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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NYW 869041
By STW/SW Date 6/10/88



RAAN-36

INTELLIGENCE NOTE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

August 17, 1972

MOROCCO: HASSAN'S MILITARY PROVES UNTRUSTWORTHY

The attempt on August 16 by pilots of the Moroccan F-5 fighter squadron to kill King Hassan brings into question the loyalty of the Moroccan military. This loyalty is the key to the durability of Hassan's regime, particularly in view of his failure in recent months to broaden his power base by bringing the political opposition into the government. Since the abortive coup at Skhirat in 1971, the King has demonstrated that he is interested only in cosmetic reforms and that he has no intention to share power in a meaningful way. He appeared content to let his power rest on the narrow base of the military establishment, and seemed sufficiently confident of Defense Minister General Mohamed Oufkir's control to leave on an extended vacation to France at the end of July.

Demise of Oufkir. The apparent suicide of General Oufkir in the early hours of August 17 removes an irreplaceable pillar of support. Oufkir's total devotion to the monarchy was important because he was both ruthless and well organized, traits which enabled him to command respect from and inspire awe in the military establishment. He supposedly lived by a severe code of honor which had once led him to threaten suicide should the

RAAN-36
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3

SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

- 2 -

NINW 869041
By ST/WSW Date 4/10/88

King lose faith
ch in him. His replacement, General Driss Ben Aomar, while a loyal and respected officer (an ex-Chief of Staff) is not in good health and does not have the presence of Oufkir. He is not likely to be able to mend rifts within the military that may result from this latest attempt to overthrow Hassan.

Internal Outlook. The King now faces the task of again purging the military, which has shown itself untrustworthy twice in the past 13 months. To gain time and contemplate future maneuvers, if the King remains true to form, he will attempt to reopen a dialogue with the political opposition. He may be expected to downplay the attempted assassination as an isolated incident and create an atmosphere of dialogue and reform. Past experience, however, does not suggest that Hassan will change his personalized style of government based on a traditional web of patron-client relationships.

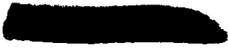
International Implications. The latest attempt came just as Hassan was recovering his international stature as a result of his adroit handling of the Rabat OAU Summit and his election as OAU President in June. He now stands to have his prestige slip again, particularly if he finds it necessary to devote all his energy to stabilizing his domestic scene. He may be inclined, however, to exploit his role as OAU President to try recovering international status as well as to draw attention at home away from a confused situation.

Neighboring Tunisia, Mauritania and possibly Algeria--despite Boumediene's dislike of monarchy--will probably be relieved that Morocco has been spared, at least for the moment, the chaos that would have resulted had the coup been successful. The hostile Libyan radio, on the other hand, lost no time in lauding the attempt on the King and calling for other efforts.

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E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.4

NINQ 969041
By STV'sw Date 11/10/88



- 3 -

US Linked to Plot. Moroccan officials have already alluded to US involvement because the pilots operated from Kenitra, where we have recently reduced our presence. We have strongly denied any role. While Hassan probably feels any such charges groundless, he nonetheless might believe that such a popular attitude would warrant a reduction or change in the US military presence; this would also serve him well in negotiations he may undertake with the political opposition, which opposes any US military presence in Morocco.

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