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Morocco & The United States: A Shared History

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MOROCCO & THE UNITED STATES: A SHARED HISTORY

by

Daniel Valentin

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Interdepartmental Studies

Jim Giblin
Thesis Mentor

Spring 2018

All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Interdepartmental Studies have been completed.

Emily Wentzel
Interdepartmental Studies Honors Advisor

**MOROCCO & THE UNITED STATES:
A SHARED HISTORY**

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Daniel Valentin

James Giblin, Faculty Mentor

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for a
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with Honors in International Studies

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Abstract

This thesis reviews existing literature on domestic affairs in Morocco and its interactions with the United States with the goal of examining the main reasons why both countries have been in positive relations throughout their shared history. Through an extensive analysis of time periods that include their origin of international relations, the American-led invasion of Axis-controlled Morocco during World War II, and the Cold War collaboration between both countries, I argue that the current friendship between the United States and Morocco is the result of unprecedented and unexpected actions taken by leaders in both countries on behalf of the other. The actions of different Moroccan kings, American leaders, and foreign powers all shaped the narrative that progressively strengthened the bond between Morocco and the United States enough to ensure both would remain friendly with each other continuing into the twenty-first century.

Eighteenth Century

Both the domestic and international affairs of Morocco at the end of the 18th century are discussed in the UNESCO General History of Africa. At that time, Morocco was ruled over by a king, Sīdī Muhammad ibn ‘Abdallah, also known as Muhammad III, whose agenda was to increase order in Morocco, give more power to the monarchy, and to help turn Morocco into a world power (El Fasi 231). The king’s plans were thus international in nature, because he did not want to stay isolated from other foreign powers. Trade relations are indicative of such an attitude taken by Muhammad III, and so he mainly set out to develop Morocco’s trade ports, in addition to signing agreements with several European countries (El Fasi 231). This stage of domestic transformation helped increase Morocco’s visibility in an attempt to make the country stronger than before. Such efforts set the stage for the important events that followed.

While remaining on good terms with the Shārīf of Mecca and witnessing the decline of the local Wahhābī presence, Muhammad III took bolder steps in foreign relations, including proposing to Louis XIV to discontinue slavery, supporting the Ottoman empire against Russia, and deciding to recognize the sovereignty of the United States (El Fasi 232). Muhammad III was able to achieve his goals in the context he ruled under, in which he could move forward relatively unopposed, particularly under the eye of the Islamic world. That Morocco could even address the French imperial power in such a way, or offer support in a large-scale war between Turkey and Russia, or even serve to recognize the sovereignty of any country would seem to indicate that the Moroccan king carried much influence after rapidly bringing Morocco into the global sphere.

In a time when enforcing state tax collection could have easily lead to revolt, Muhammad III was curious about Europe’s success in managing its abundant commercial ventures, often

engaging in discussions with foreign merchants and ambassadors, sparking his desire to open new sources of income from international trade (Roberts 195-196). This move to look outwardly for economic opportunities meant the king was paying attention to affairs overseas. As early as 1777, after his secretaries informed him that a new American nation was splitting from Britain, Muhammad III decided to open its ports to them and recognize America as a sovereign nation, making it Morocco's first interaction with the Americans (Roberts 196-199).

This gesture to reach out to the Americans, both politically and economically, seems to be rooted in Muhammad III's desire to interact more with the European powers at that time. It can thus be seen as an opportunity to grow his country's economy, while maintaining public order, in order to legitimize its own power relative to its European neighbors. In this way, the decision to establish relations with the Americans was an answer to the domestic and international concerns facing Morocco. Such relations also granted legitimacy and more commercial promise to the Americans, which they were in need of while trying to break from Britain. The origins of relations between Morocco and the Americans begin to tell the story of how the two nations came to be as they are today.

Mid Twentieth Century

The next major interaction that would test the relations between the United States and Morocco would take place a few centuries later, during the Second World War.

Before this interaction took place, and after years of deregulatory trade agreements with England, France, and Spain, Morocco had become a protectorate of France in 1912 after the Treaty of Fez, its most valuable regions having fully fallen under the occupation of the French military by 1926 (Maghraoui 39-43). These circumstances weakened Morocco's governing autonomy, as French resident-generals took from the Moroccan king the power to make major executive decisions (Ikeda 13). The rising power that Morocco had thus unraveled at the hands of the very European powers it had once so skillfully negotiated with at the eve of the conception of the new American nation.

France then suffered during World War II after being defeated by and requesting an armistice with Nazi Germany, which resulted in the creation of a neutral "État Français" based at Vichy on 24 July 1942. The Vichy government was essentially a puppet-state, while Paris and the rest of Northern France was directly occupied in the north (O'Hara 12-15). This means that the French state, and thus its protectorates, had fallen under the dominion of Nazi Germany. By this time, the United States was already at war with the Axis powers.

In 1942, the United States and the United Kingdom planned Operation Torch after agreeing to collaboratively invade Axis-occupied North Africa (O'Hara 45-46). Though the British considered General Eisenhower relatively inexperienced, the allied Combined Chiefs of Staff made him the Commander in Chief of Torch, which he planned to implement on 7 November, aiming to capture Casablanca along with Oran, Algiers, and Tunis (O'Hara 46-47). In this "binational" operation, the British "regarded the capture of Casablanca 'as both unfeasible

and irrelevant”” (O’Hara 47). Clearly, taking steps to liberate Morocco apart from Algeria and Tunisia was not a priority of the British, but of the United States.

French Casablanca came under bombardment early in the morning of 7 November, with American admirals fending off French air and naval forces (O’Hara 186-194). Having succeeded both at sea and in the air, the American troops advanced towards Casablanca on land along the Casablanca-Rabat highway against French artillery fire, with supporting artillery fire from American ships and air bombings until French Casablanca surrendered on 11 November, after experiencing heavy losses and realizing that further resistance was futile (O’Hara 220-225). After their victory against the Axis defenders, the Americans allowed the French to temporarily hold power in Casablanca to ensure the security and safety of its Moroccan populace, much to the French military’s dismay (O’Hara 225). The Vichy French were defeated in Morocco, ending Axis rule in the region.

The military operation to liberate Morocco from Axis rule was not at all what the British had in mind when planning to invade North Africa. It was purely an American interest. Conceivably, the Allies could have focused only on Algeria and Tunisia as the British had initially intended. After all, one less invasion would have meant fewer casualties in the overall operation. It was clear that the Americans were willing to take that risk, and did, to ensure that Morocco was not left in Axis control. Nevertheless, under the terms of surrender agreed at Casablanca, Morocco remained under French control, and it would stay that way even after the liberation of Paris, and the end of Nazi Germany at the end of World War II.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt honored the Moroccan king, Muhammad V, by visiting him in a suburb of Casablanca and promising him independence. This generated a wave of Moroccan nationalism, which then led to the creation of a Moroccan movement to claim the

country's independence. The support of the United States and the United Kingdom for Moroccan independence angered French authorities in the region (Ikeda 16-17). This Western clash of ideals both empowered the self-organizing Moroccans, as well as highlighted one of the main problems France would then be faced with in Morocco.

The American troops left an impression on the Moroccan Jews and Muslims that helped make the United States immensely popular to the average Moroccan citizens (Pennell 157). At the same time, the Free French, led by Charles De Gaulle, refused Morocco's freedom manifesto, which resulted in riots led by Moroccan nationalists. At this time there was also a famine in 1945 due to a poor harvest, for which the French did nothing, while the Americans offered an abundance in food aid (Pennell 158). With no freedom and no food, the Moroccan people were in a desperate, vulnerable position.

The aid provided by the United States served to make a positive impression with Moroccans, relieving them from a deprivation that the French willingly ignored. This is amplified by the fact that the United States performed the duty that France ought to have fulfilled because Morocco was still its protectorate, and that France's neglect towards the Moroccan famine was intentional, and thus personal.

It is therefore no surprise that when Muhammad V was given permission to visit Tangier after the famine hit Morocco, he took the opportunity to praise the American government to a vast, cheering crowd, strategically ignoring giving any praise to the French government, in the presence of French officials (Pennell 159). This jab at the French occupiers was subtle, and it resonated with the masses. At this moment in time, the United States had clearly been the better friend to Morocco that France should have been.

Contrary to American and British post-colonial sentiments, which recommended that Morocco be returned its ability to self-govern, France still sought to maintain its control of the country against the wishes of rising Moroccan nationalists, resulting in a surge of nationalist North African movements in the late 1940's (Ikeda 17-21). This period marked the end of Moroccan submission to their French occupiers, and the beginning of a transition period that would end French colonialism in the coming years.

The American-led invasion of Morocco alongside the Allied powers in Operation Torch did free Morocco of Axis rule, but not from French colonial rule. By the end of this war, Morocco had already undergone a dramatic cultural shift, opposite of what it had been experiencing near the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, President Roosevelt's visit to Casablanca, the larger American international policy that encouraged post-colonial independence, and the delivery and provision of food aid during a famine by the United States did help light the sentimental spark of Moroccan independence from France. This tumultuous time in twentieth century world history brought the United States and Morocco closer together, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

The events that would lead up to this new vision of an independent Morocco took place during the 1950s, after World War II, at the beginning of the Cold War. These events would come to lay the foundations of contemporary international relations between the United States and Morocco.

By 1952, Moroccan nationalism had become popular throughout the country, with support for French control diminishing, and King Muhammad V had grown immensely popular and influential, garnering many supporters across the land, scaring the French government into exiling him and replacing him with his uncle, Muhammad Ben 'Arafa (Miller 150). Contrary to

France's intentions, their decision caused the shocked citizens of Morocco to associate their nationalism with Muhammad V's exile, causing the French government and its citizens to question their country's policy in anticipation of how the Moroccan populace could potentially react (Miller 150-151). The shortsightedness of the decision to exile Muhammad V might indicate a sense of desperation on behalf of France with regards to its ability to control its Moroccan protectorate. This would become evident in what immediately followed his exile.

When Muhammad V was exiled, public disapproval turned into a revolution in Morocco, during which people relied on radios to broadcast messages of quickly organized armed insurgency across the nation. It caused daily violence targeted towards European colonial settlements, which the French military brutally countered with their own forces while France was seeing similar dissent in its colonies across the world (Miller 151-152). At this point, it's clear that France had betrayed one of its key promises to Morocco when it first sought to make the land a French protectorate: to ensure its safety and security. That betrayal might have put the last nail in the coffin for colonial loyalist sentiments among the populace. Without the means or capacity to maintain control in Morocco, France had to give up the fight.

As a final solution to their massive problem, France opted to return Muhammad V to Morocco from Madagascar and to restore him and his family to the throne (Miller 152-153). This gesture on behalf of France was another massive reversal of its intentions. It granted legitimacy back to the Moroccan monarchy, which had been largely illegitimate since the beginning of the twentieth century. No longer could the European power reasonably maintain dominion over Morocco. The time had finally come for independence.

After Muhammad V met with the French Foreign Minister in Paris in 1955 to declare that he would seek reform in Morocco by turning it into "a democratic state based on a

constitutional monarchy,” he finally returned to Morocco to declare the end of a “minor jihad” to gain independence, and the start of a “major jihad” to work together to build a new Morocco, which was met with thunderous applause and cheering by civilians (Miller 153). France had finally conceded and the king was back in charge of the Moroccan state. Interestingly, the king opted not to restore Morocco’s government as a traditional monarchy as before, but to create a constitutional monarchy.

The king’s use of religious labels, such as “minor” and “major” jihads for these experiences was clearly appealing to the Moroccan populace, which was mostly conservative and Muslim. This also indicated also that the citizens of Morocco finally had a leader that was in touch with their values, which they did not have with their French rulers.

French influence waned and quickly collapsed in Morocco, which meant that France’s presence had become more of a liability than an asset. The safety and security they had once used to earn the loyalty of the king and the Moroccan people had disappeared, to be replaced by widespread violence.

The newly independent Morocco was not alone in the global sphere, with powers like the United States and the United Kingdom having initially influenced Moroccan independence against the interests of then Vichy France after their intervention.

In a broader sense, it was as though Morocco and the United States had switched their roles in global affairs. The once free and powerful Moroccan monarchy helped legitimize a newborn United States against the wishes of their former English imperialist masters near the end of the eighteenth century. A century and a half later, the United States invaded Casablanca and encouraged the Moroccans to gain independence from their French imperialist masters. Both sides succeeded mutually in these historical encounters. By the time Morocco had rid itself of

French rule, they were both independent, and the United States had become one of the most powerful independent countries in the world, and a key player on the global stage.

During the early post-independence, period Muhammad V militarized the country and stabilized the government, while lagging behind in addressing human rights issues and overall living conditions for Moroccan citizens (Miller 158-159). Morocco's harsh living conditions can be put into perspective when remembering their recent struggle against France, but it was clear that Moroccans still had problems that the king had yet to grapple with.

In 1956, the port city of Tangier, which was technically an international zone in the northernmost region of Morocco, had become immensely popular for American travelers to visit with extraterritorial rights, and hundreds of Americans held residency there as the city's population boomed (Edwards 122-123). During the advent of Muhammad V's rule, there were already many Americans living in his domain, most of whom regarded Morocco as pleasant. By this time that Americans were beginning to develop positive feelings towards Morocco, many Moroccans would have already held good opinions of the United States from events in previous decades.

Muhammad V even received a friendly visit from United States Vice-President, Richard Nixon and Mrs. Nixon in 1957 while relations between Morocco and the United States were still cordial (Miller 158). In the meantime, the communist East and capitalist West were at odds with each other as the Cold War began progressing, and Muhammad V opted to voice "strong anticommunist sentiments," while also siding with fellow African countries instead of any of the major world powers at the time, unexpectedly disappointing the United States (Miller 159). Opting to side with countries that were not involved with the mainstream Cold War tensions translated into Moroccan neutrality, meaning that Morocco opted not to help support the United

States in the international sphere at that time. It was understandable in a pragmatic sense, as the king still continued relations with the United States while working to rebuild his country. At the same time, clinging to anticommunist sentiments wasn't enough for the United States in the ideological sense.

Not long after Morocco had undergone reforms and found its place in the Cold War, Muhammad V died on 26 February, 1961, causing widespread despair among the Moroccan populace, who had come to deeply respect him and consider him the “father of the nation” (Miller 162). Given the longevity of Muhammad V's high involvement in Moroccan leadership against foreign occupiers and on the domestic front before his death, such sadness that the people experience seems completely warranted, however effective his governing actually was. The death of one Moroccan king gave way to the rise of another, his son. King Hassan II succeeded Muhammad V, ushering in a new era of Moroccan rule in both the domestic and global sphere.

Hassan II was known to be an avid learner while heir apparent under his father, having also studied law in Bordeaux, being receptive both to the world outside of Morocco and to advancements towards modernity in the country, while also being ambitious, cold, and prone to anger (Miller 162). Among the first steps he took in international diplomacy was reversing Muhammad V's neutrality policy in favor of the capitalist West by strengthening ties with Europe and the United States (Miller 165). This initiative was particularly appealing for France, with whom Hassan II wanted to improve economic and diplomatic relations. Hassan wanted a stronger bond between the two countries as well as the preliminary establishment of stronger ties with the West (165). Hassan II clearly disregarded any apprehension his father felt towards coming closer to the Western powers during the Cold War, which make his actions seem bolder and more risky on the global scale.

An agreement that Muhammad V made with the United States to have five American military bases removed from Morocco in 1959 was completed in 1963 during Hassan II's rule, proving to be the start of a friendly relationship between Morocco and the United States during the king's rule (Miller 165).

Unfortunately, Morocco's newfound respect from the West was tested due to a crisis in internal affairs from 1962-1965, when rising socialist movements and plots against the king in opposition to the traditionally conservative Moroccan government threatened Moroccan unity, stoking Western fears that Morocco might be turning sympathetic towards the communist East during the Cold War (Miller 167). Hassan II responded with conviction in 1963 with a massive arrest of five thousand leftists and a trial that winter that saw eleven leftist leaders sentenced to death for plotting to kill the king (Miller 167). The pressure that Hassan II experienced from the aggressive leftist movements against him was a clear threat both to his rule and to his life.

Meanwhile in 1963, Morocco happily became one of the first countries to welcome U.S. Peace Corps volunteers, remembering the actions America took during the Second World War, and its introduction of food and other products such as bubble gum, jazz music, facial cosmetics, and clothing materials (Miller 209). That Morocco was willing to offer access to their country for the Peace Corps only further indicates the level of comfort that had grown between Morocco and the United States.

During the late 1960s, many young American adults sought to live in Morocco before turning thirty, which was part of an overall trend of that generation to go out and travel to new places in a specific movement that was commonly known as "hippie orientalism" (Edwards 248). Before going to play at Woodstock, Jimi Hendrix visited and performed in several sites in Morocco, including Asilah along the coast, Chefchaouen in the northern mountains, and in

Ketama, where he drew vast crowds of American hippies (Edwards 249). All of this shows that Americans saw fit to come to Morocco to engage in their counter culture movement, even though the message of such a movement had little to no relevance to the Moroccan government, which still allowed them to play peacefully in their cities.

Hassan II's first decade of rule was an important stepping-stone by which he helped reestablish Morocco's presence on the world stage in a way that his father did not. Muhammad V's work to create and solidify an independent Morocco contributed to Hassan II's desire to grow closer to Europe and the United States in a way that his father had not achieved. Morocco's international diplomacy was thus strengthened. Internal strife would yet continue to test international relations with both the United States and other world powers in the following decades, which proved just as decisive during Hassan II's rule. The conflict that would take center stage was a remnant of the same post-colonial era that Morocco had just begun recovering from, escalating to the forefront of local and international relations.

A former colonizer of Morocco's southern territories during the time France ruled in the north, Spain announced in 1971 its withdrawal of its claims to the desert lands in the south, giving Hassan II an opportunity to "press a Moroccan claim," as there were valuable phosphate deposits that could be tapped into (Miller 180). Rather than be conjoined with Morocco, the Sahrawi people who lived in that region wanted to govern themselves, and both Mauritania and Algeria openly opposed Morocco's plan to take the land for themselves (Miller 181). These circumstances set the stage regionally for Morocco, as Hassan II would have to decide what to do with full knowledge of the feelings of his nation's neighbors.

Hassan II's plan to take the Western Sahara region drew massive popular appeal from both citizens and the military, which was good for the king after dealing with years of political

dissent from the left, and in May 1975, Hassan II initiated a massive march of 350,000 Moroccan volunteers in the “Green March” to remove border signs and express the resounding sentiment that the Western Sahara should belong to Morocco (Miller 181). As a result, the United Nations allowed Morocco control over the region, but left sovereignty to the people living there (Polisario), who received aid from Algeria, and then waged war against Morocco, starting a bitter desert conflict (Miller 181).

Putting this situation into perspective means understanding the new nature of Moroccan regional power that not only hadn’t been seen in decades, but also ran opposite to the country’s motivations for independence in the somewhat recent past. It can be argued that Morocco, which had only recently freed itself as a former colonial power, had taken on the role of being a regional colonizer by taking control of the Western Sahara, against the wishes of the local Sahrawi who lived there, and to the angry disapproval of its fellow former colony, Algeria. The regional situation is even more controversial due to the fact that the land previously belonged to Morocco before it fell under the hands of Spain, which was the reason Morocco laid claim to it in 1975 in the way that they did. With the United Nations backing Moroccan control of the Western Sahara, and Morocco’s internal political sphere finally unified, conflict was inevitable.

Algeria was joined by other African states in its support for Western Saharan independence, viewing Morocco’s military rule there as “old-style” and “selfish,” but Hassan II’s actions appealed to the United States and other Western powers (Miller 184-186). Regionally, Hassan II made enemies with his neighbors, which was problematic in the sense that tensions that hadn’t existed before were instigated solely by his decision to invade Morocco. On the other hand, it was never Hassan II’s intentions to create friendly relations with his neighbors in the western North African macro region. His goal was to use his conservative minded administration

to unite Morocco's citizenry and to establish stronger relations with Western powers internationally. Given the results of his decision, invading the Western Sahara region fulfilled those very goals he held, if only at the expense of the relations he could have had with other African countries while nearing the closing years of the Cold War.

After the end of the occupation of the Western Sahara, Morocco had run up a large amount of debt with money borrowed from the European Economic Community (EEC), which prompted Hassan II to liberalize Morocco's economy, putting formerly state-controlled companies and lands in the hands of wealthy Moroccan investors, a process that would carry into the early 1990s (Miller 207-208). Meanwhile, the United States steadily supplied Morocco with weapons to be used to help retain control of the Western Sahara, while Morocco would in turn continue supporting the United States in its dealings in the Middle East, even though such dealings were sometimes disagreeable to most Arab states (Miller 208). The United States and other Western powers had already led the charge towards economic liberalization by this point in time. Hassan II's decision to follow suit can be seen not only as a remedy to the country's debt problem, but also as another way of appealing to the capitalist West on the international level through diplomacy.

Unlike former Moroccan kings, Hassan II considered himself an "adviser" to the American president, routinely making trips across the Atlantic to spend time recreationally with every president from Kennedy to Clinton, usually to "golf, horseback ride, and party" (Miller 209). This kind of personal, friendly relationship between the king of Morocco and the United States was entirely the invention of Hassan II, who clearly went above and beyond in terms of "being friends" with the United States. This sort of close-knit bond that he created was not only unprecedented, but it would also come in handy in important international affairs in the Middle

East with regards to one of the most hotly contested issues at that time: the Israeli Palestinian Conflict.

Though the United States facilitated the Camp David Peace Accords between Egypt and Israel during the Carter presidency, Hassan II contributed to the settlement by helping the United States communicate with Israeli officials and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) (Miller 209). In this instance, Morocco opted to use the background of its country's specific cultural history as a tool of negotiation with the Jewish Israelis and the Muslim Egyptians. It was a skill that the United States certainly did not have, and thus could not use in such a deal in international policy.

Additionally, Hassan II opted to use his power and his country's positive relations with the United States to contribute to peace talks between two countries, with no explicit interest or incentive being pursued that would benefit the Moroccan people or government, keeping in mind Morocco's national support of the Palestinians. That sets apart the nature of this decision on behalf of Hassan II from his other decisions related to United States, especially the Western Sahara occupation.

This series of decisions and events marked the furthest extent any Moroccan King had ever been involved in international relations with the United States, as well as the most involved any Moroccan king had been with any series of American presidents. Arguably, Morocco and the United States grew closer due mainly to the attitudes and decisions that Hassan II had taken, which began as a desire to side with the West during the Cold War, instead of remaining neutral like his father wished to do. The Moroccan king had not forgotten the American landings in Casablanca in 1942, or the aid they brought to their starving populace, and especially for supporting Morocco's independence from France.

From this groundwork, and the groundwork laid by his father Muhammad V, Hassan II was able to take an imperfect Morocco to new heights both in domestic politics, and in the international sphere, helping contribute to and influence the United States in their decision-making with Middle Eastern countries, using their cultural and historical background to do so. Never before had modern Morocco been as involved with the United States, or in the global sphere, except during the rule of Hassan II.

The Twenty-First Century

Similarly after the death of his father, Muhammad V, all of Morocco was devastated when Hassan II died in 1999, as the nation was “profoundly moved by the disappearance of this larger-than-life and often unloved father figure” (Miller 214). The heir to the throne was Hassan II’s son, Muhammad VI, who gave an air of hope to the people with his spry, outgoing manner, with the citizens of Morocco expecting him to continue on with reforms carried out by his father (Miller 214). The death of Hassan II, the coronation of Muhammad VI, and the major crisis that followed shortly afterwards, both domestically and overseas, would make for an unusually shocking time in the Moroccan realm.

The attacks on United States soil during 9/11 occurred the same year as a group of attacks in Casablanca in 2003, which prompted Muhammad VI to end the so-called “era of leniency,” slowing the rapid rate of reform the country was expecting leading up to the Arab Spring in 2011 (Miller 214). Both of these events were breaches of national security involving suicide bombings that resulted in the deaths of many innocent civilians in both countries at the hands of militant extremists. For Muhammad VI, deciding how to react on an administrative level was key, and he opted to set aside the country’s reformation plans in favor of new priorities.

It wasn't until the 2011 Arab Spring began that reforms in Morocco would be brought back to the forefront for the government, and it involved placing further restrictions on the power of the king through changes in the constitution (Miller 214). Before that would happen, civil movements in the form of street protests were becoming frequent, blended with mass emigration due to economic troubles in the country, and with the Western Sahara conflict being the most expensive unresolved issue left by Hassan II, Muhammad VI was focused mainly on resolving issues on the domestic front (Miller 231-232). Whether or not the conditions of these circumstances can be seen as another in a series of steps to tackle challenges facing Morocco, or a step down from the success of Hassan II, the new king certainly had much to do during his first years in power.

Realizing this, Muhammad VI turned to the United States for advice on how to handle the Saharan conflict, the both of them united by a common purpose of combating terrorism after the disasters that faced their countries, and the two countries signed an agreement to allow free trade to lower tariffs and raise United States investment toward Morocco in (Miller 233). Once again, the roles between both nations switched relative to the dealings they engaged in decades before. During Hassan II's rule, he would go out of his way to come to the aid of the United States, offering help when their democratic friend overseas needed consultation in Middle Eastern affairs, such as during the Camp David Accords. By the time both countries were struck by terrorist disasters that shook their nations, Morocco was less stable and lacking resources needed to address domestic issues, which was where the United States came in handy. By reciprocating in the form of consultation in the Sahara Conflict, joining them in the war on terror, and further opening up trade and investments, the United States granted much needed relief to Morocco without sacrificing its own autonomy and by keeping relations friendly. By this point, it was

clear that even a more contemporary era, the long friendship between the two nations still stood strong.

At the same time, Muhammad VI made moves towards the enhancement of freedom of speech, another principle held deeply by the West, in Morocco by ensuring that Moroccan media was free to operate, particularly in larger urban settings, though it was not yet legal for the media to criticize the King (Storm 100-101). In truth, freedom of speech was limited under Muhammad VI's reign during the early 2000s.

After the Arab Spring began in 2011, Muhammad VI wasted no time getting to work on a new constitution that limited the king's power to engage in politics, increasing legislative powers in Moroccan parliament, establishing the independence of the judicial branch (Miller 235). While Arab populaces in other countries were overthrowing their respective leaders, Morocco remained stable and content, due largely in part to Muhammad VI's move to make Morocco more democratic than it was before, but not quite as democratic as the United States or members of the European Union (Miller 236).

At the same time, loosening the grip of the monarchy succeeded in preventing a violent uprising, and it made the Moroccan government more closely resemble that of Western democratic powers, such as the United States. Since the Moroccan populace was largely accepting of these new reforms, it was clear that having a government that more closely resembled that of said Western democratic powers was acceptable for Morocco, not to mention to its king.

The story behind the relationship between the United States and Morocco is unmatched by any other Islamic or Middle Eastern country, in that positive relations between the two were not conditional to the flow of oil, and the countries have never been at war with each other, making Morocco an anomaly in the Islamic world. Morocco's modern leaders did not shy away from the West, whether that was through diplomacy, regional control by its northern neighbors, or through mutual influence in the decision-making that would affect Middle Eastern affairs.

What began as the pursuit of international trade and making Morocco a stronger world presence led to the recognition of the newly formed United States of America by an old, Islamic, North African kingdom that was not strong in the business of international relations. Once Morocco was in a place in which the king could engage with and interact regularly with his neighbors with authority, it was clear that Morocco had achieved its goal.

It wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that Morocco's power had diminished so greatly that the French and Spanish foreign powers were able to step in and take control of the land, turning the king into a figurehead with no real authority, subjecting their populace to the wills of their new masters. Years later, the French colonial masters that offered security to Morocco were then taken over by Nazi Germany during World War II, which by default meant that Morocco had fallen under Axis-control. Soon after, the United States entered the war and decided, against the will of the United Kingdom, to land in Casablanca to free the country from the Axis powers that held dominion there.

Famine ensued in Morocco after Free France regained control throughout the war, and the French administration did nothing to quell their hunger. In that time, the United States fed Morocco instead, while also encouraging them to seek independence as a future former protectorate. This resonated well with both the populace and the king, Muhammad V. After the

nationalists approached France with a formal freedom Manifesto, France declined and exiled the king, resulting in mass riots that the French could not handle. Betraying their security role by attacking Moroccan civilians, lacking the resources to quell the riots, while also facing worldwide dissent in their colonies, France finally acquiesced and returned Muhammad V to Morocco to make it an independent country once again.

In this time, Muhammad V sought to rebuild the legitimacy of the monarchy that was lost in the years prior, militarizing, and maintaining relations with the West as the Cold War began. The king made a point to condemn communism, but not side with the capitalist West, in favor of remaining neutral alongside other African countries, which slightly strained relations with the United States.

The death of Muhammad V and the rise of his son, Hassan II meant Morocco would take a new course as a country, one that would eventually bring the United States and Morocco more closely together than ever before. For the remainder of the Cold War, Hassan II allied Morocco with the capitalist West while still remaining anticommunist. This improved relations with the United States, a country whose presidents over the span of decades enjoyed frequent visits and consultation from the Moroccan king that proved to be helpful in some of the most consequential moments, while average American citizens enjoyed heightened travel to Morocco in a time when it was still working to improve its own strength and international relations as a growing Islamic, North African power.

This new role of the Moroccan king that Hassan II raised the spirits of his citizens to new heights, accomplishing a still controversial occupation of formerly occupied land in the Western Sahara. Though it was costly and it angered Morocco's neighbors, it did help unify the formerly

fractured, developing political sphere that helped the king ensure a greater sense of security through a strong national identity that had grown closer to the United States than ever before.

With the passing of Hassan II, Muhammad VI took power and immediately witnessed deadly attacks in Casablanca, while the United States were also devastated by the 9/11 attacks. At this time, the king postponed continuing his father's reforms to deal with domestic issues plaguing the land, due mostly to the ongoing Western Sahara conflict that was draining Morocco's finances with little to no return, at a time when civil unrest was not only growing in Morocco, but throughout the Arab world leading up to the Arab Spring of 2011.

At this time, the United States proved most helpful by returning in the role of giving consultation for the Western Sahara conflict, increasing free trade with and investing in Morocco's economy, and together taking measures to combat terrorism. When these issues were settled, Muhammad VI began continuing in his father's footsteps by implementing reforms of his own. He took steps to increase free speech in the media and helped create a new constitution that contributed to a more democratized government by also weakening the power of his kingship and giving more power to parliament and the judiciary.

By the time the Arab Spring was taking place, Morocco remained a stable country. Its citizens were content enough with the king's actions in government, many of the country's problems being addressed while other Arab regimes were being violently toppled, all while still after almost a century of more positive relations and collaboration with the United States, and largely the Western world.

Looking back on this shared history between Morocco and the United States, it seems that their fondness for one another over the years has depended heavily on the actions of their leaders in specific moments in time. Had Muhammad III not been bold enough to recognize American sovereignty and to seek trade with the newborn nation in the western hemisphere, other leaders after him might not have either. That would have meant the two countries might not have been able to embark on the same established path that they had in reality, and thus they might not have been able to enter the same positive relations as they did during the 20th century.

Eisenhower, in the presence of more experienced British officers, insisted against their wishes on an invasion of Vichy French-occupied Casablanca to help liberate Morocco from the Axis powers during World War II. Morocco would remember this, along with the food and aid America provided them when Free France wouldn't, and their encouragement towards independence from their colonial masters. This reciprocation of power, regardless of intentions, echoed the same empowerment Morocco gave the United States near the time of its origins as a nation. One military invasion deemed unimportant by the British, dwarfed by the many invasions yet to come during the fall of Nazi Germany, meant the entire world to the country of Morocco because they were granted the opportunity to act in accordance with their nation's interests at the time, which were also agreeable to the United States.

The later collaboration between the two countries during the Cold War era would thus not have been possible without this brief World War II encounter, as it may have become more difficult for Morocco to gain its independence from France without any United States involvement whatsoever. Since the United States was briefly involved, and Morocco was able to take steps to becoming a stronger, independent world power, they were able to enjoy a healthy relationship with the United States in the following decades.

The United States had another friend during the tense and tumultuous Cold War, one of a completely different culture at that, and its king once again decided to act boldly and transform his role into what he saw fit for the sake of the two nations. Presidents from Kennedy to Clinton, who all enjoyed his trips overseas, warmly welcomed his “adviser” role. No Moroccan king had ever acted this way in the past, and it proved to be fruitful. The results of the Camp David Accords might have yielded different, less successful results had President Carter not relied on Hassan II’s cultural wisdom in communicating with the Jewish Israelis or the Muslim PLO. Peace between Egypt and Israel after much fighting and bloodshed was thanks both to the United States and Morocco.

At the turn of the new century, when Muhammad VI took power, and terrorist attacks had faced both the United States and Morocco, in a time when Morocco was experiencing major unresolved domestic problems, the two countries yet again turned to each other, and the United States reciprocated in the advisory role that it had received under Hassan II, while also investing in Morocco’s economy at a time when Muhammad VI wanted to press forward with governmental reforms that emulated the democratic administration of the United States and European parliaments, addressing the very issues pressed by Moroccan civilians were voicing at the time on the eve of the Arab Spring in 2011. Had Morocco not been as active in its unprecedented role that it had taken in the later 20th century, the United States might not have had the basis to reciprocate in the way that it did in the 2000s.

Throughout all of these experiences, though economics and political upheavals were main factors of the decisions both the United States and Morocco made on behalf of international relations, there was a clear back and forth pattern that also contributed to and progressed their friendship as countries. Moroccan kings, American military leaders and presidents, and even

civilians all took risks in the pursuit of continued companionship with the other country, in gestures both large and small, and in the face of many external pressures and conflicts.

This story is what led to the continued positive relations that are still shared between the two countries today, in the midst of continuing turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa, and with whatever domestic problems still create aches and sores on the domestic fronts in both the United States and Morocco. What is to become of the two countries going forward, whether or not they continue as unlikely friends or simply go their separate ways, is not certain. Whatever the case will be, there will still prevail a long, successful history of positive relations between the United States and Morocco that have and continue to serve as a strong basis of friendship between them both.

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