40TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: SAHRAWIS SEEK POLITICAL RIGHTS

This issue of the SPSC LETTER is appearing in a month in which we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 22nd anniversary of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Both documents are important in this struggle of the Sahrawi people.

The International Covenant notes that "all peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development." The current effort of the Sahrawis to exercise this right has its roots in the traditional independence of the people of the region, in their repeated efforts to avoid subjugation by colonial powers, and in the stated goals of these two UN documents. The Covenant is an elaboration of the rights to civil and political freedom described in several articles of the UDHR.

In conformity with these two documents, the UN General Assembly has pronounced the 1990's as the "International Decade for Eradication of Colonialism." Certainly it is in this period that colonialism should disappear in the Western Sahara. Since the 1960's the UN General Assembly has studied the question of the former Spanish Sahara. The right of a people to self-determination and the principle of a free and just referendum have marked the debates and been echoed in UN votes.

November 20, 1988, the UN again voted 86 - 0, with 53 abstentions, to request "the parties to the Western Sahara conflict—the Government of Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Sagia el Hamra and Rio de Oro (Polisario) to begin direct negotiations for a cease fire and the holding of a referendum on self-determination for the Western Saharan people under the auspices of the UN and the OAU."

To assist his own efforts in this regard and to move the peace process forward, in late October UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar named Uruguayan judge Hector Gross de Espiel as UN Special Representative for the Western Sahara. Gross de Espiel has met separately with delegations of the two parties to the conflict and will continue meetings concerning the peace proposal which was outlined by the UN Secre-
tary-General last August. The week of December 12, Gross de Espiel will meet with delegations of the two parties in Geneva. Also present for the discussions in Geneva will be representatives of Mauritania and Algeria.

Two areas of agreement between Morocco and the SADR on the UN/OAU peace proposal are the basis for the vote and the questions of the referendum. Both parties agree that the Spanish census of 1974 should serve as the basis for determining who will be entitled to vote. They also agree that the two questions should be integration or independence.

The five points which need to be resolved are the Moroccan military presence, Moroccan settlers in the territory, Moroccan occupation laws, the election campaign and direct negotiations between the two belligerents.

The UN Secretary-General continues to give personal attention to the conflict in Western Sahara. In November Perez de Cuellar and Gross de Espiel met separately with delegations headed by Bachir Moustapha Sayed (Polisario Front) and Ahmed Osman (president of the Moroccan National Assembly). In December the Secretary-General met with Mouloud Said (Polisario Representative to the UN Fourth Committee) and the Moroccan Ambassador to the UN to discuss with them the meeting in Geneva scheduled for later in the month.

MEANING OF UNGA VOTE ON ISSUE

Commenting on the vote of the UN General Assembly in New York in October, Mohamed Sidati, SADR Minister for Foreign Affairs, noted that the UN vote "reiterates the legitimacy of the cause of the Sahrawi people and its inalienable right to self-determination and independence." He added that the vote calls for a free and fair referendum for the Sahrawis and that it "reaffirms the legal framework for a settlement" (OAU Resolution 104 and UNGA 40/50--Ed.), and "calls for direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front." Sidati said that the recent UN resolution and vote effectively supports the mission of "good offices" undertaken by the Chairman of the OAU and the UN Secretary-General.

A month which has given birth to two documents like the UDHR and the Covenant of Civil and Political Rights is a good month for a meeting of Morocco and the Polisario Front. One can hope that foot dragging delaying tactics by Morocco to avoid direct negotiations may be halted in Geneva. Hector Gross de Espiel will soon visit the Western Sahara. Let us hope that he, President Moussa Traore of Mali, Acting Chairman of the OAU, and Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar will succeed in bringing peace and justice to Western Sahara.

"Everyone has a right to a nationality," notes the UDHR. It is also a twenty-five-year-old cry of the Sahrawis. "Anyone is entitled to a social and economic order in which rights and freedoms set forth (in the UDHR, Ed.) can be fully realized." The Sahrawis think it is time for them to exercise these rights.
PUBLICATIONS UPDATE............


Detailed study of recent events including the agreement in principle by Morocco and the Polisario Front to U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's peace proposal.


Letter to journal. Of interest would be reader responses.

Similar information was also published by Wilson in IRIDE, Guigno 1988, Florence, Italy, and in VERA, Malgagn Kvenfrelsisbarattu, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 1988.


Useful tool. It is not meant to be comprehensive, but is a quick reference source.


Good article. The Guardian, like Africa News, has been covering the war in Western Sahara for the past thirteen years.


The number of articles, books, etc., is increasing. Numbers of citations were respectively 79, 135 and 16. The Library of Congress has good holdings in this area as in others.


Evenhanded treatment of peace process underway.

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Secretary of State George Schultz' statement on "Efforts for Peace in Africa" was printed by the U.S. State Department in "Current Policy No. 1111." The address was given by the Secretary at a reception in honor of the Organization of African Unity in New York City, October 4, 1988. Remarks concerning Western Sahara were the following:

"We also welcome and support the Secretary General of the United Nations [Javier Perez de Cuellar] in his efforts to mediate the dispute in the Western Sahara. With the concurrence of the Security Council, important steps toward a resolution--including the designation of the Secretary General's special representative--have already been taken. We hope that the progress attained through the UN and OAU efforts will permit the introduction of a balanced resolution in the General Assembly this year supporting the Secretary General."

SECURITY COUNCIL VOTES FOR SPECIAL ENVOY OF PEREZ DE CUELLAR TO WESTERN SAHARA

The text of the Security Council resolution on Western Sahara is the following:

"The Security Council,
Having heard a report given by the Secretary-General concerning the joint good offices undertaken by the Chairman of the OAU, in accordance with Resolution 40/50 of the General Assembly, for the solution of the Western Sahara question,
Taking note of the agreement in principle, given on August 30, 1988, by the Kingdom of Morocco and Polisario Front to the joint proposals of the UN Secretary-General and the Chairman of the OAU,
Anxious to support these efforts for holding referendum of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, organized and supervised by the UN, in cooperation with the OAU,
-Decides to authorize the Secretary-General to nominate a special representative to Western Sahara,
-Requests the Secretary-General to submit to it, as soon as possible, a report on the holding of a referendum of self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and on the means to be implemented in order to ensure its organization and supervision by the UN, in cooperation with the OAU."

Result of vote:
Aye: 15  Nay: 0
Abstentions: 0

Debates on Western Sahara at the UN in October found delegations supporting the peace initiatives of the UN and OAU. Speaking for implementation of direct negotiations and continuation of the process were representatives of Nigeria, Syria, the Association of American Jurists, Algeria, Cuba, Hungary, West Germany, Ghana, India, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania. These delegations, as well as others, noted the need to resolve the questions of a cease-fire, withdrawal of troops and administrative personnel by Morocco as well as withdrawal of any Moroccan settlers, and the suspension of Moroccan laws in the territory.
AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE SADR

1. SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM SPEAKS

The International Scientific Symposium on "Non-Alignment: Its Doctrine and Dynamics in Realizing the Vision of World Without War and Free from Racial Discrimination," meeting in New Delhi, called for admission of the SADR to the Non-Aligned Movement and the UN at the close of its sessions, August 20. Noting that "the SADR is already a full member state of the OAU and is recognized by 71 countries," meeting delegates urged admission of the SADR to other international associations. Experts from some twenty nations attended the meeting at which Malainine Sadik, SADR Head of the Asia-Oceana Department, led the Sahrawi delegation. Symposium delegates also called for full implementation of AHG 102 and 42/78 (40/50) of the UN General Assembly.

2. INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE MEET

At the invitation of the OAU, Mohamed Sidati led a Sahrawi delegation to the International Conference on Refugees held in Norway August 22-24. The conference, sponsored by the OAU, UN and UNHCR had delegates from 130 member states of the UN. Issues discussed at the meeting were the Western Sahara conflict, refugees in southern Africa, and the international situation.

The Sahrawi delegation was received during the meeting by Robert Mugabe, President of Zimbabwe and current chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. Withdrawing from the meeting in protest of the seating of the SADR delegation was Morocco.

3. NEW SADR GOVERNMENT FORMED

The Executive Committee of the Polisario Front recently formed a new government (August/September) following meetings at which the committee studied strategies for the national independence agenda of the Sahrawis. The following persons were named to these posts:
- Mahfoud Ali Beiba, Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs and Justice.
- Brahim Ghali, Minister of Defense.
- Mohammed Lamine Ahmed, Head of the Political Bureau.
- Mansour Omar, Minister of Health.
- Mohamed Salem Ould Salek, Minister of Information.
- Mohamed Ali Ould El Ouali, Head of the SADR Mission to Algeria.
- Sid Ahmed Batal, Minister of Education.
- Mohammed Sidati, Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- Abdelkader Taleb Omar, Minister of Equipment and Transport.
- Bouchraya Beyoun, Minister of Commerce and Development.
- Ibrahim Hakim, Head of the Presidency.
- Bachir Moustapha Sayed, Head of the Committee for Foreign Relations of the Polisario Front.

4. WAR CONTINUES ON FRONTLINES

The National Liberation Army of the SADR continues to strike the sand wall in the SADR as Morocco continues to delay negotiations which might lead to a cease-fire. August 18, the Sahrawis attacked Haousa. The battle which lasted from 5:00
to 9:00 A.M., took place over 15 kilometers of wall in length and 8 kilometers in width. According to the Sahrawis, 180 Moroccan soldiers were put out of combat. Captured was Captain Ghazali Mohamed, Head of the Royal Battery of the Ninth Royal Artillery Group and three of his lieutenants.

Wire services reported another battle at Oum Dreiga September 16. Moroccan authorities reported 270 casualties while Polisario reported 200 Moroccan soldiers put out of combat and 25 captured.

Battles are expected to continue along the wall until direct negotiations between Morocco and the SADR lead to a cease-fire, withdrawal of Moroccan troops, administration and settlers.

5. HASSAN CANCELS VISIT TO SPAIN

The projected visit of King Hassan II of Morocco to Spain November 8-11 was cancelled, according to some sources, due to the Spanish vote in the 4th Committee of the UN on the resolution on Western Sahara. The resolution called for direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front concerning the future of the Western Sahara. It appears that Morocco is continuing to oppose direct talks.

6. SADR PROTESTS EGYPTIAN ARMS

"The government of the SADR deplores the irresponsible position of Egypt which is ready to satisfy Moroccan arms requirements," says a release from the SADR Minister of Information in early November. The report added that "Sahrawi government considers this way of contributing to the peace effort, led by the Secretary-General of the UN and supported unanimously by the Security Council of the UN, to dishonor Egypt.

Sahrawi officials called on the international community and the Secretary-General of the UN to prevent this kind of action which comes at a time when the Maghrib is undergoing a period of political conciliation and unity and when the Sahrawi-Moroccan conflict is approaching a very sensitive stage in the peace process.

Marshal Abou Ghazala, Vice Premier and Minister of Defense, is reported to have stated that "Egypt is ready to satisfy Moroccan arms needs."

7. NEW AMBASSADOR TO SEYCHELLES

Ouadadi Cheikh Lhiba presented his letters of credit to President France Albert Rene of the Republic of the Seychelles September 27. The new ambassador resides in Madagascar.

During the course of the audience, the Sahrawi ambassador informed the Seychelles Head of State of latest military and diplomatic developments in the peace process for Western Sahara. The Seychelles president reaffirmed his state's support of the SADR and to the legitimate struggle of the Sahrawi people.
1. BROADCAST AIRS ON SADR AND CURRENT UN PEACE INITIATIVE

Assumpta Oturu of KPFK, 90.7 FM, interviewed Anne Lippert, Editor of the SPSC NEWSLETTER, September 13, 1988 in a half-hour long program. "SPOTLIGHT AFRICA" has been focusing on the issue of Western Sahara in recent years.

2. AFRICA PEACE TOUR: YEAR 3

Karen Buckley of Western Sahara Campaign took part in the third Africa Peace Tour sponsored by a number of NGO's and church groups in April 1988. Buckley spoke on the war in the Western Sahara, its impact on human rights and development programs in northwest Africa, and its connection to other African liberation struggles.

This is the third year Western Sahara Campaign has taken part in the tour. In April 1987, Zahra Ramadane, a Sahrawi woman working in the Sahrawi refugee camps, and Teresa K. Smith, Executive Director of Western Sahara Campaign, also toured.

1988's Tour was focussed on the southwest states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado.

3. JACKSON CALLS FOR RIGHTS

Vice President of the Association of American Jurists, Ms. Deborah Jackson, spoke as a petitioner before the 4th Commission of the UN General Assembly concerning the conflict in Western Sahara October 19. Ms. Jackson expressed satisfaction at the agreement in principle to the peace proposals of the UN/OAU, but noted that numerous obstacles remained to the finalization of peace in the region.

In her remarks Jackson noted that "the right of people to self-determination is one of the fundamental principles of international law and that violations of the norms and principles increase international tension and threaten world peace and security."

It was in this context that she asked for the immediate application of UNGA resolution 40/50 and OAU resolution 104 because "these are essential to arrive at just and definitive political solutions to the conflict in Western Sahara. In the name of the Association of American Jurists Jackson called on the international community to redouble its efforts to put into effect resolutions 40/50 and 104. She also urged the international community to take all necessary measures to prevent dilatory maneuvers from disturbing the process of peace that is underway.

The Association of American Jurists includes lawyers, judges and law students throughout the US, in Central America and in the Caribbean.

4. ACAS SPONSORS WESTERN SAHARA PANEL AT ASA ANNUAL MEETING

ACAS, the Association of Concerned African Scholars, sponsored a panel on Western Sahara, October 30, 1988 at the African Studies Association annual meeting. Speakers for the panel were Karen Buckley, chair; Yahia Zoubir, Daniel Volman and
Anthony Pazzanita.

Buckley also read a paper by Teresa K. Smith at the panel on "Decolonization in Africa: The Unfinished Agenda," October 31. October 28 Anne Lippert gave a paper on "Sahrawi Women's Insertion in the Liberation Struggle" on a panel sponsored by the Women's Caucus of the African Studies Association.

DISAPPEARANCES IN OCCUPIED SADR

According to a report printed in Western Sahara Campaign, USA News, Sahrawi journalist, Sidati Sellami, was detained by Moroccan authorities in fall 1987 at about the time of the UN Technical Mission's visit to the SADR. Sidati had been working at "Radio El Ayoun" from 1971 to the time of his disappearance. He hosted a radio program listened to by Sahrawis in the occupied territory, in the refugee camps in Algeria and in the Canary Islands.

Sidati had hosted the program on Arabic literature in Hassania, the language of the Sahrawis of the SADR, during both Spanish and Moroccan occupations. Also disappearing at the same time was Sidati's daughter, Ettanah Sidati Sellami, who also had worked at the radio station in a program of Hassania poetry and literature.

According to the report, no charges have been filed against the two. Also interned from September 1986, according to the report, are Jedla Mach (70 years of age), her daughters, Fatimetou, Embarka and Najima, and her sons, Laabda and Salane, cousins, Ould Hamedaha and Chrif El Mamuh.

The report also stated that Mamma Mint Sidi Ould, who has been detained several times by Moroccan authorities, has reported the death from torture of Khatri Mohamed Lamine Ould Bejeija, who was seized from his nomad encampment.

MEETING OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS REITERATES SUPPORT OF SAHRAWIS

The question of Western Sahara was examined by the Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Nations meeting in Nicosia, Cyprus, September 1988. Following discussions by the delegates which gave general support to the UN/OAU peace plan including new initiatives by the UN Secretary-General, those taking part in the meeting reiterated their consensus on the question as formulated at the 1986 Harare, Zimbabwe, meeting.

Among other statements, the ministers noted the need to resolve questions of a cease-fire and a referendum without military or administrative constraints.

The ministers reaffirmed their conviction that the resolution of the question of Western Sahara resides in the full application of resolution AHG/104, adopted by the 19th meeting of the OAU Heads of State, which defines the means for arriving at a just and lasting political resolution of the conflict, and in resolution 42/78 of the General Assembly of the UN, which ratifies the above resolution of the OAU. Direct negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front are called for.