

The blog of
Fernando del Pino Calvo-Sotelo

Nec laudibus, nec timore, sed sola veritate

Barbarians at the gates

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Don Quixote said that “no truth can be expected from the Moors, for they are all deceivers, liars, and tricksters”¹. The same can be said of the Spanish government. Its ridiculous explanations, hastily exonerating Morocco of any responsibility for the extremely serious events that have taken place in Ceuta, are yet another example of its suspicious subservience to Moroccan interests. What does it owe to Morocco? In this regard, Spanish PM Sánchez’s body language when he appears before Mohammed VI is revealing: typically arrogant in his role as an alpha male, in the presence of the Moroccan king the Spanish PM adopts the posture of a schoolboy going to see the principal in his office to be reprimanded, or that of a submissive subordinate awaiting orders. When will we receive an explanation about the abrupt abandonment of the Sahara in exchange for nothing, the inaction in the face of drug-smuggling boats coming from Morocco, and the inexplicable dismantling of OCON-Sur —the Civil Guard’s specialized unit in the fight against drug trafficking in the Strait?

Isn’t it strange that the Spanish government has at no point lodged a formal diplomatic protest or demanded an explanation from the Moroccan government? Isn’t it strange that, if Morocco is innocent, far from apologizing, it has labeled Ceuta and Melilla “occupied cities,” and that the Moroccan Human Rights Council (a comical oxymoron) aggressively accuses the Spanish police of “assaults,” alleged “extremist groups” of “insults and beatings” against the intruders, and the city of Ceuta of failing to adequately care for them?²

The invasion by some 80,000 individuals (how many infiltrated agents and criminals are among them?) made possible by the passivity and collaboration of Moroccan police forces resulted in about a hundred deaths by drowning, amid Morocco’s utter indifference to their fate. A month later, thousands of intruders continue to eke out a meager existence in the city and cause obvious public order and public health problems that are making life impossible for our fellow citizens in Ceuta.

Some of the invaders have committed serious crimes, a fact that should come as no surprise to us. Indeed, according to official statistics, Moroccan immigrants commit crimes (in proportion to their population) at a much higher rate —by an order of magnitude— than other immigrant subgroups or the native Spanish population, as

¹ M. Cervantes. Don Quixote of La Mancha, Part 2, Chapter III (Castro Library).

² [Morocco accuses Spain of assaulting migrants crossing into Ceuta and claims sovereignty over the enclave | Euronews](#)

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I had the opportunity to demonstrate in a previous article³. It would be advisable for journalists in our country —after taking a short course on respect for the truth and another on mathematics for dummies— to reflect this fact rather than repeat politically correct slogans.

Initially, Sánchez labeled the incident a “violation of territorial integrity,” a serious offense against a country’s sovereignty that usually constitutes a *casus belli*. Later, the Minister of Defense would speak of a “hybrid attack by an interested party” (the identity of the party?). However, shortly thereafter, the Minister of the Interior and Sánchez himself rushed to praise and absolve Morocco (“reliable partners”) of all blame, an attitude they maintain despite all evidence to the contrary.

Anatomy of an attack

What happened? To understand this, we must start from several basic premises. The first is that the events in Ceuta have nothing to do with immigration, but rather with a geostrategic showdown: they clearly constitute a serious step forward in Morocco’s claim to the Spanish cities located on the southern coast of the Mediterranean. We cannot forget that Morocco has a long-term plan; Spain does not. The second point is that Morocco is the main, sole, and obvious suspect, and it has a track record, as we will have occasion to explore. Third, despite being a poor, corrupt country governed by an authoritarian regime that is hardly exemplary, Morocco has been forging alliances with powerful patrons, through which it wields international influence disproportionate to its modest political, social, and economic reality. Thus, it never acts without the backing of major powers, whose interests it always seeks to align with.

Finally, we must understand that, paradoxically, Morocco has a highly educated and polyglot elite that has crafted a consistent and efficient foreign policy in recent decades by dedicating effort and money to winning over supporters on both sides of the ocean (in the U.S., in the EU, and also among politicians and journalists in Spain). In contrast, Spanish foreign policy has lacked a clear direction, consisting of a combination of blind conformity to third parties’ interests, an inferiority complex, and erratic shifts based on the political or ideological sympathies of the various governments —that is, on the whimsical likes and dislikes of its PMs— to the detriment of Spain’s long-term interests. In this regard, the reckless hostility of the Socialist governments led by former PM Zapatero and current PM Sánchez toward a major power like the U.S. —an ally of Morocco— has caused us enormous harm, which the North African country has been able to exploit. This hostility was, moreover, unnecessary, for although Spain’s interests —which are the only ones we must defend— need not necessarily coincide with those of the U.S., there are channels for managing differences without resorting to provocation.

³ See [Immigration - Fernando del Pino Calvo-Sotelo](#)

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That said, there is ample evidence to suggest that what occurred this past July was a clear hybrid attack by Morocco. Why now? In the global order of things, Morocco is aware of the window of opportunity presented by the Trump-Israeli presidency in the US, its animosity toward Sánchez, and the latter's extreme political weakness. Morocco is also acutely aware of Sánchez's international isolation, due to his frictions with both the US and also with many EU countries, after his outrageously lax immigration policies. The timing of the incident —coinciding with Throne Day— far from exonerating Morocco, reinforces the suspicion. Indeed, we must not forget that the failed invasion of Parsley Is (see later) took place on the eve of the public wedding celebrations for Mohammed VI (July 12–14, 2002), so it seems to be his custom to give himself gifts on special occasions.

Furthermore, Throne Day is precisely the day on which the Moroccan king receives congratulations from his allies. This year also marked the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and since Morocco was the first country in the world to recognize U.S. independence in 1777, President Trump's congratulatory message to King Mohamed was particularly eloquent: "His Majesty's wise leadership has been a cornerstone of stability. Morocco's steadfast commitment to promoting peace, combating extremism, and protecting U.S. and Moroccan security —among other things, through its pivotal role in the Abraham Accords— reflects a valuable partnership for the United States"⁴.

On the other hand, the Supreme Court's regrettable ruling on June 29th⁵ provided Morocco with an alibi: the blatant smokescreen of "spontaneous mobilization." It is also possible that Morocco chose the end of July knowing that the prime minister would display his lack of love towards his own country by not interrupting his vacations under any circumstances. Arab countries attacked Israel on Yom Kippur; Morocco has done so just before August.

The evidence pointing to Morocco is overwhelming. First, Morocco has a clear motive (to test and destabilize) that no other "interested party" possesses: what interest would immigration mafia groups or private organizers have in provoking a mass outpouring? Furthermore, it is absolutely impossible for a mobilization of 80,000 people to go unnoticed in Morocco, a highly controlled police State —much less if they were heading to a city located just a few kilometers from where King Mohammed was celebrating Throne Day. Similarly, it is impossible for 80,000 people to have coincidentally gathered in Ceuta on the same day. Had it been a spontaneous mobilization organized via social media, there would have been a steady trickle of people for weeks, not a flood within 24 hours. It is clear that this

⁴ [Message from President Donald Trump to His Majesty King Mohammed VI on Throne Day - U.S. Embassy & Consulate in Morocco](#)

⁵ [The Supreme Court confirms that the law does not allow "immediate returns" of migrants attempting to swim into Ceuta and Melilla | CGPJ | Judiciary | Judicial News](#)

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was an organized movement —and not one orchestrated by smuggling rings, which are unnecessary for someone to take a bus or a train within Morocco itself.

Second, the Moroccan border police adopted the same passive stance they had taken in previous border incidents, allowing and facilitating —according to various Spanish police reports— the entry of the invaders. These individuals may have known about the Supreme Court’s ruling, but how did they know that the Moroccan police would allow them to cross the border that day? When Morocco doesn’t want anyone to cross, no one does. Who gave the Moroccan police orders to do nothing —not even send reinforcements— for at least 24 hours?

Finally, the fact that Morocco agreed to the immediate return of the vast majority of the intruders proves nothing. Exactly the same thing happened in the previous 2021 border incident, and no one questioned Morocco’s involvement on that occasion.

What should Spain have done?

Under normal circumstances, Spain’s reaction would have been very different. A normal Spain would have flown into a rage, summoned the Moroccan ambassador, recalled its ambassador to Morocco and denounced the events in all international forums.

It would have immediately reinforced the police and military presence in Ceuta, deployed a significant Navy presence there and announced the construction of an airfield for both civilian and military use. A gesture that would have sent a clear message about the Spanish identity of the autonomous cities would have been the presence of the king and the entire government holding a Cabinet meeting in the city.

Similarly, a normal Spain would not have provided free food to the invaders —a perverse incentive— but rather the opposite: it would have used hunger to its advantage so that within 24–48 hours the intruders themselves would have returned home, driven by their empty stomachs. Charity and stupidity are not synonyms.

Likewise, a normal Spain would have listed all the areas where it could inflict harm on Morocco (bilateral trade relations, relations with the EU, electricity and energy supplies, aid to rival countries, undermining the regime’s domestic image through the lifestyles of its highest-ranking officials, etc.), baring its teeth at the neighboring country instead of wagging its tail. Ideally, we should have cordial and mutually beneficial relations with everyone, but these must be based on mutual respect and the rules of the game. As the Spanish saying goes: “Friends, very good friends, but keep the donkey at the other side of the fence.”

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In short, a normal Spain would have reacted with a policy of harsh retaliation —one that would deter future attempts— and announced a sharp shift away from Spain's excessively obsequious policy toward Morocco, which has borne such bitter fruit, beginning to treat the Maghreb country for what it is: a conflictive partner with all its neighbors. But Spain is no longer a normal country, and Morocco knows it.

First precedent: the Green March

We said at the outset that Morocco is a suspect with a track record. Indeed, in November 1975 —amid Spain's dictator Franco's dying moments— the North African country sent hundreds of thousands of civilians to invade the Spanish Sahara. At that time, Hassan II was able to accurately gauge the young and inexperienced Prince Juan Carlos of Spain, then acting head of State, and realized that an opportunity had presented itself to do what he had never had the courage to do during Franco's lifetime.

The U.S. explicitly supported Morocco, silencing the UN's protest over the flagrant violation of international law and ensuring Spain's non-opposition by exerting pressure on Prince Juan Carlos. The Americans were enthusiastic about the Moroccan regime as a counterweight to Algeria, which was moving within the Soviet orbit. Thus, the ruthless but intelligent Moroccan king Hassan II knew how to exploit the U.S.'s fear of two scenarios: that a Soviet-controlled Polisario Front would take root in the Sahara, and that in Spain, the end of the dictatorship would lead to political chaos that would contribute to instability in the region. For all these reasons, the Green March was as much —if not more— a U.S. operation than a Moroccan one, yet another skirmish in the Cold War in which Spain was reduced to playing a pitiful role: that of a U.S. pawn sacrificed on the grand chessboard of the superpowers. Morocco also acted in accordance with U.S. interests, but in its case, those interests coincided with its own.

Second precedent: Parsley Is.

In July 2002, Morocco sent a meager armed contingent to take possession of the deserted islet of Parsley, which is under Spanish sovereignty. The gendarmes —who immediately raised a Moroccan flag— would soon be replaced by unkempt-looking Marines. Naturally, the Moroccan authorities initially denied having any knowledge of what had happened, just as they do now; later, they brazenly claimed that the action was part of the war on drugs. However, the Spanish government at the time was not fooled and clearly recognized that it was facing a serious threat that could create a dangerous precedent.

Indeed, the Moroccan action was intended to test Spain's resolve to defend its territorial integrity, which is why the Moroccans deliberately chose a small, insignificant islet just a few meters off their coast —one that would make Spain question whether it was worth putting up a fight. In this way, they sought to weaken

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any Spanish response, which the Moroccans would immediately dismiss as an overreaction.

Fortunately, Spain reacted firmly, relying on overwhelming military superiority that deterred Morocco from doing anything foolish. As a result, the Moroccan attempt ended in a humiliating failure, and Spain secured two decades of calm along its southern border.

In the Parsley incident, Morocco also believed it could count on American complicity. Three months before the incident, Mohammed VI had made a successful visit to the U.S. (his second in two years), during which Morocco had capitalized on the new sense of American vulnerability following 9/11 to pledge full support against jihadist terrorism. Just as, in the time of Hassan II, Morocco had exploited the U.S.'s fear of a Soviet presence in the Sahara, in the time of Mohammed VI it exploits the U.S.'s fear that the fall of the fragile Alawite dynasty would give way to a radical Islamist (or pro-China) regime capable of exerting control over the strategic Strait of Gibraltar. The tactic is the same: "It's either me or disaster"; only the enemy to be feared changes. On that occasion, however, Spain's fluid relations with the U.S. nullified Morocco's siren songs, and the Americans limited themselves to facilitating a diplomatic solution from a dismissive but neutral stance.

For its part, France —always keen to weaken Spain— openly supported Morocco. President Chirac advised the Spanish government to accept the *fait accompli*, and even suggested handing over Ceuta and Melilla and abandoning its legal claims to the Sahara. The French government also allowed the Moroccan foreign minister to defend his position at a press conference... in Paris. But French support for Morocco went further: once Spanish special forces had retaken the islet, three fighter jets took off from Morocco headed for the islet, prompting Spanish naval and air forces to go on combat alert. However, just 30 miles from their apparent target, the formation broke up: two of the fighter jets turned out to be French Mirage fighters, which headed north, and only one a Moroccan jet, that returned to its home airfield. One can only imagine the consequences this provocation would have had had the Spanish military not maintained its cold blood⁶.

The obscure March 11th 2004 terrorist attack

Less than two years after the assault on Parsley, the Madrid March 11th 2004 terrorist bombings took place. Far from resembling an Al-Qaeda attack (ten nearly synchronized bombs detonated on the eve of an election and without suicide bombers?), the bombings exhibited elements typical of a subversive operation by intelligence services with a clear political intent. Indeed, the obvious immediate

⁶ Testimony of Vice Admiral G. Rodríguez Garat featured in the documentary *Perejil* (Movistar+).

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objective of the attack was to bring about an electoral seismic shift and the rise to power (against all polls) of the sinister Socialist Zapatero, who had promised to withdraw Spanish troops from the unpopular —and unjust— war in Iraq. Its plausible strategic objective, therefore, would be to destroy the nascent alliance between Spain and the U.S., which had relegated France to a secondary role for the first time since World War II and had jeopardized Morocco's privileged relations with the U.S. The withdrawal of Spanish troops —carried out deliberately by Zapatero in an unnecessarily abrupt and insulting manner to the Americans— achieved such objective. As a result of the March 11th attacks, whose true nature the Spanish people failed to understand (having fallen into the trap set by the masterminds behind the attack), Spain would never regain the same international prominence. The attack was a success.

Before disregarding the former analysis as a febrile idea, the scene described by former Spanish Minister of Interior Jaime Mayor Oreja in his book *An Uncomfortable Truth* should be read. During a lunch in 2005 with the former Moroccan Minister of the Interior, Driss Basri —with whom he maintained regular contact— Basri told him: "I suppose you have no doubt that the March 11th attack was the work of a secret service. Logically, it would have been our own, but since I recruited, trained, and selected them myself, I want to tell you that they are incapable of organizing an attack as complex and difficult as the one you have suffered. Look toward the secret services of another neighboring country"⁷. Basri had been Hassan II's right-hand man and Morocco's Interior Minister for 20 years, but after the accession of Mohammed VI, he had been dismissed and was living in self-imposed exile in Paris.

Upon reading this, the first thing that came to mind was: «*Excusatio non petita, accusatio manifesta*». Then I asked myself: How could the French secret services possibly be involved in the murder of 200 innocent people? But another question came to mind: Didn't France harbor Basque ETA terrorists for two decades while they were murdering 500 Spaniards?

The mastermind behind the March 11th attacks remains a mystery, partly because the professionals who carried out the attack covered their tracks very well and partly because of the lack of will to uncover the truth. The fact that our country has tiptoed around the serious testimony of the former Moroccan minister demonstrates our fear of peering into that abyss. The perpetrators of the attack were counting on that.

⁷ J. Mayor Oreja. *An Inconvenient Truth* (Espasa, 2026).

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Third precedent: 2021

In 2021, in response to Spain's decision —at Algeria's request— to admit the leader of the Polisario Front to a Spanish hospital, Morocco recalled its ambassador in Madrid and allowed some 8,000 intruders to cross the border into Ceuta and Melilla amid the passivity of the Moroccan police, just as has happened on this occasion. Algeria and Morocco would soon sever diplomatic relations after the former accused the latter of infecting the cell phones of numerous high-ranking Algerian officials with the Pegasus spyware (does that ring a bell?)⁸.

The 2021 border incident also had its own geopolitical context. In 2020, at the end of Trump's first term, the U.S. declared its intention to support Morocco's claims to Western Sahara as a reward for the normalization of relations between Israel and Morocco with the signing of the Abraham Accords. One of the benefits associated with being a signatory was access to Pegasus, a powerful cyberweapon whose sale requires express, client-by-client authorization from the Israeli Ministry of Defense. Furthermore, in 2021, Mohammed VI awarded Trump the Order of Mohammed (Morocco's highest honor), and Trump reciprocated by awarding the Moroccan king the Legion of Merit. Therefore, Morocco made the decision to launch its small 2021 Green March with the peace of mind that it had American sympathy.

Conclusion

The Moroccans are experts at throwing stones and hiding their hands. Undoubtedly, the image of 80,000 ragged people desperate to leave their country with only the clothes on their backs does not paint Morocco in a favorable light. However, I very much doubt that a king who spends much of his time under French protection in Paris and lives in ostentation and opulence amidst its poor people cares much about that image.

We must be aware that Morocco is in the process of launching two depth charges. The first is intended to convince the U.S. that Morocco is a more reliable partner than Spain, and that it might be in America's interest to diversify control of the Strait of Gibraltar between two allies instead of allowing Spain to continue being the only country that controls both sides. Incredibly, Spain's dismal political class still fails to understand the geostrategic value that the control of the Strait provides (an advantage clearly understood by Britain and Morocco) and the enormous strategic importance on Ceuta and its waters.

⁸ [Algeria cuts diplomatic relations with Morocco | Reuters](#)

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Morocco's second deep-water charge is about planting the seed of doubt in EU countries that it might be safer for them if the southern border of the Schengen Area were separated by a stretch of sea rather than a simple fence.

Morocco —as it did in Parsley Is. and in 2021— has tested Spain's reaction to an act of aggression unprecedented since the Green March. The result might encourage it to go further, as it knows the current Spanish government will not stop it. However, the massive and indignant public outcry in the streets —which was unexpected— might just do so. They know they should be careful not to awaken the age-old national pride of the Spanish people.

Having said all this, the most serious issue is that all evidence suggests that Morocco exercises control over Spain's PM Sánchez (following the spying on his cell phone with Pegasus) and over his Minister of the Interior (for unknown reasons, and therefore open to speculation). In any case, it is clear that our government is not defending Spain's interests but rather those of Morocco; thus, the problem is not only that the barbarians are at the gates, but that the traitors are willing to open them.

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