



Western Sahara. Shameless Realism at the United Nations

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After its blessing to Kosovo's independence, the United Nations could be tempted to make a new exception in the application of international law - this time to solve the Western Sahara conflict. Resolution 1813 approved on April 30 by the Security Council resorts to the application of international law, based not on what the law says but by what it is convenient to the great powers that are currently members of the Security Council.

This shameless realism must be interpreted when it is about the Western Sahara conflict, due to the solution that Morocco is trying to impose since the Spanish colony's invasion in 1975 in order to avoid the self-determination referendum, according to which, by right, the Sahrawi people should be able to vote between independence or the definitive annexation to its Northern neighbor.

Recently, the U.N.'s own special envoy for Western Sahara, Dutchman Peter Van Walsum, has joined the chorus of allies and supporters defending the aggressor's annexationist theses, when he declared that the territory's independence was not a "realist solution." The State Department in Washington

has also gone along these lines when its spokesmen declared that "an independent Sahrawi state is not a realist option" and that, they consider instead as the "only" realist solution that the Sahrawis settle for some sort of autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty.

As a result, no wonder that the Moroccan government has been elated when reading the text of a resolution recommending the parties to have a "realist vision" and a "spirit of compromise." The calls to realism carry implicitly the message that each side must be ready to give up its aspirations, and in this case, the Sahrawis have no other choice but giving up its right to self-determination - a right that the United Nations recognized the Sahrawi people have. As the South African ambassador warned - this country was presiding over the Security Council when the resolution was approved - what the United Nations is saying to the Sahrawi people is that "if you are weak, you have to accept anything," even if the truth and the law are on your side. That is bad because what is perfectly valid for the Sahrawis may also be valid for weaker parties in other conflicts. ¿What about if realism were to become the preferred solution and Pal-

estonians were told exactly that regarding Israel?

Naturally, no one would come up with such a suggestion at the United Nations, at least for now, about applying realism as a solution for the Palestinian conflict. However, in a less publicized case such as the Sahrawi conflict, the possibility that the Polisario Front could accept those recommendations would mean avoiding the annoying nuisance of having to admit the scandalous failure of applying a peace plan whose sole complication has been the shameless undermining effort by Morocco since the very first day when the U.N. deployed its Blue Helmets to help guard Western Sahara. The effort carried out by the United Nations in order to avoid condemning this flagrant disobedience constitutes such a scandal that, by itself, it should be enough as a motive to dissuade any state engaged in conflict to go to the United Nations to find a solution to its problem – unless it counts on the support of the great powers.

The makings of Resolution 1813 is an example of the enormous advantage enjoyed by those who in spite of having the law against them can nonetheless count on powerful friends to compensate for the misfortune – the Franco-American honeymoon after the anti-American irritation orchestrated by Chirac's "No to War," has protected Morocco against the strenuous efforts of non-permanent Security Council members, South Africa, and Costa Rica. They have tried to balance the U.N.'s shameless realism alluding to

constant human rights violations by King Mohammed who is trying to make sure Western Sahara integrates to his Greater Morocco project. Nevertheless, it has not worked. Arbitrary detentions, torture and the disappearance of persons are traits practiced by Moroccan occupation forces, and they are commonplace in Western Sahara as a part of the dose of realism that the Sahrawis will have to stomach if they do not want to be accused by the United Nations of undermining peace efforts.

And Spain, what kind of role is it playing in such an unfair absurdity? Judging by its collaboration in drafting the resolution and the silence with which it has accepted the arguments of pro-Moroccan realism – can it be it is part of the Alliance of Civilizations ideology? – by simply allowing France and the United States decide. Everything is being done in the name of good friendly relations with Morocco – a country that just has demands – to avoid that King Mohammed starts another Green March – this time against Ceuta and Melilla. When the main goal is to keep the pacifist honor immaculate, the best defense is to avoid conflict. That is to say, leaving the Sahrawis stranded and shamelessly cooperating with breaching international law – the same international law that Spanish Socialists claim to defend.... Because the U.N.'s shameless realism regarding Western Sahara is really immoral, illegal and illegitimate.

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