

and constructive disarmament negotiations. We hope for positive and tangible response from the Soviet Government when the Disarmament Commission resumes its work.

The resolution as adopted by the Political Committee does not in any way preclude the submission by the Soviet Government in the Disarmament Commission of any proposals the Soviet Government, or any other member for that matter, desires to put forward. For our part, we pledge ourselves to continue to work constructively for a genuinely safeguarded system of disarmament and at the same time to give sympathetic and honest consideration to any concrete and practical proposals which the Soviet Government may make toward this end.

Text of Resolution

U.N. doc. A/L. 149
Adopted April 8, 1953

The General Assembly,
RECOGNIZING that

Under the Charter of the United Nations all States are bound to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use

of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

The aim of a system of world-wide disarmament is to prevent war and release the world's human and economic resources for the purposes of peace,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Disarmament Commission [and commends the Commission for its efforts to carry out the instructions laid down by the General Assembly at its sixth regular session];²

2. *Reaffirms* General Assembly resolution 502 (VI) and requests the Disarmament Commission to continue its work for the development by the United Nations of comprehensive and co-ordinated plans providing for:

(a) the regulation, limitation and balanced reduction of all armed forces and armaments;

(b) the elimination and prohibition of all major weapons, including bacteriological, adaptable to mass destruction;

(c) the effective international control of atomic energy to ensure the prohibition of atomic weapons and the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes only.

The whole programme to be carried out under effective international control in such a way that no State would have cause to fear that its security was endangered;

3. *Requests* the Commission to report to the General Assembly and to the Security Council no later than 1 September 1953, and hopes that all the members of the Commission will co-operate in efforts to produce constructive proposals likely to facilitate its task.

²The clause in brackets was deleted from the Committee I text of the resolution, on a Soviet motion.

Puerto Rico's New Self-governing Status

U.S./U.N. press release dated March 21

Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., U.S. representative to the United Nations, announced on March 23 the transmittal to Secretary-General Trygve Lie of the new Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and other documents pertaining to the Commonwealth's new self-governing status. Following is the transmittal letter:

I have the honor to refer to the U.S. representative's note UN-1727/89 dated January 19, 1953,¹ notifying you that as a result of the entry into force on July 25, 1952, of the new Constitution establishing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Government has decided to cease to transmit information on Puerto Rico under article 73 (e) of the Charter.

The attainment by the people of Puerto Rico of their new Commonwealth status is a most significant step. This is the kind of progress to self-government contemplated by the U.N. Charter. This is the democratic pattern of the free world—of goals set and hopes realized. The people of

Puerto Rico expressed their view by resolution at their Constitutional Convention in the following words:

Thus we attain the goal of complete self-government, the last vestiges of colonialism having disappeared in the principle of Compact, and we enter into an era of new developments in democratic civilization.

I invite your attention in particular to the enclosed letter of Governor Muñoz Marin of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in which, after requesting the termination of the transmittal of information under article 73 (e) with respect to Puerto Rico, and after recounting the development of the Island's political progress, he says:

The people of Puerto Rico are firm supporters of the United Nations and this great organization may confidently rely upon us for a continuation of that good will.

Let me add that the people of Puerto Rico at this moment are proudly cooperating to the utmost in the U.N. effort to repel aggression in Korea. The men of Puerto Rico who are bearing the hardships of battle with other U.N. troops have, by their courage and determination, demonstrated their strong love for freedom.

¹ BULLETIN of Feb. 9, 1953, p. 229.

There are enclosed for the information of the members of the United Nations the following documents in compliance with the terms of Resolution 222 (III) of the General Assembly:

(1) Text of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.²

(2) *Memorandum by the Government of the United States of America Concerning the Cessation of Transmission of Information Under Article 73 (e) of the Charter With Regard to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,*

(3) Copy of the letter dated January 17, 1953, from the Governor of Puerto Rico to the President of the United States.

MEMORANDUM BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CONCERNING THE CESSATION OF TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION UNDER ARTICLE 73 (e) OF THE CHARTER WITH REGARD TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

Introduction

1. The United States Government, in pursuance of Article 73 (e) of the Charter of the United Nations, has, in accordance with Resolution 66 (I) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 14, 1946, transmitted annually to the Secretary General since 1946 information on Puerto Rico. During this period successive advances have been made in the growth and development of self-governing institutions in Puerto Rico and in the vesting of powers of government in the Puerto Rican people and their elected representatives. This process has reached its culmination with the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the promulgation of the Constitution of this Commonwealth on July 25, 1952.

2. With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the people of Puerto Rico have attained a full measure of self-government. Accordingly, the Government of the United States has decided that it is no longer appropriate for it to submit information on Puerto Rico pursuant to Article 73 (e) of the Charter.

3. Resolution 222 (III), adopted by the General Assembly on November 3, 1948, states that, having regard to the provisions of Chapter XI of the Charter, it is essential that the United Nations be informed of any change in the constitutional position and status of any non-self-governing territory as a result of which the responsible government concerned thinks it unnecessary to transmit information in respect of that territory under Article 73 (e) of the Charter. The Members of the United Nations concerned are requested by this resolution to communicate to the Secretary General, within a maximum period of six months, such information as may be appropriate, including the constitution, legislative act or executive order providing for the government of the territory and the constitutional relationship of the territory to the government of the metropolitan country.

4. As a result of the change in the constitutional position and status of Puerto Rico as described in this memorandum, the Government of the United States considers it unnecessary to transmit further information under Article 73 (e) of the Charter concerning the Common-

wealth of Puerto Rico. The United States Government desires that the United Nations be fully informed of the background of this decision. Accordingly, and in pursuance of Resolution 222 (III), this memorandum has been prepared and, together with a copy of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and a letter from the Governor of Puerto Rico is transmitted to the Secretary General for circulation to the Members of the United Nations for their information.

Constitutional Development of Puerto Rico Under United States Administration

5. Puerto Rico has been administered by the United States since 1898 when Spain ceded its sovereignty to the island under terms of the Treaty of Paris. Puerto Rico had a military government until 1900 when the United States Congress enacted the first organic law providing for a civil form of government. The establishment of the Commonwealth in July 1952 marks the culmination of a steady progression in the exercise of self-government initiated by the first organic law.

6. The first organic law, known as the Foraker Act, provided for a Governor appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States, a legislative assembly in which the lower house was elected but the upper house was composed of the heads of executive departments of the government and five other persons, all appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate; and a supreme court, the members of which were also appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, justices of the lower courts being appointed by the Governor with advice and consent of the upper house of the legislature. The act provided for Puerto Rico's representation before all departments of the Federal Government by a popularly elected Resident Commissioner. The Resident Commissioner has a seat in the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States.

7. In 1917, the scope of self-government was increased with enactment by the Congress of a second organic law known as the Jones Act. Under it, the people of Puerto Rico elected both houses of their legislature, and the popularly elected upper house advised and consented to the Governor's appointment of justices of the lower courts. The President retained authority to appoint the Governor, the justices of the supreme court, the heads of the departments of justice and education, and the auditor, but all other heads of executive departments were appointed by the Governor. The people of Puerto Rico became citizens of the United States. The protection of a bill of rights patterned on the bill of rights of the United States Constitution was extended to Puerto Rico. Provision for representation before the various departments of the Federal Government remained. The legislature could repass a bill over the Governor's veto, but if the Governor did not then approve it, it did not become law unless it received the approval of the President.

8. In 1946, the President appointed as Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, a Puerto Rican who had formerly been Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico. This was the first time that a Puerto Rican had been appointed Governor.

9. In 1947, the Congress authorized the people of Puerto Rico to elect their Governor, beginning with the general election in 1948, and provided a line of succession in the event of a vacancy in the position of Governor or of the Governor's temporary absence or disability. The elected Governor was authorized to appoint all the members of his cabinet, the heads of the executive departments, including the attorney general and commissioner of education. No change was made at that time in the provisions respecting appointment of the auditor and justices of the supreme court.

² H. doc. 435, 82d Cong., 2d sess.

Development and Adoption of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

10. In 1948, the candidates for Governor and Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico, who were elected by very substantial majorities, ran on a platform calling for the adoption by the people of Puerto Rico of a constitution of their own drafting, within the framework of a continuing relationship with the United States to which the people of Puerto Rico would consent. In that election, the candidates who advocated statehood for Puerto Rico and independence for Puerto Rico were defeated. An overwhelming number of candidates for the legislature who ran on the same program as the successful candidates for Governor and Resident Commissioner were also elected. In accordance with the expressed wishes of the people of Puerto Rico, there was introduced in the Congress a bill to provide for the organization of a constitutional government by the people of Puerto Rico. It was enacted on July 3, 1950 as Public Law 600, 81st Cong. (64 Stat-319).

11. That law expressly recognized the principle of government by consent, and declaring that it was "adopted in the nature of a compact", required that it be submitted to the voters of Puerto Rico in an island-wide referendum for acceptance or rejection. If the act were approved by a majority of participating voters, the Legislature of Puerto Rico was authorized to call a constitutional convention to formulate a constitution, which would become effective upon its adoption by the people if approved by the Congress after a finding by the President that it conformed with the applicable provisions of the act and of the Constitution of the United States. Those provisions of the Organic Act which related to matters of local government would thereupon be repealed, while the remaining provisions of the Organic Act, relating to such matters as Puerto Rico's economic relationship to the United States, the force and effect of applicable Federal laws, and continued representation in Washington, would thenceforth be known as the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act. The Congress made only two stipulations with respect to the content of the constitution to be adopted; that it provide a republican form of government and that it include a bill of rights.

12. Four political parties participated in the campaign preceding the referendum: two advocated approval of Public Law 600, 81st Congress, one opposed it, and one was divided in its position. On June 4, 1951, 506,185 persons, 65.08 percent of the 777,675 qualified voters of Puerto Rico, participated in the referendum, and 76.5 percent of those voting approved the act. On August 27, 1951, ninety-two delegates were elected to a constitutional convention, representing the Popular Democratic, the Statehood and the Socialist parties. The convention met in September 1951, and concluded its painstaking work in February 1952. An official English and an official Spanish version of the constitution were adopted, and the text was published in the four daily newspapers of Puerto Rico in both languages. Copies of the document were distributed throughout the Island.

13. On March 3, 1952, the constitution was submitted for adoption or rejection. Of the 783,610 qualified voters, 456,471 participated in the referendum. Of these, 373,594 or 81.84 percent of those voting supported adoption of the constitution; only 82,877 or 18.16 percent of those voting disapproved it. All of the elections and referenda held in Puerto Rico in connection with the development of the constitution were on the basis of universal adult suffrage without property or literacy requirements. Puerto Rico has had universal adult suffrage since 1929. There have been no property requirements since 1906 and the last literacy requirements were removed in 1935.

14. On April 22, 1952, the President transmitted the Constitution to the Congress with his recommendation for approval, and by Public Law 447, 82nd Cong. (66 Stat. 327), signed by the President on July 3, 1952, the Congress approved the Constitution subject to certain

conditions which were to be submitted for approval to the Puerto Rican Constitutional Convention. Public Law 447, in its preambular provisions, recalled that the Act of July 3, 1950 "was adopted by the Congress as a compact with the people of Puerto Rico, to become operative upon its approval by the people of Puerto Rico"; that the people of Puerto Rico had overwhelmingly approved this Act and that the Constitution of Puerto Rico had been drafted by a Constitutional Convention; that the Constitution was adopted by the people of Puerto Rico in a referendum; that the President of the United States had declared that the Constitution conformed fully with the applicable provisions of the Act of July 3, 1950 and the Constitution of the United States, that it contained a Bill of Rights, and provided for a republican form of government; and that the Congress of the United States had considered the Constitution and found that it conformed with the stipulated requirements. The operative part of Public Law 447 recorded the approval by the Congress of the United States of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico subject to certain conditions, among which was that the following new sentence be added to Article VII: "Any amendment or revision of this Constitution shall be consistent with the resolution enacted by the Congress of the United States approving this Constitution, with the applicable provisions of the Constitution of the United States, with the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, and with Public Law 600, 81st Cong., adopted in the nature of a compact." The Puerto Rican Constitutional Convention considered and approved these conditions. On July 25, 1952, the Governor of Puerto Rico proclaimed the establishment of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico under its Constitution.

Principal Features of the Constitution of the Commonwealth

15. The Constitution of the Commonwealth, as it became effective with the approval of the Congress, provides that "Its political power emanates from the people and shall be exercised in accordance with their will, within the terms of the compact agreed upon between the people of Puerto Rico and the United States of America" (Art. I, Section 1). The Constitution of the Commonwealth is similar to that of a State of the Federal Union. It establishes a tri-partite form of government, with a popularly elected Governor, a popularly elected bi-cameral legislature and a judicial branch. The heads of all executive departments are appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Puerto Rican Senate; appointment of the Secretary of State also requires the consent of the House of Representatives. It should be noted that with the establishment of the Commonwealth neither the President nor the United States Senate participates in any way in the appointment of any official of the government of the Commonwealth.

16. The Legislative Assembly, which is elected by free, universal and secret suffrage of the people of Puerto Rico, has full legislative authority in respect to local matters. The Commonwealth has the power to impose and collect taxes, and to contract debts. Acts of the Legislative Assembly become law upon approval of the Governor, or, in the event that an act is vetoed by the Governor, upon its reenactment by two-thirds of the total number of members of which each house is composed. The President may no longer prevent a bill re-passed over the Governor's veto from becoming law by disapproving it. The protection of a bill of rights is extended to persons in Puerto Rico. All public officials must take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth. Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by the Legislative Assembly, and will be voted on at a referendum, becoming effective if ratified by a majority of the electors voting thereon. The Constitution does not restrict the substance of future amendments, except to provide that

they shall be consistent with the act approving the Constitution, with the applicable provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, and with the act of Congress authorizing the drafting and adoption of a constitution.

17. The judiciary of the Commonwealth is independent under the Constitution. The justices of the Supreme Court are no longer appointed by the President but are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate of Puerto Rico. Justices hold office during good behavior and may be removed, after impeachment, for causes specified in the Constitution. The number of justices may be increased only by law at the request of the court itself. No judge may make a direct or indirect financial contribution to any political organization or party, or hold any elective office therein, or participate in any political campaign or be a candidate for elective office unless he has resigned his judicial office at least six months prior to his nomination. Although judgments of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico may be appealed to the United States Court of Appeals, decisions of the United States Supreme Court have established that the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico is the final authority on the meaning of a Puerto Rican law and that its decision interpreting such a law may not be reversed unless the interpretation is "inescapably wrong" and the decision "patently erroneous"; it is not sufficient to justify reversal that the Federal Court merely disagree with the Puerto Rican Supreme Court's interpretation. There continues to be a Federal District Court in Puerto Rico, but its jurisdiction does not differ from the jurisdiction of Federal District Courts functioning within the boundaries of States.

18. Under the Constitution, there is full and effective participation of the population of Puerto Rico in the Government of Puerto Rico. Article II, section 1, provides that no discrimination shall be made on account of race, color, sex, birth, social origin or condition, or political or religious ideas and requires the laws to embody these principles. Puerto Rico is divided by the Constitution into senatorial and representative districts for purposes of electing members of the Legislative Assembly, and provision is also made for election of senators and representatives elected at large. By a special procedure established by Article III of the Constitution, minority parties are assured of representation which recognizes their island-wide voting strength. Elections will be held every four years.

19. Article II, section 2, requires that the laws shall guarantee the expression of the will of the people by means of equal, direct, and secret universal suffrage and shall protect the citizen against any coercion in the exercise of the electoral franchise. Article VI, section 4, provides that every person over twenty-one years of age shall be entitled to vote if he fulfills the other conditions determined by law and prohibits depriving a person of the right to vote because he does not know how to read or write or does not own property.

Present Status of Puerto Rico

20. The people of Puerto Rico continue to be citizens of the United States as well as of Puerto Rico and the fundamental provisions of the Constitution of the United States continue to be applicable to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico will continue to be represented in Washington by a Resident Commissioner whose functions are not altered by the establishment of the Commonwealth. Matters of foreign relations and national defence will continue to be conducted by the United States, as is the case with the States of the Union.

21. At the request of the people of Puerto Rico and with the approval of the Government of the United States, Puerto Rico has voluntarily entered into the relationship with the United States which it has chosen to describe as a "commonwealth" relationship. The term "common-

wealth" was adopted by Puerto Rico as the official English designation of the body politic created by the Constitution (the official Spanish title is "estado libre asociado"), to define the status of that body as "a state which is free of superior authority in the management of its own local affairs but which is linked to the United States of America and hence is a part of its political system in a manner compatible with its Federal structure", and which "does not have an independent and separate existence" (Resolution No. 22 of the Constitutional Convention). By the various actions taken by the Congress and the people of Puerto Rico, Congress has agreed that Puerto Rico shall have, under that Constitution, freedom from control or interference by the Congress in respect of internal government and administration, subject only to compliance with applicable provisions of the Federal Constitution, the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act and the acts of Congress authorizing and approving the Constitution, as may be interpreted by judicial decision. Those laws which directed or authorized interference with matters of local government by the Federal Government have been repealed.

22. In Hawaii, Alaska, Guam and the Virgin Islands of the United States the chief executive is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, not popularly elected by the people; the executive officer immediately subordinate to the Governor is appointed by the President, either alone or with the advice and consent of the Senate, but not by the Governor; and judges of the highest courts exercising local jurisdiction are appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate, not by the Governor. This is so provided by their respective organic acts as enacted by the Congress. This is not the case with respect to Puerto Rico. The people of Puerto Rico will participate effectively in their government through universal, secret and equal suffrage, in free and periodic elections in which differing political parties offer candidates, and which are assured freedom from undemocratic practices by the Constitution itself. These elections will be conducted in the future, as they have been in the past, without interference by the United States. The people of Puerto Rico have complete autonomy in internal economic matters and in cultural and social affairs under a Constitution adopted by them and approved by the Congress.

23. Under the Puerto Rican Federal Relations Act, there will still be free trade with the United States, only United States coins and currency will be legal tender in Puerto Rico, and the statutory laws of the United States not locally inapplicable will, with some exceptions, have the same force and effect in Puerto Rico as in the United States. United States internal revenue laws do not apply in Puerto Rico, and the people of Puerto Rico will continue to be exempt from Federal income taxes on the income they derive from sources within Puerto Rico. The proceeds of United States excise taxes collected on articles produced in Puerto Rico and shipped to the United States and the proceeds of customs collected on foreign merchandise entering Puerto Rico are covered into the Treasury of Puerto Rico for appropriation and expenditure as the legislature of the Commonwealth may decide.

24. The final declaration of the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico (Resolution No. 23), expresses the views of the people of Puerto Rico as to the status they have now achieved.

"When this Constitution takes effect, the people of Puerto Rico shall thereupon be organized into a commonwealth established within the terms of the compact entered into by mutual consent, which is the basis of our union with the United States of America.

"Thus we attain the goal of complete self-government, the last vestiges of colonialism having disappeared in the principle of Compact, and we enter into an era of new developments in democratic civilization."

Conclusion

25. The United States Government, therefore, has decided that, with the entry into force on July 25, 1952, of the new constitutional arrangements establishing the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, it is no longer appropriate for the United States to continue to transmit information to the United Nations on Puerto Rico under Article 73 (e) of the Charter. This conclusion constitutes a recognition of the full measure of self-government which has been achieved by the people of Puerto Rico.

THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 17, 1953

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MY DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

On July 25, 1952, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico was formally installed in response to the wish of an overwhelming majority of the people of Puerto Rico pursuant to a compact between them and the Government of the United States. Puerto Rico became a Commonwealth in free and voluntary association with the United States, and its people have now attained a full measure of self-government. Accordingly, I respectfully suggest on behalf of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that the Government of the United States take steps to notify the United Nations of the status of Puerto Rico, that it is no longer a non-self-governing area, and that reports concerning it are no longer appropriate under Article 73 (e) of the Charter.

This development has climaxed fifty-four years of growth in mutual understanding and mutual good will. Democratic rights in Puerto Rico have been progressively recognized as self-government has increased. Since 1917, the people of Puerto Rico elected all members of their legislature which had comprehensive powers to enact laws for Puerto Rico. Since 1948, the people of Puerto Rico also elected their own governor, and all other officials of Puerto Rico were locally elected or appointed by elected officials except the Auditor of Puerto Rico and the Justices of the Supreme Court. Until the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico began to function, the latter officials were appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the United States Senate. The Congress of the United States, however, retained full jurisdiction to legislate with respect to Puerto Rico without the consent of its people, to override its laws, to change its form of government and to alter its relations to the United States.

These reservations have been to a large extent formal. In the entire fifty-four years history of United States administration of Puerto Rico, Congress did not in any instance exercise its power to annul or amend an Act of the Puerto Rico legislature, nor did it modify the relations of Puerto Rico to the United States except progressively to extend self-government to its people in response to their wishes. Even before 1948, the appointed Governor of Puerto Rico was a Puerto Rican whose selection was recommended by the majority political party of the island. After 1948, the appointed Auditor and Justices of the Supreme Court were Puerto Ricans, also appointed with the recommendation and approval of the majority party.

This political history has been accompanied by a mutually beneficial economic relationship. The people of Puerto Rico have received many services from the Government of the United States and have benefited by grants-in-aid. Puerto Ricans have not been subject to the payment of taxes and have been entirely free of imposts, duties or any form of exactions for the support of the Federal Government. At all times since the turn of the century we have enjoyed free trade with the United

States, and since 1917 we have had the benefit of common citizenship. Despite the fact that our population has grown from 953,000 inhabitants in 1900 to 2,219,000 in 1950, our standard of living has substantially increased. For example, the average per capita income in 1930 was \$122.00 as compared with \$319.00 in 1950.

The people of Puerto Rico have been keenly aware of our basic economic problems due to the density of population and the poverty of natural resources. We are proud of the progress that we have made and are continuing to make by the utilization of our own talents and our democratic institutions. This progress would have been impossible, however, if it had not been for the sympathetic cooperation of the United States, manifested in a wide variety of ways, material and political. We have been helped in building sounder social and educational bases for the exercise of our political rights and for our own economic advancement. Our joint efforts in combatting illiteracy and improving health conditions have produced remarkable results. In 1900 the literacy rate in Puerto Rico was 20 percent as compared to 78 percent in 1950; and in the same period the death rate has dropped from 25.3 per thousand to 10 per thousand.

Although the relationship was one of freedom and justice in practice, the people of Puerto Rico were not satisfied to remain in a status which appeared to reflect the imposition upon a people of the will of another community. We are proud of our culture and background, and we cherish our individual dignity and our common heritage. We profoundly believe that our government should be solidly based upon our own will and our own free choice. Accordingly, for some years, as our democratic institutions developed and became firmly established, the people considered and debated the matter of their status.

Specifically, the people of Puerto Rico discussed three choices: independence, statehood within the Federal Union, or association with the United States as a free Commonwealth. At no time did we consider that our choice was restricted, or that any alternative was foreclosed to us or could not be achieved by peaceful means; and it should be said that at no time did the United States attempt, directly or indirectly, to interfere with our choice. On the contrary, President Truman said in a message to the Congress as long ago as October 1945:

"It is the settled policy of this Government to promote the political, social, and economic development of people who have not yet attained full self-government and eventually to make it possible for them to determine their own form of government * * *. It is now time, in my opinion, to ascertain from the people of Puerto Rico their wishes as to the ultimate status which they prefer, and, within such limits as may be determined by the Congress, to grant to them the kind of government which they desire."

And in his message to the Congress in January 1946, he said,

"This Government is committed to the democratic principle that it is for the dependent peoples themselves to decide what their status shall be."

Each of the alternatives of independence, statehood, and association has been represented in Puerto Rico by a political party which favored it, and which actively campaigned for the support of the electorate and nominated candidates for the legislature and the governorship. In the 1948 elections the three alternatives were fully presented to the electorate by the three main political parties. The preference of the people, expressed in an election which was as democratic as any in the world, was unmistakably expressed in favor of the third alternative: a free Commonwealth associated with the United States on the basis of mutual consent. Their choice is aptly summed up in the Spanish name of the new body politic, "Estado Libre Asociado."

It was at the request of the officials of the Puerto Rican

government acting pursuant to the mandate of the people that the Congress of the United States initiated the series of actions which resulted in the creation of the Commonwealth. On July 3, 1950, the 81st Congress enacted Public Law 600. This was, in effect, an offer by the Congress to the people of Puerto Rico, which we might accept or reject, to enter into a compact defining the status of Puerto Rico and the relationships between the respective communities. The compact offered the people of Puerto Rico an opportunity to establish our own government and to remain in association with the United States on defined terms. It was the precise formula that the people, through their elected representatives, had requested.

According to its terms, Public Law 600 was submitted to the qualified voters of Puerto Rico in a referendum held on June 4, 1951 after months of intensive debate. The Law was accepted by the people of Puerto Rico by a vote of 387,016 to 119,169. Sixty-five percent of the eligible voters participated in the referendum. In this as in all elections in Puerto Rico, all citizens of at least 21 years of age, male or female, without property or literacy requirements, were entitled to vote.

After acceptance of Law 600, a Constitutional Convention was elected on August 27, 1951 in an election where all the qualified voters had the right to participate. The Convention met at San Juan on September 17, 1951 and proceeded to draft a Constitution. On February 6, 1952 it approved the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico which it had drafted, by a vote of 88 to 3. On March 3, 1952 the qualified voters of Puerto Rico again went to the polls to express approval or disapproval of the Constitution drafted by the Convention. The Constitution was ratified in this referendum by a vote of 373,594 in favor of approval and 82,877 against approval.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Compact, the Congress of the United States on July 3, 1952, approved the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.³ On July 11, 1952, the Constitutional Convention of Puerto Rico by resolution accepted amendments proposed by the Congress and took the final step in ratifying the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth was duly installed on July 25, 1952, and the flag of Puerto Rico was raised beside the flag of the United States.

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, therefore, represents the government that the people of Puerto Rico have freely adopted. It reflects our own decision as to the type of institutions and the kind of relationship to the United States which we desire. There can be no doubt that in the full sense of the term, in form as well as in fact, the people of Puerto Rico are now self-governing. We have chosen our institutions and relationship with the United States. We have determined the nature and distribution of the powers of government. We have created our own Constitution under which we established our own government, the nature of which is described in Article 1, Section 2 of the Constitution as follows:

"The government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico shall be republican in form and its legislative, judicial and executive branches as established by this Constitution shall be equally subordinate to the sovereignty of the people of Puerto Rico."

Under this Constitution, of course, all of our officials are either elected by the people or are appointed by officials whom we elect. The legislative power of the Commonwealth under the compact and the Constitution essentially parallels that of the state governments. The laws enacted by the Government of the Commonwealth pursuant to the compact cannot be repealed or modified by external authority, and their effect and validity are subject to adjudication by the courts. Our status and the

³ For President Truman's message to the Congress requesting approval of the Constitution, see BULLETIN of May 5, 1952, p. 721. For his statement on signing the joint resolution of approval, see *ibid.*, July 21, 1952, p. 91.

terms of our association with the United States cannot be changed without our full consent.

The people of Puerto Rico are firm supporters of the United Nations, and this great organization may confidently rely upon us for a continuation of that good will. The Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will be ready at all times to cooperate with the United States in seeking to advance the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Sincerely yours,

LUIS MUÑOZ MARIN
Governor
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

U. S. Delegations to International Conferences

U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America

The Department of State announced on April 9 (press release 179), that Merwin L. Bohan, U.S. representative on the Inter-American Economic and Social Council, had been designated acting U.S. representative for the fifth session of the U.N. Economic Commission for Latin America, which is to open on that date at the Hotel Quitandinha in Petropolis, Brazil.

The acting U.S. representative will be assisted by the following advisers:

- Robert E. Asher, Office of Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs, Department of State
- James C. Carliss, Office of Regional Inter-American Affairs, Department of State
- Edmund H. Kellogg, Office of U.N. Economic and Social Affairs, Department of State
- Fred Burton Smith, Office of the General Counsel, Department of the Treasury
- Mrs. Kathryn H. Wylie, agricultural economist, Latin American Division, Department of Agriculture
- George Wythe, Office of International Trade, Department of Commerce

At its forthcoming session, the Commission will make an extensive survey of the current economic situation in Latin America. Among the subjects which will be considered in this connection are: trends in production and the rate of development; inflationary tendencies; trends in exports and imports; price movements of export commodities; payments problems—in particular, changes in the pattern of payments with reference to Europe; and problems of intra-regional trade. Of the several important background documents which will be used by the Commission in its consideration of these subjects, one relates to the possibility of effecting multilateral compensation agreements between Latin American and European countries through the facilities of the European Payments Union; another is the Resolution of the U.N. General Assembly on "Financing of Economic Development through the establishment of fair and equitable international prices for primary commodities and through the execution of national programmes of integrated economic development."