

Puerto Rico 'Freeing' Urged

New York Times News Service

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., — A U.N. committee has approved a resolution recognizing the "inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence."

The resolution, approved by the U.N. Special Committee on Colonialism 12 to 0 with 10 abstentions, fell short of demands by Cuba, backed by China and the Soviet Union, that the committee classify Puerto Rico as a colony of the United States. It is nonbinding.

(In Washington, the State Department called the committee's discussion and vote "interference in the internal affairs of the United States and Puerto Rico" and an "insult to the people of Puerto Rico.")

("We wish to make it absolutely clear that there has not been any change in the U.S. position, that the General Assembly settled this question



—UPI

RICARDO QUESADA

in 1953 and confirmed its position last year," the department said.)

Several of the abstaining delegates also noted that the General Assembly last year

opposed a similar move. They urged the 22-member committee not to upset this decision.

Cuba Hails Action

Ricardo Alarcon Quesada, the Cuban, chief delegate, however, hailed the decision as a victory and the vote was greeted by cheers and applause from the public gallery where members of the Puerto Rican independence movement were seated reportedly with guest tickets from the Cubans.

The United States and Britain withdrew from the committee's membership in January 1971. The United States complained at the time that the committee's resolutions were one-sided and rammed through by Soviet, Asian and African members, who constitute the majority of the committee.

A U.S. spokesman after the meeting said that the resolution which emerged was con-

siderably weaker than Cuba had wanted and meant that Puerto Rico would not be listed as a colony under the committee's jurisdiction.

Forum Held Key

Such a listing would have permitted the committee to call petitioners in open session and would have provided them with a forum to push their demands for independence.

The resolution, while introduced by Iraq, was primarily pushed by Cuba. It called for a special working group of the committee to report next year on how to deal with the issue. The committee claimed it was acting under the colonialization declaration adopted by the General Assembly in 1960.

Puerto Rico, as a commonwealth associated with the United States governs itself under its own constitution. In a 1967 referendum, 60 percent of the islands voters expressed a preference for continuing the U.S. relationship.