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MOROCCAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

AND THE REASONS FOR MOROCCAN RECEPTIVITY TO CONTACT WITH ISRAEL

by

Mark Tessler

Department of Political Science

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Moroccan-Israeli Contacts

On July 22 and July 23, 1986, King Hassan II of Morocco and Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel met in Ifrane, a Moroccan resort town known for its mountain air, pine forests, and Swiss-style chalets. The Hassan-Peres summit was historic in significant respects. With the exception of Egypt, which agreed to negotiate with Israel in 1978 and which signed a peace treaty with Jerusalem the following year, no Arab country had either recognized Israel or been willing to permit public meetings between its own leaders and officials of the Jewish state. Hassan's invitation to Peres was thus a bold and dramatic gesture, one which, as will be seen, was made with very specific objectives in mind. Nevertheless, the Ifrane summit was by no means the first time that Hassan had welcomed Israelis to his kingdom. On the contrary, it was rather the most recent in a series of Israeli-Moroccan encounters stretching back more than a decade.

Israeli-Moroccan contact may in fact go all the way back to 1965. Although never confirmed, there are reports that Israeli operatives in France assisted Moroccan security agents in abducting Mehdi Ben Barka, a leader of the opposition that was challenging King Hassan's government in the mid 1960s. Ben Barka at the time headed the Union Nationale des Forces Populaires, a left-oriented political party which was rapidly gaining influence among the country's urban poor. The king's concern with the UNFP and the left opposition increased after young men from the slums of Casablanca rioted in March of 1965, and late in the year Ben Barka was kidnapped and murdered in Paris as part of the regime's crackdown on opponents. A full and authoritative account of the "Ben Barka Affair" has never been made public, but it is widely believed that French police officers took part in the operation. There are persistent rumors of Israeli collusion as well.

Most contacts between Israel and Morocco have happily been of a different sort. Of particular interest is the role King Hassan played in forging the connection between Israel and Egypt that eventually led to the Camp David accords of 1978. Yitzhak Rabin, the current minister of defense and prime minister of Israel from 1974 until mid-1977, reports in his memoirs that Hassan began to mediate between Jerusalem and Cairo in 1976. According to Rabin, the king attempted initially to involve Syria as well. Rabin himself made a secret trip to Morocco at this time, as part of a process in which Hassan held separate talks with each of the parties and, interestingly, sought to avoid any involvement by the superpowers.

The culmination of the king's effort came in September 1977, at a secret meeting between Hassan and Moshe Dayan. Dayan, at the time foreign minister in the government of Rabin's successor, Menachem Begin, had to disguise himself to enter Morocco. He wore a wig, sunglasses and a false mustache. Dayan also followed a complicated itinerary before being received by Hassan in a 600 year old palace in Marrakesh. He travelled from Paris on a commercial Moroccan airliner, landing at Fez and then being driven to Ifrane for the night. The next day he returned to Fez for a flight to Marrakesh, finally beginning his meeting with the king late in the evening. Despite the strict secrecy surrounding his visit, Dayan later reported that the encounter had been informal and relaxed. "Don't worry," Hassan is said to have told his guest, "I won't be overthrown if it becomes known that you are here."

Dayan was impressed with the hospitality he received and, especially, with Hassan himself. He reported that the king saw himself as having a special role to play in bringing Arabs and Jews together, and that the monarch had accordingly spoken at length both about his own warm relations with the Jews of Morocco and about his commitment to Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Dayan then

told Hassan that Israel was interested in direct and high level contact with Egypt, to which Hassan replied with a promise to investigate the matter. Israel's answer was not long in coming; just eleven days later Dayan was invited to return to Morocco for a meeting with General Hassan Tohami, deputy prime minister of Egypt and personal emissary of Anwar Sadat. These events led to Sadat's dramatic visit to Jerusalem two months later, which in turn spawned the Camp David accords and the Israel-Egypt peace treaty of 1979.

Peres himself had met with King Hassan prior to the 1986 summit. In March 1981, during an election campaign in which he hoped to lead the Labor Alignment back to power, Peres traveled to Morocco for a discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He was received in the same Marrakesh palace where Hassan had welcomed Dayan. This meeting, like those involving Rabin and Dayan, was held in secret; neither Hassan nor Peres discussed it publicly. Nevertheless, a few Israeli sources give accounts of the encounter. Among the topics of conversation were Labor's chances of defeating Menachem Begin's Likud Bloc in the forthcoming election and the ways that America's Middle East policy might change under the new administration in Washington.

Peres placed emphasis on the behavior of the Arab states in his discussions with Hassan. He reportedly spoke of the need for enhanced cooperation among the conservative and moderate states of the Arab world, most notably Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia. This alliance, he argued, would cooperate with the United States -- and tacitly with Israel -- in order to enhance the stability of the Middle East. Peres also stressed the need to deepen Israeli-Egyptian cooperation. Normalization, he told the king, would promote the eventual acceptance of Israel by other Arab states. Hassan, by contrast, sought to focus attention of the Palestinian dimension of the Middle East conflict, asking his guest whether a Labor-led government would agree to amend U.N. Resolution 242 so as to include a reference to Palestinian rights.

Peres showed no interest in this line of thought, however, stating that attempts to modify UN 242 would only lead to more conflict and confusion. It would, in his judgment, open a Pandora's box. The king was apparently disappointed by this response but the two men nonetheless discussed other possibilities and later parted amicably.

Moroccan-Israeli contacts continued and, in contrast to these early meetings, some took place in the public arena. In May 1984, for example, Morocco permitted 35 prominent Israelis to attend a conference of Moroccan Jewry in Rabat. The Israelis were flown to Morocco from Paris by the Royal Air Force. Hassan did not meet the visitors personally, but the crown prince, the prime minister and other senior officials did attend a reception in honor of the conferees. In addition, one of Morocco's ministers later called for creation of a Muslim-Jewish peace council, hinting that Hassan could serve as an intermediary in talks between Israel and the PLO. Syria recalled its ambassador from Rabat to protest these gestures toward Jerusalem, but Moroccan officials insisted that they had discussed their intentions in advance with a number of Arab governments and received no complaints. Moreover, contact between Morocco and Israel continued. Though details are sketchy, there are reports that a senior Moroccan official visited Israel in the fall of 1985 to discuss the possibility of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Yet another instance of Moroccan-Israeli contact took place in the spring of 1985. In May, Israeli deputy minister of agriculture, Avraham Katz-Oz, visited Morocco and explored the possibility of agricultural cooperation between Rabat and Jerusalem. Katz-Oz stated that Israel could assist Morocco not only in the domain of agricultural technology but also with respect to marketing, especially since Rabat is seeking to establish closer agricultural ties with the United States and could make use of Israel's contacts in the U.S. Proposing

that joint Moroccan-Israeli ventures in the field of agriculture need not necessarily be preceded by the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries, Katz-Oz invited a number of Moroccan farmers to Israel's annual agricultural fair and later reported that several had accepted his invitation.

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Although the Hassan-Peres summit caught observers by surprise, there were indications late in 1985 and early in 1986 that the king was beginning to think about a new gesture toward Israel. In November of the former year, Hassan told French journalists that he would be willing to meet Shimon Peres. This statement was particularly significant because the king made it in public, and in this respect it contrasted sharply with previous overtures toward Jerusalem. For this reason, too, Hassan's declaration drew much more criticism from Arab sources than had his earlier gestures toward Israel.

Hassan invited Peres to Morocco in December, but the intensity of Arab complaints showed the king that he had moved too quickly, without having first laid a foundation for his action. Therefore, rather embarrassingly, he abruptly retracted his offer to meet with the Israeli prime minister. Yet the king did not abandon his plan; he instead sought to gain legitimacy for his scheme by involving other Arab countries in it. At an Arab summit meeting in March, Hassan urged that steps be taken to explore Israel's willingness to negotiate on the basis of peace proposals acceptable to the Arabs, meaning the plan adopted at the Fez summit conference of September 1982. The Fez Plan calls for creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and for mutual recognition between this state and Israel. The March 1986 summit took no action in response to Hassan's suggestion about contacts with Israel. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the king

was laying the foundation for a renewal of his own invitation to Prime Minister Peres.

Arrangements for Peres' visit were worked out on July 11 during a secret meeting in Paris between Moroccan and Israeli officials. The prime minister and his party arrived in Morocco ten days later, travelling on an Israeli Air Force plane which flew directly to Fez and landed about 11 PM on the night of the 21st. The Israelis were taken in a motor convoy to the luxurious villa that had been reserved for them near Hassan's palace in Ifrane, and in a highly unusual gesture of cordiality the king drove to the Israelis' residence to welcome his guests personally. All of the visitors were profuse in their praise of the hospitality they received. Uri Savir, Peres' media advisor and spokesman, compared it to a story out of "A Thousand and One Nights." There were lavish eight and nine course meals, he reported. "We were lodged in a fabulous hilltop villa and three or four ministers were constantly on hand to host us."

Hassan and Peres held two days of substantive talks, beginning shortly before noon on the 22nd. Present at this meeting were two other Israelis: Savir and Rafi Edri, a Moroccan-born member of Knesset. It was Savir and Edri who had travelled to Paris earlier in the month to make arrangements for the trip. Peres also received counsel from two additional officials who had come with him to Ifrane. One was Cabinet Secretary Yossi Beilin and the other was Dr. Nimrod Novik, the prime minister's foreign policy advisor. Hassan, for his part, was accompanied in the discussion by Foreign Minister Abdel Latif Filali, Interior and Information Minister Driss Basri, and Ahmed Reda Guedira, the king's closest political advisor.

As he had done in his secret talks with Peres in 1981, Hassan focused his attention on the central Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Specifically, after he and Peres had both set forth general analyses of the

current Middle Eastern situation, the king told Peres that he had two questions to ask. First, in return for peace with the Arab world, would Israel agree to withdraw from all Arab territories captured in the 1967 war? Second, would the Israeli government agree to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization? By asking these questions, Hassan deliberately placed his dialogue with Peres squarely within the framework of the Fez Plan. Indeed, the king was quite explicit about this, emphasizing that the Fez Plan endorsed the Palestinians' right to self-determination and recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization as their sole legitimate representative. According to Hassan, acceptance of these points was the price that Israel must pay for peace with the Arab world.

Peres answered both of Hassan's questions in the negative, which, according to some Israeli analysts, is what the king should have expected. As Israeli journalist Hirsh Goodman asked rhetorically, "Could Peres, without cabinet consultation, without party approval, without the presence of a legal advisor or non-partisan senior government official, and without any national mandate, have committed Israel to any of the basic assumptions of the Fez Plan -- direct negotiations with the PLO; a pre-commitment to return all of the territories; the creation of an independent Palestinian state; and the renegotiation of the status of Jerusalem?" Every one of these elements of the Fez Plan is unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of Israelis. Had Peres yielded on any one of them, Goodman wrote in the Jerusalem Post, he would have needed Dayan's wig and sunglasses to return to Israel.

Nevertheless, the Israeli prime minister may have found it helpful to be asked these questions by Hassan. Peres' Labor Alignment is distinguished from its major political rival, the Likud Bloc, by a willingness to withdraw from some of the territory that Israel has held since 1967 and by a more moderate approach to the question of Palestinian rights. While Labor's position on these

issues stops far short of the Fez Plan, Peres can now tell the Israeli electorate with more credibility that Arab leaders will respond to moderation on the part of the Jewish state and that Labor's advocacy of territorial compromise does indeed hold some promise of movement toward peace. The ability to make these arguments when campaigning against Likud and other right-wing parties in future elections is an important political benefit that Peres and his party may have reaped from the meeting in Morocco.

Some Israeli advocates of territorial compromise recalled the initial encounter with Anwar Sadat in this connection. The president of Egypt had come to Jerusalem to offer recognition and peace to the Jewish state. Yet Sadat's November 1977 speech to the Knesset set out terms and conditions that were not very different than those put forward by Hassan in the summer of 1986. These terms and conditions turned out to be but the opening bid in an elaborate diplomatic game, however, and their presentation by Sadat was primarily intended to get that game started. Whether Hassan would eventually modify his stated positions, as had Sadat, was not the critical issue in July 1986 so far as the political agenda of Labor was concerned. The Alignment's goal was to show the Israeli public that there is a meaningful alternative to continued war with the Arabs but that pursuit of this alternative requires compromise on Israel's part. As the party of compromise, at pains to distinguish itself from the intransigence and militant nationalism of the political right, Labor could not but benefit from Peres' discussion with Hassan.

There was also another way in which Peres hoped to derive political benefit from his visit to Ifrane. Jews of Afro-Asian origin now make up a majority of the Israeli population, and Jews of Moroccan origin are the largest subset among them. But these so-called "oriental" Jews have traditionally voted for Likud rather than Labor, and anti-Alignment sentiment runs especially high among those

whose families came from Morocco. Moreover, Peres in particular is disliked by this category of the Israeli population. He has, for example, been shouted off the podium on several occasions when attempting to address audiences composed of Israelis of Moroccan origin. Labor's obvious interest in improving its image in this community is made even greater by the internal power struggle that is presently taking place within Likud. This struggle broke into the open at the Likud party convention in March 1986 and, because of the personalities involved, its outcome could effect the degree to which the party continues to be seen as responsive to Afro-Asian voters. The net result of all this is that the Alignment in general, and Peres in particular, were in a position to derive political capital from the Ifrane summit.

Whatever the eventual political fallout back in Israel, Peres' negative response to Hassan's inquiries produced some tense hours during the Ifrane summit. According to the king's own account, he told the prime minister that since Israel was unwilling to recognize Palestinian rights and establish a dialogue with the PLO, there was nothing more to discuss and it remained only to say good-bye. Hassan agreed that the Moroccan and Israeli advisors present should nevertheless be given a chance to formulate a communique; yet the same impasse was reached when a draft prepared by the Moroccan team again called for Israeli recognition of the PLO and complete withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. In the end, however, Hassan approved a more general statement, based on a draft prepared by the Israelis. This communique, the official version of which was in French, read as follows:

> "His Majesty King Hassan II has, on July 22 and 23 of 1986, received at his palace in Ifrane Shimon Peres, prime minister of Israel. During the talks marked by frankness and devoted essentially to the study of the Fez Plan, the Moroccan sovereign and the Israeli prime minister analyzed, in

depth, the situation in the Middle East and the conditions, in form and in substance, likely to contribute efficiently to the establishment of peace in this region.

His Majesty King Hassan II gave a presentation of the Fez Plan, explaining his views concerning the merits of each of its elements and suggesting that this plan has the double merit of, on the one hand, constituting the sole document which is objectively valid to serve as a basis for a just and durable peace and, on the other, being the object of an Arab consensus, in contrast to any other plan or peace proposal.

In his turn, Mr. Shimon Peres clarified his observations on the Fez Plan, putting forth propositions pertaining to conditions he deems necessary for the installation of peace.

As the meeting was of a purely exploratory nature, aiming at no moment at engaging in negotiations, His Majesty King Hassan II will inform the Arab leaders, and Prime Minister Peres his government, of the points of view developed during the talks.

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There are at least four respects in which the Hassan-Peres summit is significant in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. First it was marked by openness, in contrast to Hassan's previous encounters with Israeli leaders. It had originally been planned to keep the talks secret, leaving it to Hassan and Peres, once in Ifrane, to decide whether and in what context to announce their meeting to the public. When Rabat told Jerusalem that Israeli journalists were welcome, however, it became clear that the summit was not to be kept secret after all; and indeed the world learned of the meeting while the Israeli prime minister and his party were still in the air on their way to Morocco. Furthermore, Hassan reinforced the public nature of the summit by giving a

lengthy report to his own countrymen in a nationally televised address. The king defended the legality of his action, insisting that "no one can say the Fez resolutions forbid contact with Israel, within the framework of the plan," and then adding that "no decision of the League of Arab States, since it has existed, has forbidden an Arab leader to meet with an Israeli leader." Even more significant, however, was the king's claim that his action was helpful and courageous, as well as legal. He told the Moroccan people, inter alia:

> My brothers will be the judge of what is proper to do, now that they have grasped the tenor of the conversation. I did not accept this meeting in order to negotiate or to decide on anything. In my mind, this was an exploratory effort. I personally think it cowardly not to listen to an adversary, an enemy. We have, dear people, been educated in courage. The newspapers have written: "The courageous action of Hassan II..." But my action, essentially, was not courageous, it merely was the fruit of our common civic education... We have learned that it is necessary sometimes to sit at the negotiating table rather than demonstrate in the streets.

Second, and of related significance, Hassan consulted with other Arab actors. Although he stated in his speech that "I did not notify a single Arab head of state about this," in fact it appears that the king consciously sought to operate within a moderate Arab consensus. To begin, as reported, he urged the Arab League at its summit in March 1986 to explore Israeli willingness to negotiate on the basis of the Fez Plan. Although he ostensibly hoped that the initiative would come from others, he undoubtedly realized that the League would not respond to his suggestion and thus was presumably laying a foundation for his own subsequent action.

Further, it appears that Hassan did contact key Arab states about his

intentions. Jordan radio reported that a high level Moroccan envoy was in Amman on the night of July 21st, delivering a message from Hassan and consulting with King Hussein, the Jordanian monarch. In the wake of this development, there were rumors to the effect that Hussein himself might soon join Hassan and Peres in Ifrane, or that he might at least take steps to sound out other Arab leaders about their attitude toward such a possibility. In addition, several U.S. officials issued statements encouraging Hussein to follow Hassan's lead and open direct talks with Israel. For example, Vice President George Bush was scheduled to begin a tour of the Middle East the following week and aids said that he would press this suggestion upon King Hussein during his visit to Amman.

Although most attention was focused on Jordan, King Hassan also briefed the leaders of several other Arab countries on his plans for a meeting with the prime minister of Israel. Specifically, he informed the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Egypt; and it is particularly significant in this connection that Saudi officials permitted Hassan's 45-minute speech to his countrymen to be broadcast live in their own country as well. Finally, it should be noted that the Hassan-Peres communique committed the king to report on Israel's position to other Arab leaders. All of these actions reflected Hassan's desire act in association with other Arab states and, in particular, to operate and exercise leadership within a moderate Arab consensus.

Third, moderate Arab leaders reacted with comparative restraint to the Hassan-Peres summit. While Syria, Algeria, Libya and some elements within the PLO denounced the king forcefully, the Saudi decision to broadcast the king's speech was indicative of the tolerant attitude that key Arab regimes took toward the meeting. Egypt, the only Arab state that has made peace with Israel, praised Hassan's action. Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, called it "a good initiative," adding that "everybody who likes peace would be happy about it."

Initial reaction among some Palestinian nationalists in the Occupied Territories was also encouraging, although admittedly cautious as well. For example, Hanna Siniora, editor of the East Jerusalem daily, al-Fajr, which is usually sympathetic to the Arafat wing of the PLO, said he welcomed the meeting and hoped it would lead to negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Among the Arab analyses favorable to the meeting were those advanced by Jeune Afrique, a Paris-based French-language weekly with strong North African connections. The journal argued that Arab rejectionism played into the hands of Israeli extremists, enabling them to deflect attention from Jerusalem's own intransigence by pretending that there are no Arabs willing to negotiate. Hassan's initiative, on the other hand, offered the Arabs a significant public relations victory. It demonstrated to all the world that there are Arabs willing to make peace and that Israelis can also say "no." The magazine added that Hassan had also succeeded in reopening the file of the Palestinians, an important development in view of PLO troubles in recent months.

With the exception of Egypt, none of these Arab sources offered unconditional praise of Hassan's initiative. Some expressed skepticism, and most said that they would ultimately judge the summit on the basis of its results. Nevertheless, this was hardly the militant condemnation that was hoped for by Arab rejectionists or other critics of the Moroccan monarch, or by hard-liners in Israel who are also opposed to compromise. Some Arab states, like Tunisia, did not comment on the summit at all, and observers judged the condemnation of others, such as Iraq and Kuwait, to be restrained and to some extent perfunctory.

A fourth point of significance is the existence of the communique, which reinforces the public nature of the meeting. The statement issued at Ifrane also records Hassan's concern that the meeting, though exploratory, be understood as part of an effort to foster a broader Arab-Israeli dialogue.

Moroccan-Israeli contacts continued after the Ifrane summit. In August, Israeli newspapers reported visits by Moroccan agricultural specialists and by Moroccan journalists. Among others, a representative of Morocco's banana growers was said to have toured Israeli groves in the northern part of the country and to have signed several commercial contracts. It was also reported in August that Israeli Transport Minister, Haim Corfu, had been invited to attend a transportation convention in Morocco. The invitation, issued with the approval of King Hassan's government, marked the first time an Israeli cabinet member had been asked to attend a conference in an Arab country other than Egypt.

In October, the king himself met several Israeli officials when he received members of the World Association of Moroccan Jewry at his palace in Rabat. Those with whom he met included four Moroccan-born Israeli members of Knesset. One was Rafi Edri, who had accompanied Peres to Ifrane. In greeting his guests, who had come to Morocco for a meeting of the executive committee of their association, Hassan is reported to have said, "Let this association serve as a bridge between the Jewish world and the Arab world, for it is our community that links the two." A spokesman for the visitors responded by praising the king "for his courage in helping to build bridges of understanding between Israel and its Arab neighbors," and there were reports that Edri may have given Hassan a private message from Peres. In addition, though denied by officials in Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported at this time that the king's senior advisor, Ahmed Reda Guedira, had travelled to Israel for further discussion with Peres.

Four Moroccan businessmen and agriculturalists visited Israel in March 1987. The men were on a private mission, and the Rabat government issued a strongly-worded statement to the effect that the group had no official status. Nevertheless, the Moroccans met with a number of Israeli officials, including

deputy minister of agriculture Avraham Katz-Oz and Yitzhak Peretz, a Moroccan-born Member of Knesset affiliated with the Labour Party. Katz-Oz told reporters that he had met the men during his own visit to Morocco two years earlier and expressed the view that, despite denials from Rabat, the delegation would not have been possible without the approval of Moroccan authorities. While in Israel, the Moroccans toured a variety of agricultural settlements, research institutes and processing facilities, giving special attention to production of bananas, poultry and dairy products.

The U.S. Contribution

Three kinds of explanations have been advanced by those who seek to account for King Hassan's receptivity to contact with Israel. First, it is argued that Hassan is motivated by a desire to demonstrate the strategic value of a Moroccan connection to the United States and other Western powers and, in so doing, to acquire tangible benefits in return. Second, it is suggested that Moroccan calls for Arab-Israeli reconciliation are not totally cynical but, rather, that the king genuinely regards himself as a bridge between Arabs and Jews. Third, some assert that Hassan is pursuing a strategy which he sincerely believes to be in the interest of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular. These three kinds of explanations are not mutually exclusive.

Morocco depends heavily on U.S. military and economic assistance, which is essential for the conduct of the war in the Western Sahara and, more generally, for the nation's economic survival. As shown in the accompanying table, Washington currently provides Rabat with about $130 million annually in economic and military assistance. The amount of overall foreign assistance to Morocco declined somewhat between 1983 and 1986, and this is naturally a source of concern to Rabat. More generally, however, U.S. aid has more than doubled since the Reagan administration came to power and the percentage of assistance given

as a grant has increased steadily since 1982. Even though these expressions of American friendship toward the regime in Rabat are hardly adequate to offset Morocco's deepening economic troubles, they represent significant sums of money which King Hassan's government would find it extremely difficult to do without.

Table

U.S. FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO MOROCCO, 1980-1986

(millions of U.S. dollars)

FISCAL YEAR	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Development Assistance (grant)	9.1	12.1	10.7	13.5	19.0	19.5	20.0
Economic Support Funds (grant)	0	0	0	0	7.0	15.0	11.5
Public Law 480 Title I (loan)	5.8	25.0	35.0	27.5	45.0	55.0	40.0
Public Law 480 Title II (grant)	9.9	16.	13.5	10.5	14.9	8.8	5.6
Foreign Military Sales (guaranteed loan)	25.0	33.4	30.0	75.0	38.75	8.0	5.0
Military Assistance Program (grant)	0	0	0	25.0	30.0	40.0	45.0
International Military Education & Training Program (IMET) (grant)	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.47	1.85
TOTAL	50.7	87.6	90.3	152.8	156.15	147.77	128.95
TOTAL GRANT	19.9	29.2	25.3	50.3	72.4	84.77	83.95
PERCENT GRANT	39%	33%	28%	33%	46%	57%	65%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of State

The king may be hoping that his gesture toward Israel will lead to a substantial increase in assistance from the United States. After all, Egypt currently receives about $2.5 billion in U.S. aid annually, a figure that assumed such proportions only after the Camp David accords of 1978. Thus, were his meeting with Peres to generate serious movement toward Arab-Israeli accommodation, Hassan might find it reasonable for Washington to show its appreciation by helping to meet the economic needs of a valuable Arab ally. In all probability, however, Hassan's objectives and expectations were less grandiose. The king's immediate concern in 1986 was to limit the aid cuts expected to result from U.S. efforts to reduce its budget deficit. He also hoped, if possible, to see American foreign assistance restored to its 1985 or 1984 level.

In calculating that an overture toward Israel might help him to acquire more U.S. support, the king has not only been influenced by the example of Egypt. Hassan is also aware that several black African countries, most notably Zaire and Liberia, have been able to shore up U.S. aid packages by reestablishing diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. Yet another indication that Hassan hopes his moderate stance towards Israel will contribute to increased U.S. aid is the fact that he has sought to generate support for Moroccan interests from Jewish and Zionist groups in the United States. For example, it is no accident that he chose David Amar and Jo Ohanna to lead a high level mission to the U.S. in the spring of 1985. Amar, the king's personal business manager, is also head of the Moroccan Jewish community. Ohanna is the only Jewish member of the current Moroccan parliament. More recently, when a new Moroccan ambassador to the U.S. was named early in 1987, he made it a point to meet with American Jewish leaders and a number of Jewish Congressmen. For example, the new ambassador, M'hamed Bargach, met in April with Stephen Solarz

(D-N.Y.), an outspoken supporter of Israel who several years earlier had been critical of U.S. aid to Morocco, and Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.). Indeed, reports of the meeting, including pictures, were printed in the weekly newspapers serving a number of American Jewish communities.

Rabat not only seeks direct economic assistance from the U.S. Extremely important, too, is World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policy toward Morocco, which to a considerable degree is shaped by the attitude of the administration in Washington. Since 1983, the World Bank has almost doubled its lending to Morocco, the amount having increased from roughly $250 million to more than $400 million annually. The International Monetary Fund has also played an increasingly important role in the financial affairs of the country. As Rabat's current accounts deficit worsened and contributed to an external debt approaching $13 billion, the IMF in September 1985 granted Morocco 18 months access to $230 million in standby credit and an additional $132 million for the financing of overseas grain purchases. In August 1986, with another half billion dollars added to the external debt, and with Morocco unable to pay either its bill for imports or its debt service obligations, the IMF agreed to negotiate a new loan package and to reschedule the country's debt yet again.

Morocco is receiving this assistance through its incorporation into the "Baker Plan," named for U.S. Treasury Secretary James Baker. Fashioned at the 1985 World Bank-IMF Conference, the plan offers fifteen countries a total $20 billion in commercial credit in return for austerity measures and economic policy reforms. Morocco is one of the countries included in the plan, and in part the Bank and the IMF have been responsive to Rabat's needs because Morocco has indeed carried out many of the belt-tightening and reform measures demanded by its international creditors. For example, the country has reduced subsidies on foodstuffs and other basic commodities and cut public spending during the

last eighteen months. It has also begun to limit state intervention in the economy and to expand the private sector.

Yet Rabat's ties with the U.S. are critical, too; it is unlikely that Morocco would have been included in the Baker Plan had it not been seen as a team player and a valuable ally by the Reagan administration. Thus, IMF and World Bank assistance to Morocco — whatever its long term value, and this is a matter of debate — is also in large measure a function of Moroccan-American relations.

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Although Morocco has long enjoyed a cordial relationship with the United States, events of the last few years have led some in Washington to wonder about the value of a close alliance with King Hassan, and this in turn has caused Rabat to seek opportunities to assure the United States that it is indeed a useful and reliable ally. To begin, internal unrest and domestic challenges to Hassan's rule have raised questions about the long-term stability of the monarchical regime in Morocco. In 1979, for example, in the wake of the Iranian revolution, the Central Intelligence Agency issued a report indicating that the government of King Hassan could be overthrown in the near future. Thereafter, concern intensified as a result of major rioting in Casablanca in 1981, postponed elections in the same year, the discovery of a military plot against the monarchical regime in 1983, and blatantly rigged local elections in the latter year as well. A watershed of sorts was reached in 1984, when widespread rioting in January left the nation badly shaken and brought a government crackdown that added to the climate of tension and uncertainty. The combined weight of these developments led some in Washington to suggest that U.S. interests were not well served by close identification with the government of King Hassan.

Comparisons between Morocco and Iran were common at this time and reinforced doubts about the future of Hassan's government. These comparisons were encouraged, in the first instance, by structural similarities between the Shah's regime and that of King Hassan. Both were traditional monarchies supported by the military and governing in association with a small and privileged elite. Symbolic factors also suggested commonalities between the government in Rabat and that in Tehran prior to the revolution. These included both the pomp and extravagance of palace life and the opposition of Islamic movements claiming that monarchies are alien to the true spirit of the religion. Relevant, finally, was the fact Hassan received the Shah after his overthrow while opponents of the Moroccan monarch visited Tehran following Khomeini's ascent to power.

Whether justified or not, all of this contributed to concern about the the long-term prospects of King Hassan and his government and lent credibility to the view of those who argued that the king might soon be incapable of containing the challenges confronting him. Even if the regime did survive, some added, repression would inevitably increase and this would make the Rabat government a less desirable ally. Senior officials of the Reagan administration were not themselves overly preoccupied with concerns of this sort. On the other hand, criticisms and doubts were expressed in Congressional and State Department circles and could not be ignored by authorities in Rabat.

Rabat's worries about its ties to the United States have also been shaped by past disputes over the delivery and use of American weapons. Beginning in 1977, there were complaints that Morocco was violating a 1960 security assistance agreement between the two countries and this brought opposition, both in Congress and by the Carter administration, to the continued provision of certain weapons to Morocco. It was charged, in particular, that Rabat was using

U.S.-supplied aircraft in the Saharan war, even though Washington had made them available with the understanding that they would not be employed outside of Morocco's internationally recognized borders. The administration announced in November 1978 that is was limiting arms sales to Morocco because of this situation, and the following spring Rabat responded by asking President Carter to withdraw the U.S. ambassador in Rabat.

Washington modified its arms policy toward Morocco late in 1979 and, significantly, a key factor in overcoming congressional opposition was the support that Rabat received from a number of representatives known for their sympathies toward Israel. A full account of the role that pro-Israeli poltical action groups played in this episode is not available, but it does appear that these group encouraged their friends on Capitol Hill to be responsive to the needs of King Hassan's government.

Changing attitudes and perceptions within the Carter administration also had much to do with the change in policy. The revolution in Iran led to charges that the Shah had fallen because of inadequate U.S. support, and Washington was thus sensitive to the contention that it might no longer be perceived as a strong and reliable ally. It is in this connection that Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Harold Saunders, in January 1980 made the following statement to Congress about the need to assist Morocco: "With Southwest Asia in turmoil, we need to nurture our relations as never before with all Islamic and non-aligned states, but we particularly need to stand up for and support our avowed friends and supporters." Rabat's case in the American capital was further helped by the fact that Polisario forces carried out attacks inside Morocco in 1978 and 1979. These raids added validity to Rabat's insistence that it was not fighting a "foreign" war in the Sahara and that the use of U.S. weapons against Polisario thus was not a violation, or at least not a serious violation, of the security assistance agreement it had signed with the

United States.

The political orientation of the Reagan administration predisposed it to be less critical of Rabat, and Washington accordingly agreed in 1981 and 1982 to increase the flow of arms to Morocco. A number of senior U.S. officials visited Morocco at this time, including Secretary of State Alexander Haig who travelled to Rabat in February 1982. One result of this new warmth in Moroccan-American relations was the establishment early in 1982 of a joint military commission. Another was a dramatic increase in the amount of military assistance that Washington proposed to provide to Morocco. The administration in April asked Congress to authorize $100 million in military sales credits for the 1983 fiscal year, an increase of more than 300 percent from the 1982 level of $30 million. The joint maneuvers that Moroccan and American armed forces carried out in April 1983 provided yet an additional manifestation of deepening military cooperation between Washington and Rabat.

Yet in 1984 there emerged a new and potentially more serious complication in Moroccan-American relations, the formation of a political union between Morocco and Libya. In August, Hassan met with Muammar Qaddafi in Oujda and signed a treaty establishing the Arab-African Union. Moreover, though the Oujda Agreement envisioned only a loose confederal structure linking the two states, the Arab-African Union was not limited to symbolic pronouncements professing an intention to work for unity in the future. On the contrary, it was marked by expanded economic and cultural cooperation and by the actual creation of federal political institutions, some of which had begun to function by the end of 1984.

The agreement between Hassan and Qaddafi was eminently reasonable from the Moroccan point of view. Rabat's motivation for the accord was to end Tripoli's support for Polisario guerrillas, Morocco's adversary in the eight-year old war in the Western Sahara; to offset a 1983 Treaty of Fraternity and Concord between

Algeria, Tunisia and Mauritania, which reduced the influence of both Morocco and Libya in the North African political arena; and to gain a variety of economic benefits, the most important being the opportunity for unemployed Moroccans to find work in Libya. Furthermore, although there had long been serious strains in the relationship between Rabat and Tripoli, a rapprochement between the two governments had been in the making for over a year, which meant that Washington and others might properly have anticipated the Hassan-Qaddafi alliance of August 1984.

But the formation of the Arab-African Union nevertheless took the U.S. by surprise and brought bitter denunciations from American officials. The Reagan Administration felt betrayed by its allies in Rabat and was particularly angry that the initiative for the new alliance had come from Hassan. One of Washington's fears was that the union might enable Qaddafi to exploit domestic opposition in Morocco, or perhaps move Morocco away from its traditional moderate and pro-Western foreign policy. The principal U.S. concern, however, was that the union with Morocco would enhance the legitimacy and reduce the diplomatic isolation of the Muammar Qaddafi, whom the United States considers an international outlaw. Equally important, Washington worried that under the mutual defense provisions of the unity agreement, U.S. arms made available to Morocco might find their way to Tripoli, perhaps even to be used in Qaddafi's foreign adventures.

Hassan insisted that U.S. fears were unfounded and suggested that his association with Qaddafi would actually moderate the Libyan leader's behavior. The U.S. remained skeptical, however, and U.S.-Moroccan relations were accordingly strained during the latter part of 1984. Moreover, these strains were intensified, and any hope that the Moroccan connection might moderate Qaddafi's own behavior dashed, when Egyptian police apprehended Libyan agents seeking to carry out a campaign of terror and assassination late in the year.

U.S. determination to take action against Qaddafi intensified during 1985 and 1986, culminating with bombing raids on Tripoli and Benghazi in April of the latter year. These developments caught Hassan in the crossfire between his Libyan and American allies and created considerable tension in relations between Washington and Rabat, all of which helps to explain Hassan's desire to appear sensitive to U.S. ties to Israel and supportive of American peace-making efforts in the Middle East. Fearful that his Libyan connection might bring an end to the American support his government enjoyed, and on which it had in fact become heavily dependent, the Moroccan monarch sought opportunities to demonstrate to the United States the utility of his friendship.

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An example of Hassan's effort to make himself useful to the United States was his responsiveness to Washington's desire to gain access to Moroccan military bases for use, if necessary, by the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force. The RDF is a strike force which had been created specifically for use in the Middle East. In the spring of 1982, on the eve of Israel's invasion of Lebanon, Washington and Rabat were involved in intense negotiations over the question of American access to Moroccan military facilities and the Reagan administration made it clear that a return was expected on its investment in Morocco. The matter was a major topic of discussion when Hassan visited the U.S. in mid-May, and a week later the two countries concluded an agreement whereby American military planes would be permitted to use Moroccan airfields in the event of an emergency in the Middle East or Africa. Facilities were to be made available to the U.S. at several Moroccan airfields, most notably the military section of the Casablanca international airport and the military air base at Sidi Slimane. It was also agreed that this arrangement would continue for six years, with the

possibility of renewal in 1988.

Although Rabat recognized the need to satisfy the Reagan administration, and hence concluded an agreement with Washington, the matter of U.S. access to Moroccan military installations was highly sensitive for the Moroccans. Negotiations were intense and Hassan's government at first played down the importance of its talks with the U.S. and then, for a time, sought to conceal the fact that a facilities-access accord had been concluded. Washington, for its part, respected Moroccan concerns to the extent of agreeing that the text of the accord not be made public. There are also reports, although some in Washington deny them, that Morocco retains a right to reject requests for access to its facilities if the U.S. is taking action against a Arab country with which Rabat has friendly relations.

Morocco's military cooperation with the United States in general, and the facilities-access agreement in particular, gave much ammunition to King Hassan's critics. Both domestic and foreign opponents of the king charged that Hassan had subordinated Moroccan and Arab interests to those of the United States and Israel. The purpose of the Rapid Deployment Force, they insisted, was to protect American interests in the Middle East, adding that these interests often ran counter to those of the Arabs. Israel and a few conservative and unrepresentative Arab regimes might benefit as well, but the projection of U.S. military power into the region nonetheless ran counter to the true interests of the Arab world; and on this basis they condemned Hassan for betraying the cause of the Arab nation. Such arguments were forcefully advanced by the king's critics at home and abroad, including both those on the left and those associated with militant Islamic movements. Algeria, in particular, sought to embarrass Morocco by calling on all Arab governments to deny the RDF access to their military facilities.

Making all this even more sensitive from the Moroccan point of view was the

fact that Washington and Rabat were conducting negotiations and concluding an agreement at a time when Israel's invasion of Lebanon was widely expected. Following numerous Israeli denunciations of PLO activity in southern Lebanon, the Israel Defense Forces had mobilized in April for a possible sweep across the country's northern border. Many observers predicted that an invasion was imminent; and, even though the operation did not immediately take place, there was no doubt about the determination of Menachem Begin's government to neutralize PLO forces in Lebanon. Moreover, it was widely believed in the Arab world that the U.S. was taking a tolerant attitude toward Israeli designs, and perhaps even giving Jerusalem active encouragement. At the very least, the U.S. at the time shared the Israeli government's belief that instability in Lebanon was primarily the result of the PLO's presence in that country. Reinforcing the perception of U.S.-Israeli collusion was a visit to Washington by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. Sharon met with Secretary of State Alexander Haig several weeks before the actual invasion, which took place early in June. Although it is denied in both Washington and Jerusalem, many believe that Haig at this time gave tacit and perhaps even direct approval for the invasion.

While these developments gave King Hassan reason to put some distance between himself and the Reagan administration, he in fact judged it in his interest to do just the opposite. The conclusion of a facilities-access agreement between the United States and Morocco accordingly indicates the degree to which Hassan attaches importance to his American connection and is willing, if necessary, to take stands which are unpopular in the Arab world in order to preserve it. Furthermore, the king not only went forward with the military cooperation accord he had concluded with the U.S., he also involved himself deeply in the diplomatic activity that followed Israel's invasion of Lebanon and he did so in close collaboration with the United States. This, too, shows the

king's priorities and strategy in the defense of Moroccan interests.

After the invasion, Morocco helped to organize a meeting of the Arab League in order to respond to events in Lebanon and, also, to the evolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict more generally. Then-Foreign Minister Boucetta visited a number of Middle Eastern countries in August to canvass Arab opinion and to lay the ground work for an Arab summit, to be held in Fez in September. About this time, on September 1, the American president put forward a peace initiative designed to resolve the critical Palestinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict. President Reagan proposed that Israel relinquish control of the West Bank and Gaza, Arab areas which it had occupied since 1967, and that the Palestinians who live in these territories be permitted to achieve their self-determination in association with the Kingdom of Jordan.

Although the Reagan Plan was not entirely satisfactory to the Arabs, Hassan praised it and, along with a few other Arab leaders, worked to see that it was favorably reviewed at the Fez meeting. It was thus clear that Israel's expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon, invading a sovereign Arab country and laying siege to its capital in the process, did not weaken the king's desire to ally himself with Washington on matters affecting the Middle East and did not erode his willingness to work for an accommodation with the Jewish state.

The Arab summit viewed the Reagan Plan as a positive development but urged the U.S. administration to go farther. It proposed its own alternative, which was Arab recognition of Israel in return for creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Although the Fez Plan was not acceptable to the U.S., Washington nonetheless viewed it as an expression of Arab moderation, one which moved the Arab world closer to acceptance of Israel's right to exist. Washington also recognized that Hassan had played an important role in formulating and securing approval for the Arab peace plan. Further, the king responded to the complaints of some

Americans that the plan did not unambiguously express a willingness to make peace with Israel. He issued public statements making it clear that Morocco was prepared to recognize the Jewish state and affirming that this was also the position of the other Arab countries that endorsed the Fez Plan.

In October, Hassan led a delegation to the United States to explain the plan and urge support for it. He also sought to discuss with administration officials concrete steps that might be taken to promote peace. Six Arab states participated in the mission. Hassan had originally sought to add a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization but abandoned this proposal when the U.S. objected. While in Washington, Hassan again praised the Reagan Plan and stated that peace with Israel was possible. In one public declaration he expressed confidence that peace and coexistence could be achieved "on the basis of the American and Arab proposals and the U.N. Security Council resolutions." In another he stated that "the Arab nations will recognize Israel if it returns to its pre-1967 borders."

It is significant that King Hassan, an important head of state, would lead an Arab delegation to the U.S. and publicly affirm in the American capital his willingness to make peace with Israel. This action demonstrates once again that Hassan believes it is in his interest to seek an accommodation with the Jewish state and to coordinate his policies closely with the United States. In a related context, concerning Lebanon, it is interesting to note that there was talk for a time that Morocco might provide troops to serve alongside American and European units in the international peace-keeping force being sent to Beirut. In November 1982, President Gemayel of Lebanon visited Rabat to discuss this possibility.

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It is clear that under Hassan's leadership Morocco has adopted toward the Arab-Israeli conflict a position which will win it favor in the United States. It has in recent years pursued this policy with consistency, during periods when Arab-American relations were strained. Hassan has also been willing to pursue this policy in a visible manner, not only in the United States but in the Arab world as well and, to a reasonable degree, inside Morocco itself.

It is therefore not surprising that the king would regard a new overture toward Israel, and even a gesture as bold and dramatic as his public summit with Shimon Peres, as a useful device for easing the strains that entered into Moroccan-American relations following the 1984 treaty between Hassan and Muammar Qaddafi. As explained, Washington was disturbed and perhaps even offended that one of its closest allies in the Arab world would offer legitimacy to a man whom the U.S. considers an international outlaw. The Reagan administration also worried that Moroccan resources, and especially weapons supplied to Morocco by the U.S. itself, might become available to Qaddafi and actually enhance the Libyan leader's ability to make trouble on the world scene. As the confrontation between Washington and Tripoli deepened during 1985 and the first part of 1986, Hassan experienced growing pressure to cut his ties with Qaddafi and concluded that action to smooth out his relations with the U.S. was necessary. Seen in this context, and against the background of his past contacts with the Jewish state, his invitation to Peres becomes less of a surprise.

And U.S. praise for Hassan was not long in coming. In glowing statements, the White House and State Department lauded the king for his "courageous initiative" and "potentially very important" contribution to the Arab-Israeli peace process. As expressed in a State Department press release issued the day after the summit, "This is an historic opportunity to further the cause of peace in the region and the U.S. Government urges all governments to support these

leaders." The U.S admitted that it had been consulted in advance about the meeting and explained that Washington appreciated Hassan's initiative all the more in view of the importance it attaches to face-to-face contacts between Israeli and Arab leaders. For several years, the Reagan Administration has taken the position that any revival of the peace process must involve direct talks between Israel and its neighbors. One State Department official interviewed immediately after the summit called this an "absolutely fundamental" element of Washington's Middle East policy, strongly endorsing the Hassan-Peres meeting in this context and adding that "this is the way in which serious work can get started."

Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, summed up U.S. reaction in the following statement before a subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee in October.

> The growing realization in the Arab world that direct contacts with Israel are acceptable and beneficial was clearly exemplified by King Hassan's meeting with Shimon Peres and the muted reaction to it, including in the Arab world. The Moroccan monarch joined those who forthrightly declare to the world that they are willing to take risks for peace -- to face threats from rejectionists who all too often resort to cowardly terrorism and intimidation to block peace. We applaud Morocco's action.

Murphy's statement, entitled "Supporting U.S. Interests in the Middle East," also listed other "positive developments that we have seen in the region over the past several months," and at the top of this list was Hassan's abrogation in August of the treaty of union with Libya.

In sum, Hassan's calculations appear to have been sound so far as Moroccan-American relations are concerned. An Israeli commentator, Asher Wallfish, wrote

on the day of the summit that the Moroccan monarch has staged "a coup de theatre for the guest as well as the host" but "Hassan will probably gain more from the visit than Peres." The king "constantly needs to prove to the U.S. administration that he deserves to keep on getting the financial and military aid he receives. What better way than by mounting a fresh initiative for dialogue?" And indeed, Hassan's meeting with Peres, followed by his announcement five weeks later that Morocco was terminating its union with Libya, brought about a significant improvement in relations between Rabat and Washington. It may also be noted that the Hassan-Peres summit received very favorable notices in Europe.

Other Contributing Factors

The preceding might suggest that Hassan's interest in Arab-Israeli accommodation is insincere and manipulative. In fact, however, it may reasonably be argued that the king is motivated not only by a concern for the preservation of good relations with the United States but also by a belief that he has a special role to play in bridging the gap between Arabs and Jews and, further, by a conviction that he is rendering a genuine service to the Palestinian cause. Consideration of these arguments is not intended to challenge the view that Hassan's political calculus is based above all on a desire to be recognized and rewarded by the administration in Washington. It is rather to identify and assess some of the other factors that contribute to the king's receptivity to contact with Israel. These additional perspectives on the Hassan-Peres summit will also contribute to an understanding of the king's self-image and of moderate Arab views about solutions to the Palestinian problem.

The situation of Morocco's own Jewish community sheds important light on Hassan's attitude the Jews and toward Israel. Even though the number of Jews in Morocco has shrunk from over 250,000 at independence to less than 18,000 at

present, the Moroccan Jewish community remains the largest and most secure in the Arab world. Its members participate actively in the nation's economic and political life. Although many are poor, many others are quite prosperous and there is also a bureacratic and professional Jewish middle class. The recent election brought a Jew into parliament. Further, since most Jews today live in Casablanca, the regime has in the past been responsive to their needs by including a Jew among its candidates for the Casablanca Municipal Council. Finally, and perhaps most important, Jews retain control of their community and its institutions, including schools, courts, social services, and administrative councils. In each of these areas, the Jews of Morocco enjoy considerable autonomy, permitting them to maintain a level of communal solidarity and coherence that is unknown among the Jewish minority in any other Arab country.

Hassan takes personal pride in this situation, regarding himself as the protector of Moroccan Jewry; and, as a result, most of the latter believe the king is sincerely concerned about their welfare. Moreover, Hassan is carrying forward an established historical tradition, which encourages the view that the king's attitude is neither aberrant nor cynical but, rather, deeply rooted in the Moroccan monarchy's conviction that it is responsible for the well-being of all citizens of the country. For example, Hassan's father, Mohammed V, was admired for his refusal to deliver Jews to the Nazis during World War II, and for this a public square was recently dedicated to his memory in the Israeli city of Ashkelon. No other Arab leader, not even Anwar Sadat, has been so-recognized by the Jewish State.

These are among the considerations that led Moshe Dayan to write that King Hassan genuinely believes himself to have a special role to play in bringing Jews and Arabs together. This is the view that Hassan has of himself as leader of Morocco, a view he sees as totally consistent with the projection of

Morocco's Islamic identity as a nation; and an extension of this explicit and visible commitment to Arab-Jewish cooperation within Morocco is the contribution the king aspires to make to Arab-Jewish reconciliation in the international arena. Hassan has decreed, for example, that Moroccan-born Jews living in Israel have not forfeited their Moroccan citizenship and are welcome to return. Indeed, he has issued statements inviting them to do so on a number of occasions.

Even before the round of secret diplomacy that led up to the Camp David accords of 1978, the king encouraged visits to Morocco by prominent American Jews and even by some Israelis who were not of Moroccan origin. Visitors were often told that, under Hassan's guidance, Morocco conceives of itself as a bridge, as a point of meeting and transition. Its history and geography show it to be a link between Europe and Africa. Similarly, with respect to ideology and culture, it is a place where East and West intersect. In the context of this global and internationalist perspective, it is perhaps natural that the king should also see himself and his country as a point of reconciliation between Muslims and Arabs on the one hand and Jews and Israelis on the other. To be sure, there are elements of romanticism and even propaganda in such images of Morocco. In other circumstances, Hassan stresses that his nation's core is Arab and Islamic and that all other aspects of its identity are of secondary importance. And indeed this is the case. In the king's view, however, being Arab and Muslim is perfectly consistent with the international vocation that he has assigned to himself and his country.

All of this leads to the conclusion that Hassan takes seriously his image as protector of the Jews in Morocco and views himself as a leader capable of transcending local quarrels and of working for Arab-Jewish accommodation on the international level. Accordingly, the king's attitude toward Israel and toward Jews is motivated not by self-interest alone but also by a genuine sense of

historic and personal responsibility, the latter reflecting both a sincere ideological commitment and a healthy measure of egoism.

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There is another part of the explanation that stands in partial opposition to theories of self-interest, and this places emphasis on the contribution to the Palestinian cause that Hassan aspires to make. This, too, may reflect a degree of egoism. Further, Palestinians and others may legitimately debate whether Hassan's initiatives in actuality advance the realization of Palestinian rights, and the king's actions have in fact been condemned by many Palestinians. Nevertheless, it remains probable that Hassan's motivations include a sincere desire to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict in a way that respects and responds to the Palestinians' demand for a homeland.

Hassan's contribution to shaping and winning support for the Fez Plan is consistent with this analysis. Although the plan remains unacceptable to Arab rejectionists, who refuse to accept the existence of Israel as a Jewish state, it is nonetheless firmly based on the national and political rights of the Palestinian people, above all the right to self-determination. As stated, the plan calls for creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza with East Jerusalem as its capital. Further, the Fez Plan is an attempt by moderate Arab states to win support for the Palestinian cause in the U.S. and Europe, and to persuade the Western powers in turn to exert pressure on Israel. Put forward in response to the September 1 peace initiative of President Reagan, the plan offers recognition of Israel in return for the creation of a Palestinian state; and indeed this two-state solution has already been endorsed by most European nations.

Even if the Fez Plan has not won as much support in the U.S. as Hassan and

other moderate Arabs might have hoped, it stands as a constructive and reasoned response to the Reagan administration's own peace proposals. It also contrasts sharply with Israel's uncompromising attitude toward the American initiative of September 1, 1982. While the Arabs indicate a willingness to make peace with Israel in the context of a two-state solution, the Israeli government, then under the leadership of Menachem Begin, totally rejected the Reagan initiative and stated that it is not even an acceptable starting point for negotiations. Under such circumstances, Hassan and other Arab leaders might logically conclude that Arab moderation would strain relations between Washington and Jerusalem and produce greater American support for Palestinian rights. At the very least, it should have led the Reagan administration to act on its calls for Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Territories and for the exercise of Palestinian self-determination in association with Jordan.

Hassan's subsequent activities have not strayed from either the Fez Plan or the moderate Arab consensus it represents. This was evident when he urged the Arab League in March 1986 to test Israeli willingness to negotiate on the basis of the plan and also when he himself took the initiative by inviting Peres to Ifrane. Moroccan officials commenting on the Hassan-Peres summit placed particular emphasis on this point. For example, Foreign Minister Filali told the Jerusalem Post in an interview, "The most positive result, in my opinion, is that Peres understood the fundamentals of the Fez Plan, which Israel has always opposed." The following excerpts from this interview are also indicative of Morocco's desire to make progress towards solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is clear that if Peres had arrived with concrete proposals the king would have been happier.

We thought the Israelis were ready to take a step toward the

Palestinians. In any event, we feel it was necessary to do what we did, that is to start a dialogue.

It is my feeling that the Israelis must be less intransigent. We (ourselves) are realistic and believe that this conflict has gone on much too long.

Peres cannot return to Morocco if he does so only to tell us the same thing. But he promised in a document he gave us that Israel would not impose its sovereignty on the Occupied Territories.

I also want to stress the warmth radiating from the meeting. There was a kind of electric current flowing between the king and Mr. Peres and between the members of the Moroccan delegation and the Israeli team -- in which was included a Jew of Moroccan origin. When the king appealed to Shimon Peres, he used the word "brotherhood."

Some of these same points were expressed by Hassan himself when he reported to the Moroccan people on his meeting with Peres. The king stated, for example, that he had resisted all attempts to move the talks beyond the context of the Fez Plan. He accepted Peres' determination to present his own proposals; but he insisted that the meeting be exploratory, not part of a negotiating process, and repeatedly stated that he himself was interested only in exploring Israel's attitude toward the Fez Plan. Also, in his speech and elsewhere, Hassan emphasized his responsibilities within the Arab League, including the chairmanship of its committee on Jerusalem. Here, again, he reaffirmed his determination not to modify the established Arab position on the Palestinian question, insisting that his sole purpose was to give Israel an opportunity to narrow the gap between itself and Arab moderates.

The king also indicated in his speech that two sets of considerations had influenced the timing of his initiative. One had to do with the circumstances

of the Arab world, and of the Palestinians in particular. The other had to do with the domestic political environment in Israel.

In the former context, it is significant, although Hassan did not say this explicitly in his address, that the PLO had asked the king for assistance in the wake of its growing internal fragmentation and its split with King Hussein of Jordan in February 1986. Details of Morocco's contacts with the PLO are not available, but it is known that in the spring of 1986 there were discussions between Moroccan officials and representatives of the PLO and that the latter asked the former for diplomatic support from the king. In June, for example, a PLO delegation visited Rabat for consultations with senior Moroccan officials and, presumably, with Hassan as well. The timing of this visit is important; it took place five weeks before the summit and after several months of Moroccan statements about the need to encourage Israel to negotiate on the basis of the Fez Plan.

In the latter context, Hassan sought to test Israel's political waters before Peres turned the premiership over to Yitzhak Shamir of Likud. Likud represents that segment of the Israeli electorate which is committed to territorial maximalism. Thus, for example, the Likud-led government of Shamir's predecessor, Menachem Begin, rejected the peace initiative put forward by Ronald Reagan in 1982 because it called for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. The Labor Alignment led by Peres, on the other hand, reacted favorably to the Reagan initiative, even though not all of its provisions are acceptable to Labor and even though the Alignment shares with Likud a rejection of the Fez Plan. Despite their political and ideological differences, Labor and Likud had shared power in a government of national unity since 1984, agreeing to rotate the premiership between the leaders of the two parties. Under this arrangement, Peres had taken the first turn as prime minister and was scheduled to relinquish the position to Shamir in October 1986.

Hassan hoped to exploit the political divisions between Labor and Likud and to provide Peres with a reason to withdraw from his agreement with Shamir. Aware that Peres' popularity among Israelis had risen substantially in recent months, and also that some Alignment insiders were urging the prime minister to break the coalition agreement and call new elections, the king hoped to give Peres an opportunity to translate moderation toward the Arabs into domestic political capital. Should a breakthrough be achieved at Ifrane, Peres might decide to campaign on a peace plan which he and Hassan had fashioned and, with this additional momentum, he might achieve a large enough victory to permit Labor to form a government without the participation of Likud. Such a development would, of course, be in interest of Hassan and other moderate Arab leaders. And even if the Ifrane summit did not accomplish enough to have this kind of immediate impact on the Israeli political scene, it could nonetheless give Zionist advocates of territorial compromise ammunition to use in more distant elections. Israeli moderates consistently complain that the credibility of their political platform is limited by the absence of Arab leaders willing to state explicitly and publicly that they are ready for peace with the Jewish state.

A final point stressed in Hassan's own analysis is the fact that the meeting was held in Morocco. The king reported that Israeli officials had requested that the summit be convened in the United States during a visit Hassan had planned. A meeting in Washington also appears to have been the preference of the Reagan administration. It could be argued that both Jerusalem and Washington would actually get more mileage from an Arab leader welcoming the Israeli prime minister to his own country. Nevertheless, while they welcomed the summit, some of the president's advisor in fact complained that they had gone to considerable trouble to accommodate Hassan's wish to be received in the

U.S. capital and they were accordingly displeased when the meeting with Peres required the king to cancel his trip to the United States. As a result, Hassan would almost certainly have agreed to a meeting in Washington had he been motivated solely by a desire to score points with the Reagan administration.

But it appears that Hassan was pursuing other goals as well and that his motivations included a genuine wish that the fruits of his encounter with Peres be substantive as well as symbolic. He sought to maximize his control over the meeting and his leverage over the Israelis, which could be accomplished by hosting rather than attending a meeting with the Israeli prime minister; and his purpose in this was almost certainly to increase the chances of striking a bargain, one which would be politically advantageous to Peres but which would also advance the cause of the Palestinians.

For the time being at least, none of this has made much difference so far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned. On the other hand, it may be too early to render a final judgment about Hassan's attempt to bring Arabs and Israelis together. The king's actions may yet have some impact either in Jerusalem or Washington or among moderate Arabs. In any event, so far as the present analysis is concerned, the Moroccan king's efforts should be seen not only in the context of Rabat's desire to win favor with the United States but also as a serious Arab attempt to gain Israeli recognition of Palestinian political rights and thereby to make progress toward solving the Arab-Israeli conflict. This was not Hassan's principal motive, but neither was it wholly absent, as the king's critics have charged. Thus, quite apart from continuing debates about the wisdom or effectiveness of this approach to Arab-Israeli accommodation, it is necessary to conclude that Hassan sought to help the Palestinians as well as himself and that his invitation to Shimon Peres was not an entirely cynical and manipulative political action.