Mr. Chairman:

The United States delegation has a short statement which we are privileged to make concerning the relationship of the U.S. to the work of this Committee.

Since the last annual session of this Committee, Congress has voted to admit Alaska and Hawaii as the 49th and 50th States of our Union.

Accordingly, as requested by General Assembly Resolution 222, the U.S. Government will shortly inform the Secretary General that it is ceasing to transmit the statistical and other information on Alaska, which it has done under Article 73 of the Charter, while the new state was still a dependent territory.

It will do the same with respect to Hawaii after it has formally assumed the responsibilities of statehood.

Until January of this year these two Territories contained almost all of the dependent populations under United States sovereignty.

Thus, although the United States interest in the work of this Committee remains undiminished, its role as a member which contributes information on the affairs of Non-Self-Governing Territories will be reduced almost to the vanishing point.

The application of Alaska for membership in the Union was accepted by an Act of Congress last June, 1958.

Similar applications from the people of Alaska had been presented to each of the preceding seven Congresses of the United States.

Under the terms of this legislation, Alaskans were required to reconfirm in a popular referendum their desire to join the Union.

This they did last August, 1958 by a vote of better than 80% in favor.

And, in due course, Hawaii will also have a popular referendum on the subject.

Accordingly, on January 3 of this year when the 86th Congress of the
United States went into session it included two United States Senators and a Member of the House of Representatives from Alaska.

A few weeks ago Congressional action, similar to that taken on behalf of Alaska, was taken for Hawaii.

As a result, Hawaii will become the 50th State of the Union.

Hawaii, as this Committee is aware, is populated by American citizens whose forebears have come from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Polynesia, Micronesia, as well as the mainland of the U.S.

This has enabled it over the years to become a laboratory which has won world-wide recognition for its success in developing harmonious democratic race relations.

Alaska, too, is inhabited by a multi-racial population composed of Eskimos, Indians and peoples of European descent.

As a consequence, both Hawaii and Alaska represent a particularly fitting and welcome addition to the U.S., which derives its basic strength from its population of freely associated groups of people which come from many different racial and national backgrounds.

U.S. Fraternal Ties with Asia and Africa

With the addition of Hawaii to the Union, a majority of whose people are of Asian origin, the population of the U.S., which already includes more citizens of African ancestry than any country in the world except Nigeria, will henceforth have direct fraternal bonds with the peoples of both the great continents of Asia and Africa.

Although it is true that there still remain a few limited areas in the United States, as well as some in Asia and particularly in Africa, where varying degrees of racial and social discrimination survive, it is hoped that the racially democratic society of Hawaii and Alaska will be a fresh reminder that the U.S., as Abraham Lincoln once described it, is "a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

The Civil War which ended slavery in the United States and the constitutional history of our country since that time have made it clear that representative American thinking contains no room for any philosophy which supports race supremacy or race discrimination, either at home or abroad no matter where it may exist.

The traditional sympathies of the American people have long been squarely on the other side — on the side of those who rebel against inferior
status; who demand recognition of the dignity and worth of the human person.

In this post-war era, no society can truly flourish or happily exist, in North America or on any other continent, unless it is based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and on the observance of fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex or religion as laid down in the Charter.

The U.S. delegation considers the entry of Alaska and Hawaii into the Union as a fitting occasion to emphasize that these new States are working examples of these principles which are reflected in both the Constitution of the U.S. and the Charter of the U.N.

The attainment of statehood by Alaska and Hawaii come 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 in the few non-fully self-governing territories of the United States have left behind them forever their status as politically dependent peoples.

Few Remaining U.S. Dependencies

This leaves only three small, but none the less important, dependent island groups under United States sovereignty.

These are Guam, American Samoa, and the Virgin Islands, with a total estimated population of less than 20,000 families.

None of these islands is large enough or strong enough to fit any accepted definition of sovereign nationhood, although all of them have for some time been moving toward full self-government.

There are also a number of similar small insular territories of other nations which are scattered throughout the world whose peoples have already attained a considerable degree of self-government.

The ultimate status of all these islands is a problem which the respective administering authorities are undoubtedly studying with a view to seeing
what new types of constitutional arrangement will be suitable to meet their own requirements, as well as the requirements of Chapter XI of the Charter.

Mr. Chairman, we have made these observations at this time in order to keep the position of the U.S. in this Committee in its proper perspective.

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United States Mission to the United Nations
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Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Department of State
Office of Information