

MOROCCO & THE WESTERN SAHARA

Language proposed by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee will establish a dangerous precedent, requiring the US to consult with the United Nations before aid relief decisions are made in the Western Sahara. **It is critical that the U.S. is able to act decisively and cooperatively with Morocco, in a region that is vulnerable to looming terror threats from ISIL/Da'esh-inspired and linked HVEs.**

Morocco as a bulwark of Cooperation in the Fight Against Terror

- Morocco is a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL.
- Morocco is a major non-NATO Ally and a Mediterranean Dialogue (5+5) partner in the EU's Barcelona Process.
- Morocco participates in the 5+5 Defense Initiative, which brings together five European and five North African countries to address security issues in the Western Mediterranean.
- Over 1,000 U.S. personnel participate annually in a flagship bilateral military exercise, African Lion, and smaller bilateral exercises are held regularly.
- Recent Moroccan purchases of U.S. defense materiel include:
 - 24 F-16 aircraft; 24 T-6 trainer aircraft; 90 AGM-D Maverick air-to-ground missiles; refurbishment worth over \$1 billion for 200 Abrams M1A1 tanks acquired as a grant U.S. transfer; advanced AM 120-C7 air-to-air medium-range missiles systems; and Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) missile guidance kits.

Threat of Ceding Unilateral Authority

U.S. policy has long supported a solution to the Western Sahara based on a formula of autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty.



The Trump

Administration "continue[s] to view Morocco's autonomy plan as serious, credible, and realistic." Efforts to undermine progress underway to settle this dispute by ceding decision-making control on aid to the United Nations would carry a significant risk of alienating U.S. - Moroccan Security Cooperation. **The U.S. Government should retain its authority to act decisively in a region that is vulnerable to infiltration by autocracies which flirt with terrorism.** Last month, Vice President Pence announced that President Trump ordered the State Department to stop funding "ineffective" United Nations relief efforts and that, instead, the U.S. will help by funding directly through the U.S. Agency for International Development. The currently proposed Senate language could impede attempts to regain control of US diplomacy priorities.

TIME

"The last thing Africa needs is another failed state, and that's exactly what Western Sahara would become if Morocco left...An independent Western Sahara would be an even bigger breeding ground for terrorists."

- Peter Pham, Director of the The Atlantic Council, *There's a New Terrorist Threat Emerging in Western Sahara, and the World Isn't Paying Attention*