

who was replaced by Sidi Mohammed ben Moulay Arafa, to whom the nationalists were violently opposed. In 1954, terrorist activity in Morocco increased and for the fourth time a number of Arab and Asian nations brought the Moroccan question to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly. In view of the indications that negotiations between France and Morocco were to begin, the Assembly expressed the hope that a satisfactory solution would be achieved.

The sharp division of opinion on the dynastic issue made it difficult to implement reforms promised by the French Government, and disturbances for a while became worse. In August, 1955, however, talks were held at Aix-les Bains between representatives of the French Government and representatives from Morocco of the Istiqlal and other political parties, of El Glaoui, and of the French colons. As a result of these talks, a Council of the Throne was formed and Sultan ben Arafa abdicated. A short while later, El Glaoui announced his intention to support the former Sultan ben Youssef and declared that he should be re-instated on his throne. Thus no powerful native leader nor native political group remained opposed to the return of the former Sultan.

After further consultations with Moroccan representatives, the French Government, on November 5, 1955, accorded official recognition to ben Youssef as Sultan of Morocco. The Sultan then declared his intention to form a representative provisional government whose main tasks would be to make Morocco a democratic state with a constitutional monarchy and to negotiate with France a new status for Morocco as an independent state associated to France by links of inter-dependency. Sultan ben Youssef returned to Morocco on November 17, amidst general acclaim.

On December 7, 1955, the first independent Moroccan government was constituted under the leadership of Si Embarek Bekkai. On December 9, the powers of the French directors of the administration were transferred to the Moroccan ministers, with the French Resident-General acting as Minister of National Defence and Foreign Affairs to the Sultan. The way was now open for comprehensive negotiations on the future of Franco-Moroccan relations.

The Franco-Moroccan Agreement of March 2, 1956

The Agreement of March 2 between France and Morocco provided that they would conclude new agreements to define their inter-dependence in fields in which they have common interests, to organize their co-operation on the basis of equality, especially in matters of defence, foreign relations, and economic and cultural affairs, and to guarantee the rights and liberties of French citizens settled in Morocco and of Moroccans settled in France. The negotiation of these supplementary agreements is now proceeding, and France and Morocco have already concluded a diplomatic convention re-affirming their permanent friendship and agreeing to consult together on foreign affairs. Under the terms of the convention, Morocco will assume the obligations resulting from treaties concluded by France in the name of Morocco, as well as those resulting from international acts concerning Morocco on which it has made no observations. France has undertaken to support the candidacy of Morocco for membership in international organizations.

Negotiations are also in progress between Spain and Morocco, whose representatives are working out detailed arrangements for the transfer of power.