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LETTER DATED 16 FEBRUARY 1979 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the message addressed by H.E. Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Member of the Political Bureau, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to H.E. Mr. M'hamed Boucetta, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Morocco.

On the instructions of my Government, I request you to have this message distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Fathih BOUAYAD-AGHA
Deputy Permanent Representative
Charge d'Affaires a.i.

Annex

Message dated 15 February 1979 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Algeria addressed to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
and Co-operation of Morocco

I have read with interest your message of 1 February 1979 on developments in the situation prevailing in our region as a result of the occupation of Western Sahara.

I cannot conceal my disappointment at the fact that your Government is consistently seeking to involve Algeria, directly or indirectly, in the war between Morocco and the people of Western Sahara. My country has always hoped that the truth will eventually become obvious and that the Moroccan Government will ultimately realize what the facts are.

That eagerly-awaited change is not yet in sight because your Government is not only continuing to treat a decolonization problem as a bilateral dispute but is also periodically brandishing the ominous threat of an alleged right of pursuit against my country.

I cannot but strongly deplore the continued resort to such action which, in any event, is increasingly irrelevant to actual events.

The situation that prevails in the region is, need I say it, largely the result of Morocco's decision unilaterally to breach earlier commitments, concerning the decolonization of the territory on the basis of the right to self-determination, to which we subscribed together at various meetings between the leaders of our two countries.

I should once again like to stress most solemnly that Algeria has no dispute with Morocco and that its dearest hope is to maintain with it the excellent relations required by geographical proximity and by sharing a common civilization and history.

Since you yourself have been a nationalist and a militant in the struggle waged by our sister Moroccan people, you know that foreign occupation inevitably engenders resistance from the peoples subjected to it.

Thus, the war that broke out in Western Sahara between the soldiers of the POLISARIO Front and Morocco was neither desired nor provoked by my country. On the contrary, Algeria has been tireless in its efforts to prevent a conflagration in our region which would destroy the links between our peoples and the permanent interests of the Maghreb. It has constantly advocated at the regional and international levels a political solution to the problem of Western Sahara.

In this connexion, the debates and decisions of the fifteenth OAU Summit at Khartoum and the thirty-third session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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have again unequivocally reaffirmed the cardinal principles that should govern the decolonization of the territory of Western Sahara.

In order to speed up progress towards peace and to help to bring it about, the United Nations General Assembly has again confirmed the legitimacy and representativity of the POLISARIO Front and solemnly reaffirmed "the inalienable right of the Saharan people to self-determination and independence". The peace so ardently desired by the peoples of the region will assuredly become reality once the national rights of the Saharan people have been recognized.

The assistance and support given by Algeria to the national liberation struggle of the Saharan people is consistent with the principles that inspire my country's efforts in favour of all struggling peoples and is part of the great surge of international solidarity which was expressed in a new and striking fashion at the most recent session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Algeria is too mindful of the integrity of its territory and the inviolability of its frontiers to allow itself to violate those of another country, especially a friendly neighbouring country. In this connexion, I should like to remind you of a passage from the message addressed by the late President Boumediene, may he rest in peace, to His Majesty King Hassan II in October 1978:

"In all conscience I can assure Your Majesty that, because of the indissoluble bonds that still exist between our two peoples, no Algerian soldier has ever crossed the national frontiers to which we pledged ourselves together in 1972. Moreover, only a few weeks ago I solemnly declared to the National People's Assembly that the Algerian armed forces will intervene in no case outside our frontiers and that, as vigilant guardians of our territorial integrity, they will stand ready to repel any attack against our country. That line of conduct remains unchanged".

Today as yesterday, it remains unchanged.

The attacks recently committed against the sovereignty of Algeria and the security of its citizens at several points in its territory are obviously very serious. Whatever clever reasoning may be employed to exculpate Morocco in both the dropping of weapons on Cape Sigli and the bomb attacks at Maghnia and Oran, the evidence is, unfortunately, too categorical to leave any doubt at all about the identity of the persons who committed these dastardly acts.

Moreover, the threats and intimidations of every kind to which Algeria is being subjected are certainly not the best way of creating a favourable climate for frank and sincere joint action by all the parties concerned with the question of Western Sahara.

It is our view that all the actions directed against my country are inspired by hidden forces other than the capacity for persuasion, not to say poisoning of

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minds, which all enemies of the Algerian revolution, even among Algerians themselves, are able to manufacture from the information that you appear to be receiving about my country, its people, its institutions and its leaders.

On another subject, the meeting planned between President Houari Boumediene and His Majesty Hassan II, you ask me, in effect, to make a moral judgement. In all truth and sincerity I must say that the intention was that it should deal with only one item, excluding all others, and that was the question of Western Sahara and the satisfaction of the national inalienable aspirations of the Saharan people.

I can also affirm in all truth and sincerity that the fact that that meeting could not be held was not due to the state of health of President Houari Boumediene, as you say, but due to our differences, not only about the question of Western Sahara but also about the Middle East and the Palestinian problem.

The only proof I need is the statement made about that very subject by a spokesman for the Moroccan Government on 6 October 1978, to which it was my inevitable duty to reply publicly on 10 October 1978, when I stated:

"With regard to the problem of the Middle East, although both say they are relying on the decisions of the Algiers and Rabat summits, it is obvious that the respective positions of Morocco and Algeria are quite divergent on both substance and form.

"Morocco, after all, was the first Arab country to welcome President Sadat after his return from Camp David with a view to stressing Morocco's sanctioning of a policy of which it is, indeed, one of the principal executants.

"Algeria, for its part, has never departed from the line adopted at the Arab summits which unequivocally confirmed their recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, acknowledged that the Palestinian problem was the key to any solution and accordingly laid down as an inviolable principle, inseparable from the other issues, the recovery of all occupied territories and the regaining by the Palestinian people of its national inalienable rights.

"It is in that spirit that Algeria, faithful to the commitments it has undertaken, steadfastly shoulders its obligations within the Front de Fermeté in order better to provide the support needed more than ever by the PLO, as the incarnation of the resistance of the Palestinian people, and by the Syrian bastion: these two today constitute the mainstay of any policy of honour, justice and dignity in the Middle East."

In any event it seemed to us to partake of a policy of duplicity and equivocation for President Houari Boumediene, returning from the Damascus Summit at which the countries of the Front de Pa Résistance et de la Fermeté had rallied around the PLO, should immediately have a meeting with His Majesty the King of Morocco, who had just once again sanctioned the Cairo policy by receiving President Sadat on his return from Camp David.

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The Palestinian cause is a matter of conscience for the people of Algeria. The achievement of the national rights of the people of Palestine is yet another cause concerning which Algeria, if it is to be true to itself and to its own ethics, can accept no complicity, no accommodation of any kind, whatever the strength and diversity of the bonds between our two sister peoples and the importance of the interests at stake. I should undoubtedly have preferred you not to force me to make this statement, which is all the more painful for being the truth. But the need to tell the truth makes it essential. It forces me to tell you, as God is my witness, with sincerity, with honesty, the things that were planned, as they would have had to turn out, and why they did not happen. Moreover, statements by the highest authorities in Morocco, all of whom go to great pains to deny the existence of the problem of Western Sahara, of the Saharan people itself and its national rights, of the POLISARIO Front - recognized by the international community as that people's sole legitimate representative, and without whose participation no just and durable peace seems possible - clearly show that the decision of President Houari Boumediene to postpone the planned meeting was indisputably sound.

In any event, you are in an excellent position, now as in the past, to know that the problem of Western Sahara was neither a personal problem of President Houari Boumediene nor a device of the Algerian leaders to create difficulties in Morocco. It is a genuine problem of decolonization for which there can be no final settlement without the active participation and full support of the Saharan people and its legitimate representatives.

If, then, an effort of the imagination has to be made, it is in this direction that I would fraternally invite you to make it, and as soon as Algeria, with the African and international community, feels that there is a real desire to attack the causes of the crisis without making futile efforts to deal with its effects, it will do its very utmost to bring about a just solution, in a sincere, honest and committed manner.

I can assure you that Algeria will continue to work tirelessly to establish the dialogue necessary to restore, for the benefit of all peoples of the region including, naturally, the Saharan people, the peace and co-operation for which they hope. The question of Western Sahara is eminently political and for that reason inevitably calls for a political solution.

We are convinced that, recognizing their heavy historic responsibilities, the leaders of our countries will be able, leaving aside trivial susceptibilities and all other objective considerations, to show imagination and wisdom and to demonstrate in their actions the friendship and brotherhood which must always characterize relations between the Algerian and Moroccan peoples.

With a view to the realization of that aim, which finds its natural place in the thousand year-old history of the Great Arab Maghreb, Algeria solemnly proclaims once again that it is fully prepared to put those noble ideals into practice.

(Signed) Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
Member of the Political Bureau
Minister of Foreign Affairs
