ARTICLE 10

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TEXT OF ARTICLE 10

The General Assembly may discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter, and, except as provided in Article 12, may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council or to both on any such questions or matters.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

1. No express reference to Article 10 was made in the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the period under review. In the debates in the General Assembly, Article 10 was usually invoked together with other Articles of the Charter which define either the powers and functions of the General Assembly in various areas of international concern or the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. Moreover, Article 10 was usually referred to in the General Assembly as an additional basis, rather than as the principal ground for action. In the majority of cases, the principal ground was found in the more explicit provisions of Articles 11, 12, 13 and 14. For this reason, most of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly on the reports of its political committees, as well as certain resolutions of a political character adopted without reference to a committee, are treated in the studies of the other Articles.
2. By reason of its comprehensive character and, particularly, by virtue of the provision that the General Assembly may discuss any question or any matter "within the scope of the present Charter", references to the competence of the General Assembly or to Article 10 occurred most often in the debates in reply to objections stemming from Article 2 (7), that the General Assembly was not competent to discuss a particular matter and to make recommendations concerning it, or to the contention that a particular question was a legal one, and the proper organ to deal with it was not the General Assembly but the International Court of Justice. The arguments and counter-arguments appeared to shed light on constitutional questions related to Article 2 (7) rather than on those related to Article 10, and they are dealt with in the study of Article 2 (7).

3. Resolutions of the General Assembly admitting a State to membership in the United Nations, as well as those containing recommendations to the Security Council with regard to the question of the admission of new Members, are treated in the study of Article 4. No effort is made in the present study to deal with proceedings in which arguments advanced in support of the competence of the General Assembly were similar to those which were presented during consideration of the same agenda items at previous sessions of the General Assembly and were treated in earlier volumes of the Repertory.

4. The remaining General Assembly resolutions bearing upon Article 10 are listed in the Annex, together with the corresponding agenda items, which are limited to those referred to the First Committee or to the Special Political Committee, and to items of a political character that were considered directly by the General Assembly. No constitutional significance attaches to the arrangement, which is merely a convenient means of presenting the material.

5. Section A of the Analytical Summary of Practice presents two case histories bearing upon the meaning of the term "within the scope of the present Charter". There was no discussion during the period under review touching upon the question of the scope of the recommendations of the General Assembly "relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter".

I. GENERAL SURVEY

6. According to the provisions of Article 10, the General Assembly may make recommendations to the Members of the United Nations or to the Security Council, or to both, on any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter.

7. The practice of the General Assembly in addressing the recommendations contained in the resolutions listed in the Annex is briefly summarized in the following paragraphs.

8. Recommendations were addressed by the General Assembly as follows: to all Member States; 1/ to Member States; 2/ to a specific Member State; 3/ to a specific Member State and the authorities of a specified State; 4/ to all Governments; 5/ to

1/ G A resolutions 1007 (ES-II), operative para. 2; 1248 (XIII), operative para. 3; 1301 (XIII), operative paras. 3 and 5.
2/ G A resolutions 1006 (ES-II), part II, operative para. 2; 1014 (XI), operative para. 1; 1301 (XIII), operative paras. 2 and 4; 1302 (XIII), operative para. 4.
3/ G A resolution 1006 (ES-II), part I, operative para. 1.
4/ G A resolution 1006 (ES-II), part I, operative paras. 2 and 3.
5/ G A resolution 1018 (XI), operative para. 8.
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Governments; 6/ to Governments and non-governmental organizations; 7/ to the Governments of Member States; 8/ to the Governments of the area; 9/ to the Governments of specific Member States; 10/ and to host Governments. 11/

9. The General Assembly also addressed recommendations to the Secretary-General; 12/ to the Secretary-General and specific subsidiary organs; 13/ to all organs and subsidiary bodies. 14/

10. In addition, recommendations were directed to specific subsidiary organs; 15/ to United Nations agencies, to international non-governmental and national scientific organizations, and to individual scientists; 16/ to private organizations and Governments; 17/ to the authorities of a specific Member State; 18/ to "the parties"; 19/ to "all concerned"; 20/ and to "all countries concerned". 21/

II. ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A. The question of the application of the term "within the scope of the Charter" in deciding whether a particular matter may be discussed

11. Discussions bearing upon constitutional aspects of the term "within the scope of the present Charter" took place during consideration of the following questions:

6/ G A resolutions 1191 (XII), operative para. 1; 1315 (XIII), operative para. 1.
7/ G A resolution 1129 (XI), operative para. 3.
8/ G A resolutions 1014 (XII), operative para. 2; 1212 (XII), operative para. 4.
9/ G A resolutions 1018 (XII), operative para. 3; 1191 (XII), operative para. 5.
10/ G A resolutions 1015 (XI), operative paras. 1, 2, 3 and 5; 1178 (XII), operative paras. 1-4; 1302 (XIII), operative paras. 1, 2, 3 and 5.
11/ G A resolutions 1018 (XI), operative para. 2; 1191 (XII), paras. 4; 1315 (XIII), operative para. 5.
12/ G A resolutions 1006 (ES-II), part II, operative para. 1; 1007 (ES-II), operative para. 3; 1191 (XII), operative para. 2; 1212 (XII), operative para. 3; 1347 (XIII), operative para. 7; 1315 (XIII), operative para. 2; 1348 (XIII), operative para. 2; 1344 (XIII), operative para. 5.
13/ G A resolutions 1129 (Xi), operative paras. 2 and 4; 1344 (XIII), operative para. 4.
14/ G A resolution 1272 (XIII), operative para. 3.
15/ G A resolutions 1018 (XI), operative paras. 1, 4, 5, 7 and 12; 1115 (XI), operative paras. 1 and 2; 1191 (XII), operative paras. 3, 6 and 8; 1147 (XII), operative para. 2; 1347 (XIII), operative paras. 1, 4 and 5; 1315 (XIII), operative paras. 3, 4 and 6-8. In this connexion, the General Assembly also addressed its requests to "The Director of the Agency" (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)), and expressed its thanks to "Mr. Henry R. Labouisse, Director of the Agency".
16/ G A resolution 1347 (XIII), operative para. 2.
17/ G A resolution 1018 (XII), operative para. 6.
18/ G A resolution 1006 (ES-II), part I, operative paras. 2 and 3.
19/ G A resolution 1272 (XIII).
20/ G A resolutions 1147 (XII), operative para. 1; 1347 (XIII), operative paras. 3 and 6.
21/ G A resolution 1007 (ES-II), operative para. 4.
(a) treatment of people of Indian origin in the Union of South Africa; 22/ (b) the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa; 23/ (c) the question of Algeria; 24/ and (d) the question of West Irian (West New Guinea). 25/

12. Discussions in connexion with the first and third of these questions followed the general lines of the debates which had taken place during consideration of the items at previous sessions of the General Assembly. During consideration of the first question, it was maintained in reply to an objection to the competence of the General Assembly, based on Article 2 (7), that if viewed as a dispute between states, the question came under the provision empowering the General Assembly to recommend measures for peaceful settlement; if viewed as a violation of human rights, it also came under the Charter. 26/

13. In connexion with "the question of Algeria", references to Article 10 were again made mainly in reply to objections concerning the competence of the General Assembly, based on Article 2 (7); some of these references were linked to Articles 1, 11, 14, 34, 35 and 73. 27/ The discussion in connexion with the agenda items, "the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa" and "the question of West Irian (West New Guinea)" is summarized below.
1. The question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa

14. When the agenda item, "the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa" was considered at the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the General Assembly, references were made to Article 10 in reply to the objection based on Article 2 (7) that the General Assembly was not competent to consider the question. The opinions were generally similar to those expressed in the consideration of the item at the ninth and tenth sessions of the General Assembly. 28/

15. In the course of the consideration of the item in the Special Political Committee, it was stated that the apartheid policy followed by the Government of the Union of South Africa was likely to prejudice friendly relations between nations, and the discussion was therefore within the competence of the United Nations. It was stated further that the discriminatory laws applied by the Union Government constituted a violation of the provisions of Articles 1 (3), 55 and 56 of the Charter. Under Articles 10, 11, 13 and 14 of the Charter, the General Assembly was competent to discuss any matters within the scope of the Charter and to make recommendations on such matters. The claim that under Article 2 (7) of the Charter, the United Nations was not competent to discuss certain questions could not be invoked for the purpose of avoiding discussion of violations of the Charter.

16. Some representatives maintained that the competence of the General Assembly to discuss cases of the violation of human rights was supported by several precedents and was in keeping with the spirit of the Charter. In their view the United Nations had not only the right, but also the duty, to consider such cases of violation to ensure respect for fundamental freedom for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. In this connexion it was recalled that under Article 2 (2) of the Charter, all Members undertook to fulfil in good faith obligations assumed by them, including respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

17. One representative, while acknowledging the competence of the General Assembly to discuss the question of racial conflict in the Union of South Africa, expressed doubts concerning the precise limits of that competence. In his view it was desirable that the International Court of Justice should be asked to give an advisory opinion on the matter. 29/

29/ For texts of relevant statements, see G A (XI), Spec. Pol. Com., 13th mtg.: Ethiopia, para. 21; Uruguay, para. 28; 14th mtg.: Peru, para. 16; 15th mtg.: Ethiopia, para. 29; 16th mtg.: Chile, para. 35; G A (XII), Spec. Pol. Com., 52nd mtg.: Haiti, para. 7; 53rd mtg.: Brazil, para. 6; Syria, para. 1; Tunisia, para. 33; New Zealand, para. 37; 54th mtg.: Bulgaria, para. 52; Burma, para. 33; Costa Rica, para. 3; Greece, para. 28; Ireland, paras. 7-9; 55th mtg.: Byelorussian SSR, paras. 25 and 27; Ecuador, para. 15; Peru, para. 16; Sweden, para. 2; 56th mtg.: Guatemala, paras. 33 and 34; Uruguay, paras. 3 and 4; United States, paras. 10 and 11; 57th mtg.: Mexico, para. 38; G A (XIII), Spec. Pol. Com., 87th mtg.: India, paras. 7 and 8; 89th mtg.: China, paras. 2 and 3; 91st mtg.: Japan, para. 10; Uruguay, paras. 1 and 2; 94th mtg.: Lebanon, para. 25; Peru, para. 26.
2. The question of West Irian (West New Guinea)

18. During consideration of the item, "the question of West Irian (West New Guinea)" at the eleventh session of the General Assembly, a draft resolution 30/ was submitted by Bolivia, Burma, Ceylon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Yugoslavia, which would request the President of the General Assembly to appoint a good offices commission to assist in negotiations between the Governments of Indonesia and the Netherlands to achieve a just and peaceful solution of the question in conformity with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter. In this connexion references were made to Article 10 in reply to an objection based on Article 2 (7) that the General Assembly was not competent to consider the question.

19. The view was expressed that Articles 10 and 14 of the Charter left no doubt of the competence of the General Assembly to discuss the matter. The question of Netherlands New Guinea, it was asserted, could adversely affect and impair both the general welfare and the friendly relations among nations. Notwithstanding the reliance of certain Members on Article 2 (7) of the Charter, a dispute such as the one between Indonesia and the Netherlands could not be considered as a matter essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of the Netherlands.

20. The competence of the General Assembly was contested on the ground that the question submitted was a claim to territory which affected the right of the Netherlands to exercise sovereignty over Netherlands New Guinea and was precluded by Article 2 from being dealt with by the General Assembly. Supporting the argument that the General Assembly was not competent to deal with the question, one representative held that the representatives who invoked Article 35 of the Charter brushed aside Article 2 (7), which was applicable despite Article 35 and, consequently, despite Articles 10 and 14, to which reference had also been made. The matter was not a dispute envisaged by the Charter but an effort towards territorial annexation.

21. Some representatives thought that the issue between the Netherlands and Indonesia was a legal one, to be dealt with by the International Court of Justice, the proper organ for such a case.

22. Other representatives, who maintained that a legal controversy did not necessarily have to be settled in a court but could be settled by negotiations, nevertheless doubted whether the United Nations had the right to recommend to the parties that they should settle a legal controversy, not by judicial means, but by negotiation. Inasmuch as the party submitting the matter to the United Nations had refused to settle it by judicial means, to impose the method of negotiation on the parties meant to accept the principle that the United Nations could impose the duty of negotiating on one party to a dispute because the other had refused to accept normal legal procedure.

23. Some representatives contended, on the other hand, that the competence of the General Assembly was beyond doubt, and it was the duty of the General Assembly to try to find some way of resolving the question.

Decision

At its 664th plenary meeting, on 28 February 1957, the General Assembly failed to adopt the draft resolution which the First Committee had submitted to it.

24. The question of the competence of the General Assembly in connexion with Netherlands New Guinea arose again at the twelfth session of the General Assembly. During the debate, the following nineteen-Power joint draft resolution 31/ was submitted:

"The General Assembly,

"Having considered the question of West Irian (West New Guinea),

"Viewing with deep concern that the prolongation of this political dispute is likely to endanger the peaceful development of that area,

"Realizing that a peaceful solution of this problem should be obtained without further delay,

"1. Invites both parties to pursue their endeavours to find a solution of the dispute in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter;

"2. Requests the Secretary-General to assist the parties concerned as he deems it appropriate in the implementation of this resolution and to submit a report of progress to the General Assembly at its thirteenth session."

25. Some representatives considered that under Article 2 (7) of the Charter, the General Assembly was not competent to discuss the question. Others were of the opinion that whatever the nature or political importance of the dispute might be, it was based on a legal problem, and the appropriate body to solve it was not the General Assembly, but the International Court of Justice.

26. Some representatives contended that the question was extremely complex and that the General Assembly was not competent to deal with all its aspects. In their view, the claim by Indonesia of sovereignty over Netherlands New Guinea raised a purely legal question which the General Assembly was not competent to decide; whereas the demand of Indonesia for a resumption of negotiations on the future status of the Territory was a political question falling within the competence of the General Assembly. In this connexion it was stated that if the case of Indonesia was that the Netherlands was unlawfully occupying part of Indonesian territory, the General Assembly would have to refuse to deal with it; a judicial decision was required and, as stated in Article 92 of the Charter, the International Court of Justice was the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. On the other hand, if the case of Indonesia was that it would be expedient for the two countries to try to work out an agreed status for Netherlands New Guinea, the General Assembly could facilitate the promotion of a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Some representatives contended that such negotiations were possible only on condition that Indonesia should relinquish its claim to sovereignty over Netherlands New Guinea and declare itself willing to accept an outcome of the negotiations other than transfer of the Territory to Indonesia.

27. Those who upheld the competence of the General Assembly in the matter maintained that though the General Assembly was not in a position to dictate a course of action

31/ G A (A II), Annexes, a i. 62, p. 2, A/C.1/L.193. The draft resolution was submitted by Afghanistan, Bolivia, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen.
to the parties, it was nevertheless under a duty to try to promote a peaceful settlement. They contended that the General Assembly should avoid the danger of attributing primary importance to the judicial elements of the problem. In their opinion, the suggestion that the question should be referred to the International Court of Justice was unacceptable because the problem of the independence of peoples, their sovereignty and their right to self-determination could not be settled in the courts. They thought that the question of Netherlands New Guinea constituted such a problem, since the Territory was part of Indonesia. They contended that the question should remain before the General Assembly until an agreement should have been reached.

28. In opposition to the draft resolution, it was contended that operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution was incompatible with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, which did not permit the General Assembly, as distinct from the Security Council, to impose any particular procedural measure on any party against its will; this included mediation or, as it was called in the draft resolution, assistance. This paragraph of the draft resolution was therefore not only unacceptable, but definitely ultra vires for the General Assembly. Operative paragraph 1 was also considered objectionable, on the ground that the dispute concerning the future status of Netherlands New Guinea, which was mentioned in the draft resolution and which the sponsors wished the parties to solve, was not a dispute concerning which negotiations had been provided for in the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty, 32/ but rather one which had arisen as a result of the contention of Indonesia that under the terms of the 1949 charter, sovereignty over Netherlands New Guinea had been transferred to Indonesia. This dispute concerned a purely legal question which must be decided before there could be any question of negotiations.

29. One of the co-sponsors of the draft resolution, referring to Article 2 (3) of the Charter of the United Nations and article 2 (f) of the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty, maintained that it was reasonable for operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution to invite the parties to settle their dispute in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter. He also considered that with the assistance of the Secretary-General, the parties might well be able to clarify their differences and thus pave the way for a solution. He hoped that the exhortation of the General Assembly to the parties to continue to work for a peaceful solution would have the effect of relaxing tension in south-eastern Asia.

30. One representative held that it might be best to adopt a resolution calling on the parties to make use of such conciliatory measures as they might decide upon and to endeavour to solve their dispute in a manner consonant both with the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations and with the advancement of the population of Netherlands New Guinea; the resolution did not need to contain a recommendation for any particular one of the several methods for pacific settlement of disputes enumerated in the Charter.

31. At the 912th meeting, on 26 November 1957, the First Committee approved 33/ the draft resolution by a roll-call vote of 42 votes to 28, with 11 abstentions.

32/ The 1949 Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty, by which the Netherlands had transferred sovereignty over Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (S C, 4th yr., Special Suppl. No. 6, S/1417/Add.1, appendix VII).
33/ G A (XII), 1st Com., 912th mtg., para. 88.
Article 10

Annex

Decision 34/

At its 724th plenary meeting, on 29 November 1957, the draft resolution submitted by the First Committee failed of adoption in the General Assembly. 35/

** B. The question of the scope of recommendations of the General Assembly "relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter"

ANNEX

Tabulation of some agenda items bearing upon Article 10 a/

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34/ G A (XII), Plen., 724th mtg., para. 131.
35/ For texts of relevant statements, see G A (XI), Plen., 664th mtg.: Peru, para. 143; G A (XI), 1st Com., 859th mtg.: Bolivia, para. 58; El Salvador, para. 23; 860th mtg.: Cuba, paras. 26 and 28; Netherlands, para. 11; 861st mtg.: France, paras. 47 and 48; 862nd mtg.: Indonesia, para. 70; Netherlands, para. 74; 863rd mtg.: Italy, para. 5; G A (XII), 1st Com., 905th mtg.: Netherlands, paras. 13 and 14; 907th mtg.: Japan, paras. 27 and 31; 908th mtg.: Belgium, para. 18; Bolivia, para. 12; Nepal, para. 3; Yugoslavia, para. 23; 909th mtg.: Italy, para. 28; Netherlands, paras. 41, 45, 46 and 48; 910th mtg.: Bulgaria, para. 42; France, paras. 58 and 59; Poland, para. 20; Uruguay, para. 54; 911th mtg.: China, para. 35; Peru, para. 11; 912th mtg.: Brazil, para. 6; India, para. 10; Mexico, para. 70; Netherlands, paras. 66 and 67, Pakistan, para. 21; Thailand, para. 75.
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a/ This tabulation includes only agenda items which were referred by the General Assembly to its First Committee or to the Special Political Committee, and agenda items of a political character which were considered directly by the General Assembly.