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LETTER DATED 8 FEBRUARY 1979 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you
herewith a letter of 8 February 1979 addressed to you by H.E. Mr. M'Hammed Boucetta,
Minister of State Responsible for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of the Kingdom
of Morocco. I should be grateful if you would circulate it as a Security Council
document.

(Signed) Abdellatif FILALI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 8 February 1979 from the Moroccan Minister of State
Responsible for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation addressed to the
President of the Security Council

In a letter which I had the honour to address to you on 9 January 1979 (see S/13023), I once again denounced the acts of aggression committed against Moroccan national territory by groups armed and financed by the Algerian Government for the sole purpose of undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The calm and composure which we have continued to maintain in the face of these extremely serious armed attacks seem to have resulted only in an intensification of these acts of aggression, accompanied by a large-scale campaign of false accusations of alleged violations of Algerian sovereignty.

We have repeatedly denounced, in all international bodies and with the utmost vigour, this intolerable behaviour on the part of the Algerian Government, the main purpose of which is to divert the attention of world public opinion from the constant aggression being directed against Morocco and to discredit Morocco by means of fabrications, as in the case of the alleged arms drop above Cape Sigli.

The campaign of deception that was immediately launched, followed by a call for the mobilization of the Algerian people to counter an alleged threat from abroad, enlightened us as to the real objectives of the manoeuvre by the Algerian authorities.

In order to demonstrate once again the utterly false nature of the Algerian accusations, I should like to recall some of the information contained in my letter of 9 January 1979 (see S/13023).

The question remains why the Algerian authorities, who claimed to have all the details of the alleged operation, did not react immediately, since, if they are to be believed, they knew the exact time the aircraft took off, its point of departure, its flight path, the names of the persons who allegedly organized the operation from Morocco and of those who were to receive the cargo, the registration number of the aircraft and the name of the pilot.

How could anyone imagine that a C-130 Hercules aircraft, which is a slow and cumbersome plane, could carry out such a mission 500 kilometres from the Moroccan border without provoking any adverse reaction, when all air traffic over Algeria and its Mediterranean coasts is constantly monitored by civilian and military radar units, which maintain close surveillance in the area?

Inasmuch as the Algerian allegations did not find credence either in informed circles or with international public opinion, it might have been supposed that the rulers of Algeria would act in a more responsible, moderate manner.

/...

In fact, such was not the case, for other events of the utmost gravity occurred in the Moroccan town of Oujda, claiming innocent victims.

On Tuesday, 9 January 1979, at 7.30 a.m., three young schoolchildren were killed and several others were wounded by the explosion of a bomb which had been meant to destroy the Moroccan radio and television station at Sidi Yahia and had been placed on the road customarily taken by the schoolchildren.

On Wednesday, 10 January 1979, at 8.30 p.m., a passerby discovered a suspicious box which had been placed in the corner of a café terrace on the Place du Maghreb in the centre of the town of Oujda. The box, which was recovered intact by the security services, contained an explosive device consisting of 20 pieces of TNT and 20 sticks of dynamite, seven of them of 400 grams each and 13 of 200 grams.

On 13 January, a third explosive device intended to blow up the railway bridge between Morocco and Algeria was discovered 4 kilometres from the frontier in Moroccan territory.

In view of these repeated criminal acts, which were unmistakably of Algerian origin, and in view of the overwhelming body of evidence that has been assembled, Morocco was entitled to take drastic action to safeguard its citizens and the inviolability of its frontiers in spite of the risks which such action entailed.

However, Morocco preferred once again to maintain an attitude of calm and composure in view of the exceptional circumstances in which the fraternal people of Algeria found themselves during the illness of the President of Algeria and following his death.

Despite the level-headed attitude that we have taken, some Algerian officials persist in undermining the desire for peace which we continue to cherish; what the leaders in Algiers refer to as "the Maghnia and Oran events", which were the subject of the letter addressed to you by the Algerian Minister for Foreign Affairs, are in reality only one of the many aspects of the effort to set the stage and to condition the people of Algeria.

The Algerian allegations in this regard offer no supporting evidence that can withstand sound, impartial analysis, particularly with regard to the nationality, residence and alleged links with the Moroccan authorities of the person said to have planted the Maghnia bomb.

The stage-setting for these events, in which Morocco states that it played no part whatsoever, was actually designed to cover up a far more serious and meticulously prepared operation that was to take place on a bloody Sunday in Tan Tan, a Moroccan town situated on the Atlantic coast more than 400 kilometres from the Algerian frontier.

On Sunday, 28 January 1979, mercenaries armed and trained by Algeria infiltrated as far as the town of Tan Tan, where they attacked the civilian population, causing a number of casualties and significant material damage. When they fled back into Algerian territory, the attackers took with them a number of hostages, including women and children.

This new act of aggression unquestionably reflects the determination of some Algerian officials to persist, regardless of the consequences and the risks, in their refusal to engage in any dialogue with a view to ending the state of tension prevailing in our area. Such behaviour can only be harmful to international peace, security and stability.

In refraining from using the same methods as the Algerian leaders and from responding to their aggression, Morocco continues to look to the future and beyond present events, which it still ventures to hope are a purely temporary phenomenon. It has deliberately exercised self-control and refrained from availing itself of the natural right of pursuit, which is accorded to any sovereign State whose territory has been deliberately violated.

Until now, we have continued to display patience and calm. However, it is extremely dangerous to peace and security in the area for the Algerian officials concerned to persist in their provocative behaviour without regard for the future of the peoples of the area and for them to believe that Morocco will continue to refrain from exercising its right of self-defence.

We are, of course, determined to avoid any irreparable action if the Algerian leaders respond in kind to our goodwill.

It is in this spirit that I have just addressed a letter, the text of which is attached hereto, to the Algerian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I hope that our appeal will be heeded and will be recognized as merely an expression of wisdom and a sense of responsibility. If the time comes, however, Morocco will, as it has done throughout its history, take all necessary steps to defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity and to protect its citizens.

The Moroccan Government is therefore relying on your wisdom, your farsightedness and your contribution to put an end to the acts of aggression and provocation of all kinds being carried out against the national territory of Morocco so that the countries of the area can enjoy an era of stability, peace and harmony.

(Signed) M'Hammed BOUCETTA
Minister of State Responsible for
Foreign Affairs and Co-operation

Appendix

Letter dated 2 February 1979 from the Moroccan Minister of
State Responsible for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation
addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria

On Sunday, 28 January 1979, the town of Tan Tan was subjected to an act of clear-cut aggression. In addition to the incalculable material damage that was caused, innocent Moroccan citizens lost their lives during and after the aggression. Moroccan national territory is thus once again being attacked and deliberately violated by forces directed, organized and equipped by Algeria and originating in Algeria, to which they return after completing their nefarious mission.

On past occasions, as you are aware, His Majesty King Hassan II has, in the face of the repeated armed attacks directed against Morocco, announced his intention to exercise the natural right of pursuit accorded to any sovereign State whose territory is violated.

Until now, in an effort to look beyond present events, which it still ventures to hope are a purely temporary phenomenon and not of fundamental significance, Morocco has not exercised this right of pursuit.

Morocco has deliberately exercised this self-control, mourning in silence and dignity its dead and its losses.

Above all else, it has wished to safeguard the future and to do nothing that might have irreparable consequences.

We could also have responded to the most recent act of aggression on Sunday, 28 January, with another, equally blind and brutal act of aggression. We refrained from doing so in order to avoid taking an irreversible step but also and above all because we are taking account of and are moved by the special and very tragic circumstances in which the fraternal people of Algeria today find themselves.

The purpose of this letter is not so much a complaint - which I would certainly have presented in a more suitable form - as a warning and a deeply and sincerely fraternal appeal to your wisdom and sound judgement.

You, better than anyone, are aware, since you followed them and took part in them, of the overtures and efforts made by His Majesty Hassan II and the late President Boumédiène - may God take his soul - with a view to putting an end to the tension prevailing in the area and to the dispute between our two countries.

Better than anyone, you are aware that only the state of President Boumédiène's health prevented the meeting planned and decided upon between the two Heads of State from taking place.

Since it can be assumed that such an important decision, long considered and finally taken by the two Heads of State, would not have proved futile, I can state without fear of error that their meeting would surely have put an end to any dispute and given fresh, powerful impetus to fraternal co-operation between our two countries, which remains our basic objective.

I know from personal acquaintance that you are too intelligent and too perceptive to attribute to this overture anything but its true import and meaning.

Might there not be hidden forces, implacable enemies of both, which are seeking to bring about irreparable events between our two countries and to separate them permanently?

One dark night, arms are dropped on Algerian territory. Immediately, the idea sprouts and spreads that Morocco is responsible.

A bomb explodes in an Algerian town; the first person taken into custody promptly says that he is a Moroccan and, blurting out a confession, asserts that he acted on instructions from the Moroccan authorities.

Two successive acts of violence are committed in the town of Oujda in Morocco. Clues are deliberately left at the scene of the crime so that there will be no doubt about the Algerian nationality of the guilty parties.

In a continuation of the process of escalation and with the same purpose of causing irreparable events to take place, we now see Moroccan territory violated and the town of Tan Tan attacked, with a number of dead and damage whose magnitude has not yet been estimated.

Morocco will analyse the situation in a serious, objective manner and will take the decision that the circumstances warrant.

If the time comes, it will exercise its legitimate rights and take all necessary steps to defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity and to protect its citizens.

You may, however, rest assured that its considered decision, which will not be prompted by passion or caprice, will in no case be contrary to the higher interests of the Maghreb community, whose fraternal unity and cohesion continue to be among our principal concerns.

In any event, with the Algerian people today mobilized to choose and provide itself with the institutions and men that will direct its future, I feel that there is no better time for us to call upon each other for further reflection and a better and more accurate assessment of events.

The responsibility which we have assumed enjoins us to be particularly vigilant and, above all, to ask ourselves whether hidden, clandestine forces are

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not in fact seeking to call into question and hinder the final wishes of the late President Boumédiene, whose meeting with His Majesty King Hassan II - with the results that could naturally and properly have been expected from it - would, had it not been for the state of his health, have constituted a truly great and glorious political event.

(Signed) M'Hammed BOUCETTA
Minister of State Responsible for
Foreign Affairs and Co-operation
