

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

The Honorable Joseph R. Pitts
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

JUL 20 2004

Dear Congressman Pitts:

Thank you for your letter of July 19, 2004, concerning our Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Morocco and the status of Western Sahara.

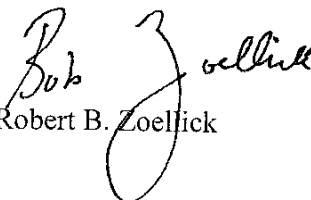
The Administration's position on Western Sahara is clear: sovereignty of Western Sahara is in dispute, and the United States fully supports the United Nations' efforts to resolve this issue. The United States and many other countries do not recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara and have consistently urged the parties to work with the United Nations to resolve the conflict by peaceful means.

The FTA will cover trade and investment in the territory of Morocco as recognized internationally, and will not include Western Sahara. As our Harmonized Tariff Schedule makes clear, for U.S. Customs purposes, the United States treats imports from Western Sahara and Morocco differently. Nothing in the FTA will require us to change this practice. The Administration will draft the proclamation authorized in the legislation implementing the FTA (H.R. 4842) to provide preferential tariff treatment for goods from the territory of Morocco. Preferential tariff treatment will not be provided to goods from Western Sahara.

I hope this letter addresses your question regarding the FTA and the status of Western Sahara. I encourage you to support the FTA. It will create economic opportunities for U.S. manufacturing and service firms, workers, and farmers, and will support economic reforms and foreign investment in Morocco.

Thank you again for your letter. Please feel free to contact me should you have further questions.

Sincerely,


Robert B. Zoellick