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## House Committee on Foreign Affairs: Morocco Advances North Africa

Washington, D.C. (June 6, 2007) Today in a House Committee on Foreign Affairs hearing entitled "U.S. Policy Challenges in North Africa," Chairman Tom Lantos (D-CA) strongly backed Morocco's approach to peace in the region.

Chairman Lantos stated, "[f]or a generation, a frustrating stalemate has stymied peace between Morocco and the Sahrawi population of Western Sahara. (...) But the next generation (...) will grow up mercifully free of an armed conflict that stains their daily existence and limits their future. This will happen if the Polisario is wise enough to accept the reasonable and realistic offer currently on the table."

At the hearing, Congressman Lantos cited a letter from former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other foreign policy experts to President Bush supporting Morocco's effort to achieve peace in North Africa, especially as it relates to ending the 30-year conflict over the Western Sahara.

The letter stated, "[b]y giving the people of the Western Sahara a true voice in their future through the full benefits of autonomy as presented by Morocco, a credible political solution can be achieved. Morocco's commitment merits the support of the international community and we must ensure that its neighbors assume their responsibility for contributing to [the resolution of this dispute]."

Said Robert Holley, executive director of the Moroccan American Center for Policy, "Morocco has worked hard to move the region forward both politically and economically. These efforts are exemplified by Morocco's recent peace initiative for the Western Sahara. This initiative has been well-received by many countries, including the United States. With continued encouragement from the U.S., Morocco can help to create a more stable and prosperous North Africa."

At today's hearing, Ambassador David C. Welch said that the Department of State "welcomed Morocco's recent initiative to resolve this dispute, [is] encouraged that it has spurred discussion, and believe[s] that it has created an opportunity for Morocco and the Polisario to come to an agreement on this long simmering problem. [The Department of State] consider[s] the Moroccan proposal to provide real autonomy for the Western Sahara serious and credible."

Adoption of the initiative would work to create a stable Maghreb region and combat the spread of terrorism, as well as end the humanitarian crisis now faced by over 80,000 refugees from the Western Sahara. By focusing on bringing peace and stability to the region, Morocco is safeguarding a vital region that is of strategic importance to U.S. foreign policy.

For more information, please visit [www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com](http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.com).

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June 6, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President:

We applaud the support of your Administration for the adoption of Resolution 1754 by the United Nations Security Council on April 30, 2007, which incorporates the historic initiative by Morocco to end the conflict in the Western Sahara through direct negotiations. This new direction for solving the crisis is in large part the result of your efforts and encouragement.

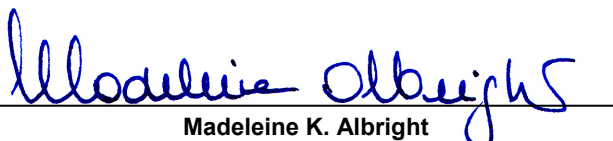
As the first country to officially recognize the United States in 1777, Morocco has been an historic and reliable ally to our great nation, and we encourage you to continue this cooperation in the challenging months ahead as the negotiations are inaugurated.

Recent terrorist attacks in Morocco and Algeria show that we cannot afford to continue to ignore the problems of this region. Failure to resolve this conflict jeopardizes international stability, our fight against terrorism, and economic integration efforts in the region.


By giving the people of the Western Sahara a true voice in their future through the full benefits of autonomy as presented by Morocco, a credible political solution can be achieved. Morocco's commitment merits the support of the international community and we must ensure that its neighbors assume their responsibility for contributing to the success of these negotiations, as called for in UNSC Resolution 1754.

Mr. President, we know that with your encouragement and support Morocco has courageously shown its leadership with this initiative. Your commitment can make possible a solution to this lingering issue and reaffirm our bipartisan support to a realistic and lasting peace in North Africa.

Sincerely,



**Madeleine K. Albright**  
Former United States Secretary of State



**Frank Charles Carlucci III**  
Former United States Secretary of Defense



**Mickey Kantor**  
Former United States Secretary of Commerce and  
Former United States Trade Representative



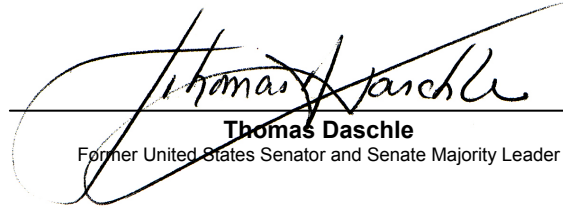
**Hazel R. O'Leary**  
Former United States Secretary of Energy



**Wesley Clark**  
Former NATO Supreme Allied Commander



**Ben Gilman**  
Former Member, United States House of Representatives and  
Chairman, House Committee on International Relations



**Thomas Daschle**  
Former United States Senator and Senate Majority Leader



**Thomas R. Pickering**  
Former United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and  
Former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Russia, India,  
Israel, El Salvador, Nigeria, and Jordan



**Martin Indyk**  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern  
Affairs and Former United States Ambassador to Israel



**Edward S. Walker Jr.**  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern  
Affairs and Former United States Ambassador to Israel, Egypt, and the  
United Arab Emirates



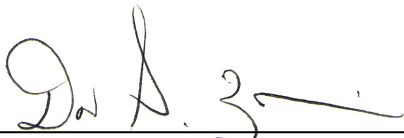
**Thomas Nassif**  
Former United States Ambassador to Morocco and Deputy Assistant  
Secretary of State for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and  
South and Central Asian Affairs



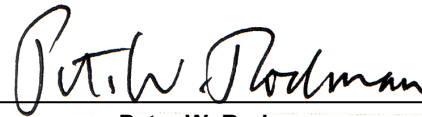
**Michael Ussery**  
Former United States Ambassador to Morocco and Deputy Assistant  
Secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and South and Central  
Asian Affairs



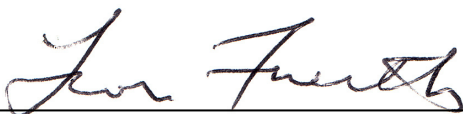
**Frederick Vreeland**  
Former United States Ambassador to Morocco and Deputy Assistant  
Secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and  
South and Central Asian Affairs



**Dov Zakheim**  
Former Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and  
Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Defense



**Peter W. Rodman**  
Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs



**Leon Fuerth**  
Former National Security Advisor to Vice President Albert A. Gore Jr.