

Morocco's Military and Security Alliance with the United States

A Running Start

- In 1777, Morocco became the first country to recognize the newly independent United States as a sovereign nation. In 1786, the two countries signed [the US-Morocco Treaty of Peace and Friendship](#), which remains the longest-standing treaty in American history. Though it primarily governed maritime trade, the document included several stipulations relating to security and military relations, among them:
 - “If either of the Parties shall be at War with any Nation whatever, the other Party shall not take a Commission from the Enemy nor fight under their Colors.”
 - “If any Vessel of either of the Parties shall have an engagement with a Vessel belonging to any of the Christian Powers within gunshot of the Forts of the other, the Vessel so engaged shall be defended and protected as much as possible untill she is in safety; And if any American Vessel shall be cast on shore on the Coast of Wadnoon (1) or any coast thereabout, the People belonging to her shall be protected, and assisted untill by the help of God, they shall be sent to their Country.”

Allies in Wartime

- Morocco has fought alongside or sided with the US throughout American history:
 - **During World War I**, [Moroccan soldiers](#) fought alongside Allied forces.
 - **In World War II**, Morocco supported Allied forces and in January 1943 hosted US President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Free French commander General Charles De Gaulle in what became known as the [Casablanca Conference](#), where the Allies agreed on their strategy to end the war.
 - **During the Cold War**, Morocco remained officially non-aligned, but was favorable toward the West and in 1982 signed [an agreement](#) with the US that allowed American forces access and transit rights to Moroccan Air Force bases.
 - **During the First Gulf War**, Morocco was the only Maghreb member of the US's coalition.
 - **Following the Bosnian War**, Moroccan forces served in the [Stabilization Force for Bosnia-Herzegovina](#). Morocco was the only Arab or African country to participate.
 - **Morocco joined NATO's Kosovo Force** in 1999, contributing 11,000 troops over 14 years.
 - **Morocco supported the US's War on Terror** in Iraq and Afghanistan, and has taken on an active role in the US's global counterterrorism efforts:
 - In 2011, Morocco and the US joined 28 other countries as founding members of the [Global Counterterrorism Forum](#)—an initiative to “reduce the vulnerability of people everywhere to terrorism by effectively preventing, combating, and prosecuting terrorist attacks and countering incitement and recruitment to terrorism.”
 - Morocco was the first Maghreb country to join the US's [anti-ISIS coalition in 2014](#).

Partnering for Success

- Beyond cooperation during hot conflicts, the US and Morocco maintain strong military relations.
 - Since the late 90s, Moroccan and American forces have participated in a joint training exercise called [African Lion](#). Under US Africa Command since 2008, African Lion has become the largest joint military exercise on the continent, with hundreds and even thousands of troops participating.
 - In 2003, Morocco established a [partnership with the Utah National Guard](#) as part of the US National Guard State Partnership Program.
 - In 2004, and “in recognition of the close US-Morocco relationship, our appreciation for Morocco's steadfast support in the global war on terror, and for King Mohamed's role as a visionary leader in the Arab world,” then President George W. Bush named Morocco a major [non-NATO ally](#). It was the first Maghreb country to achieve this status, and is one of just 16 worldwide as of 2016.
 - In 2005, Morocco joined the [Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership](#)—a US government-funded and -implemented effort designed to counter violent extremism in the Sahara-Sahel region.
 - In 2008, Morocco purchased 24 Advanced [F-16](#) Block 52 aircraft, which, according to the Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), would enhance “Morocco's capability to support US efforts in the global war on terrorism.” Other Moroccan purchases of US defense materiel include T-6 trainer aircraft, AGM-D air-to-ground missiles, AM 120-C7 missile systems, and refurbishment worth over \$1 billion of Abram M1A1 tanks. In 2016, DSCA announced Morocco’s purchase of [TOW missiles](#). The missiles are to be manufactured in Arizona and New Mexico, with an estimated completion date of August 2018.
 - Under the [Foreign Military Financing \(FMF\) initiative](#), the US provides assistance to maintain aging US-origin materiel; boost maritime surveillance to address illegal immigration, smuggling, drug trafficking, and illicit fishing; procure transport and logistics equipment; and upgrade aerial surveillance.
 - Through the [International Military Education and Training \(IMET\) program](#), Moroccan students are sent annually to Professional Military Education (PME) classes at US services schools.

For an overview of US spending on the Moroccan military, see the [State Department Foreign Operations Budget Justification](#).

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