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OFFICE OF
NATIONAL ESTIMATES

MEMORANDUM

Prospects for Political Change in Morocco

Secret

28 February 1972

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

28 February 1972

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Prospects for Political Change in Morocco*

NOTE

King Hassan survived a spectacular and nearly successful coup attempt in July 1971. While Hassan quickly reestablished control and executed the alleged ringleaders after summary trial, the uprising at Skhirat palace clearly shook the regime and exposed the vulnerability of narrowly based royal rule. The King has now promulgated a new Constitution which is to go to referendum on 1 March. It is scheduled to be followed by general elections for a new parliament. The process promises a politically important and tense period. This memorandum addresses what has changed and is likely to change in Morocco as a result of the attempt to overthrow the King, and treats the implications for the US.

* *This memorandum was prepared by the Office of National Estimates and discussed with other components of the CIA, who are in general agreement with its judgments.*

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KING HASSAN II



GENERAL MOHAMED OUFKIR

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1. Monarchy has long roots in Morocco. But in the past the royal family rarely held effective sway over large sections of the present realm. The monarchy itself was dislocated during the era of the French Protectorate (1912-1956); King Mohamed, Hassan's father, was ousted by the French and spent the last two years of French rule in exile. Capitalizing on his own record of opposition to the French and his traditional appeal as a religious and dynastic leader, the King restored the monarchy's paramountcy after Morocco gained independence. His success was facilitated by the rivalries which frustrated unity among the civilian politicians and by the absence of any popular military challenger. By the time Hassan inherited the throne in 1961, the monarchy was unquestionably the central political institution in the country.

2. Following in his father's footsteps, Hassan made it his mission to keep power concentrated in his own hands. He has worked to bolster the loyalty of the military establishment to the throne and has greatly reduced the influence of civilian politicians. Essentially a manipulator, he has on the one hand attempted to prevent the formation of groups powerful enough to threaten his position. On the other, he has made skillful use of patronage and the desire for office that animates Moroccan

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politicians in general. Office has become the gateway to riches, not political power. And Hassan's pandering to the acquisitiveness of the elite has aggravated one of the regime's most stubborn problems -- corruption. So has the monarch's example of lavish entertainment and extravagant expeditions abroad.

3. Where he has encountered opposition, Hassan has characteristically reacted by firmness or, when faced with broader pressures, by a facade of concession. Thus, he prorogued parliament and virtually suspended political activity after the bloody riots in Casablanca in 1965. But after five years of a "state of exception", he felt it expedient to regularize his regime. He convened a carefully selected assembly in 1970. Under the Constitution issued at that time, this tame parliament has no authority to challenge the King. It provides the illusion, rather than the substance, of popular participation in government.

4. The King's regime had been running into difficulties well before the July uprising. Hassan's style had alienated increasing numbers of the Moroccan people. His conceit, arrogance, and pursuit of pleasure, the latter symbolized for many by his mania for golf, were foci of irritation. The stagnant economy and the heavy hand of his security forces also contributed to cumulative resentment. Discontent among students and intellectuals

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has proved a continuing problem for the regime. Student demonstrations periodically disrupted the functioning of the universities and lycees. Student groups cheered when they thought that the King had been overthrown during the July attempted coup.

The Political Parties

5. Yet the political parties have not effectively reflected this dissatisfaction. They never effectively controlled the Cabinet, even during the first few years after independence when they were nominally part of the governmental coalition. In recent years their freedom of action has been severely restricted by the crown. This has weakened, demoralized, and disrupted their organizations which have been out of the political mainstream for almost a decade.

6. Despite the recent effort to patch together a so-called National Front, the rival formations that contest the political arena have found it difficult to concert action. The present alignment of the right of center Istiqlal Party and the leftist National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP) is an alliance from weakness to oppose the King. Of the two parties, the Istiqlal, under its leader Allal al-Fassi, is the more rigid and insistent on its

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rights to dominate the political scene. The UNFP leaders are more flexible; though they view the monarchy as a medieval institution which eventually should be uprooted, they are willing to proceed by stages, aiming first merely to get greater freedom for parliamentary action. The UNFP derives some support from the Moroccan Federation of Labor, an independent body which has considerable popular strength of its own. The other party organizations have demonstrated little popular appeal and are generally ignored by the major actors.

The Military

7. The 60,000-man military establishment holds the key to political power in Morocco. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Broadly speaking, the top officers were French trained and most of them appear to be conservative monarchists. On the other hand, during the attempted coup of last July it became evident that there was concern throughout the military about the rampant corruption in the regime. While details about the planners of the coup remain murky, it appears that middle grade officers took the initiative in planning the uprising in July. A number of generals joined them toward the

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end.* Though King Hassan has since purged elements suspected of disloyalty, this punitive action itself may have fed resentment among the junior officers.

8. The Moroccan military is distinguished from the other key institutions in the country by the high percentage of Berbers among its senior members. The marriage of Berber and Arab elements in Morocco has never been complete; the French consciously encouraged Berbers to enter the military profession as a counterweight to the Arab majority which dominated the political scene. Since independence there have been no visible signs of significant ethnic rivalries within the military. But in Moroccan society at large many Berbers resent the favored position of the Arabs from Fez in the civilian power structure. The army leaders continue to favor Berber officers, and Berber clannishness thus may become increasingly important in influencing the attitudes of the officer corps.

9. The present leader of the military establishment, General Mohamed Oufkir, has emerged as unquestionably the most

* *Four of Morocco's 16 general officers were killed in the coup attempt and five were executed by the King on charges of complicity.*

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important personage in the country after King Hassan. Oufkir is a Berber whose power is based not only on his closeness to the King, but on his long-time control of the internal security, police, and intelligence networks. An outstanding administrator, he is also widely feared for his tough and frequently brutal treatment of his political opponents. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Long relied on by the King, Oufkir further strengthened his position after the July 1971 uprising when he was given unlimited powers to restore public order. He now serves as Chief of Staff of the Royal Armed Forces and Minister of National Defense.

10. Despite his years in the public eye, Oufkir has remained a figure of some mystery. He apparently has little respect for the civilian politicians. In the past, he has shown sympathy for Hassan's efforts to strengthen the authority of the monarchy. But since July 1971 his attitudes toward the regime seem less clear. [REDACTED]

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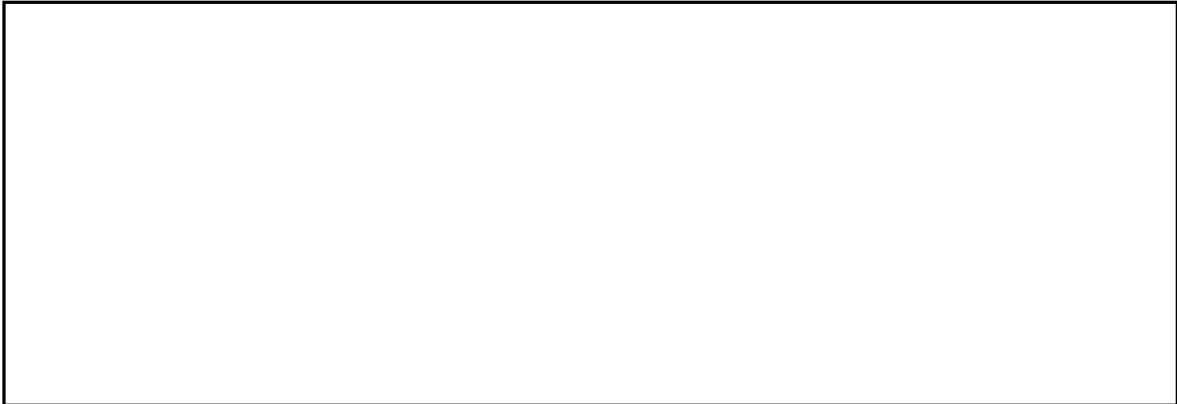
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Impact of the July Coup Attempt

11. The July uprising apparently convinced Hassan of the need for some kind of action. He immediately promised basic reforms, installed a new Cabinet of technicians, and then undertook negotiations with the major political, social, and economic leaders of the country. He took steps to raise wages, revise the tax structures, and lower living costs. At the same time, he indicated that he would pursue charges of corruption against senior officials. In this connection, five former ministers are now under arrest for involvement in financial scandals -- though the King does not seem inclined to push the investigation beyond those most obviously implicated. Hassan has also downgraded his personal royal cabinet, a body that had served prominently as an intermediary in the governing process and a check on the national ministers. And finally in February 1972

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Hassan announced that on 1 March a referendum would be held on a new Constitution limiting royal power somewhat.

12. Although these acts go further than Hassan has been willing to go in recent years, it remains to be seen how much political participation he is prepared to grant. The King has not altered much of his own personal style of pleasure seeking; he still does not work hard at the business of ruling. The political changes which the King is now offering seem essentially an effort to avoid basic transformation by permitting some minor, mostly cosmetic, alterations. Under the new regime, the King will remain the dominant power. Through his right to name the Cabinet and dissolve parliament, he has retained ultimate control over the operation of the political system. His assumption of the role of "national arbiter" between parliament and the Cabinet clearly indicates a determination to intervene actively in the process of government. He obviously has no intention of becoming a mere figurehead. Nor is it likely that Hassan contemplates permitting the new government to take action against groups, such as the army or his household, on which he has been accustomed to lean. There are even some signs that he might encourage the formation of a new royalist party to increase his weight on the political scene.

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And Hassan may hope that the limited boost in the stature of the civilian parties will serve as something of a counterweight to General Oufkir.

13. The new Constitution clearly represents less than the politicians had hoped to achieve. In an effort to press the King for further concessions, the National Front leaders have announced a boycott of the referendum. This is less extreme than their stand against the 1970 Constitution, and once the Constitution is adopted they may decide to take part in the political process, particularly if they will be able to campaign as a party. For the new arrangement does offer the parties a significant opportunity to increase their political power. Under the new regime, two-thirds of the parliament will be elected directly by the people. The deputies will have some supervisory power over the government as well as a role in any future amendments of the Constitution. The party leaders are also tempted by hopes of being included in the Cabinet, though they fear that their chances of getting significant posts are slim.

14. Changes of the scope outlined by the King will probably not do much to solve the underlying problems that trouble Morocco.

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The new cabinet is not likely to have sufficient independent authority to take bold initiatives in the economic and social realms. Moreover, there is a good chance that the Istiqlal Party and the UNFP would fall out in the process of pressing the palace to agree to basic reform. Even under the best of circumstances, it would be difficult to carry out radical land reform, which is urgently needed to correct the injustice of antiquated land tenure arrangements. A coalition government might attempt some educational reform. But it would not be easy to transform this rooted structure, nor does the regime have much wealth to invest in this area.

15. Indeed, the limited fiscal resources of the state are a major obstacle to reform. Morocco faces the normal quotient of economic problems common to underdeveloped countries: serious unemployment and underemployment, burgeoning slums resulting from the influx of the poor from the land to the cities, rising prices and inflation that exacerbate social unrest, and a wide gulf in wealth between the few rich and the many near the subsistence level. In addition, overpopulation and a high birthrate also serve to frustrate the government's efforts at development. Morocco lacks oil or other readily exploitable natural resources. Suffering from these severe

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structural difficulties, the country has made only faltering economic progress since the French left and has been in an economic slump for the past few years. The regime now has little chance of obtaining the funds needed to stimulate the economy, unless the government should become willing to take painful steps to redistribute the wealth of the Moroccan elite.

16. Failure to deal with these basic problems may not, of course, pose an immediate threat to the survival of the regime. The show of action underway since last July seems likely to absorb the attention of the politically aware for the near term. Much as they will continue to grumble and express dissatisfaction with the King's initiatives, the political party leaders are apparently not yet ready to mount all-out opposition to the proposed liberalization. They realize that they are not in position to insist on a much faster pace or more extensive change. General Oufkir and his associates also seem ready to accept this political charade, especially as long as the government maintains public order. The King apparently recognizes this danger and has warned that he will move decisively to prevent a descent into anarchy.

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17. Although an explosion does not appear likely in the immediate future, continuing discontent poses a long-term threat to the regime. To avoid eventual forceful overthrow, Hassan must be willing to change the system far more fundamentally than he has so far been willing to do. Already the younger militants within the political parties are criticizing the established leaders for negotiating with the King on the latter's terms. Particularly if the present leaders cannot obtain an adequate measure of authority from the King to provide far more effective government than Morocco has enjoyed up to now, they will face a rising challenge from the younger generation. In this event, the chances for the emergence of a strong leftist radical movement would be high. And Moroccan politics might no longer be characterized by a measured approach. Indeed, if the new government to be formed after the referendum does not accord the parties a significant role, this radicalization may come sooner rather than later.

Implications for the United States

18. The US has been closely associated with the Moroccan monarchy over the years. US military and economic aid have

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in the Moroccan context been relatively large (about \$860 million since independence: of which some \$783 million is military and about \$77 million economic). Moreover, inside Morocco the US is widely regarded as a staunch supporter of the royal regime. Despite domestic criticism, Hassan, for his part, has permitted the US to operate the important Kenitra communications complex. The Moroccans have served as something of a moderating influence in Arab councils.

19. But forces that threaten cooperation with the US are rising. As elsewhere in Africa and Asia, nationalist feeling is growing in Morocco. This process may be speeded as a result of the reemphasis on party politics that may result from the new Constitutional arrangement. Both the UNFP and more especially the Istiqlal Party stand for US withdrawal from the Kenitra facilities. In its quest for popular support, the Istiqlal may raise this issue as an early order of business. While Hassan still sees some value in retaining this link to the US, he recognizes that in terms of an inducement for additional aid and as a source of foreign exchange these facilities are a waning asset. These calculations may weaken his resolve to resist pressures if the American presence should emerge as a popular issue. Moreover, in this

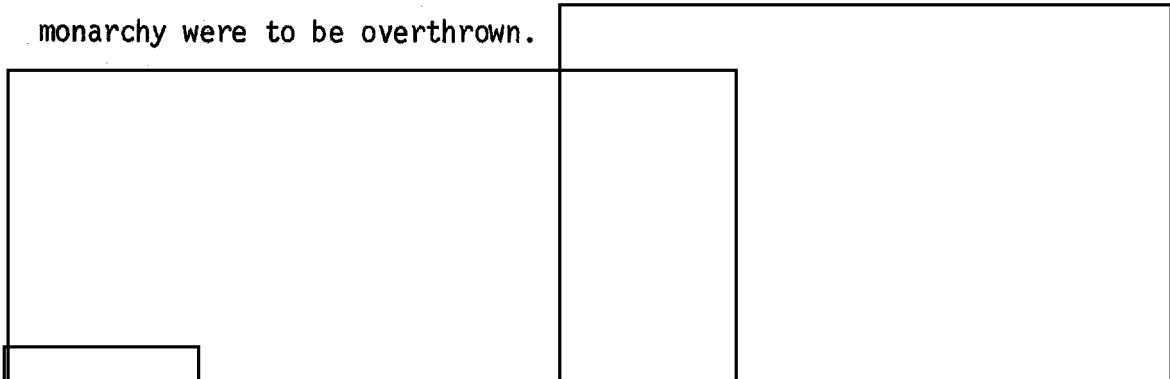
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situation present US intentions to reduce the complement associated with Kenitra might lead Hassan to believe that the US itself would not be seriously troubled by the closing of these installations.

20. Of course, the close relationship between the US and Morocco would be far more seriously disrupted if the monarchy were to be overthrown.

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Hence any successors to the monarchy would probably move soon to terminate US access to the Kenitra facilities.

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S-E-C-R-E-T

2 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:
John Huizenga

SUBJECT : Additional Distribution for MEMORANDUM:
"Prospects for Political Change in Morocco"

Subject to your approval, we would like the following to receive this Memorandum:

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C. Robert Moore (Copy sent 28 February 1972)
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Room 6234A

David D. Newsom
Assistant Secretary for African Affairs
Room 6234A

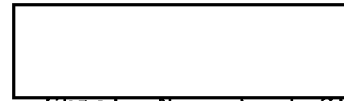
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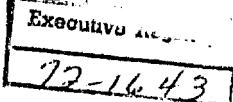
George W. Bader
Regional Director, Africa/*ISA*
Room 4B880



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Chief, Near East Staff
Office of National Estimates

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23 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of National Estimates

SUBJECT : Prospects for Political Change in Morocco
Trends in Ceylon

John -

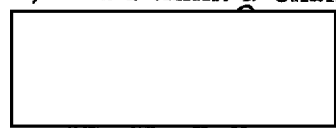
On reading your excellent memorandum on Morocco, I thought it might have been a fine candidate for an experiment in presenting possible alternative developments and the factors which might bring them about. I think this might sharpen up the value of an Estimate paper and prove a certain incentive toward decision-making to which factors to activate so that a preferred alternative could be sought. The defense will exist that this might get near to policy advocacy but I think the alternatives could be stated in objective enough terms so that it need not be.

In this case, the alternatives might be along the lines of:

- a. King Hassan's performance on about the same lines as at present, resulting in continued unhappiness with the regime, the possible growth of a real opposition underground and a substantial swing in policy as a result of his disappearance or overthrow.
- b. A "King's revolution" along the lines of Iran, accompanied by some unhappiness among some of the settled powers of the country but the gradual awakening of a political base in the country.
- c. Assumption of power by General Oufkir as an authoritarian boss replacing or under the figurehead of King Hassan.

The Ceylon estimate might also be given somewhat the same treatment although the alternatives are by no means as clear as the Moroccan.

Since I know very little, if anything, about Morocco or Ceylon, these are obviously just suggestions as to form rather than substance. They do stem from an interest in making Estimate papers a really vital part of U. S. policy formulation, however, and I think a change in form might encourage this.



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MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

Morocco is one of the places we carry on our list of potential unpleasant surprises. This paper reviews the scene on the occasion of a constitutional referendum this week, and is a dry run for an NIE some months hence.

~~JOHN HUIZENGA~~
Director
National Estimates

Attachment:

Memorandum, dtd 28 Feb 72

"Prospects for Political Change in Morocco" 28 Feb 72
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Colby

Morocco is on our watch list of potential unpleasant surprises.

John Huizenga

28 Feb 72
(DATE)

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

(47)

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DCI *Mr. Huizenga*

Morocco is one of the places we carry on our list of potential unpleasant surprises. This paper reviews the scene on the occasion of a constitutional referendum this week, and is a dry run for an NIE some months hence.

JH
Thank you - have given this some distribution.
I assume you have given this some distribution.

JOHN HUIZENGA
Director
National Estimates

Memorandum, dtd 28 Feb 72

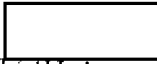
"Prospects for Political Change in Morocco" 28 Feb 72
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Cline

This is a dry run for a forthcoming estimate on Morocco intended to acquaint the community with our current thinking. It has gone to the following policy people in the Department: Assistant Secretary Newsom, Deputy Assistant Secretary Moore, James J. Blake AF/N, and Robert Pelletreau AF/N.


John Huizenga
Director
National Estimates

2 March 72
(DATE)

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