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**MOROCCO:
From
Top-down
Reform to
Democratic
Transition?**

*Marina Ottaway
Meredith Riley*

**Democracy
and Rule of Law**



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Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Publications Department
1779 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-483-7600
Fax: 202-483-1840
www.CarnegieEndowment.org

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About the Authors

Marina Ottaway is director of the Middle East Program and a senior associate in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She coedited with Thomas Carothers *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East* (Carnegie Endowment, 2005) and is the author of more than ten books, including *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semiauthoritarianism* (Carnegie Endowment, 2003) and *Africa's New Leaders: Democracy or State Reconstruction?* (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

Meredith Riley was a junior fellow in the Democracy and Rule of Law Project in 2005-2006. Riley graduated from Wellesley College in 2005 with a B.A. in Political Science and Anthropology. She is currently a Wellesley-Yenching fellow at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

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IN THE THREE DECADES AFTER IT gained independence in 1956, Morocco was characterized by stability verging on stagnation. But during the 1990s, this North African monarchy embarked on a path of top-down reform. King Hassan II took the first steps down this path during the last years of his long reign, and his son Mohammed VI continued the process after ascending to the throne in 1999.

The reform process has produced some significant changes in Morocco. Human rights conditions have improved. Past abuses have at least been partly acknowledged. A more progressive version of the *Mudawwana*, the code regulating marriage, divorce, child custody, and other aspects of family relations, has been enacted. The taboo on discussing corruption has been lifted, and there has been a degree of economic reform.

Further changes undoubtedly will be introduced in the years to come. Nevertheless, as has been the case thus far, these measures are likely to take the form of discrete steps, intended to introduce limited change in very specific areas rather than stimulate a sustained process of democratic transformation. Indeed, reform appears to be driven by a quest for modernization, not for popular participation and government accountability. To date, there is no indication that Morocco is becoming a democratic country in which power resides in institutions accountable to the electorate. Instead, the king remains the dominant religious and political authority in the country and the main driver of the reform process. All new measures have been introduced from the top, as the result of decisions taken by the king and on the basis of studies carried out by commissions he appointed. Moreover, none of the measures impose limits on his power.

So far, Mohammed VI appears to be acting in the best tradition of the enlightened, reforming, and modernizing monarchs of the past, but he has indicated no readiness to allow his power to be curbed by strong institutions, let alone to accept a full transition to a true constitutional monarchy where the king rules but does not govern. Thus, unless the power of the king is curtailed and counterbalanced by that of institutions over which he has no control, talk of democratization in Morocco is moot. Today the king has the power to appoint a prime minister and government without taking election results into account, to terminate the government and parliament at will, and to exercise legislative power in the absence of parliament. A veritable shadow government of royal advisers keeps an eye on the operations of all ministries and government departments. Not only are important decisions taken by the palace, but their execution is also managed—some argue micromanaged—by the royal entourage. The question thus is not whether Morocco will continue its democratic transformation, because, contrary to the views of some, such a transformation has not even started. The real question is whether the reforms enacted so far make further change inevitable and whether the balance of political forces that exists in the country today can force the king to accept limits on his power, leading in the foreseeable future to a democratic transformation.

This paper explores the extent and limits of the reform process in Morocco thus far, the nature of the political actors, the reforms that could change the political dynamics of the country, and what could be done by outside actors, primarily the United States, individual European countries, and the European Union as a whole, to encourage a process leading to democratization.

MOROCCO BEFORE REFORM

The modern Moroccan political system was set up by King Mohammed V when the French protectorate ended in 1956, and remained virtually unchanged until the early 1990s. It was a system that allowed pluralism in name but limited it in practice. At a time when most Arab (and Third World) countries were banning political parties or adopting single-party systems, Morocco remained an exception, allowing parties to exist, though not to operate freely.

Returning from exile as the champion of Morocco's regained sovereignty, Mohammed V was able to sideline the political parties that could have challenged him. These included the Istiqlal (Independence) party, which had led the independence struggle, and the left-wing Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (UNFP), which had split off from the Istiqlal and won Morocco's first postindependence elections. Mohammed V dismissed the UNFP cabinet and formed his own, acting as his own prime minister, and consolidated power by rallying to himself the rural notables and the security apparatus. He also capitalized on his personal charisma, the popularity of the monarchy, and powerful webs of patronage. The system his son Hassan II inherited in 1961 was thus characterized by direct monarchical control, centralization of power, and a weak and fragmented political party system. Over the next thirty years, Hassan consolidated his position even further, undermining the opposition and stifling all independent political life through a mixture of institutional manipulation, reliance on clientelistic networks, and outright repression.

The 1962 constitution confirmed the pattern of royal domination by giving the monarch the power to nominate and dismiss the prime minister and cabinet at his discretion without regard for election results, to dissolve parliament, and to assume unlimited emergency powers. Revisions of the constitution in 1970, 1980, 1992, and 1996, the latter two taking place after the reform process had started, left that pattern of domination intact, even enhancing it in key ways. After rising to the throne in 1999, the present king Mohammed VI tried to give the system an aura of modernity and democratic respectability by defining it as an "executive constitutional monarchy," a clever label that obfuscates the fact that the constitution in no way limits the power of the "executive" monarchy.

King Hassan II's strong constitutional power was enhanced by other factors. One was religion. The Moroccan king is considered to be a descendant of the prophet and, as *Amir al Mu-minin*, or Commander of the Faithful, the supreme religious authority in the country. Furthermore, Hassan could draw on the traditional network of monarchical institutions, known as the *makhzan*, an imprecise term originally denoting an elite of palace retainers, regional and provincial administrators, and military officers, but eventually embracing all persons in the service of the monarchy and connected to it by entrenched patronage networks. With the monarchy controlling not only power but also economic resources, being part of the *makhzan* was key to social mobility and even security.

Political parties were allowed to exist, but Hassan's strategies of division and co-optation rendered them largely ineffective. He co-opted party leaders, pitted parties against each other so that no

group could become strong enough to challenge his power, and encouraged the rise of new political organizations to divide and check old ones he saw as threatening. During the 1990s, for instance, he allowed an Islamist government to form in order to check the power of the Left.¹ Finally, when all else failed, Hassan II did not hesitate to resort to repression. The 1960s and 1970s, a period in which the king faced considerable challenges, including attempted coups d'état, were particularly brutal. During these "*années de plomb*" (years of lead), hundreds of palace opponents were abducted and "disappeared," and thousands were imprisoned and sometimes tortured. Victims included anyone perceived as a threat to the regime: The majority was made up of leftists, but Islamists, advocates of Western Saharan independence, and military personnel implicated in several unsuccessful coups all experienced their share of repression.

INTRODUCING REFORMS: HASSAN II

Morocco remained in political stasis until the early 1990s, when, in response to a changing international situation and the approaching end of his long reign, King Hassan II changed tack and started a slow process of opening up the political system. With the end of the Cold War came a new international climate strongly supportive of democracy. External pressure on the monarchy to conform to the new trend mounted, particularly in 1992 after the European Parliament denied Morocco an aid package because of its poor human rights record. Furthermore, the example of neighboring Algeria, plunged into a bloody war between security forces and Islamists who had turned to violence after being deprived of an election victory, provided a sharp reminder of the new vulnerability of authoritarian political systems. Domestically, a series of severe droughts had forced many rural residents into the cities, resulting in unprecedented levels of both unemployment and social discontent. Discontent led, in turn, to increasing support for Islamist groups, which brought home to the monarchy the danger of ignoring social disaffection. The fact that Morocco faced an imminent succession because of the king's advancing age provided further incentive for Hassan II to introduce changes while he was still fully in control, rather than lose his grip on power or entrust the challenge of transformation to his successor.

Reforms enacted by Hassan II fell into four broad categories: improved respect for human rights, a limited increase in the power of parliament, enhanced opportunities for political participation by parties and civil society, and some attempts to curb corruption. Most of King Hassan's initiatives were aimed at improving Morocco's record on human rights. They included the formation of a human rights council, the Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH), and later of the Ministry for Human Rights; the release of some political prisoners; the reform of laws on preventive detention and public demonstrations; the ratification of major international human rights conventions; and the formation of a special committee to investigate forced disappearances. Although important as signals of a new openness on the part of the government, these steps were limited in scope. Thousands of political prisoners remained in jail, and would only be set free years later by Mohammed VI. And while Hassan II personally admitted, shortly before his death, that forced disappearances had taken place, he never acknowledged state responsibility.

The same pattern of partial reform could be found in other areas. Constitutional amendments in 1992 and 1996 turned parliament into a bicameral body, with a lower chamber elected entirely by universal suffrage (whereas only two-thirds of the old unicameral body had been directly

elected), and broadened the scope of parliament's competence to include approving the budget and questioning ministers. But the move to bicameralism actually solidified the king's control over parliament, since the upper chamber was indirectly elected by professional organizations and local councils close to the monarchy. Furthermore, the 1996 constitution specified that the king could not only veto bills approved by parliament but also amend them at will without resubmitting them to the legislators, and that he could issue laws without consulting parliament.

Of greatest political significance was King Hassan's decision to reach out to political parties and to bring formerly hostile organizations into government. He involved all parties more directly in the discussion of a new electoral law and in other decisions affecting the conduct of elections. He allowed an Islamist organization, Al Islah wal Tajdid (Reform and Renewal) which later formed the Parti de la Justice et Développement [PJD], to participate in the 1997 elections, though only under the banner of a weak, existing party.

Dialogue and improvements in the administration of elections led to better relations between the palace and most political parties, making it possible for King Hassan to bring about the most visible political accomplishment of this reformist period: the *alternance*. Following the 1997 parliamentary elections, the king did not turn to the palace parties to form the new government, as he had always done in the past. Instead, he asked Abdel Rahman Youssoufi, the leader the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP), to form the government. (The USFP was the successor to the Leftist Union Nationale des Forces Populaires). Youssoufi was a longtime regime opponent who had spent 15 years in exile after being imprisoned twice. The decision to bring the former opposition parties into the government was not reached suddenly. Hassan II had been trying to entice the USFP and the Istiqlal for several years, but they had previously refused on the grounds that participation was pointless until the constitution was revised to rein in the king and give more power to the government and parliament. Yet by 1997, faced with the rise of political Islam, the old secular opposition parties swallowed their objections and joined forces with the monarchy.

The Youssoufi cabinet included many ministers drawn from the Kutla, a bloc of parties previously in the opposition, which included the USFP, the Istiqlal, and a number of smaller parties on the Left. The king, however, directly appointed the ministers of the so-called "sovereignty" (as opposed to "technical") ministries: Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Justice.

The *alternance* was an ambiguous move. In bringing opposition parties into the government, it clearly signaled that the monarchy was open to a democratic process. The king departed from precedent by linking his choice of prime minister to election results—the Kutla bloc had won a plurality in the elections. But the change did not in any way limit royal power or change the balance between the palace and elected officials. On the contrary, the *alternance* was engineered by the king, who decided that it was a good idea to take such a step; it was not imposed on him by an overwhelming electoral victory of the Kutla parties, which had won only 102 of 325 parliamentary seats. As a result, the Youssoufi government had little power, leaving the king once again the arbiter of Moroccan politics. The government's parliamentary majority in the lower house was small, and the indirectly elected upper house was in the hands of conservatives. The king maintained control over major policy issues, for example, imposing the neoliberal economic policies prescribed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank on the left-leaning USFP. By engineering the *alternance*, in other words, King Hassan succeeded in co-opting the two main opposition parties of long standing without being forced to give up any power or change policies.

The king also allowed more space for civil society organizations to speak out, particularly on the issue of corruption. Spurred in part by a World Bank report on Morocco that singled out corruption as a major impediment to foreign investment and economic development, in the last year of his reign the king permitted the formation of a network of associations committed to the fight against corruption, presented a report to parliament on a major social security embezzlement scheme, and announced a “good management pact” for reform of the civil service. The impact of these initiatives on corruption was negligible, but a previously unquestionable taboo had been lifted.

Moreover, the development of civil society organizations was the beginning of a lasting process extending far beyond anticorruption, most significantly into human and women’s rights but also including an array of community associations. Human rights organizations were crucial in making state abuses a matter of public discussion, and women’s rights organizations were influential in advocating and negotiating reform of the *Mudawwana*.

CONSOLIDATING REFORM: MOHAMMED VI

The rise to the throne of Mohammed VI in 1999 produced considerable initial expectation that Morocco would experience a new, more far-reaching wave of reform. From the beginning, the young king tried to project a public persona quite different from his father’s. Hassan II had been distant and aloof and had espoused conservative social values. Mohammed VI cast himself as a modern monarch, interested in meeting his subjects—the “king of the poor” rather than of the elite. Initially, he even hinted that he favored democracy, prompting speculation that he would move Morocco toward constitutional monarchism. In reality, his approach to reform turned out to be strikingly similar to that of his father, simply going further down the same path toward improved human rights, the fight against corruption, and the carefully controlled political inclusion of new groups and political parties. Moreover, the process of reform continued to be driven from the top at the initiative of the king.

The king gave special attention to the human rights agenda, and on this issue he moved considerably further than his father. He released an additional large number of political prisoners. Among them was Abdessalam Yassine, the leader of Morocco’s largest Islamic movement, Al Adl wal Ihsan, who was released from house arrest despite his scathing public critiques of both Mohammed VI and his father. The new king strengthened the Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l’Homme somewhat (though its annual reports were still considered too restrained by international human rights organizations). He took further steps to bring Moroccan laws in line with international conventions, for example, amending the penal code to abolish torture.

Most importantly, Mohammed VI acknowledged the government’s responsibility for forced disappearances and other abuses of human rights. Less than a month after succeeding his father, he admitted that the government was responsible for the disappearances and announced the formation of the Independent Arbitration Panel, which would review individual cases and compensate victims. In 2003, the panel was disbanded after paying compensation to only four thousand victims, but a few months later the king set up the Instance Équité et Réconciliation (IER) to throw light on abuses committed between 1956 and 1999 and help Morocco turn a new page. It is still a matter of dispute whether the two committees went far enough toward truly putting the issue of past human rights abuses to rest. The Independent Arbitration Panel in particular set an extremely short deadline for applications, cutting off thousands of people, and paid monetary damages to victims or their families

without any concern for reconciliation. Furthermore, the size of payments varied extraordinarily on the basis of unclear criteria. The IER process was an advance in both organization and mandate, aiming at truth and reconciliation rather than just financial compensation. But it, too, had considerable shortcomings. One was that it could not compel testimony from the security forces. Another was that its mandate only extended to 1999, thus excluding investigation into allegations that new and serious human rights violations were being committed as part of the “war on terror” at the same time the IER focused attention on the past. Finally, the IER had a contentious relationship with the main independent human rights organizations and missed important opportunities for collaboration.

Despite such criticisms, and the broader philosophical question of whether truth and reconciliation commissions are the best way of handling the legacy of past abuses, the IER was an unprecedented initiative in the Arab world. It interviewed thousands of victims, conducted field investigations throughout Morocco, organized public hearings (many broadcast on television, radio, or the Internet), and constructed a database of more than 22,000 personal testimonies. Above all, it dared to air issues of government responsibility for human rights abuses, something that was all the more notable because the government so exposed was not that of a tyrant fallen from power, but that of the king’s father.

The reign of Mohammed VI has been marked by other notable reforms. In keeping with his modernizing image, the king pushed through reform of the *Mudawwana*, a project launched by Hassan II a few months before his death. The new family code originally ran into fierce opposition from Islamist groups, which organized a massive demonstration against it in Casablanca, and was only completed in February 2004. The new code raises the marriage age from 15 to 18, allows women to divorce by mutual consent, curbs the right of men to ask for divorce unilaterally, restricts polygamy, and replaces a wife’s duty of obedience with the concept of joint responsibility. Despite continuing problems of implementation—such as untrained judges and a lack of information among women about their rights—the scope of the reform is considerable and puts Morocco well ahead of other countries in the region on the issue of women’s rights.

Similarly, the king followed in his father’s footsteps but pushed further on the issue of corruption, allowing the establishment of a Moroccan chapter of Transparency International, permitting newspapers to report on the issue, and finally in October 2005 announcing the creation of an independent organization to fight corruption. Unfortunately, the anticorruption organization still does not exist. Nor is there any evidence that the measures have had a real impact on the level of corruption—unfortunately a common experience in countries that adopt anticorruption measures—but they have contributed to wider public debate and to the mobilization of civil society organizations.

It would be impossible, given this record, to argue that the reforms Hassan II initiated and his son Mohammed VI advanced were purely cosmetic. The change that has taken place in Morocco is real. The country is more open, once-taboo subjects are being discussed by a newly independent press that has been allowed to develop alongside the official one, women genuinely have more rights than they did previously, and past abuses have been recognized and discussed. To be sure, in many areas the implementation of new policies lags far behind—there is a big difference between recognizing women’s right to ask for a divorce and making it possible for them to do so in practice, or between denouncing corruption and actually curbing it. Nevertheless, Morocco has made real progress in terms of transforming itself into a more open country, with laws that are more in tune

with those that regulate life in a democracy. Furthermore, the reform measures taken thus far have the potential to generate new reforms and create momentum for change. Although the IER limited its work to the 1956–1999 period, for example, it is difficult to imagine that similar gross violations of human rights could occur for protracted periods in the future without generating loud and effective protest. Human rights are now on the public agenda, as are the social issues addressed by the revised *Mudawwana*. By the definition used in the series of case studies of which this paper is part, the reforms are significant.²

Despite their significance in the social and economic realm and the considerable improvement they made in the Moroccan human rights situation, the reforms enacted by both Hassan II and Mohammed VI are not real political reforms that have changed the distribution of power and the nature of the political system. Power still resides in the monarchy, which is untrammled by constitutional provisions and institutional checks and balances. The king remains free to take into account the outcome of elections when forming a new government or to ignore it. Royal counselors still oversee the operations of government ministries. Almost twenty years into the reform process, democratization has yet to begin in Morocco.

THE MISSING LINK: POLITICAL REFORM

Notably absent from King Mohammed's reform project are measures affecting the political system. Far from continuing and expanding upon his father's reforms, as he has in other areas, the king has brought the process of reforming the political system to a halt.

As noted earlier, the political changes made by King Hassan were extremely modest. The constitutional amendments that created a bicameral parliament, according to some analysts, served to weaken rather than strengthen parliament by actually increasing the number of members indirectly elected by conservative, promonarchy local councils. Under the old arrangement, only one-third of the unicameral parliament was elected indirectly, but now the entire upper house, or 45 percent of the bicameral parliament, is elected in this way. And extending the jurisdiction of parliament did not help either, since in the end the king remains free to veto, amend, or simply stop anything parliament does.

Though unwilling to allow parliament to gain real power, Hassan II acknowledged the need to do something to change the face of a regime that had remained unaltered for thirty years—hence the *alternance*. But the *alternance* did not modify the political dynamics in the country. In bringing the USFP and the Istiqlal closer to the fold, co-opting their leadership, and turning them from opposition parties into servants of the monarchy, it failed to generate a self-sustaining process of change.

Mohammed VI has not followed up even on these modest steps. On the institutional side, he has repeatedly stated that no further constitutional reform is necessary. In terms of political process, in 2002 he reverted to the practice of naming a prime minister without consideration of election results, even though selecting a prime minister from the party receiving the most votes in the parliamentary elections was one of the most significant aspects of the *alternance*. Instead, after the 2002 elections the king picked as Prime Minister Driss Jettou, a loyal technocrat not aligned with any political party.

Furthermore, Mohammed VI did not try to change the informal system of personal, clientelistic networks on which the monarchy has always relied: he simply replaced individuals loyal to his father with individuals loyal to himself. To the extent that he tried to change the way the government worked, he aimed at making it more efficient rather than more democratic. Finally, the king continued to rely on the time-honored practice of co-opting adversaries, and responded to pressure for reform by appropriating the reform agenda through the establishment of hand-picked royal commissions to study issues raised by the opposition and then implementing policy changes on his own terms.

In summary, under Mohammed VI royal power has been used to bring about change in the human rights situation, to advance the cause of women's rights, and to air past injustices and the problem of corruption, but not to open the way to genuine political participation, and even less to increase the capability of institutions that could check imbalances of power. His is indeed an executive monarchy, but most definitely not a constitutional monarchy, neither in the normal sense of one in which the king rules but does not govern, nor even in the broader sense of a system in which the king has some executive power, but that power is clearly defined—and limited—by a constitution.

PROSPECTS FOR POLITICAL REFORM

There are two ways of thinking about political reform in Morocco (or in any other country). The first is to enumerate the measures necessary to transform the political system into one that is more democratic. The second is to envisage the political process that might lead to the enactment of these measures.

In the case of Morocco, the needed reforms are obvious: In order to become a democratic country, Morocco must restrict the power of the monarchy; institutionalize the separation of the legislative, judicial, and executive powers that now all converge in the hands of the king; and allow elected institutions accountable to the voters to play a real role in governance. In other words, Morocco has to move from being an executive monarchy toward becoming a constitutional one.

In theory, all political parties support constitutional amendments to bring about that transformation. In practice, they are not making a deliberate effort to make this happen, being more concerned at present with defending their position against the Islamists in the 2007 elections than with furthering a democratization agenda. The king has repeatedly stated that he does not see the need for further amendments to the constitution, and the parties are not pressing him. Political reform will not come from the top spontaneously, and so far there is no pressure from the bottom the king must heed.

For Morocco to move toward democracy, the initiative, or at least the pressure, will have to come not from the palace but from other political forces. But is it possible to envisage a political process that would convince—or force—the king to alter course and accept a diminished role for the monarchy? Can a new balance of political forces emerge in the country that would lead to such a result? Without a change in the balance of power, Morocco might become a somewhat more modern and efficient country, but not a more democratic one.

Furthermore, absent such a change in the balance of power, the royal initiatives to improve human rights and allow more public discussion of important issues in the press and elsewhere remain fragile. While it is highly improbable that the king will reverse the changes in the family code, and that violations of human rights will once again be as blatant as they were during *les années de plomb*, the regime could once again become more repressive. Some Moroccans believe this is already happening. For example, many independent journalists express concern that their freedom to write critically has been curtailed since reaching a high point at the end of Hassan's reign. Also, the fight against corruption has not gone far and is unlikely to do so because real progress would inevitably implicate people who are part of the *makhzan*—anticorruption does not come easily in a clientelistic system. Nor is the king's latest major project, the National Initiative for Human Development, likely to do much to ease poverty and unemployment, since the overall economic structure that creates joblessness, want, and illiteracy remains unchanged.

Reform of the political system, as well as more far-reaching policy reform, depends on the emergence of independent political forces that the king can neither suppress nor co-opt. By definition, such forces would have to be political movements with large political bases, and thus not dependent on the king's largesse for their survival or for their standing relative to other groups.

There are three real or potential major political actors in Morocco today. The first is the palace, what Moroccans call the *makhzan* or, in French, simply and tellingly, "*le pouvoir*." The second is the old opposition made up of the long-established secular parties. Although they appear to be a spent force, without much dynamism or initiative, these parties cannot be dismissed completely. They still get electoral support, have party structures that could be used effectively, and, with more dynamic leadership, could become much more significant players. The third noteworthy political force is the Islamist parties and movements, undoubtedly a rising power but still difficult to fathom. Above all, it is far from clear whether the PJD has the political skills to be effective were it to join the government, and whether the broader Islamic religious movements would have the capacity to keep Islamists in government from being manipulated by the palace, as the representatives of other parties have been before them.

The assets of the palace are enormous, given the formal power bestowed on the monarchy by the constitution, the informal power accrued through tradition, and the religious legitimacy enjoyed solely by the Commander of the Faithful. Just as important, the palace has a level of political experience and savvy that all other players lack. For decades it has been able to outmaneuver every domestic adversary, aided when necessary by the less subtle support of the security apparatus.

Secular Parties

The secular political parties that used to be in the opposition are important players formally, since they are part of the government and parliament. But they are also old, tired, and lacking in initiative. They are as much in need of reform as the political system itself. The term secular parties needs to be understood correctly in the context of Morocco. There are no militantly secularist parties in the country. All parties stress that the values of Islam underpin everything they do, just as they underpin the deeply religious society they represent. Secular parties do not advocate the complete separation of state and religion. On the contrary, they recognize that in Morocco the two perforce converge in the person of the monarch, who is both the supreme political and supreme religious authority. Paradoxically, the one major organization that dares to challenge the king as both a political and

a religious leader is the Islamist movement Al Adl wal Ihsan. Liberal and left-leaning parties, on the other hand, apparently have no problem recognizing the legitimacy of Mohammed VI as the Commander of the Faithful as well as the king of Morocco. In other words, Morocco's non-Islamist parties are secular only in the sense that they neither advocate the establishment of an Islamic state nor argue that the *sharia* should be the source of all legislation. It can be said that they are secular but not secularist.

The secular parties are highly fragmented. In the 2002 parliamentary elections, twenty-five secular parties competed, with all but four winning seats. (By contrast, only one Islamist party fielded candidates.) All together, there are now more than thirty registered parties (almost all of them secular). The most important among them are still the organizations that emerged before or at the time of independence: the Istiqlal and the USFP. The Istiqlal still has historical legitimacy as the most prominent party in Morocco's struggle to regain complete sovereignty. Incidentally, the party, now considered secular, was founded by a religious scholar who rooted the idea of independence in the country's Muslim identity. The USFP also has historical legitimacy as Morocco's militant socialist opposition at a time when ideologies of the Left dominated much of the Arab political world. Although these parties lost the power struggle with Mohammed V and were further marginalized by Hassan II, they remained the core of the opposition until the rise of Islamist movements. Recently, the two parties have become the nucleus of the Kutla bloc, an unusual alliance of liberal and leftist organizations that also includes smaller parties. With *alternance*, the Kutla parties left the ranks of the perennial opposition. Today the USFP and the Istiqlal consider themselves "government" parties, as if this were a permanent characteristic. Having come in from the cold, they have trouble conceiving of a new *alternance* that might once again put them, even temporarily, in the opposition—in other words, they have not fully accepted a democratic process.

The Kutla parties do not provide much momentum for change at present. They joined the government and do not have much to show for it, but they do not want to compromise their position by demanding further reform. Like all officially registered political parties, they recognize the legitimacy of the monarchy—this is a condition for registration—but they also favor political reforms that would give more power to other institutions. The 2002 election platform of the Istiqlal called for the transition from "façade democracy" to "authentic democracy." The current platform of the USFP is even more explicit, proposing specific constitutional amendments that would increase the power of parliament vis-à-vis that of the king. Yet, like most secular political groups in the Middle East, these well-established parties find it difficult to communicate a new and more vibrant message that would allow them to build stronger constituencies. Their platforms are generic and almost indistinguishable. They promise to address the issue of unemployment, to stimulate the development of key economic sectors, to improve education, and to build affordable housing—all measures Morocco badly needs, but that, in the absence of a clear strategy, have a "chicken in every pot" ring to them.

Despite their obvious problems, it would be a mistake to dismiss the Istiqlal and the USFP completely as potential participants in a process of political reform. When they accepted King Hassan's invitation to enter the government in 1998, many analysts predicted that they would be destroyed by the decision. Instead of bringing about real change and demonstrating their effectiveness to Moroccan citizens, they would be tainted by their association with the king, prevented from implementing a real reform project, and thus would be discredited. But only half of the prediction has proven correct. The Kutla parties failed to establish themselves as effective

implementers of a vigorous reform agenda, in part because of the limited power of the government, but also because of their own lack of competence and their timidity about taking advantage of that power to the maximum extent. Moreover, King Hassan made sure that he, not the government of Prime Minister Youssoufi, got the credit for any positive changes. But the second half of the prediction, that the Istiqlal and the USFP would become discredited and consequently lose votes, has not come about. Support for the two parties has been remarkably stable. The USFP secured fifty-seven seats in the 1997 elections, dropping only slightly to fifty in 2002; the Istiqlal improved its position considerably from 1997 to 2002, from thirty-two seats to forty-eight. The two parties have apparently secured a stable niche in Morocco's fragmented political system, possibly aided by the absence of other credible non-Islamist parties.

The historical opposition parties thus have a solid base of support. They also have well-established party structures: some 600 offices around the country for the USFP and more than a thousand for the Istiqlal. The two parties' effectiveness as instruments of political change, however, is decreased by their fear of the Islamist organizations and therefore their reluctance to challenge the king—on whom they count for protection against the new rivals. As a result, while they proclaim the need for constitutional reforms that would enhance the power of parliament and the independence of the judiciary, they also make it clear that reforms can only go as far as the king will allow and that he must continue to play a central role. This is more than an admission of powerlessness by the parties; it is also a recognition of the fact that they prefer their own control of a weak government under his continued tutelage to the possibility of stronger institutions controlled by the Islamists.

The secular parties also include many that were historically allied with the monarchy. These are tame organizations that never challenge the king, but only vie for participation in the circles of power close to him. Many have been kept small and weak by rivalries, often encouraged by the palace, that lead to frequent splits and reorganizations. But some parties do have support, particularly the Mouvement Populaire and the Rassemblement National des Indépendants, especially in rural, and, in the case of the Mouvement Populaire, Berber areas. With more than sixty seats in parliament, the Mouvement Populaire is a force to be reckoned with, although more as a monarchy-allied counterweight to the Islamists than as an independent force for change.

Islamist Parties and Movements

In comparison to the secular parties, the Islamist parties and organizations are young and vigorous but also untried. They are less fragmented and more tightly organized than the secular parties. They are also more ideological—by contrast, the socialism of the USFP has become watered down over the years to nothing more than a vague concern for the poor and downtrodden. There was only one Islamist party, the PJD, until the recent formation of two new small parties, which may not survive the 2007 elections. In addition, the panoply of nonviolent Islamist organizations includes a religious movement affiliated with the PJD (Al Tawhid wal Islah), and the larger, more militant (though nonviolent), and vocally antimonarchist Al Adl wal Ihsan. (The jihadist groups are not included in the present discussion, as they are not actors in any conceivable political reform process. They do not seek participation and do not appear to be strong enough to bring down the regime through violence. While it is all too likely that the jihadists will engage in more acts of violence, as they did with the Casablanca attacks in May 2003, they will most likely remain a background, low-level threat that may help the government justify a degree of continuing repression.)

Islamist parties and organizations likely pose the most serious challenge to the king's monopoly on power. They could inject a new dynamic into Moroccan politics, possibly leading to political reform, although it is far from a foregone conclusion that they will succeed in doing so. This will depend largely on the PJD's capacity to resist co-option by the palace and its success in maintaining the support of the religious organizations if it joins the government. The outcome will also depend on how the secular parties respond—whether by joining the Islamists in pressing for reform or by joining the king to stop the Islamists' rise, simultaneously undermining the reform process.

The PJD, so far the only Islamist party to compete in elections, has established itself as a major force in Moroccan politics. In the 2002 elections, it gained the third-highest number of seats in parliament, despite presenting candidates in only fifty-five of the ninety-one constituencies. This restraint resulted from the fear that too large an electoral victory might provoke the government into nullifying the election results and banning the party, as the Algerian government had done ten years earlier when faced with the prospect of a victory by the Islamic Salvation Front.³ The party could well win the largest number of votes in the 2007 parliamentary elections, though not the majority: the large number of political parties makes it virtually impossible for any one party to do so. A new election law will further limit the margin of victory of any one party—some analysts even argue that no party is likely to win more than 20 percent of the seats.

Given the obstacles to a strong electoral victory and the proven capacity of the palace to outmaneuver and co-opt political parties, it is hardly certain that the PJD will have the power to force real change in Moroccan politics. Indeed, if the Islamist movement in Morocco only included the PJD, there would be good reasons to doubt that the party would be any more successful at avoiding co-option and strengthening the power of the government vis-à-vis the palace than the Kutla parties have been. But the Islamist movement also includes the two large religious organizations, which may increase the PJD's resolve and ability to resist co-option. Furthermore, the PJD is a stronger party, in terms of organization and leadership, than the Istiqlal and the USFP. It has more open and democratic governance and thus extensive internal debate. This means that the leaders know their actions are observed, and thus that they need to satisfy their constituents rather than simply pursue personal ambitions.

To understand how the religious movements might influence the political scene, it is necessary to go back to the history and different intellectual legacies of the two major nonviolent groups. The origins of all contemporary mainstream Islamist political movements in Morocco can be traced back to the 1970s. This was a crucial period in many Middle Eastern and North African countries, during which the character of opposition movements shifted away from the nationalism and socialism that had dominated the political scene and toward Islamism. This change, encouraged in many cases by governments seeking to combat leftist influence by encouraging an Islamic revival, did not receive much attention at the time. There was good reason for this in Morocco, because the full impact of the shift toward Islamism did not manifest itself until the 1990s.

The PJD and the religious movement Al Tawhid wal Islah, from which the PJD stems and with which it is associated, have their roots in a radical group that developed in the 1970s called Islamic Youth. The Rabat branch of the movement broke off in the early 1980s, because of disagreement over the autocratic tendencies of the group's leader and most importantly because the movement was taking an antagonistic stance toward the government. From the beginning, the hallmark of the breakaway group, originally called Al-Jama'a Al Islamiyya, was the decision to become a recognized association and a legitimate participant in Moroccan politics. It took some ten years, and a new

name that omitted references to Islam (Al Islah wal Tajdid), before the government recognized the group as a legitimate association. But when the newly relabeled Al Islah immediately tried to form a political party to participate in local elections, the government denied it registration, frustrating the organization's attempt to enter electoral politics.

During the next five years, Al Islah wal Tajdid explored various strategies for political participation. It considered joining the Istiqlal, but the party rejected collaboration with Al Islah as an organization, although it declared itself ready to accept Al Islah's members into its ranks as individuals. In 1996, however, Al Islah managed to attach itself to a moribund party, the Mouvement Populaire Démocratique et Constitutionnel (MPDC), itself a splinter group from an older Berber movement. Because the MPDC was an empty shell at that time, Al Islah was able to take it over, presenting its own candidates in the 1997 parliamentary elections and gaining nine seats in parliament. The quest by the movement to become an official political player, initiated in the early 1980s, had finally succeeded.

There is some dispute about why Al Islah was successful in taking over the MPDC and what role the king and the *makhzan* played in the maneuver. Certainly, Hassan II decided to accept the entry of the Islamists into politics as legitimate players. Whether the palace actually organized the takeover, as the more conspiracy-minded observers argue, is less clear. But the takeover was complete. In 1998 the MPDC changed its name, becoming the PJD. Al Islah, which had in the meantime joined with another small Islamist movement, had also changed its name to Al Tawhid wal Islah (Unity and Reform). The two names and the formal separation of the organizations persist to this day, with the PJD as the political party and Al Tawhid as the broader religious movement.⁴

The dominant theme running through this long and convoluted story is the movement's determination to gain official recognition, not only as an association, but also as a legitimate political party. This determination has had a major impact on how the PJD has acted as an official party. After 1998, it carefully positioned itself as a constructive critic of the new *alternance* government, always going out of its way to stress its complete acceptance of the legitimacy of the monarchy. In the 2002 parliamentary elections, in which it enjoyed great success and emerged as the third-largest party, it was careful to limit the number of districts in which it competed, to avoid alarming the king, the other political parties, and Moroccan society as a whole. In the 2003 local council elections, it agreed to compete in only 25 percent of localities. As an important player in parliament, with a forty-two-member caucus, it decided it would support laws adopted democratically by majority vote after ample discussion, including the reform of the *Mudawwana*. Although the PJD initially opposed the new family code and helped organize massive demonstrations in Casablanca against it, in the end it explained to its followers that adoption of the new code was the result of a democratic process and thus had to be accepted. Participation and legitimacy remain paramount in the policies of the PJD. This is its strength but could also be its downfall, causing it to become co-opted, with its leaders—like those of other parties—settling into the comfortable role of mildly critical, loyal, and ultimately ineffectual supporters of the monarchy.

The other major Islamist movement, the larger and more militant Al Adl wal Ihsan (Justice and Charity), has refused to participate in the Moroccan political system, which it considers corrupt, with as much determination as the PJD has shown in striving to join it. Organized around the figure of its founder, Abdessalam Yassine, a combination of spiritual guide of the movement and charismatic leader, Al Adl wal Ihsan is a complex and at times bewildering organization. In part, it is an organization in the mold of Morocco's numerous traditional Sufi brotherhoods, nonviolent

and suffused with a strong current of mysticism, including a belief in the importance of dreams. In part, it is a very political movement, with some of its leaders prone to using the radical language of dependency theory and Third World revolution. The two at times combine in ways that worry the Moroccan government. For instance, in early 2006 many of the movement's followers started reporting that they had dreamt about a major but unspecified upheaval that would occur sometime before the year was out; this triggered a wave of arrests by security forces concerned that the dreams might be related somehow to an actual plot.

Yassine launched Al Adl wal Ihsan in 1974, with an open letter to Hassan II attacking the legitimacy of the king as a political and religious leader. The organization has maintained this antagonistic position toward the monarchy ever since. The king, in the movement's view, has used Islam to serve his own interests and maintain monarchical control rather than devote his efforts to serving the interests of the Islamic community. Abdessalam Yassine's message of nonviolence and forthright opposition to the monarchy, reiterated constantly by his daughter Nadia Yassine (also an important figure within Al Adl), has won the father prolonged periods of imprisonment and house arrest and his daughter constant trouble with the authorities.

While Al Adl continues to reject political participation, it has undergone changes recently that have led to speculation that it might be preparing to alter its position. First, while the aging Abdessalam Yassine has retreated increasingly into mysticism, other people in leadership positions are unquestionably moving in the opposite direction; they are political operatives, not mystics. Al Adl has also evolved organizationally, putting in place two separate leadership bodies for the movement's two tendencies: the political Majlis al Shura, which provides the political and organizational direction of the movement, and the Majlis al Irchad (or Majlis al Rabbani), which provides spiritual (or ideological) guidance. This is not the same kind of separation between political party and religious organization that occurred with the PJD and Al Tawhid, but it is perhaps the beginning of a change in that direction. The fact that the organization launched a new membership drive as the country started preparing for the 2007 elections certainly suggests at the very least a sensitivity to the political cycle.

The existence of Al Adl, a membership-based organization with an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 members and tens of thousands of additional followers, and of the smaller but still large Al Tawhid wal Islah, makes it more difficult for the palace to co-opt the PJD. Al Tawhid is a source of strong support but also a challenge for the PJD. It is an organization whose members adhere to strong religious principles and are less inclined than the politicians in the PJD to accept the need for compromise and pragmatism required by participation in politics and government. The PJD must use constant care in managing relations with its religious base, a task that has not always been easy. For example, the PJD received enthusiastic support when it organized a demonstration against the new, supposedly un-Islamic family code, but found it more challenging later to explain to its supporters in Al Tawhid why it ultimately decided to accept the reform. The PJD probably does not have infinite room for maneuver if it wants to maintain the allegiance of its religious base, but nobody, including the PJD, knows just how much room it has. The perception that the PJD had been co-opted would also cause it to lose the support of many Moroccans who are attracted to it not because it is an Islamist party but because they believe that it is the only honest party in Morocco today, untainted by compromises with the palace.

If the PJD managed to avoid co-option, driven by the danger of losing the support of members of the religious movements or, worse, by the emergence of a rival movement, Morocco could embark

on a process leading to political reform. Yet even then, other pieces would have to fall into place. If the PJD enters the government after the 2007 parliamentary elections, it can only avoid accusations of co-optation and a consequent loss of support if it manages to accomplish something. This means taking the utmost advantage of whatever power the system allows ministries to exercise, which lies not so much in their formal mandates but in exploiting the interstices of a system controlled by the palace. Although ministries are ultimately controlled by the king's counselors, ministers can take some initiatives and initiate policies, as long as they can do this without challenging the palace. PJD leaders, and even some of the more dynamic members of other political parties, argue that this is possible, but there is no proof that this is the case; in any event, it has not happened yet.

The willingness of the PJD to stand up to the palace has not been tested. As an opposition party in parliament, it has been careful not to antagonize the monarchy. As a result, some dissidents, even in the leadership of the PJD, already complain of co-optation. A critical moment will occur after the 2007 elections if the party is given the opportunity to join the government, and accepts it. The capacity of the PJD to work from within the legal political process while maintaining an independent voice and challenging the palace to give up some power in the short run is the key to starting a democratic process in Morocco. But it is not enough: in the long run, a paradigm change in the Moroccan political system requires that more than one party stand up to the king. In turn, this requires internal reform in the secular parties, particularly the convening of regularly scheduled congresses, leading to the election of new officers and the renewal of the party leadership. It is difficult to imagine parties such as the Mouvement Populaire and the Rassemblement National des Indépendants, the so-called feudal parties based on networks of rural notables, transforming themselves. But the Istiqlal and, in particular, the USFP, which already have real party structures (however fossilized), have at least a potential for their own, and thus Morocco's, transformation.

The final element in a process leading to political reform would be the willingness of the monarchy to surrender some power if faced by a party that maintained its independence. The monarchy will not give up power if it is not pressed; nor will it do so if it feels threatened. The palace has the capacity to resist pressure for political change, thanks to its networks of clients and, above all, to the strength of the security apparatus. Less accommodating Islamists have already been subjected to the scrutiny of the security system, and no one is certain how willing the monarchy would be to use repression against more mainstream Islamist opposition.

So far, the parties have not succeeded in exerting sufficient pressure on the monarchy to force a democratic opening, in part because they have been co-opted and in part because secular parties have chosen the king's protection against the Islamist parties over a drive for reform. The parties would have much a better chance of achieving the reforms they ostensibly want if they joined forces, but this would require an alliance between secular parties and the PJD, which would not be easily forged. Pressure on the monarchy to relinquish power will not come from civil society, either; nor will it come from a poor, politically disaffected population.

In other words, while real political reform in Morocco is not impossible, it certainly will not be easy. It will require that the PJD avoid co-optation and take advantage of every possibility for action the system offers, that other parties meet the challenge by renewing themselves, and that all parties exert combined pressure on the monarchy to give up some power. Finally, it will require that the monarchy respond positively. Realistically, though, such a scenario is less likely than the continuation of economic, social, and human rights reforms without any change in the political system.

PROMOTING POLITICAL REFORM IN MOROCCO: A LIMITED ROLE FOR OUTSIDERS

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.

Nevertheless, the prospects for outside influence on a process of democratization are not good. First, there is the question of whether, given the country's excellent comparative standing, the United States and Europe should make it a priority to encourage real democracy in Morocco. Valid arguments can be made both in favor of neglect (efforts should be concentrated on countries where the situation is worse) and of greater engagement (it would be easier to help bring about democracy in Morocco than in a more repressive state). The result has been a rather uncertain policy, particularly on the part of the United States. Morocco has received praise from Washington for the changes that have taken place so far and has been rewarded with a free-trade agreement.⁵ At the same time, the level of U.S. assistance to Morocco has fluctuated, having recently being reduced drastically and then restored. Europe has a more linear policy, but it has focused on economic relations and cultural exchanges.

The United States enjoys good relations with the Moroccan monarchy, which has never challenged U.S. interests. This was true during the Cold War and is true today. Morocco has cooperated on issues regarding international terrorism. Except for the occupation of the Western Sahara, it has not pursued an adventurist foreign policy (and the United States has no particular interest in how the issue of the Western Sahara is resolved, as long as it does not lead to conflict and instability in the region). There is, in other words, no good reason for the United States to antagonize Mohammed VI's regime by pressing hard for democratic reforms. Furthermore, the administration of George W. Bush, anxious to be able to point to cases of successful democratization in the Arab world, is much more interested in stressing Morocco's successes than its shortcomings. Morocco has also been an easy partner for both the European Union and the individual European states.

The United States has established fairly good relations with the PJD. The party is legal, is as moderate as can be expected of an Islamist party, competes democratically, is a significant political player, and can be expected to be even more important after the 2007 elections. Whether or not U.S. officials believe that the PJD is truly committed to democracy and would not try to turn Morocco into an Islamist state, they know that the power of the palace will keep the PJD under control. Good relations with the PJD thus suit the U.S. government's need to show, at very little risk, that it is not against Islamic organizations, only against Islamic extremists. As a result, PJD leaders have contacts with U.S. embassy officials, are invited along with leaders of all other parties to embassy receptions, and have no trouble obtaining visas to the United States. This has created a minor backlash against the United States on the part of some secular parties and nongovernmental organizations in Morocco, which have become convinced that the United States wants the Islamists to come to power in Rabat. (Indeed, some secular Moroccans are also convinced that the United States is behind the success of other Islamist movements in the Arab world, including the illegal Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt). Despite this highly conspiratorial perception of relations between the United States and the PJD, the superficial cordiality does not denote closeness, much less U.S. influence over the PJD. Indeed, the concept of the United States encouraging the PJD to remain steadfast in its independence of the king in order to push for true democratic reform taxes the imagination of even the most suspiciously minded.

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.

The most significant civil society organizations are those focusing on human rights and women's rights. They have done impressive work in their respective areas, thanks to their own efforts but also to the fact that they have worked toward goals supported by the palace and the international community. Women's organizations in particular played a key role not only in generating support for the reformed *Mudawwana*, but also in lobbying for changes in the nationality law (so that women could transmit citizenship to their children) and a gender quota for women in parliament. Anticorruption organizations, bound to challenge vested interests if successful, have had a more limited impact, lifting the taboo on the discussion of corruption but achieving no concrete results.

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.

NOTES

- ¹ Ellen Lust-Okar, "Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition," *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (January 2004): 159-179, and Michael J. Willis, "Political Parties in the Maghrib: Ideology and Identification. A Suggested Typology," *Journal of North African Studies* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 1-28.
- ² Marina Ottaway, *Evaluating Middle East Reform: How Do We Know When It Is Significant?* Middle East Series, Carnegie Paper no. 56 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).
- ³ Michael J. Willis, "Morocco's Islamists and the Legislative Elections of 2002: The Strange Case of the Party That Did Not Want to Win," *Mediterranean Politics* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 53-81.
- ⁴ For more detail, see Michael J. Willis, "Between Alternance and the Makhzen: At-Tawhid wa Al-Islah's Entry into Moroccan Politics," *Journal of North African Studies* 4, no. 3 (Autumn 1999): 45-80.
- ⁵ Members of the U.S. government frequently commend Morocco for its reforms. See, for example, the statement by Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes at the Moroccan Foreign Ministry, Rabat, June 5, 2006, and statements by Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.), John B. Larson (D-Conn.), and Robert I. Wexler (D-Fla.), quoted in an article by the state-owned Moroccan wire service Maghreb Arab Press, "US Congresspersons Hail Morocco's 'Courageous and Strong' Measures to Consolidate Democratic Process," June 10, 2006. Morocco is also the only country in the Middle East approved for funding through the U.S. government's Millennium Challenge Account development assistance program.

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