

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON



December 17, 1952

AIR MAIL

My dear Sol:

In accordance with your request to Mr. Robbins I enclose a copy of the resolution on Factors which was adopted by the Seventh General Assembly on December 10, 1952. This resolution approves provisionally the list of factors which is annexed and which may serve as a guide both for the General Assembly and the Members responsible for the administration of non-self-governing territories, in deciding whether a Territory has or has not attained a full measure of self-government. The resolution recommends inter alia that provisionally the list of factors should be taken into account in any case the General Assembly may examine concerning the cessation of the transmission of information under Article 73(e) of the Charter. The resolution also provides for a more thorough study of factors by a new Ad Hoc Committee of ten Members. This Committee is to be convened four weeks before the 1953 session of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories, about July 15, 1953. In a very recent decision the General Assembly referred the question of the cessation of the transmission of information on Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles to this Ad Hoc Committee. The United States will be a Member of this Ad Hoc Committee.

As you are aware, the problem of factors has a long history in the United Nations. The Charter, while specifying certain obligations for Members of the United Nations "who have or assume responsibility for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government", does not undertake to define the term non-self-governing territory.

At its first session the General Assembly, after some discussion, merely "noted" the list of 74 territories on which 8 Members had transmitted or declared their intention to transmit information.

The Honorable
Sol Luis Descartes,
Secretary of the Treasury,
San Juan, Puerto Rico.

By 1948 the General Assembly had before it information on only 62 of the 74 territories originally listed. The Assembly, therefore, adopted a resolution affirming the principle that the United Nations should be informed of the changes in the constitutional position and status of certain territories which had led the responsible authorities to discontinue the transmission of information, and which requested the Members concerned to furnish the Secretary-General with the relevant documents relating to the change in status of the territory. [GA Resolution 222 (III)].

At the Fourth Session in 1949 the General Assembly considered that it was within its responsibility "to express its opinion on the principles which have guided or may in the future guide the Members concerned in enumerating the territories for which the obligation exists to transmit information under Article 73(e) of the Charter". The Assembly also invited the special Committee on Information transmitted under Article 73(e) of the Charter to "examine the factors which should be taken into account in deciding whether any territory is or is not a territory whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government".

After examining the factors in 1951, the Special Committee's report noted that there are numerous elements which should be taken into consideration in determining if a territory is or is not self-governing, and that it did not consider any single factor or particular combination of factors as prominent or decisive in every case except that the will of the people concerned properly and freely expressed would in all cases be the paramount factor. The report listed a number of factors of geographical, political, economic and cultural nature which in the Committee's opinion should be taken into account, stressing that the list was not to be considered as being exhaustive.

Upon the receipt of the report of the Special Committee, the Fourth Committee of the Sixth General Assembly appointed a sub-committee for the further study of the basic and general factors. This sub-committee compiled a list of factors and recommended a draft resolution to the Fourth Committee concerning procedures for the future study of the problem. This resolution [567 (VI)] decided to take as a basis for future study the list drawn up by the sub-committee; invited Members of the United Nations to transmit to the Secretary-General a statement of their views on the factors; and appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to carry out the further study of the factors.

The Ad Hoc Committee, which met in September 1952, had before it the list of factors compiled by the sub-committee of the General Assembly, the views of 20 Members who had submitted statements of their views, and the information transmitted to the Secretary-General by Administering Authorities when they ceased reporting on certain territories. The Ad Hoc Committee compiled a list of factors under three headings: those indicative of the attainment of independence; those indicative of the attainment of

other separate systems of self-government and those indicative of the free association of the territory with other component parts of the metropolitan or other country.

Upon receipt of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee the General Assembly adopted the resolution to which I have referred and a copy of which is enclosed.

The reports on the West Indian Conference and the Fifteenth Meeting of the Commission have been most interesting, and I am pleased to hear that both came off so well. We are taking our first step to initiate follow-up work tomorrow by reporting to the representatives of various government Departments to whom we have already sent copies of the Recommendations.

With warm personal regards and best wishes for the Christmas season,

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin Gerig
Director, Office of
Dependent Area Affairs

Enclosure:

Copy of the resolution on Factors.