

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 29, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the ongoing conflict in Western Sahara. Despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice denying Morocco any sovereignty over the territory and upholding the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination, international law continues to be ignored.

The United Nations (UN) has reaffirmed the right of the Sahrawis to self-determination and established the UN's mission for the referendum in the Western Sahara (MINURSO) in 1991 with the goal of organizing and conducting a referendum in which the people of Western Sahara will choose between independence or integration into Morocco. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent on MINURSO, but unfortunately, Morocco, with the support of the French government in the Security Council, has frustrated all efforts by the UN to carry out a free, fair and transparent referendum.

In 1997, former Secretary of State James Baker was appointed as Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary General. After seven long years of negotiations, he presented a compromise that was unanimously endorsed by the UN Security Council, accepted by the Polisario Front on behalf of the Sahrawis, but was rejected by Morocco.

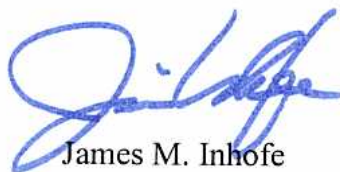
According to recent reports, there is an attempt to bring a so-called solution which claims to bring "autonomy to the territory". This actually represents a flagrant violation of international law and a denial of the right to self-determination for the Sahrawi people. The right to self-determination is a core value of the United States of America and we believe your Administration should not associate itself with this violation of a fundamental human right.

MINURSO was entrusted by the international community with organizing the referendum and, if its responsibility is to be changed, we should reconsider whether the United States taxpayers should continue to finance a UN operation that violates international law. Furthermore, we regret that past attempts to include human rights monitoring as part of the MINURSO mandate, which were in reaction to the violence against the Sahrawis by Moroccan authorities, were blocked by France at the UN

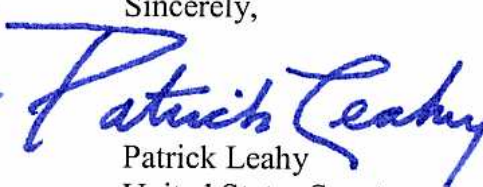
Security Council, and we encourage the US mission at the UN to pursue this objective at the next UN Security Council meeting regarding Western Sahara.

It is our hope that you and your Administration will uphold the right to self-determination in Western Sahara, and by doing so, will advance the just and lasting solution that will bring peace and stability to that part of the world.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe
United States Senate



Patrick Leahy
United States Senate



Russell Feingold
United States Senate

cc: Honorable Condoleezza Rice,
Secretary of State
Honorable Stephen Hadley,
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Honorable Alejandro Wolff,
Acting US Ambassador to the United Nations