billion** in lost economic growth, unnecessary loss of lives, loss of jobs, loss of our educated workforce through mass migration and many other opportunities lost as a consequence of coups.

Not to mention the **physiological trauma and stress** that each family has had to confront as a result of their losses in the coups and in some cases with tragic consequences.

Beddoes said the people of Fiji have **never 'bestowed'** upon the FMF the authority or mandate to 'dictate' what is or is not good for them. He said the people have the mental capacity and intellect to decide that for ourselves.

Beddoes said the only legal and legitimate authority to which the people have 'bestowed' their trust and given their mandate to in our recent past was to the **2001 and 2006 parliament** and they will 'bestow' that mandate again on the **next parliament in 2014** elections. Beddoes said that although the Military would like to think they are '*our last bastion of defense*' their actions in 1987, 2000 and 2006 say otherwise.

But **they can still get back to that place of pride** they once held in the hearts of the people of Fiji by taking some very simple but sincere steps; such as:

- i. Expressing their sincere **regret and remorse** for what they have done especially to those families whose loved ones lost their lives or were brutalized by the regime;
- ii. Seeking the **forgiveness of the people** for their wrong doing and making a pledge to never abandon the people again;
- iii. **Renewing and reaffirming their oaths** to defend the people of Fiji and their elected government and to never again consider the vested interest of a few over the interest of the people of Fiji;
- iv. **Returning to its core traditional role** of being the '*last bastion of defense for the people of Fiji and their elected government*';
- v. **Leave the business of managing** the country to those aspiring candidates that the people elect through free and fair elections to do.

If there are officers or servicemen and women who aspire to become representative of the people, then by all means, **resign your commission or office, hang up your uniform or robe** and step into the **political arena** and like the rest of us, put your case to the people and if you are convincing and sincere enough, the people will respond to your message with a mandate for you to represent their aspirations and interests in the next parliament.

There is no place in a society like ours for the use of military or any kind of armed intervention as a means of changing our political direction.