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Approved For Release 2008/08/04 : CIA-RDP06T00412R000200110001-6

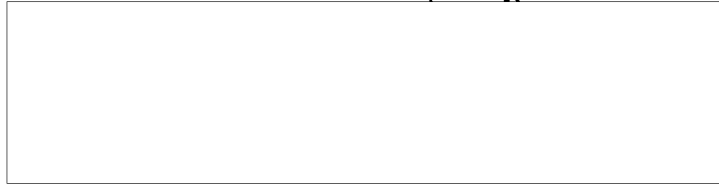
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# Morocco: King Hassan's Domestic Situation

**An Intelligence Assessment**

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*PA 81-10067  
February 1981*

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# Morocco: King Hassan's Domestic Situation

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## **An Intelligence Assessment**

*Research for this report was completed  
on 23 January 1981.*

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OPA [redacted]

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This report was coordinated with the Office of Strategic  
Research, the Office of Economic Research, the  
Directorate of Operations, and the National Intel-  
ligence Officer for Near East and South Asia. [redacted]

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**Morocco: King Hassan's  
Domestic Situation** 

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**Key Judgments**

Morocco's King Hassan is in the strongest domestic political position he has enjoyed in several years. Over the past year he has solidified his hold by skillfully pitting competing factions and interest groups against each other and by demonstrating greater responsiveness to the discontent of potential opponents and the needs of the Moroccan military. Conciliatory moves last summer undercut the criticisms of his civilian detractors—even of the socialists, Morocco's only credible political opposition—who were attracting growing popular support, and there is widespread disarray in the ranks.

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There are signs, however, that this calm is fragile. The government's parliamentary coalition is rent with dissension, and Hassan is under pressure to call for new elections this summer. Labor and student activists are said to be considering renewed protests as economic hardships continue, although they have not yet acquired the legitimacy and support necessary to challenge the King effectively. Such ups and downs are cyclical; during the course of his reign, Hassan has faced stiff challenges from his civilian opposition and withstood two coup attempts by the military.

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The war in Western Sahara, which the general public and even traditional royal supporters blame for Morocco's economic difficulties, is the most dangerous near-term threat to the country's stability. The political climate is more favorable for a compromise settlement now than it has been in several years. But Hassan will have to proceed artfully if he is to secure public acceptance of significant concessions by Morocco.

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Devotion to the throne is gradually giving way to irreverence or indifference as the impact of modernization and education spreads, especially among the youth. Over the long term, the King will face substantial pressure for political liberalization. Fledgling democratic institutions—the development of which Hassan has generated and tolerated—will demand more vigorously that a transition be made from a divine-right monarchy to a constitutional one.

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This process will not be smooth. The King or his successor will almost certainly resist fundamental changes. Nevertheless, widespread calls for the abolition of the throne are not likely in the near term. Most politically aware Moroccans seem to fear discarding this symbol of their country's legitimacy and continuity.

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The attitude of the military, the only force capable of unseating the King, will be critical. At the moment, morale in the Moroccan military is quite high, and the Army is generally apolitical. Unlike the military segments of most other North African countries, Morocco's military seems unlikely to seek a permanent role in politics. Although the armed forces probably would step in as a last resort in an unmanageable situation, they probably would prefer the quick restoration of a civilian regime.

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## Morocco: King Hassan's Domestic Situation

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King Mohammed V, father of Hassan II, began in 1958 what has come to be known as Morocco's "democratic experiment." He issued a series of proclamations in that year announcing his intention to establish a constitutional monarchy and to create democratic institutions. Mohammed died in 1961 before completing his project, but shortly after his death Hassan reaffirmed his father's commitment and personally took charge of drafting Morocco's first constitution, which was approved in a popular referendum in December 1962. [redacted]

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Since that time, Morocco has had two more constitutions, punctuated by a "state of exception" from 1965 to 1970—when Hassan dissolved the heavily factionalized and hamstrung legislature and ruled by decree—and by a five-year period following the promulgation of a new constitution in 1972 during which no legislature sat. The King's manipulation of the country's political system and his skill at balancing competing factions and exploiting their differences have prevented the formation of political institutions with enough power and credibility to restrict Hassan's ability to make all major decisions. Hassan's tactics have helped him to put down frequent stiff challenges from his domestic opponents and to weather two coup attempts by the military. [redacted]

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Morocco has developed a free press—although it circumspectly exercises much self-censorship—and a parliament in which issues are subject to lively debate. The country also has a variety of political parties, labor unions, and other interest groups that are vocal and often troublesome. In early 1980, for example, grumbling about Morocco's growing economic and social problems was increasing, and Hassan faced the prospect of unrest from trade unionists, students, and Islamic fundamentalists. Arrests and preventive detention of the leading activists, while they cowed organizers and prevented incidents, tended only to build popular resentment and to give Hassan's opponents—especially the Socialists Union of Popular Forces—new weapons with which to attack him. [redacted]

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photo from Pictorial Parade ©

*King Hassan at press conference*

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### Hassan's Handling of Key Issues

Last summer, in response to growing political discontent, the King made a number of unexpected moves that neutralized criticism from his political opponents. In July and August, Hassan pardoned a number of political activists—some had been in jail for many years—whose cases had become a major cause for Moroccan and European human rights groups. The releases included virtually all of Hassan's important socialist opponents. [redacted]

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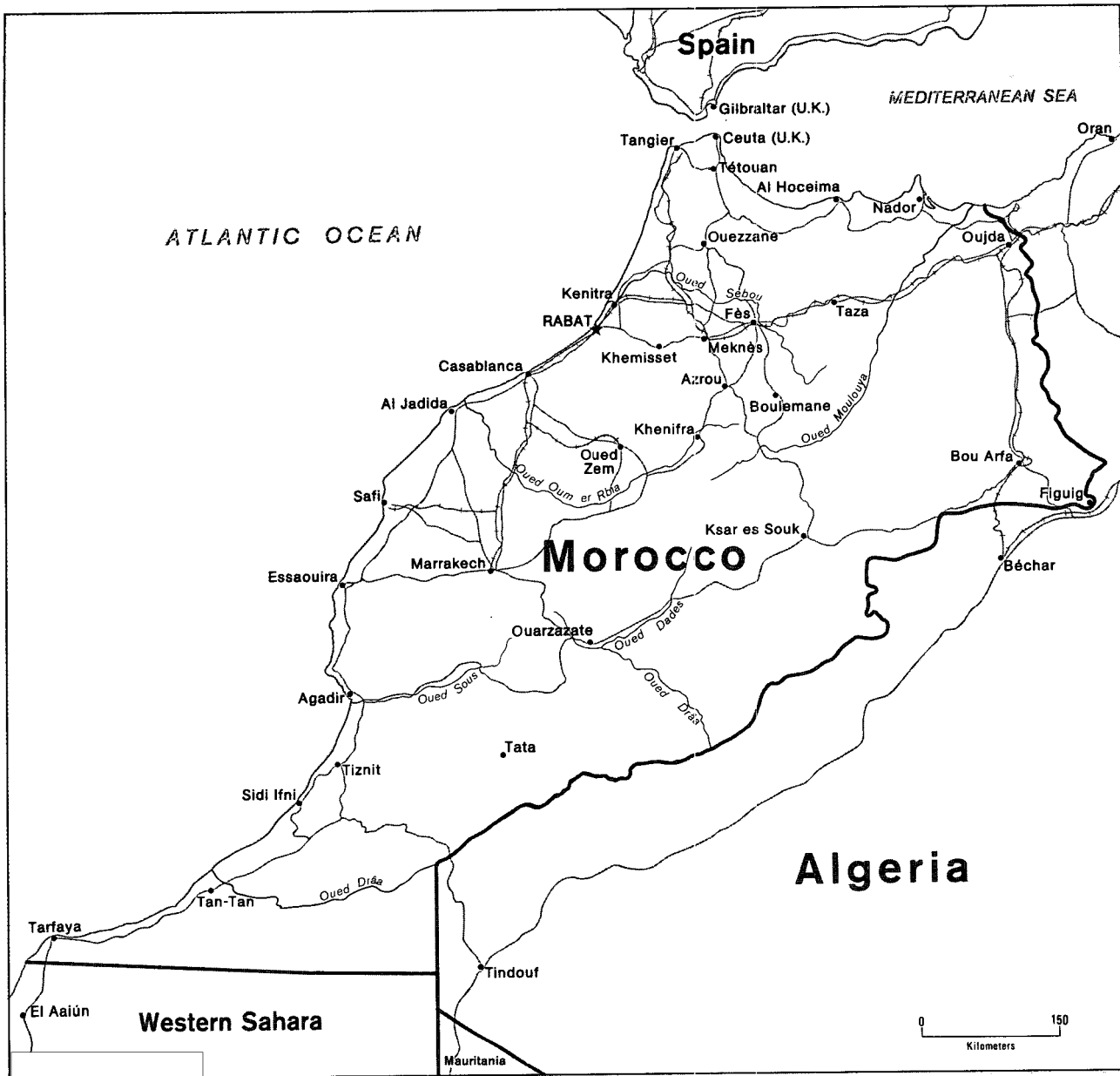
At the same time, Hassan amnestied many oppositionists in exile and encouraged them to return home. He reinstated with back pay a number of labor activists who had lost their jobs during strikes in the spring of 1979. The King also announced a series of economic measures intended to benefit low-income citizens, such as rent reductions and special tax measures. [redacted]

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These actions have for the moment fragmented Hassan's opposition and helped to foster the image of an active monarch concerned with the public welfare. As a result, the King appears better off politically than he has for the past few years. [redacted]

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This calm, however, is fragile. Still unfulfilled are Hassan's promises to resolve Morocco's serious and growing economic problems, and his trade union and socialist critics intend to exploit this failure to rebuild their support. [redacted]

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**Western Sahara.** The most serious immediate problem for the King is the conflict in Western Sahara, with which his fortunes are inextricably linked. In the past, Hassan has used the call of "regaining" the Sahara as a diversion from serious domestic problems and as a way to rally popular support. This tactic is less and less successful; both the elite and the masses link Morocco's economic problems with expenses for the war. The military's improved standing and successes on the battlefield this year, however, have extensively reduced pressure on the King to consider a compromise settlement. Some military leaders—and perhaps the King—are said to believe that Morocco can stabilize the situation and go on to "win" the war. [redacted]

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There are, nonetheless, important motivations for the King to end the conflict. These include Morocco's deteriorating international diplomatic position and the increasing impact of the country's serious economic problems on the general population. Algeria also seems more interested in trying to resolve the problem and is reportedly putting pressure on the Polisario to moderate its demands. Finally, the political climate is likely to worsen in the next few months. [redacted]

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If Hassan chooses to pursue compromise, he will need to do so artfully. The country's political parties are trying to position themselves to profit from any settlement that may emerge. Their leaderships—expecting to capitalize on the popular aversion to a compromise—are likely to be more intransigent on the issue than the King will be. [redacted]

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Since last summer, many observers had been predicting that the King would form a "government of national unity" including all political elements and led by royal counselor and former Prime Minister Guedira. Guedira is the most dovish of Morocco's senior politi-

cal figures. He is Hassan's confidant on the Sahara question and is rumored to be handling secret contacts with the Algerians. A national unity government is now less frequently discussed. Some observers speculate that the politicians would not accept Guedira's leadership, while others suggest that the socialists have made demands that Hassan would not meet. [redacted] 25X1

The country's political parties have almost unanimously either criticized Hassan for Morocco's reported talks with Algeria or expressed strong reservations about the outcome of the talks. Should the palace announce a surprise compromise settlement soon, a political crisis could ensue because a settlement would lack broad political support. [redacted] 25X1

For this reason, Hassan may try a cabinet shuffle and new elections in the summer to legitimize whatever he may be working out with the Algerians or through OAU and UN mediation. Because the political scene is fragmented, however, it may take many more months of maneuvering for the King to achieve even a fragile consensus. [redacted] 25X1

**Economic Problems.** Morocco's economic difficulties and the popular perception that they are attributable to the war may encourage Hassan to believe that he cannot await the formation of this consensus. In strictly economic terms, linking Morocco's economic problems and the costs of the war probably is not justified. Massive economic assistance from oil-rich states—primarily Saudi Arabia and, to a lesser extent, Iraq—and budgetary subsidies to hold down the prices of consumer goods have shielded the public from the worst effects of the cost of the conflict, now estimated to be between \$400 million and \$800 million per year. But the drain of the Sahara war, in addition to other defense expenditures—over half the Army is fighting in the south, and defense needs diverted at least 40 percent of the national budget last year—aggravates other problems. [redacted] 25X1

Senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians are increasingly concerned about Morocco's economic future. They lament that public expenditures for the country's great social and economic needs lag far behind the country's population growth. The commercial elite,

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formerly staunch supporters of the King, are complaining more frequently that government restrictions and inefficiency hamper their ability to do business.

Articulate middle class elements, who have themselves suffered only modestly because of the economy's problems, are finding more in common with the masses of Morocco's poor who attribute price increases to "the war." [redacted]

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Although Morocco's economy has considerable potential over the long term, mostly because of mineral wealth, during the next few years it will face serious imbalances over which the government will be able to exert little control. Morocco has just suffered through three years of an austerity budget (1978-80), which the government instituted when the bottom fell out of the economic boom in 1976 as phosphate prices plunged. The austerity program sharply slowed real economic growth, which fell from 7 to 3 percent per year in 1978 and 1979. It caused particular problems and hurt consumer interests in economic sectors like construction, public works, automobiles, and light manufacturing. The government severely cut back imports of foreign goods and nearly cut in half its investment in the public sector. [redacted]

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These policies temporarily reduced trade and budget deficits in 1978, but they heightened social pressures. The government said last year's inflation rate was 9 percent, but we estimate actual inflation at more than 15 percent. Cost-of-living and salary increases in any case have not kept pace. Unemployment has reached an unprecedented high—possibly 20 percent in major industrial areas—and may even be higher in urban areas like Casablanca. Many consumer goods are in short supply as a result of government restrictions on imports, and prices of import substitutes have been driven up. Morocco, like other energy-poor Third World countries, is greatly affected by soaring fuel prices, although the Saudis and the Iraqis have assured its supplies for 1981. [redacted]

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The government has been able to do little to address the social pressures that have led to labor dissatisfaction. It announced increased allocations for education, public health, and other social welfare projects, but real spending in these areas declined in 1980 and will probably drop again in 1981. The government's price

control program has not slowed the increase in consumer prices, and inflation this year will probably be between 15 and 20 percent. Real economic growth will be about 3 percent, and revenues will not be sufficient to fund a number of promised social programs. Unfulfilled promises to students are already beginning to cause ripples, for example, and grumbling is likely to spread to other sectors as aggressive labor unions—especially the socialists—seek to exploit popular dissatisfaction. [redacted]

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Morocco has recently concluded an agreement with the International Monetary Fund that the government hopes will help to solve some of its serious economic problems over the next three years. The Fund, however, is requiring Morocco to meet certain economic targets. These goals will require even more sacrifices by the public over the next year, because the regime is obliged to cut subsidies to consumers and to limit government spending. [redacted]

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**Pressures for Political Reform.** The economic difficulties of the past three years have only heightened glaring social inequalities between the elite and the working classes, and Hassan has done very little to narrow these disparities by either chastizing the most flagrantly corrupt or moderating his own style. Devotion to the King is increasingly giving way to irreverence or to indifference, especially among the youth. Emotional issues, such as "regaining" the Sahara, no longer seem to rally popular sympathies the way they once did. The public, even the privileged classes who traditionally have strongly supported Hassan, is beginning to judge the King by his ability to get economic results. This promises to be an area where Hassan will be found wanting, even though it is questionable whether anyone could do a much better job. [redacted]

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Hassan's civilian opponents, both active and potential, are poorly organized. They lack the power to enforce their wishes on the monarchy, although they could doubtless create popular disturbances that the regime would find difficult to contain. There is likely to be growing pressure, however, both from the government bureaucracy and from the public, for greater popular participation in running the country and for a general political liberalization. It is uncertain how fast this pressure will build, but some groups like the socialists

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King Hassan with his sons

photo from Sigma ©

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are already calling for movement toward a constitutional monarchy. If Hassan were to die or be removed from the political scene, these pressures would probably mount much more quickly.

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Hassan would almost certainly resist any but the most cosmetic trimming of his royal privileges and divine-right status, and we assume that the Crown Prince would do the same. It is far from certain, however, that there would be widespread calls for abolition of the monarchy. Although Hassan is not well liked, many politically aware Moroccans probably fear that dispensing with the throne altogether would deprive the country of its political "glue."

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**Attitudes of the Military.** In this situation, the attitude of the military is critical. The armed forces are the only group powerful enough to unseat Hassan, and they would probably step in if things became unmanageable. Many officers chafe under Hassan's strict control and personal supervision of the armed forces, and most would presumably welcome greater independence.

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some younger Moroccan officers are more "republican" in their outlook than their older counterparts, but we are uncertain whether these officers would approve the abolition of the monarchy or wish a permanent role for the military in Moroccan politics.

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Morale in the military has improved markedly over the past nine or 10 months, however, largely as a result of successes against the Polisario Front guerrillas.

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Such dissidence as there is appears to center in the middle and lower officer corps, but it now seems minor and unfocused. Efforts by some political parties to establish links with the military have, moreover, been ineffectual, and it is doubtful that these groups could find common cause anytime soon on any except the most serious issues, like an unfavorable Sahara settlement

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To retain the support of the military, especially its younger and more independent officers, Hassan must continually demonstrate his awareness of and sensitivity to its needs. The King, seeming to recognize this, has authorized a number of reforms over the past year that decentralize authority and reward initiative. For the moment, these tactics seem to have worked in building rapport badly damaged by years of unproductive fighting in the Sahara by a military hamstrung by royal dictates. Military morale is at its highest point in over a decade, and the challenge to the King will be to prevent a slump as frustrations recur in the Sahara and with the economy.

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**Politics of the Governing Coalition**

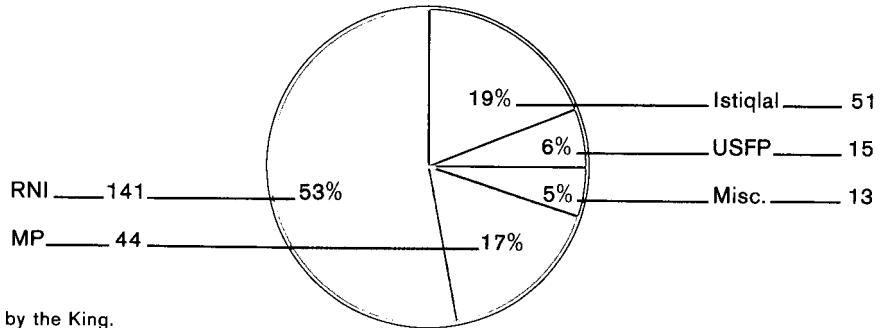
Morocco's parliamentary system appears headed toward paralysis again because of disputes within the leaderships of the parties in the governing coalition. This will complicate Hassan's handling of the sensitive Sahara question and will prove difficult to resolve.

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Factionalism is especially troublesome within the large and amorphous National Assembly of Independents (RNI), the palace-controlled front group that controls 53 percent of the seats in parliament and most major government ministries. The party is headed by the King's brother-in-law Ahmed Osman, who resigned as Prime Minister in 1979 to take over leadership of the Independents at Hassan's request. Osman has tried to bring together a diverse group of conservative and liberal deputies, some of whom reportedly even favor a socialist government. These ideological contradictions, coupled with Osman's lackluster leadership and the

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**Distribution of Seats in the Moroccan Chamber of Representatives**



NOTE: Shaded portions indicate control by the King.

Party	Leader	Orientation	Seats
Rassemblement National des Independents (National Assembly of Independents—RNI)	Ahmed Osman	Loose grouping of deputies who are supported by and subject to government control.	141
Mouvement Populaire (Popular Movement-MP)	Mahjoubi Aherdan	Rural-based party of Moroccan Berbers; subsidized and strongly influenced by the monarchy.	44
Istiqlal (Independence) Party	Mohamed Boucetta	Oldest and largest conservative political party in Morocco; led Moroccan independence movement; strong nationalist irredentist outlook; supports constitutional monarchy, Arabization; is the most vociferous defender of Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara.	51
Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (Socialist Union of Popular Forces—USFP)	Abderrahim Bouadib	Only militant political party of the left; strong proponent of political and economic reform that would substantially reduce King Hassan's autocratic powers.	15
Miscellaneous	Various	Several minor political parties, mostly palace oriented, will be unable to exercise significant influence, but their presence serves Hassan's interest in creating the appearance of a broad-based government. Morocco's small pro-Soviet Communist party—Party of Progress and Socialism—is tame, holds only one seat, but does have a significant following in youth and intellectual circles.	13

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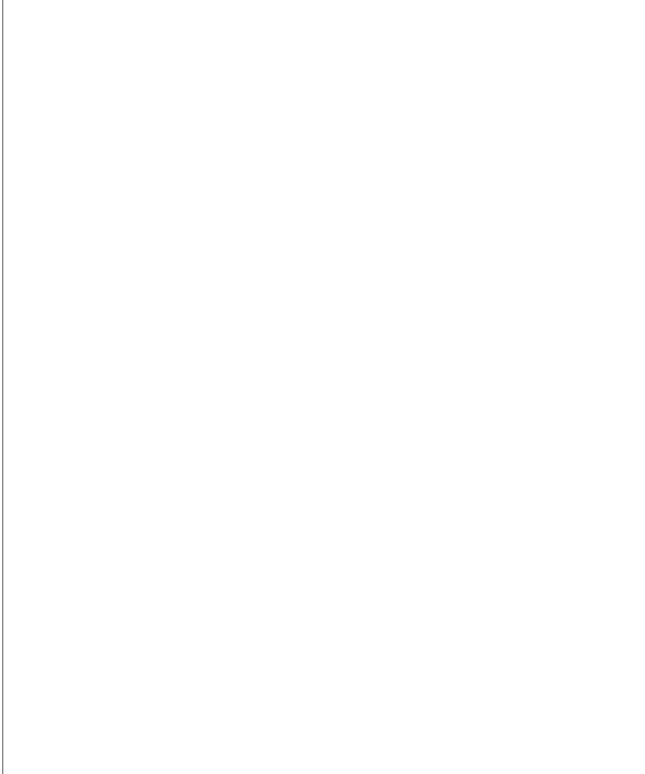
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family and ethnic animosities always present in Morocco, have for the past year caused strains within the party. Two main factions have developed. The largest supports Osman himself. A more militant group, representing about one-third of the Independent deputies, is headed by Labor Minister el-Jadidi. [redacted]



Istiqlal is said to be maneuvering to take advantage of the factionalism among the Independents. Istiqlal itself is factionalized, however, and the rifts have widened in recent months. [redacted]



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The other major party in the ruling coalition is the Istiqlal, headed by Foreign Minister Boucetta and controlling about 19 percent of the seats in the legislature. It is the country's oldest and largest conservative party and led the fight for Morocco's independence. The strongly traditionalist Istiqlal, however, has grown out of touch with most Moroccans—especially since the party's decision to participate in the government, where it holds the sensitive and difficult portfolios for education and foreign affairs. Its lackluster performance—it has been unable to gain government approval for any of the reforms it advocates—and its unpopular policies are reported to have attenuated its influence greatly. [redacted]

The third party in the governing coalition, the Popular Movement (MP), holds about 17 percent of the seats in parliament. It is an almost exclusively rural-based organization of Moroccan Berbers, subsidized and strongly influenced by the government and royalist in its outlook. The party thus does not have nationwide appeal, but the predominance of Berbers in the Army and Interior Ministry and their restive and rebellious nature give the Popular Movement greater influence than its numbers suggest. [redacted]

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There have long been rumblings of dissent within the group—mostly as a result of regional and generational conflicts and of personal antagonisms toward its leader, Communications Minister Aherdan, who runs the party largely as a one-man show. In the fall of 1979, the dispute broke out in the open when four dissident members issued a long manifesto highly critical of

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Aherdan, complaining that the party had no organization and no ideology other than its emphasis on Berber culture. The dissidents were expelled from the party; this silenced the criticism but did not move Aherdan to open party decisionmaking or wider participation.

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Reports of dissatisfaction within the party have recently cropped up once more, and some political observers have told US diplomats that long-simmering rivalries may soon boil over.

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discontented Transportation Minister Naceur has received the King's blessing to challenge Aherdan or to form a separate party. This seems unlikely, however, because of Aherdan's proven loyalty and his strong following. But it would be typical for Hassan to play off such leaders against each other.

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#### **The Left Opposition**

The disarray in the governing coalition has worked to the advantage of the King's militant opponents on the left. These opponents are capitalizing on Morocco's growing economic and social problems to attract supporters away from progovernment, conservative, and traditional groups.

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**The Socialists.** The Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) has grown rapidly since its formation in 1974, and its good organization and active program have made it Morocco's only credible opposition party. It is a strong proponent of a substantial reduction in the King's autocratic powers, and it has gained credibility as a result of its refusal to participate in the cabinet.

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The party controls less than 6 percent of the seats in parliament, but this does not represent its true popular following. The authorities widely and blatantly rigged elections to the disadvantage of the socialists. It is hard to estimate the extent of the party's popular support, but socialist leaders boast they could win a parliamentary majority if free elections were held. Their claim could prove true in urban areas, especially in the sprawling and overcrowded commercial center of Casablanca, but the party probably has only a small following in most of the still traditional countryside.

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Hassan has tolerated the socialists since their party agreed to participate in parliament, but authorities clearly regard it as the most menacing opposition element. Until recently the government has subjected the party to an active harassment campaign, arresting its leaders and intimidating the rank and file. These tactics worked largely to galvanize the party, however, and are at least in part responsible for the regime's decision to attempt to conciliate the socialists.

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Hassan's moves last summer to meet almost every significant demand of his socialist opponents have reportedly undercut the party's arguments. The King's actions have also spawned a divisive debate within the party. The more moderate leaders are said to have been placated by the King and to be afraid of jeopardizing their gains by pushing the government much further, anticipating a new crackdown. These leaders are said to find it hard to retain control over the party's more activist younger members. The militants decry the failure to capitalize on Morocco's worsening economic situation; the party's continued participation in parliament, which serves to legitimize Hassan's dominance; and the socialists' past informal cooperation with the palace. The return of prominent exiles like Abderrahman Youssoufi, pardoned by Hassan last summer, has probably strengthened the hand of the radicals.

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The King is fueling this debate by continuing to dangle the offer of important cabinet posts for the socialists and to suggest that he will not postpone parliamentary elections from 1981 to 1983, as a constitutional amendment approved last summer permits. Hassan is said to be ready to offer the socialists three or four portfolios, including the important Agriculture and Education Ministries, and to give parliament greater responsibility in overseeing day-to-day affairs. This formula seems to fit the socialists' general conditions for joining the government—that parliament get more power and elections be held in 1981. But it apparently still lacks specific guarantees for the observance of civil rights, the unconditional holding of elections in June, and real budgetary powers for parliament. Socialist

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participation in the government would go a long way toward forming the national consensus that most observers believe is necessary before Morocco can begin serious negotiations to settle the Sahara conflict.

[redacted]

In the meantime, the debate in socialist circles is likely to continue, and it is uncertain who will prevail. Although the King hopes that the feuding will not get out of hand and endanger the relative calm at home, party First Secretary Bouabid announced in mid-December that the party would withdraw from parliament in June 1981, whether or not elections are held.

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**Labor.** In late 1978 the socialists organized the Democratic Confederation of Workers (CDT). It moved aggressively and soon was almost as large as Morocco's tamer, long-established 150,000-member Union of Moroccan Workers (UMT). The UMT is nominally independent but actually supported by the regime. The socialist union's militant social program advocates, among other things, an immediate 70-percent salary increase and minimum housing guarantees. The CDT's critics argue that it is actually seeking to topple the regime by advocating nationwide strikes and pressing extreme demands in the face of Morocco's severe economic difficulties.

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Before long, however, the union was having trouble attracting new members and coordinating its strike efforts. This happened primarily because of the regime's forceful reaction to the socialist-sponsored strike of teachers and public health workers in April 1979. The government summarily dismissed up to 1,000 union employees from their jobs, the union's membership declined, and it lost much credibility when it became financially unable to continue support payments to the members.

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Today the CDT is in difficult financial straits. It had to cancel several planned strikes in 1980 because the members feared a lack of union financial support if the government once again cracked down. The union's credibility problem persists, and the King's concessions to the socialist opposition last summer appear to have defused significant protest activity for the next several months.

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Militants within the union, especially in key sectors such as mining, fault their leaders for being overly cautious. The leadership has become reluctant to press the government too far for fear of provoking a repetition of 1979's problems and wants to rebuild its image slowly. The ensuing tension reportedly led to an increase in wildcat strikes last year. The militants may eventually force the union's leadership to be more activist and to put greater distance between the union and the socialist party, which continues to counsel moderation.

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The union will probably concentrate its efforts for the next few months on low-key recruitment, sensitizing the public to Morocco's deteriorating economic situation in an effort to present itself as an acceptable alternative to the larger, "nonpartisan" union. These efforts are meeting with some success. Last December the UMT attempted to organize a strike of railroad workers, formerly a UMT preserve; the socialists successfully urged their members to boycott the strike. The government agreed at the last minute to a generous settlement with the UMT in an effort, according to socialist leaders, to detract from the socialists' image.

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The regime considers the socialist union a major threat to domestic stability. The union continues to be supported by teachers, phosphate workers, and laborers in several state factories, as well as by workers in other important government activities such as communications. An Interior Ministry report last summer is said to have concluded that the socialists' were the only trade unions that would be able to mobilize workers in a general strike during an economic crisis. The CDT is likely to profit from the country's worsening economic circumstances by gaining new members, but it will always be vulnerable to a government crackdown until it overcomes its financial and organizational problems.

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**Students.** The education sector in Morocco is probably the most disaffected element in society. Teachers are becoming more militant, and students as a group are more vocal than the population at large. The National Union of Moroccan Students (UNEM) has been the

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major student group since its formation in 1956, and it has developed into a highly politicized organization. The regime is especially concerned about student radicalism because over half the population is under 25, and security authorities regard the student union and the socialist party's youth wing as the two most dangerous political organizations. [redacted]

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Originally affiliated with the conservative Istiqlal party, the student union severed this association in 1959. Its members gravitated to the socialist party before the government clamped severe restrictions on the union in the 1960s because discontent over social and educational issues became widespread. The government finally banned it in 1973 and legalized it again only in 1978. [redacted]

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Student members chose a new national leadership in August 1979 at an organizational congress. Only one radical was elected to the student union's national council, and only a handful of radicals were elected to its administrative committee. Far-left militants charged that the government and the socialist political party manipulated the elections to install a moderate leadership. [redacted]

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During elections in January 1980, however, an extreme leftist group—some of whose members belong to semiclandestine Marxist organizations—gained control of student councils at Morocco's three largest universities. Their victory apparently came as a consequence of the failure of the student leadership to redress academic and material grievances, not as a result of political issues. Consequently, the union felt itself under greater pressure and became more activist. It sponsored more strikes, to which the government reacted by arresting a number of extremist leaders and trying some of them. Tension subsided by spring, however, when the regime released or gave lenient sentences to most of the activists. [redacted]

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At a conference on education organized by the King last August, the government promised to maintain a dialogue with students and to act on their principal complaints. These include increasing academic stipends, opening new dormitories, reviewing admissions policies, and reducing classroom overcrowding. This

bought the regime time, but in recent weeks student strike activity in Rabat and Casablanca has begun to pick up somewhat. Activists, disillusioned by the failure of the government to follow through on promises made last summer, have been pressing for "warning" and "wildcat" strikes. More moderate union leaders at first refused to endorse the effort but later agreed—presumably fearing that they would otherwise lose influence to the radicals [redacted] 25X1

Strike activity has thus far been largely peaceful and orderly. The union's executive committee was said to be planning more strenuous strikes if the government did not respond by early this year. The government has remained silent, and more frequent campus confrontations are likely. Student extremists are doubtless looking forward to campus elections scheduled for this month or next, and the activists seem to stand a good chance of ousting a number of socialist party members. This would further heighten tensions with the regime and undermine Hassan's efforts to forge a national consensus, and it would weaken the already shaky links between the socialist party and the student union. [redacted] 25X1

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*The Communists.* Morocco's Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), the country's tiny Communist party, is closely watched by the government. Tolerated mostly because its membership is small—a total of 1,500 to 4,000 with only 825 active cell members—the party has gained few adherents except among youth and intellectuals in a few cities. Secretary General Ali Yata, who first formed a Moroccan Communist party in the 1940s, holds the group's only seat in parliament. [redacted] 25X1

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The Communists have a militant social program on domestic issues and support the Soviet Union on every international issue except Western Sahara and other Maghreb matters. Only a very small portion of the party's operations are funded by local contributions; the rest is a direct subsidy from the USSR for Moroccans studying in or traveling to the USSR and in support of the party's daily newspaper. [redacted]

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Despite the dedication and commitment of its few followers and its militant social programs, the party is unlikely to attract much of a following as long as it is led by Ali Yata. Many of the country's radical youth consider him a sellout to the government because of his decision to operate legally and to participate in parliament. These young radicals belong instead to semiclandestine Marxist-Leninist groups like the "23 March" and "Ala al-Amam" groups, which are seeking to gain control of the student union. [redacted]

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The Communists' efforts to establish working relationships with other Moroccan groups—especially with the socialist political party and its labor union—have proved fruitless. There seems little likelihood of establishing such cooperation soon. [redacted]

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