

AMERICA SALUTES MOROCCO'S ATLAS LIONS!



Americans love underdogs. After Team USA was eliminated at the Doha World Cup, many Americans started rooting for Team Morocco, an underdog that defied all expectations and all odds.

As pretty much everyone on the planet knows by now, Morocco's Atlas Lions were the first team from the Arab world and Africa to advance to the World Cup semifinals. Their historic run has now ended, succumbing to France, defending world champions.

Morocco's incredible fans at the World Cup, many of whom traveled to Qatar from North Africa, were heartbroken. As television cameras captured tears streaming down the faces of those impassioned fans, many of us cried right along with them.

In a few short weeks, the Atlas Lions managed to unify the whole Arab world. No amount of money or political intrigue has ever accomplished that feat. How Team Morocco pulled off this monumental task is disarmingly simple: They played their hearts out.

And their new fans – from every corner of the world – love them for that.



NATIONAL U.S.-ARAB CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

غرفة التجارة الأمريكية العربية الوطنية

A little-noticed story in *The Washington Post* [link] highlighted an intriguing backstory: What it must be like for the Atlas Lions to tackle soccer's biggest stage, but also Morocco's colonial past. In battling Spain, Portugal, and France, Team Morocco has faced "a perfect anti-colonial trifecta, surely one of the most compelling narrative twists in World Cup history."

With every win at the World Cup, the Atlas Lions – and their throngs of admirers – grew to feel that this team belonged right where they were: Competing at the highest level against the best teams in the world.

Throughout this tournament, the Atlas Lions have felt our pride, and we have felt theirs.

In 2026, the FIFA World Cup will be hosted in North America. A lot can change in four years' time, but many Americans are hoping that Morocco's Atlas Lions will be back in action to pick up where they left off in Doha.

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