



# Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco

By William A. Hoisington Jr

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Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco describes and analyzes the method of colonial conquest and rule linked to the name of Marshal Louis-Hubert Lyautey (1854-1934), France's first resident-general in Morocco and the most famous of France's 20th-century overseas soldier-administrators. Lyautey popularized the notions of 'peaceful penetration' and 'indirect rule' as part of a grand colonial design of military pacification, economic development, political modernization and social betterment. For Lyautey imperialism could be a life-giving force for both Frenchmen and Moroccans alike and during his thirteen years as resident general he boldly promoted France's actions in Morocco as the 'highest form' of imperialism. This book traces the development of Lyautey's ideas on conquest and rule at home and abroad, and shows how they translated into practice. While there was much that was praiseworthy in Lyautey's approach to colonial matters, in the end force always remained more effective than anything else and, whether used gently or severely, it failed to stem Moroccan resistance to French rule. Based on archival material in Morocco and France, Lyautey and the French Conquest of Morocco is the first book to deal in a detailed manner with French pacification strategy in Morocco and with the mechanics of 'indirect rule' (always, in reality, rather more direct than indirect). It should be of great value to readers of 19th and 20th century French, European and North African history and to students of colonialism and imperialism.

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### Editorial Review

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In our "enlightened" age, the term *imperialist* is generally used to censure; it conjures up images of arrogance, racism, and a lust for power and wealth. Too often, we forget the deep core of idealism that drove many to expand the empires of the various European powers. Louis Hubert Lyautey was a brilliant soldier and administrator who envisioned a thriving cultural and political synthesis between France and the peoples of North Africa. Motivated by a genuine respect and reverence for native traditions, Lyautey hoped the process of "indirect rule" and the gradual penetration of French influence would guarantee a peaceful and bright future for Morocco. In the end, of course, such hopes were illusory for they ignored the cultural traditions of the Moroccans. Frustrated by native resistance to such progressive views, Lyautey resorted to brute force to maintain control. Hoisington has eloquently illustrated the ironies and inherently tragic consequences when a good man insists on foisting his ideas on an alien people who have ideas and dreams of their own. *Jay Freeman*

From the Back Cover

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