

September 18, 1953

My dear Mrs. Menon:

I have read with great interest your remarkable statement of August 31, 1953 before the United Nations Committee on Information from Non-self-governing Territories on the subject of Puerto Rico.

The people of Puerto Rico, without distinction of parties and political creeds, are deeply grateful to the Indian delegation and to you personally for your expressions of friendly regard, as <sup>well as</sup> for your intense and sincere effort to understand the nature of our political evolution.

It is gratifying to note that in your sober analysis you are well aware of the fact that our new relationship with the United States arises out of the voluntary effort of the people of Puerto Rico and that in the elections of 1948, the people chose between three different alternatives in a free and democratic manner. It is this element of self-determination, of the democratic will of the people freely expressed and freely asserted, which underlies the whole concept and structure of our Commonwealth and has released our energies for the basic undertaking of assuring to every one of our citizens the protection of their human rights and the conditions most favorable to their cultural self-expression and fulfillment.

In asking the United States to notify the United Nations that Puerto Rico had ceased to be a non-self governing territory, the Commonwealth Government was animated with the desire to explain to other friendly nations throughout the world the nature of the political status which the overwhelming majority the people of Puerto Rico chose of their own free accord. As in the case of other areas which have emerged to the dignity of self-government, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico has been established in response to conditions and circumstances peculiarly our own. We have understood that self-determination does not merely mean the right to imitate and follow old and respected theories of political development, but also the right to create with bold imagination tempered with prudent realism new formulas of freedom in association, sorely needed, we think, in a world so torn by bitter ~~h~~ate and animosity.

It is with this spirit and purpose, that I should like to ~~clarify~~ <sup>dispel</sup> some of the doubts on the attainment of full self-government by Puerto Rico which you expressed at the last meeting of the Special Committee on Information.

In determining the degree of self-government achieved by Puerto Rico, you thought it best to apply the list of factors drawn up by the Ad Hoc Committee on Factors in its last meeting of July of this year. While it was evident to you that the new status of Puerto Rico satisfied most of the

factors enumerated by the Ad Hoc Committee, particularly with regard to the second and third type, there were certain aspects which arose some confusion in your mind and led you to the belief that "the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico does not fully satisfy any of the three categories of factors indicative of the attainment of self-government."

Before proceeding to clarify your doubts with regard to those particular aspects, I should beg to call your attention to the fact that the Ad Hoc Committee has generally agreed that no enumeration of factors can do more than serve as a guide in determining whether a territory is or is not self-governing. Each specific case will need to be determined by the particular circumstances of that case. Paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 567 (VI) of the General Assembly underlined this principle by stressing that such a list of factors "cannot be regarded as exhaustive or definitive, and that a single factor or particular combination of factors cannot be regarded as decisive in every case. Whether the people of a territory should be regarded as having reached a stage of self-government where there is no longer any obligation to transmit information should be solved in the light of the conditions enumerated under either of the two headings, taking into account the circumstances of each particular case, which will need to be studied separately."

In further emphasizing this regard for avoiding a too strict application of any set of factors, the Fourth Committee declared

in its resolution adopted on 18 November 1953 "that the factors, while serving as a guide in determining whether the obligations as set forth in Article 73 (e) of the Charter still exist, should in no way be interpreted as a hindrance to the attainment of a full measure of self-government by the Non-Self-Governing Territories."

I wonder, therefore, whether in your praiseworthy interest of making a detailed and objective analysis of our status, you have not applied, perhaps, too strictly the set of factors, without fully considering the Assembly's concern for the peculiarities of each case and its reiterated conviction that no combination of factors can be regarded as decisive.

While in all respect to your views I may think there is some disagreement between your criteria and those of the General Assembly