

events intruding, notably the battle for Cuito Cunavale which raged during the period of negotiations. This is also the most controversial aspect of his interpretation of the constructive engagement era.

For many analysts the battle for Cuito Cunavale is pivotal to understanding the Namibian independence settlement. They argue that the M.P.L.A. forces, backed by Cuba, withstood a Unita/S.A.D.F. siege to hold this strategic town, and that they then threatened to inflict a major defeat on the South Africans. The ability of Cuban troops to operate in southern Angola, and the decisive shift in air superiority towards the M.P.L.A., convinced the South African military that continued control of southern Angola was impossible, and that a negotiated settlement to Namibia's independence was imperative. For Crocker, Cuito Cunavale was of no strategic importance to either Unita and/or the S.A.D.F. Their objective was merely to prevent the Angolan and Cuban forces from breaking out of the town. The S.A.D.F. was never threatened with defeat, and the 'legend' of Cuito Cunavale was created by Fidel Castro and sold to the gullible liberal press. Castro's lie was largely uncontested because it allowed the Cubans the escape route they needed to achieve 'peace without losers'.

This difference of interpretation reflects both the weakness and strength of Crocker's book. It focuses on the diplomatic process from the personal perspective of the Assistant Secretary of State, and minimises the importance of other factors – local, regional, and international, as well as political, economic, and military – which impinged upon, and were shaped by, the strategy of constructive engagement. The strength of *High Noon in Southern Africa* is that it assists us to understand these events by providing the definitive insider's perspective on U.S. diplomacy and regional engagement.

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Le Sahara occidental: enjeu maghrébin by ABDELKHALEQ BERRAMDANE

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The conflict in the Western Sahara has now lasted for almost two decades, and despite the presence of the *Mission des Nations Unies pour le référendum au Sahara occidental* (known as Minurso) in the disputed territory, the U.N.-sponsored referendum did not take place as expected in 1992. Unfortunately, the process of decolonisation, for various reasons, is far from being completed and there is little hope that the stalemate will be broken in the near future. It remains to be seen whether, and under what conditions, the referendum will be held by mid-1994, as recently urged by the U.N. Security Council.

Le Sahara occidental: enjeu maghrébin traces the origins and evolution of the desert war between Morocco and the *Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y Río de Oro* (Polisario Front) within the regional and international contexts, and reviews the rôles played by those involved directly and indirectly in the struggle. Given the claim made in the preface that 'despite his Moroccan origin' Abdelkhaleq Berramdane has been able 'to transcend any

feeling of belonging or of fallacious identity', and to provide an in-depth and sober analysis (p. 6), one would have expected a 'neutral' yet authoritative study. The well-informed reader will be quite disappointed.

In fact, one of the major problems faced by this French-based scholar has been how to provide an objective account of the genesis and development of the war given his clear attachment to Morocco's claims. In the introduction he states that 'the Cherifian kingdom [Morocco] wants to find again its roots and memory. It refuses to lose the Western Sahara when it has already lost Mauritania, which it had claimed for many years' (p. 11). Throughout Part 1, 'Le Maghreb divisé', the author betrays his sympathy for the Kingdom's irredentist claims by his deliberate choice of language. For instance, he says that, starting in 1974, Morocco sought an entente with Spain to recover its southern territory. Elsewhere he argues that whereas Algeria strove to encourage independence for the Western Sahara, 'Morocco and Mauritania were defending *their* territorial integrity' (p. 52).

Unmistakably, Berramdane's main target in Algeria. One is led to believe that the Western Sahara conflict was mainly created by President Houari Boumédiène (1965–78) and, to a lesser extent, by Libya. From the author's point of view, Algeria sought regional hegemony and also needed to expand. Thus, by supporting Sahrawi independence, Algeria attempted to make Western Sahara a 'reserve of minerals for its industry' and to gain access to the Atlantic (p. 56), a thesis long held by Moroccan officials. Indeed, Algeria appears as a Machiavellian 'super' power capable not only of outmanoeuvring Moroccan diplomacy, but also of convincing the majority in the Organisation of African Unity (O.A.U.), the Non-Aligned Movement, and the U.N. General Assembly of its thesis on the Western Sahara. Although the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (S.A.D.R.) was consequently recognised by 75 countries, one-third of these are dismissed as 'micro-states' (p. 71, fn. 36). According to Berramdane, Algeria's strategy was to keep the Sahrawi dossier in the hands of the O.A.U. and to force Morocco to negotiate with Polisario. Not only does he argue that the opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice was ambiguous, but also that the admission of the S.A.D.R. to the O.A.U. was illegal. Further, the author states, without providing any proof, that Algeria encouraged Polisario in the 1970s to take French nationals in Mauritania and Spanish fishermen off the Sahrawi coasts as hostages in order to put pressure on both France and Spain.

Part 2, 'Les grandes puissances partagées', reveals few if any new insights into the rôle of the outside powers. There is an excellent analysis of the often contradictory policies pursued by Spain and France in the Maghreb designed to keep their presence and preserve their vital interests. The strategic concerns of the United States are discussed extensively, but the regionalist versus globalist views within successive Administrations deserved more analysis. Furthermore, the recent active rôle played by the American Congress, which has favoured a rapid and just resolution of the conflict, has been totally overlooked. Nor is there any mention of the now well-established fact that the United States put pressure on Spain to cede Western Sahara to King Hassan II, thus leading to the November 1975 tripartite accords between Spain, Morocco, and Mauritania.

Although the author used U.S. Government sources extensively, no references are made to any of the numerous and valuable academic studies on either U.S. foreign policy in general or towards the Western Sahara in particular. The same observation applies to the chapter on 'La circonspection de l'Union soviétique'. Despite having stated earlier that Algeria had turned to the Eastern Bloc and that Morocco had renewed its allegiance to the West, the author does not analyse Soviet–Algerian relations, and their relevance to the conflict and to Soviet policy towards the Maghreb in general. There are no references to academic studies on the subject either.

Part 3, 'Le Maroc engagé', though very informative, is really an elaboration of Berramdane's earlier book, *Le Maroc et l'Occident* (Paris, Karthala, 1987), being limited to a discussion of those actions taken in the Middle East and Africa to further the Kingdom's interest and those of the West, whose support on the Western Sahara is badly needed. What is particularly curious, to say the least, is that the Sahrawis themselves are totally ignored: no space has been devoted to the tactics of their leadership or the merits of their cause, let alone their long-standing suffering. If the author's aim has been to perpetuate the idea that the Western Sahara issue is merely a conflict between Algeria and Morocco, it should be noted that this was publicly refuted by King Hassan himself in July 1987.

Le Sahara occidental: enjeu maghrébin holds Algeria responsible for having helped 'to create suddenly a people out of the sands', who having been strongly armed and supported on the international scene cannot now be abandoned (p. 100). Indeed, in the book's short and disappointing 'Conclusion générale' it is claimed that Algeria has 'mobilised its entire people against another people, unanimous in its claims to defend the rights of a third people that it was first necessary to dig up from the sands' (p. 342) – a statement that sums up the author's unspoken political stance. It is unfortunate that a wealth of researched material has been used in such a way as to support his own and Morocco's position. And, even if he seems to regret the delay in the holding of a referendum on self-determination on the very last page (p. 345), Berramdane is silent about the reasons which have caused such a stalemate and impeded the peaceful and definitive resolution of this long-lasting conflict.

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Uneasy Friendship: Nigerian–American relations by GEORGE OBIOZOR

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Nigeria's current economic recession and political turbulence notwithstanding, the study of its foreign policy continues to be well served in quantity and quality of output. Apart from the seminal volume edited by Gabriel O. Olusanya and R. A. Akindele, *The Structure and Processes of Foreign Policy-Making and Implementation in Nigeria, 1960–1990* (Lagos, NIIA Press, 1990), there are lesser known works like U. Joy Ogwu and Adebayo Olukoshi (eds.),