

GUEST COLUMN ON STATUS  
by Arturo Morales Carrion  
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Note: In view of all the current excitement, and the many distortions one finds in the press, I feel a series of three or four columns on status coming on. As an ~~open~~ opener, and especially since it went almost unnoticed by English-speaking residents and ~~with~~ visitors, I have asked Under Secretary of State Arturo Morales Carrion to let me use the following abridged translation of his recent press-statement. ~~as a guest-column.~~ E.P.H.

Controversy over status flares up again, and its opponents have bombarded Puerto Rico's commonwealth status with a barrage of ~~epite~~ epithets. They have called it "an odd and ridiculous scarecrow," an "ugly duckling," a "fraud," a "hoax." As a commonwealth, Puerto Rico has been called a "permanent colony." The existence of a compact between the people of Puerto Rico and the Congress of the United States is denied vehemently, while the stubborn opposition insists that Puerto Rico is still an "unincorporated territory," a "possession," a "dependency" of the United States. A panel of prominent lawyers has even defined commonwealth status as a hybrid of state and territory, and insists that Congress lacked the power to create it -- seven years after the Congress and the people of Puerto Rico did so create it.

The opposition's repertory of epithets is truly impressive. However, while the dictionary is gutted of its pejorative terms for the purpose of disparaging and discrediting our present form of government, it is interesting to note the United States Government's official position on the matter, as expressed to the world.

On May 12, the Honorable Mason Sears -- in an important statement that was all but ignored by our press -- addressed the United Nations Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories. He said that the United States would soon cease to transmit ~~information-~~ to the United Nations information on Alaska and Hawaii -- as non-self-governing territories. Then, before the United Nations, before the international community, he went on to define -- not his personal views, but the official position of the United States of America. Among other things he said:

"The attainment of statehood by Alaska and Hawaii comes less than six years after the

adoption of a United Nations resolution concerning the establishment of Puerto Rico and its two and a quarter million people as a self-governing commonwealth, voluntarily associated by vote of its people in a compact with the United States.

"They have also been assured by President Eisenhower that if at any time the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico adopts a resolution in favor of more complete or even absolute independence, he will immediately thereafter recommend to Congress that such independence be granted.

"Thus, in the brief period since the summer of 1952, over 97% of the peoples ~~of~~ in the few non-fully self-governing territories of the United States have left behind them forever their status as politically dependent peoples." (Italics mine, A.M.C.)

Note: On the one hand we have a picturesque collection of epithets, a calisthenic exhibition of pejorative semantics. On the other is the serious, formal, responsible opinion of the United States Government. Which shall we believe?

Here is a serious dilemma: If the United States spoke the truth about Puerto Rico's present status, then the enemies of that status have perpetrated a monstrous fraud. On the other hand, those enemies are right in the event that the United States has deceived world opinion. But in that event, the good faith, the integrity, the moral responsibility of the United States are challenged before the world.

Shall we Puerto Ricans believe that the Government of the United States lies deliberately when it insists in the United Nations that Puerto Rico has ceased being a non-self-governing territory? Shall we believe that the United States, in solemnly declaring that Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawaii "have left behind them forever their status as politically dependent peoples," is attempting to bamboozle ~~the world?~~ world-opinion? Shall we conclude that the United States doesn't know what it is doing or saying?

Or shall we have faith in the United States, in its word, in its respect for free determination, not only for Puerto Rico or for the entire world? Among us Puerto Ricans, who are the ones who truly believe in the United States?

I direct these questions to the ardent compilers of epithets, and especially to the friends of those compilers who ~~infest~~ the Republican Statehood Party.