

Original Paper

Received: June 06, 2019

Accepted: June 11, 2019

Moroccan Armed Forces in the Face of Geopolitical Mutations

Rachid El Houdaigui*

Abstract

One of the first sovereign decisions of independent Morocco was to create the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) on 14 May 1956. Since then, the mission of the Moroccan army is consistent with the country's historical continuity shaped by strategic constants, it has however been subject to both conceptual and operational pressures since the late 1990s, as the lines between defense and security have blurred. This paper explores the central issue of adjusting the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) to a rapidly changing world. It examines two dynamics from a comparative perspective: strategic prioritization in support of defense policy adjustment and the defense-security continuum at the heart of FAR doctrine.

Keywords: Morocco; Royal Armed Forces Doctrine; Geopolitics

* Rachid EL Houdaigui is professor of International Relations at Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tangier's Law Faculty and Senior Fellow at the Policy Center for the New South. He is also professor at Royal College of Advanced Military (Kenitra) and professor invited at Cergy-Pontoise University (Paris), Cadix University (Spain) and at La Sagesse University (Beirut, Lebanon). Mr. EL Houdaigui is the author of numerous books and articles dealing with International relations and geopolitics: the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Arab world. Mr. Rachid EL Houdaigui is co-director of the Moroccan-Spanish review "Peace and International Security" and in charge of the Observatory of Mediterranean Studies (Abdelmalek Essaadi University) (elhoudaiguirachid@yahoo.fr).



Introduction

One of the first sovereign decisions of independent Morocco was to create the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) on 14 May 1956. The army turned professional with the abolition of conscription by Dahir (Royal Decree) on 31 August 2006. This is unlikely to be disrupted by the restoration of military service as of February 2019¹. It is thus a professional military force made up of: the Royal Army, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy, the Royal Gendarmerie and the Royal Guard². Reservists complete the picture³. Auxiliary Forces report to the Ministry of Interior⁴.

The FAR stand out from other armies in the Arab-African sphere on four grounds: 1. Decision making verticality strengthening the chain of command, headed by the King as Supreme Leader and General Chief of Staff; 2. Dual institutional organization- strategic and military matters reporting to FAR General Staff and administrative affairs managed by the Deputy Prime Minister (Budget, Legislation, Regulation); 3. Doctrinal corpus drawn essentially from the King's agenda as addressed to the FAR on the anniversary of their creation (14 May)⁵; 4. Complete non-politicization, manifested by loyalty to the regime, refraining from official positions, banning incorporation and neutrality with regard to politics.

The mission of Morocco's armed forces is certainly consistent with national historical continuity shaped by strategic constants, but it has been under both conceptual and operational pressures since the late 1990s, as the lines between defense and security have blurred. Critical questions that are doctrinal, technical and organizational in nature need be addressed. How to prevent a strategic surprise, whether conventional (military offensive), asymmetrical (terrorism) or diplomatic (demonstration of force)? How to ensure continuous and efficient adjustment of military forces to geo-strategic and security challenges in response to operational theater requirements? What training models for the military?

We do not purport to answer all these questions and even less, to theorize them. Any analytical method for assessing FAR adaptation processes must first overcome the challenge of insufficiently conceptualized military studies in Morocco owing to a lack of interest by universities for this field. This fact does not preclude us from drawing observations from which we can further explore a renewed role of the FAR, its content and scope⁶.

That being said, this paper aims to explore the central issue of FAR adaptation in a rapidly mutating world. It examines two dynamics from a comparative perspective: strategic

¹Enacted on Thursday, February 7, 2019, the implementing decrees of the law stipulate mandatory military service for Moroccan citizens aged between 19 and 25 years. The duration of military service is set at 12 months. The number of conscripts is expected to reach 10,000 in 2019 and 15,000 in 2020. The Finance Act of 2019 provides for a budget of 46 million euros for this purpose.

²Active 209,000

³Reservists 200,000

⁴Paramilitary 75,000

⁵These are instructions on strategic vision and operational means of defense policy.

⁶Rachid EL HOUDAIGUI, The Royal Armed Forces at the service of the renewed strategic doctrine, *Revue des FAR*, Rabat, July 2009.



prioritization in support of defense policy adjustment and the defense-security continuum at the heart of FAR doctrine.

Strategic prioritization in support of defense policy adjustment

Morocco faces complex challenges with uncertain outcomes. Three requirements are at the forefront of Morocco's chain of strategic priorities: balance in a world undergoing geo-strategic mutation, positioning in an expanded context that spans the Mediterranean, the Sahel and the Atlantic via the Maghreb, as a central axis, and appropriation of integrated action imperatives by defense.

Finding equilibrium in the whirlwind of global geo-strategic mutation

The World has come to a crucial stage in its post-bipolar reconfiguration process. Strategic rivalry still drives this dynamic and appears to enshrine a new hierarchy of power. It is multipolar and fragmented, with the United States of America as its arbitrator for the time being. Issues facing States are no longer limited to enemy and threat identification but also and perhaps even more so, span questions of status and rank in a world of competition: how to maintain oneself as a major power for the United States and China, how to be a leader and not provoke the great powers? For Russia, how to reclaim its history? How to play a key role in the global institutional system (G20, WTO, UN Security Council) for major emerging countries such as India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico? How to overcome strategic lethargy in support of global economic influence for the European Union? How to position or reposition oneself, if not in the global system, then at least in regional subsystems, for instance in the case of Mediterranean countries?

Current rivalries transcend the classic North/South divide and call into question global and regional balances. The arms race is the central indicator of tension between states, competing with each other for military might⁷. The objective being to position oneself, if not as an influential actor in the center, then, at least, as a key partner to the center, from the periphery.

The United States and China are now two major interdependent but competing economic and strategic powers. The Sino-American duopoly has yet to acquire the requisite geo-strategic charge to organize and structure the world. One thing is certain however, the centrality of the Pacific area will, ultimately, impact the strategic positioning of a number of clusters, with consequences on Morocco's diplomatic agenda. The Atlantic and the Mediterranean, two spaces to which Morocco belongs, are to see their strategic usefulness and functionality shift from macro to micro. Already a periphery of the Pacific area, their strategic value depends on factors of regional or sub-regional importance, with no global scope. The Atlantic is more an area traversed by maritime routes than an area of geo-strategic rivalry, as was the case under the American-Soviet duopoly. As for the Mediterranean, it generates risks and threats whose scope is confined to its shores and, in some cases, is continental. It is also an area that is highly securitized by Western military forces.

⁷P. D. Wezeman, A. Fleurant, A. Kuimova, N. Tian and S T. Wezeman, Trends in International Arms Transfers, march 2019, Stockholm.



REPATS

This dynamic largely explains Morocco's shift towards sub-Saharan Africa, in search of new economic, political and diplomatic horizons. This is a major component of diplomatic priorities: building an African destiny, breaking the Maghreb impasse; consolidating advances with the European Union (EU), the United States and some Arab countries; diversifying global partnerships and settling the Western Sahara issue as a priority⁸.

Today, Morocco's African policy is built on open and proactive diplomatic discourse, calling for a break with Third Worldism, deconstruction of pessimistic discourse, non-interference in ongoing democratization processes and the modeling of intra-African cooperation based on sovereign appropriation of African wealth. Its constant projection⁹ has made the tactical and strategic choice to focus action on specific areas that can be controlled and that generate significant added value (military cooperation, religious diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy and crisis management, civil-military training, service economics, food security). The question of sustainability and influence in a competitive context nevertheless remains at the heart of Moroccan concerns. It is difficult, for example, to comment on the future of relations with South Africa, whose position towards Morocco has hardened to the point that, together with Algeria, it now constitutes the most vehement anti-Moroccan tandem in Africa.

Consolidating geopolitical support points in a neighborhood fraught with uncertainties

Morocco's positioning provides framework and structure to its relations within its regional environment, through three concomitant pillars: Maintaining strategic balance with Algeria; Fighting regional terrorism; and Ensuring an effective presence in the Strait of Gibraltar.

Maintaining strategic equilibrium with Algeria

The geopolitical stage in the Maghreb pits Morocco against Algeria, in an antagonistic relationship marked by all-out competition. This leadership race structures bilateral relations, straining the entire region, to the detriment of Maghreb integration. The persistence of Moroccan-Algerian strategic imperatives explains the longevity of the Western Sahara conflict. This results in a structuring rivalry focused on allocation of strategic resources to isolate and exhaust the adversary's endurance, via three avenues: The first is to implement a strategy designed to ensure that consolidation of regional leadership and international recognition of the country's strategic utility co-exist in practice. The second consists in neutralizing the opponent's diplomatic game in the Sahel-Saharan region. The arms race is the third path to undermining the opponent's strategic endurance. Under the guise of modernizing defense systems, both countries are major arms importers: accounting for 71% of all arms imports in Africa between 2014 and 2018¹⁰. The 2019 Finance Bill mentions USD 12 billion in appropriations for the Algerian Ministry

⁸ Rachid EL HOUDAIGUI, La política exterior de Marruecos, desafíos y ajustes, Anuario internacional, 2018, CIDOB Barcelona.

⁹The Head of State made some 50 visits to about 30 countries, compared to just a few in the West between 2003 and 2018.

¹⁰P. D. Wezeman, and, SIPRI, op.cit.



of Defense, over one billion more than in 2018¹¹. Morocco, for its part, seeks to maintain its air superiority and military balance in the Maghreb through a targeted procurement program. This arms race raises concerns and exacerbates uncertainties in the Maghreb.

Supporting the fight against regional terrorism

The complexity of terrorism lies in its mobility, independent of borders and national identities, hence the importance of determining whether terrorist networks have sufficient resources to perpetuate insecurity in the region? Three indications lead us to believe that terrorist networks are likely to grow in importance in the area. First, the political context in some countries of the region favors the development of situations generating despair and a lack of political and economic opportunities. These states of mind jointly contribute to the conditioning of individuals and predispose them to radicalism and even revolutionary terrorism. Secondly, the drivers of these terrorist threats are networks that operate at multiple levels (local, transnational, regional, and international).

Porous borders allow a new mapping of territories, between "de-staticized" and de jure areas, transcending national and geographical borders through mobility and the ability to adapt to novel situations. A number of European countries have, in turn, become incubators of religious radicalism and terrorism. Terrorist acts committed in France, Belgium and the Netherlands were perpetrated by Europeans born, raised and radicalized in Europe. Lastly, in North Africa, these networks flourish in three geographical areas (the Sahel-Saharan strip; the Tindouf area with the proven complicity of the Polisario Front and the southern Libyan territory, where an informal war economy, based on predation and criminalization, is emerging and ensures the networks' prosperity. This system lives through the maintenance of situations of extreme insecurity¹².

Effective presence in the Strait of Gibraltar

Since the end of the Second World War, the international status of the Strait of Gibraltar has shifted in accordance with international and regional contexts and their strategic consequences. Three countries are involved: Morocco, Spain and the United Kingdom; intertwined by a set of disputed and claimed maritime enclaves, but also by the power of exchange in goods and people across the Strait of Gibraltar. Today, in view of the strategic military complex established in the area¹³, it seems that the Strait of Gibraltar takes on a multidimensional functionality: a point of projection of American and NATO forces towards areas of conflict and insecurity in the Mediterranean and Africa; a point of support for NATO naval

¹¹ Sur l'armée algérienne, voir particulièrement Sophia Arezki, de L'ALN A L'ANP, la construction de l'Armée algérienne, édition Barzakh, Alger, 2018; Flavien BOURRAT, La professionnalisation des armées arabes face à un nouveau contexte stratégique régional : les cas de l'Algérie, de la Tunisie et de l'Égypte, Note de recherche stratégique n°24 – octobre, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (Irsem), Paris, 2015; Flavien Bourrat, l'armée algérienne: un Etat dans l'Etat, in Les Champs de Mars, n° 23, Paris, 2012.

¹² Ihssane Guennoun, Abdelhak Bassou, The Sahel and the Al Qaeda and Daech trends: What possible outcome, Policy Brief, Policy Center For the New South, Rabat, January 05, 2017.

¹³ This complex includes US and NATO bases in Moron and Rota (naval) (Andalusia), British naval base and listening station in Gibraltar, Spanish naval and air bases, Moroccan naval base in Ksar Sghir.



forces, the European Union (EU) and European and US navies; a highly valuable intelligence base for the British, who exploit it for themselves and for their closest ally, the United States; a security point to secure infrastructure, the maritime passage and the Strait.

Of course, this dynamic is not without a ripple effect of military and security issues. Morocco has therefore established its first naval base in the Mediterranean (KsarSghir) to the west of the Tangier Med port complex. It serves as the military port of call for Royal Navy vessels protecting the northern coast in the Strait of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. This military re-positioning marks Morocco's entry into the military complex based in the Gibraltar region.

Appropriation of integrated action imperatives by defense

The defense debate in Morocco is admittedly limited to relevant institutions and a handful of domestic observers, yet it is more relevant than ever in an evolving global context, driven by relentless reconfiguration of geo-strategic balances and the impact of the economic and financial crisis on State budgets: Will defense policies be suited to their future tasks? Will military staff strategists have sufficient resources to effectively manage the adaptation process? In addition to modernizing weapons systems, not discussed here, adaptation requires managerial transformation that matches a triad of challenges: ensuring defense and security interaction, first; strengthening civil-military R&D, especially; and modernizing defense through international partnership, certainly.

The central role of defense departments in strategic affairs is a global reality. In the aftermath of the Cold War however, many countries began to restructure strategic frameworks in light of complex international relations and the interference between "purely" security issues and strategic-military issues. The threat of military aggression in Morocco still remains, and continues to occupy a prominent place in defense policy. But the gradual shift from the space covered by that policy to internal security threats both external and internal (illegal immigration, terrorism crime, drug trafficking, social tensions) reveals a blurring of lines between the competencies of different security services. This new situation recurs on different scales and is likely to lead either to turf conflicts, with ruthless consequences on State action, or to an integrated approach based on maintaining permanent bridges between various security forces. Current trends refute one-dimensional action at not only the strategic, but also the operational and tactical levels. They also favor integrated security management based on a comprehensive vision to ensure enhanced government interoperability.

In the same way, international relations complexity and the intertwining of issues, reduces decision-maker leeway both in terms of time and choice. Decisions are made in uncertain, changing and unpredictable environments¹⁴. In the absence of initiative and a culture of risk in the decision-maker, strategic action is unadaptable. This presupposes trust in people and their skills. New ways of waging war in all its forms find practical meaning and scope in what is commonly referred to as the "Revolution of Military Affairs". The first component of this doctrine is an information monopoly based on real-time exchange of situational knowledge, control by anticipation, and dissemination of intelligent control devices. The second component

¹⁴General Vincent DESPORTES, *Deciding in uncertainty*, 2nd edition, Economica Publishing, Paris, 2007.



is the ability to integrate new technologies (information, nano and bio-technologies) into military applications to enable accuracy and reduce uncertainty. The third component is networked decision-making. This revolution is nevertheless, part of the progressive evolution of a phenomenon driven by identical intentions, namely victory and power.

In parallel to the conceptual and functional reorganization of the State's strategic security action, military staff appropriate legislation not only as a simple expression of their country's global vision on major contemporary legal issues¹⁵, but above all as an effective instrument to safeguard against jurisdictional implications of any offensive military action. The concept of aggression is in fact at a legal turning point, gradually moving into the realm of international criminal law. This will lead to the individual criminalization of aggression between States. The risks will therefore be high for civilian and military decision-makers involved in military action described as aggression. International justice could thus rule against them.

The defense-security continuum at the heart of far doctrine

The defense-security continuum is the basis on which national strategic doctrine structures and organizes FAR roles. Such an approach finds particular emphasis on three levels: defending Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara; broadening the scope of defense to include security challenges; and consolidating FAR extra-military missions.

Defense of Moroccan sovereignty over the Sahara

Defense, in both military and geo-strategic terms (defending the country and contributing to its strategic influence), finds particular relevance in the King's Agendas, outlining FAR strategic functionality. This is the classical register referring to the primary objective of territorial integrity preservation. The Western Sahara conflict is a perfect example of the dual mission of defending and protecting national sovereignty. Indeed, after a war from 1975 to 1990¹⁶, the mission became that of securing and protecting the Sahara region. By mobilizing substantial resources and relying on a strategy of walls, the FAR was able to keep at bay any strategic and security threat from the East and South-East. But the longevity of the dispute kept the military institution on alert. Indeed, the UN peace plan and MINURSO deployment in September 1991 to monitor the ceasefire and hold a referendum did indeed pacify the conflict.

But it quickly showed its limits on the ground as a result of the failure to hold the referendum, plunging the region into an uncertain state of affairs in which parties to the conflict maintained a deadlocked dialogue from 1988 to 13 April 2007, the day Morocco presented its proposal for an autonomous Sahara to the United Nations Secretary General. Failure to conduct the referendum revealed in fact that the principle of self-determination was not applicable in absolute terms to the Sahara issue. As such, expanded autonomy of the Sahara region is in line with the principle of equity both in terms of the democratic nature of its content and its geopolitical purpose, i.e. contribute to ending a conflict afflicting the Maghreb, by integrating the

¹⁵Jean-Paul Pancraccio, Droit, défense et stratégie, Revue Défense nationale et sécurité collective, special issue, July 2009.

¹⁶Adoption of the UN peace plan and deployment of MINURSO in September 1991.



various Sahrawi factions into a regional political process (Sahara) guaranteeing the rights and obligations granted by the autonomous status within a framework of Moroccan sovereignty. Negotiations are the political framework to ratify peaceful settlement of the Sahara conflict. The opposite scenario is also likely in the event Polisario and Algeria reject any all concessions. In which case, no one can foresee the path antagonists will take or what repercussions this will have on Maghreb stability.

Broadening the scope of defense to include security challenges

Extending the scope of defense to security challenges, given dangers to national security posed by terrorism and illegal immigration networks; such trends are present in the new Moroccan conception and practice of defense, on equal footing with military components¹⁷. This novelty is not so much about alignment with Western policies as it is about awareness of dangers to national security posed by terrorists, drug traffickers and illegal immigration networks. The terrorist attacks of Casablanca (2003) and Marrakech (2011), as well as other failed attempts¹⁸, are sufficient to establish the importance of a global, proactive, scalable and multidimensional approach.

Moroccan authorities have pursued a three-pronged anti-terrorism strategy in recent years: 1) Repressive, security and judicial measures, based on adapting legal texts to the needs of the fight against terrorism, intelligence and preemptive operations to dismantle cells at the earliest stages.; 2) Preventive measures aim to combat extremism by reshaping the religious field, just as they aim to combat poverty, exclusion, injustice and poor governance by strengthening the rule of law to deprive terrorism and extremism of conditions favorable to their development and strengthen the resilience of populations; 3) Deep and multidimensional international cooperation through sustained and visible presence within international bodies in charge of combatting terrorism.

The FAR contribution to this strategy occurs at three levels, first in terms of prevention, by participating in the Hadar(vigilance) anti-terrorist mechanism under the authority of the Ministry of Interior¹⁹.The FAR also perform social and rescue actions to strengthen social ties. Lastly, bilateral and multilateral military cooperation contributes to the improvement of FAR human and technical interoperability (NATO, Defense 5+5 Initiative).

Defense-nation interaction to strengthen army social ties

Defense-nation interaction is understood here in the sense that military action is not limited to a war - meeting the enemy – logic, but also to a logic of safeguarding a nation's values as well as its protection. This provides an opportunity to strengthen civil-military ties both in terms of soldier socialization and in terms of services provided to civilians, as well as contribution to economic prosperity. The need to renew the Army-Nation bond in domestic and international

¹⁷King Mohammed VI's agenda on the occasion of the 53rd anniversary of FAR's creation, 14 May 2009.

¹⁸Since 2002, 183 terrorist cells have been dismantled and 361 terrorist plans foiled. Statement by Abdelhak Khiame, Director of the Central Bureau of Judicial Investigations (BCIJ), to the MAP agency, 11 October 2018.

¹⁹Hadar includes Royal Armed Forces, Royal Gendarmerie, Police and Auxiliary Forces.



contexts charged respectively with socio-economic and strategic challenges finds its meaning along five major thrusts:

- Consolidation of the legal basis for this bond on the basis of Article 38 of the Constitution of 2011: "All citizens shall contribute to the defense of the country and its territorial integrity against any aggression or threat".
- Socialization and public relations actions are aimed at strengthening the socialization process, such as the restoration of compulsory military service, abolished in 2006, and the organization of FAR open house days²⁰.
- Civil-military cooperation constitutes the third lever for bringing civilians and the military closer together. The agreement between the Ministries of Higher Education and of Defense is one of the measures taken to this end: it allows the enrollment of FAR officers in engineering schools and universities and the establishment of research partnerships between military schools and university institutes.
- The FAR also undertakes local solidarity actions: such as medical and health care for rural populations, via the field medical and surgical hospital; or contribution of FAR social services to the transit and reception operation of Moroccans residing abroad.

Besides, while political and sociological aspects of civil-military relations are already among FAR achievements²¹, consolidation of technological independence for enhanced defense economic efficiency and strategic autonomy is beginning to guide the national institutional debate (ministerial departments) towards pooling civil-military efforts in the field of R&D.

Support Morocco's strategic utility

Participation in multilateral peacekeeping operations (PKOs) is a constant feature of Morocco's foreign policy. This participation is both military and humanitarian in nature.

- Military hospitals

Projecting the health component to provide medical support to populations in need, both nationally and internationally, is one of the FAR's main operational orientations. A solid experience in logistics, rescue, medical and surgical assistance has been acquired over the past twenty years. This experience materialized through the establishment of multidisciplinary field hospitals, notably in Africa and the Middle East. Out of ten actions between 2000 and 2015, six were carried out in sub-Saharan Africa; two in Palestine; one in Tunisia and one is still ongoing at Camp Zaatari on the Syrian-Jordanian border (see Table 1).

²⁰ Jean Francois Daguzan, Armées et société dans le monde arabe : entre révolte et conservatisme, note n°05/13, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, février 2013.

²¹ Brahim Saidy Relations civilo-militaires au Maroc : le facteur international revisité, Politique étrangère, Paris, 2007/3.



Table 1: Multidisciplinary field hospitals

Year	Country	Mission
2000	Gaza, Palestine	Accomplished
2005	Maradi (Central-Eastern Niger)	Accomplished
2006	Brazzaville, Congo	Accomplished
2011	Zarzis (Tunisian city bordering Libya)	Accomplished
2012	Brazzaville, Congo	Accomplished
2012	Gaza Palestine	Accomplished
2012	Camp Zaatari on the Syrian-Jordanian border	Ongoing
2013	Bamako, Mali	Accomplished
2014	Conakry, Guinea	Accomplished
2015	Bissau, Guinea Bissau	Accomplished

Source: Author

- Peacekeeping operations

Since 1960, the FAR have contributed to some 10 peacekeeping operations either under the aegis of the UN (see Tables 2, 3 and 4) or that of NATO and the EU (see Table 4). These actions are no longer limited to the African continent and the FAR are now active in more distant crises (Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo). This broadening in the field intervention brings the FAR into contact with situations with high political and strategic added value.

Today, the FAR have a diverse range of means of intervention at their disposal for peacekeeping anywhere in the world. Participation in the stabilization process in Bosnia and Kosovo is emblematic of the role now assumed and confirmed as such, from this perspective. Operation ALTHEA embodies Moroccan armed forces' contribution to one of the most important aspects of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), conflict prevention and international crisis management²². This engagement made it possible to involve the FAR, throughout the operation, in the mechanisms for managing common security and defense policy (CSDP, formerly

²²See on this subject, Rachid EL HOUDAIGUI, Commander Mohammed MAJDOULI, Mokhtar GHAILANI: Moroccan Contingent from Bosnia and Herzegovina back home: A review of a mission accomplished, *Revue des Forces Armées Royales*, n°321 December 2007.



European Security and Defense Policy, ESDP) crises, through the Committee of Contributors, the presence of a senior Moroccan officer and the provision of EU classified information to Morocco.

These technical/ military prerequisites become political achievements insofar as they consolidate confidence and strengthen convergence of views in the assessment and treatment of instability risks in the Mediterranean region. Advanced status thus provides for a framework agreement to be drawn to organize Morocco-EU relations in the area of crisis management in a more structured way²³. In the same vein, contribution to stabilization operations under NATO command gives new impetus to practical cooperation between Morocco and NATO (26+1). A momentum that undoubtedly brings more confidence and commitment to crisis prevention and management.

On the African side, FAR presence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Côte d'Ivoire until 2016 and in the Central African Republic puts Morocco in contact with competing countries that purport to play the same role. Such contacts can be a source of competition, as with South Africa in the DRC crisis. Nevertheless, FAR's experience contributes to increasing the credibility of its actions and consequently, allows Morocco to claim a leading position in operations conducted in Africa within UN-led interventions.

Table 2: United Nations / Completed operations

PKO	Deployment date	Continent
<i>ONUC (Congo)</i>	July 1960 - June 1964	Africa
<i>ONUSOM I (Somalia I)</i>	April 1992 - March 1993	Africa
<i>ONUSOM II (Somalia II)</i>	March 1993 - March 1995	Africa
<i>UNAVEM II (Verification Mission in Angola)</i>	May 1991 - February 1995	Africa
<i>UNAVEM III (Verification Mission in Angola)</i>	February 1995-June 1997	Africa
<i>UNTAC (Provisional Authority in Cambodia)</i>	March 1992 - September 1993	Asia
<i>MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti)</i>	November 2004- March 2006	America

²³The Advanced Status granted by the EU to Morocco on Monday 13 October 2008 offers Morocco greater opportunities for cooperation with the EU through greater trade liberalization, enhanced political dialogue, a one-off association with the Common Foreign and Security Policy and access to certain Community programmes and agencies.



<i>MONUC (Mission in the DRC)</i>	1999-2010	Africa
<i>UNOCI (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire)</i>	April 2004- June 2016	Africa

Source: Author

Table 3: Ongoing Operations

PKO	Deployment Date	Continent
MONUSCO (Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo)	June 2010	Africa
MINUSCA United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	April 2014.	Africa

Source: Author

Table 4: NATO-led operations in the Balkans

PKO	Deployment Date	Continent
<i>IFOR (Peace Implementation Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina)</i>	December 1995- December 1996	Europe
<i>SFOR (Peace Stabilization Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina)</i>	December 1996- December 2004	Europe
<i>KFOR (NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo)</i>	June 1999 January 2014	Europe

Source: Author



Final Remarks

This paper highlights important realities inspired in their design, by HM King Mohammed VI's vision, highlighting development prospects that guide defense policy in general and the mission of FAR in particular.

Morocco's defense policy operates in a complex and multi-centered world. The State coexists with other actors, all of whom act in relation to each other, on different scales (supranational, sub-national, and intergovernmental) and on broad agendas.

Adapting FAR's mission to the new strategic context, coupled with its historic national responsibilities, results in three complementary configurations. First, a strictly military configuration with missions and objectives that revolve around the nation's defense. Then, a civil-military configuration oriented towards national solidarity. Finally, a diplomatic configuration focused on Morocco's international influence and illustrated by international commitments: peace-keeping operations; solidarity actions; assistance to friendly countries in bilateral contexts.

This adaptation process is not without difficulty, but the stakes are high, especially for Morocco. Morocco must, more than ever before, safeguard its independence and strategic autonomy and promote its international influence.



References

Arezki, S. (2018). de L'ALN A L'ANP, la construction de l'Armée algérienne, édition Barzakh, Alger.

Bourrat, F. (2012). l'armée algérienne: un Etat dans l'Etat, in Les Champs de Mars, n° 23, Paris.

_____. (2015). La professionnalisation des armées arabes face à un nouveau contexte stratégique régional : les cas de l'Algérie, de la Tunisie et de l'Égypte, Note de recherche stratégique n°24 – octobre, Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'Ecole Militaire (Irsem), Paris, 2015.

Brahim, Saidy. (2007). Relations civilo-militaires au Maroc : le facteur international revisité, Politique étrangère, Paris, 2007/3.

Daguzan, Jean Francois (2013), Armées et société dans le monde arabe : entre révolte et conservatisme, note n°05/13, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, février 2013

Desportes, Vincent (2007). Deciding in uncertainty, 2nd edition, Economica Publishing, Paris.

EL Houdaigui, Rachid (2007). Commander Mohammed MAJDOULI, Mokhtar GHAILANI: Moroccan Contingent from Bosnia and Herzegovina back home: A review of a mission accomplished, Revue des Forces Armées Royales, n°321 December 2007.

____ (2009). The Royal Armed Forces at the service of the renewed strategic doctrine, Revue des FAR, Rabat, July 2009.

____ (2018). La política exterior de Marruecos, desafíos y ajustes, Anuario internacional, 2018, CIDOB Barcelona.

Ihssane Guennoun, Abdelhak Bassou (2017). The Sahel and the Al Qaeda and Daech trends: What possible outcome, Policy Brief, Policy Center For the New South, Rabat, January 05, 2017.

Moghira, Mohammed Anouar (2015). Les Armées arabes et le pouvoir d'Etat. Militaires du peuple ou du régime? (XIX°-XXI siècle), Paris : Karthala.

Pancraccio, Jean-Paul (2009). Droit, défense et stratégie, Revue Défense nationale et sécurité collective, special issue, July 2009.

Revue Champs de Mars (2012). la place et le role des armées arabes dans le Monde arabe contemporain, La Champs de Mars n°23, documentation française, Paris 2012.

Revue Moyen-orient (2013). "Armée Arabes- les militaires face aux révolutions", Paris.

Valter, Stephane (2017). Sociologie des forces armées arabes: éléments théoriques et cas pratiques, In Maghreb-Machrek, 1-2/2017

Wezeman, D., Fleurant, A., Kuimova, A., Tian, N. and Wezeman, S T. (2019). Trends in International Arms Transfers, march 2019, Stockholm

