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REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM
IN THE AGENDA OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

THE COLONIAL CASE OF PUERTO RICO

Letter dated 20 August 1971 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached copy of the document which was submitted to the Special Committee on decolonization on 28 February 1962 by the Movimiento Pro Independencia de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rican Pro-Independence Movement). This document is mentioned in the memorandum I sent you with my request for the inclusion of the item entitled "The colonial case of Puerto Rico" (A/8441, para. 26).

I would appreciate it if you would have this letter and the attached document circulated as an addendum to document A/8441.

(Signed) Ricardo ALARCON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba
to the United Nations

PUERTO RICAN PRO-INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

De Diego 156 Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico

28 February 1962

The Puerto Rican Pro-Independence Movement, a patriotic association of the Puerto Rican people struggling for the recognition of their sovereignty, most respectfully submits to the Special Committee the following statement and request:

I

1. Paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of December 1960 provides that "immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable them to enjoy complete independence and freedom".

2. Puerto Rico is a Latin American nation subjected to political, military and economic domination by the United States and, hence, has not attained independence.

3. In its resolution of November 1961, whereby the Special Committee was created, the General Assembly noted that "with a few exceptions, the provisions contained in the aforementioned paragraph of the Declaration have not been carried out".

4. In the case of Puerto Rico, the United States has in effect violated the United Nations mandate set forth in the aforementioned paragraph of resolution

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Implementation of the Declaration
on the Granting of Independence to
Colonial Countries and Peoples
United Nations
New York, New York

1514 (XV), since it has not taken, nor has it announced that it will take, any steps to transfer all powers to the Puerto Rican people, "without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire...". On the contrary, spokesmen for the United States Congress and its committee on territories have recently stated that they do not anticipate the passage of any legislation that might alter or reform the existing régime in Puerto Rico. The President of the United States has violated the promise he made to the United Nations in 1953 to take measures aimed at granting the Puerto Rican people more complete "or even absolute independence" whenever the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico made such a request.

II

5. In its resolution of November 1961, creating the Special Committee, the General Assembly noted that "contrary to the provisions of paragraph 4 of the Declaration, armed action and repressive measures continue to be taken in certain areas with increasing ruthlessness against dependent peoples, depriving them of their prerogative to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence".

6. In the case of Puerto Rico, the United States does in effect continue to resort to repressive measures, "with increasing ruthlessness", against the Puerto Rican people struggling for independence, using for that purpose all its repressive forces, both civil and military, in constant violation of the most fundamental civil rights of the followers of the Puerto Rican independence movement.

7. We hereby charge the Government of the United States with having violated and continuing to violate in Puerto Rico, the provisions of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

III

8. In its resolution of November 1961, whereby the Special Committee was created, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern "that, contrary to the provisions of paragraph 6 of the Declaration, acts aimed at the partial or total disruption of national unity and territorial integrity are still being carried out in certain countries in the process of decolonization".

9. In Puerto Rico the United States has indeed carried out acts, and continues to carry out acts aimed at disrupting the national unity and territorial integrity of the country. It has thus established absolute rule over a vast portion of the national territory, including almost the entire area of the adjacent islands of Vieques and Culebras (both of which are Puerto Rican municipalities) and has arbitrarily and unilaterally transformed our territory into a vast network of American military, air and naval bases, to the detriment of the territorial integrity of Puerto Rico.

10. The establishment by the United States of an enormous network of military, naval and air bases on Puerto Rican territory is a unique case because of the serious danger it represents. Puerto Rico is one of the most densely populated islands in the world (2,400,000 people live in an area of only 9,000 square kilometres). More than 10 bases, with great arsenals of nuclear weapons and guided missiles, occupy more than 10 per cent of the arable land of the country. In our case, the threat of total extermination of an innocent population in case of war is greater than anywhere else, for here the United States has concentrated its most important military installations in the Caribbean, an area of great international tension.

11. We hereby charge the Government of the United States with having carried out acts incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in clear violation of the provisions of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV).

IV

12. In its resolution of November 1961, creating the Special Committee, the General Assembly stated that "further delay in the application of the Declaration

is a continuing source of international conflict and disharmony, seriously impedes international co-operation, and is creating an increasingly dangerous situation in many parts of the world which may threaten international peace and security."

13. In the case of Puerto Rico, the fact that a Latin American people in the Caribbean - currently an area of great international tension - continues to be subjected to colonial domination by the United States and that, furthermore, the United States obstinately refuses to recognize the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence, while intensifying its repression against the patriotic forces that for over a century have kept alive the struggle for independence, constitutes a threat to peace in an area of great international tension, where it is of the utmost importance to avoid new problems which might aggravate the existing situation.

14. We submit that the urgent consideration by the Committee of the case of Puerto Rico is essential to the achievement of the fundamental purpose of preserving peace.

V

15. Paragraph 4 of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly in December 1961, whereby the Special Committee was created, requests the Special Committee to examine the application of the Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), to make suggestions and recommendations on the progress and extent of the implementation of the Declaration, and to report to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.

16. Paragraph 6 of the same resolution "authorizes the Special Committee to meet elsewhere than at United Nations Headquarters, whenever and wherever such meetings may be required for the effective discharge of its functions, in consultation with the appropriate authorities".

17. In order to verify the charges that we are hereby making against the Government of the United States of America, it would be necessary and useful for the Special Committee to meet in Puerto Rico and investigate on the spot the facts alleged herein.

VI

18. The Puerto Rican Pro-Independence Movement has drawn up a plan whereby the Government of the United States could transfer all powers to the Puerto Rican people, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire, without any distinction as to race, creed or colour, in order to enable the Puerto Rican people to enjoy complete independence and freedom.

19. We feel sure that none of the various sectors of public opinion in Puerto Rico could object to this plan, since it adheres strictly to the principle of self-determination. We therefore feel sure that, if given the opportunity to be heard by the Special Committee, we would help it begin its work with a concrete achievement of decisive and immeasurable value for the strengthening of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations.

ON THE BASIS OF THE ABOVE, we most respectfully request that the Special Committee:

1. Grant a hearing to the undersigned in order that we may explain in further detail the charges made hereby and that we may explain the concrete plan we will submit as a means of ensuring the implementation with regard to Puerto Rico of the provisions of paragraph 5 of resolution 1514 (XV).
2. Travel to Puerto Rico to investigate on the spot the facts hereby alleged and hold public hearings where the Puerto Rican people may express their opinions in this regard.
3. Request the Government of the United States of America to abstain, while these charges are under investigation, from taking any repressive measures whatsoever, through any of its agencies or instrumentalities, including those of the colonial Government of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, against the thousands of patriots who have confirmed their support of this statement with their signatures.

Done at San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 28 February 1962.

JUAN MARI BRAS
Secretary General

F. MANRIQUE CABRERA
Director General

G. VICENTE MAURA
Secretary for Foreign Relations