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## Democratic Governance of Security in Morocco\*

Abdalla Saaf\*\*

Although the democratic governance of security lies at the heart of various questions that have shaped Morocco's political life recently, this issue remains relatively little known and hardly addressed by social sciences research, mostly for reasons other than academic. Studies available up to now focus primarily on the army and its role in the Moroccan system, often through an historical perspective\*\*\*, and their preoccupations change according to historical circumstances.

In the years following independence, the question of security was addressed in terms of symbolic and material resources in the hands of those in power in their confrontation with their political adversaries of the moment<sup>1</sup>. It later came to the point where these resources structured power itself, becoming an essential tool for the control of the State and the society

by those in power, and ultimately a constituent part of power itself (1963 – 1971)<sup>2</sup>. After the two *coup* attempts of 1971 and 1972 and the conflict in the “Western Sahara” from 1975 to 1989 (or “Moroccan Sahara Affair”, according to Moroccan terminology)<sup>3</sup>, the army's power of negotiation increased, and it became a fully-

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<sup>1</sup> See the episodes of the first struggles for control of the State between an important part of the National Movement and the monarchy in Waterbury John, *Le Commandeur des croyants. La monarchie marocaine et son élite*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1975 and Leveau Rémy, *Le fellah marocain, défenseur du trône*, preface by Duverger Maurice, Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1976.

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<sup>2</sup> Palazzoli, Claude, *Le Maroc politique*, Sindbad, Paris, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> The Southern territories were occupied by Spain until the collapse of Franco's regime in 1975. Their incorporation to the rest of the kingdom of Morocco led to an armed conflict, lasted until the adoption of a ceasefire in 1989.

\* This paper was drafted before the adoption of the constitutional reforms of July 2011.

\*\* Director of the Center for Studies and Research in Social Sciences of Rabat.

\*\*\* El Merini Abdelhak, *L'armée marocaine à travers l'histoire*, 2000, Rabat. See in this work the important bibliography on the subject.

fledged political actor<sup>4</sup>, in a country described as being constantly in struggle. As the only armed and organized institution in the country, and sometimes suspected to be under Islamic influence, the army is seen as a danger by some.

Today, security issues are framed in terms of the so-called “democratization process”<sup>5</sup> and the current reform context. The debate touches upon the “democratic control” of security institutions, a topic closely related to royal prerogatives and more generally to political reform in Morocco. It is therefore important to analyze the internal dynamics and trends within the army, the police and intelligence services in the light of Morocco’s democratic prospects. Broadly speaking, several signs suggest an evolution in such matters is underway, including at the echelons close to power, such as the relevant Parliament committee and the institutions working on issues of political memory (particularly human rights violations). The status of the security issue is therefore changing. Meanwhile, an increasing number of prominent political figures have made public statements on this topic, and public debate is growing.

Nevertheless, the underlying questions in this debate are numerous, complex and often

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<sup>4</sup> Dalle Ignace, *Le règne de Hassan II 1961-1999. Une espérance brisée*, éd. Tarik-Maisonneuve & Larose, Paris/Casablanca, 2001. See also, *Le Maroc actuel. Une modernisation au miroir de la tradition*, éditions du CNRS, Paris, 1992 ; Hughes Stephen O., *Le Maroc de Hassan II*, éditions Bouregreg, Rabat, 2003.

<sup>5</sup> In the sense used by present political analysis literature – see for example Diamond Larry and Plattner Marc, “The Role of the Army in Democracy”, in *Nouveaux Horizons*, The Johns Hopkins University Press & National Endowment for Democracy, Paris, 1996.

difficult to grasp from an external perspective, as access to information is difficult. The actors involved remain discreet in their analyses and personal judgments on the continued increase in security personnel, the internal distribution of competences between different bodies and their *modus operandi*. Political actors thus acknowledge the importance of security reforms, but the issue remains appended to general discussions on constitutional reform, State reform and human rights.

This paper will first establish a picture of the current security apparatus, based on the available information: what are its components, and how are they connected to each other? What is their logic? A discussion of ongoing evolutions and future prospects will follow in part two.

### **I. The organization of the current security apparatus**

Producing an analysis of the Moroccan security forces is painstaking, due to the inherent opacity of the field and to the political agenda of all security actors, internal and external. The reasons behind their development, the positioning of the various bodies involved, their institutional interactions and the general configuration of the apparatus, are issues that lie at the heart of the political and social decision-making process.

### **A. Historical overview of the development of the security system**

Generally speaking, two groups should be distinguished: the army on one hand, and the police, auxiliary forces and intelligence services on the other.

### *1. Evolution of the army and its relationship to the King since 1956*

After independence, the army develops significantly with the King's trust.

With around 20,000 men inherited from both the colonial and Liberation armies (30,000 one year after), the Moroccan army in 1956 is structured rather modestly: thirteen infantry battalions (ten of five companies, one of three companies, and two from the North, originally from Spanish army), one army service corps of two platoons of muleteers, two armored squadrons (one reconnaissance and a second of AMX tanks), one artillery group, one engineer battalion, one communications detachment, one transportations company and one logistics squad. According to living memory however, the army actually only consisted of a few artillery battalions, deployed chiefly in Rabat and Marrakech, some armored vehicles, a very limited air force and an extremely small naval force.

The newly-born Moroccan army consisted of Moroccan soldiers from the French army, French infantrymen and troopers who had left the Spanish army, in addition to National Liberation Army forces, which were absorbed in early 1958. Present along with officers from the French and Spanish armies were those trained at the Royal Academy of Meknes, at Saint-Cyr, the Toledo Academy in Spain, and all those having graduated from Arab and foreign military academies.

The army, officially created on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1956, embodied in the eyes of the population a feeling of regained pride, synonymous with independence. Nevertheless, this foundation momentum came along with a legitimacy problem: while those who came from the colonial armies accused the members of the

National Liberation Army (NLA) of playing into the hands of the regime's opposition forces, the NLA blamed the ex-French army officers for making up the idea of a plot against the king. Despite these tensions, the Royal Army eventually managed to regain the monopoly over legitimate violence.

In the face of tensions with Algeria, which broke out in the October 1963 Sand War, and with Spain, along with internal security problems (political upheavals directly related to the creation of the army, the Rif uprising of 1957-59, armed opposition, urban riots), the armed forces quickly expanded. The army saw an increase in its personnel, resources and armament, alongside the development of training, international cooperation and the definition of a new doctrine and strategy against both internal and external threats. The army became the most important organized force in the country, as highlighted by the data in the annex. The very nature of the threats and challenges explain the predominance of the army's ground troops over the air force and navy.

In his memoirs, Hassan II recounts the great trust he had towards his army:

“When I went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, I took with me most of the officers who were implicated in the first or the second plot. We found ourselves inside the mosque at Mecca, a huge square edifice. There, without my asking them anything, they again took an oath of loyalty to me. Two days later, we arrived at Medina and inside the Tomb of the Prophet, they again renewed their oath. They did this in the two most holy and sacred places of Islam. In this context, continued suspicion would mean no longer having any confidence in God. It is

exactly as if you decided to put your case before a lawyer while choosing to keep an eye on it to make sure he does a good job”<sup>6</sup>.

**The beginning of the 70s is a turning point, leading to an in-depth reorganization of the army**

The two failed *coup* attempts of 1971 and 1972<sup>7</sup> strongly affected the trust the King put in his army. He undertook a full reorganization of the army, through a range of initiatives and new operational rules:

- the abolition of the ministry of Defense, which was replaced by an administration with limited competences;
- the abolition of classical military discipline and submission of the officers to the direct authority of the king, the supreme commander of the armed forces, as stated by the Constitution;
- the dismantling of the military institution into disparate unities
- efforts to control and monitor the Royal *Gendarmerie*, from the allocation of weapons to the movements of soldiers in the barracks;
- granting officers certain privileges and material advantages, thereby making them more influential. This included facilitating the acquisition of permits for sand pits, marble quarries, fishing

concessions, granting exceptional bank loans, etc. ;

- balancing out the respective political weights of the army and the Interior ministry, while taking care to foster divergences between the two institutions, be it in questions of form or content;
- creating institutions intended to normalize relations between civilians and the military, following the example of the National Defense Council and the National Security Council.

However these measures did not impact the substantial development of the armed forces mentioned above, which continues until today, to the point that they now number in the hundreds of thousands: 220,000 professional soldiers in service and 200,000 additional conscripts, in addition to the military equipment listed in the strategic reports on the balance of power in the region.

**2. *The other actors: police, paramilitary forces and intelligence services***

Police officers in urban areas and the gendarmes operating in the rural provinces and at important intersections constitute what is commonly referred to as the “first degree” forces. Their tasks and competences were apparently defined as they went along, according to circumstances.

The birth of the modern Moroccan police seems to go back to the Algeiras Treaty in 1906, when police units were first constituted in Moroccan ports and commanded by French and Spanish officers.

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<sup>6</sup> Hassan II, *La mémoire d'un roi*, interviews with Eric Laurent, Plon, Paris, 1993, pp 157-158.

<sup>7</sup> Some observers speak of a third attempt at overthrowing the State, that of General Ahmed Dlimi.

The *Gendarmerie* was constituted in the wake of the events that followed the signing of the Treaty, by the fusion of what was called “the occidental public forces”, at Casablanca, and the “oriental public force” created at Oujda. This fusion later gave birth, in January 1928, to the Moroccan Gendarmerie. The Royal Gendarmerie officially came into being after independence, when the French Gendarmerie handed power over to the Moroccan authorities, from April 1<sup>st</sup> 1957. The first class of Moroccan officers subsequently underwent training and graduated, and a manual defining its missions was published in January 1958.

The Gendarmerie is responsible for maintaining order, and exerts a semi-civilian, semi-military control<sup>8</sup> over the population, with the support of its 20,000 staff members, including around 800 officers. This corps has sprawling dimensions, with its mobile police units, parachutists, coastguard units, special intervention forces and its intelligence services. It also includes a number of administrative and technical services, along with its regional branches (22 regional command posts, 64 bases and 322 centers). It reports directly to the King (Royal military court), is administrated by the Defense Ministry, is under the authority of the Justice Ministry in terms of criminal justice assignments, and under the Interior Ministry in terms of its administrative police. As a general rule, and because it is fully incorporated into the royal armed forces, the staff members must follow general military regulations.

The “second-degree” forces correspond to the paramilitary forces that operate under government authority (such as the auxiliary forces), as well as all armed non-military

forces (firemen, border guards, park rangers etc.), who cannot act without written orders specifying the tasks they are confided with.

Lastly, mention should also be made of other intelligence services such as the Directorate General of Studies and Documentation (DGED), whose nature, objectives and internal organization remain highly opaque. These services’ prerogatives and means were increased after the *coup* attempts. They are a reclusive organization, and operate under state secrecy, far from any legislative or judiciary control. Though they officially report to the king, they answer only to themselves in practice<sup>9</sup>.

## **B. Distribution of competences and powers**

The security sector was profoundly shaped by periods of confrontation between various political actors in competition. In the wake of these decisive power struggles, the king emerged with the most advantageous share of authority. In this general power configuration, the head of state’s central position is remarkable; however, the king’s extensive prerogatives do not preclude the importance of other factors such as the organization’s structure, and the existence or not of a Defense Minister.

### ***1. Royal competences are extensive***

National Defense is a royal prerogative, as the king is also the Supreme commander of the Royal Armed Forces, in accordance with article 30 of the Constitution. His preeminence is strengthened by several other constitutional provisions, notably inviolability, infallibility and freedom from

<sup>8</sup> Special edition of *Assahifa* n°44, 21-27 July 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Special dossier, *Le Journal*, «Le roi, otage de ses espions », n° 266, July 29th - August 4th 2006.

responsibility, in compliance with his status of supreme representative of the nation. Therefore, his competences in the field of defense are reinforced by his right to proclaim a state of exception (article 35), even if article 73 states that “the declaration of war takes place after having been communicated to Parliament” and article 45 states that “the fundamental guarantees accorded to civil servants and military personnel are within the realms of the law”. Likewise, in the case of war, it is up to the king to refer to the Council of Ministers, and thus set the war machine in motion. It is clear that the parliament and the government only have minor competences in this domain.

The army was established under the auspices of the king on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1957 on the basis of a National defense Committee and a Military House created within the Royal palace. The abolition of the Defense Ministry in 1972 did not modify this direct and unconditional link with the king; on the contrary, military headquarters are under direct royal command, operating within an extremely centralized, both vertical and horizontal hierarchic structure. The army’s own branches (Air Force, Navy, Police and auxiliary forces) operate separately from each other, each within their own chain of command.

It is again the king who imparts, on an individual basis, the right to command. Beyond military hierarchy, each soldier answers directly to the king. Soldiers have the right to disobey an illegal order, and the obligation to report it to the chief of Staff, a measure that further reinforces royal control over the army.

The full extent of responsibility for military prerogatives is and has been taken on by the king: “We devote our entire attention to the forces that we have placed under our supreme

command” (speech by Mohamed V). This commitment by the king to his army and by the army to its king need not be contradictory, in the mind of the sovereign, with the spirit of democracy: “The royal army is an illustration of the evident symbiosis of the people and the throne, because it encompasses in its make-up all the components of the nation and of Moroccan society. When one sees a farmer’s son rubbing shoulders with the son of a shopkeeper, a middle-class man, a craftsman or even with a person close to the king himself, it is tangible proof that the Royal Army Forces represent the transcendence of democratic principles” (speech by Hassan II).

This understanding is obviously not shared by everyone. For some, strategic sectors such as defense, national security and religious affairs, ought to be in the hands of the sovereign. A possible Defense administration may be limited to participation in the decision-making process, at the same level as the consultation of public opinion<sup>10</sup>. For others, the Constitution should be revised, in order to challenge the king’s supreme command and limit his decision-making power, as well as that of his personal advisors and generals. In this perspective, the government should be afforded more powers in areas that have been, up until now, considered royal prerogatives, such as Foreign Affairs<sup>11</sup>.

## ***2. The security apparatus’ internal organization***

Beyond the issue of who wields power, the question of security also refers to the

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<sup>10</sup> Ghomari, Mohamed, *Polyvalence de l’armée*, Casablanca, 2004.

<sup>11</sup> See the statement of Benamour Abdelali, interview with Al Ayyam, n°124, June 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 2004.

apparatus itself: the police, army, gendarmerie and intelligence services. The analysis of their working trends, their organization and their adequacy with the sought-after democratic evolution, fits in with the broader problematic of the general balance of institutions under a hypothetical democratic governance. This section will discuss these issues with regards to two security branches, namely the intelligence services and the police.

By nature, intelligence services seem to constitute the last of the hidden, taboo institutions in modern politics, far removed from public scrutiny and claims for reform. Talks of “democratizing the institution” appear in this case derisory, at least at this moment in time – but such may be the case in other countries too, including some with more experience in this field. The secret services are, in theory, submitted to the requirements of a constitutional state at several levels: respect for human rights, monitoring by democratic institutions, including the discussion and vote of their budget, oral and written questions, committee debates, etc. All this, however, remain external, leading some to consider the security services as lying beyond the remit of true democratic control.

The police seem to lend themselves to a different treatment, closer to that of the justice system, by the media and human rights organizations. Its practices have been criticized consistently for a long time, and academic studies show a rising interest of the media for such questions<sup>12</sup>.

Political and social resentment is on the rise, though within certain limits. For instance, it is interesting to note that management of security by locally elected people, in large

cities as well as in small towns, is not addressed, even though this is a widely-spread practice in many African, South American or Asian countries. Nonetheless, grave violations have been highlighted within all branches of the security services during the symbolic trials related to human rights issues under “the Years of Lead” and numerous proposals for reform have been brought forward. This issue thus seems to be closing in around the services.

### ***3. Defense policy and the administrative management of the army***

At its establishment in November 1956, the Defense Ministry was made in charge of military issues, matters which, under the French Protectorate, were managed by the resident general’s Head of military Staff and the Chief of Staff. From then on, the Ministry was responsible for the armed forces’ operational organization and arms management, and became the relevant authority for both troops and officers.

As mentioned earlier, the army’s place in Moroccan society was reestablished on a new basis after the attempts to overthrow the king in 1971 and 1972. The abolition of the ministry of Defense, replaced by an administration with limited powers, redefined the role of armed forces with regards to other components of the State and society (this will be elaborated on subsequently). At the same time, classical military discipline and the direct submission of the military hierarchy to the sovereign were suspended. The army was reorganized into units counterbalancing each other, and special measures for the surveillance of troops and weapons were taken. Lastly, the running power tried to implement a new balance (or rather imbalance) between military and non-military

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<sup>12</sup> See the statement of Bendourou, Omar, *ibid*.

security forces by establishing a National Defense Council and a National Security Council.

Managed by the Deputy Prime Minister, the branches in charge of administrating Defense in Morocco have a purely administrative role, and are not involved in policy-making, strategic planning and efforts to modernize the apparatus, or even analyzing threats and allocating tasks between departments. They account for six branches in total: financial affairs (budget, military programs), acquisitions and works (equipment, material, installations, and supplies), administrative affairs (legal department, management of military personnel), military security (reception and transit), military justice and the military administration' inspection services. All in all, they act as a mediator between the government and Parliament in matters relating to the army's budget, legislation and regulation.

The administration of the army is a reserved area, removed from parliamentary involvement, even if the Foreign affairs and Defense Committee is in theory supposed to be instructed with any security-related issue. In practice, draft texts presented by the administration tend to be followed, no matter the sector, but especially when it comes to security, as illustrated by the annual debate on the national Defense budget. Parliamentary discussion remains unanimous, with no proper debate, as if performing a democratic ritual in which form prevails over substance, instead of a true public deliberation. This is so, despite these being highly strategic issues affecting conflict-management and for the permanence of the nation.

As far as human resources are concerned, there are three types of military personnel: career soldiers, enlisted men and conscripts.

Military service is compulsory for all male citizens since 1965, in line with article 16 of the Constitution: "all citizens contribute to the defense of the country". The sovereign's expectations are clear: "we desire to strengthen the spirit of obedience and the virtues of devotion and altruism among the citizens subjected to this service. We hope that compulsory military service will instill a spirit of virility and pride in our young men and will produce straight, upright young people, quick to assume their responsibilities and to fulfill their greatest duty" (Hassan II).

Military personnel seem to care a lot about distinctions, privileges and material allowances (amenities, concessions). These are a source of problems in terms of military governance. The media have often shown interest in incidents relating to military governance over the last few years, picking up on management, upward mobility and social promotion issues both in Morocco (the Adib affair<sup>13</sup>, arms thefts, military authorities' implication in illegal immigration in the Oujda affair) internationally (the case of the expeditionary corps in the Congo). Consequently, the security forces are often portrayed in the media in very different ways<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> Captain Adib, a young officer, was sentenced to five years in prison in 2000 and expelled from the Air Force, after reporting fuel smuggling by an aviation lieutenant-colonel in the South of the country. He had been accused of "disobeying military regulations" for tipping off the French newspaper *Le Monde* without authorization from his superiors.

<sup>14</sup> See the results of the public enquiry published by Assahifa n°207, April 20th-26th 2004.

## II. Analyzing future tendencies

The evolution of the relationship between the army and the ruling power, along with new forms of public debate on security matters and ethics, are highly significant and contribute to a “de facto democracy”. All the while, new problems and constraints are assailing the security sector, which must consequently define new strategic directions.

### A. Current trends towards a renewed link between army, ruling power and society

#### 1. Security, the army and politics

The army, a shield for the ruling power, is subtly kept away from public affairs

At the death of Hassan II, the new king inherited of a mixed situation in terms of security. At the beginning of the present reign, the army was invited to participate in the ceremony of allegiance (the *bay'ah*)<sup>15</sup>; a novelty, as it had previously been kept away from political life, institutions and society. This indicates that the army is no longer in a position where it can stay shielded from the important question of its own democratization.

In Morocco as elsewhere, the army exceeds its original mission of territorial defense. It is an organic component of political power, providing it with authority and a persuasive force faced with social movements. The Moroccan army was used several times to face down internal conflicts: in the Adib

Affair in 1957, the revolt of the Rif in 1958<sup>16</sup>, or in the Ben Thami affair of 1960. It was also instrumental in handling revolutionary movements, particularly in the so-called July 1960 plot and the two popular uprising of March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1965 in Casablanca and March 1973, as well as the social movements of 1981, 1984 and 1990. Nevertheless, these uses of the army in “civilian” matters do not point to any real military takeover, in the sense of an “existential manifestation of a political and military power, conscious of its driving force and voluntarist in institutional and national social life”<sup>17</sup>. They do not threaten to overthrow the almost structural separation between military authority and politics, which dates back to the two failed coup attempts of 1971 and 1972. Between 1958 and 1973, royal power resorted to the army to establish its political domination, even if the levers of power were outside the military sphere. The struggle for national liberation had actually been led by the Liberation movement together with the resistance army, in a complementary manner despite tensions. After the events of 1971 and 1972, the king ensured that the military were progressively and methodically kept away from politics.

In short, political power uses the army is for its own protection, while subtly keeping away from the state apparatus and political life in general.

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<sup>15</sup> See the “affairs” reported in Al Jarida Al Okhra, « L’armée hors du carré des réformes », n°65, from May 8th to 14th 2006.

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<sup>16</sup> In 1958, an uprising in the Rif Berber region is repressed by the Royal Armed Forces (FAR), headed at the time by the future King Hassan II.

<sup>17</sup> See El Merini, op.cit. See also Harmat-Allah Moussa, *Le Roi Mohammed VI ou l’espoir d’une nation*, Ed. Maarif, Rabat.

**The civilian political class and diplomacy's contradictions and weaknesses are obstacles in the way of reducing the scale of the security apparatus**

The civilian political class has an ambivalent relationship to security and military affairs – if they ever deal with them at all. Should we conclude that political parties perceive the army as a danger, as incompatible civilian life? Does the army's strength make for the political parties' weakness? In fact, politicians' distaste for security matters, particularly military issues, stems both from fear the army inspires and the incomprehension that envelops it. That being said, some recent public declarations testify presently to more audacity and maybe constitute a sign of change<sup>18</sup>.

More generally, the relation between the army and the political class raises the issue of whether it will ever be possible to reduce the scale of the state security apparatus. The experience of the National Defense Council<sup>19</sup> is still too recent to be able to provide any answers, but this institution does not seem to play any substantial role. Even if threats are predicted to decrease, raising the issue of the redeployment, or even conversion of some of the military forces currently mobilized, some actors and observers still compare the operational potential of the Moroccan armed forces with that of neighboring – and rival – countries: Spain, linked to NATO and the emerging European defense system, and

Algeria, whose oil revenues are used to increase its military capacities.

Moroccan diplomacy, the main purveyor of alternatives to military solutions, lacks efficiency and is full of contradictions, a reason why there are no reasons to expect any reduction of the role of the security services. Fluctuating between their commitment to defend current institutions and the necessity to face up to regional and international challenges, diplomats have often shown the weakness of their tools and means of action, as well as their heterogeneous levels of skills. True to their conservative reputation, they mostly spend their time justifying decisions already taken by the ruling power, far removed from democratic control and the fluctuations of public opinions. In addition, they seem to lack any real strategic vision and adequate tools for analysis and prospection. This constant short-term navigation makes it harder for them to transform on-the-ground gains into actual diplomatic successes, as was the case in the Saharan affair.

All in all, Moroccan diplomacy as a whole is content with reacting to the international agenda. Instead of undertaking the elaboration of a convincing global security concept, it is merely subjected to the repercussions of international politics. In all areas, the country's bilateral relations are not always coherent and often weak. They do not appear to confirm to the traditional logic of calculated alliances and interests, even in the case of the United States. Morocco's links with English-speaking African countries are not very active, not to stay simply absent; on the African continent, diplomatic relations are limited to French-speaking countries, traditionally close and rarely democratic, all of which also appear to be in very good terms with Morocco's adversaries. In the

<sup>18</sup> Bensbia Naji, *Bénis soient nos gouvernants*, Hadia pub, 2005

<sup>19</sup> Institution created by the Dahir of November 9, 1959 and chaired by the king, it is composed of three members: the Prime Minister, Minister of Public Works and the Interior Minister. Its function is to define the state's defense policy and to make arrangements in this area.

Mediterranean, Morocco follows Europe's Mediterranean policies, providing not much innovation. In its relations with other Arab countries, the Moroccan diplomatic corps is content with passively following the agenda of the Arab League, a regional organization in great difficulty. As for Asia and Latin America, its interactions are symbolic.

The weaknesses of Moroccan diplomacy outlined here leave nothing to suggest a reduction of and partial conversion of the security apparatus. Even if foreign affairs were managed more efficiently, the consolidation of the security apparatus would not be considered any less inescapable, because of the strong securitarian bent in Moroccan political culture and the weight of the military and police.

## 2. *Emerging public debates on security matters*

After being considered taboo for a long time, criticism of the current system of governance and control of public security is now being voiced by advocates of democratic reform as well as by traditional political actors<sup>20</sup>, and even within the security institutions themselves. This emerging debate revolves around on three basic questions:

- 1- In keeping with the issue of constitutional reform, institutional questions occupy a place of choice in the debate. This includes the possible consolidation of executive power (government and Prime Minister), an

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<sup>20</sup> See for example the declaration of El Yazghi, First Secretary of the *Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires*, on the appropriate formula of control of the police, of the army and the intelligence services. Interview with Al Ahdath al Maghribia, of June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

issue indirectly related to the security sector. The question of how competences are allocated is also being addressed, but more often from the point of view of operational efficiency<sup>21</sup>.

- 2- How can security be maintained in the full respect of human rights? Past and present human rights violations (notably torture) have fuelled public debates on security<sup>22</sup>.
- 3- The question of transparency (in the broad sense of the word, both economic and institutional), is also central, after investigations carried out by *Transparency Morocco* and the wide media coverage of several incidents<sup>23</sup>. The army is not considered a major economic actor (contrary to other countries), but the origin of the assets of the people working in this sector is still highly opaque<sup>24</sup>. Additionally, spite of its fast-growing expansion, very little information is available on the private security market, an area currently being promoted by the state. As it is

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<sup>21</sup> One of the signs of the development of the public debate on democratic control of the security sector is the omnipresence of this theme in the press. During the preceding decades, the question was discussed among experts and in a medium inaccessible to the ordinary "citizen".

<sup>22</sup> See « Points de vues et opinions sur la réforme constitutionnelle », Mouvement pour une constitution démocratique, published with the support of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Rabat, 2005.

<sup>23</sup> On the infiltration of security sectors by the "drug mafia", see Al Ayam, N° 236 from June 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> 2006

<sup>24</sup> See the debate provoked by the Amnesty International report, Al Ayam, n°141, from July 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> 2004.

often the case elsewhere, Morocco's military is highly opaque, and aspires to self-sufficiency, with its own grade schools, specialized institutes, higher education, hospitals, housing system and social services. Nevertheless, contacts between its personnel and the wider society are greater today than they ever have ever been. The time when soldiers were recruited, educated, isolated and submitted exclusively to State's influences, so as to better dominate society, is past.

Last but not least, the debate on transparency raises the issue of supervision. Given the current context of non-interference of the army in political life, the State no longer needs to resort to authoritarian methods to monitor the army's activities. Some, however, have described an impressive scheme, involving the use of different branches to mutually control each other and prevent political takeover.

Based on these concerns, the debate has produced fundamental political questions: how is security to be made compatible with democracy? How should the parliament's powers be extended? Is better control over the armed forces conducive to more internal and external security and stability? Is democratic control the best of all possible controls? What kind of links are there between security reform and political reform and, of the two, which one should be the priority? Who should be made responsible for elaborating the concept of national security, for identifying threats and setting up the national strategy?

Public opinion seems to have a keen interest in the management of security, and is calling for a global reform of the sector, which would

tackle ethical issues, the fair use of resources as well as the position of security actors within society, in particular with regards to their links with radical Islamic movements. As we will see in the discussion below, this question relates both to the efficiency of anti-terrorism policies<sup>25</sup>, and to the risk of infiltration of radical Islam in the institutions<sup>26</sup>.

## **B. Trends: emerging reform prospects in a context of renewed risks**

### ***1. New threats and new weaknesses in the face of radical Islam***

In terms of renewed risks, the earthquake in El Hoceima in 2004 showed that the country was highly vulnerable to natural hazards, and that this had not properly been addressed before. However, apart from this incident, it is the emerging Islamist risk that is by far the most significant new rising threat.

The international terrorist attacks of the last decade, particularly those of New York on 9/11 and Madrid on March 11<sup>th</sup> 2004, have prompted officials to address the question of security in a more global context. Intelligence services, concentrated into the hands of the military, required better coordination across services, a redefinition of the tasks at hand, and more adequate human and material resources in the face of these new risks.

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<sup>25</sup> The conclusions of the Arab Report on Human Development outline the army, the police, the justice system and the politicians as the most corrupt bodies in Moroccan society. See Assahifa from April 20th – 26th 2005.

<sup>26</sup> According to the investigators, elements of the army, the gendarmerie and the police were members of the network discovered in July of 2006. See the press conference of the Moroccan Minister of the Interior, *Le Matin*, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2006.

The fear of Islamic infiltration led to several new measures being adopted<sup>27</sup>, as echoed by the press<sup>28</sup>. The army proceeded to expel a number of soldiers considered as Islamists<sup>29</sup>, including many on the Kenitra base<sup>30</sup>. These expulsions, which targeted people with up to eighteen years or more in service, were given a number of justifications: some were excluded because they were related to people involved in an arms theft at Taza; two officers because they had attended a party where religious statements were held, others because their children continued to attend religious schools run by Islamists after being asked to take them out, and others because of their commitment to collective worship. The army started putting soldiers known for their religious tendencies under surveillance. Criticism of soldiers that entertain strong religious practices became commonplace. The army's disciplinary body has also prohibited the wearing of a beard or a religious veil while in service.

Should we conclude that the army is mainly concerned by the danger within its own ranks? Several news items have drawn attention to threats posed by soldiers influenced by their social environment, yet no general conclusions can be drawn from this<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Al Jarida Al Oukhra, n° 65, op.cit.

<sup>28</sup> The starting point was constituted by the events of May 16<sup>th</sup> that accelerated the pace of the measures taken. Then there was the theft of 7 Kalachnikovs from a barracks at Taza, which was immediately tied to Islamic sensibilities.

<sup>29</sup> The 5<sup>th</sup> Bureau, which became principally charged with the surveillance of Islamist movements, was supposedly eliminated after the cellule was dismantled in the summer of 2006.

<sup>30</sup> The exclusion could have affected more than 27 officers coming from different sectors.

<sup>31</sup> See Assahifa n°113, May 2004.

Beyond the army's own ranks, terrorism has become increasingly incorporated into other illegal activities (drugs, smuggling, people trafficking), and consequently more independent and more difficult to tackle. The terrorist attacks of March 11<sup>th</sup> 2004 in Madrid have highlighted how drug trafficking routes cross those of international terrorism. Income from non-agricultural cannabis produced for export is correlated to profits from smuggling<sup>32</sup>. Linking up such activities enable terrorist organizations to escape supervision by the financial authorities, including when it comes to more sensitive transactions, such as buying explosives material.

## ***2. Current reforms being implemented***

As stated earlier, several factors point towards a future expansion of the security apparatus, be it the inefficient diplomatic corps, the regional context, the new types of threats, or the preeminence of security in Moroccan political culture. Can these factors outweigh the impact of the reforms currently being carried out and the trend towards democratization of Moroccan politics and society?

Three types of reforms have shaped the development of Morocco's security forces. First, the attempt by the ruling power to ensure increased security in its relations with the army by implementing controls and surveillance; this approach focused mainly on security. Other reforms, more technocratic, addressed a needed increase in skills and efficiency (better professionalism and training, appropriation of security equipment, development of techniques and know-how).

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<sup>32</sup> Two officers from the North have investigated smuggling done by other officers (2001).

Last but not least, the reforms related to the current political transition: these constitute an easing of authoritarianism, but by no means a full process of democratization. Here a further distinction may be drawn between measures that have already been implemented and those pertaining to human rights that were been suggested by the Equality and Reconciliation Authority (IER).

### **Measures and adjustments under implementation**

The first set of measures to be implemented was related to control mechanisms. Parliament's<sup>33</sup> Foreign affairs and Defense Committee was charged with undertaking an in-depth control of the national Defense budget and debating it before its presentation in plenary session. Political parties were given the right to instruct the committee with an issue, or summon a minister for questioning. In practice however, a review of the committee's reports over the last three years shows members of Parliament adopting measures unanimously, in an attitude of unconditional submission, even though some of them speak of a democratic revolution.

Current reforms also seem to be trying to ensure better coordination and organization between the various security services: interdepartmental structures are being created, missions are being redefined and tasks entrusted to army intelligence services are being revised. Moreover, a new geographical division of security has been adopted: new security zones and new prefectures have been established, in an attempt to match the security map with that of the regions.

The term "reform" has even been used in relation to the creation within the Department of Territory Security (DST) of a branch specialized in monitoring and following up terrorist networks. DST was therefore freed of some of its heaviest and more redundant tasks. Finally, a number of measures have been taken to professionalize the workforce, improve agents' material conditions, and improve their general efficiency.

Current trends thus point to important changes in the security services. Bureaucratic and technocratic in their inspiration, they are prompted by objectives of modernization and efficiency .

### **Proposals by the Equality and Reconciliation Authority (IER)**

The IER authority constitutes one of the most remarkable reforms. Created by virtue of a royal decree on January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, based on recommendations by the Advisory Council on Human Rights, it is made up of a president and sixteen additional members and was established as a "national commission for truth, equality and reconciliation". It is an independent commission, officially entrusted with the investigation and analysis of all past human rights violations having occurred between independence and 1999. More particularly, it deals with violations that were "massive and/or systematic, including forced disappearances and arbitrary detentions", according to the IER report.

After laboriously assembling and cross-checking information from hearings and answers from the various concerned authorities<sup>34</sup>, the IER released a report aiming at establishing the truth and defining legal

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<sup>33</sup> The parliament consists of two rooms. The first one is directly elected for five years, and the second for 9 years with one third retiring every three years.

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<sup>34</sup> Note that the report itself points out the limitations inherent in this exercise

responsibilities, which contained the conclusions of its investigations as well as recommendations and reform proposals. It proposes the implementation of a comprehensive policy to fight impunity, through “legal reforms, the development and implementation of public policies in the areas of justice, security and law enforcement, education and lifelong learning, as well as the active involvement of civil society”. One key component of the report recommends strengthening judicial independence, and improving criminal law and security policies. In terms of governance of the security apparatus, the report requests a “clarification and publication of statutory texts relative to the attribution, organization, decision-making processes, modes of operation and system of monitoring and evaluation of all security and intelligence apparatuses, without exception, including administrative authorities charged with maintaining public order or with the authority to use the public force”.

All in all, the situation in Morocco in terms of democratic reform of the security sector is ambivalent, but promising. The security sector’s historical position close to the inner sanctum of power represents a challenge for democratic aspirations; compared to previous experiences however, the impact of current reforms has been incommensurable.

## Annex

**Table n° 1: Breakdown of Moroccan Army personnel, by type (2005)**

Type	Number
<b>Reservists</b>	150,000
<b>Paramilitaries</b>	50,000
<b>Army corps</b>	175,000
<b>Navy</b>	7,800
<b>Air force</b>	13,500

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Table n° 2: Military personnel in the Maghreb**

Type	Polisario	Morocco	Algeria	Libya	Tunisia
<b>Army corps</b>		196,300	127,500	76,000	35,000
<b>Paramilitaries</b>	3,000	50,000	181,200		12000
<b>Reservists</b>	3,000	150,000	150,000	40,000	

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Table n° 3: Military spending in the Maghreb (unit: 1 million \$US)**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Algeria</b>	2.100	2.400	3.100	3.000	3.200	3.100	2.200	2.800
<b>Libya</b>	1.300	1.500	1.300	1.200	1.000	562	747	1.310
<b>Morocco</b>	1.400	1.700	1.800	1.400	1.400	1.400	1.800	2000
<b>Tunisia</b>	334	355	351	356	321	404	492	537

Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies