

Press Releases: Joint Press Availability With Foreign Minister Bourita

Remarks

John J. Sullivan

Deputy Secretary of State

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DEPUTY SECRETARY SULLIVAN: Good afternoon. I am delighted to be here in Rabat, honored to stand here with my dear friend and esteemed colleague His Excellency Foreign Minister Bourita. I thank him for his kind hospitality. It's been a very busy week for the Moroccan government, for the Foreign Ministry. He has been a most gracious host. And for that I am most welcome.

Morocco remains one of our oldest and closest allies anywhere in the world – evidenced by our Treaty of Peace and Friendship, negotiated in 1786, the longest unbroken treaty relationship in United States history. We look forward to growing our strong friendship for the next 242 years and beyond.

Today, Morocco is a key partner to the United States in our counterterrorism efforts, a Major Non-NATO Ally, and a pivotal player in the issues confronting the broader Middle East and North Africa region today.

Morocco has taken an active role in advancing key international efforts, through the Global Counter Terrorism Forum and just this week by hosting a meeting of the Defeat-ISIS Coalition, Morocco is yet again demonstrating its regional leadership in security.

Our close cooperation is reflected not only through annual exercises like African Lion, but also in Morocco's choice to use U.S. F-16s and M1-Abrams tanks and training to improve interoperability with U.S. forces.

Yet our strategic relationship goes far beyond counterterrorism. The United States consults closely with the Moroccan government on issues of common interest, including regional security, energy diversification, sustainable development, and the promotion of educational and cultural opportunities. Morocco is also the only country in Africa with which the United States has a Free Trade Agreement, more than doubling Moroccan imports to the United States and increasing trade between our countries by 300 percent since the

adoption of the agreement in 2006.

Morocco demonstrates its leadership in many ways including through its embrace of people and influences from other cultures, its promotion of religious tolerance, and its focus on youth empowerment. By working together and promoting our shared values, we are unlocking the potential of all our citizens in ensuring the continued prosperity of both our great countries.

The United States is committed to deepening and strengthening our ties with the people of Morocco through our trade relationship, through cultural exchange, and through government-to-government relations.

The U.S.-Morocco Partnership, has endured for almost two and a half centuries, our ties are strong and our relationship continues to thrive. I know the president values very much his relationship with His Royal Highness and our government ministers work very well together.

I look forward to continuing our sustained cooperation, and to growing our alliance even stronger in the years ahead.

Thank you – I am now happy to join Foreign Minister Bourita in answering your questions.

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