

NEWS RELEASE

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More than 140 Foreign Policy Experts and Scholars call on Pres. Obama to Support Democracy-building in Muslim World; Morocco highlighted as a Model for the Region

Washington, DC (Mar. 11, 2009) – Yesterday, more than 140 foreign policy experts and scholars from the U.S. and abroad addressed an open letter to US President Barack Obama, congratulating him for his promise to reach out to the Muslim world and calling for concrete policy changes to rebuild and strengthen US relations with partners in the region.

“In order to rebuild relations of mutual respect, it is critical that the United States be on the right side of history regarding the human, civil, and political rights of the peoples of the Middle East,” wrote the experts in the letter, which received bi-partisan support from former US government officials as well as international political and civil society leaders. “What they need from your administration is a commitment to encourage political reform not through wars, threats, or imposition, but through peaceful policies that reward governments that take active and measurable steps towards genuine democratic reforms,” said the letter.

Morocco, the United States’ longest-running treaty ally, since 1787, was highlighted in the letter as one of the region’s models for reform, where “the right to participate in reasonably credible and open elections has moderated Islamist parties and enhanced [its] commitment to democratic norms.”

For the full text of the open letter and list of signatories, please visit: http://www.islam-democracy.org/documents/pdf/Letter_to_Pres_Obama_about_Democracy_-_3-5-09.pdf

For more than 230 years, Morocco and the United States have forged a strong multi-faceted partnership to promote security, economic growth and political stability in the Muslim world and beyond. After first recognizing the American colonies in 1777, Morocco then signed the U.S.’s longest unbroken Treaty of Friendship and Peace. In 2004, Morocco signed a Free Trade Agreement with the U.S., opening the door to increased trade and economic development for millions in North Africa. In 2007, the two countries signed a \$697.5 million Millennium Challenge Compact— the largest MCC compact granted to that date— as part of the US initiative to recognize and promote good governance building through economic incentives and partnerships.

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THE MOROCCAN AMERICAN CENTER FOR POLICY (MACP) is a non-profit organization whose principal mission is to inform opinion makers, government officials and an interested public in the United States about political and social developments in Morocco and the role being played by the Kingdom of Morocco in broader strategic developments in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East.

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