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HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

DECEMBER 4, 1980

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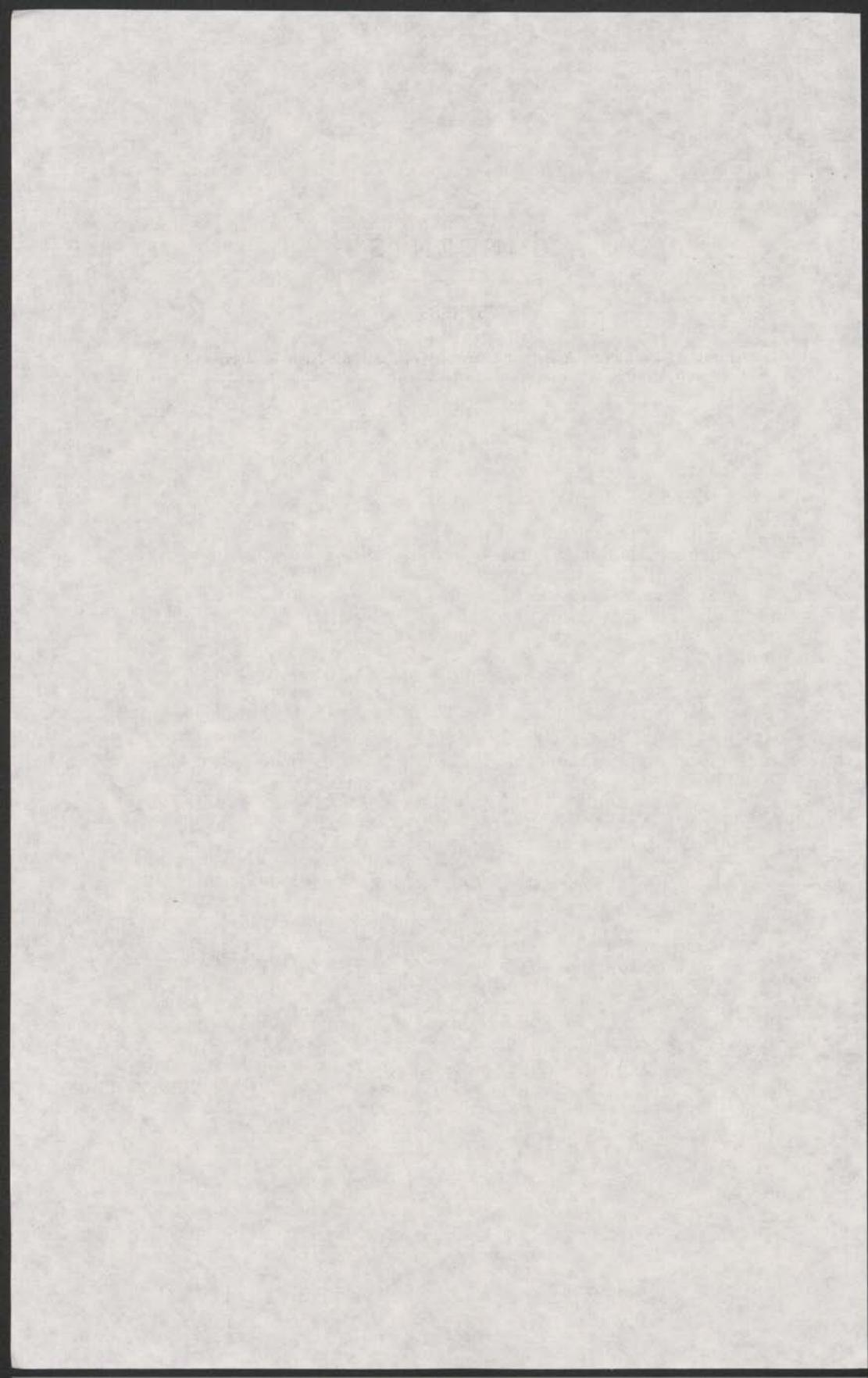
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CURRENT SITUATION IN THE WESTERN SAHARA—1980

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1980

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met at 2 p.m. in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Stephen J. Solarz (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. SOLARZ. The hearing of the subcommittee will come to order.

We are particularly pleased that Assistant Secretary of State Harold Saunders could be with us this afternoon. He has just returned from an important mission abroad. I don't know that he has had a chance to get too much sleep before coming before the subcommittee, so we will try to be particularly gentle in our questioning.

I am also pleased that his deputy, Morris Draper, could be here as well.

This is likely to be the last formal hearing that the Subcommittee on Africa has for this session of Congress, in the absence of some cataclysmic emergency that might develop unexpectedly in the next 24 hours.

There is a possibility that we may be having a hearing on South Africa with James Michner next week, but those arrangements have not been firmed up.

In any case, in a way I think it is appropriate that the last hearing of the subcommittee should be held on the subject of U.S. foreign policy in the Western Sahara and North Africa because this is an area in which the subcommittee has attempted over the years to exercise its oversight responsibilities.

I would like to believe that we have made a constructive contribution to the way in which this issue has been considered in the executive branch. Obviously a number of developments have taken place of some significance since we last had a hearing on the subject.

So, without further ado, I would like to ask Secretary Saunders to give his testimony. Obviously it will be included in the record as prepared. I have a more formal statement to be included in the record as if it had been read.

[Mr. Solarz' opening statement follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STEPHEN J. SOLARZ

Today we continue our series of hearings on the conflict in the Western Sahara and its implications for U.S. foreign policy. The Saharan war is about to enter its

sixth year. It is spreading over an increasingly large area, with deeper Polisario attacks into Southern Morocco, increased military activity on the Morocco-Algeria border, and reports that both sides have used Mauritanian territory. The issue of the Western Sahara is more and more prominent at international conferences and in international institutions.

Having followed the situation closely in the last few years and having traveled to the area in the Summer of 1979, I have been impressed by the complexity of the problem and the difficulties it poses for U.S. diplomacy. Among the major concerns that we need to factor into a realistic and humane foreign policy that serves both our interests and our ideals are the following:

First, the existence—according to most area experts, of a dedicated, authentic nationalist independence movement among the Sharawi people, just as there are such movements, in different guises, among the Namibian and Eritrean peoples

Second, the presence of nationalist sentiments towards the Western Sahara that are just as strong on the part of Morocco, a country with which we have had a long and basically constructive relationship although it has sometimes differed with us as in its opposition to the Camp David Agreement and its support for Jonas Savimbi's guerillas in Angola.

Third, the fact that Polisario's major outside supporter, Algeria, is a leading supplier of oil and natural gas to our country, has attracted several billions of U.S. contracts, and—as Assistant Secretary Saunders' travels to Algiers indicate—is playing a leading role in efforts to release the U.S. hostages in Iran consistent with its policy of broadening political relations with the U.S.

Fourth, the danger that continued conflict over the Western Sahara could eventually jeopardize economic and political stability in Morocco, escalate into broader regional conflict and attract great power intervention

Nearly a year ago the Administration proposed to thread its way through this labyrinth by reversing its previous policy of refusing to sell Morocco arms suitable for use in the Western Sahara and attempting to use new sales of counterinsurgency equipment as a means of acquiring leverage on the parties to promote a compromise negotiated settlement. The House Foreign Affairs Committee however urged that any deliveries of counterinsurgency equipment in Morocco "should be related to Morocco's willingness to help achieve a cease fire, to negotiate the relevant Western Sahara issues, and to cooperate with international efforts to mediate the dispute". It was also expected that the Polisario and other parties to the conflict also demonstrate "similar good faith efforts to reach a negotiated solution". Finally, the Committee supported the executive branch's broadening its official contacts in the region with all parties to the conflict, including Polisario.

As the war continues, the first actual deliveries of counterinsurgency equipment are imminent, and there are reports of a new tank sale to Morocco, we will be especially interested in learning from our witnesses what, if any, progress has been made in moving the conflict from the battlefield to the bargaining table. We will also want to inquire about recent military developments and what they promise for the future, the status of U.S. contacts with Polisario, the Algerian role in the Iranian negotiations and its significance for our policy in the Maghreb, the roles of external powers in the conflict, and the latest events in the Organization of African Unity and United Nations.

Mr. SOLARZ. Our witnesses today are: Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, who has just returned from Algiers where he was deeply involved in negotiations to free the U.S. hostages in Iran.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY ANALYSTS FROM THE CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

After Mr. Saunders testifies in open session and has responded to questions from the subcommittee members, we will go into closed session to hear the CIA testimony. As soon as enough members arrive we will vote to go into closed session.

We have all sorts of questions to ask, Mr. Secretary. Why don't you just proceed?

I am pleased, by the way, to introduce the newest member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the distinguished gentleman from De-

troit, Mr. Crockett, who I am empowered to designate as a temporary member of the Subcommittee on Africa.

In my final act as chairman of the subcommittee, I hereby designate you as a temporary member of the subcommittee. I hope we can count on your support if necessary. Good to have you with us.

Mr. CROCKETT. Thank you.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Secretary, why don't you proceed.

STATEMENT OF HON. HAROLD H. SAUNDERS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SAUNDERS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I think I might echo at the outset a word that you said. I believe in dealing with this subject, we have together shared perhaps one of the better experiences of executive-legislative branch cooperation in terms of thinking about the difficult options that we as a nation have before us in dealing with this complex area.

I think the exchange between us always has contributed to a better product in terms of the policy we have followed.

I would just like to start by putting those feelings on the record from our side of town.

I think it is appropriate, too, that we have this hearing today symmetrically. We began the year by dealing with this issue. I think it is appropriate, as this session closes, that perhaps we wrap up the year's developments, that provides a convenient distance for a perspective.

I, like you, will simply leave my formal statement for the record.

I might just say a couple of things by way of introduction to pick up main points in that statement.

One of the principal issues that we have considered as we have talked about policy toward the Western Sahara over the past 18 months has been the question of how we can conduct our policy in this area so as to achieve three objectives:

First, we need to maintain a productive working relationship with each of the countries and parties involved.

Second, in doing so, we have needed to pursue and protect broad interests which apply across larger areas of the Middle East and Africa both.

Third, we have pursued the specific objective, long-term objective, of a peaceful resolution of a problem that complicates the policies of the countries involved and complicates the pursuit of policy by the United States.

I think it is fair to say, looking back over 1980, that, as I think you have already indicated, there have been some modest developments in the Western Sahara dispute perhaps moving us closer to the negotiating process that would be necessary to develop the terms of a settlement.

More important, perhaps, or equally important from our perspective, our relationships with the parties have advanced during this period. As we both recall, when we started 18 months ago worrying about this problem together, one of our concerns was the deterioration in the relationship between the United States and Morocco.

I think it is fair to say at this stage that that relationship has markedly improved, I think partly as a result of the arms decision that we worked on together a year ago.

That improvement in the relationship was demonstrated during the United Nations General Assembly session this fall, when the United States was able to work I think constructively with Morocco in framing a resolution which while it did not pass I think represented a significant step forward in the articulation of Moroccan policy.

On the Algerian side, our relationships I think have also improved. Much to the side and without much public notice there has been an intensive negotiation going on on the question of liquified natural gas and our relationship in that area.

More in the headlines of recent times has been the many meetings that we have had now with the Algerians in connection with their role as the designated intermediary between us and Iran for the release of the hostages in Tehran.

I venture to suggest that a year from now, whoever is looking at this question in this forum will see that it has been possible as we have learned to work more closely with the Algerians in one field and then another, that that will extend to closer collaboration in the effort to achieve peace in the Sahara.

Third, we have moved perhaps more slowly than we foresaw in January, when I last testified, but nevertheless I think we now have accomplished at least a beginning in the field in the contact with the Polisario.

We had an initial contact here in the spring, and just within the past 3 days we have had a visit of two officers to spend a 24-hour period in Tindouf visiting the refugee camps.

Mr. SOLARZ. Within the last 2 weeks?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Two days. Yesterday and the day before.

Mr. SOLARZ. Have you received or seen a report on their conversation?

Mr. SAUNDERS. There is nothing in writing at this point. I have spent some time, since while in Algiers, with one officer involved, but that is very sketchy at this point.

Mr. SOLARZ. I assume that the officers involved would be sending a cable back to the Department on this.

Mr. SAUNDERS. They are working on that now, but it doesn't exist yet.

Mr. SOLARZ. I will be in town next week. If you could share that with me, I would be personally interested in seeing it.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Be glad to.

In the field of establishing a negotiating process, there have been two significant developments within the African context.

First of all, the summit meeting last July and then the meeting of the Wisemen committee in September, which produced the proposed terms of reference for a ceasefire and move toward a referendum and settlement.

Perhaps as significant as that again has been the step taken by the Moroccans during the U.N. General Assembly where they formally in a resolution which they proposed welcomed that proposal from the Wisemen committee of the OAU, and in their statement indicated their readiness to cooperate in procedures which could

lead to ascertaining of the wishes of the population, which it seems to me in a tentative way establishes the elements of a negotiating process.

I underscore the word tentatively when I say that because I don't want to oversell what has happened. In a year's perspective it seems to me we now have something there that we just did not have a year ago.

We are now down to the point where we are talking to the parties about how to make the OAU's proposal operational; talked to the Moroccans about how one might organize a referendum or how they might work with the OAU to organize a referendum.

We posed the question to other parties, as well as members of the OAU, so there is now a dialog going on the mechanical aspects of it, which of course in something as complicated as this becomes critical.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Secretary, I was under the impression that the Moroccans had categorically rejected the idea of a referendum as a way of resolving this. Is that not the case?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They have not used the word referendum. They have wanted to use the word referendum. They have found a different formulation by which they say that they are prepared to cooperate in finding a way to ascertain the views of the population, or words to that effect.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, when our people raise with them the modalities of such an exercise, how did they respond?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They are perfectly willing to talk about ways in which one might begin this process for them. I think logically the first step is to determine what would be the population. That, as you well know, is in itself a major issue.

We have talked about using the 1974 census as a base, obviously there would be other proposals as well; talked about ways in which one might go at the problem, the kind of individuals that one might get to handle a problem like that. So they have engaged in that discussion.

Mr. SOLARZ. Is it your understanding that the Moroccans accept in principle the idea that the people of the Western Sahara, however defined, ought to be able to determine their own future?

My impression has been that their argument was that such an exercise had taken place in 1975 at the meeting of the Jemak when they voted for affiliation with Morocco, and that the matter was no longer open to question.

Has this position evolved to the point where they now acknowledge the principle that the people of the Western Sahara should be given an opportunity in one form or another to determine whether they wish to remain affiliated with Morocco, or operate for some other governmental arrangement?

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is certainly not appropriate for me to speak for the Government of Morocco. My understanding of their position is, though, that there has been an evolution in their position.

It is beyond the old position where they stated, as you just did, that that act had taken place. It has not evolved as far as your statement would describe it. It is somewhere in between.

That is why I emphasize the formulation that they are now using, that they will work with the OAU, come in and verify the views of the population. So, it is somewhere in between.

Mr. SOLARZ. The population now living in the Western Sahara.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Well, that would be, I suppose, their position in the negotiations. Again, as I say, they are willing to discuss how you establish a fair population base for this exercise. They are willing to talk about that.

Mr. SOLARZ. We have a vote underway, as you know. The second bells have rung. So we will temporarily recess and resume the hearing in about 10 minutes.

[Brief recess]

Mr. SOLARZ. The hearing will be resumed.

We have with us the distinguished minority member of the committee, Mr. Goodling.

You may proceed, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Just to complete the last exchange here, I might give you the exact words of the current Moroccan formulation on the question of how to ascertain the wishes of the population. The Foreign Minister, for instance, within the last few weeks has stated the following:

Morocco is prepared to allow Africa and the OAU to verify and authenticate with the help of anyone they want to help them the expression of the Saharan peoples will—to verify and authenticate the expression of the Saharan peoples' will.

Mr. SOLARZ. In any way that they want?

Mr. SAUNDERS. "Prepared to allow Africa and the OAU with the help of anyone they want to help them;" in other words, the United Nations, for instance.

Mr. SOLARZ. When was this statement made?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Within the last 3 weeks, beginning of November. November 4 runs in my mind.¹

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, that certainly, on the face of it, sounds encouraging.

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is a step forward anyway.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do you want to complete your remarks?

Mr. SAUNDERS. No, I have done what I wanted to do, just to introduce the subject.

Mr. SOLARZ. Fine.

[Mr. Saunders' prepared statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. HAROLD H. SAUNDERS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Mr. Chairman, there have been some modest developments in the Western Sahara dispute over the past six months which improve prospects for the negotiating process necessary to develop the terms of a settlement.

As you are well aware, the American government has sought to encourage all of the interested parties to turn their energies from the battlefield to the peace table. While we are neutral on the final outcome, we are deeply committed to bringing this war to an end so that our friendly relations with all of the countries of North Africa can continue to develop unclouded by the present distractions and complications of the war in the Sahara.

In the deliberations of the Organization of African Unity in the past few months and the current UN General Assembly, tentative steps have been taken that may

¹ The interview appeared in the Moroccan press on Nov. 5 and took place in Paris earlier that week.

begin to lead the protagonists out of their current impasse. Over the past six months, we have seen a gradual change in attitudes on all sides which has created an atmosphere and an opportunity increasingly focusing the attention of the interested parties on those successive steps that must be taken if a compromise resolution of this conflict is to emerge.

I emphasize that the process is still highly tenuous and requires careful nurturing. There is no quick and easy solution. The road toward peace—in the Western Sahara and elsewhere—will take the parties over some rough terrain as they maneuver to defend what they perceive to be their vital interests.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE PARTIES

Our relations with the parties to the dispute bear directly on our ability to work with them towards a solution. Today, partly as a result of our decision to sell certain types of arms to Morocco, our measure of influence with Morocco is increased to the point where we can cooperate in constructive steps, most recently the Moroccan-sponsored resolution at the UN. At the same time, we have increased the intensity of our contacts with Algeria, especially on the question of our hostages in Iran. We believe such cooperation in one field will make it easier for us to work together in others. Also, we have established contacts with the Polisario, first in a meeting in Washington last spring, then by a visit to Polisario refugee camps in Algeria within the past week.

ESTABLISHING A NEGOTIATING PROCESS

As you know the OAU has played an important role in trying to work out a compromise solution. Arising out of a decision taken by the OAU Summit meeting last July, the OAU's ad hoc mediation committee on the Western Sahara (more commonly referred to as the Wisemen Committee) met in September and approved a peace-plan calling for (1) an immediate ceasefire by December 15; (2) return of the Moroccan and Polisario forces to their base camps; (3) a UN peacekeeping force to supervise the ceasefire; and (4) an OAU referendum assisted by the UN on the issue of the future political status of the Western Sahara. For the first time, all of the interested parties—including Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Polisario, and representatives of Saharan organizations in the Western Sahara—attended this session of the Wiseman Committee even though no negotiations took place among the interested parties.

Morocco, which regards itself as the aggrieved party to Polisario attacks within Morocco proper, readily accepted the OAU call for an immediate ceasefire but expressed reservations about the referendum while the Polisario supported a referendum but refused to accept a ceasefire until Morocco agrees to enter into direct negotiations. Algeria, for its part, maintained its position that it was not a party to the dispute even though the Polisario is granted assistance and asylum by the Algerians. It is widely anticipated that if the current OAU initiative does not lead to substantial progress towards a negotiated settlement by next June (when the 1981 OAU summit will take place) the Polisario will be admitted to the OAU. This may lead to increased material assistance to the Polisario and to further isolation of Morocco.

Further developments occurred during consideration of the Western Sahara issued by the UN General Assembly's fourth committee last month.

The resolution supported by Algeria passed easily, criticizing Moroccan occupation of the Western Sahara and calling for direct negotiation between the Polisario and Morocco leading to self-determination and "independence." By referring to "independence" and to the Polisario as "representative of the people of the Western Sahara" it seemed to us that resolution pre-judged the issue and to some degree contradicted the Wisemen recommendation for a referendum which would allow the inhabitants of the Western Sahara to express their own preferences. The Moroccans offered a resolution which supported the initiatives of the Wisemen Committee. We would have liked to see specific reference to the core elements of the Wisemen's recommendations. However, in a statement the Moroccan delegate said "Morocco is cooperating and will continue to cooperate diligently with the ad hoc committee to implement its mandate of Freetown, particularly as it relates to the free choice of the population." We considered this statement a significant step forward and, on the basis of it, supported the Moroccan draft resolution.

FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR NEGOTIATION

Although the Moroccan draft resolution was defeated by one vote, we followed up with bilateral discussions with both the Moroccans and Algerians to explore how the recommendations of the Wisemen could be implemented. We have also sought to

elicit from various members of the OAU their suggestions for maintaining the momentum set in train by the September resolutions of the OAU Wisemen Committee. There are a number of questions which might be usefully addressed in this regard:

How would a referendum be carried out?

How would one establish voting eligibility?

Which institutions would be best equipped to carry out a referendum?

Would it be useful for the OAU to establish a subcommittee of experts to work out some of these details?

We do not embrace any particular solution to the conflict, although the OAU call for a ceasefire and a referendum does appear to us as a useful basis upon which to move forward. As a result of my discussions with interested and concerned parties I note a heightened interest in accelerating the peace process. Compared with the situation a year ago, I believe that we can take some satisfaction in the progress that has been made:

The interested parties have met with the OAU subcommittee.

The complexities involved in reaching a peaceful solution have been brought out more clearly.

The OAU has laid down general principles which could serve as the basis for a settlement.

And most important, the interested parties seem to have come to an awareness of the urgency of embarking on negotiations as the only way out of a stalemate on the battlefield.

Nevertheless, the principal parties remain far apart on their demands. We believe a process of peace is required to bring about a convergence of views.

MILITARY SITUATION

While the military situation in the past year has improved for the Moroccans and they appear able to hold their control of the principal towns in the western Sahara, Polisario attacks continue. Thus, the war of attrition continues without any indication that either side has reason to hope for a military victory.

We have been particularly concerned about Polisario attacks deep into Morocco's southern provinces which in some instances could have shifted the locus of the fighting toward the Moroccan-Algerian border. In talks with both Algeria and the Polisario, we have attempted to discourage especially attacks outside of the disputed territory. There are some indications that our concern has been fruitful. Reports of increased Polisario movement in Mauritania and the role of Libya are also of concern to us. We do not believe that either Morocco or the Polisario has won—or can win—a decisive advantage on the battlefield. Therefore, our original premise that the war is unwinnable in any ultimate sense is still valid. That fact, of course, should be an added incentive for encouraging the interested parties to reach a compromise settlement.

STATUS OF U.S. ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO

I would like to end my remarks with a few comments on the status of U.S. arms deliveries to Morocco. With regard to the arms package which was approved earlier this year, consisting of 6 OV-10 reconnaissance aircraft, 20 F5-E fighter aircraft, and 24 helicopters, none of these items has yet been delivered to Morocco. There is some question whether the Moroccans are still interested in the purchase of the helicopters, and a delivery schedule is still pending. The first fighter aircraft deliveries should commence in April 1981. Morocco has made a request for the sale of 108 M-60 tanks and it is under review in the Department.

CONCLUSION

The Western Sahara conflict is a complex issue in which our North African friends are themselves divided. It is our hope that the United States will continue its role of encouraging the interested parties to concentrate on the negotiating process itself and that out of the give and take which such a process involves, a compromise settlement will emerge.

Mr. SOLARZ. Could you tell us, first of all, why the planes which we agreed to sell to Morocco last year, which were the subject of some controversy here in the Congress, have not yet been delivered?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They were never scheduled for delivery before early next year. Late January, early February would have been the

earliest deliveries that we would have made under the original schedule. So that issue has not arisen.

Mr. SOLARZ. For both the OV-10's and the helicopters?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That was the OV-10's. The helicopters, the Moroccans have either changed their minds about or wanted to study further. In any case, they are not active at the moment.¹

Mr. SOLARZ. Our impression at the moment is that the Moroccans do not want the helicopters.

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is my impression.

Mr. SOLARZ. How many OV-10's will they be getting?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Six.

Mr. SOLARZ. Have they requested anymore?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They are potentially interested in some more. We have no formal request.

Mr. SOLARZ. Who is paying for the OV-10's?

Mr. SAUNDERS. The Saudis have offered financial support.

Mr. SOLARZ. Now, I was told by Miss Lillian Wynn, who was a member of the delegation with whom you met sometime ago—I don't know if you recall her.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes, I do.

Mr. SOLARZ. She told me that you had said to this group that the reason the planes hadn't been delivered yet was because of me, that I had somehow been responsible for holding up these deliveries.

Mr. SAUNDERS. I did not say that.

Mr. SOLARZ. I appreciate the tribute to my abilities.

Mr. SAUNDERS. I wrote her a letter subsequently explaining—and I think I sent you a copy of it—the policy as we had worked it out together last year.

Mr. SOLARZ. As you know, I was opposed to the sale of the planes, but once the issue had been resolved, I moved on to other matters. So, I was somewhat surprised to hear this. I gather no such statement had been made.

Mr. SAUNDERS. No.

Mr. SOLARZ. Have there been any direct contacts between Morocco and the Polisario within the last year?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Not that we are aware of. Although the significant breakthrough of the year on that front was, of course, the fact that the Moroccans and the Polisario were at the same meeting of the Wisemen committee in September.

It was a meeting of all interested parties. The Moroccans had with them some representatives of Saharan organizations from the Western Sahara as well. They did not negotiate directly.

Mr. SOLARZ. Did they sit at the same table?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't think they did, actually, but they were there. They were part of the same conceptual group. They were willing to accept that proposition, that all interested parties should somehow work together.

Mr. SOLARZ. What is our view of the role the Soviet Union is playing, if any, in this ongoing conflict?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think it is the same as we discussed the last time we talked about this. I would take this issue on two levels, perhaps. Very specifically, the Polisario uses Soviet equipment that

¹ Morocco does not intend to buy the 24 MD 500 helicopters.

is not provided directly to them by the Soviet Union but reaches them through either Algeria or Libya. I think that is a fact which we all accept in common.

The other plane is the more difficult one to define, which we discussed after the last hearing on this subject; that is, the extent to which the Polisario is an instrument of the Soviet Union.

I would not call it an instrument of the Soviet Union in the sense that it is in any way susceptible to the direct manipulation of the Soviet Union. I do not believe it is. However, there are people in the Middle East, a number of friends of ours, that see the Middle East in terms of a new Soviet push, whether it be Syrian troops on the Jordanian border or South Yemen, Ethiopia, or in this area.

They look for those activities whose thrusts have directions in common with interests of the Soviet Union. Only in that sense would I relate the Soviet Union to this.

Mr. SOLARZ. Is it your view that the Soviet Union is providing arms to the Polisario through Algeria and Libya?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think my view is that Libya and Algeria are providing arms to the Polisario. Whether or not the Soviets have been supplying arms to those two countries in the form of an extra increment that goes for that purpose I have no way of knowing, but I don't take that for granted necessarily.

Mr. SOLARZ. I was in Moscow in October, and I had a number of discussions on the Western Sahara, among other issues. Soviet officials with whom I met, who deal with the question, gave me the very strong impression from their perspective that this is a very murky situation.

They have significant economic interests in Morocco, I think a multibillion dollar phosphate arrangement, and that they did not wish to become involved in the conflict, that they didn't want to prejudice their possibilities for good relations with all the countries in the area.

They seem somewhat embarrassed by the fact that in comparison to the aid they are providing other African liberation movements, in Namibia, Zimbabwe, and elsewhere, that here they had not been involved.

It wouldn't be the first time the Soviets gave one impression and tended to another, but does this sound to you like an accurate reflection of the situation from their perspective?

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is partly true because their economic relationships with Morocco have been on the uptrend in the last 6 months.

Mr. GOODLING. Would the gentleman yield on that point.

Would the Soviet Union not be able to control, then, the use Libya or Algeria would make of Russian-supplied arms?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't think they have the same kind of tight restrictions on transfer that we do, although I really don't know for sure.

Mr. GOODLING. But if they have that great an interest, can they? is the question I am asking.

Mr. SAUNDERS. If they had an interest in keeping arms away from the Polisario, I would assume they could. It does not seem to me they do have an interest in keeping arms away from the

Polisario. What you may have here is an in-between, a venting between arrangement.

As I say, I just don't know why there is an understanding that x amount of what goes to Libya will go to the Polisario, or whether they just have an unstated understanding that that will happen.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, is it our view that the Soviet Union approves of all of the arms transactions there which Colonel Qaddafi is engaged?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I have no way of knowing that.

Mr. SOLARZ. I mean, he has helped some pretty bizarre organizations that even the Soviet Union I think refrains from being identified with.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Sure.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do we have any new evidence about any Cuban military involvement with the Polisario?

Mr. SAUNDERS. The answer on that seems to be just about the same as it was a year ago.

Mr. SOLARZ. Which was we have no evidence?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We have always said there might be a few doctors or people like that, but no organized support of the military effort.

Mr. SOLARZ. What impact, if any, would you say the sale of the OV-10's to Morocco has had on our relationship with Algeria?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Not a great deal. The Algerians seem to have taken that in stride. Of course, they did voice their objections to it. They would voice their objections to any significant sale, but I think they are able to keep it in perspective.

Mr. SOLARZ. Has the sale had any impact on Morocco's attitude toward negotiations?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I believe so in a general way. It is not the sale of six airplanes per se. It is really the turnaround in the American relationship with Morocco that I stressed when I testified to that decision a year ago.

We were, as you know, in a period of deterioration in our relationships with Morocco, I think largely deriving from their sense that we were not prepared to cooperate with them in the fullest sense of helping them to preserve their security.

I think the significant part of the decision was not the exact quantities or the types of equipment so much as the fact that we had removed the blockage in our relationship, we were prepared to cooperate.

Mr. SOLARZ. Now, I was a little bit surprised that Algeria refrained from attending the American summit. I mean, the change in leadership in Algeria, the role they have played as intermediaries in the hostage dispute, a number of other things seem to suggest they might be moving in a somewhat more moderate direction in terms of their foreign policy.

How do you account for the fact that they elected to stay away?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Their answer is a very simple and straightforward one, that they could not afford to be at a summit where the PLO was not represented.

Mr. SOLARZ. What do you mean by could not afford?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They are my words, not theirs. They would not go to a summit where the PLO was not represented because the main focus of most of the Arab summit meetings is attention to the

Palestinian problem. They did not feel that that issue should be dealt with in the absence of the PLO.

Mr. SOLARZ. When you said they could not afford, that suggested they felt that would create political problems for them internally or externally.

Mr. SAUNDERS. No, that was my formulation. Probably not a very good one.

Mr. SOLARZ. As you know, the King spoke near the beginning of the year about his peace plan for 1980. This committee is waiting with some expectation to find out about the peace plan. Some members gratuitously analogize it to a peace plan of a Presidential candidate in this country over a decade ago.

On September 21 I am told that King Hassan said, and I am now quoting, "The military situation is developing in our favor every day. We think that we are going to win it. We are winning it. I have always wished 1980 to be the year of peace. I maintain that my wish is being realized little by little."

This would seem to imply the peace plan was a plan for military victory and through the establishment of a military victory, the establishment of peace.

Is this in fact what the peace plan was or is it something else? Have we heard anything about it?

Mr. SAUNDERS. He has still not unveiled the peace plan, so we have heard nothing about it. I would say two other things, though.

One is, even at the beginning of the year, we surmised that since Morocco at that time seemed to be getting the worst end of the military situation, the Moroccans would feel a need to rebalance that situation, to improve their general military position before they could do anything else.

I think that is in the process of being accomplished. In the course of the year the character of military action has changed to the point where the Moroccans appear to be in greater control, and they are now in the process of developing a defensive perimeter in the northwestern part of the Western Sahara. That is one point.

Second, if one can take the steps that have been taken during the fall, these modest steps, first with the OAU and then at the General Assembly, one can see at least the possible beginnings of laying a groundwork for a negotiated settlement.

I have no idea of knowing whether they are indeed parts of the master plan, but if one had to construct an apparent rationale behind Moroccan strategy for the year, it would go something like that.

Mr. SOLARZ. A year ago or so there were some people in the intelligence community and elsewhere who raised some serious questions about internal stability in Morocco. I think it would be helpful to get your assessment of the internal situation in Morocco today and whether the prospect for the political survival of the King have improved or declined over that period of time.

Mr. SAUNDERS. My impression would be that the stability of the regime has not declined during that period, that the economy is somewhat more stable. The drain from the war remains great. It is almost, but not quite, covered by Arab assistance.

I think there is one more proposition that needs to be stated here, that really also needed to be stated in our talk about the grand strategy.

Despite the change in the character of the fighting, I don't think anything has happened to change the basic proposition that we discussed a year ago; namely, that the war is not winable by either side in strictly military terms.

Therefore, coupling with that, your questions about stability, I still think that the objective has to be to find a way toward a negotiated settlement, but that the stability of the regime is such that that would be possible were the terms to emerge in a politically manageable way.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Goodling.

Mr. GOODLING. I have just a couple of questions. I was not here when you read your opening statement, so I may be asking you things you have already discussed during my absence.

We were talking about support of the Polisario by Libya and Algeria. Has that been on the increase or the decrease, or about the same as in the past?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Of course the Algerian support, it is a fact of where the Polisario live, and where they operate from and where their main communities are in Southwestern Algeria, outside of the small city of Tindouf. There are refugee camps, communities there. Most of the fighting population is elsewhere in the Western Sahara. But that infrastructural support is just there as a given as far as Algeria is concerned.

Now, in addition, I guess our impression is that support from Libya over the last 18 months has increased proportionately. The Polisario also apparently gets some financial support from maybe one or two of the gulf Arab states.

Mr. GOODLING. Where has the fighting been going on most recently. Is it in Morocco or is it in the Western Sahara?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Early in the year we had been concerned. It seemed to be not only within Morocco proper, but moving slightly northward up the Algerian Moroccan border to the point where it had the danger of potentially engaging Algerian and Moroccan forces across that international border. The fighting in that area subsided in the first third of the year. There has been some fighting in the southern part of Morocco proper during the summer. The present fighting, in so far as it is inside Morocco proper, seems to be concentrated around this new effort of the Moroccans to develop a defensive perimeter which I can show you on a map—essentially it is a perimeter that cuts down from Morocco proper into the Sahara, and then swings west to the coast. They are developing a defensive line there. And the Polisario has attacked inside Morocco proper as that line began to work its way down from Moroccan bases to the Saharan border. The work is going on now inside the Sahara. The fighting has tended to follow that down. The short answer to your question is there are still some attacks inside Morocco proper. The bulk of the fighting I guess is now concentrated around that work that I just described in the Sahara.

There is some indication that the Polisario may attempt to establish the position that they are not any longer attacking in Morocco

proper. The facts do not seem to bear that out at the moment. But maybe they are foreshadowing a trend of some sort.

Mr. GOODLING. What is the political lineup in Africa as far as other African states are concerned in relationship to the two opposing groups?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I guess there are two ways of measuring this. One is in terms of the United Nations General Assembly vote on the two resolutions that were put before the Fourth Committee of the Assembly this October. An Algerian resolution which called for self-determination and independence in the Western Sahara carried by a very large margin. Now that is of course the whole assembly population. But I think it is certainly reflected in Africa as well. A Moroccan resolution which welcomed the Wisemen's proposals, and was a sort of procedural resolution about how to get on with the process of moving toward a settlement, lost in that committee by one vote, 40-to-41.

Now, in Africa itself, I think the OAU in the July summit was very close to admitting to membership the Polisario's political organization, a state in exile. And that was staved off only by the agreement to have a meeting in September of the wise men which would bring together all interested parties. In other words, an effort to try to find a negotiated settlement, because other Africans recognized that an act of letting the Polisario state in would drive Morocco out, and they did not want to take a divisive step like that.

We can supply the exact numbers, but it has reached a point where a majority of the OAU would accept the membership of the Polisario state or government in exile.

Mr. GOODLING. Thank you.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you, Mr. Goodling.

Mr. Wolpe.

Mr. WOLPE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to pursue a bit further the question of the U.S. position with respect to several of the aspects of the Western Saharan conflict.

At the United Nations, during the recent debate, the U.S. delegate criticized the General Assembly resolution for its adopted position that the people of the Western Sahara have the right to self-determination and independence, on the grounds that it needed to be made clear that, I quote from the language of the U.S. delegate, "Independence is not the only appropriate outcome of the self-determination." I understand the U.S. delegate also opposed a call for direct negotiations with the Polisario, because that prejudged the question of who represents the people.

Could you clarify the American position with respect to the question of self-determination—specifically, the question of who is a proper representative of the people?

Mr. SAUNDERS. The resolution that we voted against, and about which we made the statement from which you are quoting, was a resolution which we felt tended to prejudge the outcome of what we feel should be a negotiated settlement by deciding that there should be an independent Saharan state, that there should be direct negotiations with the Polisario and so on. So we objected to it on procedural grounds.

On self-determination, the position that we took and reflected in our statement there is the same position that we take with regard to self-determination in Puerto Rico. And there are two points involved. One is that independence is not necessarily the outcome of an act of self-determination. It is quite apparent in Puerto Rico that there might be other very reasonable outcomes that people would prefer.

Mr. WOLPE. If I may pursue that, Mr. Secretary. My understanding of that resolution is that it reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence, not that it was affirming any specific statement as to the precise outcome of self-determination.

Mr. SAUNDERS. You just stated the outcome of the act of self-determination in the way you read that sentence. You said the right to self-determination and independence. The point is that the right to self-determination is not necessarily the right to independence. Independence is not for the people of Puerto Rico for instance the only possible outcome of an act of self-determination. They might choose statehood or commonwealth status or something else. And the same is true in an act of self-determination in the Western Sahara. The people of the Western Sahara according to Moroccan lights would have the right among other choices to choose their present relationship with Morocco, rather than independence.

Mr. WOLPE. What would be the American position if the people, in fact, through exercise of their right of self-determination decided to choose independence. Would we be supportive of that?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We are not here to judge in advance the outcome of an act that is supposed to be an act of free choice. It is a contradiction of the right of free choice for the United States to go around telling other people what their choices ought to be.

Mr. SOLARZ. Will the gentleman yield? My impression of our policy was that we would be prepared to accept whatever the outcome of an exercise in self-determination was. In other words, if the people choose to remain affiliated with Morocco, that would be acceptable to us. On the other hand, if they were given an opportunity to determine their own future, and they choose independence, that would be acceptable as well. Is that not a correct statement?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think that is not a correct statement. Because the other statement we make about self-determination with regard to Puerto Rico, and it applies to other cases as well, is that there is no one right instrument for the exercise of an act of self-determination. It can take place—and indeed if you examine the acts of self-determination since the U.N. Charter came into force in the late forties, you find acts of consultation, negotiation, referenda, elections, a whole variety of means. And as a matter of fact, one of the resolutions that applies to the Western Sahara, as you know, speaks of self-determination through consultation.

Mr. SOLARZ. I am not talking about the modalities for expressing the will of the people, whether it is a referendum or a convention or a visiting commission or whatever. The question is, whatever the mechanism for permitting the people of the area to determine what their future may be, if they choose independence, is that an outcome which is incompatible with our interests?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We would accept—I do not think it makes any difference whether it is incompatible or compatible with our interest. We have said that, (a) we want a negotiated settlement, which we think is the way you are going to have to go as a way of exercising—working toward the right of self-determination. Obviously, we would accept a negotiated settlement, whatever that might be.

Mr. WOLPE. If I could pursue the other part of the question I raised earlier with respect to the objection to the U.N. resolution on the grounds that there was a reference to the Polisario. My understanding is that the resolution clearly attempted not to prejudge that question by dropping the reference to the Polisario as “the representative of the Western Saharan people.”

Mr. SAUNDERS. Again, I think the point was, we did not think it was appropriate in the U.N. resolution to insist on a particular kind of negotiation. The OAU had already organized one meeting of all interested parties. It seemed to us that rather than insist that this party sit down with that party, that one should go back and let the OAU Wisemen get people together on whatever basis was workable. That was the way to proceed—rather than to have people sit in New York, and try to decree that from a distance. We had the same problem with this resolution that we have with a lot of resolutions in New York on the Arab-Israeli problem. The people sit there and try to put down principles about final arrangements when what you really need to do is to get people engaged in a process of negotiation where they can work out the mechanics of negotiating, can work out the right means of working out a final solution. The objection was on those broad grounds. Also, Mr. Draper points out that the Polisario is mentioned as the representative of the Saharan people in the resolution in paragraph 10.

Mr. WOLPE. My understanding is they took out the word “the.”

Mr. SAUNDERS. There are still people in the Western Sahara whom they do not represent.

Mr. WOLPE. Let me proceed to the last question I have, Mr. Chairman. What is the significance of the Moroccan pledge of cooperation with the OAU ad hoc committee’s mandate.

There was an expression, as I understand it, that this Moroccan statement of cooperation related to the free choice of the population. On that basis the United States supported the Moroccan draft resolution. At the same time, Moroccan officials made it clear that they were looking toward an OAU, and I think the words were, inspection and verification of the freedom and authenticity of the Saharan peoples’ choice of affiliation of Morocco, and not necessarily an impartial referendum including a choice of independence. The question I am asking is, if it is our view that the Moroccans are prepared at this point to accept an impartial referendum or not.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Before you came in we addressed that point. The Moroccan position is evolving and the reason we supported the resolution was to encourage that evolution. I don’t think they have reached the point where they are prepared at this moment to accept the referendum as you and I might define it.

They have, however, expressed willingness to cooperate with the OAU. The exact formulation which I read earlier is Morocco is

prepared to allow Africa and OAU to verify and authenticate, with the help of anyone they want to help them, an expression of the Saharan peoples' will. That is an evolution in their position which seems to us to give you something to work with.

They also, in addition to this, agreed to work with the OAU Wisemen's Committee to work out the mechanics of how you do that. In our view, once you get into the question of talking about the mechanics of how you do something, you have taken a significant step forward. You are by no means at a solution to the problem but you are better off getting people into this kind of process, and to that degree, we regarded that as progress.

Mr. WOLPE. Is there any evolution in their view that the Saharan people might remain defined as the 95 percent who lived in the Moroccan controlled areas, which would effectively exclude from the definition tens of thousands of people that claim to be Saharans, who are living in the Polisario camps in Algeria?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We have already had discussions with the Moroccans in which we have talked about exactly how you would define the population base for the determination of the will of the Saharan people. Obviously, the Moroccans would prefer to confine that exercise to those living in the Western Sahara.

The Polisario has a number that doesn't seem realistic because it is too large. Somewhere in there is a realistic population base and it isn't going to be easy to determine the just way of confining that population for this exercise. It is going to be one of the most difficult parts of the whole exercise, but the Moroccans are willing to talk about that now with the OAU.

Mr. SOLARZ. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Is it our position that anyone who can clearly establish their legitimacy as a Saharan ought to be able to participate in this exercise, even if they are not now living in the Western Sahara?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think that requires a good deal of study and discussion and we have the 1974 census.

Mr. SOLARZ. That is why we are having the hearing.

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is a good bit beyond anything that any of us have done to date. You have got the 1974 census, the Spanish census, as one base. Now, there may be ways of developing that but I don't think at this stage we know how to do that and that is what you would get experts from the OAU in to do.

Mr. SOLARZ. I think we have a vote on now. We will recess for a few minutes and then return.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Right.

[A short recess was taken.]

Mr. SOLARZ. I have returned—as someone else once said on another occasion. The hearing will resume.

Mr. Secretary, could you tell us what the status of the tank sale to Morocco is?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes, sir, we still have that under review in the State Department.

Mr. SOLARZ. Morocco has requested permission to buy 100 tanks?

Mr. SAUNDERS. 108.

Mr. SOLARZ. When was that request made?

Mr. SAUNDERS. During the early fall.¹

Mr. SOLARZ. And we haven't made any final decision?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is correct, we still have it under review.

Mr. SOLARZ. How many tanks do they have already?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We will provide the number.

[The following was subsequently submitted:]

The Moroccan Armed Forces have 54 M-48A3, 54 M-48A5, and 50 French AMX-13 tanks for a total of 158 tanks. The AMX-13 is a light tank which is obsolete. Morocco's moreover, are largely nonoperational.

Mr. SOLARZ. And why haven't we made a decision yet?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We just want to take our time to make that decision and there are a lot of factors involved.

Mr. SOLARZ. It is not simply for technical or reasons of bureaucratic delay, there are substantive considerations pro and con?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think I would rather not in open session talk about the internal deliberations of the executive branch.

Mr. SOLARZ. For what purpose has Morocco requested the tanks?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They for some time have felt the need for the normal equipment of self-defense. I recall, for instance, when I spoke with the king in the summer a year ago, he described Morocco's needs for defense along its border with Algeria. This kind of equipment would be appropriate to the conventional forces to defend Morocco—

Mr. SOLARZ. Is it our impression Morocco wants these tanks for the purpose of defense of Morocco proper?

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is certainly my impression, because this kind of equipment, as I understand it, is not really appropriate to the kind of guerrilla desert warfare that is being conducted in the Sahara.

Mr. SOLARZ. They already have American tanks?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes sir.

Mr. SOLARZ. About 100 or so?

Mr. DRAPER.² 108.

Mr. SOLARZ. And are they using any of those tanks in the Western Sahara?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Not in the Western Sahara. As of my last understanding they were arrayed along the Algerian border, mostly up north.

Mr. SOLARZ. None of the American tanks are being used in the Western Sahara?

Mr. DRAPER. I think some of those M-48 tanks have been in the Western Sahara but have not been kept there or used there effectively—

Mr. SOLARZ. What were they doing then?

Mr. DRAPER. They can be used in static positions. They could dig in, but the classic use of tanks in a mobile fashion in the Sahara hasn't been suitable.

Mr. SOLARZ. Under the terms of our military agreements with Morocco, if you gave them the tanks would they be entitled to use them in the Western Sahara?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Well, you know the history of our exchanges with them on the F-5 aircraft. That position, as you know, again from

¹ The letter was delivered to the State Department in August 1980.

² Morris Draper, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

previous exchanges in the subcommittee, was modified a year and a half ago. I think the answer is that they would be able to.

Mr. SOLARZ. I want to make it clear I certainly have no problem nor do I think any of the other members of the committee, with providing Morocco with military equipment for the defense of Morocco itself. We certainly have a stake in the stability in north Africa, and Morocco has by and large been a country which has been friendly to us, and to the extent there are any external threats, I think we can legitimately help them deal with those threats, but the point at which American weapons are used, primarily in the context of the ongoing war in the Western Sahara, raises issues of a different character.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Our judgment certainly is that whether or not a few tanks might be used in a static position in the Western Sahara from time to time, that these tanks are being requested for conventional use in Morocco proper and would be really only appropriate militarily for use in that context.

Mr. SOLARZ. This is what the Moroccans told us?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is correct.

Mr. SOLARZ. They have said quite clearly they do not want the tanks for use in the Western Sahara but for the defense of Morocco?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't know if that has been said that explicitly, because they don't accept the distinction, of course, but they have spoken in terms of their units along the international border.

Mr. SOLARZ. Has Morocco completely incorporated the part of Western Sahara under control of Mauritania into Morocco itself?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Administratively, yes. In terms of the defense, of military action that is being taken, obviously it is concentrated in the far north.

Mr. SOLARZ. I was under the impression they incorporated it militarily and governmentally and administratively as well, and that it was considered what, the 37th province of Morocco. Is that their view?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is my understanding.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do we accept that or reject it?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Well, our position applies to the entire Sahara. We do not accept Moroccan sovereignty in the Sahara.

Mr. SOLARZ. My impression of American policy toward the Western Sahara is that our overriding objective is to facilitate an end to the war?

Mr. SAUNDER. And a negotiated settlement which will perpetuate whatever peace results from the end of the fighting.

Mr. SOLARZ. And that in a certain sense is more important than the exact character of the negotiated solution. Obviously if the war is to end it will have to be on a basis acceptable to all of the parties concerned, otherwise the war won't end. Since no one can oppose a peace, it is our view that the negotiated end to the war itself is more important than the particular substance of the agreement.

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is true. We have taken no position nor do I see any value in taking a position on the way a settlement works out. What is important is that it be a settlement each party is willing to live with.

Mr. SOLARZ. If all parties could agree, for example, on an end to the war, which provided, say, for autonomy in the people of the Western Sahara within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty, we would not object to that?

Mr. SAUNDERS. If all parties agreed to any solution, we would not object.

Mr. SOLARZ. Similarly, if all parties agreed to some exercise in self-determination, which led to independence, we would not object to that either.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Whatever the solution would be we would not object provided it was a genuinely negotiated solution involving all parties.

Mr. SOLARZ. What is our assessment of the Polisario?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Essentially that is a nationalist movement. I think that is a dominant philosophy.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do you see in it any Marxist-Leninist movement?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't have that impression.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do we see it as a cutting edge of Soviet expansionism in Morocco?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I would not describe it that way. It may be what it is doing—if it is destabilizing Morocco—it might at some point serve Soviet purposes, but that is a very difficult distinction to make that we have discussed on several other occasions.

Mr. SOLARZ. Do we believe that if the Saharan state were established the Polisario would invite the Soviet Union in to establish a base?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't think that is a foregone conclusion, but no one can know at this stage of the game what might happen farther down the road. Nations have a way of looking for help where they can find it. If they have difficulty, then one cannot preclude that, but one does not have to take that as a foregone conclusion either.

Mr. SOLARZ. I understand that in the course of the last year, King Hassan has continued his opposition to the Camp David agreement; is that true?

Mr. SAUNDERS. He is not one of the most vociferous opponents. I think what he has objected to is the alienation of Egypt that has resulted from what seems to be an Egyptian-Israeli treaty which has not gone on to include the Palestinians and other elements of a settlement. But he has certainly not done anything to undercut the process. He has voiced his views about it as have a number of others.

Mr. SOLARZ. Has he maintained diplomatic relations with Egypt?

Mr. SAUNDERS. No.

Mr. SOLARZ. He is chairman of the ALCO Committee—ALQODS (Jerusalem)?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is correct.

Mr. SOLARZ. In that capacity he has called for Arab sovereignty over East Jerusalem?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes.

Mr. SOLARZ. What has been his position on the Palestinian question, does he favor self-determination for Palestinians?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes.

Mr. SOLARZ. Does he favor an independent Palestinian state or a Palestinian entity in Jordan, or has he not expressed himself on that aspect of the problem?

Mr. SAUNDERS. The formal Arab position has been an independent Palestinian state.

Mr. SOLARZ. He recognizes the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes, as do all the other Arab countries.

Mr. SOLARZ. Has he come out in favor of Iraq in the conflict between Iraq and Iran?

Mr. SAUNDERS. He has tilted toward Iraq, but I am not aware of his having gone out of his way to express a strong view.

Mr. SOLARZ. Has he promised Iraq any future Moroccan nuclear fuel?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Not that I have heard of.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Draper or any of your associates?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Why don't we provide a classified answer to that if we may?

Mr. SOLARZ. Sure.

Mr. SOLARZ. What is your estimate as to the number of people there are in Tindouf?

Mr. SAUNDERS. 120,000. Well, you mean in the—

Mr. SOLARZ. In the refugee camps?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We will provide the exact number.

[The following was subsequently provided:]

Population of Tindouf refugee camps: There is no consensus about the number of refugees in the camps of the Tindouf region. The UNHCR has not been permitted regular access to the refugee camps nor has it been allowed to conduct a census. Estimates of the number of refugees have ranged widely in the past 5 years from a low of 12,000 to a high of 120,000. Independent Western visitors gave credence to the latter figure in 1980.

Mr. SOLARZ. Mr. Secretary, I have just been handed a quotation here from the King on September 2 of this year, and let me read it to you and then you can respond to it, because it relates to the question of nuclear fuel. He says—someone asked the question to the King—"How does Your Majesty assess the Zionist campaign against Iraq's technological program"?

Answer: This is from a foreign broadcast information service.

I can't see why, in addition to racial discrimination, the world should accept nuclear discrimination. Morocco is on its way to becoming a nuclear power because it has the raw material, the uranium phosphates. By the end of 1981 we will have produced 2,281 tons of uranium.

On such a day, I do not see why (Morocco?) should not become a nuclear power, but a peaceful nuclear power. If one day Morocco produces uranium and Morocco is asked by Iraq to supply it uranium for its reactor, then it will be a pleasure to supply it uranium knowing very well that Iraq is a country that abides by its international law.

I am not quite sure how the presence of Iraqi troops on Iranian territory is evidence of the Iraqi's desire to comply with international law, but leaving that aside, do you have any response to this statement?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think we will provide an answer on the whole question on a classified basis.

Mr. SOLARZ. Can you answer in public session whether Morocco in fact does have nuclear fuel?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I would prefer to provide a factual answer. I am not aware that Morocco is today a major producer of uranium.

Mr. SOLARZ. I assume it is our policy to do everything we can to discourage the development of a nuclear capacity in Iraq?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Certainly is and has been.

Mr. SOLARZ. And that we would view very seriously efforts by any country to provide Iraq with a capacity to become a nuclear power?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is correct.

Mr. SOLARZ. Thank you.

Mr. SAUNDERS. You are talking about nuclear weapons?

Mr. SOLARZ. Yes, well right, if you have the nuclear fuel and nuclear reactor and you are not subject to safeguards, you then have the capacity to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Do we have any idea how many of the refugees in Tindouf are not Saharan but are Saharan refugees from elsewhere in the area?

Mr. SAUNDERS. We have no basis on which to make those distinctions. You really have to conduct a very detailed census there and that just has not been done.

Mr. SOLARZ. We were talking a little earlier about the problems of conducting a referendum in the Western Sahara and you indicated one possibility might be to use the U.N. Spanish census of 1974 as a basis. My understanding is that those records have been maintained and they contain within them the names and identities of people, and that it could constitute the basis for an electoral register; is that the case?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is our understanding as well. You would have to go back and just see what that represented as one of the first steps and in any such exercise, of course, would have to be to select those people who would go back and conduct a review whose fairness would be accepted by both parties.

Mr. SOLARZ. Morocco, up until the present time, refuses to meet directly with the Polisario, am I correct in that?

Mr. SAUNDERS. That is correct, although there was this first step last September.

Mr. SOLARZ. Is the Polisario willing to meet with Morocco?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They would be.

Mr. SOLARZ. In our view, do we favor direct talks between Morocco and the Polisario?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I think we always favor, it if it is politically possible, direct talks. We have worked very hard to establish those in a number of situations. We are experiencing the difficulties that one experiences when one doesn't have direct talks and current exchanges, with Iran today.

Mr. SOLARZ. What is the basis of your conclusions that the Polisario has been recruiting non-Saharan people to its ranks and that there has been increased Polisario movement in Mauritania?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Again, we just don't have the kind of statistics that permit solid judgments of that kind.

Mr. SOLARZ. Have the Moroccans offered us any evidence to substantiate their claims that the Polisario consists of a collection of sort of Saharan mercenaries and people who have a variety of axes to grind, none of which would have anything to do with the Sahara?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Their basic argument is that the large discrepancies in numbers, the discrepancies between the number of people who are known to live in the Sahara in the early seventies and the hundreds of thousands who were said to have been Saharans outside, obviously there is a large discrepancy there and just exactly where the discrepancy all comes from would take some hard work to determine.

Mr. SOLARZ. Indeed.

According to the Defense Security Assistance Agency, there were by the middle of this year about 178 U.S. Government contract personnel in Morocco in connection with our arms supply relationship with them. This was the greatest number of people we had in such a capacity in any Third World country other than Saudi Arabia. Is there some reason which accounts for the fact that Morocco is No. 2?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't know the exact answer to that. My experience has been that those numbers ebb and flow depending on training programs that are necessary with the introduction of equipment. I will ask Defense to provide you with a breakdown on what those people are doing there.

[The following was subsequently provided:]

U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL IN MOROCCO

In Morocco there are currently about 40 military personnel: 10 in the Defense Attache's Office, 12 with the Moroccan-U.S. Liaison Office (MUSLO), which administers the FMS program, and the Marine Security guards at Rabat and Casablanca. At the moment there are no Military Training Teams (MTT) in Morocco; their number fluctuates from none up to around 75 depending on the nature of our arms deliveries. The duration of an MTT assignment also varies but is limited to no more than six months. About 100 contractor technicians (non-government, non-military) have been working in Morocco for several years installing Westinghouse's aerial radar defense network which is almost completed. Their numbers will drop considerably in 1981 as the Westinghouse project phases out.

Mr. SOLARZ. The tank sale would not require any additional advisers or training personnel or anybody like that, I assume?

Mr. SAUNDERS. I don't know, I would think they might. It is a new item of equipment.

Mr. SOLARZ. What tanks were we considering selling them?

Mr. SAUNDERS. They have requested M-60.

Mr. SOLARZ. What, A-3, A-1?

Mr. SAUNDERS. A-3.

Mr. SOLARZ. That is the latest model we have, right?

Mr. SAUNDERS. Yes.

Mr. DRAPER. Yes sir, M-60, but the M-60 production line is going to end.

Mr. SOLARZ. Are there any other Middle East countries besides Israel we have sold the M-60A-3 to?

Mr. DRAPER. Egypt.

Mr. SOLARZ. Finally, what is the basis for your judgment that from a military point of view Morocco is doing better now than it was a year ago?

Mr. SAUNDERS. There was a major engagement which I think the Moroccans felt really tested their ability to control their own territory. There appeared, because of the incursion, the possibility anyway that the Polisario would be able to move into Morocco proper and hold mountainous portions of Morocco proper for some

period of time and stave off the Moroccan military. Out of the engagement, Morocco ultimately succeeded.

I think the Moroccans have developed new techniques and new methods of command and control. Since that time, they have managed to be on the offensive and managed not to get themselves into a difficult defensive position again. They have just performed better in each engagement and gradually I think are in the process of moving the incursions into Morocco proper back toward the border.

Mr. SOLARZ. One of the problems in the past from the Moroccan point of view has been the inadequacy of their command and control procedures. Is more flexibility being given to commanders on the spot to respond in a way, best way they see fit, or does the King still have to sign off?

Mr. SAUNDERS. My impression is from our military experts, that there have been significant improvements in command and control and that a lot more is being done on the ground by commanders. I am not a military expert.

Mr. SOLARZ. Have the Libyans been more involved with the Polisario over the course of the last year vis-a-vis Algeria.

Mr. SAUNDERS. It is my impression proportionately, Libyan aid has increased vis-a-vis the aid of others like Algeria. I can't quantify that but our impression is the Libyans have been more active in the past year.

Mr. SOLARZ. Well, we had hoped to have an executive session with the CIA after your testimony, but in order to go into closed session, I think we need five members, four, and as I look around, I don't see them, so let me take this opportunity to thank you very much, Mr. Secretary, and Mr. Draper, for your coming. I think this has been a helpful update and I don't know what the future has in store for either or both of you, but I certainly wish you well and I am sure our paths will cross in one capacity or another.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Thank you.

Mr. SOLARZ. Perhaps the people from the agency who are here might meet me in my office right after this vote and I can talk with you over there. OK, thank you.

Mr. SAUNDERS. Thank you very much.

Mr. SOLARZ. The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:40 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.]

