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## **Morocco's King Mohammed VI to Meet with President Obama, Discuss Strategic Partnership during Washington Visit**

### **Leaders to Focus on Common Interests, Shared Values, and Vision for MENA Region**

**Washington, DC** (November 18, 2013) — On Friday, November 22, 2013, King Mohammed VI of Morocco will meet with President Obama at the White House for discussions to deepen the two countries' long friendship and strategic partnership. The two leaders will address how Morocco and the US can work together, based on shared values and common interests, to meet key economic and security challenges confronting the Middle East and North Africa. They will also discuss political transitions in the region, for which Morocco's democratic and economic reforms offer a peaceful model for change.

The visit is a result of President Obama's personal invitation to the North African monarch, who will be meeting the President for the first time. "This visit will highlight the long-standing friendship between the United States and Morocco and strengthen our strategic partnership," said the White House in a statement. "The President looks forward to discussing a range of issues of mutual interest with King Mohammed VI, including support for Morocco's democratic and economic reforms. This visit is also an opportunity to increase our cooperation on addressing regional challenges, including countering violent extremism, supporting democratic transitions, and promoting economic development in the Middle East and Africa."

King Mohammed VI, who ascended Morocco's throne in 1999, has met previously with former US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush in Washington, and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Morocco. In September 2012, the US and Morocco launched a Strategic Dialogue—the first such US dialogue with a Maghreb nation—to advance common interests on political, economic, security, and educational and cultural affairs. Traveling with the King are senior members of Morocco's new government, with portfolios addressing all of these areas, visiting Washington for the first time since the new coalition was announced in October.

The meeting marks a poignant date for both leaders, the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. In March 1963, eight months prior, Kennedy welcomed King Mohammed VI's father, King Hassan II, to the US, remarking that, "Though a wide ocean separates our two countries, they have been bound together throughout our history." Kennedy said, "Your country was the first to recognize the United States in the most difficult days of our revolution" and "occupies a position of strategic importance in the world." King Hassan said Moroccans hoped their meeting "may usher in a new era of stronger ties, in the field of true and honest and unselfish cooperation in their mutual interests, as well as in the interest of the cause of freedom, peace, and human dignity throughout the world."

"For more than two centuries, Morocco and the US have enjoyed a special relationship, founded on core values and shared interests of two nations on opposite sides of the Atlantic," said Edward M. Gabriel, Chair, Moroccan American Center for Policy. "This remarkable partnership has been sustained over the centuries by leaders with a vision for how our nations can work together to achieve common goals. King Mohammed's meeting with President Obama comes at a time of trial and transition in the region. That vision is needed now more than ever."

\* For recent think tank briefing papers on Morocco & US-Morocco relations: <http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Briefing-Papers-Towards-a-New-Morocco-US-Strategic-Partnership-.pdf>

\* For the history of US-Morocco relations, see "The US and Morocco Share a Long History of Friendship," at: [http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/FS\\_US-MoroccanAlliance18January2013.pdf](http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/FS_US-MoroccanAlliance18January2013.pdf)

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