

BACKGROUND

MOROCCAN SULTANS

I. Ex-sultan: Sidi Mohamed ben Youssef

(Mohammed V)

- A. To throne age 16 (November 1927),  
selected for youth in hope pliable.
  1. After World War II, started assert  
independence, repeatedly tangled with  
French over proposed "reforms."  
Visualizes self as leader Arab world  
in northwest Africa; in 1947 made  
ringing defense of Arab League.
  2. Is virtual but not nominal head  
Istiglal, principal Moroccan  
nationalist party: has worked closely  
with party leaders.
  3. Advocates nationalist moderation,  
genuinely concerned people's welfare,  
betterment education, living  
conditions.

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B. Forcibly deposed (20 August 1953) for blocking French "reforms." French flew him and entourage of 35 to Corsica.

1. In January 1954 (height<sup>9</sup> of Spanish criticism French Moroccan policy)

French flew him to Madagascar.

Expected then final destination would be even more remote (New Caledonia or perhaps Tahiti).

2. Now rumored he may be allowed come to France.

3. At present, remains Madagascar with wives, two sons, several daughters, household servants. French, in effort discredit, frequently leak false rumors concubines in entourage.

C. Has refused abdicate formally.

1. French recently obtained his promise neither he nor sons would engage in politics.

2. However, French efforts undermine his popularity in Morocco not successful.

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II. Present sultan: Sidi Mohamed ben Moulay

Arafa (Mohammed VI).

A. Selected by French to replace ben Youssef

1. A cousin of ex-sultan; colorless old man, some 70 years old.
2. Is wealthy landowner, completely non-political, regarded as "good simple man," reported unable speak French.
3. Has repeatedly voiced desire abdicate, return to quiet life in Fez.

B. French dissatisfied with Arafa; although pliable, lacks ex-sultan's popularity, widespread respect.

1. Moroccans view him as French puppet. Already two assassination attempts (latter, March 1954, wounding him slightly).
2. Official tour Morocco (February-March 1954) met only sparse sullen crowds, cold receptions. Has not left palace in Rabat since.

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III. Possible Successors:

- A. Numerous among many members reigning Alaouite dynasty.\* Most frequently mentioned is Prince Moulay Abdullah, 18-year-old second son ex-sultan.
1. French reportedly making unofficial feelers on this. (Denied by Foreign Ministry)
  2. While Moroccan nationalists primarily want ex-sultan back, probably would accept son, if assured this approved by ex-sultan.

\* Selection made by French in practice; rubber-stamped by college of native religious leaders.

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