

# MIR MARKER

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Folder Title: POTUS Trip to Rabat, Morocco for Funeral of King Hassan II, July 25, 1999 (Briefing Book)				
Staff Office-Individual: Executive Secretary				
Original OA/ID Number: 2590				
Row: 35	Section: 2	Shelf: 11	Position: 2	Stack: V

# Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

## Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001a. memo	Samuel Berger to POTUS re: Your Visit to Morocco for the Funeral of His Majesty King Hassan II (5 pages)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)
	<i>Partial release - KBH 2/5/2020</i>		
001b. memo	re: Meeting with King Mohammed Ben Hassan (2 pages)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)
	<i>Partial release - KBH 2/5/2020</i>		
001c. memo	re: Meeting with Moroccan Prime Minister Abderrahman Youssoufi (2 pages)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)
	<i>Partial release - KBH 2/5/2020</i>		
001d. talking points	re: Summary Points to be Made for Meeting with President Asad of Syria (1 page)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)
	<i>Partial release KBH 2/5/2020</i>		
001e. talking points	re: Points to be Made for Meeting with President Asad of Syria (2 pages)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)
	<i>Partial release - KBH 2/5/2020</i>		
<del>001f. email</del>	<del>re: Update on Middle East Peace Process (3 pages)</del>	<del>07/24/1999</del>	<del>P1/b(1)</del> <i>KBH 2/5/2020</i>

**COLLECTION:**

Clinton Presidential Records  
National Security Council  
Executive Secretary  
OA/Box Number: 2590

**FOLDER TITLE:**

POTUS Trip to Rabat, Morocco for Funeral of King Hassan II, July 25, 1999 (Briefing Book)

2015-0690-M  
rs1243

**RESTRICTION CODES**

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL  
OF CLASSIFIED ATTACHMENTS  
Initials: KBH Date: 9/9/2019  
2015-0690-M



**THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP  
TO RABAT, MOROCCO  
FOR THE FUNERAL OF  
HIS MAJESTY KING HASSAN II**

**JULY 25, 1999**

**Office of the Executive Secretary**

~~SECRET~~

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SCOPE MEMORANDUM



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Executive Secretary  
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rs1243

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED IN PART  
PER E.O. 13526

July 24, 1999

2015-0690-M [1.01]

KBH 9/9/2019

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

SAMUEL BERGER <sup>A</sup>

SUBJECT:

Your Visit to Morocco for the Funeral of His Majesty King Hassan II

*Life After Hassan . . .*

At times ruthlessly, often shrewdly, but always with a powerful sense of leadership, King Hassan II succeeded in holding together his country of 30 million people during thirty-eight turbulent years, surviving countless assassination attempts, military coups and economic riots. He was more than a mere King. Known as "the great survivor," he was the longest reigning monarch in Africa, supreme temporal and spiritual authority, the Commander-in-Chief, a descendant of the Prophet, the Commander of the Faithful, the Savior, the Unifier. He leaves behind a country in the midst of an extraordinary but fragile political experiment and a region on the verge of a historic but risky diplomatic adventure. In both arenas, he was expected to play significant parts. Like the other regional monarch whose death preceded his own by a mere five months, he bequeaths his titles and these heavy responsibilities to a young, untested son.

EO 13526 1.4d

*A Monarchy in Transition*

King Hassan thoroughly dominated Moroccan political life since 1961, when he inherited his father's throne at the age of thirty-two. There were numerous ingredients to his success. First was his capacity to use the symbols, ceremonies and power of his spiritual and political heritage. His legitimacy derived from his position as scion of a four-century old Alawite dynasty, which claims direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed.

EO 13526 1.4d

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Reason: 1.5(d)

Declassify On: 7/23/09

cc: Vice President  
Chief of Staff

EO 13526 1.4d

Equally effective was the King's use of the Western Sahara issue to strengthen his nationalist appeal. The 1970s saw the onset of the conflict, which pitted Morocco against the Algerian-backed and independence-driven POLISARIO front. In 1975, Hassan sent troops into Western Sahara following Spain's withdrawal, turning the issue into a unifying patriotic theme.

Perhaps most importantly, and again not unlike the other departed King, Hassan adeptly balanced two worlds: the Western -- whose support he needed -- and the Arab -- whose hostility he could ill afford. At no time was this in starker evidence than during the Gulf War when, sensing the powerful pro-Iraqi feelings of his citizenry, he both praised Saddam as his "dear Arab brother" and (alone among his immediate neighbors) sent forces to support the U.S. effort. In a supremely ambidextrous speech, he announced that his mind was with the coalition, while his heart was with Saddam.

EO 13526 1.4d

Seeking to deflect mounting criticism by diminishing his direct responsibility, Hassan began a process of political liberalization, releasing hundreds of political prisoners, expanding press freedom and broadening participation. In 1998, in one of his final and most significant political acts, he invited the leader of the Socialist opposition, a man twice sentenced to death, to lead his government.

The significance of Morocco's experience with political cohabitation (a conservative King from the world's oldest reigning royal house appointing a long-time socialist opponent as Prime Minister) extends far beyond the country's borders. For the Arab world as a whole, it has become a test case of whether the region can evolve peacefully toward pluralism and democracy. For secularists inside and outside Morocco, it has become a test of whether moderate, progressive parties can be viable alternatives both to repressive regimes and to radical Islam.

EO 13526 1.4d

*The Challenges Ahead*

Still untested, King Mohammed Ben Hassan faces several immediate challenges from rapidly changing domestic and regional scenes:

Political/Economic: With a per capita annual income of \$700, an Islamic movement that is expanding its grass-roots appeal and a fragile political partnership between monarchy and opposition, Morocco would have faced a menacing future even under King Hassan's continued rule. Economic growth has been uneven at best, due in large part to several debilitating droughts. Unemployment of 20 percent -- and up to 40 percent in some areas -- remains a potent source of discontent. At the same time, Morocco's Islamist movement has spread on university campuses, fuelled by the growing ranks of the unemployed. In response, the King banned Islamist movements from forming political parties and has held Morocco's most prominent Moslem opponent, Sheikh Abdesalam Yassine, under house arrest since 1989.

Maintaining a close relationship with ailing Prime Minister Yousoufi, continuing the political opening and deepening Morocco's fledgling democracy will be key to Mohammed Ben Hassan's success. But he will have to contend with large segments of the Kingdom's powerful elite which never warmed up to the idea of cooperating with the opposition -- or to the populist, egalitarian ideals to which it adheres.

Middle East Peace Process: Without Sadat's dramatic flair or Hussein's international presence, King Hassan quietly led the way toward Arab-Israeli contacts. In 1982, he hosted an Arab Summit meeting in Fez in which he persuaded all leaders to sign on to a peace plan that implicitly recognized Israel's right to exist. Later, he arranged for the first secret meetings between Egypt and Israel that led to President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. In 1984, he stunned the region by inviting eleven Knesset members to a meeting in Morocco to honor its Jewish population. Again, in July 1986, to the consternation of many of his countrymen, he met with then Prime Minister Peres in Morocco, for a series of talks on ways to negotiate a Middle East peace. More recently, in the lead-up to this year's Israeli elections, he invited numerous Israeli leaders, including many of Moroccan descent, calling openly for the peace process' resumption -- and implicitly for Bibi's ouster.

In short, Morocco more than once has played the role of path-breaker and trail-blazer. As the peace process enters a fateful phase, we will have to see whether the new King enjoys the moral and political authority to carry on his father's tradition.

Western Sahara/Algeria: Having agreed to the UN-sponsored referendum process on the future of the Western Sahara, Rabat has since dragged its feet, making clear that it will not countenance any outcome under which it would lose sovereignty over the area. In quiet approaches over the past several months, and sensing the futility of an ill-fated referendum process, we had encouraged Hassan to opt for a negotiated solution through direct talks with the POLISARIO. Former Secretary Baker, in his capacity as UN Special Envoy, has been playing an important public and behind-the-scenes role.

EO 13526 1.4d

Accordingly, we may witness a prolonged period of paralysis.

Two outside actors will be critical in this regard, both of whom may be tempted to test the young King early on. For the POLISARIO, the death of their arch-enemy provides an opportunity, though the military balance remains unchanged and clearly in Morocco's favor. More significant will be the approach taken by Algeria, a country that also has placed a new leader at its helm. Since his election in April, President Bouteflika has gone out of his way to improve relations with King Hassan, exchanging warm letters and agreeing to a meeting that was to have taken place in a matter of weeks.

EO 13526 1.4d

#### ***Who You Will See at the Funeral***

Though perhaps not as universally admired as Hussein, King Hassan was respected far beyond his own borders. Your presence at the funeral will send a powerful message throughout the Arab and Moslem worlds about our desire for close and friendly relations. You should expect to see most of the Arab world's leaders, a number of African heads of state as well as prominent Europeans. In most cases, the conversation likely will focus on the late King and the prospects for the peace process. For a handful, you will need to navigate trickier waters:

- **President Asad** [redacted] EO 13526 1.4d

[redacted] But you should avoid any specifics. Instead, you should emphasize that Barak came to Washington to learn more and to consult, not to make decisions. He said he needed time to think about it and put his negotiating team together. That is why we set the date for the Secretary's visit in mid-August. (Talking points follow).

- **President Bouteflika** has been sending countless messages that he wants closer relations with the United States. [redacted]

[redacted] EO 13526 1.4d

[redacted] Since that time, he has taken impressive steps to put an end to the conflict, pushing for adoption of a reconciliation package that includes amnesty for thousands of Islamists who do not have blood on their hands. How far he will go on the path toward genuine democracy and economic reform remains to be seen, but we should acknowledge his initial steps with reciprocal movement on our part (e.g., in terms of high level visits). You should tell Bouteflika that we are following his progress closely, welcome the steps he has taken to put an end to the conflict and hope that he will continue to take courageous steps to promote democracy, human rights and economic reform. The message should be that, as he does so, we will stand by Algeria. You also should encourage him to continue the rapprochement with Rabat. Finally, you should know that Bouteflika is eager to see you in his capacity as Chairman of the OAU during next September's UNGA. We have not yet settled on a schedule, and you should be non-committal.

- **Prime Minister Sharif** will approach you on Kashmir. Your response should be straightforward: he needs to finish the withdrawal in Kargil and should not lose the advantage he gained at Blair House.
- You should seek out **Amir Shaykh Hamad** of Bahrain, whose father's funeral you did not attend, and express your personal condolence.

**MEETING WITH KING  
MOHAMMED BEN HASSAN**

# Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001b. memo	re: Meeting with King Mohammed Ben Hassan [partial] (2 pages)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)

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National Security Council  
Executive Secretary  
OA/Box Number: 2590

### FOLDER TITLE:

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2015-0690-M  
rs1243

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MEETING WITH KING MOHAMMED BEN HASSAN

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Assure him of your desire to maintain the close relationship you enjoyed with his father.
- Tell him you want to remain in close touch on issues of mutual interest -- like the peace process and Western Sahara.

BACKGROUND

EO 13526 1.4d

Mohammed Ben Hassan, the son of Hassan's only recognized wife, will turn thirty six next month. He will be Morocco's first monarch to have been educated entirely in his country. He holds a law degree and, at age twenty two, was named second only to his father in command of Morocco's armed forces. He is known to be intelligent, witty and reform minded.

EO 13526 1.4d

More recently, as he became increasingly aware of his physical frailty, the King had begun to give his son additional leeway and exposure to the international scene. For example the Crown Prince represented Morocco in talks with POLISARIO officials in 1996. In a 1995 interview, King Hassan said his son would rule in his own way. "He is not me, and I am not him. I just have to pass on two important things: that he should be a patriot right up to the supreme sacrifice, and to keep going whatever happens."

Mohammed Ben Hassan is unlikely to order significant policy changes in the near term. Still, some adjustments are to be expected. He probably will take a lower profile on peace process issues (whether he invites Barak to the funeral will be a first indication) and rely more heavily on advisers and close family members.

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Note: King Hassan has another son and three daughters by Lalla Latifa, a commoner styled simply as the mother of the royal children. Mohammed Ben Hassan was the elder son.

EO 13526 1.4d

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POINTS TO BE MADE FOR MEETING ON  
KING MOHAMMED BEN HASSAN

- You lost a great father and the world a unique leader and statesman. He was a good friend and I relied on him very much.
- Want our relationship to be as close as one I enjoyed with your father. When you need me, let me know. I'll be there.
- He earned worldwide respect for Morocco as a visionary who understood the importance of peace in the Middle East.
- I will never forget courageous steps he took to promote Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Under his leadership, Morocco was a real trail-blazer for peace.
- Also earned universal admiration for the recent steps he took to promote pluralism, democracy, human rights. Know these are difficult, but strongly believe they are critical for Morocco's future and will serve as model for region.
- Know we will continue to work closely together, on peace process and on Western Sahara where a peaceful solution must be found.
- You will be in our thoughts and prayers, and the United States will be with you every step of the way.

**MEETING WITH PRIME  
MINISTER YOUSOUFI**

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MEETING WITH MOROCCAN PRIME MINISTER  
ABDERRAHMAN YOUSSEUFI

2015-0690-M [1.03]

KBH 9/9/2019

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Express support during this difficult phase.
- Assure Yousseoufi of our solidarity and backing for his efforts.

BACKGROUND

Abderrahman Yousseoufi -- head of the opposition United Socialist Forces Party (USFP) -- is Morocco's first opposition Prime Minister in over 35 years. He returned from self-imposed exile in 1995 and led the USFP party to a strong showing in the 1997 legislative elections, on the basis of which the king appointed him Prime Minister in March 1998. Selected by the King to stifle opposition criticism of the palace's cautious democratization program and its failure to address deep socio-economic problems, Yousseoufi was an ideal response to both charges: Yousseoufi's 50 years of political activity focused on labor and human rights and include two exiles and a death sentence issued in absentia by the King in the 1970s for leftist activities. (Hassan subsequently pardoned Yousseoufi in 1980.)

Since coming into office, Yousseoufi has focused on decentralization of authority, judicial reform, protection of human rights, "third way" economic liberalization, education reform, job-creation and improved conditions for women and children. He has been a proponent of warmer ties to Israel in the past and may support reengagement in the process now that tangible progress appears achievable. The Prime Minister also supports stronger ties to the West, particularly Europe since Yousseoufi and many of his cabinet members were educated in France and maintain ties to that country.

From the outset, Prime Minister Yousseoufi's relationship with King Hassan was marked by considerable ambiguity. They come from clearly distinct political and ideological traditions, and their antagonism has deep roots. Still, and despite having very different strategic objectives, they appeared to have developed a mutual dependency of sorts, with each one needing the other's backing to succeed. We lack solid evidence on Yousseoufi's relationship with the new King, but some indicators are of interest: the age-old personal enmity will be gone; Mohammed Ben

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Hassan is said to be reform-minded and close to civil society;

EO 13526 1.4d

Youssoufi was a teacher before he became president of the National Council of Resistance and got involved in left-wing political activity. He has served as vice president of a number of NGOs active in human rights.

POINTS TO BE MADE FOR MEETING WITH  
PRIME MINISTER YOUSOUFI

- This is a sad day. We are mourning a great statesman and leader.
- You, more than most, knew what kind of a leader he was. You had to fight him in the past, and work with him more recently.
- I think he did a great service to Morocco and more broadly to democracy by choosing you to be his Prime Minister. Believe he had learned from Morocco's and others' experience that country only could grow stronger with greater participation, pluralism, respect for human rights and economic equality.
- I greatly admire what you have done throughout your life, your courage and your commitment to the causes of social justice and human rights.
- You represent hope not only in Morocco but throughout Arab world for democratization and respect for human rights.
- Hope you will be able to work well with new King. I wish you success and am prepared to help.

**BILATERAL WITH  
PRESIDENT ASAD**

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SUMMARY POINTS TO BE MADE FOR MEETING WITH  
PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIA

- Very impressed by Barak's seriousness. The peace process is his top priority. Believe a peace agreement between the two of you is achievable.
- Am prepared to do my part to make that happen.

EO 13526 1.4d

- He made it clear that he had not come to make decisions. Wanted to lay out his vision and discuss how to achieve it.
- I respected that and did not press him to make a decision. He said he needed time to think about it and put his negotiating team together. That is why we set the date for the Secretary's visit in mid-August.
- Wanted to express appreciation for what you have been doing. Public statements helped create a positive environment.
- I have heard that you put the Palestinian rejectionists on notice. I would consider that to be an important step.
- Have noticed that situation in southern Lebanon has remained calm. But was alarmed by the side-bomb that Hezbollah exploded on Thursday. If it had hit its mark the chances for resuming the negotiations would have evaporated.
- If you can ensure no offensive activities by Hezbollah, I am confident Barak would agree to the same on his side.
- The most important thing now is to resume the negotiations as soon as possible. I hope you are ready to do that. I know Barak is. And, as I said, I will be ready to do my part to achieve an honorable and dignified peace.

DECLASSIFIED IN PART  
PER E.O. 13526

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Declassify On: 07/23/09

# Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

## Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001e. talking points	re: Points to be Made for Meeting with President Asad of Syria [partial] (1 page)	07/24/1999	P1/b(1)

### COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records  
National Security Council  
Executive Secretary  
OA/Box Number: 2590

### FOLDER TITLE:

POTUS Trip to Rabat, Morocco for Funeral of King Hassan II, July 25, 1999 (Briefing Book)

2015-0690-M  
rs1243

### RESTRICTION CODES

#### Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

#### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

SECRET

POINTS TO BE MADE FOR MEETING WITH  
PRESIDENT ASAD OF SYRIA

- Very impressed by Barak's seriousness. The peace process is his top priority. He believes that comprehensive peace is achievable in fifteen months.
- He is ready for bold moves and fateful decisions. He has a strong mandate from his people and a broad coalition behind him.
- If he can maintain the confidence of his people, he intends to proceed on all tracks simultaneously. He is not interested in playing one track off against the other or proceeding on one track and leaving the other behind.
- He views his Arab counterparts in the peace process as partners. He wants to build relationships based on trust and mutual respect.
- Most importantly, like Rabin, he is a man of his word. He will not say one thing and do another. He believes that it is essential to be straight and honest with you. He will not mislead you.
- As you know, I had long discussions with him. Based on what I know about you and what I now know about him, I believe a peace agreement between the two of you is achievable.
- And I am prepared to do my part to make that happen.

EO 13526 1.4d

- He talked about his commitment to achieve an agreement with you but he made it clear to me at the beginning of our conversations that he had not come to make decisions on this track, or any other, at this time. He first wanted to lay out his vision and discuss how to achieve it with me.
- I respected that and did not press him to make a decision. He said he needed time to think about it and put his negotiating team together. That is why we set the date for the Secretary's visit in mid-August.

SECRET

Reason: 1.5(d)

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PER E. O. 13526

2015-0690-M [1.05]

KBH 9/9/2019

- The Secretary will visit Israel and then come to Damascus to discuss the resumption of negotiations with you.
- I wanted to express my appreciation for what you have been doing in the meantime. Your public statements have helped to create a positive environment for negotiations.
- I have heard that you put the Palestinian rejectionists on notice. I would consider that to be an important step. It would be very helpful in putting our bilateral relationship on a more normal basis.
- I have noticed that the situation in southern Lebanon has, for the most part, remained calm. However, I was alarmed by the side-bomb that Hezbollah exploded on Thursday. It was aimed at a bus carrying 25 Israeli soldiers. If it had hit its mark the chances for resuming the negotiations would have evaporated.
- Hezbollah does not want peace. They know that Barak cannot carry on negotiations with you and make big decisions while Israel is taking casualties in Lebanon. They intend to explode the negotiations. You cannot allow them to sacrifice Syrian interests to their agenda. If they do, Barak will not be able to proceed and all our efforts will be fruitless.
- On the other hand, if you can ensure no offensive activities by Hezbollah, I am confident Barak would agree to the same on his side.
- The most important thing now is to resume the negotiations as soon as possible. I hope you are ready to do that. I know Barak is. And, as I said, I will be ready to do my part to achieve an honorable and dignified peace.



**TO BE PROVIDED**

**GENERAL POINTS ON  
KING HASSAN II**



## GENERAL POINTS TO BE MADE ON DEATH OF KING HASSAN II

- Tremendous loss. King, at helm of Morocco for thirty-eight years, helped build a stable nation in a turbulent region.
- Was close friend of the United States through good times and bad, most recently during the Gulf War. Also stood with us in Somalia.
- Displayed courage abroad and at home.
- Launched first contacts between Arabs and Israelis, displaying foresight and courage. In many ways, he paved the way for Sadat's historic trip to Jerusalem.
- Began a process of national reconciliation in Morocco, naming as his Prime Minister a longtime opponent, twice sentenced to death. With this act, showed that he had learned from experience that Morocco needed to evolve into a more modern, pluralistic and democratic society. In this way, Morocco stands out as a model in the Arab world.
- A readiness to make peace and to turn a page in Morocco's history are what King Hassan leaves behind.
- Now it is up to Crown King Mohammed Ben Hassan, with the help of the Moroccan people to complete what King Hassan II so courageously began. He does so at a time when the peace process once again is moving forward and when Morocco's vision and leadership will be sorely needed.
- He can count on our support as he undertakes this endeavor.

## Exchange Mail

DATE-TIME 7/24/99 9:31:41 AM

FROM Malley, Robert (NESA)

CLASSIFICATION ~~SECRET~~

CLASSIFICATIONREASON 1.5(d)

DATECLASSIFIEDON 07/24/1999

DECLASSIFYON 07/24/2009

SUBJECT UPDATE ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS [~~SECRET~~]

**DECLASSIFIED**  
**PER E.O. 13526**  
 2015-0690-M (1.06)  
 KBH 9/9/2019

TO Bartlett, L. June (EXSEC)  
 Bradtke, Robert A. (EXSEC)  
 Dejban, Donna D. (NSA)  
 Gire, Cynthia L. (EXSEC)  
 Hilliard, Brenda I. (EXSEC)  
 Jacobson, Tracey A. (ADMIN)  
 Joshi, M. Kay (EXSEC)  
 Kerrick, Donald L. (NSA)  
 Millison, Cathy L. (EXSEC)  
 Powell, Elliott (WHSR/EXSEC)  
 Sargeant, Stephen T. (EXSEC)  
 Snip, Sarah E. (EXSEC/INTERN)  
 Wasserman, Elaine P. (EXSEC)

CARBON\_COPY Riedel, Bruce O. (NESA)  
 Cooper, Kathleen H. (NESA)

TEXT\_BODY for the book

TRANSLATED\_ATTACHMENT HASSAN MEPP.doc  
 UPDATE ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Several developments have occurred since your meeting with Prime Minister Barak.

\* On the Palestinian track, Arafat's anxiety remains high, fueled by Barak's comments about Wye modification and by suggestions that the Syrian track may be about to take off, and only slightly abated by your phone call. His meeting with

Barak, originally scheduled for Saturday, now has been set for Tuesday in light of Hassan's funeral.

One element of confusion that has come into sharper focus in recent days involves Barak's claim that he wants to improve Wye by providing greater contiguity to the Palestinians. That assumes that Arafat has seen the Wye maps, which he has not.

(As you will recall, Bibi's government announced that it would show the withdrawal maps one phase at a time, and only upon the government's approval).

In other words, when Barak proposes to delay some of the land turn-over in exchange for an improved territorial make-up, Arafat will fail to see this as a fair trade. His natural response will be: improved as compared to what?

We have brought this issue to the Israelis' attention, but you may want to further sensitive Barak, as it could have a decisive impact on the atmosphere and outcome of Tuesday's talks.

\* On the Syrian track, the long-distance ballet between Barak and Asad continues, albeit with a few missteps. Foreign Minister Levy announced that he saw no reason why Israel should have to agree to full withdrawal ahead of negotiations, a statement that caused angry reactions from Damascus. Since then, however, Israelis and Syrians have inched closer to a public bridging of their positions. Danny Yatom, Barak's Chief of Staff, stated that Israel "had no problem" with Syria's demand that the process continue where talks were halted in 1996. "The main problem," he added, "is interpretation by the two sides." Syria's press hastened to welcome these remarks.

While encouraging, the steps still fall short. Barak is a captive of his vow not to allow Syrians to dip their feet in the water; Asad is constrained by his own statements about June 4, 1967; and both are at the mercy of a

Lebanese flare-up  
that quickly could get out of control.

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OF CLASSIFIED ATTACHMENTS  
Initials: KBH Date: 9/9/2019  
2015-0690-M

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