SUBJECT: TUNISIAN POSITION ON SPANISH SAHARA

1. SEPTEMBER 17 PRESS PUBLISHED EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW GIVEN BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI TO AL-HAYAT OF BEIRUT IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED GOT POSITION ON SETTLEMENT OF SPANISH SAHARA DISPUTE. CHATTI EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SETTLEMENT WILL ARISE FROM DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, I.E., MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON ONE SIDE AND SPAIN ON THE OTHER. HE SAID TUNISIA SUPPORTS THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRINCIPLE CONTAINED IN UN RESOLUTION CALLING FOR
REFERDUM IN DISPUTED TERRITORY, BUT IS OPPOSED TO OFFERING INDEPENDENCE AS AN OPTION. TUNISIA BELIEVES, HE SAID, THAT THE BIRTH OF A STATE IN THIS AREA IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THERE ARE SO FEW INHABITANTS AND BECAUSE OTHER CONDITIONS REQUISITE TO STATEHOOD ARE LACKING. CHATTI ADDED THAT IF THE TERRITORY IN QUESTION BECOMES INDEPENDENT, "SPAIN WILL HAVE GONE OUT BY ONE DOOR AND COME BACK IN BY ANOTHER".

2. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME GOT HAS PUBLICLY GONE BEYOND FORMULA OF SUPPORTING UN RESOLUTION AND "LIBERATION" OF SPANISH SAHARA.

SEELYE

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