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NSC BRIEFING

21  
~~20~~ January 1954

FLARE-UP IN MOROCCO

**CONFIDENTIAL**

I. Spanish activity:

A. Current flare-up in Morocco results from Madrid's desire:

1. To irritate France at time when situation lends itself to such action, and springs out Spanish desire to occupy in Morocco position equal to France.
- To curry good will in Arab World by promoting anti-French sentiment by supporting removed Sultan and by vaguely promising more autonomy to Spanish Morocco.

B. Current assemblage of local Moroccan notables aimed at above objectives not a unilateral Spanish abrogation of 1912 treaty with France which still governs relations in Morocco of two countries.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

**CONFIDENTIAL**

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II. French Position:

- A. France long irritated over Spanish "uncooperative attitude," using this situation in attempt to solicit American support for its policies in this area.
- B. France exaggerating and sending military forces into nearby Algeria aimed at impressing Spanish.

III. Probable Results:

- A. No formal autonomy for Spanish Morocco expected to develop. Status quo anticipated.
- B. No significant change in present situation in Morocco where adequate French military forces maintain uneasy formal public order. 54,000 French troops present.

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- C. Spanish Morocco will not become staging area for terrorist attacks on French territory. 60,000 Spanish troops will maintain order in their zone.
- D. Spain will gain little prestige with Arabs. Already indifferent, Spanish-French relations will be strained further.

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**BACKGROUND**

**Spanish-French Controversy over Morocco:**

- A. When French dethroned Sultan Mohamed V 20 August 1953, Spain informally declared this unilateral action violation bilateral agreement 27 November 1912 establishing Spanish protectorate. Therefore refused to recognize successor, Mohamed VI.
- B. This position, repeated publication provocative articles by controlled Spanish press, and asylum to French Moroccan refugees have created considerable belligerency French-Spanish relations in Morocco.
- C. Both protagonists willing to discuss differences; neither wants to initiate discussions.

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D. Spain, meanwhile, closely controls provocative activities, has tightly circumscribed nationalist activities by imprisoning or expelling offenders, and has not allowed nationalists to establish base of operations for attack on French Morocco. French aware limitations upon nationalist activity.

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**BACKGROUND**

**Practicability of Separating French and  
Spanish Morocco**

- A. Spain historically has repeatedly hinted it would establish separate Moroccan kingdom. Controlled press has since August made recommendation.
- B. It now established that some 600 Spanish Moroccan notables convened Tetuan 20 January by Spanish officials in "spontaneous demonstration of public opinion" to:
1. Condemn French policy.
  2. Approve Spanish policy.
  3. Declare continued allegiance to dethroned sultan, Mohamed V.
  4. Request separation of Spanish protectorate from rest of Morocco and elevate khalifa (sultan's deputy) to role of "independent prince."

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- C. Khalifa, highest native official Spanish Morocco, and native advisers are known to be lukewarm to move. Spanish Moroccan nationalists strongly disapprove maneuver; unable to oppose it.
- D. Regarding separation of two protectorates, however, an indivisible Moroccan empire has remained fiction of international law since 1912; is not based on fact. Pro-forma tie has existed in the fallacy that khalifa is sultan's representative. In every other respect two territories have been administered jealously and separately. Liaison between protectorate officials has been completely superficial. Real cooperation exists only on the lowest administrative levels.