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# Algeciras Conference Crisis Camera



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## Algeciras Conference

### Crisis Camera

#### Background

Morocco's history as an independent state begins in the 8<sup>th</sup> century after the separation of the Arab caliphate of Damascus due to the Berber revolt. After the upheaval—which was caused by the oppressive politics concerning religion and privileges among the people—the country became divided in little Berber states, all independent from each other. Regarding religion, the Berber states adopted Islam in their own image. However, some kept contact with puritan sects of Islamism.

After gaining its independence from the Caliphate, Morocco became a haven for many dissidents that came from the Arab empire in the east. One of those dissidents was called **Idris ibn Abdallah**, who was a descendant of Mohammed, was appointed imam of the Awraba Berbers. With their help and because of his abilities in politics he succeeded in conquering almost the entire territory of Morocco and thus establishing the first dynasty of the kingdom of Morocco: the Idrisid dynasty.

This dynasty lasted from 788 until 974 when they failed in defeating the forces of the caliphate of Cordoba; the result of this was the occupation of Morocco until 11<sup>th</sup> century when a nomad Berber tribe took control gradually of the territory of Morocco and reaching an extension of 3,300,000 km<sup>2</sup> of territory. This dynasty called Almoravid lasted until 1147 and it was followed by the Almohad dynasty.

The Almohads were one of the most powerful dynasties in the history of Morocco. They formed an empire that covered almost the whole northwest of Africa and the south of the Iberian Peninsula. They defeated the last dynasty, Almoravid, and thus taking control of their territory. The decline of this dynasty was different from the one that came before it since they weren't conquered by a new religious movement. They declined because of the progressive loss of their territories and the rise of the next dynasty: the Marinid.

The Marinid ruled from 1244 until 1465 and they controlled almost all of northwest Africa. Their reign ended in an insurrection, and in 1472 a relative dynasty, the Wattasid, took over. The viziers that were recruited from the Wattasid overpowered the sultan, and with the death of the Marinid Caliph, they were able to take control of Morocco. They lasted until 1554 when a stronger and publicly supported dynasty took over; they were known as the Saadi.

The Saadi dynasty was able to defend the kingdom against the Portuguese and the Ottoman Empire. Their rule ended when a civil war began for the succession of the Imperial throne. The result was the rise of the actual ruling dynasty in control of Morocco, the Alaouites. They began their reign in 1631.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the European powers realized the importance and benefits of controlling small African states. Their control over these states helped the economy thanks to the exploitation of natural resources. Also, when viewing it from a military perspective, their location played an important role. Summarizing, Morocco's location next to the Gibraltar strait was an immense military and commercial advantage.

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the American and French revolutions and with the rise of the first Napoleonic Empire. These events would be the direct causes of the events that happened and developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century started the industrial revolution; it began with the invention of the steam machine, with improvements and mechanizing of the textile industry, and the evolution of iron making. These sectors developed due to the invention of machines and the perfection of methods that incredibly augmented the production of goods and products. Iron materials were easier to produce thanks to the use of coal as fuel.

The constant invention and improving of new machines that helped and changed the way of producing and elaborating products was the core and the main engine that moved the industrial revolution. With this revolution also came an incredible and violent change of humanity's way of life. The production of clothes was cheaper and simpler so more people could afford them. Also, the improvement of the production of iron and iron related products made the creation of new machines and the construction of buildings cheaper and easier.

The common man could now reach a better way of life; this made the worldwide population increase. Furthermore, the whole economy changed and mercantilism became obsolete. With the increasing new factories and production of goods, capitalism gained strength and became the main economic doctrine. Society changed completely, and with it changed the working ethics. New legislations appeared to regulate these changes, which included the durations of work shifts, and the minimum age for work, among other things.

This revolution and change in life style was first seen in England, and then the rest of Europe and the world followed. Because to this early industrialization England, and many other countries of Europe, made their way to become the most powerful and influential nations in the world, however countries like the United States were not completely left behind.

Other main factors that changed the world in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were the independence of new countries and the French revolution. These started with the American Revolution which was caused by the abusive taxes and economical politics that the English parliament was imposing onto the Americans. Tired of these abuses they rebelled against England and fought for their independence, and they succeeded.

Encouraged with the ideals of enlightenment and the triumph of the American Revolution, the French revolted against the absolute monarchy of Louis XVI. They abolished the monarchy and established a government for the people, where everybody was equal in front of the law. These two revolutions would change the world. In America, the Spanish

colonies like Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, and Peru, among others, rebelled and achieved independence, this marked the fall of the Spanish empire.

In Europe there were changes in the legislation and the way of thinking in the people. Napoleon Bonaparte made his debut in this stage. He was a brilliant general of the French army, and was able to fight back the armies of the second coalition—armies of England, Russia, and Austria, among others. This war had started because of the French revolution. The European powers saw it as a threat to their government; they saw that their destiny could be the same as Louis' XVI, so when the peaceful alternatives ended and no treaty could be reached, France declared war against Austria. Soon, other countries joined the war and formed the 1<sup>st</sup> coalition.

The first coalition war ended in 1797, but peace could not last and so the year after, the second coalition war began. It was during this war that Napoleon took control over the French government and turned it into the first French empire. He won the war against the second coalition in 1806 establishing France as Europe's most powerful nation. The French empire did not last long; its fall began with the disastrous invasion of Russia where Napoleon entered with 400,000 soldiers and left with less than half of them. The massive number of deaths was due to the Russian winter—the French soldiers could not withstand it.

Napoleon was finally defeated in 1814 in the battle of Waterloo by the seventh alliance—the free countries of Europe had united under one banner to defeat the French empire. With the fall of the Napoleonic Empire, the Concert of Europe began; this was a congress composed by the European powers to arrange control and balance of power in the continent. Also, with the fall of the French empire came nationalism and the formation of Germany through unification wars. Furthermore, it began a second wave of colonialism, sparked need for more power and influence, and search for materials for the industries were its cause, and its main stage was Africa.

The European powers started to create new colonies in Africa and gained more territory and raw materials. This started a race for who had more power and influence in the continent, which caused many wars. The British had South Africa; the French the north, and the rest was split between Spain, Portugal, Belgium and other European countries. In this race and position, the importance of Morocco was a big one.

It was during the reign of Abderrahmane when the European influence began, and it was because of the support of Morocco for the Algerians in their independence that they partially entered European affairs. They withdrew their support for the Algerians due to the victory of the French forces. After this, Morocco worked its trading links with other nations and soon started trading with Europe and the United States. With this, they were able to modernize their army, which was needed to keep the internal struggles with the Berber tribes at bay.

Morocco completely entered European affairs in 1859 when the territorial disputes for the control of the territory of Calcutta caused a war between Spain and Morocco. The war

lasted until 1860 when the Spanish won because of their victory in the battle of Tetuán. The consequences for Morocco were the loss of territory and a payment of 100 million francs, which was twenty times more the government's budget. This was humiliating to Morocco and with this, the influence of the European's powers grew stronger.

During the reign of Hassan, Morocco gained power due to the brilliant rule of the sultan. Because of this Morocco did not fall completely under the influence of the Europeans and remained independent. Hassan followed his father's—Mohammed IV—policy of modernizing the country. It was during his reign that the conference of Madrid took place; this conference was held to discuss several problems concerning the economy of Morocco and the influence of Spain and France. At the end of the conference Morocco remained independent, but the influence of Spain and France was enormous. This would lead to a struggle for the control of Morocco between the European powers.

### Recent

In May 4<sup>th</sup> 1898, Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister of Great Britain, delivered a speech at the Albert Hall of London.

*"We may divide the nations of the world, roughly, in **living and dying**. On one hand, great countries have enormous power which increases year by year, (...) along with these, there are a number of communities that I can only describe as dying, (...) in those States, disorganization and decay spreads almost as fast as the concentration and growth of power in the nations that live beside them."*



Lord Salisbury

Salisbury shamelessly referred to the **Ottoman Empire, China, Persia and Morocco** as the *dying nations*, but not only did he assure those states were in decadence, he also guaranteed the *vivid nations* would **eventually take over** the dissolving countries.

*"Undoubtedly, **we will not let England be disadvantaged** in any adjustment to take place, on the other hand, we will not feel envy if the enlargement of a rival eliminates the desolation and sterility of the regions in which our arms cannot lengthen."*

With his speech, the Prime Minister had given a clear view of the political international situation regarding the new wave of colonialism that had been spreading through that time and the increasing imperialist age.

During the 1900 Great Britain **changed its approach** concerning the Moroccan dilemma. Even though they had supported Morocco, they were now on the opposite side. The reason for this sudden change was obvious: **England couldn't afford having anymore enemies**. They had tried reaching Germany but failed, and after having experienced the international solitude during the Boer war, they would leave Morocco to their own fate as long as that gave them **France's support**.

After the English policy of rapprochement towards France, Spain strove to **improve their affairs** with Great Britain –as they had become aware that this was the key to their aspirations over Morocco. First all military forces were retrieved from Algeciras and then – in order to obtain approval– they stated what Great Britain had been expecting them to say: that they supported **Morocco's status as an independent nation.**

Years later, in 1904, France and Great Britain signed the **Entente Cordiale**, formally declaring that they were a unity. This new alliance meant that from that point on they would cooperate with each other's concerns, thus the United Kingdom accepted Morocco as a sphere of French influence. However, France had to pay a price: they would not interfere in Egypt.



In **April 19<sup>th</sup>** of that same year, France and Spain started negotiating over the territory of Morocco. It was clear for the Spanish government that French influence in Africa was **stronger than ever**, and that meant that Spanish colonies could be reduced at some point. Therefore, when France offered a small part of the territory, Spain accepted and agreed to leave the negotiations a secret, just as the French were asking.

As France and Spain debated about Morocco, Russia and Japan had been confronting each other in war. Russia was expected to win; nevertheless they were losing and had to accept mediation from the **president of the United States.**

These happenings affected Russia's international reputation since no one could have anticipated that Japan would be a threat for the commonly known **Russian Bear**. Not being able to pursue their political development in Asia, Russian interests focused in the Black Sea which could eventually lead to complications with Germany.

The possibility of a future conflict between Germany and Russia, and knowing Japan was a growing worldwide power, France desperately sought **Britain's support.**



Kaiser Wilhelm II

Anglo-French relations and the recent division of Morocco by France and Spain called Germany's attention. **The Kaiser Wilhelm II** decided to visit the Moroccan city **Tánger** so he could personally persuade the Sultan to summon a forum in order to discuss Morocco's future.

The sudden visit enraged France, since the international gathering could endanger the plans they had for Morocco. Germany's intentions were clear: they would prevent at any cost France and Spain's control over Morocco—more than that, they would not let France grow any more powerful.

France, being now threatened, declared war against Germany. With the purpose of avoiding the conflict, the Moroccan Sultan called to an international conference encouraged by Germany.

Now the year is **1906**, the conference will be held in **Algeciras (Spain)** by those who were present in the previous meeting in Madrid. We will meet there on **January 16<sup>th</sup>**.

The time for us to end this conflict has come, peace will remain among our countries only if we manage to solve obstacle. Good luck comrades and remember, together we stand.

*“Justice is defended with reason and not weapons. Nothing is lost in peace and everything can be lost in war.” Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli*

### **Ideological Terms Glossary**

#### **Colonialism:**

The control or governing influence of a nation over a dependent country, territory, or people.

#### **Imperialism:**

Policy of extending the authority of an empire or nation over foreign countries, usually also acquiring colonies and dependencies.

#### **Capitalism:**

Economic system in which investment and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained by private individuals or corporations, contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.

#### **Revolution:**

An overthrow or repudiation and the thorough replacement of an established government or political system by the people governed.

### **Mode of Action**

The different actions and movements that will be carried out in the committee will be written through what it is called an “Action Paper”. Although there may be personal action papers that involve only the delegate’s character and do not have to be approved by the whole chamber, the Chair strongly encourages and recommends all the delegates to make the majority of their action papers concerning the whole chamber.

### **Example of and Action Paper**

- **Characters involved:**

The delegate must mention those characters that are involved in the procedure of the plan or that are in favor of it.



- **Specific Objective:**  
In which the delegate must announce the purpose of submitting these action paper. What do the delegate(s) want(s) to accomplish by submitting this action paper
- **General Process of the Plan:**  
In which the delegate(s) must explain widely the plan that should be carried out to accomplish their goal expressed previously in the Specific Objective.
- **Expected Results:**  
In which the delegate must express the results that are being looked for with this action paper and the results the delegate thinks will be accomplished.
- **Approved/Rejected by:**  
In which any representative of the Chair will approve or reject the action paper and therefore take the necessary actions to continue with the flow of the committee.

### **Research Sources**

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