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Paper presented at the workshop on "The dynamics of change in the Arab world: Globalisation
and the re-structuring of state power"
Rome, 23-24 February 2007

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The aim of this research paper is to present a narrative for the relationship of the security sector (broadly defined) with Morocco's ongoing political transformation.

Many Arab states have evolved in the post-colonial period into security states -- that is, states where the primacy of the security sector, notably in maintaining regime stability, trumps the role played by political actors such as parties, elected officials, or appointed technocrats and senior civil servants. Morocco largely fits this model, with senior officials and royal advisers widely recognized as influential political players have often spent a career in the security services.

From military strongmen such as General Mohammed Oufkir in the early 1970s, General Ahmed Dlimi from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s and General Hosni Benslimane since the early 1980s, to security sector civil servants hailing from the Ministry of Interior such as former Prime Minister Driss Basri or current Prime Minister Driss Jettou, personnel from the security sector has and continues to play a pivotal political role in Morocco.

Despite an official narrative that pits King Muhammad VI has a reformist in contrast to the late Hassan II, eight years into his rule there has been little change to the practice of statecraft, which remains in the hands of a few persons loyal to the monarch. Non-security sector political actors, while they have gained new importance since Hassan II began to implement limited political reform in the 1990s, remain largely constrained by "red lines" imposed by the security sector and in practice must negotiate with it. Political groups that wish to operate outside of this framework, such as the Islamist movement al-Adl wal Ihsan, face severe limitations on their field of action and periodic security crackdowns.

As elsewhere in the region, post-9/11 global concerns about terrorism have also played a major role in redefining the Moroccan security sector's outlook. Morocco has been fingered as a major origin country for al-Qaeda affiliated Islamist terrorists, most notably in the Madrid train bombings of 11 March 2004, but also generally among the "Afghan Arabs." One reason for this is the Moroccan security sector's support (within the scope of wider US and Saudi backing for Afghan *mujahideen*) for anti-Soviet Islamist groups during the Cold War.

In the aftermath of the 16 May 2003 Casablanca bombings, the Moroccan security services reversed what had appeared like a retreat from the public sphere and launched a wide-ranging crackdown on Islamist groups, arresting hundreds of alleged terrorists and earning the rebuke of local and international human rights groups that believed many of the arrests were unwarranted. The Casablanca attacks also changed the public discourse

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about the role of the security sector, with many observers noting what was dubbed a "Tunisian tendency" among the security services -- a reference to the zero-tolerance policy towards dissidents (notably Islamists) adopted by the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia.

Close collaboration between the Moroccan security services and Western ones -- notably those of France, Spain and the United States -- has also introduced a new problematic. Under the administration of US President George W. Bush, Morocco has frequently been singled out as an example of an Arab country that was engaging in positive political reform. On the other hand, the same administration has collaborated closely with Morocco, making it a key country in the "rendition" program to extradite and interrogate (often through the use of torture) suspected members of al-Qaeda.

Of particular interest in Morocco's case is that the revival of a critical role for the security sector in the aftermath of the Casablanca bombings coincided with the first attempt to address past human right abuses by the security sector in any Arab country: the *Instance d'Equite et de Reconciliation* (IER). The IER, headed by former leftist dissident Driss Benzekri (who spent 17 years in prison under Hassan II) was tasked with accounting incidents of kidnappings, torture and other human rights abuses by the security services under the reign of Hassan II, most notably the period known as *les années de plomb* (the year of lead). Although the IER represented a major step towards ending impunity for the illegal actions of the security sector, many observers have noted that it was a flawed process that did not sufficiently address the issue of key security sector personnel taking responsibility for past incidents.

Several important aspects of Morocco's security sector will be excluded from examination in this research paper. The question of Morocco's tense relationship with Algeria, with the Polisario and the Western Sahara's future status will not be broached in depth, although recent attempts by the Moroccan government to depict Sahrawi irredentists as Islamist radicals will be touched upon. These were excluded for both reasons of brevity and because of the difficulty obtaining reliable primary material from military sources.

This research paper will will draw in interview with primary sources including government officials, human rights activists, political actors, members of the IER as well as as media, NGO and academic sources.

Part of the reason for looking at at the relationship between security sector and the issue of political transition is because of the contradictory pressures countries such as Morocco have been exposed to (as explained in part two of the IAI/UI security sector concept paper): there has been increased pressure to pursue democratization since the end of the Cold War and, at least between 2003 and 2005, due to the Bush administration's "Forward Strategy of Freedom." But initial efforts focusing on electoral reform and monitoring have proved disappointing: electoral autocracies have been largely able to satisfy demands for elections while continuing to restrict prospects for meaningful political reform. In its conclusion, the paper will examine the potential for security sector-focused reform efforts.