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2012 STRATEGIC PLAN

- **Overview**
- **The Goal & Expected Results**
- **Audiences, Campaigns & Principal Activities**
- **Messages**
- **Appendix**
 - **The Influence of American Ethnic Groups on US Foreign Policy**
 - **The Influence of Non-Governmental Organizations and Think Tanks on US Foreign Policy**



2012 STRATEGIC PLAN

OVERVIEW

Last year, 2011, the Moroccan American Center made up of the Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP), the Moroccan American Cultural Center (MACC), and the Moroccan American Trade and Investment Center (MATIC), defined its strategic goal as:

To gain explicit/concrete support from the Obama Administration for Morocco's Western Sahara policy by advancing Morocco's strategic relationship with the United States.

MAC worked with the Embassy and MAC consultants (The Washington Team) and the Rabat Team to develop programs, activities, campaigns, and messages that would secure the desired public statement from the Obama Administration **"and/or obtain concrete support through specific steps that demonstrate a US commitment to the Western Sahara."**

Due to the efforts of the Washington and Rabat Teams, both goals were achieved in 2011. In March 2011, during a visit by Foreign Minister Fassi-Fihri, Secretary Clinton explicitly stated that the long-held policy of the United States to support a solution based on autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty remained the same and specifically referred to the Moroccan initiative as "serious, credible and realistic." Secretary Clinton also committed to advancing the bilateral relationship with Morocco through the creation of a Strategic Dialogue.

The second half of the goal— "demonstrating concrete support through specific steps"— was realized when the Congress passed an Omnibus Appropriations Act that included, for the first time, language that "permits" US development assistance to be spent in the Western Sahara. All three outcomes (public support from the Obama Administration, a strategic dialogue between Morocco and the United States, and Congressional support for extending US foreign assistance to the Western Sahara) combine to make 2012 a key year for advancing the bilateral relationship and strengthening the US position on the Western Sahara.

The first section of the strategy paper explains the goal and expected results MAC hopes to achieve for 2012. The second section gives details on the campaigns, programs, activities, messages, and audiences for the 2012 Strategic Plan.

GOAL & EXPECTED RESULTS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GOAL & EXPECTED RESULTS

The Goal for MAC in 2012 is:

To promote the US-Morocco strategic partnership in order to enhance stability and security in North Africa and advance the resolution of the Western Sahara issue through the establishment of specific US assistance measures in the Southern Provinces.

The MAC Team believes that 2012 offers a unique opportunity to strengthen the US-Morocco bilateral relationship based on the success of the past year. Since this is the final year as Secretary of State for Hillary Clinton, we need to take advantage of this situation. Other factors working in our favor include strong Congressional support for Morocco, Morocco's role as a model in the Arab Spring, and the arrival of a new Ambassador. Challenges include the fact that things normally slow down during a presidential election year, there is reluctance in the State Department bureaucracy to engage in any additional issues in the MENA region, and that priorities at State will be drawn to "front page" issues like Egypt, Afghanistan, Israel, and Iran. Nevertheless, MAC believes that with a supportive Secretary of State, an engaged Congress, and a new Ambassador who will have the opportunity to engage and reengage some of our key audiences while Washington is focused on North Africa, we can overcome these structural obstacles and produce a set of results to achieve our goal.

MAC has identified these key results to achieve our goal:

1. To ensure that the United States spends spend money in the Western Sahara thereby establishing tangible evidence of US support for Morocco's initiative to resolve the problem through the Sovereignty/Autonomy formula (create "facts on the ground"). It is critical that we take advantage of the Congressional language and secure funding to be spent in the Western Sahara.
2. If the State Department does not spend money in the Western Sahara, we need to secure Congressional language that directs money to be spent on a specific project related to the Western Sahara.
3. Condition, through legislative action, US assistance to UNHCR and WFP in such a way that US monies in support of these activities must include funds designated specifically to promoting "durable solutions" (repatriation, resettlement) including the conduct of a census and identification project in the refugee camps.
4. Secure a Congressional report through a Hearing (either House or Senate) on the dangers posed by the Polisario-run refugee camps.

5. Help secure US support for inserting language asking for a census in the camps in the MINURSO rollover text. Assuming this is agreed to by Rabat, we would support their efforts through non diplomatic means including Congress, think tanks and the media.

**AUDIENCES, CAMPAIGNS &
PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**



AUDIENCES, CAMPAIGNS & PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

AUDIENCES

The Washington Team directs its messaging and activities at specific audiences:

- Congress
- Administration
- Media
- Opinion leaders/Policy analysts
- Think Tanks
- NGOs
- Special interests and advocacy groups: Moroccan American groups, human rights, women, environment, interfaith, economic development, reform, Jewish-American leaders
- African-American and Hispanic-American leadership
- Student organizations/blogs
- Others

This appendix of this strategic plan contains two overviews of the importance of think tanks and NGOs and ethnic/special interest groups to Morocco's work in Washington, DC.

CAMPAIGNS AND PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

MAC has prioritized four campaigns for 2012 to achieve the goal and expected results, and to take advantage of the political climate in the US and overseas. (MAC also is fully prepared to be involved in a fifth campaign to promote better US/Morocco relations through activities designed to support whatever agenda emerges from the new US/Morocco Strategic Dialogue. This was one of the two objectives we sought in the strategic meeting between Clinton and TFF last March. We continue to advocate the pursuit of this goal and stand ready to execute support activities for whatever agenda may emerge from talks about the Dialogue between the US and Morocco.) The four campaigns articulated in this plan are the following:

- Facts on the Ground
- Close the Camps
- Morocco as a Model
- The Ambassador's Rollout

Congressional language that allows US assistance to be spent in the Sahara presents an unprecedented opportunity for developing facts on the ground with the aim of creating tangible evidence of US support for Morocco's autonomy initiative as the only viable solution to the problem in Western Sahara. When US money is spent in the Sahara, it will be a clear sign of American commitment to resolving the conflict and thus advance US support for the autonomy solution. In addition, once

US funds are spent in the region, there is the potential for a multiplier effect, which may inspire other countries to pursue development in the region or create conditions for US private investment in the Sahara. The Facts on the Ground campaign has the potential to change the dynamics of the Western Sahara issue and so its implementation will thus be a priority for 2012.

In conjunction with the Facts on the Ground Campaign, MAC has prioritized a concurrent and complementary campaign to "Close the Camps" in Algeria.- While the issues of refugee rights and the security and humanitarian dangers in the camps have long been our concern, recent security developments indicate that the time has come to shift from an "open the camps" campaign to a "close the camps" campaign. In 2011, the Polisario was implicated in a number of negative events in the region – from collusion with Qaddafi's forces as mercenaries in the war in Libya to increased evidence of cooperation with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in narcotrafficking and terrorism—culminating in the October kidnapping of European aid workers from the camps in Tindouf, allegedly with aid from Polisario members. These incidents have greatly damaged the Polisario's image in the region and the US. The time has come to capitalize on this and engage in a full-scale effort to close the camps for security and humanitarian reasons. Our strategy here involves an emphasis on the security threats posed by the camps and a complimentary campaign to begin to bring pressure to bear on emptying the camps through the application of specific measures designed to promote "durable solutions" to the refugee problem (i.e, repatriation to Morocco, resettlement of the refugees in Algeria or resettlement in third countries).

In addition to the Facts on the Ground and Close the Camps campaigns, MAC will continue the successful Morocco as a Model campaign. Continuing issues of stability and security related to the Arab Spring have Washington more focused on the region. Given Morocco's successful constitutional reforms and democratic transition in 2011, it continues to stand out as a leader in the region, and the opportunity remains for Morocco to take advantage of its position to advance its bilateral relationship with the United States. The key challenge is to engage policymakers on Morocco's largely peaceful reform process as well as other potentially violent developments in the region. MAC will do this by highlighting Morocco's progressive reforms, continued support of women's rights, and its commitment to a constructive transition under a new constitution and government. MAC will continue to position Morocco as model for reform, development, and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa.

Lastly, the arrival of the new Ambassador presents another opportunity to advance Morocco's agenda in the United States and promote the three campaigns noted above. In meetings with policymakers and journalists, the Ambassador will have an opportunity to tell Morocco's story and develop relationships helpful to Morocco. By coordinating the Ambassador's rollout with our other campaigns, the Team will amplify the effect of these campaigns and gain a critical group of third parties willing to speak in support of Morocco's positions on these issues.

FACTS ON THE GROUND CAMPAIGN

Expected Result: Spend US money in the Western Sahara

To implement the Facts on the Ground campaign, the Team will work with policymakers on the Hill and interested parties in the development and NGO communities. As key actors in the defining and potential implementation of US aid in the Sahara, these parties have a vested interest in concretizing the appropriations language. Engaging in an educational and advocacy campaign with these groups will create advocates who support shifting US money to the Sahara with their respective constituencies. This will expand the number of interested parties beyond those concerned only with Morocco and spread a positive message about development as a potential tool for conflict resolution among the policy community in Washington.

Principal Campaign Activities:

- A letter from the leaders of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee to the State Department and USAID regarding implementation of the Appropriations language
- Private MAC meetings with NGOs, contractors, and House staffers to explain the significance of language and to identify programs that may be extended to the Western Sahara
- Private Embassy (or MAC) meetings with policymakers from the White House, State Department, and Congress to explain the language and identify programs for the Sahara
- A think tank event hosted by a prominent NGO that focuses on the language and how development assistance can impact conflict resolution
- A Private sector delegation to the Dakhla
- A delegation from a prominent business publication to the South that results in a US media article on opportunities in the Western Sahara
- A Congressional Staff delegation and/or CODEL focused on how to implement the Congressional language
- Media attention, through articles and other means, on the value of establishing US facts on the ground and the importance of the Congressional language in promoting US security and stability interests in the region
- Work with the House on effective oversight of this policy
- Secure 2013 Appropriations language designating specific development assistance funds for programs in Western Sahara

CLOSE THE CAMPS CAMPAIGN

Expected Result: Generate momentum in Washington for closing the camps for security reasons and for conditioning US funds to UNHCR and WFP on the application of programs from these agencies designed to promote “durable solutions” to the refugee problem. The Close the Camps campaign

combines MAC's long-standing messages on security and terrorism in the region with our efforts to promote the rights of refugees. MAC has been largely successful in its messaging on the AQIM threat in the Sahara and the Sahel. It is now common knowledge among policymakers that the threat of terrorism and trafficking in the region must be taken seriously, particularly in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. The key now is to translate support for Morocco on security issues into support for resolving the Western Sahara under the autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty—the only viable option for increasing security in the territory. Since the camps are a recruiting ground for terrorists and security issues such as trafficking, disaffected youth, drug smuggling, terrorism, and aid diversion proliferate in the camps, the theme for 2012 will be to close the camps as the only effective solution. This will expand our traditional audience beyond organizations interested in refugee rights to those interested in regional security and terrorism. This enables MAC to more effectively underscore the urgency of closing the camps and resolving the Western Sahara issue.

The Close the Camps campaign will benefit from the Facts on the Ground campaign because it adds a distinct audience: facts-on-the-ground engages development agencies and Congressional appropriators, while close the camps involves security and refugee organizations.

Principal Campaign Activities:

- Media article recommending closing the camps because of the Polisario/AQIM connections, the rising instability in the Sahel, the role of the camps as a recruiting ground for terrorist and drug cartels, with
- A think tank event focusing on security issues and a companion publication on closing the camps
- An Op-Ed on closing the camps
- Proactive Congressional lobbying to secure a hearing and report on the AQIM/Polisario connections. Top possibilities for the hearing are the House Intelligence Committee and the House Homeland Security Committee
- A Close the Camps event at a think tank with an Op-Ed published by one of the speakers A Sahrawi delegation to DC to support the need for closing the camps
- A refugee rights event in DC with prominent NGOs
- A video taken by a young person from the region in the You Tube style who can speak personally on this issue
- Appropriations language that conditions US assistance to the refugee camps in a way that requires application of programs designed to promote "durable solutions including funding for a census and identification project in the camps.

MOROCCO AS MODEL CAMPAIGN

Expected Result: Continue to position Morocco as the model in the region on all issues ranging from human rights to security cooperation and peaceful democratic reform

Positioning Morocco as a model has always been an essential component of MAC's strategy. This theme has increased in importance during the Arab Spring and the subsequent reforms initiated under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI. Today, the audiences interested in Morocco have greatly increased, providing an opportunity to highlight Morocco's reforms in a number of outlets. MAC will continue to work with journalists and think tanks to highlight Morocco's reforms, particularly as elections and other transitions take place in the region in 2012. Morocco is well placed to serve as an alternative, progressive model to the continuing negative and destabilizing developments coming out of the region.

Principal Campaign Activities:

- A briefing on women in Morocco to underscore Morocco's commitment to women's rights in order to clarify the policies of the Islamist-led government – possible Isabelle Coleman event after her return
- Social media/blogger event on the positive reforms in Morocco
- An event marking the King's March 9th speech, providing an opportunity to review events of the past year
- An official visit to Washington by HM King Mohammed VI
- A women's leadership delegation from Morocco to DC
- Publication of an analysis of human rights in the Maghreb and a related think tank event
- A Human Rights Caucus Staffdel to Morocco
- An event on regionalization in Morocco to promote the new governing model and highlight how autonomy is already being implemented in the WS
- A delegation from the new Moroccan government to visit DC and meet with their counterparts, the Hill, and media
- Participation in the important Foreign Policy Concordia event in NYC in September
- Continued outreach to the Honorary Counsels
- Double the Members in the Congressional Morocco Caucus
- Increase number of Congressional Champions who speak out on behalf of the bilateral relationship
- Moroccan American Community Outreach
 - Provide support for meetings with the members of Congress
 - Conduct research on who they are and what they do
 - Prepare a list of the most prominent and important for Grasstops
 - Determine if they have any "voting" issues

Ambassadors Rollout

Expected Result: The Rollout effort will both introduce the new Ambassador to important audiences in Washington and give him the opportunity during his meetings to promote whichever campaigns are relevant to the different groups so that they can support Morocco's efforts

Principal Campaign Activities:

Congress

- Meetings (Critics of Morocco or Moroccan policies): Rep. Wolf, Rep. Payne, Sen. Leahy
- Meetings (Friends or Influencers of Morocco policy): Morocco Caucus, Foreign Affairs Committees, Intelligence Committees, Appropriations Committees, Leadership
- Ambassador's letter to Congress concerning the state of the bilateral relationship
- Briefing and introduction to key Congressional Staff

Media Interviews

- Editorial Boards of major publications
- Key Foreign Affairs Columnists
- Key Foreign Affairs Reporters

State Department

- Officials responsible for compiling the Leahy Report
- Officials responsible for advancing the Strategic Dialogue
- Officials whose roles affect Facts on the Ground

An introductory party to gather all of the policymakers and journalists in one place for a casual introduction

Brief the foreign policy advisors of the Presidential Campaigns

Cultural Events

- Morocco Caucus event with the new Ambassador
- Potential Movie screening at the MPAA
- Lunches and Dinners for key audiences with the new Ambassador
- Special events that celebrate the history and importance of the bilateral relationship: Treaty Celebration Dinner, George Washington Letter event, etc.

MESSAGES

Messages

While the three campaigns have individual themes that are complementary, there are messages unique to a campaign, while other messages cut across two or more campaigns. For the new Ambassador rollout, messages will be recommended that are most appropriate for the meetings.

Among the primary messages are:

- Regional security and stability will be enhanced by closing the camps, thus eliminating conditions that encourage terrorism, the violations of refugee rights, and criminal behavior by members of the Polisario.
- The US should stop spending money to support the Polisario Camps – which have become a recruiting ground for AQIM and other illegal organizations – and should instead spend money to close the camps and resettle the refugees.
- The US should support autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty to demonstrate that it can be an effective peace-maker, promote regional security and stability, and be a partner in promoting regional economic integration.
- With forward movement on the strategic dialogue, Morocco will be able to play a more effective role in the region and the Middle East when it has a clear understanding with the US on joint priorities and goals. This will enable Morocco to enhance its role as a crossroads for trade and investment, and continue to demonstrate its regional leadership in progressive economic, political, and social policies.
- Moroccan, American, and international interests are threatened by the challenges to regional security and stability from the lack of effective security cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel, the growing ties between terrorists and traffickers, and the continued humanitarian crisis in the camps.
- The lack of progress in the UN-led negotiations process cannot be allowed to make people in the camps humanitarian victims and prized recruits for terrorist organizations second-class citizens. The security threat posed by the camps should be closed regardless of the status of the negotiations.
- This refugee situation is the only one in the world with a resettlement solution ready to be implemented in four countries, beginning this year.
- Morocco is doing its part for peace and to welcome home the refugees. It has made extensive investments in the South, supports regional economic development efforts, is a partner in regional security cooperation, and is ready to fully implement the CBMs.

- Regionalization, called for by the new constitution, will promote regional economic development because it empowers local economic growth efforts through greater accountability of local leaders and citizens.
- Regionalization, in which more power resides in local communities and regions, is an assertion of democracy and progress in Morocco.
- The Western Sahara issue can be resolved with leadership from the US. It is a winning policy for the Administration and already has broad international support and a UN sponsored negotiations framework.
- An internationally recognized autonomous Moroccan Sahara will reduce intra-regional tensions, promote regional stability and prosperity, and help deter the spread of terrorism in the region.
- The UNSC, UNHCR, and Special Envoy should do their jobs by implementing specific CBMs that provide some relief and hope to the refugees. At a minimum, this should include a census in the camps, a fully supported repatriation program, and protection of the essential rights of the refugees.
- Implementation of the autonomy proposal will give the refugees the opportunity to make a choice about their futures—an option they are currently denied. Closing the camps will promote regional stability by making possible greater economic growth and investment in the South.
- It is time to enable Sahrawis in the camps to exercise their right to repatriation.
- His Majesty King Mohammed VI is America's friend and partner. His leadership sets an example for the region across the religious, cultural, economic, and political landscape. He intends on keeping his promise to the Moroccan people to solve the Western Sahara conflict; and the US should help make that possible.
- His Majesty King Mohammed VI is a peace-maker. He has expressed his desire to resolve all issues with Algeria in order to eliminate obstacles to peace, progress, and prosperity in the region.
- It is time for the US to proactively secure support from the international community for Autonomy/Sovereignty as the only viable solution to the Western Sahara conflict, one that fully satisfies the requirements of self-determination.
- The US should demonstrate that it stands with Morocco, its friend and ally, by taking actions consistent with the Appropriations language including official visits by senior officials, extending aid programs to the South, and passing anti-warehousing legislation.
- The US must encourage the UNHCR to do their job and resettle the refugees.

- Conditions in the camps promote instability and promote appeal of terrorism to marginalized population. Humanitarian and Security issues must be resolved.
- Resolving the Western Sahara conflict enables Morocco to use more efficiently its resources to promote progress and development throughout the region.
- Resolving the conflict is the best solution for promoting Sahrawi human rights.
- Moving ahead with regionalization promotes political reform and good governance by devolving decision-making to local populations and authorities.
- Morocco has historically been a strong proponent of interfaith dialogue.

APPENDIX

- **The Influence of American Ethnic Groups on US Foreign Policy**
- **The Influence of Non-Governmental Organizations and Think Tanks on US Foreign Policy**

Ethnic and domestic interest groups have a substantial impact on some aspects of US foreign policy because of their ability to influence US domestic politics. By organizing groups of people based on ethnic origin (as an example, Cuban-American) or common interest (as an example, opposes abortion) these organizations influence policy by making their political support contingent on the candidate supporting their policy positions.

American elections are decided by four major factors - votes, money, manpower, and political parties. By leveraging their ability to affect the outcomes in those four categories, ethnic and interest groups create and sustain power in Washington.

Votes

This is the simplest example of how special interest and ethnic groups influence the political process. In American politics, the person with the most votes wins all races for Congress. So any ethnic or interest group that can deliver 1,000, 10,000, or over 100,000 votes has an outsized influence on the process.

As an example, the local labor union has a membership of 20,000 workers and wants their next Congressman to support a higher minimum wage for all workers. In return for the 20,000 votes in the union, the Candidate signs a pledge that he will vote to increase the minimum wage in the next Congress. If he fulfills his promise, the workers will most likely vote for him again. If he breaks his word, those 20,000 votes will go to someone else in the next election. The other examples of large organizations that can influence elections through votes are very large ethnic communities such as Jewish-Americans and African-Americans.

Money

There are very few ethnic and interest groups that have the necessary size to control an electoral outcome through votes alone. Most ethnic and interest groups try to combine membership size with money – the second most important part of American electoral politics.

American elections are funded by individual supporters giving money to Congressional candidates so that the candidate can then pay for campaign expenses (such as yard signs, and television advertising). The maximum any person can give to a candidate for a specific race is \$4,800. Most campaigns cost well over \$1 million dollars and some races can cost over \$20 million. Therefore the ability of an ethnic or interest group to pool their contributions together into a pool of support for candidate can substantially assist a campaign.

As an example, a 100 person Cuban-American community in California can secure the support of a Candidate through a fundraiser. The votes of 100 people will not make a substantial impact in the election, but California has a

very expensive media market. The infusion of \$100,000 will make a big difference in buying television ads. So the Cuban-American community agrees to host a fundraiser in which all 100 members of the community will give \$1,000 each in exchange for the Candidate supporting an embargo on Cuba. Here the community has used its money as a way to influence a candidate when their actual size does not make a big difference in the overall vote.

Manpower

All campaigns rely on volunteers to contribute both time and supplies so that the campaign can reserve funds for expensive advertising. Walking neighborhoods to solicit support, putting up signs, making phone calls, securing transportation to take people to the polls, and other day to day campaign activities are done with volunteers. The ability of an ethnic or interest group to provide manpower can also influence policy positions.

As an example, a Fire Department with a membership of 10,000 fire fighters promises to provide 500 volunteers on Election Day in exchange for a Candidate supporting more fire trucks. The volunteers will wear Fire Department Supports Candidate X T-shirts and talk to people while they are in line to vote. Since most community members respect and admire firefighters, their support can be worth much more than 10,000 votes if they leverage their position in the community to influence other voters.

Political Parties

The two major political parties alternate power in Congress and the White House. The ability to have a policy that is endorsed by both parties protects the policy from changing when the other party comes to power. This change in power can happen quickly. After the 2004 elections, the US Senate, the US House of Representatives, and the White House were all controlled by Republicans. Four years later, after the 2008 elections, all three were controlled by the Democrats. The ability to influence a party is much harder and more difficult than anything involving a single candidate (the examples above involve a single candidate). It takes a sustained effort in multiple campaigns in all three areas (votes, money, and manpower) before a particular foreign policy becomes a part of a political party; but the most powerful ethnic groups in America (Jewish-Americans, Cuban-Americans, and Greek-Americans) all try to influence both parties at every level.

Conclusion

As long as America retains the current electoral system, effective ethnic and interest groups will continue to leverage their ability to provide votes, money, and manpower to political parties and candidates in exchange for certain policy positions.

The Influence of Non-Governmental Organizations and Think Tanks on US Foreign Policy

America is home to a large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and think tanks that work on a wide-range of issues important to US domestic and foreign policy. Both the number and influence of these organizations has vastly expanded in the past decade, and these organizations play an increasingly important role in the formulation of US policies.

While there are some prominent think tanks located in other cities, Washington is the center of the NGO and think tank cultures. It is home to 393 think tanks, more than any other city in the world. The presence of these organizations has made Washington an intellectual leader in idea formulation. In a global survey of the influence and respectability of the world's think-tanks, the Washington-based Brookings Institution and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace ranked first and second respectively, highlighting not only that DC remains an important intellectual center, but also that the influence of think tanks should be taken seriously. As an August 2010 article in the *Washingtonian* noted, "with regard to policy, Washington's think tanks can claim to have created an immense amount of change that has reshaped our nation and the world. Everything from the Marshall Plan to the US Agency for International Development to environmental standards found their origins in think tanks scattered around the city."

Prior to analyzing how these organizations influence policy, it is important to underscore the key differences between NGOs and think tanks. There are certainly similarities between the two types of organizations, as they both conduct research and engage in advocacy. However, NGOs are generally more issue-specific than think-tanks, often focusing on one or a number of issues rather than a range of US domestic and foreign policies. In addition, NGOs work more at the grassroots level; while they may be experts on a given issue, they also focus on mobilizing civil society around a certain cause and generating awareness about a given issue. Because so much of their work revolves around civil society advocacy, NGOs tend to be less academic and rarely undertake the depth and breadth of research that think tanks do. Rather, NGOs develop advocacy programs and projects, and while those activities are certainly supported by research, both field and academic, they are tailored to a broader audience than policy makers, politicians, and the media. Given this focus, NGOs also work in a number of other places beyond Washington. Many have headquarters in Washington because lobbying remains a vital part of their work, but they also have field offices throughout the country and even overseas, with locations varying according to their specific issue. Bearing this in mind, the two types of organizations nevertheless seek to influence policy in similar ways.

First, through publications, events, and Congressional testimony, NGO and think tank experts work to directly lobby for certain policy options. Secondly, there is a revolving door between the Federal Government (most prominently Congress and the Administration) and the prominent think tanks and NGOs in Washington – experts often move from these private sector jobs into political positions within the incoming Congress or Administration and vice-versa – meaning that a number of

the important players in policy formulation come from the NGO and think tank worlds.

With regards to the former, these organizations produce a substantial number of books, policy papers, reports, analyses, and commentary on almost every issue in American politics. Think tanks focus on a wide variety of research topics while NGOs tend to focus on a single group of issues, e.g. the environment. As these publications are produced for a policy audience, they are essentially what link the policy world with the research world, applying academic rigor to contemporary policy problems. The *Washingtonian* described this phenomenon by referring to think tanks as, "universities with no students, whose world of study is politics and policy. Think tanks help set policy agendas and bridge the gap between knowledge and power." Part of the reason government officials and policymakers are prone to seek policy advice from think tanks and to take their research seriously is because think tanks can research a tough policy problem without the time pressures and political sensibilities that government officials face. They can provide good analysis on long-term strategic problems in an intellectual honest manner without fear of reprisal, and can therefore provide policymakers with a deeper understanding of issues than would have been possible without their scholarship and analysis.

As for NGOs, because of their focus on single issues, they are generally regarded as experts in a practical as well as academic way. NGOs can devote time and resources to analyzing a specific issue, something even specific departments within government don't have time to do. They can help provide the government with insight into a certain problem and can also help it develop the tools needed to address that problem because they deal with project implementation as well as issue research and advocacy.

As a result, successive Presidents and government officials have increasingly looked to think tanks for guidance and policy advice, and have used think tank publications as a resource for setting their policy agendas. Upon entering office in 1981, President Reagan gave every members of his cabinet a book from the Heritage Foundation that outlined conservative principles he wished to enact during his tenure. More recently, when President Obama took office, he sought guidance from the Center for American Progress and used its book *Change for America: A Progressive Blueprint for the 44th President* to jump-start his political agenda. Think tanks thus have an ability to influence policy through the publication and distribution of written resources. NGOs are more often called upon to address a specific problem and provide expertise on policy implementation.

Another way in which think tanks, NGOs, and their experts influence US policy is through oral testimony and media exposure. Experts are often asked to testify at government reviews or at Congressional hearings, where they have the opportunity to lobby for a certain option or a certain way of thinking about an issue. They are also often to serve on advisory panels to debate US policy. The power they wield on these panels varies, but they do provide a platform for experts to directly advocate a certain policy position. Once they are deemed experts, either by the government or their own think tank, a number of media opportunities open up as well, exposing

these experts and their policy choices to the American public. In turn, increasing media exposure furthers their expertise, both in the eyes of the government and the American public.

It is difficult to assess whether this influence has a positive or negative impact on US policy. In some cases, think tanks and NGOs provide nuance and alternative strategies for any given issue. This can be extremely beneficial when addressing controversial policies that policymakers want to deal with, but consider too political. In other cases, think tanks and NGOs follow such a strict political line that they end up advocating narrowly-defined policy decisions that reflect their partisanship. This is an issue of particular concern because of the second way in which think tanks influence policy: by providing a recruiting network for the government.

Because of the revolving door between think tanks and the government, a large number of people who work for the government have worked at think tanks or NGOs at some point in their lives. According to the *Washingtonian*, more than 60 percent of assistant secretaries at the State Department came from think tanks. Another example is that, since early 2009, more than 50 staff members from the Center for American Progress have joined the Obama Administration and certainly influence a number of his policy choices. This process also works in reverse. When there is a change in the Administration, many government officials find work at think tanks and NGOs. With their government background, they are well attuned to the system and understand how to influence policy from the outside.

While this process certainly contributes to the expertise of both government and NGOs and think tanks, there are also downsides. As it is a real career goal of some experts to ultimately work for the government and wield power over US policies, some individuals at think tanks and NGOs get caught up in this and end up politicking and networking, forgetting to do the research part of the job. Using their think tanks and NGO jobs as a platform for advocating opinions cloaked as expertise, these "experts" contribute little to advancing real dialogue on important issues. As the *Washingtonian* argues, "the seductive effect of being so close to power, as well as constantly being called on by the media for quotes in stories or appearances on talk shows, can lead many in Washington's think tanks to confuse visibility with utility. The more prominent someone is, the more likely the media are to solicit that person's opinion. The result is that media appearances can result in real influence, warranted or not." This influence in the media can lead to real power and ultimately a government career. Likewise, former government officials who join NGOs and think tanks often use their positions as a platform for criticizing governmental policy. This critical questioning can provide for healthy debate, but it can also serve to undermine the formation of government policy.

The Major Players

In general, all US think tanks and NGOs carry out some form of research and do some sort of advocacy as a means to advance their ideas and their policy preferences. However, each organization does this in a different way; the political leaning of a think tank, its target audience, and its donor list dictate how it seeks to

influence US policy. For some organizations, the latter is most important because it most directly controls day-to-day operations. Funding sources include governments, corporations, foundations, foreign sources, and individuals, each with its own goals in mind. Some donors want to influence votes in Congress or shape public opinion, others want to be experts on a given subject or push for specific areas of research or education. Funding therefore defines an organization's priorities, as well as its research subjects. The other two issues – political leaning and target audience – also play a valuable role, but in many instances these are defined by both the organizations' mission statement and its sources of funding.

Despite these differences, however, there is no set formula for what types of organizations influence policy – some are government funded, others are independent, some are partisan, others are neutral. While the network of influential think tanks and experts has grown over the years, there is nevertheless some consensus about the players that wield particular influence in the American government. The majority of these are located in DC, where they have intimate access to a plethora of government officials and organizations.

According to a 2008 study by University of Pennsylvania professor James McGann, the top ten most influential think tanks on US policy are as follows:

1. The Brookings Institution

A non-partisan organization that does not push a particular political view, its mission is to conduct high-quality, independent research and, based on that research, to provide innovative, practical recommendations that advance three broad goals: strengthen American democracy; foster the economic and social welfare, security and opportunity of all Americans; and secure a more open, safe, prosperous and cooperative international system. Based in DC, Brookings also has offices in Doha, and Tsinghua.

2. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Founded in 1910, its work is nonpartisan and dedicated to achieving practical results. The Endowment has offices in Washington, Moscow, Beijing, Beirut, and Brussels.

3. The Council on Foreign Relations

The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) is an independent, nonpartisan membership organization, think tank, and publisher dedicated to being a resource for its members, government officials, business executives, journalists, educators and students, civic and religious leaders, and other interested citizens in order to help them better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other countries. The Council has offices in New York and Washington.

4. The Rand Corporation

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decision-making through research and analysis. A federally funded research and development center, Rand's research priorities are defined by government officials and focus on matters of national interest, such as health, education, national security, international affairs, law and business, and the environment.

Headquartered in Santa Monica, RAND has offices in Washington, Pittsburgh, New Orleans, Jackson, Boston, as well as international offices in London, Doha, Brussels, and Mexico City.

5. The Heritage Foundation

The Heritage Foundation is a DC-based conservative think tank that seeks to build an America where freedom, opportunity, prosperity, and civil society flourish. It strongly advocates for individual liberty, free enterprise, limited government, and a strong national defense. While it seeks to share its beliefs in the news media and within the governments, its primary focus is on influencing Congress. To do this, the Heritage Foundation produces short publications that frequently target legislative votes, and it provides issues briefings for new members of Congress every two years, as well as its recommendations to Republican leaders.

6. The Center for Strategic and International Studies

A bipartisan, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC, CSIS conducts research and analysis and develops policy initiatives that look into the future and anticipate change. Founded at the height of the Cold War, CSIS is dedicated to finding ways for America to sustain its prominence and prosperity as a force for good in the world. The organization focuses on defense and security, regional stability, and transitional challenges, and seeks to provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision makers in government, international institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

7. The Cato Institute

The Cato Institute is a DC-based public policy research organization dedicated to the principles of individual liberty, limited government, free markets, and peace. Its scholars and analysts conduct independent, nonpartisan research on a wide range of policy issues and work to advance a libertarian policy agenda.

8. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Established by an act of Congress in 1968, the Wilson Center is the US' living memorial to President Woodrow Wilson. The Wilson Center is a nonpartisan institute for advanced study and a neutral forum for open, serious, and informed dialogue. It brings pre-eminent thinkers to Washington for extended periods of time to interact with policymakers through a large number of programs and projects.

9. The American Enterprise Institute

The American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research is an institution dedicated to research, education, and policy advocacy on issues of government, politics, economics, foreign affairs, national defense, and social welfare. AEI operates at the intersection of scholarship and politics, aiming to elevate political debate and improve the substance of government policy toward the goal of a more prosperous, safer, and more democratic nation and world. Self-described as right of center, but widely viewed as right-wing, the American Enterprise Institute targets the executive branch of the government and was intimately involved in President George W. Bush's policy for a "surge" in Iraq.

10. The Hoover Institution

The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University, is a public policy research center devoted to advanced study of politics, economics, and political economy—both domestic and foreign—as well as international

affairs. With its world-renowned group of scholars and ongoing programs of policy-oriented research, the Hoover Institution puts its accumulated knowledge to work as a prominent contributor to the world marketplace of ideas defining a free society.

As private entities, NGOs operate in a similar manner to think tanks. However, what sets this group apart is that they generally focus on a limited range of issues and a defined set of political perspectives. Their work is defined by their issues rather than by their political affiliation. They are particularly concerned with the application of policy and its operations in the field. They are at the forefront of evaluating and recommending policies based on specific needs that may or may not reflect a particular political ideology. Funding issues nevertheless apply, although most NGOs would argue that they are transparent, objective, and set their own agendas.

There is no ranking for the most influential NGOs, which exert influence only on specific policy issues. However, the major players in each issue are well-known:

- Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House are deemed experts on human rights and civil liberties
- The International Republic Institute, the National Democratic Institute, National Endowment for Democracy, and the International Federation for Electoral Systems are viewed as experts on democracy promotion and electoral monitoring
- International Crisis Group, Search for Common Ground, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Fund for Peace are conflict resolution and mediation experts
- Refugees International, the United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, and Refugee Council USA are the premier organizations for refugee protection and resettlement.

With regard to humanitarian projects and economic development, the US generally relies on international organizations for the former, placing confidence in organizations like UNICEF, OXFAM, ICRC, and Doctors without Borders for assessments of emergency situations and information from conflict zones. For the latter, DAI, AED, Chemonics, and RTI International, among others, are the primary contractors for USAID projects and are regarded as experts in implementing economic development projects; and the Clinton Global Initiative and the Gates Foundation are influential in the promotion of economic development policy because of their celebrity power to bring international attention to an issue.

As is evident from this description of think tanks and NGOs in DC, there are there a wide-range of organizations involved in policy in DC, and how these organizations influence US policy is contingent upon a number of factors. As a result, navigating the think tanks and NGO networks is not a simple task, and understanding how these organizations can have an impact—positive or otherwise—is not always clear. The Team is preparing another analytical paper that will examine the criteria used by the US in determining how countries perform on qualification indicators for MCC and other funding sources, many of these criteria are generated by NGOs.

How This Impacts Morocco

Think tanks and NGOs have the capability to influence US policy toward Morocco on a number of issues. Through publications and testimony, think tank experts can provide their perception of any given issue in Morocco directly to a US audience, whether that is the media, the administration, Congress, or the American public. In large part through their publications, testimony, and media appearances, think tanks and NGOs can create the consensus opinions around certain countries. That is, if enough think tanks write and report that Morocco is a moderate, democratizing country, then that becomes the "Washington Policy Consensus." The diversity of think tanks that come to the same conclusion also contributes to an issue becoming conventional wisdom in Washington. Organizations and their experts have a platform to tell their version of an issue, whether it is democracy, human rights, women's rights, military and economic assistance, or the Western Sahara. When the organizations are considered to be credible subject matter experts, government officials rely on this outside expertise for their own policies without any oversight or accountability.

If Morocco is able to bring any number of foreign policy think tanks and independent experts on its side, it will influence policy and, as importantly, create a favorable image for Morocco when policy is made. The difficulty is that there are so many issues and so many experts, so it is not always straightforward who the appropriate think tank target should be, and indeed that target changes according to the issue. For example, while USCRI is a helpful partner and advocate for Morocco on refugee rights, it would be ill-suited to talk about democracy or economic assistance. As a result, Morocco, or any other country or interest group in the same position, is required to establish partnerships with a wide-range of think tanks and NGOs, some that will be receptive and pro-Morocco, others that may be receptive but have strict funding and partisan restrictions, and still others that actively oppose lobbying of any sort.

The downside of this is that Morocco could be negatively influenced by an organization or expert who holds significant influence over US policy. Generally, issues related to Morocco are not controversial enough to generate such negativity, and it is very unlikely that all of the influential organizations would agree on a given policy since they are so nuanced. However, many of these organizations are focused on US policy, and if enough decide, for example, that reducing the US deficit is vital for America's future, they could advocate for reducing foreign assistance funding for all recipients, even if they are generally supportive of the US-Morocco relationship. Some of the organizations, albeit not the most influential, are so focused on a single issue that they do not think about the broader strategic issues. By the same token, the bigger and most influential organizations listed above, are focused on so many issues that they be uninterested in taking up Morocco's cause.

In conclusion, think tanks and NGOs are a vital part of America's political system and will remain that way in the immediate future. Think tanks generate the ideas

that become US policy, literature that creates a favorable or unfavorable image of a country, and experts who will have positions of power in future Administrations. In order to take advantage of this opportunity, Morocco will need to continue its outreach to influential think tanks and NGOs and find ways to work together across the political spectrum in a way that creates a consensus of positive image of Morocco and a cadre of experts who will have positions of influence in future Republican and Democratic administrations.