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**THE ALGERIAN ARMED FORCES:  
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL  
CHALLENGES**

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## The Algerian Armed Forces: National and international challenges

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### THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD DEMOCRACY (1962-1988)

The Algerian Armed Forces arose from the National Liberation Army (ALN), particularly from the so-called 'border army' which, as General Jaled Nezzar recalls in his *Memoirs*, began to play a dominant role under the command of Colonel Houari Boumedienne in late 1959: this army relentlessly waged war on the French forces deployed on the borders of Morocco and Tunisia until the conflict ended in 1962 (1). Although the creation of the ALN itself dates back to 1954, it was not until the Summam Congress, on August 20, 1956, that its structure was determined and it became considered an instrument for implementing the policies developed by the party: the National Liberation Front (FLN). The internal struggles within the FLN-ALN tandem, both in and outside Algeria, have been described by many authors: both the confrontations within the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (CNRA) and those at the various FLN congresses during and immediately after the war –the Summam Congress (1956), Tripoli Congress (1962) and Algiers Congress (1964)– aimed at taking control of the embryo of the future Armed Forces. According to Mohamed Harbi, the session of the CNRA held in December 1959 – January 1960 was crucial, as it abolished the Ministry of the Armed Forces, replacing it with an Inter-Ministerial War Committee (CIG), directed by military officers of a General Chiefs of Staff (EMG) led by Boumedienne, who went on to become Defense Minister of the first independent government and, starting in June 1965, President until his death in 1978. At the time, the EMG directed its efforts mainly at reorganizing the 'border army', which was to a large extent escaping the control of the CIG and the movement's other political authorities (2). It is clear that, at the time of independence, the ALN was by its very nature the best organized and, therefore, main instrument for beginning to build the new State.

#### *Independence and the Ephemeral Presidency of Ahmed Ben Bella*

The referendum of July 1, 1962, showed that of 6.5 million electors, 6 million were in favour of independence, which was declared on July 3 of the same year. Two days after the first provisional government was formed the first of several internal struggles among factions occurred, and this continued until 1965. The Constitution of August 1963 reinforced Ben Bella's presidentialist bent. In this context, one of the main original merits of the ALN may have been to prevent the outbreak of a civil war immediately after having won independence (3).

As Minister, Boumedienne began to establish the new State's basic rules for defence: any national liberation movement must have the capacity to engage in combat and take action; and after achieving victory and creating a State, it must transform itself into a professional army devoted to guaranteeing national security and internal order. The ALN arose from the original guerrilla movement of 1956, becoming the embryo of the Armed

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Forces. These were predominantly ground forces, with the Air Force and Navy added later (4).

#### *President Boumedienne's Military Reorganization*

After Ben Bella was removed from office on June 19, 1965, and Boumedienne was shortly after named president of the Council of the Revolution, the FLN became the instrument of the Armed Forces. In fact, after that point they became identified with each other, the latter becoming the real backbone of power. Many authors have paraphrased Harbi's famous comment that 'in most countries the State has an Army; in Algeria the Army has its State' to illustrate the description of the military omnipresence in the political life of the first decades of independent Algeria (5). In the opinion of the political scientist Abdelkader Yefsah, with the confusion between State and Party typical of the Ben Bella period, Boumedienne's arrival in power changed the duo to a trio: State-Party-Armed Forces (6).

From an organizational standpoint, after the coup of 1965 the Chiefs of the Military Regions, with political and military responsibilities, and the General Secretary of Defence, who commanded the Central Offices of Land, Sea and Air, were all directly responsible to Boumedienne. No General Staff existed, since it had been dissolved after the coup attempt in 1967 by Colonel Tahar Zbiri, who was then its Chief (7).

The role of the Armed Forces as a People's Army was also a determining factor in the implementation of some of the most important development projects launched in Boumedienne's socialist period: the construction of the Trans-Saharan highway (2,500 kilometres) to the borders of Niger and Mali, the construction of the Great Green Wall, designed to slow the northward advance of the Sahara desert towards the productive north of the country, and the construction of the railway along the northern coast. Its humanitarian and reconstruction work is also noteworthy, supporting civilian authorities and services in contexts such as the great El Asnam earthquake in 1980 (8). Military intervention in this context was recently referred to by the president of the Commission for the Defence of the Council of the Nation (Senate), Abdelhamid Latrèche: on October 11, 1980, immediately after the earthquake, five companies of the University Militia of Blida – headquarters of the 1st Military Region–, the equivalent of a thousand officers, arrived at the scene of the disaster even before it was declared a catastrophe and other Armed Forces personnel under the command of General Abbes Gheziel arrived. This swift reaction was similar, according to Latrèche, to that of November 2001, during the dramatic flooding in the Bab-El-Ued district of Algiers (9).

The second Algerian Constitution, approved by 98% of the votes cast in the referendum of 1976, demonstrated how power had been concentrated in the FLN and in the Head of State, whose role was clearly established as President, Supreme Chief of the Armed Forces and head of national defence, as well as presiding the High Council on National Security, an advisory body for all matters affecting national security (10). An amendment introduced in 1979 reduced each Presidency to a five-year term. In its preamble, it recalled that Algeria owed its independence to a war of liberation that would go down in history as one of the epic struggles in the revitalization of the peoples of the Third World (11). In other references to national defence and to the security and defence of the State, it stipulated that the People's National Assembly could legislate on all matters except national defence. Meanwhile, the role of the ALN was clearly established in a specific chapter (VI: articles 82 to 85), as an 'instrument and shield of the Revolution' and as a safeguard for national independence and sovereignty, as well as participating in the development of the country and in the construction of socialism (12).

#### *The Presidency of Chadli Benjedid*

When Boumedienne died on December 27, 1978, his successor was also from the military: Colonel Chadli Benjedid, until then Commander of the Oran military region,

elected by his companions according to the Armed Forces hierarchy, he being the most veteran. This was confirmed by a referendum on February 7, 1979, and he was re-elected on January 12, 1984 (13). In Algeria, men from the ranks of the military, particularly the Army, have traditionally taken the most prominent positions in the leadership of the FLN and of the State and for many years have been presidents –like Boumedienne, Benjedid and Zerual– ministers, governors of wilaya (administrative units equivalent to provinces), ambassadors and general managers of state enterprises, among others (14). This practice has become less common in recent years: as a result, since the removal of Lieutenant Colonel Mulud Hamruche from the office of Prime Minister on June 5, 1991, no commander or officer of the Armed Forces has taken this position, which has been occupied by technocrats from the public industrial sector –Sid Ahmed Ghozali, Abdessalam Belaïd and Ahmed Benbitur–, by diplomats such as Smail Hamdani and Ahmed Uyahia, and by high-ranking party members such as Ali Benflis (15).

The role of the Armed Forces in the repression of the so-called Couscous Revolt, from its outbreak on October 5, 1988, in a difficult political and social context, was such that, for the first time, an institution that was the repository and guarantor of the nation's highest values, began to lose credibility in the eyes of part of the population. Starting in 1989 there were a number of important movements in the top military ranks: in July of that year, the presidential advisor on military affairs, Major General Belhouchet, went into retirement and was not replaced until some time later; also, General Atailia, general inspector of the Armed Forces, was made responsible to the new Minister of Defence, General Jaled Nezzar, who was then close to President Benjedid and was a key figure in understanding to the role of the Algerian Armed Forces throughout these years (16). Also responsible to General Nezzar was the General Office for Security and Defence or Military Security, reorganized in September 1990 as the Information and Security Department (DRS) whose director, General Mohamed Medien Tawfik, had until then been responsible to the President (17).

From the start, Benjedid set out to reorganize the Armed Forces. He reduced its revolutionary stamp and operational workings, reinstated the General Staff, created the ranks of General and Major General –under the previous revolutionary model the highest rank was Colonel–, created operative commands for the three branches of the Armed Forces, reorganized the Military Regions and, in the spring of 1990, created the first large unit along the lines of a division. In addition to the two authorities mentioned above, the following were also responsible to the Minister of Defence: the Chief of General Staff (of Defence) in the early nineties, General Abdelmalek Guenaïzïa, and in turn, to him, the Chiefs of Staff for Land, Sea and Air, considered Deputy Chiefs of Staff, commanding their respective areas (18); the General Secretary of Defence, the top ministerial administrative authority in charge of directing the Central Departments and, in fact, exercising ministerial functions in routine matters; and, finally, the High Commissioner for National Service (Military Service), in the early nineties, General Alleg. In a broad sense, the Armed Forces began to become less revolutionary in structure and also began to lose their role as a supporter of revolutionary movements considered 'just causes' around the world(19).

As we will see later, the Armed Forces, having begun in the new constitutional framework to adapt their missions to strictly military defence, were forced in the early nineties to shift their attention to new threats inside the country (20). Previously, their main function was to guarantee the security and defence of Algeria against exterior risks and threats –a role they still retain today–. At the time of independence there were already major security challenges: in the sixties these were mainly the bloody 'Sand Dune War' against Morocco in 1963 and the foreign participation of Algerian units in 1967 and 1973 in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict (21). In the seventies, the situation in the Maghreb was once again a determining factor: there were clashes with the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces

(FAR) in late 1977 in the context of the Western Sahara conflict, while the lack of a clearly defined border with Libya made it necessary to establish permanent garrisons in Tamanrasset and in Djanet (22).

In the eighties, the Armed Forces also had to assess a number of events that were important in terms of an evolving sense of threat. These events, still seen in a Cold War and North-South context, as well as in Arab-Islamic terms, included: the various bombings of Libya by units of the US 6th Fleet between 1981 and 1983, in the context of the Lebanese civil war and its internationalization; Israel's bombing of the General Headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Tunisia in 1985, and the assassination by Israeli commandos of PLO leader Abu Yihad in Sidi Bou Saïd, near the Tunisian capital the same year; the bombing of the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi by units of the US 6th Fleet in April 1986; and Israel's progressive broadening of its concept of national security to include from Morocco to Pakistan (23).

Meanwhile, Algeria's diplomatic activism in areas such as the Non-Aligned Countries Movement (NAM), third world solidarity through the Group of 77, initial leadership of a front rejecting the Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel and solidarity with the Palestinian cause, also determined to a great extent the design of Algerian security and defence policy. As a result, years later, when Algiers was the scene of the crucial meeting of the 1988 Palestinian National Council, where the PLO began its pragmatic journey towards the peace agreements signed with Israel in Oslo in 1993, it is understandable that the Armed Forces activated its maximum alert plan to prevent scenarios such as that in Tunisia in 1985.

On the domestic front, the Armed Forces had yet to define threats or risks from inside the country's borders and, as a result, did not develop a doctrine or take measures to face them. In fact, the guerrilla-terrorist experience of Mustafá El Buyali, which began in August 1985 with an attack on the Gendarmerie Nationale headquarters, combined with the radical Islamic agitation that caused riots in Constantina and Setif in November 1986, as well as other problems in and around Oran, seemed to have been cut short with the death of El Buyali himself in an ambush in January 1987 (24). Experience would later show that two years of activism had left a deeper imprint than could have been imagined at the time (25).

## **THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS AND THE ARMED FORCES**

On February 23, 1989, the Algerian people voted in favour of a new Constitution that would establish a multi-party system in the country (26). Drafted in only a few weeks, it focused the role of the Armed Forces on the 'defence of the unity and territorial integrity of the country' (article 24-C) and took away any specific role in the future of national political life (27). In fact, shortly afterwards, on March 4 of the same year, the Armed Forces voluntarily and officially withdrew from the Central Committee of the FLN at a congress of a party that was soon to lose its single-party status (28). Another important decision was to separate the functions of the President from those of the Minister of Defence, a measure taken by the government of Prime Minister Hamruche. This had not been the case since Ben Bella was removed from office. In September 1990, Benjedid appointed Major General Nezzar, the highest-ranking officer, as Defence Minister. Nezzar immediately went to work to create the administrative structures to make the new Ministry of Defence operative (29).

### *The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and its Insurrectionist Activities*

The democratic process in Algeria led to diverse reactions abroad: King Hassan II of Morocco publicly expressed his approval of the 'democratic process in Algeria' while the Tunisian president, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, was quick to request the cooperation of all

Arab countries against the 'fundamentalist subversion' that was beginning to appear in Algeria, especially after the legalization in September 1989 of the FIS, a party that in Algiers in 1990 brought together Islamic fundamentalists from around the world to determine the role of Islam in the world. It must also be kept in mind that terrorism had already existed only a few years before when El Buyali, the leader of the so-called 'Fighting Group for the Prohibition of the Illicit', kept the authorities at bay until his death on January 3, 1987, after which more than 200 of his men were judged at a spectacular trial in the city of Medea (30). Two years later, during the Hamruche government, when the General Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, General Mustapha Cheloufi, protested an amnesty for Abdelkader Chebuti, El Buyali's second-in-command, accused of the murder of several police officers, he was immediately removed from office (31).

The early experience with radical Islamic insurrection, quickly noticed by some observers both inside and outside of Algeria, soon proved a serious challenge to the system, in particular to the Armed Forces. After the FIS won the municipal and regional elections of June 13, 1990 –thus controlling 32 of the 48 regional assemblies and 853 of the 1,539 local councils–, the municipalities under its control replaced the FLN's republican emblems with purely Islamic ones: Balladi Islamiya (Islamic Municipality) and Madinat Islamiya (Islamic City). In January 1991, commanders and officers of the Armed Forces were criticized by the FIS for not training their volunteers to go to Iraq to fight against the multinational coalition that had been fighting the regime of Saddam Hussein since January 17 of that year (32). Also, the manifesto published by the FIS in early 1991, calling for civil disobedience, only served to make the Islamists appear more subversive (33) and attempts by the Hamruche government to change the electoral code to prevent a second victory –a project deemed 'high treason' by the FIS– led to riots in May. On May 25, the FIS called for an insurrectionary general strike for an indefinite period to demand early presidential elections, took control of key points around the capital and began its attacks on institutions, kicking off ten straight days of total chaos. The backdrop to this was the call by their leader, Abasi Madani, at the end of May, for party militants to take up arms. In early June, several police officers were murdered in riots in Belcirt, a district of central Algiers known by the press as 'Kabul 2' due to the strength of radical Islamism there. This was what finally led Benjedid to break up the concentrations of people, to arrest the top FIS leaders, to cancel the first round of general elections scheduled for June, and in a June 5 decree to declare four months of martial law until October 5, as had been done in 1988 (34). Declaring martial law meant the second direct confrontation between the people and the Armed Forces in less than three years (35). The military, having obtained full powers, ordered on June 24 that all State symbols be put back in place if they had been replaced by those of the FIS (36). Madani, who had already threatened to call a 'Jihad' on June 14, did so again on June 28, while Ali Benhadj called on FIS members to gather arms and violate the martial law. On June 30, six of the main leaders of the FIS were arrested, setting the stage for a great spiral of violence that had been precluded by the FIS's initial insurrectionist efforts (37).

#### *The Crisis of the Democratization Process (May 1991-June 1992)*

By then, the Armed Forces, that had withdrawn together from the Central Committee of the FLN began to come to what would soon be the dominant conclusion: that civilian power had not been able to deal with the country's progressive political deterioration. The key aspects of this posture were clearly expressed in the professional magazine *El Djeïch* in April 1991: the Armed Forces were confident that the Algerian elites and masses would help stand up against 'nebulous fundamentalism'; they defended access to science, technology and development in the country, in a changing world context marked by the end of the Cold War and the second Gulf War, a path that the Islamists would surely put in peril if they took power (38). For some analysts, the fact that after the riots of May and June 1991 Sid Ahmed Ghazali was entrusted with the organization of clean elections, both the general elections postponed until December 25 and 27, and the presidentials

scheduled for 1992, indicated that the military elite was beginning to hold Benjedid responsible for the negative developments in events. It must be kept in mind that Ghozali was appointed after June 30, when the Armed Forces had arrested the top FIS leaders including the most charismatic ones, Madani and Belhadj, as a step prior to lifting martial law and continuing with the electoral process (39). At the end of October of that year, Benjedid appointed Major General Hocine Benmaalem as General Director of the presidential cabinet, a post vacant since 1989, when General Larbi Belkheir, who then held it, was named Secretary General of the President's Office (40).

On November 28, before the first round was held, an especially violent act highlighted concerns about an increasing spiral of violence: radical Islamists attacked the border police station at Guemmar, in the wilaya of El Ued, on the Tunisian border, slashing the throats of 24 people (41).

On December 26, 1991, the FIS won the first round of the general elections (188 seats). With only 59% of votes cast, abstentionism was a strong ally of the Islamists. The poor results of the FLN (16 seats) and the Socialist Forces Front (25) are also significant in this context. However, the defeated parties contested the results and there was a possibility that a third round would have to be organized in three months. But the second round, planned for January 16, 1992, never happened: if the FIS had obtained 28 seats through it –which was more than likely at the time– it would have obtained an absolute majority. A High Council of State (ACE) presided on January 14 by Abdelmalek Benhabiles took on the functions of the President's Office in the context of the crisis caused by Benjedid's resignation after the results of the first round were known, and given the direction events were taking (42). It must be kept in mind that if the FIS had obtained the necessary two thirds of the votes, it could even have amended the Constitution; meanwhile, FIS leaders like Abdelkader Hachani had begun calling for early presidential elections after the first round. The fact that the Presidency –which to the greatest optimists both in and outside of Algeria was the only possible place from which to stop the unchecked expansion of a possible fundamentalist Islamic victory– could quite likely be occupied by the FIS, led certain sectors of Algerian society to clamour for the Armed Forces to intervene and prevent such a scenario (43). Finally, on March 4, 1992, the FIS was dissolved by government decree and Mohamed Budiaf, an historical figure in the struggle for independence and who lived in Morocco, was invited to return to assume what was to be a short-lived presidency.

## **THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNAL ALGERIAN CRISIS**

At the start of the crisis that continued throughout the nineties, the Armed Forces were made up of a solid corps of 125,500 men: the largest group was the Army, with 107,000 men –70,000 of them conscripts– and a group of reliable and very disciplined non-commissioned officers. In 1990, a budget of 1.01 billion dollars was allocated to the Armed Forces (44). It is curious to observe how even when growing internal pressures were becoming clear, the inertia of certain defence mechanisms aimed at facing external threats or risks continued; precisely four years after the birth of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), in 1993, Algeria organized major manoeuvres on its border with Morocco (45).

### *Action Against Terrorism by the High Council of State (1992-94)*

Ali Kafi, a former colonel in the ALN, temporarily took power between the assassination of President Budiaf on June 29, 1992, and the investiture of another former military officer, Brigadier General Liamin Zerual, on January 31, 1994, after being appointed by his companions in arms. Zerual, who had been the youngest general in the Armed Forces, left them in October 1988 and returned in July 1993 as Minister of Defence and as Head of State in January 1994. His post was ratified at the ballot box on November 16, 1995.



After the assassination of Budiaf, terrorism became widespread. The attack against the 'Huari Boumedienne' international airport in Algiers on August 26, 1992, which caused nine deaths and numerous injuries, was among those that caused the most impact both inside Algeria and internationally. As for the Armed Forces, in July 1992 General Nezzar remained in charge of the Ministry of Defence; he made Major General Guenaïzia the Chief of General Staff, thereby quashing rumours at the time that the latter was going to take command of the Ministry. On December 16, 1992, Prime Minister Belaïd Abdessalam visited the commanders of the General Office for National Security (DGSN, Police), at their general headquarters in Hydra, and on December 21 he visited the Gendarmerie Nationale (National Police) in Cheraga: his speeches during both visits provided detailed descriptions of the main lines of his government's anti-terrorist policy (46). It is important to note that at first only the Interior Security Forces –the Gendarmerie Nationale (23,000 men in 1991) and the General Office for National Security (20,000 men in the same year)– combated terrorism with means that were certainly limited, considering the size and experience of the adversary (47). In April 1993, a contingent of 15,000 men of the Army's special forces joined the fight against subversive activity –commanded directly by Mohamed Lamari– and the Coordinating Committee for the Fight against Subversive Activities (CCLAS) was created. By 1995, the size of the new contingent had risen to 60,000, up from 15,000 in 1993. Until late 1994 the main activity of this personnel was to control the cities, particularly the Greater Algiers area, but in 1995 they began to make a greater effort to recover control of cities in delicate situations, such as Blida, headquarters of the First Military Region, but especially vulnerable due to its location in a mountainous area.

From 1993 to 1995, various radical Islamic groups terrorized Algeria, launching daring attacks: both the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (EIS) –heir to the MIA– assaulted villages and small towns, where they carried out bloody attacks using urban guerrilla methods that forced the Armed Forces to update their ideas and their doctrines (48). In 1993 and 1994, cities like Blida were considered 'liberated cities' by the radical Islamists. It must also be noted that during these years the terrorist groups were clearly associated with criminal groups and with smuggling operations that made their actions even more lethal (49).

In the context of the terrorist offensive, it is important to note some especially violent attacks aimed at the Armed Forces in this initial stage: the attack on the Admiralty in Algiers in February 1992 with the inside collaboration of two sergeants who were later executed (ten people were killed, six of them recruits); the assassination of President Budiaf, the only accused to date being Second Lieutenant Lembarek Bumarafi of the Special Intervention Group (GIS); and the attack on the Bugzul police station about 150 kilometres south of Algiers on March 22, 1993, during which 18 soldiers were killed (50). Challenges of this nature led Armed Forces commanders to return to the key State posts that they had begun leaving in October 1988. Although since early 1993 General Nezzar's delicate health made it clear that according to hierarchical principles, the post would correspond to the then Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces, Major General Guenaïzia, in April of that year the appointment was given to Major General Mohamed Lamari, considered the leader of a new generation of commanders and officers close to General Nezzar. His position as head of the CCLAS had put him in an advantageous position. The relocation of other high commanders such as General Abbes Ghozaiel to the head of the Gendarmerie Nationale and, above all, General Mohamed Medien Tawfik Mediene's posting at chief of the DRS illustrate this return to power (51).

On February 13, 1993, only two days after Prime Minister Abdessalam's speech, there was a car bomb attack against Major General Nezzar attributed to the MIA explosives expert, Seddiki, who had escaped weeks before from the Military Prison in Blida (52). Also, on March 27 of that year, diplomatic ties with Iran were broken and the Algerian



ambassador in Sudan was recalled (53). Months later, against the backdrop of the so-called National Charter of Rome, signed in the context of an initiative by the Community of San Egidio in late 1994, and General Zerual's aforementioned victory in the presidential elections of November 1995, it must be noted that these elections were held in an especially hostile atmosphere: on the one hand, the GIA was threatening to slit the throat of anyone who went out to vote, the EIS remained on the offensive and, on the other, the political parties meeting in Rome had called for a boycott of the elections (54). With the participation of international observers from Mali and other African countries, and supervised by the UN, there was a rate of participation (76%) higher than ever seen before in Algeria, and Zerual received 61% of the votes, followed by the Islamist Mahfud Nahnah (25%), by the Berber candidate Saïd Sadi (10%) and by Nuredin Bukruh (4%). The contribution both of the Armed Forces and of other Security Forces, backed by numerous reserve units totalling 400,000 men, was an important factor in the normality of the elections held.

#### *The Presidency of General Liamin Zerual (1994-1999) and the Development of the Fight Against Radical Islam*

Zerual, President and Minister of Defence from January 1994, appeared to public opinion and many analysts, especially outside Algeria, to be the leader of the most moderate faction in power: the 'dialogists' as opposed to the 'eradicators' opposed to any understanding with Islamism; in fact, Zerual was able to promote a new generation of Armed Forces officers, as well as attracting young civil servants and technocrats to a commitment with the State. In any case, at the time, both 'eradicators' and 'dialogists' agreed to assign the Armed Forces a 'Turkish' operating scheme: formally independent of political power, they would be obliged to intervene only when vital national interests were at stake. In fact, Manichean schemes have largely been too simplistic to describe the Algerian Armed Forces, particularly in those years. Although certain high military commanders began returning to politics in 1992 it is important to consider this phenomenon free of rash or over-simplistic analyses. Only a few months before Zerual became president, several Armed Forces commanders and officers had taken key posts: Zerual as Minister of Defence, Mohamed Lamari as Chief of the General Staff at the Defence Department (in July 1993), and retired Colonel Selim Saadi as Minister of the Interior of the Reda Malek government. However, equally or more important was the role played by the Armed Forces in organizing and leading the dialogue with the opposition, as was reflected in the fact that of the eight members of the newly-created Commission for National Dialogue, three were generals: General Mohamed Tuati, General Tayeb Derradji (General Inspector of Land Forces) and General Ahmed Senhadji (Chief of Military Infrastructure) (55).

To make a quick assessment of Zerual's term in office, he began dialogue and negotiations and undertook the first phases of the implementation of amnesty with the so-called 'Rahma (Clemency) Law'. In 1994, he put the top FIS leaders, Madani and Benhadj, under house arrest and in late October promised presidential elections for the following year (56). After taking power, he announced his intention to organize legislative provincial and municipal elections within two years, a commitment he met as follows: the constitutional referendum on November 28, 1996 (57), legislative elections on June 5, 1997 (58), and local elections on October 23, 1997 (59). The legislative elections were won by Zerual (32%), who then allied with the FLN (14%) and with the Islamists of the Social Movement for Peace, the former Hamas of Mahfud Nahnah (14%), to form a government. Regarding the attitude of the Armed Forces as an institution to the elections, an example is that, just before the legislative elections of June 1997, the Communications, Information and Orientation Office (DCIO) of the Armed Forces, publisher of El Djeïch, met in Sidi Fredj with all its collaborators and officers to receive instructions from the director, Colonel Abdessalam Buchareb, aimed at making all

members of the Armed Forces aware of the need for them to meet their obligations in the context of helping build the constitutional institutions of the State (60).

In opposition to the process of normalization encouraged by the authorities, in September 1995 the GIA had called for an Islamic caliphate in Algeria from which to liberate the rest of the Muslim world –a goal that mobilized hundreds of terrorist cells in various wilayas around the country–. This uncompromising position was also held by a number of top leaders of the old FIS: while Rabah Kebir congratulated Zerual from Germany, Anuar Haddam in the US called his fellow Islamist a traitor and said the ‘holy war’ would not be stopped by an electoral farce, and in December the FIDA assassinated the Navy’s second-in-command, General Mohamed Butighane. But in fact, little by little, the combined efforts of the Armed Forces, the Gendarmerie Nationale and, starting in 1995, private security groups contributed to re-establishing normality. In this context, between November and December 1995, about 1,000 members of the GIA and the EIS deserted. Furthermore, after the constitutional referendum of November 1996 the activism of armed groups became progressively less a political threat and increasingly a question of security. The authorities began to look for a way to militarily crush these groups in the way the Peruvian government managed to do with the Sendero Luminoso terrorists in 1993 (61).

Objectively, the conditions for such a victory were certainly not favourable. Western countries were neither supportive nor understanding. For example, in Washington, some influential analysts drew parallels between the mistakes made by the US in Iran in the late seventies and those that should not be repeated in Algeria (62). Shortly before Zerual’s victory in the presidential elections of November 1995, the US had held manoeuvres with Tunisia to deal with a hypothetical emergency evacuation of Westerners living in Algiers in the context of an Islamist insurrection –for much the same reason, the multinational ‘Tramontana 94’ exercise was held in late 1994 on the coasts of Almeria. This is clear evidence that the idea had become widespread that the radical Islamists could possibly even overthrow the Zerual regime (63).

But that was not the direction of events and although the violence continued –on October 3, 1997, the GIA launched its first attack on a city, Blida, located 40 kilometres south of Algiers, with 19 homemade missiles only hours after killing 89 people in different locations in the region–, the situation was in fact more affected by the truce achieved in negotiations with the EIS led by Madani Mezrag (64). Precisely, the GIA’s actions were a response to the capitulatory attitude of the EIS and were carried out during a convenient power vacuum in the 1st Military Region. This power vacuum existed because the post of 1st Region Chief had been vacant since Zerual had removed General Saïd Bey, who was close to General Lamari, holding him responsible, according to some observers, for not intervening sufficiently to prevent the latest massacres and, according to other, for rather carelessly handing out 60,000 weapons for citizen self-defence and not having prevented the theft of weapons in the Greater Algiers area.

#### *The Presidency of Abdelaziz Buteflika (1999 to the Present)*

In February 1999, an editorial in El Djeïch reaffirmed the neutrality of the Armed Forces as the April 15 elections approached. Buteflika received 73% of the votes in these elections, which were a further step toward normalization in Algeria, both internally and internationally and which were followed three years later by parliamentary elections on May 30, 2002. The new president immediately began to work on security. With the passing of the ‘Civil Harmony Act’ on July 13, 1999, and its ratification by referendum on September 16 of the same year, about 1,200 terrorists surrendered in the six months that this law was in effect. Another effect was the definitive demobilization of EIS members, who at the time had respected two years of truce negotiated directly in 1996-97 with representatives of the Armed Forces and in effect since October 1997 (65). In the

application of this Act, on January 13, 2000, the Armed Forces and Security Forces increased their deployment to areas where there were strongholds of terrorists who had not respected the truce. These were estimated to be about 4,000 (66). A false highway control by the GIA on the following February 14, at which they slit the throats of 16 civilians, clearly demonstrates this terrorist group's opinion of the Act (67).

In the four years of the Buteflika presidency, advances have been made on the internal reforms involving security and defence issues and on the country's participation in international forums on these issues, as we will see in the following sections. Fighting continues against terrorism that has been significantly debilitated but still subsists and whose international connections are now combated by third countries. In 2003, the GIA lost Rachid Abu Turab, its new leader since 2002, who was arrested by the Security Forces in November. The GSPC, which in 2003 also defied the State by kidnapping thirty foreigners in the deep south of Algeria –some of them rescued in a military operation and the rest freed in Mali after a ransom was paid– suffered significant losses in September in a military operation that killed 150 of its members.

#### *Changes Within the Algerian Military Institution, Defence Policy and Security Policy*

Any analysis of a country's Armed Forces must focus both on its structure and on the changes in its constituent parts. In the case of Algeria, it is important to note how for three decades (1962-92) its Armed Forces focused their attention on exterior threats and then had to adapt to internal changes, the domestic terrorist threat and international changes with the end of the Cold War, as well as some important changes of a regional nature. In general, all this time the country has remained subdivided into six military regions and since the early nineties the Army has been restructured into four division-style units –two armoured and two mechanized (68)–.

A key issue that has been considered in recent years, with terrorism continuing to subsist, is the need to turn the Armed Forces from a 'people's army' (with conscripts) into a professional army. In 1997 the Forces had about 124,000 members and according to the most recent figures, there were 136,700 in 2002, of which 75,000 were conscripts – primarily in the Army– as well as reserve forces that have remained steady over the past decade at about 150,000 men (up to 50 years of age) (69). Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that in the course of the various stages of the fight against Islamist terrorism, starting in 1994 a policy of privatization of security began to be implemented, with the creation of various militias and self-defence groups armed and organized by the State.

This privatization of security, which simply recognized that the military and its resources were insufficient to face the terrorist threat, proceeded chronologically as follows: in 1994 the Communal Guard (about 50,000 men) and the Patriots were created and later the so-called Legitimate Defence Groups, created by the authorization of each Prefect with the approval of the Security Forces. All together, these private groups under State control have about 100,000 members (70). The Communal Guard, for example, was created to strengthen security in areas recovered from the Islamic radicals and enable General Lamari's forces to concentrate their efforts on the fight against subversives, using the Intervention and Surveillance Group (GIS), whose members were known as 'Ninjas' (71).

Three months before the legislative elections of June 5, 1997, the authorities publicly expressed their desire to regulate all these private groups, whose members, according to journalistic sources, received three times the minimum wage, among other privileges. In the same year the first trials were held to punish certain excesses committed by members of these groups. The most recent statistics provided by the paramilitary forces show that they have 181,200 members subdivided as follows: the Gendarmerie Nationale, responsible to the Ministry of Defence and commanded by General Mayor Ahmed Boustila, have 60,000; the DGSN, commanded by Colonel Ali Tounsi and responsible to

the Ministry of Interior, 20,000; the Republican Guard, 1,200; and the private groups – Legitimate Defence Groups and the Communal Guard– about 100,000 (72).

*The Armed Forces and their Image: the Balance of a Decade*

After a decade of violence in Algeria, we have the perspective to come to some conclusions regarding the Armed Forces in terms of their participation in the democratic process, their unity, coherency and discipline, and also their image both inside and outside the country. From the beginning, and particularly as security issues gradually became less challenging in the second half of the nineties, their participation in the democratic process required them to abandon habits learned during thirty long years of a single-party monopoly on power. These included a lack of transparency, distrust of civilian power and the failure of legislative and judicial authorities to control the activities of their members.

There are many examples of a lack of transparency in earlier years, a fact that in the nineties helped feed certain conspiracy theories that have also been propagated in Western countries. A significant precedent was the way in which the rumours that spread throughout the country in 1988 about the enrichment of President Benjedid's family contributed greatly to setting the scene for the bloody riots of 1988 (73). On a more positive note, we would also recall the pioneer 'Benlucif case', in which Major General Mustafá Benlucif, who had been one of the most powerful officers in the eighties thanks to his good relations with President Benjedid and his circles, was sentenced in 1993 to 12 years in prison for stealing State-owned goods worth 60 million French francs. This was a useful precedent on the road to transparency and the fight against corruption (74). However, conspiracy theorists have concentrated their efforts most on security issues. The assassination of President Budiaf in June 1992 (still not clarified) and the attack on the Bugzul police station in March 1993 (initially silenced by the High State Council [ACE] while the Ministry of Defence investigated this very serious event), made it possible for them to feed every kind of rumour about the involvement of the Armed Forces and the Security Forces in the violence, a thesis that is still maintained today, though now it is considered less credible.

As the political process advances there is room for certain optimism. The national media are the first to criticize abuses committed against the population and the regime has begun to introduce transparent practices aimed at eliminating old habits. These are measures that could help unravel the conspiracy theories. In particular, thanks to its use of the Internet to promote itself, the 'Algerian Free Officers Movement' (MAOL) has received great media attention in the past half decade. This movement is trying to tap into in the collective memory of the Arab world to regain the prestige of the movement of progressive officers led by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt and which some have tried to establish in neighbouring Morocco (75). But despite any possible parallels, the simplistic ideas of the MAOL essentially consider Algeria to be a State held hostage by a military junta whose leaders dominate the country politically and economically through corruption and the most extreme kinds of repression, including collusion with, if not responsibility for, the worst massacres committed in recent years. This extremely simplistic theory, combined with the proven fact that fierce terrorism has made Algeria a testing ground for various currents of radical Islam, has led the coverage given this instrument in certain media (76) and also at times in political-diplomatic publications in the Western and Arab worlds, to scandalize not only political authorities and Armed Forces commanders in Algeria, but also a large part of public opinion, as has been repeatedly seen in the media there (77).

Another important issue up to now has been the possible infiltration of Islamists into the Armed Forces and, consequently, of a possible split in the latter. Experience has shown that the Algerian Armed Forces, along the lines of the Turkish Armed Forces in the past

two decades, have remained united and disciplined, which has prevented a division and, in turn, has prevented Algeria's descent into a true civil war (78). In chronological order, we can see how the early nineties were the first years in which members of the Armed Forces were tried and sentenced in the context of budding terrorism in Algeria. Until February 1993, 37 death sentences had been passed, two of them against two naval NCOs –sergeants Nurreddine Rahmane and Mohamed Fodhil– who were found guilty of taking part in the Islamist assault on the Admiralty in February 1992 and were executed in December of the same year. Significantly, this was the first time that members of the Armed Forces had been executed (79). There had been the isolated precedent in the eighties of Mustafá El Buyali, a former Captain of the 4th Wilaya during the war of liberation, who after leading a radical Islamic group in the mid-eighties and killing several policemen, was killed in a clash with Security Forces in January 1987 (80). Of note in the early nineties was Saïd Makhlufi, a former officer who founded the Islamic State Movement (MEI), breaking off from the FIS (81). Another case worth mentioning is that of the former Air Force officer and Mig pilot, Kamareddine Kherbane, who was a founder of the FIS and who was arrested on September 18, 2001 in Casablanca, arriving from London, where he had enjoyed freedom of movement in recent years despite being wanted by the authorities in Algeria, where Moroccan authorities finally returned him two days later (82). Also, in June 1998, Army Lieutenant Alili Messaud landed an Mi-8 attack helicopter from the Blida base at Ibiza airport, the closest of all European airports to Algerian air space. This abandonment of his mission received extensive media coverage (83). At the end of the decade, another important media story was that of Habib Suaïdia, a former Army officer who, as General Lamari reminded all his comrades in arms in March 2001, had been stripped of his rank, his uniform and his job after being tried and found guilty of theft. In fact, the accusations against Suaïdia were serious –ranging from Armed Forces involvement in massacres attributed to Islamists to serious accusations of corruption and other wrongdoing– and the coverage of the story in a number of influential Western and Arab media was so great that an official response was necessary (84).

As for what some of the media and some institutions such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called a 'dirty war' and others have called excesses, both on the part of the Armed Forces and the Security Forces, it must be kept in mind that by 1992 the commanders of the DGSN and of other forces were concerned about the growing discontent noticed among their members regarding what were perceived in their ranks as manipulations of judicial power which, in their opinion, showed little interest in carrying out their own anti-terrorist sentences. According to some analysts, this distrust of the justice system, which at other times has also included political authorities, as was the case before General Cheloufi was removed by the Hamrouche government from his post as General Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, could have led to an increase in clandestine actions aimed at teaching a lesson. These were marginal at the time, but it was clear that they could spread, as has occurred in other countries going through similar periods of insecurity (85).

## TOWARDS THE MODERNIZATION OF THE ALGERIAN ARMED FORCES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION

### *National Efforts in Research and Development*

Studying the relations between the Algerian Armed Forces and the outside world in the context of modern-day globalization will enable us to better understand issues such as the renovation of military material and their relations with other armed forces in the world. However, we must first provide a summary description of Algerian ambitions in terms of defence policy. To start with, we can see that although in the eighties the Algerian navy received a certain boost with an accelerated policy of acquisitions from the USSR, and despite the fact that the country has significantly renewed its military aviation, this effort does not reflect the emergence of a negative perception of its northern neighbours. This

fact has undoubtedly helped smooth the way for reflection and in some cases for the implementation by Algeria of increasingly ambitious bilateral and multilateral security and defence plans (86).

The Algerian defence industry is modest, having developed primary capacity to domestically produce certain munitions at the factory in Jenchela, and light arms at the factory in Seriana, both since 1990 with the cooperation of the People's Republic of China, as well as some landing vessels, fisheries protection vessels and speedboats for military use, the latter under licence from 'Brooke Marine', in the eighties at the Mers el-Kebir base near Oran.

Mention must also be made of nuclear research and development, even though it is not for military purposes, as the commitments made by the Algerian government demonstrate. In certain circles (87), theories have developed regarding Algeria's intention to build nuclear arms after the Iraqi defeat in the second Gulf War. These theories are based on three premises: the first involves the existence of two nuclear reactors in the country, one built with Argentine technology in Draria (which never caused suspicion given its low power) and the 'Es Salam' reactor in Birine, Aïn Usera, 250 kilometres south of Algiers, which has been under suspicion of all kinds; the second emphasizes the fact that it was intelligence agencies and the Western media that made the existence of the reactor public, at a time of international concern about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and other countries; and the third, more innocuous, but also mentioned, is the presence of significant proven reserves of uranium in Algerian territory. The controversy (now settled) over the Aïn Usera reactor began in April 1991, when some news media in the US (88) and the UK accused Algeria of building a suspicious nuclear installation with technical support from China (89). Some time later, after the peak of accusations and replies had passed, the 'Es Salam' reactor was inaugurated on December 21, 1993. At this ceremony, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Salah Dembri, confirmed Algeria's rejection of the 'military atom'. This was corroborated by the message read immediately afterward by the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Blix (90). Although Algeria has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and admits inspections, later concerns have arisen, especially in some news media and on occasion are put forward by Morocco at times of bilateral tension (91). As for the third premise, in 1996 there were an estimated 20,000 tonnes of uranium reserves in the El Hoggar region of southern Algeria (92).

Along with this reality, it is also important to note the great effort Algeria has made to acquire conventional military materiel, especially in recent years, since the terrorist violence began. While in the eighties there was a net trend towards reduced defence spending due to the combined effect of the democratization process and the progressive normalization of relations with Morocco, starting in 1992 a slight increase was required by the urgent need to fight terrorism. Projected spending for 1993 was around 1.5 billion dollars, a 25% increase from 1990. This was allocated to renewing weapons stocks, equipping security services, financing modern research methods and raising some salaries. In 1990, with 1.2 billion dollars in military spending, Algeria had been second to Libya (1.8 billion dollars) in the Maghreb, followed by Morocco with 1.02 billion dollars (93). A comparative study carried out by the IISS in London showed that Algeria had gone from 1.441 billion dollars in annual defence expenditure in 1985 to 2.989 billion in 2000 and 3.149 billion in 2001. These amounts include both the costs of acquiring military material to renew largely obsolete stocks and paying for the very costly fight against terrorism, still necessary even though the terrorist threat has significantly eased compared to the difficult 1990s (94).

### *Precedents of Algerian-French Bilateral Cooperation*

From the first moment of independence, the pragmatism that generally characterized bilateral relations between the new State and the old metropolis –or more correctly, the old capital, in the sense that, officially, the Algerian departments were part of French national territory (95)– also applied to security and defence issues. Relations were more intense in the sixties, then diminished somewhat in the seventies, though there has always been a significant volume of multi-directional relations, continuing to the present and which Paris would like to maintain despite the fact that it is edging ever closer to Morocco.

The first agreements that began to establish this very pragmatic framework were those of April 19, 1963, on Medical Military Aid, and on June 12 of the same year on Cooperation and Technical Support, the latter signed with the nascent Algerian Gendarmerie Nationale. Both agreements were simultaneously complemented at the time with ad hoc purchases of French materiel for the new Armed Forces, finally leading to the signing of the first Convention on Technical Military Cooperation between Paris and Algiers. Signed on April 8, 1966, this would thereafter be the legal framework to channel bilateral relations in that area (96).

French participation in the construction of the Algerian Armed Forces began to decline significantly when, early in the seventies, Boumedienne chose the USSR as Algeria's main supplier of materiel and closest partner in cooperative ventures. When Boumedienne died in December 1978, few Algerian officers were being trained at the Superior School of War in Paris or in other French centres and bilateral military and technical cooperation had been reduced to a minimum.

When Colonel Benjedid came to power in 1979, he wanted to distance his country from the Soviet orbit and re-established contacts with the French authorities in 1981 with the new French president, François Mitterrand. These contacts led to the signing, on July 21, 1983, of a 15-year Cooperation Agreement on Defence that put great emphasis on cooperation involving materiel. In late 1985, when the Algerian economic crisis hit – caused by the combined effect of the drop in oil prices and the drop in the value of the dollar on an income-dependent, single export economy– Algeria's ability to purchase materiel fell off sharply. The generalized use of Arabic in several corps starting in 1983 also had an effect on the exchange of personnel: for example, the number of Gendarmerie Nationale grant recipients sent to France never again rose to over 50 a year (97).

When in 1990 Major General Nezzar was appointed first Minister of Defence and was entrusted the work of creating the new Ministry and putting it in operation, he took an interest in the organization and workings of the French Ministry of Defence and of some of its services. In the second half of that year, several Algerian delegations visited the Army Information and Public Relations Service (SIRPA), the Central National Service Office, air defence centres, and military health centres, among others. In 1991, the effects of the second Gulf War and the political and security problems that were beginning to appear in Algeria first of all delayed an entire series of visits, then led to a period of distancing and cooler relations also later caused by France's unwillingness to satisfy Algeria's requests to purchase certain military materiel (98). In recent years, the progressive normalization of politics and security in Algeria has led the French government to try to normalize relations in these areas. This was highlighted during President Chirac's visits to Algiers and those of President Buteflika to Paris, both in 2003, though France continues to give priority to Morocco (99). Among the most significant recent events was the visit of a major French military delegation to Algiers on October 20-22, 2003, led by Rear Admiral Jean-Louis Barbier, who has focused his work on cooperation with the Air Force, meeting with a



delegation presided by the Chief of the Air Force General Staff, General Abdelkader Lounès (100).

#### *Relations with the Former Eastern Bloc*

The Algerian Armed Forces' traditional support of 'just causes', from the nearby Polisario Front to the more distant PLO to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, kept them in constant contact until the late eighties with the Soviet Union and with the Eastern Bloc, with emphasis on the acquisition of materiel and officer training. It is significant that in 1976 the Council of the Revolution and the Council of Ministers launched a double call to the Non-Aligned Countries and to the international community to support first Angola and then Mozambique 'until the final victory of their people'. Despite being aimed at shaking off colonial status, both these conflicts were automatically absorbed by the East-West dynamic then in full force (101).

In the late eighties, when the democratization process was in full swing and President Benjedid was seeking to change the revolutionary stamp both of the regime and of its Armed Forces, closer relations with the US also took a military expression, as we will see in the following section. First of all, it is important to point out that the inertia of the past and the obstacles to purchasing Western materiel throughout almost the entire 1990s has meant that in Algeria today almost all basic materiel, combat methods and military organization are still of Soviet origin (102). Added to this is the large number of commanders and officers who have taken courses at military academies and training centres in the USSR: according to the Algerian historian and anthropologist Mahfud Benune, specialist in the study of elites, and in particular the military elite in his own country, about 3,500 commanders and officers have received training in the ex-USSR, compared with about a hundred who have studied at academies in France, the UK or the US (103). This makes it all the more interesting for countries that wish to cooperate with the Algerian Armed Forces and carry out joint exercises with their materiel. This is the case of the US, which since 1998 has carried out combined air-sea exercises with the Algerian Armed Forces, such as the ones held on January 15-16, 2002 (Exercise AUCEX 2002) (104).

Although terrorism led the Russian Federation to drastically reduce the number of its advisers in Algeria –after the murder of two Lieutenant Colonels in October 1993 the 300 to 500 advisers who had been there were reduced to 100 in 1994– Moscow's profile in terms of military materiel has remained very high, despite having to share the Algerian market with other former Eastern Bloc states (105). In chronological order, this is some of the materiel acquired in the past ten years to modernize materiel and, in some cases, to respond to terrorist groups: in 1995 Algeria received 48 armoured personnel carriers from Bulgaria and the same number from Slovakia in 1996; in 1997, two Su-24 airplanes from Byelorussia; in 1998, 27 T-72 tanks, 32 armoured personnel carriers and 14 Mi-24 Hind attack helicopters from Ukraine; in 1999, 36 Mig-29 airplanes –officially in exchange for 120 antiquated Mig-21– from Byelorussia; and between 1999 and 2001, 25 Su-24 airplanes from the Russian Federation (106). Algeria is continuing this acquisitions policy, which is closely observed by its neighbours, as can be seen in the visits by General Lamari to the Russian Federation on May 20, 2002, and to Byelorussia on April 14, 2003 (107).

#### *From Relations with the US to NATO's Mediterranean Initiative*

In the context of the difficult Cold War years, some of Algeria's stances made it possible to create an atmosphere that favoured a change in the US's perception of the country's international role. First, there was Algeria's contribution to the liberation of the hostages at the US embassy in Teheran in 1981; then, Algeria's role in easing the Arab-Israeli conflict, which helped change the PLO position in the conflict, as was demonstrated at the Palestinian National Council held in Algiers in 1988; and finally, Algerian mediation in

delicate issues such as the liberation of hostages from several kidnapped passenger planes also made closer relations possible. During Benjedid's presidency, these relations began to become important: Algeria's purchase of C-130 military transport aircraft and the Algerian president's subsequent official visit to the US in 1985 meant that, little by little, bilateral relations became 'an essential fact of Algerian defence policy' (108).

After the temporary interruption in the electoral process in January 1992, bilateral relations have gone through several stages in terms of their effects on the Armed Forces. In 1993, days before announcing the break in diplomatic relations between Algiers and Teheran, Major General Lamari, Chief of the CCLAS at the Ministry of Defence, made two secret visits to the US and to France at the head of an important military delegation. In Washington, he was received by the then Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, and in Paris he met with top officials from Pakistan, Tunisia and Egypt. The reason for the meetings was to begin defining a key group of countries to fight the emerging Islamic terrorism then in rapid development. Days later, the Turkish minister of Foreign Affairs visited Algiers, indicating that Turkey, an important country in terms of the purchase of materiel as we will see later, had joined the initiative (109).

More recently, bilateral military relations with US have been intensifying in recent years. Among other noteworthy events was the January 13, 2002 visit by an American Navy delegation to prepare the 'AUCEX 2002' exercises, which took place on January 15-16 on the Algerian coast with the participation of the American destroyer USS Ramage of the 6th Fleet. Days later, US General Barbara Fast, Director of Intelligence of the SACEUR, was received by the Chief of the General Staff of the Defence Ministry, Army General Lamari (110). More recently still, a large American military delegation visited Algiers on September 6, 2003, headed by General Charles F. Wald, attaché to SACEUR, who was received by top officials, including General Lamari and the commanders of the three divisions of the Armed Forces. The visit included a trip to Tamanrasset, where the National Security Agency (NSA) is establishing an electronic surveillance station, accompanied by General Lamari and by Major General Ben Ali Ben Ali, Commander of the 6th Military Region (111).

It is clear that prior experience acquired through cooperation with the US and with other member States of the Atlantic Alliance has smoothed the way for the inclusion of Algeria in NATO's Mediterranean Initiative, an experiment in dialogue and cooperation launched in February 1995 with a number of countries in the Mediterranean basin. Participation in this exercise is by invitation and Algeria joined in 1999 (112). In November 2002, Algeria was entrusted for the first time with co-organizing, in collaboration with the NATO Defence College in Rome, the annual research seminar that brings together diplomats, Alliance military officers and experts, and Mediterranean Dialogue partners. Days later, on November 21-22, Algeria also expressed interest in sending a large delegation to the Alliance's Prague Summit (113). There have also recently been several important joint operations, including a mine-clearing exercise held in Algerian waters in October 2003 (114).

#### *The Flowering of Bilateral Relations with other States*

Although the Russian Federation and other Western European countries on the one hand, and the People's Republic of China on the other, continue to be the two most important partners of the Algerian Armed Forces –especially in terms of military materiel, training and technical cooperation– the opening up to other countries is significant in a different, but also important aspect of Algerian foreign, security and defence policy. In the Arab context, there was a noteworthy purchase of 53 armoured personnel carriers from Egypt in 1992 (115), and in the Maghreb context, there were the Military Cooperation Agreements signed with Libya in 1975. More recently, a similar agreement was signed with Tunisia on November 21, 2001. The latter agreement emphasizes, in addition to

bilateral cooperation in the surveillance of the fragile common border, the desire to better control al-Qaeda networks in which nationals of both countries have played (and continue to play) an important role (116). Also, it is predictable that terrorists of this network will be returning to their countries of origin given the intense combat in what was until recently their Afghan sanctuary and the multinational fight against terrorism (117).

Further afield, we would mention the defence-related relations Algeria developed in the difficult nineties with three countries: Turkey, India and South Africa. Between 1996 and 2001 Algeria received from Turkey 700 'Scorpion' armoured personnel carriers (118). The agreement signed by Army Corps General Lamari with Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes on November 8, 2001, consolidated fruitful bilateral relations as was acknowledged by the Chief of the General Staff of the Indian Air Force during his visit to Algiers in March 2003 (119). Finally, we must emphasize that one of the most fruitful bilateral defence relations developed in recent years has been between Pretoria and Algiers. This cooperation has been important not only in terms of defence but has also broadened to multilateral diplomacy in the continent of Africa, for example the launch of the NEPAD initiative. The Military Cooperation Agreement signed with the Republic of South Africa on February 15, 1999, by Army Corps General Lamari and by South African Defence Minister General Joe Modise, is significant as the first agreement for the purchase of arms from a foreign country made public in Algeria. The materiel acquired by virtue of the agreement –although there had been prior acquisitions– included combat helicopters, night vision equipment, 'Mamba' light tanks and unpiloted 'Seeker' reconnaissance aircraft with a more than 200-kilometre range (120). It must be emphasized that this security and defence agreement is a reflection of bilateral relations in which President Nelson Mandela has always expressed his gratitude to Algerian authorities for their traditional support of him and the African National Congress (ANC) (121). The visit to Algiers by an important military delegation headed by South Africa's Secretary General of Defence, J.B. Massillila, from October 20 to 24, 2003, was an opportunity to assess this cooperation (122).

Security and defence relations with Spain began with a limited cooperation agreement signed on December 14, 1989, by the then General Director of Infrastructure of the Ministry of Defence, Alberto Valdivielso Canas. It included plans for professional training and for the exchange of information and was expected to be broadened and intensified in subsequent years –a desire that was slowed by Algeria's growing internal crisis (123)–. The progressive strengthening of bilateral relations between Algiers and Madrid in the nineties made it possible in the past three years to lay the groundwork for the development of broad, institutionalized cooperation on security and defence issues. In 2002, the signing of an initial military cooperation program for 2003 (124) –which on balance has been very positive and in which, for example, about ten Algerian officers have received study grants– directly preceded the conclusion of an Agreement on Cooperation on Defence Issues, signed on July 20, 2003, during the visit to Algiers by General Secretary of Defence Policy, Francisco Javier Jiménez-Ugarte (125). This renewable 20-year agreement begins with the Annual Cooperation Programme for 2004, which could include training in diverse areas, including peace-keeping operations, technical cooperation, the exchange of visits, carrying out manoeuvres and, in general, the exchange of experiences between both Ministries of Defence. A clear legal framework will now channel relations that had so far been characteristically modest and disperse (126). Thus, fourteen years after the first attempt to come together in this area, Spanish-Algerian security and defence relations are firm and in all likelihood will be strengthened in the future, as was demonstrated by the visit to Spain for the first time since the independence of Algeria by the Chief of the General Staff of the Defence Ministry, Army Corps General Mohamed Lamari, from January 19 to 22, 2004 (127).

## THE GREAT FUTURE CHALLENGES FACING THE ALGERIAN ARMED FORCES

Various changes both inside and outside Algeria indicate a future of profound changes for the country's Armed Forces. These will affect questions such as contributions to peace-keeping operations, civilian-military relations in the country, the debate regarding military service, the generational change within the Armed Forces and the debate on the role of the Armed Forces in the democratization process.

Since the late eighties, Algeria has contributed to several UN peace-keeping operations, from the various stages of the Angolan conflict (UNAVEM) to Haiti (UNSMIH), to Cambodia (UNTAC) and, more recently, Ethiopia-Eritrea (UNMEE) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Although in quantitative terms this participation has not been very great, it has indeed been qualitatively significant: Algeria's early work in Angola, supervising the evacuation of Cuban troops in the late eighties; its contribution of Gendarmerie Nationale officers to support the electoral process in Haiti in the mid-nineties; the strong African vocation of its diplomacy and its Armed Forces and Security Forces indicate a promising future for these forces in an area where needs are multiplying exponentially (128).

In Algeria, there are two ideal tools for promoting the evolution of civilian-military relations: Parliament and the news media, the latter due to its ability to amplify the message to Algerian society. As for the former, important work has been done by two Defence Commissions: the Defence Commission of the National Popular Assembly (Congress), headed by Ali Rezgui, Defence Commission of the Council of the Nation (Senate), headed by Abdelhamid Latrèche, both being especially active not only in terms of monitoring the government, but also in holding seminars on issues that traditionally were not made public. The first parliamentary workshops on national defence were held on November 11-12, 2001 at the National School of Administration (ENA) in Algiers, organized by the Defence Commission of the Council of the Nation, entitled 'For a Citizens' Debate on National Defence' (129). For two days, members of parliament and university students debated issues such as the role of Parliament in defence, the constitutional bases of national defence and the limits on a distinction between public order and national defence, all questions still considered taboo in other Arab countries both in and beyond the Maghreb, this very fact being one of the virtues of the exercise (130). The second set of workshops on national defence, on October 12 and 13, 2003, at the Bordj El Bahri Polytechnic Military School (formerly ENITA), near Algiers, followed the same scheme as the first set and demonstrated the continuing interest and dedication of politicians, experts and Armed Forces officers in constructing a solid security community in Algeria (131). The issue of developing a defence mentality in times as difficult as these –an issue that is also of prime interest to the defence ministries of other countries, including Spain (132)–, has led to considerable efforts within the Armed Forces and in their relations with civil society (133).

Regarding the mass media, there have been notable examples, most of them recent, of uninhibited treatment of the military and its role in society and in politics. At times, this treatment has caused negative reactions that have led to legal action. This was the case of Salima Tlemçani, a journalist with the daily newspaper *El Watan*, whose article published in the newspaper on December 11, 2001, dealing with the new appointments to the Intelligence and Security Department (DRS) –the former Military Security Office, the intelligence services– led to the Ministry of National Defence laying charges against her and against her newspaper (134).

The professionalization now underway has its earliest precedents in Major General Nezzar, one of the great architects first of the modernization of the Armed Forces and then of the first steps toward the professionalization of the same, particularly after his

appointment as Minister of Defence in July 1990. The Constitution of 1989 had eliminated some regulations regarding military service that had existed in the Constitution of 1976, specifically the references to the service as 'a duty and an honour' and to its goals of 'guaranteeing the social and cultural advancement of the greatest possible number of Algerians' and 'contributing to development' (135). In April 2000, after 31 years of the existence of military service, an assessment was made of this reality. Though the first legal texts referring to the organization of the Military Service were adopted in 1968, it was in April of the next year that the first contingents reached their destinations, brought together for a common purpose: the defence and development of the nation (136). All those in the ranks of the renamed People's National Army, the former ALN, did so in application of the regulations contained in Decree 68-82 of April 16, 1968, later amended by Decree 74-103 of November 15, 1974. These regulations institutionalized a 24-month military service, making it obligatory for all Algerian men who had reached 19 years of age. At the beginning, and in the context of an Algeria that was a leader of the Third World and was working toward independent economic development, it was, in the words of President Boumedienne, the ideal framework for 'contributing to a noble goal: that of serving the people and the most underprivileged'. Indeed, the military service was a strategic instrument in the struggle against underdevelopment and was put at the service of large infrastructure projects –such as the construction of the Trans-Saharan highway and the Great Green Barrier against the advancing desert– and of other more modest but equally necessary missions involving medicine, teaching, construction planning and management, etc (137). Furthermore, as revolutionary and popular Armed Forces, their obligation was to contribute to providing youth with professional training. Looking back, regardless of the perspective from which one views the institution of military service in Algeria, there is one important fact that goes beyond all others: since its creation and to date, three million Algerians have been through it. This means, a priori, that it necessarily is of great political and social importance (138).

In more recent times, and before the present stage in which the State has begun to consider the need to professionalize the Armed Forces, the military service as an institution and, more specifically, recruits have become a priority objective of the various terrorist groups that for a decade have made young men of military age the object of their bloody attacks (139). The professionalization visible on the horizon responds not only to initiative and planning on the part of political authorities or to the plans of the Ministry of National Defence; rather, as in many other countries around the world, especially countries in transition, it also responds to the desires of the people themselves. Apart from the security threats we have summarized above (and in Algeria these have proved to be much more serious than in other societies where the debate on the reform and/or elimination of military service has been considered), there have been many changes in the perception of military service among young people facing multiple social and labour-related challenges. At present, the current obligation of all young Algerian men to present their Military Card when looking for a steady job or when preparing to go abroad has begun to be questioned, which is fully understandable in the context of the dynamism that characterizes Algerian society (140). The national debate focuses both on pure professionalization and on a reduction of military service to six months while the conditions are created for professionalization.

As for the generational change, this has already largely happened. General Zerual had held the highest Armed Forces and government posts –he was Minister of Defence in 1993, became Head of State on January 30, 1994, and the elections of November 16, 1995 confirmed him as such until 1999– and when he left, few military men who had participated in the war of liberation remained after him. Likewise, General Nezzar, who was catapulted first into the former Ministry of National Defence and then went on to become Head of State, has also retired and with him an entire generation of commanders and officers who had started either in the French armed forces or else directly in the ALN

and who have made way for new commanders and officers whose careers began in changing times. The Chief of the General Staff of Defence, Mohamed Lamari, originally in the Gendarmerie Nationale, was responsible for the anti-terrorist efforts of 1993-95, personally commanding some of the operations, and has been Chief of the General Staff since 1997. Today, as Army Corps General, he is the most visible example of Armed Forces that have increasing relations with other countries, are demonstrating increasing internal transparency, and have insistently expressed their commitment to the democratic process and to the defence of the republican values of the Algerian State. This transparency is reflected, for example, in the 'International Colloquium on Terrorism', held in Algiers in October 2002 and organized by Major General Tutti, defence advisor to President Bouteflika, enabling national and international experts to exchange opinions and experiences on the fight against terrorism with Algerian commanders and officers. This transparency can and must increase until it becomes business as usual, along the lines of the other Armed Forces with which the Algerian forces cooperate on an increasing basis (141). This trend is confirmed by today's events, largely calming the fears that remain as the presidential elections of April 2004 approach (142).

Algeria in the 21st century is characterized by the omnipresence of an overwhelmingly young population. Although an attempt continues to be made to bring them into the Armed Forces with a social and historical awareness of the national war of liberation, this will be possible to the extent that a wide range of public policies are put in place to recognize the major generational shift that has occurred. This shift, as we have seen, has affected the Armed Forces as it has other areas of daily life. In all likelihood, in the coming years this will lead to other forms of relationships and new ways of incorporating citizens into Armed Forces that have been forced to adapt not only to the harsh reality of the terrorism that has shaken the country for more than a decade, but also to changes in international society in general and more specifically, to the security issues that affect global society.

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#### **NOTES:**

- (1) Khaled Nezzar, *Mémoires du Général Khaled Nezzar*, Algiers, Chihab Éditions, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2000, p. 59.
- (2) Mohammed Harbi, starting in the second half of the fifties, held various important posts in the embryonic Algerian State, including General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (September 1961-October 1962). After independence, he was advisor to President Ben Bella from 1963 to 1965. Opposed to Boumedienne's *coup d'état* on June 19, 1965, he was arrested on August 9 of that year and imprisoned; he went into exile in France in 1973. See his work *Une vie debout. Mémoires politiques (1945-1962)*, Algiers, Éditions Casbah, volume I, 2001, pp. 114 and following.
- (3) This is the thesis of American researcher W.B. Quandt in *Société et pouvoir en Algérie*, Algiers, Éditions Casbah, 1999, p. 199.
- (4) *Situation and Intelligence Data*, Washington DC, National Defence University, X/1987, p. III-10.
- (5) Mohammed Harbi, *Le FLN. Mirage et réalité. Des origines à la prise du pouvoir (1945-1962)*, Paris, Éditions J.A., 1985, pp. 143-162, and also, Robert A. Mortimer, 'Algeria: The Clash between Islam, Democracy, and the Military', *Current History* n° 1, I/1993, p. 37.
- (6) Abdelkader Yefsah, *La question du pouvoir en Algérie*, Algiers, AP Édition, 1990, p. 160.
- (7) José Antonio Sainz de la Peña, 'Las Fuerzas Armadas del Magreb' in Antonio Marquina (ed): *Seguridad en el Mediterráneo. Nuevos planteamientos*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria San Pablo-CEU, Colección Anales n° 7, 1992, p. 155. On the attempted *coup d'état* of December 1967, see the memoirs of General Yahia Rahal, *Histoires du pouvoir. Un Général témoigne*, Algiers, Éditions Casbah, 1997, p. 154.
- (8) Paul Balta, 'Algeria's 25 Years of Independence', *NATO's Sixteen Nations*, XII/1986-I/1987, p. 38; and Carlos Echeverría, *Cooperation in Peacekeeping Among the Euro-Mediterranean Armed Forces*, Paris, WEU Institute for Security Studies-Chaillot, Paper n° 35, II/1999, p. 8.

- (9) A. Latreche, 'Allocution de clôture de Mr. le Président de la Commission de la Défense Nationale du Conseil de la Nation' in *Commission de la Défense Nationale du Conseil de la Nation: Pour un débat citoyen sur la défense nationale*, Algiers, Éditions ANEP, 2001, p. 123.
- (10) The first Constitution had been ratified by referendum on September 8, 1963, and the second one in 1976, also ratified by referendum. See Paul Balta, 'L'Algérie et le Grand Maghreb', *Le Trimestre du Monde*, n° 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 1989, p. 103.
- (11) On the role of the Algerian revolution as a beacon for other revolutionary experiences in the Third World, and on Algiers as the 'Mecca' of national liberation movements around the world, see Y. Rahal, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.
- (12) See Claudine Rulleau, 'La nouvelle constitution algérienne. Une volte-face complète', *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, n° 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 1989, p. 163.
- (13) P. Balta, *op. cit.*, p. 37. According to A. Yefsah, it was during the 4<sup>th</sup> FLN Congress that the candidature of Colonel Benjedid to the post of General Secretary of the Party and, consequently, to that of President of the Republic, was boosted in particular by the then Lieutenant Colonel Kasdi Merbah, chief of Military Security, and by Colonel Belhuchet, later Presidential Advisor on Military Affairs. See A. Yefsah, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
- (14) A good example to illustrate this claim is that of General Liamin Zerual: in the late eighties he was Assistant Chief of the General Staff of the Army and, after resigning from his post in 1990, was named ambassador, later returning to the country first as Minister of Defence and then as President in 1994. See *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 1, XII/1992, p. 2.
- (15) Fayçal Metaoui, 'Debat d'experts autour de la question des élites: Rien ne peut se faire sans l'avis des militaires', *El Watan*, 26/III/2002, p. 2.
- (16) The publication of General Nezzar's memoirs has been a crucial contribution to the study of this issue. See K. Jnezzar, *Mémoires... op. cit.*, and by the same author, *Algérie: Échec à une régression programmée*, Paris, Publisud, 2001.
- (17) J.A. Sainz de la Peña, *op. cit.* p. 156.
- (18) Also responsible to the Chief of the General Chiefs of Staff are: the commanders of the Military Regions, the Chief of Air Defence, and the commander of the Gendarmerie Nationale, who in the early nineties was General Ghaziel. *Ibidem*, p. 156.
- (19) Both the FLN, through its Office for Friendship with the People, and the Armed Forces in its own areas of influence, had made great efforts to support revolutionary causes around the world.
- (20) To illustrate the nature of the threat represented by radical Islam, which had been present since before the electoral process was interrupted in January 1992, see Mohamed Issami, *Le FIS et le terrorisme. Au coeur de l'enfer*, Algiers, Éditions Le Matin, IX/2001.
- (21) General Nezzar's memoirs give a detailed explanation of some of these interventions in places such as the Sinai Peninsula. See K. Nezzar, *Algérie: échec... op. cit.*, pp. 104 and following. Also, there is at present interest in the subject of Algerian military officers who took part in interventions in the Middle East conflicts to the extent that they have formed an association—known as the Organization of Middle East War Veterans, with about 5,000 members—to demand what they consider to be their rights. See 'La marche des anciens combattants du Moyen-Orient empêchée: Nous reviendrons le 15 avril', *L'Expression*, 29-30/III/2002, p. 7.
- (22) *Situation and Intelligence Data, op. cit.*, p. III-1.
- (23) In 1982 and 1983 the Algerian National Navy modernized its fleet, acquiring three 'Koni' class frigates, four 'Nanuchka' combat craft, four 'Brooke Marine' fast attack craft, two 'Baglietto' class landing craft and 16 patrol. These purchases in the United Kingdom and Italy reveal an increasing desire after then to reduce their dependence on the USSR. Algeria caused a certain amount of concern among its neighbours at the time for adding to its two 'Kilo' class submarines the rental of two Soviet 'Romeo' class submarines for training purposes. See Abdennour Benantar, 'La sécurité nationale algérienne dans les années 90: entre la Méditerranée et le Sahara', *The Maghreb Review*, vol. 18, n° 3-4, 1993, p. 159.
- (24) Mustafâ El Buyali postulated in his 'dalil' to the authorities that he was fighting to create an Islamic State in Algeria as 'the first stage in the fight for a regime that brings together all Islamic countries with its capital at Mecca'. His group later became the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA). See M. Issami, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- (25) Paul Balta, 'Réflexion sur un séisme', *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, n° 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 1989, p. 136.
- (26) On February 23 the participation rate was 78.81% per cent of 12,961,628 eligible voters and 73.43% voted in favor. See Paul Balta, 'L'Algérie et le Grand Maghreb' *op. cit.* p. 103.
- (27) C. Rulleau, *op. cit.*, p. 159.
- (28) Domingo del Pino, 'Argelia: revancha de la historia', *Política Exterior*, vol. VI, n° 25, Winter 1992, p. 12.
- (29) Bruno Callies de Salies, 'La coopération militaire franco-algérienne', *Défense Nationale*, VI/1997, p. 128.



- (30) Domingo del Pino, 'Argelia, en el filo de la navaja', *Revista Española de Defensa*, September 1991, p. 56.
- (31) *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 5, 10/II/1993, p. 2.
- (32) The FIS's solidarity with Hussein showed they were good at dealing with symbols. This was purely instrumental, allowing them to keep a high profile and carry weight, rather than falling by the wayside as was the case of their Islamist colleagues in Tunisia.
- (33) Lara Marlowe, 'Algeria. Searching for Salvation', *Time*, 26/VIII/1991, p. 26.
- (34) R.A. Mortimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.
- (35) Álvaro Iranzo, 'La dimisión de Chadli Benyedid', *Política Exterior*, vol. VI, n° 25, Winter 1992, p. 24.
- (36) Domingo del Pino, 'Argelia, en el filo...', *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.
- (37) According to Séverine Labat, Madani's call on May 25 for a strike was based on the principle that, after the traumatic events of October 1988, the Armed Forces would not fire on the population again; in short, the FIS was already testing the reactions of the military to see how far it could go. See S. Labat, 'Le 'grève sainte' de mai-juin 1991', *Reporters Sans Frontières: Le drame algérien. Un peuple en ôtage*, Paris, La Découverte, 1994, p. 141.
- (38) *El Djeïch*, IV/1991, p. 1.
- (39) R.A. Mortimer, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- (40) Major General Benmaalem had risen to Colonel in July 1979, to General in 1984 and to Major General in July 1990. Before being appointed Head of the Department of Defence and Security Issues for the Presidency of the Republic in late 1988, he had commanded the two Military Regions, the 4<sup>th</sup> (Uargla) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Oran). See *Arabies*, n° 60, XII/1991, p. 12.
- (41) Cherif Memmoud, 'Début d'une tragedie. Ça a commencé à Guemmar', *L'Actualité*, 25-26 October 2002, p. 5, and A. Iranzo, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- (42) On December 25 there had already been multiple car bomb attacks on several neighbourhoods of Algiers and in the rest of the country, information which both the government and the FIS itself hid from the population. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, a policeman was murdered and a terrorist network with weapons and propaganda was dismantled in the *wilaya* of Mascara. Subsequent investigations showed that FIS militants had already gone into hiding, culminating the preparatory stage for the launching of the Jihad. See M. Issami, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-195.
- (43) See Leïla Aslaoui, *Les années rouges*, Algiers, Éditions Casbah, 2000, pp. 176 and following; K. Nezzar, *Algérie: échec...* *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10 (introduction by Ali Harún), and pp. 165 and following; and Ramón Cotarelo, 'El golpe blanco frente al integrista', *Gente-Semanal de Diario 16*, 19/I/1992, p. 21.
- (44) The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 1990-1991*, London, IISS-Brassey's, 1990, pp. 99-100; and Alain de Marolles, 'Argelia: una democracia entre rejas', *Política Exterior*, vol. VI, n° 25, Winter 1992, pp. 37-38.
- (45) *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 5, 10/II/1993, p. 4. The UMA, still operating today, is a subregional international organization created by the Heads of State of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia by the Treaty of Marrakech on February 17, 1989.
- (46) *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 6, 24/II/1993, p. 1.
- (47) Luis Martínez, 'Armée/islamistes: le couple infernal', *Arabies*, IX/1997, p. 22. In 1992 the Armed Forces grew by 13,000 members and the paramilitary forces were reinforced: the National Security Forces were created (16,000), the Gendarmerie Nationale was increased by 12,000 members, the Republican Guard was provided with 10 additional light tanks and six patrol boats were acquired for the Coast Guard service. See *The Military Balance 1992-1993*, p. 103.
- (48) The GIA acted under these initials for the first time in September 1993 and was joined by dissidents from the MIA and by 'Afghans' –veterans of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan, demobilized since 1989–. On the change in doctrine and the reallocation of resources, see C. Echeverría Jesús, 'Las Fuerzas Armadas Argelinas ante los nuevos desafíos', *Ejército*, n° 681, V-VI/1997, pp. 34-38.
- (49) See by the detailed study by Xavier Raufer, *Nouvelles menaces. Les entités criminelles hybrides. Le cas du GIA*, Paris, Notes d'information du Laboratoire MINOS-Centre des Hautes Études de l'Armement, XII/1996.
- (50) 'Algeria: A State Under Siege', *Africa Confidential*, vol. 34, n° 9, 30/IV/1993, p. 4.
- (51) *Ibidem*, p. 4; and *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 4, 25/I/1993, p. 2.
- (52) *Africa Confidential*, vol. 34, n° 8, 22/IV/1993, p. 3.
- (53) See *Africa Confidential*, 30/IV/1993, p. 4. Prime Minister Belaid Abdessalam had already referred to Iran as a 'source of tension' in December and asked Iranian authorities to reduce their diplomatic staff in Algiers. See 'Algeria. The Double Act', *African Events*, XII/1992, p. 8.
- (54) IISS, 'War-torn Algeria. The Dawn of a New Era?', *Strategic Comments*, vol. 6, n° 2, III/2000, p. 1.
- (55) See 'Algeria: Searching for a Strategy', *Africa Confidential*, vol. 34, n° 23, 19/IX/1993, p. 5.

- (56) See Robert Mortimer, 'Algeria: The Dialectic of Elections and Violence', *Current History*, V/1997, p. 231.
- (57) This was the first amendment, ratified by referendum, of the Constitution of 1989. The Constitution of 1996 continued to prohibit parties based on religious, nationalist or linguistic criteria. See the study by the Armed Forces' Military Institute for Documentation, Studies and Planning (IMDEP): 'Les modes d'élection. Étude de droit comparé', *El Djeïch*, V/1997, pp. 2-20.
- (58) Regarding the legislative elections of June 1997, the May 1997 issue of *El Djeïch* published the editorial 'Élections: un choix et une prise de position' on page 1, calling for the votes to strengthen the institution-building process. The June 1997 issue once again devoted its editorial to the same issue, titling it: '5 Juin: prélude de tous les espoirs' (p. 1), and insisting that the elections 'will smooth the way for all hopes, the foremost of which is to restore stability to our country, for our citizens to find calm again, and for free and regularly elected institutions to consolidate the Algerian State'. Finally, the first editorial after the elections – '5 Juin 1997: consecration de la volonté populaire', *El Djeïch*, VII/1997, p. 1 – gave congratulations for the level of voter participation (65.60%), calling it a success on the path to the construction of democracy.
- (59) On the call from within the Armed Forces for participation in the local elections of October 23, 1997, see the editorial 'Adoption du projet national', *El Djeïch*, X/1997, p. 1.
- (60) 'Direction de la Communication, de l'Information et de l'Orientation. Réunion des cadres', *El Djeïch*, VI/1997, p. 2.
- (61) See the detailed description by General A. Maïza, Commander of the First Military Region in 2002, of how the Armed Forces and political authorities organized the fight against terrorism in those years in his speech 'L'Engagement de l'Armée Nationale Populaire face au terrorisme' to the International Colloquium on terrorism organized by Major General Mohamed Touati in October 2002 in Algiers, in *Las Actes du Collòque International sur le Terrorisme. Le Précédent Algérien. Tome II*, Algiers, ANEP, 2003, pp. 197-209.
- (62) See the study prepared for the US Army by Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria. The Next Fundamentalist State?*, Santa Monica, RAND-Arroyo Center, 1996, in particular Chapter 5 (pp. 49-91) which describes the author's theories on how the FIS could hypothetically have exercised power.
- (63) See Andrew J. Pierre and William B. Quandt, 'Algeria's War on Itself', *Foreign Policy*, n° 99, Summer 1995, pp. 131-148.
- (64) The truce by EIS was meant to isolate the GIA politically but did not have that result. In fact, it was not even accepted by some for a time: From London, Kamar Eddine Kherbane, former vice-president of the FIS, rejected the call for a truce by the leader of the EIS. The call had to be repeated on October 4, 1997, by the group's second-in-command, Ahmed Benaïcha.
- (65) The study by General Maïza assesses the two amnesty laws, the Rahma Act and the Civil Harmony Act, estimating that 6,000 terrorists benefited from them. See A. Maïza, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
- (66) Since 2001, in the two terrorists groups that continue to operate in Algeria, the GIA and the GSPC, an estimated 1,500 terrorists are in the former group and 500 in the latter. *The Military Balance 2001-2002 and 2002-2003*.
- (67) IISS, 'War-torn Algeria...', *op. cit.*, p. 1.
- (68) On the restructuring, see *The Military Balance 1992-1993*, p. 103, and for a recent example of a unit, see 'Journées d'information sur les Forces Terrestres: la 12ème Division d'Infanterie Mécanisée à Djelfa (12ème DIM)1<sup>a</sup> RM', *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, pp. 8-9.
- (69) *The Military Balance 1997-1998 to 2002-2003*.
- (70) Jose Garçon, 'Alger remet de l'ordre dans les milices', *Libération*, 14/III/1997, p. 8.
- (71) L. Martínez, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- (72) *The Military Balance 2002-2003*, p. 101.
- (73) 'Algeria. Settling Accounts', *Africa Confidential*, 19/VI/1992, p. 8.
- (74) *Algérie Confidential*, n° 10, 28/IV/1993, p. 3.
- (75) Carlos Echevarría Jesús, *The Role of the Royal Armed Forces (FAR) in Modern Morocco*, Madrid, Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, Working Paper 2003/20, 15/X/2003, p. 24.
- (76) A recent example of this coverage is the article by Colonel Ali Baali, spokesman for the MAOL, published in the context of the effects of the terrorist macro-attacks of September 11, 2001, 'Las coartadas del terrorismo', *El Mundo*, 1/XII/2001, p. 10.
- (77) 'Après Souaïdia et Yous Nasroullah. Le MAOL à visage découvert', *Le Soir d'Algérie*, 5/VII/2001, pp. 1 and 3. The MAOL website is [www.anp.org](http://www.anp.org).
- (78) Although there is frequent and continuing reference to the Algerian civil war, not only in the media but also by some analysts, we must insist that objectively this type of conflict has not occurred. See 'Algeria. First Round to the Assassins', *Africa Confidential*, vol. 33, n° 13, 3/VII/1992, p. 7.
- (79) *Algérie Confidential*, n° 5, 10/II/1993, p. 1.

- (80) Chris Kutschera, 'Le mouvement islamique algérien. Une nébuleuse en mal de stratégie', *Les Cahiers de l'Orient*, n° 14, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 1989, p. 153.
- (81) L. Martínez, 'Armée/Islamistes: le couple infernal', *Arabies*, IX/1997, p. 22.
- (82) On Kamareddine Kherbane see 'Algeria: Searching for a strategy', *Africa Confidential*, vol. 34, n° 23, 19/XI/1993, p. 5; and 'Magreb. Críticas a la pasividad europea', *Informe Semanal de Política Exterior*, n° 286, 15/X/2001, pp. 4-5.
- (83) Juan Carlos Sanz, 'El piloto argelino huido a Ibiza acusa a su Ejército de exterminar al pueblo', *El País*, 9/VI/1998, p. 8.
- (84) In this response, General Lamari recalls that Suaïdia's name already appeared on the list provided to the Delegation that, sent by the UN and headed by Mario Soares, visited Algeria in 1998 after the shock to world opinion caused by a number of terrible massacres of civilians. See 'Ordre du Jour du Chef d'État-Major de l'Armée Nationale Populaire', *El Djeïch*, n° 452, III/2001, pp. 1-4. See Habib Souaïdia, *La guerra sucia*, Barcelona, Ediciones B, 2002, and the reply to this book written by a person who had once collaborated in the writing Souaïdia's work in Mohamed Sifaoui, *La sale guerre. Histoire d'une imposture*, Algiers, Chihab Éditions, 2002.
- (85) *Algérie Confidential*, n° 1, XII/1992, p. 3.
- (86) On the relative modesty of Algerian naval resources in particular and those in the Maghreb in general, see Jean-Jacques Lavenue, 'L'armée algérienne et les institutions: de la Constitution du 23 février 1989 à l'assassinat de Mohamed Boudiaf le 29 juin 1992', *Revue du Droit Public et de la Science Politique*, n° 109, II/1993, pp. 101-119.
- (87) Of note are Morocco's recent self-interested references to this matter in its discussions of security and defence issues with Spain, a Western neighbour of Algeria and therefore potentially sensitive to the question. Pedro Canales, 'France/Espagne/Maghreb. Jeux d'alliances en Méditerranée Occidentale', *Arabies*, IX/2001, pp. 50-51.
- (88) R. Jeffrey Smith, 'China Aid on Algerian Reactor May Violate Pledges', *The Washington Post*, 20/IV/1991, p. 17.
- (89) See a description of the origin of the reports and their technical aspects in Vipin Gupta, 'Suspected Algerian Nuclear Facility', *Trust and Verify*, n° 20, VI/1991, pp. 1-2; and 'Algeria's Oussera complex', *Trust and Verify*, n° 7, IV/1992, p. 2.
- (90) *International Atomic Energy Agency Information Circular: Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the 'Es Salam' Reactor on 21 December 1993*, INFCIRC/429, 18/II/1994, 3 pp.
- (91) Regarding this, see Pedro Canales, 'Inquietud en Marruecos por la capacidad nuclear de su vecina Argelia', *El País*, 19/VI/1998; and by the same author, 'France/Espagne/Maghreb. Jeux d'alliances...', *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51.
- (92) Abderrahmane Hayane, 'Algérie, relance de la recherche nucléaire', *Jeune Afrique Économie*, n° 225, 16/IX/1996.
- (93) *Algérie Confidential*, n° 1, XII/1992.
- (94) IISS, *The Military Balance 2002-2003*, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
- (95) Regarding this, see the Treaty of Washington, April 4, 1949, which founded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Its 6<sup>th</sup> article includes the Algerian departments of France, a reference that would lose effect after July 3, 1962, as the North Atlantic Council established on January 16, 1963. *NATO Handbook*, Bruselas, NATO Office of Information and Press, X/1995, p. 232.
- (96) B. Callies de Salies, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-125.
- (97) *Ibidem*, p. 128.
- (98) This was the case of the night vision systems and of various types of weapons. However, at this initial stage, some 'Écureuil' civilian helicopters were successfully purchased. *Ibidem*, p. 129.
- (99) During Jacques Chirac's last visit to Morocco, on October 9-11, 2003, there was discussion of a global package worth 300 million dollars. This was pursued for months by firms such as, among others, Thales and Dassault, and included programs such as the refurbishing of the Mirage-2000 and the renovation of Moroccan radar systems. See 'Marruecos. La visita de Chirac', *Informe Semanal de Política Exterior*, n° 381, 20/X/2003, pp. 5-6.
- (100) 'Une délégation militaire française en visite en Algérie', *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, p. 3.
- (101) Prensa Latina, *Los Países No Alineados*, Prague, Prensa Latina-Agencia de Prensa Orbis, 1982, p. 62.
- (102) The visit to Algeria from September 14 to 19, 2003, of a Russian military delegation headed by Army Corps General Liaskalo Nikolai Petrovitch, focused on Russian-Algerian cooperation on military transfers, is a recent example of this. See *El Djeïch*, n° 483, X/2003, pp. 5-6.
- (103) Fayçal Metaoui, 'Débat des experts autour de la question des élites: Rien ne peut se faire sans l'avis des militaires', *El Watan*, 26/III/2002, p. 2.

- (104) See the details in ‘Exercices entre les Forces Navales Algériennes et Américaines’, *El Djeïch*, n° 463, II/2002, pp. 2-4.
- (105) IISS, *The Military Balance 1993-1994*, *op. cit.*, p. 111; and *The Military Balance 1994-1995*, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
- (106) IISS, *The Military Balance 1996-1997 to 2001-2002*.
- (107) See [www.stratfor.com](http://www.stratfor.com) and ‘Le Général de Corps d’Armée, chef d’Etat-Major de l’ANP visite la République de Biélorrusie’, *El Djeïch*, n° 478, V/2003, p. 2.
- (108) J.A. Sainz de la Peña, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
- (109) *Algérie Confidentiel*, n° 10, 28/IV/1993, p. 2.
- (110) ‘Exercices entre les Forces Navales Algériennes et Américaines’, *El Djeïch*, n° 463, II/2002, pp. 2-4. It must be kept in mind that in 2000 Algeria had ordered six unmanned ‘Beech’ electronic surveillance aircraft from the US to be used in the fight against terrorism. *The Military Balance 2001-2002*, p. 125.
- (111) ‘Le Général Charles F. Wald, Adjoint du Commandant suprême des Forces Américaines en Europe visite l’Algérie. Le renforcement des relations entre les deux Armées’, *El Djeïch*, n° 483, X/2003, pp. 3-4. On the strengthening of the US presence in the deep south of Algeria in order to control redeployment of al-Qaeda in the immense Sahel region, see ‘Magreb. La visita de Powell’, *Informe Semanal de Política Exterior*, n° 388, 8/XII/2003, p. 7.
- (112) Algeria has been the latest Mediterranean country to respond favourably, in 2000, to the formal invitation of the North Atlantic Council. Alberto Bin, ‘Security in the Mediterranean. A view from NATO’, in Dieter Ose and Laure Borgomano-Loup (eds.), *Security and Stability in the Mediterranean Region. 3rd International Research Seminar on Mediterranean Security*, Rome, NADEFCOL-Seminar Report Series n° 12, 2001, p. 17.
- (113) See the minutes of this Seminar in D. Ose and L. Borgomano-Loup (eds.), *Managing Change: Evolution in the Global Arena and Mediterranean Security*, Rome, NADEFCOL-Seminar Report Series n° 15, 2003.
- (114) From October 5 to 8, 2003, a fleet of six of the Alliance’s minesweepers carried out the ‘Passex Exercise’ with Algerian ships. This visit coincided with that of Rear Admiral José Romero, Deputy Commander of AFSOUTH, who was received by the Chief of the General Staff of the Algerian Navy, General Zaoui Said. See ‘Les navires de la force anti-mines du Sud de l’Europe accostent au port d’Alger’, *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, pp. 6-7.
- (115) IISS, *The Military Balance 1994-1995*, p. 122.
- (116) Carlos Echeverría Jesús, ‘La nebulosa terrorista de ‘Al-Qaeda’, ¿mito o realidad?’, *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*, number 25, 2<sup>nd</sup> period, 2001, pp. 12-13. For the Algerian-Libyan agreement, see *The Military Balance 1990-1991*, p. 97.
- (117) See the journeys of General Lamari in Cherif Ouazani, ‘Algérie. Un général globe-trotter’, *Jeune Afrique/l’Intelligent*, 27/XI-3/XII/2001, pp. 12-13.
- (118) *The Military Balance 1999-2000*, p. 124, and *2001-2002*, p. 125.
- (119) C. Ouazani, *op. cit.*, p. 12; and ‘Le Maréchal Aérien S. Kishnaswamy, Chef d’Etat-major des forces Aériennes de la République de l’Inde en visite en Algérie’, *El Djeïch*, n° 477, IV/2003, pp. 3-4.
- (120) By 1997, South Africa had already sent Algeria several ‘Seeker’ units. IISS, *The Military Balance 1998-1999*, p. 118.
- (121) General Modise had already visited Algiers in October 1998 in the context of negotiations on the agreement. See *Jeune Afrique Économie*, 12/VII-1/VIII/1999, p. 85.
- (122) ‘Une délégation militaire Sud-Africaine en visite en Algérie’, *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, p. 2.
- (123) On the partial agreement reached in 1989, see C. Echeverría Jesús, ‘La profundización de relaciones entre España y los países del Magreb’, *Estudios Africanos*, n° 7, vol. IV, VII-XII/1989, p. 13.
- (124) In the framework of the first annual military cooperation program, we would highlight the visit to Algeria, from June 28 to July 1, 2003, of Spanish Air Force delegation that visited the following schools: the Superior Air Force School in Tifraï; the Aeronautic Technicians’ School in Dar el Beïda; and the Helicopter Specialists’ School in Aïn Arnat. See ‘Une délégation espagnole en visite à Alger’, *El Djeïch*, n° 481, VIII/2003, p. 19.
- (125) On the visit of the SEGENPOL, see ‘Le général de corps d’armée Mohamed Lamari reçoit le secrétaire général de la Politique de défense espagnol’, *El Moudjahid*, 22/VII/2003, p. 10; and ‘Une délégation Espagnole Militaire en visite en Algérie: La consolidation de la coopération entre les deux armées’, *El Djeïch*, n° 481, VIII/2003, p. 21.
- (126) For example, Algerian officers and non-commissioned officers have received courses on clearing mines and deactivating explosives at the Spanish Army’s International Mine-Clearing Centre. See Ramón Hidalgo López, ‘El Centro Internacional de Desminado’, *Ejército*, n° 751, X/2003, p. 73. In the area of domestic security, of note is the specific framework for cooperation between the Spanish Guardia Civil and Algerian Gendarmerie Nationale in which, for example, three members of the Algerian Judicial Police

received a course in 2003 on police laboratory techniques, including DNA testing, paid for with European Union (UE) MEDA funds. See C. Echeverría Jesús, 'La cooperación de la Guardia Civil con los cuerpos equivalentes en los países del Magreb frente a los nuevos riesgos', *Cuadernos de la Guardia Civil*, III/2003 (at press).

(127) The expectations caused by cooperation on defence are dealt with in the interview with Spain's ambassador in Algiers, Emilio Fernández Castaño, 'Cooperación impulsada en todos los ámbitos', *Diálogo Mediterráneo*, n° 31, XII/2003, p. 41.

(128) In November 2003, there were 19 Algerian observers deployed in Ethiopia-Eritrea and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. See [www.un.org/Depts/dpko/contributors/November2003Summary.pdf](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/contributors/November2003Summary.pdf). On Algerian participation in international missions in recent years, see *The Military Balance 1991-1992 to 2002-2003* and C. Echeverría, *Cooperation in Peacekeeping*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14.

(129) 'Journée d'études parlementaires à l'ENA: Pour un débat-citoyen sur la Défense nationale', *El Moudjahid*, 9-10/XI/2001, p. 2.

(130) 'Le Sénat organise un débat public sur la défense et la citoyenneté: l'Armée et le tabou', *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 13/XI/2001, p. 7.

(131) 'Les IIèmes journées d'Études Parlementaires sur la Défense Nationale. Pour un débat citoyen sur la défense nationale', *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, pp. 10-11.

(132) Ministry of Defence, *Revisión Estratégica de la Defensa. Documentos Anejos*, Madrid, Secretaría General Técnica-Centro de Publicaciones, 2003, p. 369.

(133) See the article by the Professor of the University of Algiers, Mustapha Cherif, 'L'Éducation et la défense nationale', *El Djeïch*, n° 484, XI/2003, pp. 28-30.

(134) 'Affaire El Watan-MDN. Omar Belhouchet à la barre', *El Watan*, 26/III/2002, p. 24; and Carla Fibla, 'Una periodista argelina, juzgada por comentar nuevos cargos de su Gobierno', *La Vanguardia*, 19/III/2002.

(135) C. Rulleau, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

(136) 'Service National. 31 Années d'efforts', *El Djeïch*, n° 441, IV/2000, pp. 4-6.

(137) These missions are highlighted again in 'Le 34ème anniversaire du Service National (Avril 1969-Avril 2003)', *El Djeïch*, n° 477, IV/2003, pp. 6-7.

(138) This was the opinion expressed by Senator Latrèche in his speech at the First Workshops on Parliamentary Studies on national defence, mentioned above. See his speech at: *Conseil de la Nation-Commission de la Défense Nationale: Premières journées*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-16.

(139) In frighteningly detailed testimony on his terrorist acts, an 'emir' of the GIA describes how at different times young men of military age picked up far from their homes by Islamic terrorists belonging to this and other groups were executed, being accused of serving the apostate Algerian State. See Patrick Forestier and Ahmed Salam, *Confession d'un émir du GIA*, Paris, Bernard Grasset, 1999, p. 167.

(140) Djouab Koulder, 'Les jeunes et le service national: un obstacle pour la jeunesse', *La Nouvelle République*, 17/X/2001, p. 15.

(141) While heading this Colloquium, Major General Tuati made a stellar and pioneer appearance as the highest-ranking Algerian military officer to appear on the French television channel, LCI. Idir Benyounes, 'Les axes scellés et non négociables de l'ANP', and Ahmed Haili, 'Les déclarations du Général Touati. L'armée se positionne', *La Dépêche Kabylie*, 25-26/X/2002, p. 3.

(142) A combination of past memories and the critical stance toward the President taken by some former Armed Forces commanders –such as Generals Jaled Nezzar and Rachid Benyelles, the latter a former Chief of the General Staff of the Navy– who are, nonetheless, no longer in professional life, still riles up mistrust that does not give sufficient credit to the opinions expressed by current Armed Forces commanders or to the national and international context in which we now live. On this alarmism, see two articles by Ignacio Cembrero: 'Los generales arremeten contra el presidente Buteflika', *El País*, 27/X/2003, p. 4; and 'Una gran coalición argelina trata de evitar la reelección de Buteflika', *El País*, 27/I/2004, p. 7.