



# Washington Watch

## America's Oldest Ally Remains Key U.S. Strategic Partner

(NAPSA)—When asked to name America's oldest ally, many would be surprised to find the correct answer is the Kingdom of Morocco.

The relationship dates back to 1777, when Morocco became the first country to recognize the colonies as an independent nation and granted American ships safe passage through the Straits of Gibraltar and access to Moroccan ports. This agreement laid the foundation for a bond that has endured to today.

In 1786, the two countries signed the Morocco-U.S. Treaty of Peace and Friendship, which was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1787 and remains the longest-standing treaty of its kind in U.S. history.

During World War I, Morocco supported Allied forces, and Moroccan soldiers fought alongside U.S. Marines in France. During World War II, Morocco hosted President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle at a summit meeting to plan Allied strategy in Europe.

More recently, in 2004, Morocco became one of only 20 countries to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., and it is one of the few non-NATO American allies in the Middle East and North Africa.

### The Relationship Continues

Last year, Morocco and the U.S. entered into a formal Strategic Dialogue. And the U.S., through three administrations beginning with President Bill Clinton, has been a key supporter of Morocco's compromise autonomy initiative to end the Western Sahara conflict.

### An Exchange Of Invitations

This long-lasting international friendship was strengthened recently when an exchange of letters was followed by a phone call



**In 2004, Morocco became one of 20 countries to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., and is one of its few allies in the Middle East and North Africa.**

from President Barack Obama to Morocco's King Mohammed VI. The two leaders discussed further enhancing bilateral relations through their personal relationship, and within the framework of the Strategic Dialogue that Morocco and the U.S. initiated in 2012. They reaffirmed the historic relationship between the two countries and agreed to increase cooperation on defense, security, and the fight against terrorism. They agreed to deepen consultations on a host of key issues where Morocco has valuable insight, including Syria, Mali, and the Israel-Palestine conflict. President Obama expressed his support for Morocco's progress on democratic reforms spearheaded by King Mohammed VI, and told the King he looked forward to continuing their discussions in person, inviting him to visit Washington, D.C. this year. King Mohammed VI thanked President Obama for his commitment to the U.S.-Morocco relationship and also invited him to visit Morocco.

*This information is provided by Beckerman on behalf of the government of Morocco. Further information is available at the U.S. Department of Justice.*