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Regime Reform in the Arab Spring: Explaining Divergent Paths of Jordan and Morocco

Conventional wisdom holds that the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchs fared better in the Arab Spring than their republican counterparts. Protests in these countries were relatively small in size; demands were usually for political reform, not regime overthrow; and violence was limited. Thus, in a recent article in *The Middle East Journal*, Andrew Barwig seeks to explain the "durability" of these two monarchies, concluding that they have been better able to "stand above the political fray" and "co-opt various elements into the political system."[1] Observers have highlighted not only the seeming invulnerability of Jordan's Abdullah II and Morocco's Mohammad VI, but also similarities in the reform strategies they both used to quell popular uprisings. For example, Sean Yom titles a piece in *Foreign Policy*, "Jordan goes Morocco," to describe Jordanian reform measures.[2] Likewise, U.S. under-secretary of State William Burn cited Morocco and Jordan as countries "working to stay ahead of the wave of popular protests" through "significant reform initiatives."[3] While some observers, including the U.S. State Department, have praised the efforts of the two countries' rulers,[4] others have criticized them jointly, purporting a mere façade of change. For example, in a notable critique by a cousin of Mohammad VI and third in line to the throne, Stanford University's Hicham Ben Abdallah el Alaoui writes, "Morocco and Jordan—the two oil-poor monarchies—are trying to satisfy their citizens by liberalizing instead of democratizing. They have turned to controlled political openings cloaked in the language of freedom but intended to perpetuate the status quo."[5]

In this paper I diverge from the traditional approach by politicians and analysts to compare Morocco and Jordan, and instead demonstrate that there are noteworthy differences between the cases that beg attention and explanation. I argue that Morocco succeeded in creating an "broadened

monarchy" and effectively quelling opposition momentum, at least for the time-being, whereas Jordan failed to provide reforms sufficient to satisfy either opposition elites or the public at large, who have protested on an increasing scale, directing much criticism at the monarch himself.

There are of course many similarities in the political and economic structures of Jordan and Morocco. Politically, both kings inherited power from their deceased fathers in 1999 and enjoy a degree of historical and religious legitimacy. They hold parliamentary elections, in which Islamist parties participate and have emerged as the most significant opposition party in both cases. Despite democratic structures, both monarchs serve as final decision-makers, guided by the royal advisors they appoint. Economically, both engaged in neo-liberal reforms, while their countries suffer from high unemployment, especially for the youth population, as well as endemic corruption. These and other relevant parallels between the countries are in fact what make it so compelling to explain why their trajectories differed in the Arab Spring.

In this paper, first I establish that the recent paths of Jordan and Morocco have indeed diverged—in terms both of the specific reform initiatives and effects on protest momentum. Then, I move on to address why this is the case. Instead of providing an exhaustive list of all possible explanatory variables, I focus on a few salient ones. First I discuss and critique the argument that Jordan's deeper economic crisis is to blame for its lower level of success than Morocco at weathering the Arab Spring. Then I offer a more coherent, but still insufficient explanation: Jordan's unique societal divide between East Bank Jordanians and Palestinians. Next, I provide what I view as the best explanation: the divergent relationships between the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies and their respective Islamist parties. Finally, I conclude by assessing whether it is appropriate to label Jordan less stable than Morocco, and how long Morocco's relative success will last.

Challenging the Conventional Wisdom

Reform Substance and Process. Claims that Morocco and Jordan have jointly embarked on reforms belie significant differences in the substance of the political changes and processes through which they were initiated. First, only in Morocco can it be said that reforms succeeded in creating a "broadened monarchy." I formulated this term by adapting the notion of "broadened dictatorship" used in the literature on pacted transitions to democracy. The basic idea of the theory is that regimes act strategically when deciding whether or not to open political space to new opposition elite. Doing so runs the risk that the opposition will use the opening to better organize against the regime. On the other hand, the opposition could become co-opted via the overture, resulting in an expanded authoritarian system.[6]

Only in Morocco was there a real overture that sought to incorporate the main opposition group, the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD), into the regime fold. The main political change in Morocco was the provision in the new constitution that the Prime Minister is to be selected from the leading party in parliamentary elections. The PJD chose to back this reform proposal and the new constitution as a whole, and participated in the elections. Following its success in winning a plurality of votes, PJD Secretary General Abdelilah Benkirane was appointed Prime Minister. The new Moroccan law stipulates that he is "head of government," sharing power with the king, even if in a constrained and limited sense (the monarch is clearly still supreme). This is what Moroccan officials refer to as their "third way," consisting neither of the same-old authoritarianism or revolution, but a "genuine partnership" with the opposition.[7]

Some would say that there was no overture or expansion of the Moroccan monarchy, but just more corrupted parliamentary politics-as-usual. However, it is important to note that the monarchy did take at least a small risk in bringing in the PJD, which cannot be compared to a traditional party of royal

cronies. As one analyst notes in the Carnegie Endowment's *Sada*, the PJD is the only party which "stated that it will actually rule if it wins the voters' trust, and that it will not simply follow the orders given by the king's advisors or influential security officials."[8] There is ongoing negotiation and tension between the monarchy and the PJD about where the king's power ends and the Prime Minister's begins.[9] In any case, for the moment, it is accurate to say that the monarchy has effectively co-opted the PJD into a broadened regime.

The same cannot be said of Jordan. In contrast to the PJD's praise of and participation in the king's initiatives, Jordan's main opposition party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF, the political wing of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood), is calling for a boycott of Jordan's upcoming legislative elections, encouraging protest, and sharply criticizing the new electoral law.[10] The IAF's decision is not a matter of using a political opening to demand increased reforms; rather, it is a result of insufficient concessions by the monarchy, in its view, indicating there was not much of an opening to begin with.

The central issue concerns Jordan's convoluted singular-non-transferable voting system. Not only is it easily gerry-mandered to give rural Jordanians more representation than those of Palestinian origin, who are more likely to support the IAF, but it also forces tough decisions on political parties. The system makes it hard for parties to estimate how many candidates to field. If a party fields only one candidate who receives many more votes than needed, the extra votes are "wasted." But if it fields too many, and the vote is split amongst the candidates, it is possible that none will be elected. Thus, the IAF and other opposition activists have demanded the introduction of a national proportional system to elect political parties. The June electoral law provides only for 17 of 140 seats to be elected in this manner.[11] In response, a Muslim Brotherhood leader called the draft law "retarded and provocative."[12] In July, the government proposed upping the number to 27 seats, or about 20% of parliament, but this still did not

satisfy the IAF. Analysts have noted that to appease the IAF, the percentage would have to be increased to 30%.[13]

Moreover, a number of Jordan's political "reform" proposals are actually intended to increase the monarchy's power. The electoral law removes past restrictions on voting by the security services, considered to be highly loyal to the monarchy. This is likely to affect 10% of the vote, by conservative estimates. Second, the law adds three new parliamentary seats to the women's quota, but these are reserved for Bedouins, part of the monarchy's traditional, Jordanian base.[14] Moreover, Jordan's new "independent" electoral commission is actually royally appointed.[15] Other sore points for the opposition include that the king reserves the right to appoint the prime minister and dissolve the parliament at will.

Aside from uniquely succeeding in striking a deal with the opposition, the substance of Morocco's reform commitments was more extensive than Jordan's, at least on paper. As James Traub notes about Morocco's new constitution in *Foreign Policy*, "The document enumerates a comprehensive list of individual rights, such as are found in most European constitutions, and commits Morocco to the protection of human rights 'as they are universally understood.'"[16] The Jordanian parliament did pass a series of constitutional amendments in September last year, whose main clauses are to strengthen the rule of law and the role of the judiciary, limit the king's emergency powers, and establish a constitutional court.[17] However, these reforms are less extensive than Morocco's. Abdullah II also sacked the prime minister and cabinet officials several times since the start of the Arab Spring, but this is arguably more a sign of political instability than reform. Finally, Jordan has recently showed signs of de-liberalizing, for example by passing a regressive press law in September, which seeks to police the internet.[18]

Finally, Morocco's reform process was more efficient than was Jordan's. After Mohammad VI promised reforms in a major address on March 9, 2011, it took only three months before a draft of the new constitution was presented to the public. By July 1, it was approved via a popular referendum, and parliamentary elections were held last November. By contrast, Jordan's reforms moved ahead in a slow and haphazard manner. In mid-March, 2011, Abdullah II established a National Dialogue Committee (NDC), composed of both government and civil society figures. However, the recommendations it proposed that June were effectively shelved. The same month, the king announced in a televised address that he would undertake major reforms, but back-tracked two days later, saying it could take a couple years to implement them.[19] Parallel to the NDC, the king established a royal committee to draft constitutional reform proposals. Many of the recommended constitutional amendments were submitted to parliament and approved in September, 2011, but the electoral law continued to be debated for several months, passing only in June, 2012 (and the monarchy proposed to amend it in July). In October, the government set the date for parliamentary elections to be held in January. Given this drawn-out and conflict-ridden course, a commentary in *The Financial Times* a couple months ago referred to Jordan's "degrading reform process."[20]

Reform Effects. Clearly, Morocco's reform proposals were more extensive, and its reform process was more efficient than was the case in Jordan. Additionally, there were differences in the effects of the reforms: the reactions by opposition elites and the public at large. Morocco's public overwhelmingly supported the new constitution by a referendum, with 98% approval and 70% of voters participating.[21] To be sure, one analyst has pointed out that the voter participation figure only counts the 50-60% of eligible voters who were registered. Moreover, there were some irregularities in the referendum process; for example, there were reports of the government bussing-in voters to polling stations where there were no "no" ballots to be found.[22] Still, most observers argue that the referendum

demonstrated widespread Moroccan support for both the new constitution and the institution of the monarchy as a whole.[23] This conclusion can be confirmed by noting the positive reaction of Morocco's political parties to the constitution. The main political parties supported the constitution, not only those known to be closely allied with the monarchy, but also the PJD and the Popular Union of Socialist Forces (USFP).[24] Even one of Morocco's most prominent, hardline Salafi preachers encouraged his followers to vote in favor of the constitution.[25] To be sure, opposing it was one major trade union, three small leftist parties, the February 20 youth movement, and the illegal Islamist Justice and Charity Organization (JCO). The latter two also called for a boycott of the parliamentary elections. Voter turnout was low at 45% in those elections, but still topped the 37% turnout in the previous (2007) elections, reflecting at least a degree of increased political optimism.[26]

In Jordan, on the other hand, the reforms were not as welcomed by opposition elites or the public. Already noted is that the IAF is boycotting the upcoming January elections and organizing protests. They are joined in dissatisfaction with the monarchy's reforms by leftist and human rights activists, as well as many tribal Jordanians. Recently, a group of 400 lawmakers and activists issued a petition calling for resolving the electoral reform issues before holding elections.[27] The tense situation in Jordan is symbolized by the actual brawl that broke out in its parliament in June between a royalist and a reformist MP.[28] Disenchantment with Jordan's reform process can also be seen in the April resignation of reform-inclined Prime Minister Awn Khasawneh, who complained about interference by the monarchy and security services in the electoral reforms process.[29]

It is also noteworthy to contrast the momentum of the protest movements in Morocco and Jordan. The momentum has slowed down in Morocco, with a couple spikes in activity, but rarely are the protesters directly critical of the monarch. This is confirmed by various analysts, writing in the past few months. Traub notes in a previously mentioned article from August, "While the Arab world has been

turned upside-down over the last 18 months, Morocco experienced a brief moment at the barricades and then embarked on a process of political reform."[30] In a September article in *The World Affairs Journal*, Michael Totten praises the kingdom's "progressive stability," noting, "While much of the region is boiling with turmoil, Morocco is placid and calm."[31] Likewise, Marina Ottaway alleges in recent analysis for the Carnegie Endowment that the February 20th protest movement is now "largely inactive."[32] Commenting on the one-year anniversary protests of the movement, the pan-Arab daily *Asharq Alawsat* notes, "the turnout was in sharp contrast to the tens of thousands that once flocked to the February 20th movement's banner early last year and even the thousands that were still demonstrating last month."[33]

On the other hand, there has still been some sporadic protest activity, notably a few months ago in the Rif region[34] and the northern city of Taza, thought to suffer from the country's highest unemployment and lowest investment rates.[35] These were met with a brutal police response and arbitrary arrests."[36] A few demonstrations attracting more than a thousand protesters were reported between May and August. However, it is important to note that some of them actually targeted Prime Minister Benkirane rather than the king. This was true of the largest protest over the past several months, of 15 to 20 thousand, which took place in Casablanca in May. The protest was organized by some of the traditional leftist competitors of the Islamists, including the trade unions and socialist parties. According to *Agence France Presse*, protesters condemned the "slow pace of reform by the Benkirane government."[37] Similarly, it was reported in July that thousands of protesters in Casablanca were denouncing the Benkirane government and the PJD.[38] Indeed a commentator for *Al Arabiya* notes that Benkirane quickly lost favor amongst the unemployed youth, a key protest element.[39]

Only a few protests have more directly targeted monarchial power, such as the mid-May rally of nearly 3,000 magistrates that protested executive interference in the judicial branch (against

commitments of the new constitution).[40] Also, in mid-August, there were protests (though small-scale) against the Bayaa ceremony, in which government officials prostrate themselves before the king. According to the blog of the Project on Middle East Democracy, there were also "rare calls" by Moroccan commentators, as well as the PJD, to abolish the ceremony.[41]

Protest in Morocco is thus not insignificant, but pales in comparison to opposition momentum in Jordan. According to an IAF member quoted in *The New York Times*, protests reached an all-time high in Jordan last week since the start of the Arab Spring. The same article cites Nathan Thrall of the International Crisis Group saying that he now views the fall of the Jordanian regime as a real possibility.[42] Already in September, analysts writing in the Carnegie Endowment's *Sada* described protests as "the largest in the country's history."[43] Previously in May, Marc Lynch of the George Washington University stated, "I would rank Jordan today only below Bahrain as at risk of sudden escalation of political crisis."[44] And in March, Israeli scholar Assaf David contended that he foresees "decay of the Hashemite regime."[45]

Indeed, sizeable protests have persisted over the past year, often targeting the king himself. According to David Schenker of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, writing a couple months ago, "Over the past year and a half, protests have been a ubiquitous feature of political life in Jordan," and the demands of protesters have been "laced with criticism of the monarchy."[46] Indeed, *The New York Times* reported this month that protesters have adopted the signature chant of the Arab Spring, "The people want the fall of the regime," and pictures of Abdullah II have been burnt.[47] Middle East scholar Jillian Schwedler noted recently that certain protesters are "frequently crossing redlines, such as directly critiquing the king rather than targeting the prime minister or cabinet."[48] A number of analysts have emphasized that even many tribal Jordanians are protesting, an important development considering this segment of the population is assumed to compose the king's traditional base.[49]

Explaining the Divergent Paths

Economic Crisis? Given the broad similarities between Morocco and Jordan, it is certainly a puzzle to explain why their performances differed in the Arab Spring. Many recent articles have highlighted the importance of economic factors in explaining the protest momentum in Jordan. This is especially the case given that the past week's protests came at the heels of fuel subsidy cuts, with protesters demanding the government reverse course. In fact, the Jordanian government previously attempted to decrease subsidies in September, but changed its mind when large demonstrations emerged. However, with mounting financial troubles, Jordan was left with little choice but to try its hand again on subsidies.[50] The International Monetary Fund also made the cuts a condition for its promised $2 billion loan.[51] In many ways, the current situation in Jordan seems like a flashback to the 1970s and 80s when "bread riots" rocked the Middle East, pushing governments to undertake political reforms.[52]

An issue with this explanation is that Morocco suffers many of the same economic problems as does Jordan. To be sure, it is possible that Jordan is facing a more serious economic crisis than Morocco. This could be the result of the massive inflow of 100,000 Syrian refugees into Jordan, straining resources, including water. Meanwhile, nearby conflicts have scared tourists away, and natural gas supplies were disrupted by attacks on pipelines in Sinai that are known to deliver to Israel, but often supply Jordan as well. Moreover, the country is now feeling the blowback from its liberal spending at the beginning of Arab Spring, when it sought to quell discontent amongst its tribal base by directing increased resources towards it.[53]

On the other hand, Morocco has also toyed with the idea of removing subsidies. A key difference however, is that it was the Benkirane government undertaking the initiative and also taking the blame, not the monarchy.[54] The May protests in Casablanca which targeted Benkirane actually followed the announcement of proposed reforms to Morocco's subsidy program.[55] Ultimately, the economic

argument can partially explain protest momentum, but it does not provide a good reason why the Jordanian government failed to strike a deal with the IAF, mimicking Morocco's "third way," which would have allowed for some blame-sharing regarding the country's economic woes.

Jordan's Societal Divide? Another explanation concerns Jordan's societal divide between East Bank, tribal Jordanians and Palestinians. In the past, leaning on tribal loyalties was said to make the Jordanian monarchy stronger, not weaker. But in recent years, the king has tried to change the formula. Seeking a way to make Jordan economically viable and to expand his base of support to include urban business elite, Abdullah II introduced neo-liberal economic reforms. Problematically for the Jordanian tribes, the business elite that emerged were largely Palestinians. Sometimes state assets held by the security services were sold to Palestinian businessmen through privatization deals.[56] Like in Jordan, privatization has been denounced in Morocco as a source of corruption, benefitting royal cronies, not the population at large.[57] But the societal divide adds a more complex dimension to the issue in the Jordanian case as a large swath of the population feels it is losing the favoritism it once enjoyed. Exacerbating the situation is that the king is seen as "out of step" with the tribes' "concerns and even values."[58] Not surprisingly, Queen Rania, who is of Palestinian origin, and accused of "profligate spending,"[59] "has become a lightning rod for East Bank critics."[60]

Jordan's societal divide essentially makes it harder for the monarchy to find solutions that satisfy all. Despite protest slogans asserting unity, and certain activists working to bridge communal divides,[61] the challenges may be hard to overcome. As Schwedler notes, the different protest camps "want very different things;" the East Bank Jordanians want "*more* of the regime, not less." Indeed, while the two groups share anti-corruption sentiments, the Jordanian group has sometimes demanded curbs on the Palestinian vote and more power for the army. David Ignatius thus argues in the *Washington Post* that Abdullah II is caught in a "balancing act": "He depends on the entrepreneurial Palestinian business elite

for Jordan's economic growth; but he needs the army, dominated by the Bedouin tribes of the East Bank, for security."[62] In short, it seems unlikely that political reforms giving more power to the IAF would satisfy East Bank Jordanians. This is a disincentive for Abdullah II to find a Jordanian "third way."

Relationship with Islamist Party. While the above explanation is coherent, there are still questions about why Abdullah II's "balance" seems skewed toward the East Bank side. If the demand of the IAF is merely to increase parliamentary seats in national proportional voting to 30% of parliament (from the 20% already proposed), why is King Abdullah refusing to give in? Thus, it is important to note another explanatory variable: the respective relationships between the Jordanian and Moroccan monarchies and their Islamist parties. On one hand, this variable seems too obvious. If the key to the Moroccan and Jordanian monarchs' performance in the Arab Spring was whether they struck a deal with the Islamist party, clearly the relationship with these parties matters. Nonetheless, it is worth further investigating the construction of the relationship.

It is also noteworthy that this variable is identified in a study explaining why family law reforms (pushed by the monarchies) were passed by the Moroccan parliament, but rejected by the Jordanian one in 2004. The authors Janine Clark and Amy Young identify monarchy-Islamist relations as "combative," in the case of Jordan, and "cooperative" in the case of Morocco.[63] This seems to apply today. To be sure, there is tension beneath the surface in the relationship between the Moroccan monarchy and the PJD, but the two sides at least try to present a cooperative public appearance, avoiding direct criticism of one another and even offering mutual praise on occasion.[64] The Jordanian situation is rather different. Already discussed is the IAF's opposition to Abdullah II's initiatives. While the IAF is still considered part of the "loyal opposition" and is not demanding the King step down, it is vocally calling for substantive "regime reform."[65] Likewise, Abdullah II has directly criticized the Muslim Brotherhood in two recent interviews. Speaking to CNN's Christiane Amanpour, he expressed hope that soon enough,

"the Muslim Brotherhood will no longer be something to contend with."[66] On *The Daily Show* with John Stewart in September, he accused the international Brotherhood movement of hijacking the Arab Spring in various countries.[67]

In Young and Clark's explanation of the divergent relationships between the Moroccan and Jordanian monarchs and their respective Islamist parties, they identify Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel as a key factor. In order to prepare a parliament that would lend its stamp of approval to the treaty, the Jordanian regime mended its electoral laws before the 1993 elections. The changes were intended to increase representation of the King's loyal base of tribal Jordanians, while decreasing the weight of Islamist, leftist, and other opposition figures who opposed normalization with Israel.[68] The continued call of the IAF to abrogate the treaty thus strains its relationship with the monarchy, even to this day. Breaking the peace with Israel is a key demand of protesters and the IAF.[69] In October, when Jordan appointed a new ambassador to Israel (amid Western pressure since the post had been vacant since mid-2010), the Muslim Brotherhood, called this a "provocative act."[70] While there may be many reasons the monarchy does not want to significantly change its position on Israel, perhaps the most important is that it would jeopardize relations with the West. In turn, this would put at risk the constant stream of much needed Western aid money. Jordan is in fact the second largest per capita recipient of American aid.[71]

Clark and Young identify another important difference between Morocco and Jordan: Morocco's stronger leftist movement, along with more organized human and women rights activism.[72] While this variable seems irrelevant to the current discussion, it does indirectly affect relations between the monarchy and the Islamist movement. Non-Islamist Moroccan civil society groups compel the PJD to compete with other powerful forces. This makes the PJD weaker and hence less of a threat to the monarchy than Jordan's IAF. It is worth reiterating that the PJD only won a plurality (27%) of the vote

in the parliamentary elections, meaning that it had to form a coalition government and share power with other parties, including the monarchy-allied Istiqlal, in addition to the monarchy itself.

Another factor contributing to the relative weakness of the PJD is that the Islamist movement in Morocco is divided. The PJD is the legal version, but there is also the illegal JCO, which is banned because it rejects the institution of the monarchy as un-Islamic. Since the JCO encourages its supporters to boycott elections, it effectively dilutes the potential Islamist vote. If the PJD were stronger, it could afford to become more assertive against the monarchy. Knowing that it is weak enough, the monarchy has been more willing to take the risk of bringing it into the regime. By contrast, Abdullah II fears the bringing in the IAF would embolden it more than co-opt it.

In Conclusion: Projecting the Future

To summarize, the first part of this analysis demonstrated that the trajectories of Morocco and Jordan differed in the Arab Spring. While both countries are said to have undertaken reforms, they differed in substance, as well as in the timeline through which they were enacted. Only Morocco succeed in creating a broadened monarchy, and its reform process moved ahead in a smoother fashion than did Jordan's. The reforms also had divergent effects. Most Moroccan voters expressed their approval of the king's initiatives in a referendum, and protests targeting the monarchy have been in decline. The same cannot be said of Jordan, where protest momentum has been reaching new heights. In the second part of the paper, I argued that the best explanation for the forked paths of Jordan and Morocco is the relationship between the monarchs and their respective Islamist parties: combative in Jordan, cooperative in Morocco. Though weaker overall explanations, economic factors might account for some of Jordan's protest momentum, and the divide between Jordanians and Palestinians does uniquely complicate Abdullah II's ability to carry out reforms. There are also important factors contributing to the monarchy-Islamist relationship in both Jordan and Morocco. One such factor is the

IAF opposition to the peace treaty with Israel. A factor in the Moroccan case is the relative weakness of the PJD, caused by the presence of substantive non-Islamist activism and the divide in the Islamist movement between the PJD and JCO.

At the same time, it is important to stress the limits of this analysis. The conclusion should not be that the Moroccan monarchy is invincible and the Jordanian one is on the verge of collapse. First, growing protest momentum does not automatically imply regime failure. It is possible that Abdullah II will change course and deepen reforms. But even if he does not, the Hashemite Kingdom may be able to withstand the protests. The Bahraini regime has survived worse. As one observer quipped last week in *Foreign Policy* regarding protests in Jordan, "All of this has happened before, and all of this will very likely happen again. Seen from within, Jordan seems extremely unlikely to fall, explode, crumble, or collapse."[73] Similarly, the Moroccan monarchy has survived in part by allowing for a degree of blame for the country's troubles to shift onto the PJD. But as Traub notes, Moroccans "won't keep blaming the government, rather than the palace, forever."[74] The underlying problems that sparked the protests are still there, especially corruption implicating even the top echelons of Morocco's elite. And the PJD could also become more assertive in demanding power from the monarchy. Still, it is fair to say that at least is the near future Morocco is more stable than Jordan, thanks largely to its better relations between the king and Islamist party.

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