



Beyond Draining the Swamp

Urban Development and Counterterrorism in Morocco

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Foreword

In this paper civil affairs officer Lieutenant Colonel Steve Dalzell discusses ways that the Kingdom of Morocco is addressing some of the fundamental social and physical needs of its growing population in order to preempt social unrest—and the potential for support to extremist groups. Morocco’s campaign against Islamic extremism merits study because of its importance for the global war on terrorism and the apparent linkages between urban conditions and domestic terrorist groups.

Using interviews, government documents from Morocco and the United States, and other published sources, Lieutenant Colonel Dalzell sought to determine if and how the Moroccan strategy can serve as a model for other partners in the global war on terrorism. His analysis found that the Moroccan strategy offers an example of integrating socio-economic, ideological, political, and security-sector reforms, particularly in the growing sophistication of Moroccan efforts to eliminate informal housing areas and to increase the government’s capacity in urban policing.

The author’s on-site research observes that establishing security in Moroccan housing areas means more than improving military capabilities or increasing the presence and performance of police. Threats to stability brought on by substandard living conditions and a general lack of opportunity in certain areas of Morocco need to be addressed using pluralistic approaches to improve security, enhance participatory local governance, and develop the physical and social infrastructure. His insightful assessment and observations certainly support the importance of fostering nonkinetic and indirect approaches to conducting the global war on terrorism.

Michael C. McMahon, Lt Col, USAF
Director, JSOU Strategic Studies Department

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Stephen R. Dalzell has been affiliated with Special Operations Forces (SOF) for 12 years, starting as a direct support team leader in the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion. As a branch chief in the Joint Staff J-3 Deputy Directorate for Special Operations, he was responsible for SOF input to joint doctrine, policy, strategic plans, and readiness monitoring. He also represented the SOF community on numerous study groups, including support for the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review. He is currently assigned as deputy G3, 352nd Civil Affairs Command, Riverdale, Maryland.

LTC Dalzell coauthored four reports as an Army Fellow at the RAND Corporation in 2002:

- a. *Attracting Cutting-Edge Skills Through Reserve Component Participation*
- b. *Installation Planning for WMD Preparedness*
- c. *Past and Future: Insights for Reserve Component Use*
- d. *Future Insurgency Threats.*

This monograph was written while LTC Dalzell was a Senior Service College Fellow at the Fletcher School, Tufts University, in 2005-06. During that time, he also won first place in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff annual essay contest for his strategy article, "Where the Streets Have No Names: Looking Past Operation Iraqi Freedom to Future Urban Operations." The article was published in *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 43 (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 2006).

He has taught at the American University in Cairo and University of Maryland (Cairo campus) and presented papers at conferences of the Middle Eastern Studies Association and Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, California; Master of Arts in National Security Studies from California State University, San Bernardino; and a Doctor of Political Science from the University of California, Santa Barbara. His dissertation was "Building Coalitions and Cementing Deals: Housing Policy Reform in Mubarak's Egypt" (2006).



Morocco and Surrounding Area

1. Introduction

When you're up to your elbows in alligators, it's tough to remember that your job was to drain the swamp.

Alligators and swamps make a convenient metaphor for debates on how one can go about defeating an insurgency, terrorist group, or other non-state armed group—especially since the user can avoid specifying exactly who the alligators are or what the actual “swamp” is. Likewise, urban planners and policymakers often use military metaphors to describe their efforts—for example, the war on drugs and Morocco's *lutte contre les bidonvilles* (“struggle against shanty towns”). In both cases, the metaphors assume that what comes next is inherently good, or at least that good options for the next phase will be available when the time comes.

What if instead of thinking of security as “the lack of terrorists on our streets,” we think of trusted, well-trained police officers and communities creating an environment that doesn't allow for terrorism? What if we didn't think about wiping the city clear of shanty towns, but of ensuring that every citizen has a decent, affordable place to live, including a community that meets his or her social, intellectual, and physical needs?

This paper argues that such differences in orientation affect both the

What if we didn't think about wiping the city clear of shanty towns, but of ensuring that every citizen has a decent, affordable place to live ...

outputs and outcomes of policy and looks to Morocco for examples of creative steps in combating terrorism, steps that hold great promise for success and that other countries should study closely. The promises and risks of these tactics and strategies offer insights into how the global campaign against Islamist extremism is being fought and how the United States should be contributing to its success.

The current phase of Morocco's conflict against Islamic extremism began on 16 May 2003, when 14 young Moroccan men attacked four targets in Casablanca with improvised explosive devices. The attacks targeted the Jewish Community Center, two restaurants and a hotel, killing a total of 33 people. The Casablanca Jewish

Cemetery also was damaged, but apparently not intentionally. While the attacks were intended to be suicidal, only 12 bombers died.¹

This attack was only the most visible expression of what can be best labeled Jihadist Salafism. While not perfect, this term appropriately incorporates both the historical, philosophical roots of the movement (salafism) and the current operational focus on violently attacking those it defines as apostate or infidels.² This paper evaluates this threat and Morocco's response through four primary windows: socioeconomic development, ideology, politics, and security³ and closes with a discussion of lessons for the global war on terror.

2. The Threats to Morocco

Socioeconomic Development: Morocco's Informal Housing Areas

The initial hypothesis of this study was that the critical battleground in Morocco's campaign against Islamic extremists is the informal housing areas of its major cities. Generally speaking, "informal housing" describes one type of substandard housing in any metropolitan area, and it is often used interchangeably with "slum," "shanty town," "squatter" city, or local terms such as *favela* (Brazil), *bidonville* (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia), or *ashwa'iyya* (Egypt). Researchers often choose to focus on either physical characteristics (quality and permanence of the housing, connections to infrastructure) or the legal status of property ownership and construction.

Morocco's urban areas have four types of housing that can fall into the United Nations (UN) category of "slums":

- a. *Medinas* are old sections in pre-colonial cities.⁴
- b. *Intra-muros* are neighborhoods built by squatters for self-occupancy, without official permission and generally on public land, inside current city limits
- c. *Peripheral slums* are like intra-muros, but built around or outside current city limits.
- d. *Illegal districts* or *clandestine neighborhoods* are units built by contractors on private land but without official permits.⁵

Morocco's informal housing areas are an important and growing part of the urban scene. In the biggest city, Casablanca, they house half a million people, 10 percent of the city's total.⁶

Bidonville residents not only endure incredible squalor, they are cut off from much of the city's broader political network. "There are no voluntary associations in Thomasville and no political activity," Jean-Pierre Tuquoi writes. "People vote for a man and the promises he will never keep. With very few exceptions, politicians never set foot in the shanty towns. Mosques ... are the only focus of social life in the [Casablanca] shanty towns."⁷

When political participation fails to integrate society, informal housing areas are inherently hard for the government to control.

Streets are often narrow, winding, and unmarked; there is no way to link an individual to a home in a specific location; and the lack of economic development means strangers rarely enter, and they are easily identified when they do. Anecdotally, this situation was compounded in Morocco by a perception within the government that a police presence is a “service,” to which bidonville residents were not entitled, rather than an imperative for the protection of the state.

Ideology: The Struggle for Legitimacy

... We also stress to honest Muslims that they should move, incite, and mobilize the [Islamic] nation, amid such grave events and hot atmosphere so as to liberate themselves from those unjust and renegade ruling regimes, which are enslaved by the United States. They should also do so to establish the rule of God on earth. The most qualified regions for liberation are Jordan, *Morocco*, Nigeria, Pakistan, the land of the two holy mosques [Saudi Arabia], and Yemen....

— Osama bin Laden, February 2003⁸

Osama bin Laden’s hopes for Morocco notwithstanding, the country stands out among Arab and Muslim nations for its broad range of thinking on the connections between Islam and political life. Among these are the Sufi orders, Justice and Development Party (PJD), and Movement for Justice and Charity (MJC) with their representative leaders and groups.

Like many Muslim countries, Morocco has a rich and varied experience with Sufi orders, the esoteric expression of traditional Islam. Sufism has an innate sense of resistance to hierarchy, occasionally threatening regimes, but also can provide an alternative to radical political Islam. The largest of the Moroccan orders, the Boutchichi, provides a “social cement” by attracting several hundred thousand followers from all sectors and classes.⁹ More important politically, a Boutchichi—Ahmed Toufiq—has been the Minister of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs since 2002. This result gives hope to some that he can find a way to encourage the Sufi approach in Moroccan mosque-state relations.

Founded by former resistance leader Dr. Abdelkrim Khatib in 2000, the PJD recognizes the King's role in Moroccan life and accepts democracy. While favoring restoration of Islamic law (*sharia*), the party condemned the Casablanca bombings and remains in dialogue with other political groups on issues such as women's rights.

The major Islam-oriented political organization least accommodating to the current regime yet still nonviolent is Sheikh Abdelsalaam Yassine's *al-Adl wa al-Ihsan* (Justice and Charity). From 1973-1989, Sheikh Yassine published 15 works, offering a synthesis of Sufism and early Muslim Brotherhood thinking. He founded the MJC in 1985 and refuses to accept elections or the legitimacy of the monarchy. The MJC remains officially banned but is allowed to operate within tacitly negotiated parameters.

While Sheikh Yassine may not personally endorse violence, his critique of the status quo may nonetheless provide an ideological basis for those Moroccans who do. Yassine's platform, as expressed in a memorandum sent to King Mohamed VI on 14 November 1999, calls on the King to correct the economic, social, and political inequities he inherited from his father. This could begin, Yassine proposes, by using the royal fortune to repay the government's \$20 billion debt and invest the remainder in education and infrastructure.¹⁰

Politics: Monarchy Without Monopoly

Morocco has a constitutional, parliamentary monarchy, with Mohamed VI succeeding his late father, Hassan II, on 30 July 1999. Both the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers are appointed by the King. The numerous political parties can be divided into five informal blocs, four of which gained at least 13 percent of seats in the 2002 Chamber of Representatives election. This is key—while other Arab countries have used one-party systems to maintain strong leaders in power, Morocco has dispersed participation into a spectrum of parties.

Security: The Threat from Jihadist Salafism

The PJD, MJC, and Sufi groups are not an immediate threat to the regime. The real threat, the violent Islamist current in Morocco, hides its form behind a multitude of names. "Islamic Combatant Group," "Moroccan Armed Group," or "Armed Islamic Group" is one set of

closely related labels, but subsets of the same broad tendency have also been called the *Jemaa Serat al-Mustaqin* (“Right Way” Group), *al-Hijra w’al-Takfir* (translated various ways, including “Exodus and Excommunication” that refers to members’ intention to treat other Muslims as apostates), or *Salafia Jihadia* (which Pargeter states is more a current of thought and a lumping of various jihadist strands, rather than a specific group name¹¹). Some experts argue that different labels describe either hierarchical levels of organization or functionally/geographically distinct organizations, but most concede that none of these distinctions are definitive.

At the center of Jihadist Salafism’s concentric circles of supporters are the hard-core leaders, who tend to be well-educated and home-grown.¹² Many of the initial leaders joined the active Islamist youth movement of the 1960s, then became radicalized.¹³ (This “first wave” may in turn have been influenced by the importation of outside teachers from other countries during Morocco’s move to an Arabic-based educational system in the 1960s.)¹⁴ These former student Islamists fed the stream of Moroccans going to fight against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

When that conflict ended, former student Islamists and former “Afghan Arabs” formed the cadre of Jihadist Salafist groups and began recruiting for the next circle, rank and file members.¹⁵ One branch was organized in the early 1990s in Sale¹⁶ and by 2002 reportedly had 400 members. Most of the 94 individuals connected to the Casablanca bombings (those who either died as attackers or were arrested afterward) came from that city’s slums and were either unemployed, worked in the informal sector, or had small, traditional businesses.¹⁷

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The final ring of support comes from the general public. While the Moroccan public generally condemns terrorism in principle, this may not be absolute. “The Islamist tendencies have ‘proximity work’ that is exceptional,” says Rabat urban specialist Mohammed Haddy. “When a breadwinner is sick, leaders come to the family with a doctor, take care of the family, and provide all that they need ..., creating a moral obligation on the part of the family to the leaders. They know some graduates are out of work ... so they give money to start businesses, on the condition that there is a secret contract

between them and the people who receive help. This network is so uncontrolled that it goes deeper and deeper into the social fabric of Morocco, into the poor sectors in particular.” In other cases, these networks can manage the flow of goods and cash, in Iran-Contra-type circles of exchange.¹⁸

From 1998 to September 2001, Jihadist Salafist groups focused on supporting Al Qaeda operatives transiting or living within Morocco.¹⁹ After the 9/11 attacks on the United States, the Moroccan groups began shifting to domestic targets. Initially, these were dispersed and of low intensity, featuring attacks on unveiled women and other social targets.²⁰

One remaining question relates to the connections between Moroccan Jihadist Salafism, Al Qaeda (narrowly defined as the global leadership), and Al Qaeda-inspired groups. Most observers agree that Al Qaeda and the Algerian-based Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat (GSPC), largely comprised of non-Moroccans, may move through Morocco and have contact with the Moroccan groups, but are fundamentally distinct.

3. The Government's Response

Socioeconomic Development: Not Just Demolition but Rebuilding Community

While this analysis looks at Morocco's urban policies in light of today's terrorist threat, the Moroccan government and civil society have been concerned about the spread of informal housing and its potential for producing antiregime elements for many years. At the same time, the Casablanca attacks, in the context of the global effort against terrorism, helped hold attention on these urban programs.²¹

Globally, there are three general types of programs against informal housing:

- a. *Upgrading* is allowing the residents of an informal housing area to remain in place, while the state provides some or all of the missing infrastructure.²²
- b. *Resettlement* is relocating the inhabitants to new housing units built by the state.
- c. *Sites and Services* is a compromise that gives inhabitants new living space and connections to utilities, but not ready housing.

Morocco followed and adapted all three of these paradigms over the decades. In fiscal years 1999-2001, the government addressed at least 100 neighborhoods, affecting 64,691 families at a cost of 2.09 billion dirham (approximately \$300 million at today's exchange rate).²³

How to improve these programs remains a topic of research and deliberation. UN-HABITAT notes that "Confidence in resettlement as the perceived unique and best answer to the slum issue (in Morocco) has entirely ceased during the last 15 years," adding that the only real hope is a combination of regularizing projects and overall provision of services.²⁴ The government has encouraged critical analysis of its progress in this effort. For example, urban policy researcher Françoise Navez-Bouchanine's evaluation of urban policies, sponsored by the Ministry of Housing in 1998, provided both baseline data and policy recommendations, including the integration of social programs into the process of upgrading slums or resettling inhabitants.²⁵

One recent innovation was using private enterprise to provide utilities in urban areas, starting with electricity.²⁶ By increasing confidence in the ability of outsiders to provide services, such projects can lead to similar ones for water and sanitation. Because contractors aim to reduce costs, they can push innovation—for example, because most bidonville streets do not have heavy vehicle traffic, pipes running under them do not need to be buried as deeply as in other parts of the city.²⁷

Another major step was taken when the Moroccan government joined the Cities Alliance, Cities Without Slums initiative. The Moroccan program, Villes sans Bidonvilles, calls for eliminating all bidonvilles with more than 200,000 families by 2010.²⁸

While these efforts were underway before the Casablanca attacks, they have grown in prominence since then. King Mohamed VI went to Sidi Moumen 2 weeks after the attacks to officially launch a series of development projects there.²⁹ In 2004 one city was completely cleared of bidonvilles, three were “partly addressed,” and 13 were still in progress.³⁰ One high-profile project targets Sale’s largest bidonville, Sehb el Caid, which comprises 13.5 hectares and 2,544 families (Figure 1). There, the government is providing infrastructure upgrades for 1,239 households, while 1,305 families move to the new housing area of Said Hajji (Figure 2).³¹

Even more important than the material impact of these programs is that each component is now being evaluated in terms of social

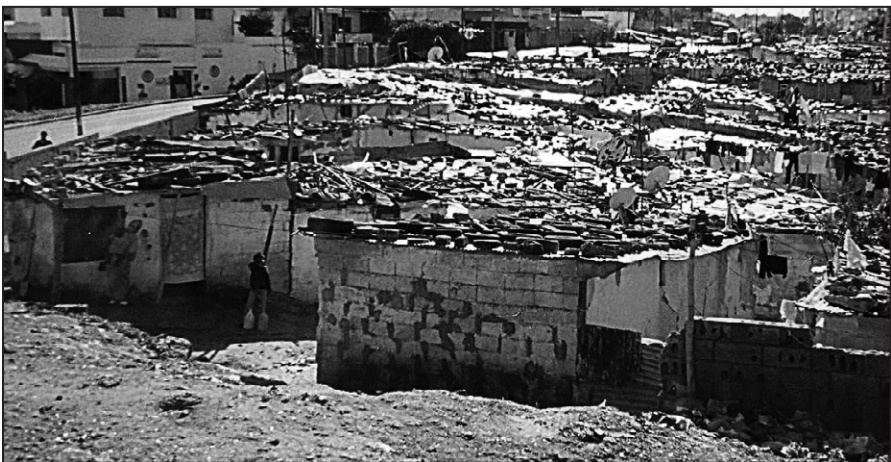


Figure 1. Sale’s largest bidonville, Sehb el Caid



Figure 2. Homes in Said Hajji, development where about half of Sehb el Caïd households will relocate

factors. For example, building only one water meter per street in a bidonville not only simplifies the project but requires residents to elect one of their own to monitor usage, determine each family's bill, and collect the money, creating a culture of participation and accountability.³² Another component of the new campaigns is *accompagnement social*, whereby outside facilitators help the bidonville populace to determine their goals, priorities, and unacceptable outcomes from the housing program. Besides ensuring money is well spent, this approach builds citizens' understanding of participation, skills at conflict-resolution, and a sense of ownership.

Fittingly, the Villes sans Bidonvilles program is itself being incorporated into the more comprehensive National Initiative for Human Development (INDH in French). Announced by the King in late 2005, this program focuses on coordinating construction of housing and infrastructure with new community centers, youth and gender programs, and sports.³³

United States Support. Much of what is being done in this area comes with direct or indirect support of the U.S. Government. As early as the 1980s, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was using loan guarantees and other programs to encourage investment in housing, particularly the upgrading of clandestine neighborhoods.

Most USAID support for informal-housing programs is now channeled through more comprehensive programs, such as INDH. USAID provides technical support within communities, on specific subject areas—for example, providing grants to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with expertise and helping develop Moroccan NGOs. USAID also gives small grants to community-based organizations for pilot projects, such as community centers and literacy programs.

Challenges. The first challenge to this program is the simple shortage in personnel trained to conduct *accompagnement social*. One urban specialist estimated as many as 2,000 social workers could be needed in each major city.³⁴

The second challenge is the tension between conducting *accompagnement social* and the desire to rapidly complete the Cities Without Slums program. One person involved in the program said that while the government sees *accompagnement social* as a way to get bidonville residents to accept the government plan, NGOs see it as a way to let inhabitants affect that plan before a decision is made. In fact, the existence of this discussion reflects the degree to which the Moroccan government has already started seeing past today's problems to sustainable solutions.

The final challenge, one rarely mentioned by interview subjects, is the most worrisome of all—the risk of rising expectations. A successful program of *accompagnement social* allows the public to better understand the causes and extent of their own dissatisfaction and gives them hope that grievances will be addressed. If the government fails to meet these hopes, the result will be increased urban instability.

Ideology: Taking Back the Pulpits

The government hopes to counter the ideological side of the Salafist threat by better using the means of religious control at its disposal. Ahmed Toufiq (current Minister of Religious Endowments and Islamic Affairs) brings with him a reputation for piety, while his predecessor was seen as a political figure.³⁵ As Minister, Toufiq has promoted a “comprehensive, multifaceted and integrated strategy ... to preserve the distinctive Moroccan identity, which is characterized by moderation and tolerance. This strategy involves restructuring the Ministry and reconsidering legislation on places of worship.”³⁶

One part of Toufiq's strategy is better use of the mass media "to remedy the separation between religion and other issues of life." As early as March 2003, he was promising radio and TV programs that would deal with contemporary questions, even "embarrassing issues."³⁷ This included the creation of a government-sponsored religious radio station, able to reach all the country's major cities. The initial programming included "programs to encourage moderation, such as debates for youth on contemporary issues and problems, as well as Koranic training programs in Arabic, French, and Berber."³⁸

A second program was for the Ministry to offer toll-free phone numbers in eight call centers in the headquarters of the *ulama* (organized body of religious scholars), where Moroccans can call to ask questions on religion.³⁹ In addition, a third line of approach is taking control of mosques and preachers. There are approximately 35,000 recognized mosques in Morocco, each with an *imam* leading the five daily prayers. Approximately 15,000 to 16,000 other individuals give Friday sermons. According to Toufiq, by early 2004, "the government has shut down 270 improvised worship places in shanty towns that do not meet the basic requirements."⁴⁰

United States Support. The Moroccan debate on the role of Islam in politics and society is an area where direct U.S. support for Rabat needs to be minimal and of low visibility when provided. In fact, the greatest U.S. role might be as recipient of indirect support. These programs should help us understand how Moroccans see the challenges of modernity, and this improved understanding should inform U.S. policies in the region.

Challenges. The more closely the efforts of prominent religious leaders follow the positions of the government and/or the monarchy, the less credibility they will have in some circles. But the more frequently the religious establishment questions policies, the more they risk fueling the positions of those seeking to overthrow the regimes. Sticking to the middle path, "speaking truth to power" without challenging that power's right to rule, is difficult. For the government, resisting the temptation to force these religious leaders to toe that line can be even harder.

Politics: Expanding Free Expression and “Impression”

One part of the government’s effort to counter the spread of violent Islam is a continued loosening of restrictions on peaceful political Islam. This two-dimensional process involves both the breadth of permitted viewpoints and the depth of their influence on public policy—expression and impression. The PJD competes in local and national elections and has its own newspapers. While its share of the overall vote declined in the 2003 elections, several PJD members now lead local governments. Initial results reveal that they are doing no worse than other mayors and generally keeping their reputation for integrity.

Why the party’s support dropped in the 2003 elections remains the subject of debate—some say it is backlash from the Casablanca attacks,⁴¹ while others blame a back-room deal. PJD leader Mustapha Ramid claims the government forced 1,000 Islamic candidates to withdraw, and some party officials were demoted to prevent a more direct government crackdown. “They had to find a way to make us shut up,” he said. “Morocco was on the right track. Since the beginning of the 1990s, we were taking the right road toward more freedom and democracy. Since 16 May, there is no doubt we have witnessed a regression in this.”⁴²

In some ways, however, the PJD’s role is part of a much broader opening in the life of the country. Beyond the political sphere, “there was neglect in educating people for too long,” one subject observed. “They lost 50 years of human development.” In particular, he noted, the King has made trips to long-neglected areas such as the Mediterranean Coast, inspiring hope that things will change.⁴³

United States Support. The U.S. Government is quietly supporting much of the grass-roots change occurring in Moroccan politics. Through U.S.-based NGOs, USAID is helping Morocco develop the necessary “hardware” and “software” for democratic government, such as focused training for women interested in running for political office.⁴⁴

Challenges. Effectively continuing this policy of “constructive engagement” with the PJD will require the government and the monarchy to retain the support of the broader political system, in spite of an ongoing debate over the proper role of Islamist parties in the country.

Some Moroccans remain skeptical of the Islamists' commitment to long-term multiparty democracy and would favor restrictions on the latter's participation.⁴⁵ The majority of Moroccans interviewed for this project, however, are more concerned that repression of the PJD could trigger another Algeria-style civil war.

Security: Bringing Order Back to the Bidonvilles

Nowhere is the Moroccan government's acceptance of a positive philosophy for change more evident than in the area of urban security. There, the government has clearly attempted to balance near-term law-enforcement operations directed against identified threats and longer-term structural reforms.

Starting soon after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the Moroccan government has made a series of arrests targeting Salafist groups in Morocco. These have included capturing the alleged leader of al-Hijra wa al-Takfir in July 2002, 30 suspects linked to the Salafist GSPC in July 2005, and 17 people suspected of Al Qaeda connections in November 2005.⁴⁶

But the government recognizes that such arrests are not enough. Waiting until groups have formed and started plotting cedes the initiative to the enemy, where the acceptable margin of error is razor-thin. To increase this margin, the government has taken two ambitious steps to end police neglect of the bidonvilles and improve the ability of security forces to take these alleyways back from budding terrorists:

- a. *Postes de Police de Proximité (PPP)* are new, stationary police positions that follow a similar model to the "neighborhood policing" concept that United States police departments rediscovered in recent years. As one semi-official journal explained, "The objective is two-fold and clear: To be as close as possible to the citizen at the level of the *quartier* and to visibly express the presence of the State in view of reassuring that same citizen The unique thing is to operate within the social fabric." By 2007, the government expects to have created 1,000 posts, with approximately 12,000 assigned officers throughout the kingdom.⁴⁷
- b. *Groupes Urbains de Sécurité (GUS)* are 196-man units that began forming on 17 October 2004 in Rabat, Casablanca,

Marrakech, Oujda, Meknes, and Fes. By June 2005 they totaled 4,000 officers. In 2006, the GUS are expected to reach 6,000 officers in 33 groups.⁴⁸

These initiatives are intended to complement the existing “special purpose” law-enforcement unit, the royal Gendarmerie. Moroccan gendarmes, unlike many of their counterparts in Europe or other former European colonies, are generally rural law enforcement officers. However, their ability to conduct both conventional police work and small-unit infantry tactics makes them a versatile weapon in the government arsenal.

United States Support. The U.S. Government has substantial programs assisting the Moroccan government to develop its law-enforcement capabilities. In 2004, for example, Moroccans received U.S. training for antiterrorism instruction, crisis response, installation security, and major case management. The U.S. also provided technical consultations on Police Academy Training and Border Patrol operations.⁴⁹

Even though the Moroccan military does not now have a major role in domestic counterterrorism operations, the U.S. military continues engaging with its Moroccan counterparts to ensure they are ready to work together if required. In fiscal year 2004, the United States European Command supported the training or military education of 119 Moroccan service members through \$1,307,289 in Foreign Military Training funds.⁵⁰

Challenges. One of the obvious challenges is that the Moroccan military is largely absent from domestic counterterrorism. It focuses on external threats, including border protection and preparing for potential conventional conflicts with neighbors such as Algeria. There is little evidence that the Moroccan military is preparing to conduct urban combat operations, of the type that the U.S. and its allies have conducted in Iraq. While law-enforcement and paramilitary forces appear to be adequate at this time, if conditions in Morocco’s major cities deteriorate, heavier military forces may become necessary and may not have the necessary training or equipment to take back the cities.

At the other end of the spectrum, there may be further hurdles ahead in getting the maximum effect out of the PPP program. Within U.S. community policing programs, having a familiar face patrolling the neighborhood is only a means to an end. The real objective is to

create community participation in controlling crime.⁵¹ It remains to be seen whether Moroccan police officers can make this transition in attitudes as quickly as they have made the structural change to PPP.

4. Implications for United States Strategy and Policy Within the Global War on Terror

The analysis surfaces key issues regarding the global war on terror and how events in Morocco are opportunities for continued advanced study toward finding the keys to success in this struggle. Some key areas of interest follow.

Results Without Progress?

Today, we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing, or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training, and deploying against us?

— Donald Rumsfeld, October 2003⁵²

One of the recurring challenges in the global war on terror is the question of how to measure success. While America's ultimate goal—the prevention of terrorist attacks against the U.S., its citizens, and assets—has been successful for more than 4 years, the Secretary of Defense was right to ask whether we think that record will continue. Short of seeing another U.S. city in flames, how would we know if we are failing in the global war on terror?⁵³

This same dilemma confronts all of our partners in this struggle.⁵⁴ For Morocco, Kalpakian was optimistic about the imminent decline of the Salafist movement following the public support for the government's post-Casablanca actions,⁵⁵ but arrests continue to be made, suggesting that terrorists have continued finding recruits in Morocco since the attacks.⁵⁶ Does this show success or failure in the campaign?

One way to think through these issues—at least to organize thinking on what is lacking—is to borrow from the vernacular of common business-oriented models. Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard approach, for example, directs strategists to identify

“performance drivers” (also known as lead indicators) and outcome measures (lag indicators) and find a balance between the two.⁵⁷ Before creating metrics, an organization needs to have a clear strategy and understand well the causal links between activities and results.

If getting metrics right is a challenge for businesses, where so many actions can be quantified in terms of easily understood input and outputs, it is vastly more difficult to use in the global war on terror or any similar public enterprise. However, one can expect that a government that starts with an objective of reducing the number of terrorists will devise a different strategy and set of metrics than one that begins with a goal of ensuring human and physical security in its cities. As Perl warns, “antiterrorism actions might be undertaken for a wide range of reasons without being clearly linked to previously defined antiterror goals; in such circumstances, caution would likely be warranted before characterizing results as progress.”⁵⁸

... a government that starts with an objective of reducing the number of terrorists will devise a different strategy and set of metrics than one that begins with a goal of ensuring human and physical security in its cities.

The Moroccan Interior Ministry has released figures showing that after the creation of the GUS, the numbers of attacks on people and attacks on goods declined, while the number of crime-scene investigations and attacks on public order increased.⁵⁹ But how much does this example mean? Even a high number of plots interrupted or “terrorists” arrested may be good because it shows effective policing capacity, or bad because it shows groups are still able to recruit. On the political side, if electoral support for an Islamic party such as the PJD declines, is that proof that society really does have a secular bias, or bad because it may indicate Islamists are resorting to more extreme channels?

Given these doubts about designing effective outcome indicators, what about appropriate performance drivers? This assumes that a group has correctly identified the causal links between its actions and the desired outcomes. The Moroccan government’s apparent focus on achievable outputs—including police officers in urban areas, increasingly free and fair elections (which they can control), and improved urban housing for the poor—seem well designed for achieving desired outcomes.

Measuring success is one area where the U.S. has the intellectual capital to assist. Deciding to focus on helping allies measure success would not only allow the U.S. to better evaluate the global war on terror but also guide all involved countries toward programs with the best chances for creating stability and reducing the likelihood of terrorist attacks.

Socioeconomic Development: The Role of “Designated Listeners”

One unexpected finding is the importance of explicitly including “social advocates” in any program attempting to redirect civil interactions. In the Moroccan case, this means creating teams to provide *accompagnement social* and facilitate the implementation of urban policy by engaging in dialogue with bidonville residents. This approach is remarkably similar to the way the U.S. military has maintained dedicated Civil Affairs units, with the explicit purpose of providing teams trained to understand the requirements of civilians within the area of military operations. These teams then use their understanding of the civilians to guide the use of other specialties toward achievement of the commander’s objectives. In the era of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, when maneuver commanders are becoming accustomed to seeing themselves as both combat commanders and military governors, the advantages of maintaining dedicated Civil Affairs forces may be underestimated. Morocco’s experience suggests that such a system needs to be maintained, as it ensures that someone remains focused on social factors and the long-term end state of sustainable communities.

The essential feature of Villes sans Bidonvilles and the National Initiative for Human Development is that they avoid reducing root causes of terrorism to poverty or slum housing. Instead, they focus on changing those aspects of urban life that take away young adults’ hope for achieving their goals through accepted means and turn them against the regime and society.

The Moroccan government seems to be ahead of those in most Middle Eastern countries in realizing the importance of these social functions. Since the U.S. is already actively supporting these efforts in Morocco, it is positioned to help other countries follow the model. The same NGOs who are working today in Morocco—and even the

same individuals gaining field experience with them—should be encouraged to continue this work in other countries. One positive step toward this view would be encouraging development work as a profession, with accepted certification and employment standards, so that young graduates choosing this career could have more confidence in their long-term economic security.

Politics: Is Political Islam Zero-sum or Self-reinforcing?

The most profound question for the ultimate success of the global war on terror, as it is being waged in the countries of the Muslim world, is whether the potential for national activity is a zero-sum game for Islamists, so that anything channeled into legal parties undercuts the appeal of more radical groups. Or does giving Islamic parties a chance to participate in government merely add to the total strength of the Islamic movement in society?

Unfortunately, it is too early for the Moroccan case to provide definitive answers. Because no further terrorist attacks have occurred and the PJD has continued making electoral advances, at least in some municipalities, one could hypothesize that some would-be terrorists are channeling their ambitions into peaceful, partisan politics. Additionally, because the PJD has never become the governing party at the national level, the continued existence of alleged terrorist plotters in Morocco does not refute this hypothesis.

For the U.S. the tentative lesson would be to keep an open mind about the ability of Islamists to participate in democratic parties. Encouraging other governments to follow a Moroccan model of permitting Islamists success on the local level, when warranted by democratic processes, can go a long way toward building legitimacy of friendly governments while not handing over the keys to the palace.

Security: Are Gendarmerie and Special Police Units Enough to Defeat a Dedicated Jihadist Salafist Threat?

Following the explosion in peacekeeping operations in the 1990s, many have been looking for ways to develop paramilitary forces that might be more suited to securing urban areas during stability operations. “The benefits of employing constabulary forces rather than individual police officers or military units are many,” one report noted. “Under normal circumstances they can deploy rapidly with

much of their own transport, communications, and logistical support. They usually can respond to situations requiring greater use of force than civil police, such as crowd control and area security. They also serve as a bridge between military and civil police forces and assume the tasks that do not clearly belong to either group.” Gendarmes, carabinieri, and other paramilitary forces are one tool currently not in the U.S. kit, but are a common sight in both Europe and former European colonies.⁶⁰

The Moroccan government is using its traditional gendarmes and the newly created GUS and PPP to ensure control of urban areas. Providing urban security within stability and support operations has been a recurring challenge for the U.S. and its allies in all their recent campaigns, including the Balkans, Somalia, and Iraq. Researchers should be closely following the Moroccan effort to determine the success of its models and their applicability to other countries and situations.

5. Conclusions

First, the initial hypothesis that “informal housing areas” are critical in Morocco’s campaign against Islamic extremists is supported by both the government’s actions and the analysis of outside observers. This premise does not mean all terrorists come from bidonvilles, but that bidonvilles uniquely provide “grunts” and hospitable environments for Jihadist Salafist groups. Addressing the numerous, intertwined problems of bidonvilles would largely reduce the Salafist threat to small numbers of dissatisfied Islamists looking for followers.

Second, socioeconomic development is a key to combating terrorism, but the emphasis needs to be on the “socio.” Building new, sustainable communities and individual livelihoods is more important than development in easily programmed and measured programs such as building apartments or providing jobs. At the same time, programs to develop communities only build dissatisfaction if they are not accompanied by adequate investment in physical infrastructure. Morocco’s use of distinct organizations to focus on physical and social infrastructure appears to be a sound method to ensure a balanced approach. This model goes beyond “peacetime” development to how military forces need to envision their strategies for stability operations.

Third, the “war of ideas” can be won, but not by simply silencing alternative voices. Effective ideological warfare needs to recognize that alternative voices find an audience because they are providing answers that the “official” and legal perspectives do not. Instead of bemoaning how opponents use 21st Century technology to build support, moderate, liberal governments need to see how the Internet and other technologies give them unprecedented means for understanding their people and finding messages that work.

Fourth, there seems to be room for legal participation of Islamic parties within Arab countries. To date, there are more examples of terrorism resulting from efforts to force salafism underground than from Islamist parties assuming responsibility through competitive elections. Pluralistic experiences (such as those of Morocco) can guide the development of models for how regimes can increase their religious legitimacy without violating human or civil rights of

minorities. In particular, allowing Islamist parties to assume offices in city governments, as in Casablanca, lets local politics function as the “laboratory of democracy” and gives opposition groups a role in developing a more open, yet stable, political system.

Finally, “security” must mean much more than improving the military capabilities of friendly and neutral governments. Until it reaches the point of state failure, most governments can do much more to improve security by improving the presence and performance of police on the street and quick reaction forces than by obtaining high-end military hardware. Not every city will solve its urban security problems by copying Morocco’s PPP and GUS, but Morocco’s ability to rapidly assess the problem and implement a solution has set a standard for how countries need to approach this challenge.

Morocco’s campaign to defeat its domestic Islamist extremists is headed in the right direction because it is implementing all these concepts. It attempts to untangle the complex linkages between “root causes,” immediate terrorist threats, and alternatives to terrorism and address them through complementary, coordinated actions. For this reason, there are grounds to hope that the lessons learned in the bidonvilles will serve as a model for more timely and effective counterterrorism strategies in other “at risk” countries around the world. ↑

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