

Morocco Country Report

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Very brief conclusions:

- 1) There is an active debate about the current and future role of democracy assistance (in lots of different forms) in Morocco. The USAID already is writing about future programs that could be implemented in several contexts (legal reform, juvenile justice, NGOs., etc.). There is also a solid evidence discussing why US assistance is important to the larger transition.
- 2) The debate about Morocco is different from other countries. The Pham evidence explains why it has unique characteristics (which make it possible to be the first real success) and the modeling evidence explains why, if successful, it could be followed by other nations.
- 3) It is an active site of Arab Spring protests. There are increasing protests that are interested in opposing the government, not the monarchy. This is different possible evolution of the pattern of Arab Spring protests and one that offers a lot of potential for further discussion of democratic transitions.
- 4) This would be a new country that has not been debated in recent college or high school topics, so all of the above reasons are new aspects of what the topic could include.

We recommend inclusion and believe it is one of the most viable North African states.

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SQ – Arab Spring Style Demonstrations Increasing Now

Protests will ensure that change happens in Morocco – government is increasingly favoring hardline against demonstrators

Hisham al-Miraat, co-founder of Talk Morocco & contributing author for Global Voices, May 26, 2011, “Showdown in Morocco” Foreign Policy, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/05/26/showdown_in_morocco

FYI – (The makhzen refers to an ancient institution in Morocco -- the extended power apparatus close to the Moroccan monarchy, made up of a network of power and privilege.)

Police violence in recent days has escalated. On May 15, peaceful demonstrators who wanted to protest in front of an alleged secret detention center in Temara (dubbed Guan-Temara by protesters) near the capital Rabat faced repression. A week later, anti-riot police systematically and violently disrupted peaceful gatherings in public squares. **This may be the sign that the regime is shifting its attitude toward the street and taking a much more hardline stance. As with other Arab regimes, the makhzen faces a dilemma: if it clamps down hard on peaceful protesters, it risks losing its reputation as a model of democratic reform** in a region often perceived in the West as averse to the liberal ideals of democracy. **If it loosens up, then it will have to face the challenge to its own existence posed by a determined and organized street.**

The "February 20" youth movement is vowing to keep up street pressure, rejecting the King's offer of token reform. If the regime insists on denying the people their rights of assembly and free expression, then the country will be heading toward the unknown. Against the backdrop of the Arab revolutions, change looks inevitable. It is still in the power of the monarchy to ensure a peaceful transition and at the same time ensure its own survival. The more the makhzen drags its feet, the more it runs the risk of undermining the stability of the country and, at the end of the day, its own existence.

SQ – Arab Spring Style Demonstrations

Increasing Now

Opposition growing in Morocco – police crackdowns & frustration with corrupt government threatens to spillover to King’s legitimacy – opposition now willing to accept reforms short of regime change

Betwa Sharma, Foreign Policy, June 9, 2011, “A Martyr in Morocco: Do the protests in Morocco finally have enough steam to unsettle the monarchy?”

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/09/a_martyr_in_morocco

While the world's attention is focused on Yemen and Syria, the Arab Spring is slowly gaining momentum in Morocco. In this North African kingdom, protesters are increasingly enraged by the security forces' crackdown on peaceful demonstrations and dismissive of the promises of reform that the monarchy made in March.

The protest movement was reinvigorated on May 29, when thousands of pro-democracy protesters marched peacefully in different cities in the largest demonstrations yet. In Morocco's most populous city of Casablanca, helmeted police on motorcycles attacked protesters with clubs.

Activists estimate that dozens of people were injured, the majority in Casablanca.

Kamal Amari, 30, was a university graduate with a degree in physics who worked as a private security officer at the port in the western city of Safi. On May 29, he was caught up in the crackdown there. "Seven policemen beat him for five minutes," said Adel Fathi, a friend.

On June 2, Amari succumbed to his wounds. Local activists call him the "first martyr" of Morocco's freedom movement. His death has transformed Safi into a front line of the country's protest movement.

The government claimed that Amari died from a chronic illness, but his family insists that local authorities did not conduct a proper autopsy. Instead, his brothers say, they were offered a bribe to keep quiet. Their father almost agreed, but the brothers refused.

A day after Amari was buried, his family and friends sat around low-set tables in an airless room. Flies buzzed around chunks of bread and sweet tea. They passed around pictures of the dead man. "Cute?" asked a relative, pausing at a picture in which Amari looked five or six years old.

Amari's brothers said that he had initially refused to visit the hospital after being beaten, fearing arrest. They said that after his death, the government also sent a religious leader to urge them to bury the body quickly. They claimed that was cover to avoid an autopsy.

One brother resolved not to let the matter end there. "I want to know who gave the order for the violence," said Mohamed. "I want the policemen and the minister of interior to be held responsible."

Mohamed, however, did not dare blame Morocco's King Mohammed VI. To do so would be breaking the law, specifically Article 23 of the Moroccan Constitution, which reads, "The person of the King shall be sacred and inviolable."

This hesitation is mirrored in Morocco's protesters. **The pro-democracy movement**, which takes its name from the first date of protests, Feb. 20, **is not calling for the overthrow of the monarchy, but it wants a parliamentary system in which the king can serve as a symbolic head of state.** On the protesters' Facebook site, they call for "a democratic constitution that represents the true will of the people."

The 47-year-old king, who came to the throne in 1999, does remain popular among many Moroccans for amending the Family Law to improve women's rights and authorizing investigations into crimes committed by the state during his father's reign. He is also credited with pursuing economic reforms that reduced the poverty rate from 15.3 percent in 2000-2001 to 9 percent in 2006-2007. And on March 9, in a bid to forestall further protests, the king pledged to embark on "comprehensive constitutional reform" that would expand individual rights and transfer increased power to Parliament.

SQ – Arab Spring Style Demonstrations **Increasing Now**

(evidence continues without interruption)

A great deal of popular anger is directed at the corrupt government. Even if the king does personally intervene in Amari's case, many do not believe that this would guarantee justice. "The king may call for a fair investigation, but investigators can do whatever they want and say that the investigation was fair," said Khadija Ryadi, president of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights.

But with the king holding ultimate authority and people's anger growing quickly, it remains to be seen how long the monarch can avoid association with the government's decisions. "The government is zero!" shouted protesters at a rally in Safi on June 5 to condemn Amari's killing. Local journalists estimated that more than 10,000 people attended the demonstration.

"Right now, we want democracy, we want more rights, but we are not against the king yet," said Hafsa Laagraovi, a high school student who marched in the rally.

"We walk in peace," the protesters chanted as the human river weaved its way through the city. The police in Safi stayed away to avoid a clash, reporters said. Large protests all over the country passed without violence on June 5.

While many Moroccans may be satisfied with the king's promise of constitutional reforms, activists don't think these will be far-reaching enough and say that the reform process is already tainted because the committee to formulate constitutional amendments was appointed by the king.

SQ Democratic Reforms Insufficient

Despite promises – future of Moroccan reforms unsure – a successful reform would be important model for the Arab world.

James Traub, contributing writer for the New York Times Magazine, June 10, 2011, Foreign Policy, “Game of Thrones: Morocco is the Arab world's last chance to prove that monarchs can reform their countries without getting thrown out of them.”

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/10/game_of_thrones

Is reform possible in the Arab world? Is there, that is, a fourth path beyond revolution, repression, and the wholesale bribery deployed by the wealthy Gulf states? **If peaceful evolution is possible anywhere, it is in Morocco.** And we won't have to wait more than a week or two for the first clues about which way Morocco will go.

The Arab Spring reached Morocco on Feb. 20, when over 100,000 demonstrators, mostly educated young people, **took to the streets in 53 cities to demand change.** King Mohammed VI, 47, one of the generation of allegedly progressive young rulers in the region, allowed the protests to unfold unimpeded. The demonstrations continued, and on March 9 **the king took the extraordinary step of appearing on television to promise constitutional reforms which, if actually implemented, would place real restraints on his powers.**

This is precisely how those of us who wrote in years past about democratization in the Arab World imagined that change would one day come: pressure from below -- and outside -- would lead to reform from above. That was the premise behind President George W. Bush's "Freedom Agenda," and calls for the United States and other Western states to support indigenous reform movements in the region. **But that premise turned out to be wrong.** Leaders like Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and King Hamad bin Khalifa in Bahrain recognized that real reform jeopardized their rule; they were prepared to open the valves just wide enough to let off steam, and then jam them shut the moment citizens began to imagine that they could actually shape their own destiny.

And that, in turn, is why the choices in the Middle East have dwindled to revolution, repression, and bribery. Since no leader has been prepared to even begin to go down a path that could lead to his downfall, citizens have realized that real reform requires regime change. They've succeeded in Egypt and Tunisia; been checked, so far, by overwhelming violence in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain; and remained silent in Saudi Arabia. **Only in Jordan and Morocco, both ruled by new generation monarchs, has there been meaningful hope for liberalization.** And Jordan's King Abdullah has been far vaguer about the path of change than has Mohammed VI.

In his March 9 speech, **the king promised "comprehensive reforms."** The prime minister would henceforth be chosen by the winning party, not by the palace. The parliament would gain "new powers that enable it to discharge its representative, legislative, and regulatory mission." The judiciary, currently run by the Judicial Supreme Council under the control of the king, would be granted "the status of an independent power." **New mechanisms would be established to strengthen political parties, now widely deemed moribund. And the king announced that he was impaneling a committee of legal scholars to produce a draft constitution not by some remote future date, but by June.**

The king's speech provoked every possible degree of optimism and pessimism from Moroccans and Morocco experts. Tahar ben Jelloun, the country's leading novelist, told me that he viewed the speech as "historic -- the first time the monarchy has laid out a vision of reform." If the changes the king proposed are in fact adopted, ben Jelloun says, Morocco's next elections will be "totally free," and will lead to the appointment of a prime minister with the same broad powers enjoyed by the prime minister of France (a less-than-encouraging analogy, given the way President Nicolas Sarkozy runs roughshod over his own government).

SQ Democratic Reforms Insufficient

(evidence continues without interruption)

Of course, what was once touted as the new generation in the Arab world, whether the young kings of Jordan and Morocco or second-generation autocrats like Bashar al-Assad of Syria, have almost always disappointed the hopes they've raised. Shadi Hamid, director of research at the Brookings Doha Center, says, "Mohammed has promised substantive reforms time and again, and has always portrayed himself as a modernizing reformer and democratizer. But he's never lived up to that; it's been largely cosmetic." Hamid sees the king's speech as more of the same.

Early reports on the draft constitutional reforms suggest that they will both empower the prime minister and curtail the king's sacred status. The new dispensation may make meaningful inroads on King Mohammed's absolute powers without achieving real democracy. As Lahcen Achy, a scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, recently wrote, "the changes will not lead to a parliamentary constitution in Morocco, but they will introduce the separation of powers and reduce the king's all-powerful role in government."

This is precisely the kind of incremental change-from-above that democracy promoters long hoped for. But Western reformers are no longer the only outside players in this game. Saudi Arabia, which feels profoundly threatened by the forces unleashed by the Arab Spring, has increasingly become a regional autocracy promoter, for example using its dominant position in the Gulf Cooperation Council to dispatch troops to Bahrain to bolster a fellow monarch beset by popular revolt. And last month, the GCC extended membership invitations to Jordan and Morocco, countries that are not in the Gulf and do not, like the other members, have oil. Rather, like Bahrain, they are Sunni monarchies wobbling before mass protest. The Saudis apparently hope to turn the GCC into a club of kings, much as Bourbon France, Russia, and Austria formed the Holy Alliance early in the 19th century to counteract the spread of democracy in the Americas and Europe.

Above all, the Saudis worry about the growing influence of Shiite Iran. But they fear democracy both because it could destabilize Sunni rulers in the region and because it undermines their own legitimacy. "A peaceful democratic transition in Morocco," as Anouar Boukhars, a Morocco scholar at McDaniel College in Maryland, recently wrote, would "provide a powerful model that the monarchies of the Gulf might potentially be forced to follow."

Despite reforms - widespread concern about government corruption & abuse of authority

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, "Morocco Rule of Law Assessment"
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. ii

Rule of law reform in Morocco over the past decade has primarily involved creation of the administrative and commercial courts, creation of an independent judicial training institution that provides initial and continuing legal education for judges, and passage of laws enhancing human rights protections. While some improvements have occurred, including the adoption of a new family law in 2004, reforms have been limited. Recently, the pace of introduction of modernization efforts has slowed and while the King continues to be viewed with affection, many institutions of government are not popular. The judiciary is perceived to be ineffective by many Moroccans. More generally, there is a widely held perception that corruption is tolerated, that a political and security elite act with impunity, and that strong actions are taken against those who would challenge power as evidenced by the recent arrest and imprisonment of members of the press.

SQ Democratic Reforms Insufficient

Government can't buy off opposition - Any attempt to extend benefits to Morocco would be costly and could fail.

Lahcen Achy, 6/3/11, A resident scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut who specializes in the political economy of the Middle East. "MOROCCO: What a GCC membership would mean for the economy." June 3, 2011 | 4:01 am.

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/06/moroccogcc-.html>. {M.e. 6.11.11}

The social contract between the king and his people in Morocco is different. Morocco's state revenues come from taxes, which represent a quarter of the country's GDP. Revenue-seeking monarchs need to favor representative institutions.

Even if Morocco decided to join the GCC, it would be hard to imagine that its membership could be an acceptable motive to postpone political reforms. Any attempt to keep the status quo in Morocco by extending generous benefits to its large and relatively poor population would be costly and could fail.

Government officials are using Facebook and other social media outlets to answer protestors – using these strategies to distract from insufficient reform

Lalami, 2/17/2011. Laila. "Arab Uprisings: What the February 20 Protests Tell Us About Morocco."

the author of Secret Son, is associate professor at the university of California, Riverside.

<http://www.thenation.com/blog/158670/arab-uprisings-what-february-20-protests-tell-us-about-morocco>.

{M.e. 6.11.11}

The reaction to the planned protests has been as predictable as it has been depressing. Though the Moroccan government has nearly doubled its food subsidies for 2011, it has not acknowledged the need for meaningful political change. Instead, the communication minister, Khalid Naciri, insisted that Morocco "has embarked a long time ago on an irreversible process of democracy and widening of public freedoms." On his Facebook page, the youth minister, Moncef Belkhatat, posted a long statement calling on the demonstrators to use dialogue instead. "My personal position," he wrote "as a Moroccan citizen who lives in Casablanca, and not in Paris or Barcelona, is that this march is today manipulated by the Polisario, with the goal of creating street clashes that will weaken the position of our country in the United Nations regarding the human rights situation in the Sahara." In other words, while one minister denies that there are any serious problems, the other blames foreign agents provocateurs.

Pro-government activists have also staged a campaign against the young people who appear in the video, uncovering supposed alcohol use, distributing a photo of one of them inside a church or of another one posing with Saharan activists. The implication is simple: the people who are organizing this march are traitors to their faith and to their country. As for the Francophone elite, they seem for now to be mostly ambivalent about the protests, pointing out that the institution of the monarchy is 1,200 years old and asking whether the marchers really want a revolution. But nothing in the February 20 platform or its promotional video suggests that anyone is asking for the toppling of the monarchy; the focus, however, has been on meaningful constitutional reform.

Reforms Internal Links

Seven suggestions for reform.

Lachen Acey. A resident scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut who specializes in the political economy of the Middle East. June 7, 2011 | 7:40 am. “MOROCCO: Reform as a path to a genuine constitutional monarchy.” <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/06/morocco-reform-can-lead-to-a-genuine-constitutional-monarchy.html>. {M.e. 6.11.11}

When King Mohammed VI announced broad changes to Morocco’s constitution in March, he signaled a shift from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. The new, elected government that results from these changes will be accountable to parliament, have an independent judiciary, offer a more decentralized governance system, provide broader individual liberties and offer women the same chance of winning elected office as men.

The changes came suddenly. Before massive protests erupted in Morocco on Feb. 20 — part of the upheaval that has swept across North Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East — the political scene seemed stagnant; no political party was pressing for constitutional changes.

On that day, however, protesters in more than 50 Moroccan cities called to set boundaries on the king’s powers and hand over the executive prerogatives to an elected government that voters can hold accountable. The king apparently received the message, although he did not make any explicit reference to the protests in his speech.

The announced constitutional reforms open new opportunities for political life in Morocco. Seven significant suggested changes included in the reforms would do the following:

Shift executive power from the king to the prime minister. The prime minister will serve as the head of the executive branch and is fully responsible for the government, the civil service and the implementation of the government’s agenda.

In the current constitution, the prime minister is responsible only for coordinating activities among the ministers of government. With the prime minister selected from the political party that enjoys a majority in parliament, parties will need to develop their economic and social platforms.

Shift power from the king to electors. The revisions will change the process of naming the prime minister, who under the current constitution is appointed by the king regardless of election results.

Expand the scope of the legislative domain and provide parliament with new powers. The legislative domain is explicitly restricted in the current constitution. Any legal issue not explicitly mentioned as being part of the domain of law belongs to the regulatory field, and can be handled by governmental decrees.

The legislative process grants dominance to the executive branch over parliament. The government controls the agenda of parliament and gives priority to bills it submits to parliament over those initiated by members of parliament. Finally, the government can legislate between regular parliamentary sessions. As such, the constitution has allowed the parliament to delegate its legislative power to the government.

Strengthen the judiciary and guarantee its independence. Morocco’s constitution sets out the principle of judicial independence. In practice, however, the judiciary is subject to executive influence.

The king serves as chairman of the Judiciary Supreme Council that is mandated to manage judges’ careers (nomination, promotion, mobility and disciplinary sanctions). In addition, the Ministry of Justice sets the agenda for the council’s quarterly meetings and submits the council’s recommendations to the king, who issues final decisions.

Shift power and resources from the center to the regions. The revisions will empower regional councils that are directly elected by voters instead of regional representatives of the executive (mainly the Ministry of Interior).

Reforms Internal Links

(evidence continues without interruption)

Promote participation by women in managing public affairs and promote their political rights. The new constitution is expected to favor equal access by men and women to elected office. It would likely include mechanisms to promote women's representation in parliament and on local councils, and to guarantee a certain number of seats for women in parliament.

Strengthen the rule of law, expand personal freedoms and ensure human rights in political, economic, social and cultural areas. The preamble of the constitution is expected to explicitly affirm Morocco's commitment to human rights as universally recognized. Morocco's Amazigh identity will also be mentioned in the constitution and the Amazigh language will be made an official national language in addition to Arabic.

The planned changes will not lead to a parliamentary constitution in Morocco, but they will introduce the separation of powers and reduce the king's all-powerful role in government. As a result, political parties and civil society should remain vigilant about the changes and seize the opportunity of regional upheaval to push for additional reforms.

Political parties play a pivotal role in any well-functioning constitutional democracy. They should allow a new generation of political leaders to emerge and open their doors to youth who no longer trust politics or parties. Compared to those of other countries in the region, Morocco's political system has become much more open over the last decade, but political leaders lacked a strategic vision and adopted a purely opportunistic behavior, trading requests for political reforms for ministerial portfolios and other private benefits. They cannot blame the regime for all of their woes.

Now that youth outside the political parties have pushed for constitutional changes, political parties must heed the message. No effective democracy can be achieved with closed, archaic and fragmented political parties. It's time for them to change along with Morocco's constitution.

The Moroccan elite exhibit both positive and negative impacts on the political processes.

Pham, 6/01/2011. (J. PETER PHAM, DIRECTOR, MICHAEL S. ANSARI AFRICA CENTER, ACUS. "UNCERTAIN FORECAST IN NORTH AFRICA: PREVENTING THE "ARAB SPRING" FROM BECOMING THE "SEASON OF DISCONTENT?" <http://www.acus.org/event/uncertain-forecast-preventing-arab-spring-becoming-season-discontent/panel1/transcript.>) {M.e. 06.11.11}

Lastly, you know, people I think refer to the elite as a dirty word, unless it's part of a frequent flyer program or a hotel loyalty program, which then has a sort of cheaper quality to it. But, you know, people think of the elite as a – as a bad thing. But that's not necessarily the case. And I think if we look at Morocco, the elite certainly has a role to play in the political processes unfolding there.

You know, it's true that – and I think I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that, you know, Morocco's elite is embroiled in corruption scandals. It has been accused of all sorts of nepotism and ties to politics. But this is the problem of elites everywhere. Elites, you know, throughout the world are – use their wealth to influence political – or politics or economic regulations, and they're always involved in scandals. There are plenty of elite in Morocco that have no regard for social issues. They have no regard for the welfare of the state. They have no interest in doing anything except ensuring that they remain elite.

Now, this is – this is unseemly, but it's not a crime. And it's – in fact, probably one of the characteristics of the elite – and certainly the elite in the United States share many of these same characteristics – where the sole interest is ensuring that one remains elite.

But among Morocco's elite, there are also good actors that do care about the welfare of the country, that do care about social programs, literacy programs, youth programs, housing programs. A good example of this is Mulig Shavi, the entrepreneur, and one of Morocco's wealthiest men. He is – embraces – I think he would be what we would call her in the United States a socially-conscious investor. He intertwines his investment profile with a social agenda.

Many of these good actors or members of the elite support the institution of the monarchy. They see the institution of the monarchy as ultimately a sound institution and an essential institution for the stability of Morocco

Democracy Assistance – Solvency - Model

US supporting Morocco now, but US must specifically encourage reforms, including media freedom and political debate. Successful reform will produce a new model for other regimes.

David Avital, executive committee member of Israel Policy Forum, & David Halperin - policy analyst at Israel Policy Forum and the Center for American Progress, **May 2, 2011**, Politico, “A model modern Muslim state” <http://www.seattlepi.com/national/politico/article/A-model-modern-Muslim-state1241364.php#ixzz1OvcG0xjk>

While protests have taken place in Morocco, they have largely been sporadic, and in support of further economic and political reforms alongside the tradition of Morocco's 1,200 years of uninterrupted monarchy.

In response, the king announced the formation of the Economic and Social Council. "We are not only injecting fresh momentum into the reform process I launched shortly after I assumed the leadership, my loyal people," Mohammed announced, "but we are also underlining the close link between genuine democracy and the achievement of human advancement and sustainable development."

He made a rare appearance on Moroccan TV soon after, to announce a public referendum on significant constitutional reforms. He described this as "a major phase in the process of consolidation of our model of democracy and development."

Washington is taking notice. After meeting with Morocco's Foreign Minister Tibri Fassi Fihri last month, Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns labeled Morocco "a model of economic, social, and political reform."

"The partnership between the United States, Morocco and the Moroccan people," Burns said, "is a very high priority for President Obama and Secretary Clinton. It's never been more important than at this moment."

Seizing this moment requires the United States to work with Morocco on a blueprint for systematic political and economic reforms that proactively respond to the region's spreading unrest. A U.S. effort to help Morocco achieve a balance between these reforms and reverence for its own history and religious tradition would be a crucial symbol for the developing Middle East — and its growing ties with the West.

Even more important, a U.S.-supported program to encourage greater media freedom, economic development and open political debate could jumpstart a path for Morocco to realize its leadership as a model for re-shaping the Arab world.

This plan could be implemented and monitored to communicate and advance a U.S. platform for supporting the growth and change called for by the peoples of the Middle East. It could counter the prevailing view that Washington only props up authoritarian regimes that serve its interests, rather than helping the people of the region.

Developing a successful Moroccan model could replace the sweeping unrest with a much-needed wave of economic growth, political freedom, justice and peace. The United States must be prepared to help Morocco achieve all this, and, in doing so, effectively advance U.S. interests and stability across the broader Middle East.

Democracy Assistance – Solvency - General

Optimal role for us democracy assistance is to boost internal support for reform, civil society proves empirical successful

Marina **Ottaway**, director of the Middle East Program & senior associate in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, & Meredith **Riley**, junior fellow in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project in 2005-2006, September **2006**, Carnegie Papers, Middle East Series Morocco: Democracy and Rule of Law, #71, “Democratic Transition?” p. 19

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp71_ottaway_final.pdf

The most important contribution to true democratic reform in Morocco that the United States and European countries could make would be to facilitate the transformation of the major secular parties through pressure on their leaderships. The United States is already trying to strengthen political parties in Morocco through the work being done by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and the International Republican Institute, nongovernmental agencies tied to the two major U.S. political parties. **Both organizations provide training for political parties**, at either the national or the local level. In the name of nonpartisanship, the training is provided to all legal political parties. **Such training does not hurt, but it is unlikely to help very much either in this case. No amount of training will convince parties whose strength resides in networks of local notables with ties to the peasantry of their districts to abandon a structure that may be outmoded and anachronistic but gives them their comparative advantage. And training for lower-level cadres will not break the stranglehold of the incumbent leaders** on political renewal in the Istiqlal and the USFP, **because the relevant issue is not knowledge but power. The real challenge is to convince the leadership of the secular parties that their best chance for both competing successfully against the Islamist parties and for achieving some of the constitutional reforms they want is to take seriously the task of reforming their organizations. Helping the process of internal reform of the political parties is an important contribution that outsiders could make to political reform in Morocco. And they could do so without undermining their relations with the monarchy, which shares the goal of party renewal—though not in order to give the parties more power.** **U.S. democracy promotion programs in Morocco have targeted not only political parties, but organizations of civil society as well. During the last fifteen years, Morocco has developed a significant network of secular civil society organizations. The reforms implemented from the top have encouraged—and allowed—the formation of such organizations, which have thrived thanks not only to the opening of the political space created by the reforms but also to the support they have received from U.S. and European organizations.**

Democracy Assistance – Solvency - General

Morocco willing to work with the USAID on further legal reforms, especially attorney training

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. iv

Another focus area should include training and professionalization of the justice sector. The MOJ has indicated openness to USAID support in this area, and it is one of the priorities of the GOM and the Magistrate’s School (ISM). While the scope and scale will depend on the direction of the justice reform strategy being developed by the MOJ and the openings it creates, the ISM has suggested it would welcome an in-depth needs assessment of the current curriculum and training program. This assessment could determine if the ISM’s curriculum addresses justice sector priorities and propose suggested changes, including new and modified courses and new training methodologies. This would then be reinforced by a training of trainers to ensure that new training methodologies and approaches are embraced and institutionalized. An important objective is to explore how to build judges’ subject matter expertise in an effort to move the existing continuing legal education efforts from ad hoc to systematic and expand the scale and availability of continuing legal education. In addition, USAID could explore the GOM’s willingness to require continuing legal education for legal professionals and then, support elements to develop a program to provide it. Cross-cutting themes such as gender, ethics, human rights, and corruption should be integrated into the curriculum for both judges and lawyers. The curriculum should also be updated to reflect the most recent laws and areas of specialization.

Despite challenges to legal reform, further improvements possible - USAID support welcomed and necessary

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 2

Key fundamental issues related to the constitution and judicial independence will take time. Reform efforts must overcome resistance from vested interests and will need to be implemented gradually. However, the Monarchy’s interest in reforming the justice sector is a positive sign that, overall, Morocco will continue in its path towards democracy. The MOJ has expressed its support for continued judicial reform and welcomes U.S. involvement in sharing best practices on certain key issues, with the MOJ Secretary General recently referring to an “excellent partnership with USAID” on the USAID-funded Commercial Court Reform Project. As of this report, the MOJ was engaged in charting a course to address the King’s call. In this respect, USAID involvement in the coming years would be timely.

Democracy Assistance – Solvency - General

Window of opportunity for a wide-range of new rule of law initiatives

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. iv

For the longer term (4-10 years), the following assistance is recommended to further develop the rule of law in Morocco. The specific assistance should depend on the direction of Morocco’s new justice reform strategy, once completed. Recommendations include:

- Support further compliance with charters of ethics and development of codes of ethics, established by the judiciary or professional associations, to provide uniform standards and guidance for professional conduct.
- Support development of human resource management systems that consist of clearly defined organizational structure, job descriptions and requirements, transparent promotion and assignment procedures, and employee manuals.
- Strengthen mentoring programs pairing new judges, prosecutors, and others with more experienced professionals to support daily performance of their duties. This approach may result in useful inputs to the ISM’s basic training internship program.
- Support updating and further development of manuals of inspection that outline steps that should be taken in auditing and inspecting courts. Such a manual then can serve as a basis for practical training and mentoring programs.
- Support efforts to provide legal aid either by establishing pro bono programs of volunteer lawyers and/or creation of a nationwide public legal aid program within the judicial branch or as a separate government entity.
- Provide technical assistance to enhance procedural operations and improve the capacities of the court system.

While increasing the rule of law in Morocco presents a number of challenges, there is reason to hope that a series of targeted interventions can have impact, even in the near term. Reforms that can adequately address institutional deficiencies and corruption will be a longer term process. The rule of law is continually developing and results are more sustainable where there is a participatory process

adapted to local cultures and expectations. There is a current willingness to seek judicial reform, both within and outside of the government, particularly in light of the ongoing development of a judicial reform strategy through the MOJ. Prior to MOJ’s completion of the strategy, USAID should take advantage of this opportunity, advocating for integration into that strategy of key activities that can lay the groundwork for a successful rule of law program.

Democracy Assistance – Solvency - General

Future assistance programs can be targeted to consolidate current progress – alternative is backsliding

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 38

The assessment has identified the salient challenges that exist in Morocco to the development and **strengthening of the rule of law. The assessment revealed a number of areas for improving rule of law in Morocco. The principal challenges to ensuring a fair, efficient, and democratically based justice system include: efficiency and effectiveness of justice sector institutions; accountability and transparency both within and external to government institutions, including public perception of wide-spread impunity; a lack of access to justice; and unequal application of laws, including inadequacies in enforcing laws and judicial decisions.**

Programmatic interventions will need to be mindful of the political will to effect change, particularly the support for, as well as the limits imposed by, the governmental structures. **While this King’s reign has opened new avenues for reform there have also been recent indications of backsliding.** **Transparency and inclusion are overarching themes with particular importance in fighting corruption and developing civic education programs. We recommend focusing on practical objectives to maximize local ownership and on providing sustainable capacity development and appropriate institutional strengthening for key Moroccan institutions, in order to consolidate gains made in this sector under previous ROL programs.** Given the importance that the MOJ has played in law reform to date, it will undoubtedly be a key player. Coordination with the current development of the MOJ reform strategy is a key element in ensuring effective cooperation and maintaining a focus for sustainable results. Activities should support the reform strategy objectives, once finalized, to ensure local buy-in and success of interventions.

Opportunity for expanded democracy assistance programs

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 27

The USAID Democracy and Governance (DG) strategy is built around citizen participation in civil society, especially youth, governance, and political parties. The new Strategy for 2009-2013 is informed by lessons learned from past USAID programs in local governance, parliamentary support, and political party strengthening. **The new Strategy for the first time anticipates funding for a limited ROL activity, as the Mission has strategically identified ROL as a critical arena for intervention to supplement other DG activities. It is important to note that other important sectors under the Mission’s strategy have relevant openings for cross-cutting legal/justice reform activities including education, civil society, and economic growth.**

Democracy Assistance – Solvency – Juvenile Justice

Morocco willing to support new USAID program to reform juvenile justice

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. iiiii

With respect to the next 1 to 3 years, the MOJ has indicated that it would welcome USAID support to strengthen juvenile justice in Morocco. To achieve this, a juvenile justice strategy needs to be developed to guide the process, more focus should be given to alternative sentencing options, and a pilot program should be developed to provide comprehensive juvenile services. If the MOJ supports the concept, USAID may want to explore piloting alternative sentencing and pre-trial diversion approaches in a particular jurisdiction. This would create the opportunity to test approaches proposed from the U.S. Embassy’s Prison Management and Alternative Sentencing Program and allow for further adaption to the Moroccan context and lay the foundation for broader generalization.

Democracy Assistance –Institutional Legitimacy - Advantage

Legal reforms can enhance Morocco’s democratic transition

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 39

In coordination with other donors, and building on assessment work to date, further improvements are needed to expand use of automation and technology in the judicial system, and to ensure that with increased use of automation requisite types of operational efficiencies and streamlining are applied. The assessment team confidently believes that a focused program based on the objectives, guidance, and suggested activities proposed in this report will have a strong likelihood of advancing respect for the rule of law and helping Morocco’s justice institutions to be worthy of respect. The program’s success will contribute significantly to the success of Morocco’s multi-faceted transition to a more stable, safe, just, and prosperous society.

Must enhance judicial institutions to boost their legitimacy

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 31

In supporting improved legitimacy of the Moroccan justice system, it will be critical to develop institutional capacities that ensure that the Moroccan judiciary is able to participate actively in decisions about its own affairs, such as determining the appropriate number of judges and support staff; allocation of courts, judges, and staff throughout the country; the appropriate level of specialization among judges in the judiciary (civil, criminal, administrative, commercial, family); and whether a separate judicial personnel system should be established.

Solvency Mechanisms – Broader than Democracy

Assistance

Economic assistance should be targeted to Morocco to encourage reforms

James Traub, contributing writer for the New York Times Magazine, June 10, 2011, Foreign Policy, “Game of Thrones: Morocco is the Arab world's last chance to prove that monarchs can reform their countries without getting thrown out of them.”

The West does not have to merely watch this drama unfold. At the recent G8 meeting in Deauville, as I noted in my column last week, the leaders of the major industrial nations, along with the heads of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, offered a package of debt relief, aid, trade, and investment to Arab countries. Much of this assistance is to be directed to Egypt and Tunisia, the two countries where protest led to political revolution (though the Saudis themselves have offered \$4 million to Egypt). The goal of all this assistance is to encourage and sustain the movement towards democracy. Evolutionary movement to this end should count as well. If the new constitution really does put Morocco on the path to democracy, then the country should be included in that most-favored club -- so long as the king actually implements the changes he's sponsored.

Multi-part long-term strategy will solve best in Morocco.

PR Newswire, 6/3/2011. (“Experts Warn of Risk to U.S. if 'Arab Spring' Turns to 'Season of Discontent,' Call for U.S. to Partner with Reformers to Spur Growth, Positive Change: Resurgent al-Qaeda, returning mercenaries, will exploit Libya chaos and arms to spread violence.” <http://www.pnewswire.com/news-releases/experts-warn-of-risk-to-us-if-arab-spring-turns-to-season-of-discontent-call-for-us-to-partner-with-reformers-to-spur-growth-positive-change-123137183.html>.) {M.e. 06.11.11}

Foreign policy experts at two forums this week examined the seismic changes of the 'Arab Spring' and focused on the importance of U.S. and European engagement with progressive leaders in the Middle East and North Africa for determining whether the current unrest will lead to reform, repression, or violent revolution.

Well-armed mercenaries recruited by Col. Qadhafi from Mali, the Polisario Front in Algeria, and elsewhere, and resurgent terrorists from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), are stocking up on arms from Libya and are eager to exploit unrest in the region after Osama bin Laden's death.

At an Atlantic Council symposium, "Preventing the 'Arab Spring' from Becoming the 'Season of Discontent,'" policy experts discussed the uncertain forecast and how to promote positive change in this pivotal part of the world. Analyst Geoffrey Porter said "every country in the Middle East and North Africa is different" and must be understood on its own terms. Dr. Anouar Boukhars of McDaniels College pointed to Morocco where "reform efforts have strengthened its legitimacy," citing King Mohammed VI's March 9 speech on constitutional reforms. Dr. J. Peter Pham, moderator of the panel, said Morocco's reforms were "triggered by an inside reality and not imposed from the outside," and successful reform in other countries must be "internally driven."

Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies emphasized the importance of understanding that the 'Arab Spring' unrest is being driven by demand for economic as well as political change. Long-term solutions will require strategic choices in an uncertain climate.

Ambassador Edward Gabriel said the U.S. and Europe can play a key role in promoting positive change. He proposed a 3-part "long-term strategy with countries that have taken reform seriously," such as Morocco and Jordan, to build partnerships for growth and "strategic dialogue" to better understand change shaping the region.

Democracy Assistance Negative Solvency

Limited opportunity for democratic assistance to succeed in Morocco – easy gains have already been accomplished

Marina **Ottaway**, director of the Middle East Program & senior associate in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, & Meredith **Riley**, junior fellow in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project in 2005-2006, September **2006**, Carnegie Papers, Middle East Series Morocco: Democracy and Rule of Law, #71, “Democratic Transition?” p. 18

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp71_ottaway_final.pdf

The context in which the United States and Europe work to promote democracy is much more benign in Morocco than in most other Arab countries. But it is also one in which outsiders will find it difficult to have an impact, in part because Morocco has already taken the easier steps concerning human and women’s rights, and now confronts the core issue of the distribution of political power.

The context in Morocco is relatively favorable to change, though not to democracy. Since the 1990s, when Hassan II decided to deal with the opposition by inclusion rather than repression, and, at the same time, took steps to improve the country’s human rights record, Morocco has become a relatively open society. **The fact that secular opposition parties have become government parties and that the PJD is by far the most moderate Islamist party in the Arab world has helped in maintaining this benign environment. To be sure, there is a darker side to the Moroccan situation.** A violent Islamist element exists, manifested most dramatically in the attacks that took place on May 16, 2003, in Casablanca, an event etched as deeply in the minds of Moroccans as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, are in the minds of Americans. And the government is still ready to use some repression against even nonviolent movements it cannot co-opt, as shown by the wave of constant arrests (though followed by quick releases) with which the authorities responded to “open houses” held in mid-2006 by Al Adl wal Ihsan to recruit new members. **And the lack of countervailing political forces means that all reforms are fragile and dependent on the will of the palace. Nevertheless, Morocco competes with Lebanon as the most open Arab country, while being more stable.**

External assistance unlikely to produce dramatic reform – internal motivation for reform key

Marina **Ottaway**, director of the Middle East Program & senior associate in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, & Meredith **Riley**, junior fellow in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project in 2005-2006, September **2006**, Carnegie Papers, Middle East Series Morocco: Democracy and Rule of Law, #71, “Democratic Transition?” p. 19

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/cp71_ottaway_final.pdf

In Morocco, as in all other countries, civil society organizations have shown a capacity to arouse and foster debate on major issues, as long as they work in a reasonably permissive environment. But, again, as is the case for such organizations everywhere, they have been successful in bringing about concrete change only when they have worked with the regime, rather than against it. While support for civil society organizations in Morocco should continue, because their existence will make it more difficult for the monarchy to slip back into more authoritarian ways, such support is unlikely to lead to true political reform. Civil society groups cannot stand in for political parties in forcing the palace to surrender some of its power and open the way to a democratic process. They lack the

clout to compel the regime to implement reforms it does not want, and they would certainly fail if they tried to challenge the monarchy to give up some of its power.

Morocco's success in moving from top-down reform to a democratic transition is not a foregone conclusion. It will require a successful balancing act by the PJD, renewal within the major secular political parties, and ultimately the willingness of the monarchy to surrender power rather than revert to autocracy. The influence of outsiders in facilitating a democratic transition will be limited, and will depend on how successfully their efforts relate to the very complicated political game that will unfold after the 2007 elections.

Muslim State Model Advantage

Morocco represents a crucial model for modern Muslim states – it offers a unique blueprint for Islamic democracies

David Avital, executive committee member of Israel Policy Forum, & David Halperin - policy analyst at Israel Policy Forum and the Center for American Progress, **May 2, 2011**, Politico, “A model modern Muslim state” <http://www.seattlepi.com/national/politico/article/A-model-modern-Muslim-state1241364.php#ixzz1OvcG0xjk>

The Middle East uprisings — demanding freedom, democracy and prosperity from corrupt, autocratic rulers — **give the United States a unique historical opportunity to redefine its policies in the region and regain creditability.**

To do so, it should look to Morocco.

While seeking to curb extremists from taking advantage of the unrest, **Washington must change its habit of blindly supporting friendly autocrats, who favor stability over freedom. The U.S. must also work with its regional allies on reforms to create a blueprint for the model modern Muslim state.**

This model has yet to emerge. Many looked to Turkey. But the struggle between its military and political echelons, and its inability to harness the spirit of this Arab awakening, rule it out. Iraq's nascent democracy was also considered, but its political stability remains questionable.

Morocco's progress in recent years, however, has been significant. Since becoming king in 1999, **Mohammed VI broke away from his father's brutal policies** during the "Years of Lead" **and immediately began a series of liberalizing reforms.**

These include permitting the return of political exiles, holding legislative elections, enhancing investing to alleviate poverty, modifying the criminal code and setting up the first truth and reconciliation commission in the Arab world to help mend the wounds of the past and set a new course.

While there is more to be done, a foundation for reform has been established. Perhaps most noteworthy, Morocco has passed these reforms in a specifically Islamic context. Many of its liberal values are also shared by the West — yet they were not born in the West, rather from the Mahgreb itself.

Muslim State Model Advantage

Morocco unique - should not be measured against any African or Middle Eastern countries.

Pham, 6/01/2011. (J. PETER PHAM, DIRECTOR, MICHAEL S. ANSARI AFRICA CENTER, ACUS. “UNCERTAIN FORECAST IN NORTH AFRICA: PREVENTING THE “ARAB SPRING” FROM BECOMING THE “SEASON OF DISCONTENT?” <http://www.acus.org/event/uncertain-forecast-preventing-arab-spring-becoming-season-discontent/panel1/transcript.>) {M.e. 06.11.11}

I'd like to – just to close one final comment about this – about Morocco exceptionalism. I think – you know, people speak about Moroccan exceptionalism, but to me, the notion of Moroccan exceptionalism stems from a miscategorization of Morocco. You know, Morocco, for those of us who have lived there, for those of us that travel there, especially for those of us that speak, you know, Morocco is not the Middle East. Morocco – it's also not Africa, and it's not Europe. And, you know, Morocco has always existed – you know, putting on my historians' hat again, Morocco has always existed sort of on the margins of these three different larger regional groupings: Middle East, Africa and Europe. But in a certain sense, it's always also acted as a bridge among these three regional grouping between Morocco and between Africa and Europe, between Middle East and Africa, between Middle East and Europe. You know, I'm speaking in part from my personal experience when I used to be – I used to be a history professor. And when I was applying for jobs, people would also ask me, well, do you teach African history or do you teach Middle Eastern history? And I always tried to say that I taught Mediterranean history. And the response was always, well, Mediterranean history is a European category. So do you teach Middle Eastern or African? And you're always forced to choose. I always decided that I was just going to teach Moroccan history, which is why I'm no longer an academic. So I think, you know, this notion of exceptionalism comes from the perception that Morocco should fit into a category of Middle East or Africa, but I don't think it does, and I don't think it ever has or nor will it ever in the future. You know, so **to measure Morocco and its current political trajectory against the events that have transpired in Tunisia or Egypt or Libya I think is a mistake. Likewise, you know, I think it's a mistake to measure Morocco against sub-Saharan Africa or against Europe. And in fact, it may simply be best to measure Morocco against its own aspirations and its own desires and its own stated political objectives, and that may yield us with a better understanding of where Morocco is going and how it wants to get there.** I'll leave my comments at that.

Juvenile Justice Advantage

Juvenile justice reform needed to offer better opportunities for Moroccan youth – alternative is extremism

US Agency for International Development, September 2010, “Morocco Rule of Law Assessment”
http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT305.pdf p. 34

Juvenile justice in Morocco faces significant challenges requiring a series of interventions designed to improve the justice system for minors and provide prevention mechanisms. Youth with little education and poor job opportunities too often turn to crime or religious extremism, creating security issues both at home and abroad. Working with juveniles can yield significant benefits by developing future leaders who expect and will demand transparent and accountable institutions. It is clear that the juvenile justice system is inadequate to meet the current needs and requires significant reform.

While legal provisions are in place to protect juveniles, they are not being implemented in practice. To ensure that a comprehensive approach is developed to juvenile justice, an extensive assessment of the needs and resources should be conducted. While the second phase of the assessment team was able to gather significant details of the processes or lack thereof, a more in-depth assessment should be conducted to pinpoint the areas for immediate intervention and to determine the resources within the community to support change. **Given other programming initiatives funded by the USG and other donors, coordination is imperative so that USAID programming can identify and fill in the gaps. There is considerable political and social will on behalf of the GOM and civil society to engage youth at risk of disaffection by reforming the system and providing opportunities to youth.** Any efforts which can demonstrate impact need to partner with and build the capacity of institutional and social partners to carry on the work beyond the life of the program. **Support efforts should focus on establishing juvenile courts and providing technical assistance in developing and implementing alternative methods for addressing youth offenders.**

Press Freedom Advantage

Moroccan government suppressing media criticism

Betwa Sharma, Foreign Policy, June 9, 2011, “A Martyr in Morocco: Do the protests in Morocco finally have enough steam to unsettle the monarchy?”

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/06/09/a_martyr_in_morocco

The initial media coverage of the pro-democracy movement was quite comprehensive and even encouraged by the state, according to journalists. But after activists rejected the promises made in the king's speech in March, the government perceived the movement as a real threat. Since then, journalists say their editors are holding back on pieces critical of the regime. They are also under pressure from advertisers whose businesses depend on the favor of the king and his entourage. Criticizing the government can have dangerous consequences. Rachid Nini, editor and owner of Al Massae newspaper, was arrested in April and charged with "compromising the security and safety of the homeland." Nini had criticized Morocco's Directorate of Territorial Surveillance for abducting people and called for the body to be supervised by the Parliament, according to local reports. He was held in Casablanca without bail and was sentenced to one year in prison on June 9. However, some journalists in Morocco also say that he was critical of the intelligence services in favor of other government security services and eventually fell victim to the conflict. Journalists are expected to protest against the sentence, however.

In light of the restrictions, many journalists are turning to Facebook, Twitter, and blogs to cover events under pseudonyms. One journalist who writes for a French-language magazine in Morocco said that he turned to the Internet after his editors repeatedly turned down his pitches about the Feb. 20 movement. He **sarcastically credited the government for warding off the freedom movement in Morocco more successfully than its counterparts in Syria and Bahrain.** **"The Morocco authorities are smarter," he said. "They are not killing us, but they are dealing with us without changing anything.... It's like applying some makeup to hide the problem."**

Morocco has a significant increase in cyber-activism to resist the government.

Lalami, 2/17/2011. Laila. “Arab Uprisings: What the February 20 Protests Tell Us About Morocco.” the author of Secret Son, is associate professor at the university of California, Riverside.
<http://www.thenation.com/blog/158670/arab-uprisings-what-february-20-protests-tell-us-about-morocco>.
{M.e. 6.11.11}

With the ouster of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and Hosni Mubarak, the Arab world has erupted in popular protests in favor of democracy and dignity. Morocco, long considered one of the most stable Arab countries, is not immune to this regional trend. Inspired by the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, a group of young activists are using social media to spread the word about a protest in Casablanca on February 20. A video they have made to promote the protests has already gone viral. It features thirteen young Moroccan men and women, speaking in their native Arabic or Berber. “I am Moroccan and I will take part in the protest on February 20,” they all say, and then go on to explain their reasons for marching: freedom, equality, better living standards, education, labor rights, minority rights and so on. (You can view the video, with English subtitles, [here](#).)

The February 20 movement was started by a group calling itself Democracy and Freedom Now. Their demands include constitutional reforms, the dissolution of the present parliament, the creation of a temporary transitional government, an independent judiciary, accountability for elected officials, language rights for Berber speakers and the release of all political prisoners. Democracy and Freedom Now was soon joined by a loose coalition of cyber-activists, traditional lefties, Islamists and twenty human rights organizations, including the Moroccan Association of Human Rights and Amnesty Morocco.

Press Freedom Advantage

Citizen Journalism developing as important resource

Jillian York, Director for International Freedom of Expression at the Electronic Frontier Foundation in San Francisco, **May 26, 2011**, Al Jazeera, “Morocco's uphill struggle for media reform: In the absence of reliable and impartial mainstream media, citizen journalism steps in to fill the void.”
<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/05/2011526141810252734.html>

On February 17, as Egypt became the second Arab country to topple a dictator in just one month's time, the Arab Spring seemed eternal and unstoppable. Young activists in several countries across the region, believing that anything was possible, put forth calls for demonstrations on YouTube and Facebook, emulating their Tunisian and Egyptian counterparts before them.

On February 20 - just three days after the fall of Mubarak - thousands of Moroccans poured into the streets of Rabat, Tangier, Casablanca, and elsewhere, responding to calls from civil society and human rights groups. A viral video campaign created by a group called 'Democracy and Freedom Now' just a week prior outlined protesters' demands: an increase in the minimum wage, labour rights, minority rights, education reform, and equality.

Initially, the protests garnered significant international attention. But as the world's attention turned first to Libya, then the rest of the region, and more recently - particularly in the Francophone world, the Dominique Strauss-Kahn affair - **continuing demonstrations in Morocco have fallen low on the priority list of mainstream media, leaving supporters of the February 20 movement flailing. A terrorist attack on a popular Marrakesh cafe has complicated the matter, giving Morocco a reason to beef up security and justify crackdowns.**

Nevertheless, the protests have indeed continued over the past three months, with large-scale demonstrations attracting thousands on March 20, April 24, and May 8 **in cities across the country. And while the sizable Moroccan blogosphere has historically been only marginally political, citizen journalism has found a strong point of entry in the absence of mainstream coverage,** emboldened by the emergence of professional journalists online, **and with the sudden courage to criticise the monarchy.**

That kind of fortitude is new in Morocco, where publications have been shut down and journalists blacklisted for crossing the country's three red lines: Islam, the Western Sahara, and the monarchy. Though the Moroccan government blocks only a few websites, bloggers have in the past been arrested for content posted online.

One citizen media initiative that arose out of the protests is Mamfakinch. Co-founded by blogger Hisham Almiraat (the site's other bloggers write anonymously), a Moroccan doctor who lives and works in France, Mamfakinch is a collective blog dedicated to countering what they view as propaganda from state-run media, with free access to information at the core of their work.

Almiraat, who on his blog recently called this a "make or break moment" for Morocco, says that "at some point, the official news agency declared that the protests were cancelled. None of that was true." That spurred Almiraat and his partners to start a new platform. Studying the work of friends in Tunisia and Egypt, they identified Tunisian news collective Nawaat.org as a "gold standard for curating", says Almiraat, "so we decided to create an alternative media entity."

Citizen journalism often serves as a major source for mainstream media. Nawaat's reporting during the Tunisian uprising often help inform major publications, as did the reporting of bloggers and Twitter users in Egypt in elsewhere. Almiraat says that his collective "hopes to serve as a link between citizen reporters and journalists in the mainstream media. We believe that both citizen and traditional media can serve the cause of free access to information and free expression."

Status of Democracy Assistance

Uniq - Aid for Morocco has increased in the past, but 2012 request is slightly less than 2011

Sarah Trister, Congressional Liaison Officer – Freedom House, May 2011, “Investing in Freedom: Analyzing the FY 2012 International Affairs Budget Request” p. 4
http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/100.pdf

GJ&D Funding by Country

(In thousands \$)	FY2010 GJD Actual	FY2011 GJD Request	FY2012 GJD Request	FY 12 Difference from FY10 Actual
Egypt	25,000	25,000	25,000	0
Iraq ¹¹	329,900	175,334	286,600	-13.13%
Jordan	26,000	16,300	22,000	-15.38%
Lebanon	25,389	28,769	31,800	25.25%
Morocco	7,248	10,650	10,150	40.04%
Tunisia	500	0	0	-100.00%
West Bank and Gaza	31,600	41,500	56,000	77.22%
Yemen	11,000	10,000	15,000	36.36%
Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)	38,200	52,900	64,300	68.32%
Near East Regional Democracy	40,000	40,000	35,000	-12.50%
USAID Middle East Regional (OMEPI)	2,500	595	1,500	-40.00%

US provides democracy assistance to Morocco

Khakee, international consultant and The Policy Practice associate, 6-14-10

[Anna, The Policy Practice, a development consultancy. 6-14-10, “Assessing Democracy Assistance: Morocco”, p. 3, <http://www.frde.org/publication/780/morocco>, accessed 6-5-11]

Morocco receives democracy assistance from the European Union and, to a lesser extent, from individual European states. **The United States and Canada also provide Morocco with democracy support as do Western NGOs. Democracy assistance covers a large number of issue areas, with a particular emphasis (in terms of funds committed) on judicial and administrative reform and decentralisation.**¹¹ NGO development, the strengthening of political parties and parliament and electoral support are also important focus areas. In addition to democracy assistance, respect for democratic principles form part of the main agreements and initiatives between Morocco on the one hand and Western states on the other, such as those under the Euro- Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighbourhood Policy. This section provides a brief overview of international democracy promotion in Morocco.

Status of Democracy Assistance

US democracy assistance to Morocco focuses on democratic governance

Khakee, international consultant and The Policy Practice associate, 6-14-10

[Anna, The Policy Practice, a development consultancy. 6-14-10, “Assessing Democracy Assistance: Morocco”, p. 4-5, <http://www.frice.org/publication/780/morocco>, accessed 6-5-11]

Morocco has traditionally been rather peripheral to United States interests, but after 9/11 this changed. Today, the US is the largest bilateral donor of democracy assistance in Morocco: democratic governance is one of four priority assistance goals of the US government in the country.¹⁷ **Funding comes mainly through USAID, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour (DRL), and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Important agencies responsible for programmes in Morocco with mainly USAID and NED funding include the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI, present in Morocco since 1998) and the International Republican Institute (IRI).**¹⁸

USAID has recently worked on technical assistance and training for the Moroccan parliament, with the aim of strengthening the parliament’s capacity to oversee public finances, review legislation and policy and engage in a dialogue with citizens. In view of the 2007 elections, USAID funded NDI and IRI to work with Moroccan political parties, including the moderate Islamist party PJD, to improve their capacity to develop political platforms and to effectively communicate them to voters. NDI also assisted Moroccan civil society to encourage voter participation in the elections, and has conducted a large number of focus groups (a particular type of polling technique) to gauge Moroccan public opinion.¹⁹ USAID has also been active on local governance, aiming to increase citizen participation at the local level and enhancing local governments’ transparency, performance, and accountability.

The main US post-9/11 initiative in the MENA region is the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), offering support for political, economic and educational reforms. MEPI’s presence is largest in Morocco,²⁰ where programming has included – apart from a range of region-wide activities notably on the media – parliamentary reforms, support to political parties, and strengthening of local government.²¹

The Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) of the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) funds some MENA-wide projects (on general democracy issues, media, women etc.) which have included Morocco. It has also funded judicial reform projects in Morocco.

Apart from funding a number of NDI and IRI programmes, NED has also funded Moroccan NGOs directly, focussing on issues such as judicial reform, local democracy, youth participation in politics, civil society strengthening, and human rights.

In the context of the troubled US-sponsored Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA), the itinerant Forum for the Future was held in Morocco in 2004 and then again in November 2009. The BMENA Foundation for the Future, intended to provide assistance to civil society organisations that work to foster democracy and freedom, started its grant-giving activities in 2007. So far, however, it has only funded a handful of projects in Morocco.²²

Some American initiatives have been very high profile, including US work with the Moroccan parliament and political parties, opinion polls which IRI undertook prior to the 2007 elections (polling had not until then been part of the political landscape in Morocco and the polls predicted that PJD had a following of approximately half the electorate, upsetting the traditional Moroccan political landscape), and official support for Al Adl wal- Ihsan spokes-person Nadia Yassine when she was detained in 2005.

Status of Democracy Assistance

NDI provides assistance with Moroccan elections

Khakee, international consultant and The Policy Practice associate, 6-14-10

[Anna, The Policy Practice, a development consultancy. 6-14-10, “Assessing Democracy Assistance: Morocco”, p. 6-7, <http://www.fride.org/publication/780/morocco>, accessed 6-5-11]

In view of the 2007 elections, the Moroccan authorities invited an international observation mission headed by the NDI to the country. It consisted of a 50-strong delegation, preceded by a pre-election assessment team. The delegates visited polling stations in selected locations.³⁷ Domestic and international observers concurred that the 2007 elections were the most transparent and fair in the history of Morocco, as ‘overall, the voting went smoothly and was characterised by a spirit of transparency and professionalism’. However the mission stressed that ‘The low voter turnout [...] and significant number of protest votes suggest that Moroccan authorities will need to undertake further political reforms in order to encourage widespread engagement in the political process. Those reforms should aim to enhance the power of elected representatives while also increasing the transparency of the system and accountability to the electorate’.³⁸ During the 2009 municipal elections, only Moroccan observers, relying mainly on their own funds, were present.³⁹

[Note – NDI = US-based National Democratic Institute]

NDI and IRI are primary international actors in election assistance to Morocco

Khakee, international consultant and The Policy Practice associate, 6-14-10

[Anna, The Policy Practice, a development consultancy. 6-14-10, “Assessing Democracy Assistance: Morocco”, p. 16, <http://www.fride.org/publication/780/morocco>, accessed 6-5-11]

Electoral support has come in several forms in Morocco: the international observation mission of the 2007 parliamentary elections, support for national observers, encouragement to participate in elections, training for candidates (in particular female candidates), and campaign training including helping set up national campaign strategies and teams. Separate, but nevertheless related, is the continuous work with political parties, including training, party building, and focus groups to bridge the gap between the parties and the electorates. Although several international actors have been involved in this area, the main actors have been US organisations such as NDI and IRI. The IRI resident representative noted that there is ‘so much work around elections, I’m a fan of that kind of work’.

US Relations Uniq

The U.S. has endorsed and plays a key role in supporting current Moroccan reforms.

Reuters. 3/24/11. “Sec. Clinton Calls Morocco "Well-Positioned to Lead" on Democratic Reforms; Affirms U.S. Support for Moroccan Autonomy Plan as "Serious, Realistic, and Credible" Approach to Resolve Western Sahara Crisis.” Thu Mar 24, 2011 7:46pm EDT.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/03/24/idUS251054+24-Mar-2011+PRN20110324>. {M.e. 6.11.11}

At a joint press briefing after meeting with Foreign Minister Taieb Fassi Fihri yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praised Morocco for advancing democratic reforms under His Majesty King Mohammed VI, and for advocating international efforts to protect civilians in Libya. She said Morocco is "well-positioned to lead" for democratic change during this "crucial moment in time for Morocco, the Maghreb, and the Middle East," and endorsed Morocco's autonomy plan as a "serious, realistic, and credible" approach to end the Western Sahara conflict.

"The King has long demonstrated his commitment to reform," said Sec. Clinton, applauding the King's speech earlier this month promising "comprehensive reforms that would guarantee free parliamentary elections, including the election of a prime minister, create an independent judiciary, and assure human rights for all of Morocco's stakeholders, including the Amazigh community." The March 9 speech was also praised by many in the international community.

Concerning the crisis in Libya, Sec. Clinton acknowledged "Morocco's leadership at the summit in Paris last week" and its "important role in the Arab League's decision to call for the protection of Libyan civilians."

On the Western Sahara, Clinton emphasized that U.S. policy "has remained constant... starting with the Clinton Administration and continuing through the Bush Administration and up to the present in the Obama Administration." She said Morocco's autonomy plan provides "a potential approach to satisfy the aspirations of the people in the Western Sahara to run their own affairs in peace and dignity."

Minister Fassi Fihri underscored Morocco's commitment to democracy and its reform initiatives, and to support democratic change in the region to keep the "Arab spring" from becoming "a dark winter." He reiterated that there "is no Arab exception for the universal principle of dignity and freedom." On the three-decades old Western Sahara conflict, he said "we hope that we can resolve this issue," which he called "a necessity" for Morocco, but also for the security of the Maghreb as a region. "Al-Qaida is here and trying to create problems not only for the Maghreb but for many, many citizens and countries." In closing, Secretary Clinton noted the continuity of reform in Morocco. "I would add that we're so encouraged...because the King has been making reforms over the last several years. We're already seeing the result of those reforms, and these additional announcements ...will add to that. So we're seeing exactly what the King has said being enacted."

"The U.S. has a key role to play in supporting conditions that make regional reforms possible," said Edward M. Gabriel, former U.S. Ambassador to Morocco and chairman of the Moroccan American Center. "We look forward to following the steps that the U.S. will take to strengthen the strategic partnership with Morocco, which has much to offer because of our shared values and interests. It has the commitment and experience to make meaningful reform a reality."

US Relations Uniq

U.S. and Morocco are strong allies: Morocco is asking the U.S. for Sidewinder missiles.

UPI, 2011. United Press International. “Morocco requests Sidewinder missiles.” Published: May 20, 2011, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Security-Industry/2011/05/20/Morocco-requests-Sidewinder-missiles/UPI-99461305898496/. {M.e. 6.11.11}

Morocco has asked the United States for 20 AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder missiles, as well as associated equipment, parts, training and logistical support. The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency, in its notification to Congress of the possible Foreign Military Sale, said the estimated cost of the deal would be about \$50 million.

Covered under the request is 20 AIM-9X-2 Sidewinder missiles, 10 CATM-9X-2 Captive Air Training Missiles All-Up-Round Block II Missiles, eight CATM-9X-2 Block II Missile Guidance Units, and eight AIM-9X-2 Block II Tactical Guidance Units, two Dummy Air Training Missiles, containers, missile support and test equipment.

The contract would also cover provisioning, spare and repair parts, personnel training and training equipment, publications and technical data, U.S. government and contractor technical assistance and other related logistics support.

"The proposed sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security objectives of the United States by supporting Morocco's legitimate need for its own self-defense," DSCA said. "Morocco is one of the most stable and pro-Western of the Arab states, and the U.S. remains committed to a long-term relationship with Morocco."

The prime contractor would be Raytheon Missile Systems Co. in Tucson.

US Strategic Interests Internal Links

Morocco is a strong ally and is geostrategically critical for the U.S.

Pham, 6/01/2011. (J. PETER PHAM, DIRECTOR, MICHAEL S. ANSARI AFRICA CENTER, ACUS. “ UNCERTAIN FORECAST IN NORTH AFRICA: PREVENTING THE “ARAB SPRING” FROM BECOMING THE “SEASON OF DISCONTENT?”” <http://www.acus.org/event/uncertain-forecast-preventing-arab-spring-becoming-season-discontent/panel1/transcript.>) {M.e. 06.11.11}

You know, Morocco, I think, is like Egypt. It’s a geostrategically critical country for the United States. It sits obviously on the Strait of Gibraltar, which is a strategic chokepoint for both the U.S. Navy moving in and out of the Atlantic Basin, but also for oil flows moving out of North Africa into the Atlantic Basin and serving terminals in the U.K. and on the Eastern Seaboard here in the U.S. It – Morocco maintains very strong ties with Washington. It’s a major non-NATO ally of the United States. It maintains very strong ties with Paris, less so with Madrid, but nonetheless the diplomatic ties with Madrid remain open and communications are clear. It – Morocco has limited engagements with its neighbors both to the east and also to the south. There is – unlike Syria, I think there is no question about Morocco’s sovereignty; Morocco’s sovereignty, Havaat sovereignty remains contested and entirely coherent within its own borders. The monarchy, which is the seat of this sovereignty is a sound institution. It has made gradual progress over the last two decades. I think we have to look at Morocco in the long term. But Morocco has made gradual progress over the last two decades towards democratization, towards human rights, towards rights for women, towards rights for minorities. I remember when I first began traveling to Morocco that there was no Berber on TV. Now you can turn on the TV and see every show duplicated in Berber.

Terrorism Internal Links

State sponsored terrorism is a huge problem in Maghreb.

PR Newswire, 6/3/2011. (“Experts Warn of Risk to U.S. if 'Arab Spring' Turns to 'Season of Discontent,' Call for U.S. to Partner with Reformers to Spur Growth, Positive Change: Resurgent al-Qaeda, returning mercenaries, will exploit Libya chaos and arms to spread violence.” <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/experts-warn-of-risk-to-us-if-arab-spring-turns-to-season-of-discontent-call-for-us-to-partner-with-reformers-to-spur-growth-positive-change-123137183.html>.) {M.e. 06.11.11}

Prof. Yonah Alexander of the International Center for Terrorism Studies warned that al-Qaeda and state-sponsored terrorism are "alive and well" in the Maghreb and Sahel, where terrorist incidents have risen 500% since 9/11 and are a global as well as regional threat. He also noted the concerns expressed by NATO officials about mercenaries in Libya.

At the Association for the Study of the Middle East & Africa (ASMEA) forum, "Terrorism in North Africa After bin Laden," investigative reporter Richard Minter warned "AQIM is taking advantage of the 'Arab Spring' to expand and grow." Professor Richard Rene Laremont of SUNY said AQIM's "narrative was weakened because change came through mass civil demonstrations, not terrorism," but that it would be reinvigorated if reforms aren't realized.

Spanish journalist Jose Maria Gil Garre, noted that AQIM has succeeded in part because it can "depend on support of military elements of the Polisario," a separatist group based in Algeria, as local guides to "carry out its arms trafficking, kidnapping, and drug-trafficking in the Sahel."

Economy Uniqueness

Morocco economy flourishing

Pham, 6/01/2011. (J. PETER PHAM, DIRECTOR, MICHAEL S. ANSARI AFRICA CENTER, ACUS. “ UNCERTAIN FORECAST IN NORTH AFRICA: PREVENTING THE “ARAB SPRING” FROM BECOMING THE “SEASON OF DISCONTENT?”” <http://www.acus.org/event/uncertain-forecast-preventing-arab-spring-becoming-season-discontent/panel1/transcript.>) {M.e. 06.11.11}

The economy [in Morocco] is also growing. I’m sure that people who have traveled to Morocco over the last two or three decades have recognized that the massive investment in infrastructure, the changes in consumer retail, consumer goods, the increasing use of Morocco as an offshoring destination by European countries, both for customer service representatives but also for manufacturing, the increasing integration of Morocco’s north into the European economies – we’re starting to see a real flourishing of economic activity to the extent that if you go to Marrakesh or if you go to Rabat, you’ll see young Europeans working as waiters and waitresses – you know, young French just out of school will take a job as a waiter or waitress in Morocco rather than staying in Europe. You’re seeing a lot of Moroccan families or second-generation Moroccans who were born in France returning to Morocco to participate in the economic activity there, which is much more dynamic than it is in France itself.

GCC Membership Impacts

Morocco has been invited to join the Gulf Cooperation Council but its membership could hurt the GCC.

Carnegie, 6/3/11. Lahcen Achy. A resident scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut who specializes in the political economy of the Middle East. “MOROCCO: What a GCC membership would mean for the economy.” June 3, 2011 | 4:01 am.

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/06/moroccogcc-.html>. {M.e. 6.11.11}

The Gulf Cooperation Council’s unprecedented decision to invite Morocco and approve Jordan’s request to join its ranks came as a surprise to political observers in the region and outside.

Even though Yemen represents a natural geographic extension and strategic depth for the Gulf states, the council has always refused its membership request. It has also dealt cautiously for a decade with Jordan’s application for a free-trade zone agreement.

Political uprisings and new security concerns that surfaced in the Middle East and North Africa over the past few months explain the unexpected move by the GCC. Gulf countries are in the process of building new strategic alliances to face the Arab Spring’s ramifications on both domestic and regional politics.

Yet, Morocco’s membership in the GCC does not seem to be the right option. The cost of its membership may be incommensurate with the expected benefits for both parties.

The GCC was founded in 1981 to achieve the economic and security integration of the six Gulf States -- Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates -- based on shared historical, geographical, and cultural ties. The council evolved progressively, moving from a free-trade zone in 1983 to a customs union in 2003 and finally to a common market in 2008. Moreover, the council began discussions a few years ago to shift to a common currency zone.

The GCC has been a reserved club for rich Gulf states. Per-capita income for the six current GCC members ranges from \$17,000 U.S. (Saudi Arabia) to more than \$70,000 U.S. (Qatar). If Jordan and Morocco join the GCC, the new council will look quite different. Per-capita income in either Morocco or Jordan does not exceed \$4,000 U.S.

At least some economic rationale can be found for Jordan’s GCC membership. It shares a border with Saudi Arabia, the largest and most influential GCC state. Jordan’s economy is strongly tied to the Gulf via trade, investment, and labor migration. Jordan’s population of fewer than 6 million is relatively easy to absorb -- the GCC’s total population is about 40 million.

Morocco, however, presents a different case. It lies in the far west of the Arab world. Its **economic relations with the Gulf states are weak. More than 60% of Morocco’s export revenue, 80% of its tourism income, and 90% of its remittances come from the European Union. Furthermore, Morocco’s population of 32 million would make it the most populous GCC country.**