



## The study of Lyautey's methods in Morocco. What lessons for AMO in 2018? 2/4

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**Guided by its vision of an autonomous Morocco, Lyautey places at the heart of its concerns the practice of an indirect administration valuing local personalities and allowing the establishment of their legitimacy. He thus seeks to preserve at all levels the local administrative apparatus, the Makhzen, under the authority of its leader, the Sultan, whose legitimacy must allow both the support of the population and the establishment of a sustainable system.**

### **The permanent logic of empowerment of local elites**

This system of "association" is thus opposed to the usual practice of "assimilation", which consists in imposing the metropolitan administrative system on local populations. Lyautey notes that "...the problem to be solved...with respect to these officials is to...the problem to be resolved ... with respect to these civil servants is to ensure their prestige, their traditional attributions and their legitimate authority, ... with constant concern for the interests of their constituents. »

To this end, Lyautey is particularly concerned with restoring a local political and cultural elite. Convinced that in Morocco, which was still independent a short time ago, there are "men of culture who have a sense and taste for politics", he will seek to develop talents and put them at the service of the country. In this way, he gives responsibility to local chiefs and managers, relying for example on the big bosses in southern Morocco and the bourgeois elites in the northern cities. He also endeavours to train the next generation in order to consolidate a high administration discredited by its venality and abuse of power: He created competitive examinations in the civil service, founded colleges in which he would seek the best people to follow a training circuit including a study trip to France, quality instruction and practical experience in the high administration. Although this policy did not produce short-term results, the impetus given by Lyautey was continued by his successors (as shown by the creation of a Moroccan ENA by Marshal Juin in 1948) and ultimately led to real and lasting success.

Beyond that, it is also the creation and training of a Moroccan military elite that is sought after. In fact, if the regular and supplementary troops demonstrated, in Morocco as in France during the First World War, competence and bravery, they were still strongly supervised by French officers. The few Moroccan officers came from the ranks, which limits their career prospects *ispo facto*.

Contrary to the Tunisian and Algerian models in which indigenous officers remained confined to the rank of captain, Lyautey's ambition was to offer Moroccan officers military excellence. This is why he created the Dar el Baïda officers' school in Meknès, despite the reticence of the French military leadership. Still active today, this school will provide the crucible of the Royal Armed Forces at independence.

### **From the protectorate of Morocco to the contemporary AMO**

"Recent experience shows us that the time for resolving crises is not measured with a stopwatch, but with a calendar [...] because the ultimate objective is that these countries take control of their own areas." General Castres.

Despite the differences in the context separating the Moroccan conflict from current operations, there is nevertheless a real link of filiation between the Moroccan meteorological service and the international community. Lyautey's method and the contemporary AMO in the defence of French interests outside metropolitan France.

### **A markedly distinct operational context**

The status of the protectorate - particularly favourable to Lyautey's manoeuvre - presents several significant differences with the relations that France has today with its partners. The framework of the protectorate consisted of controlling the administration while reinforcing the central power in place. This status also presupposed that France's rights over the country concerned were recognized by the international community, which was the case at the time. However, it is now clear that the current states, with the support of the United Nations, are in no way ready to give up their sovereignty. France cannot therefore set up its own administrators and pursue its strategic objectives in such a straightforward manner without running the risk of being immediately accused of interference or neo-colonialism. For all that, a state system under construction must be able to build its legitimacy on its administrative efficiency, which means that the training of local administrative elites must not be neglected. Although cooperation already seems to be well represented in the military field, it would benefit from being strengthened in all its other dimensions, through partnerships with French schools of administration for example.

Moreover, the ways and means agreed upon to resolve the current crises differ significantly from those used in Morocco at the beginning of the 20th century. Thus, the number of troops available to Lyautey to pacify Morocco appears disproportionate today: at the beginning of 1914, 85,000 soldiers of the colonial troops held Morocco, which is much more than the entire current land task force, which only has 77,000! Moreover, contemporary Western societies find it more difficult to accept the death of their soldiers, especially in conflicts that they consider peripheral, especially in the context of "Green on Blue" incidents. This seems all the more problematic since certain particularly fanatical modern adversaries (Daech in particular) cannot be reintegrated into the structures of

their state after a few symbolic battles, as the Moroccan tribes were within the Makhzen.

It is therefore essential to take full account of the notable operational differences between Morocco at the beginning of the twentieth century and the current theatres in order to adapt Lyautey's methods to our times in a relevant manner.

### **A General Resident with Exceptional Freedom of Action**

When Lyautey holds his position as general resident in Morocco, he enjoys a privileged position, particularly because of the exceptional freedom of action he has, enhanced both by the considerable prestige associated with his person and by the contingencies of time. The choice of Lyautey as a general resident was no accident: the ideas he developed in *The Role of the Colonial Officer*, published in 1905, corresponded with the particular situation of Morocco. Moreover, the marshal was aware of the nuisances induced by the discrepancy in perceptions and methods between a theoretical metropolitan vision and the reality of implementation in the field. He knows how to take advantage of the long delays necessary for the transmission of instructions from the metropolis. He therefore takes for granted the autonomy he must enjoy to carry out the mission entrusted to him, sometimes going to the limits of insubordination.

However, modern technologies, by considerably accelerating communication, now singularly limit the autonomy of the operational manager vis-à-vis the metropolis. Information circulates so quickly that an event can be known in Paris before the competent authorities on the territory are notified. Worse still, the most modern means of communication and control allow command and control of operations to be exercised remotely. As a result, the authorities in metropolitan France are often tempted to substitute themselves at the operational or even tactical level. This development, which is attractive in some respects, pays little attention to the essential role of the chief of field operations and therefore contributes to the reduction of his autonomy and preThis change, which is attractive in some respects, pays little attention to the essential role of the field commander and therefore contributes to the reduction of his autonomy and his pre

Moreover, France, marked by its history in Algeria, still views with suspicion the involvement of military personnel in functions with such politically sensitive stakes. Lyautey had been given full responsibility for the Protectorate and as such decided on the use of force as well as the administration of the territory. In the interests of overall coherence, he had therefore obtained from Paris authority over both the forces and the administration, which he recruited through a dedicated competition. The granting of such a level of trust, already exceptional at the time, now seems illusory: rarely indeed has the formula of Cicero, *cedant arma togae*, been imposed on the French military with such force only since the serious crisis of civil-military confidence resulting from the putsch of the generals of 21 April 1961 in Algiers.

The fact remains that Morocco's experience demonstrates the importance of an overall level of coherence responsible for coordinating the various civil and military levers and guaranteeing the effectiveness of action. And indeed, the absence of this function, which was once assumed by the Resident General, is today being severely felt in that it hinders the concentration of the effects of the various aid measures provided by France. It could, for example, be entrusted to a senior civil servant close to the Elysée Palace, with unanimously recognized experience in international relations. It should also be stressed

that in order to ensure genuine interministerial consistency, it would no doubt prove indispensable that the authority conferred on this senior official be delegated directly by the President of the Republic.

The evolution of the political-media environment in a century seems to have made it difficult to obtain the multidimensional freedom of action that Lyautey enjoyed as a general resident of Morocco, which is still essential.

### **An indispensable but contested French influence**

Notwithstanding the often irenic post-modern discourse, the preservation of our strategic interests still justifies the defence of French influence abroad. Indeed, it is still just as indispensable, whether it is to benefit from the support of other countries within the main international bodies, to diversify our sources of supply in terms of energy, to diversify our sources of supply in terms of energy, to diversify our sources of supply in terms of energy, to diversify our sources of supply in terms of energy, to diversify our sources of supply in terms of energy. It is also essential in order to face new transnational threats, from jihadist terrorism to migration crises. This observation is all the more acute given that many countries are now seeking, in a particularly proactive manner, to extend their influence in areas where they have traditionally been absent.

In particular, France is expected and legitimate in Africa and in certain parts of the Arab world where it has a good capacity to understand and influence. As a legacy of its colonial past, France has close ties with many African countries. In addition to the fact that they are often French-speaking countries, many of their executives were trained in France and their administration remains partly modelled on the French model. Moreover, France's numerous military interventions have marked France's ability to engage in support of its allies and its credibility in operational matters. The African heads of state are not mistaken and, moreover, recalled this during the opening speech of the Africa-France summit on 13 January 2017, unanimously affirming that "France remains a strategic partner of African countries in terms of security".

In such a strategic environment, the ACA is asserting itself as an indispensable complement to the intervention. Indeed, external operations make a distinction between short-term actions aimed at rapid tactical success and long-term actions that enhance the global approach: the former respond to the immediacy of political time, while the latter are more part of a strategic approach. The former respond to the immediacy of political time, while the latter are more strategic in nature. By strengthening the regalian capabilities of a friendly state, the ACA facilitates crisis prevention and, where appropriate, helps to speed up and sustain crisis resolution. It should also be noted that the AMO mission often offers interesting opportunities for European cooperation, particularly in the field of training, as shown by the various EUTM missions, for example.

The AMO is thus a particularly interesting tool, adapted to the current context, for developing French influence abroad despite the new constraints that now weigh on the military leader.

### **A "Lyautey spirit" still relevant today**

"The Resident General watches over Moulay Youssef's emerging prestige with paternal

solicitude, making a point of concealing this paternity, the child having to be all the more vigorous as he would appear to be the son of Allah and tradition.»

At the heart of Marshal Lyautey's thinking are notions whose relevance remains very real in terms of AMO, particularly in terms of knowledge of the environment, positioning vis-à-vis the partner and a global approach to the conflict.

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