

*The Algerian foreign policy facing upheavals
in the Mediterranean region*

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***Abstract*— Since its independence, Algeria has always struggled for an international order that defends: the respect of sovereignty of States and their right to self-determination, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, the peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-interventionism, whether military or humanitarian.**

The present article is made with the aim of shedding light on the foreign policy of Algeria and its evolution in a context of regional upheavals. The analysis presented reflects only the author's point of view. This article focuses on the following axes:

- **The doctrinal principles of Algerian foreign policy and its historical context;**
- **The Mediterranean dimension in the Algerian Foreign Policy such as: Algeria's relationship with the Maghreb and the European Union;**
- **Algeria's prospects for the development of its foreign policy.**

ملخص: اختارت الجزائر منذ استقلالها سياسة خارجية قائمة على مبادئ غير قابلة للنقض كمبدأ احترام سيادة الدول، وحق الشعوب في تقرير المصير، وعدم التدخل في الشؤون الداخلية للدول، والتسوية السلمية للنزاعات، وحق الجوار وعدم التدخل، العسكري أو الإنساني.

يهدف هذا المقال إلى تسليط الضوء على السياسة الخارجية للجزائر وتطوراتها في سياق الاضطرابات الإقليمية - علما أن هذا التحليل يعكس فقط وجهة نظر الكاتب- حيث يركز هذا المقال على المحاور التالية:

- مبادئ السياسة الخارجية للجزائرية وسياقها التاريخي.
- البعد المتوسطي في السياسة الخارجية الجزائرية: علاقة الجزائر مع المغرب العربي والاتحاد الأوروبي؛
- آفاق الجزائر لتطوير سياستها الخارجية.

المصطلحات الأساسية: السياسة الخارجية الجزائرية، منطقة المتوسط، اتحاد المغرب العربي، مجموعة 5+5

Index Terms—Algerian Foreign Policy, Mediterranean region, the Maghreb, 5+5 Cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

Algeria remained largely untouched by the political turmoil which struck several of its neighbors in 2011- but it is now gearing up to fight what it sees as the fallout of the Arab spring. Rising security risks in Tunisia and the possibility of total implosion in Libya are now combining with threats from the Sahel zone to its south. Algerian decision-making circles have come to the conclusion that the country is facing its most acute security challenge since the end of its dark decade in 2000.

In this environment, Algeria wants to become a major player in the region. Indeed, the Algerian government apprehends its immediate environment, north (Mediterranean) and south (the Sahel), however, the objective of the Algerian government is to develop the most peaceful and prosperous relations possible in a geographical area which it is waterfront. Algeria needs to maintain peace there; to develop their crossword economic interests; and to address the problem of security.

Facing the new challenges of a region in full democratic transition, security issues, regional integration and convergence, Algeria is undoubtedly in a rethinking phase of its doctrine in

foreign policy for its strategic repositioning on international scene.

II / The doctrinal principles of the Algerian foreign policy (historical context)

Algeria, since 1962 year of its independence from French colonization was governed with the support of the army, because of its historical colonization, Algeria opted for a foreign policy with the irrevocable doctrinal principles: the right of peoples to self-determination, the non-interference in internal affairs of States, peaceful settlement of conflicts, good neighborliness and non-interventionism military or humanitarian. Algeria had made the denunciation of imperialism a unifying project for all developing countries

1- Tripoli Program 1962

The fundamentals principles of the Algerian foreign policy were mainly determined by the Tripoli Program proposed in June 1962, by The National Council of the Algerian Revolution, and which maintain the struggle against colonialism and the support of the liberation movements.

In addition, the 1976 Constitution and the 1989 respectively have incorporated the principles of non-alignment and non-interference outside the borders of Algeria.

In its conceptualization, the Algerian foreign policy was mainly considered as part of three spaces, Maghreb, Arab and African. The first Constitution 1963 and the former president Houari Boumediene confirmed this position by stating that: "The Maghreb region between Cairo and Dakar represent a security zone for Algeria, and it cannot get any change in this area without an agreement with Algeria" put up Algeria as an integral part of these three circles, with the gradual inclusion of the Mediterranean, in the 1996 Constitution. So now Algerian rulers defines the country as part of the Maghreb, the Arab world, the Mediterranean and Africa

Having been colonized for 132 years, Algeria position itself on the international stage by choosing a posture that is avant-garde. its perception of international relations must be in accordance with the principles to which Algerian rulers have been committed at the domestic level “socialist orientation” domestic policy should find its translation into foreign policy. But it is especially the desire to position itself as a major player in the Third World who was driving the foreign policy of Algeria.

For Algeria, imperialism in all its forms, political, economic, cultural and military, is the main threat to the countries of the Third World. Its membership in the Non-Aligned Countries reflected this desire to stand out against all trusteeship even the most benevolent of them namely the former Soviet Union.

Algerian diplomacy has firstly, must to confirm its economic and political sovereignty. Its membership with the non-aligned countries has enabled Algeria to be proactive and consequently to be very present on the international scene and play a key role in certain mediation and conflict resolution.

2- The challenges of the Algerian foreign policy after the end of Cold War

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the dismantling of the Eastern bloc and the end of the Cold War and the multidimensional crisis that faced Algeria, from the fall of 1988 was a challenge for its foreign policy, defense and security. It was at that moment that the foreign policy of Algeria has entered a crisis of paradigms.

Since the end of the bipolar era, the same paradigm that led Algeria vision, from its role on the international scene continues to weigh on the current view of international relations. It is true that Algeria has, since 1999, gave new impulse to its foreign policy to be more closer to the United States of America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and diversifying its partnerships both in the economic and commercial fields also in defense. This economic openness and the desire to attract foreign investors and create an alternative economy to oil are the main

motivations. However, the perception of Algeria in some regional and international issues remained somewhat static.

Thus, Algeria continues to defend the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as the perfect example of its the question of Western Sahara. Similarly, Algeria rejects any interference in the internal affairs of States and attaches to the peaceful resolution of conflicts as evidenced, for example, its refusal to support the war waged by NATO to overthrow Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and its non-participation by troops in a military intervention force in northern Mali, Syria and Yemen to contain the growing terrorism threat.

The Algerian Army, originally an army of liberation from colonialism (ALN), has evolved into a defensive army of territorial sovereignty, not an Army of foreign intervention, even under the auspices of a multinational force approved by the United Nations (U.N). It is a fundamental principle undeniable and irrevocable that Algeria scrupulously observed.

3- *The repositioning of Algeria in line of the new global context*

It seems today that Algeria is trying to adapt its foreign policy to the new global context. Algeria expressed some signals to the international community for example, by joining the NATO Mediterranean dialogue as a milestone in relations between Algeria and the West, and its indirect assistance to international military action to combat terrorism in Northern Mali. Indeed, Algeria would therefore move more and more towards a real policy of non-dogmatic interests.

The gradual recovery of the country's peace and internal stability especially from the 2000s, as well as the improvement of the domestic economic prospects has facilitated the progressive return of Algeria on the international scene proven by its leadership activities on the African continent through its involvement in the peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea signed on 12 December 2000.

With its progressive reintegration into the international arena, Algeria has tried to rebuild credibility in a changing regional and international context. For this Algeria began by joining the NATO Mediterranean dialogue in 2000, then Algeria signed an Association Agreement with the European Union (E.U) in 2001 and also through its involvement in the negotiation process for accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

At the multilateral level, Algeria relies on privileged platforms for action at the regional and sub regional levels. Thus it is:

- Key stakeholder in the framework of "5 + 5" dialogue and cooperation of the Western Mediterranean;
 - Active member in the African Union;
 - Participate in studies for the establishment of the African Standby Force for observation, peacekeeping and emergency response in case crisis and which should be operational in 2016;
 - Key stakeholder of the North African Intervention Brigade;
 - Member, since 2000 of the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and participates in several joint exercises;
 - Founding Member of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum launched in September 2011 in New York. in this context and in 2013, Algeria hosted an international meeting aimed at defining specific strategies and programs to fight the expansion of Al-Qaeda and affiliated organizations active in the Maghreb and the Sahel;
 - Key stakeholder of the Joint Operational Army Staffs Committee (CEMOC) (Comité d'état-major opérationnel conjoint) established in 2010 and based in Tamanrasset (southern Algeria) to fight against terrorism and banditry in the Sahelo-Saharan zone Mali, Niger and Mauritania are associated;
 - Key player of the Pan Sahel Initiative 2002 became Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative" in 2005, currently coordinated by USAFRICOM;
 - Hosted the headquarters of the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and its located in Algiers.
- Bilaterally, Algeria has re-initiated and developed its relations

with China especially in the commercial and military field, has also forged new links with Germany, Spain, Italy and Portugal for commercial purpose and has structured cooperation with the United States of America based primarily on the counter-terrorism. Algeria has also revived the special relationship it had with France and Russia in political, economic and military areas. However, Algeria remains deeply attached to its doctrines. regardless of permanent insecurity context on its borders, Algeria continues to refrain from taking part in any military action outside its national territory, but is very active in regional and international cooperation include the fight against terrorism and against transnational crime.

Algeria had long suspected that a regime change in neighbouring Libya would have serious negative ramifications for its own security, and in early 2013 it was proven right. Terrorists loosely affiliated with al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) stormed a natural gas facility in In Amenas –Tiguentourine- and took more than 800 employees hostage, 39 of whom were later killed. Libya's security vacuum certainly facilitated the crisis.

Events such as the assassination of French tourist Hervé Gourdel by a group affiliated to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in late 2014, and attacks on the Algerian embassies in Mali and Libya are clear indications that Algeria is again at war with terrorism.

These attacks have also accelerated changes in Algeria's security sector which have been under way since 2012. The country's main intelligence services, the Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS) has been most affected. Ever since the 1990s, the DRS had been the main body dealing with the threat of terrorism. The attack on the gas complex in early 2013, and the failure to detect it, was therefore considered its responsibility, indeed, the separation of the DRS analytical intelligence capacity from armed forces as a whole was considered the main reason that it failed to prevent the tragedy.

As a consequence, the power of the DRS was scaled back, and the

armed forces strengthened. Three of the service's core units were removed and attached directly to the armed forces chief of staff: military security, the directorate of the judicial police, and the centre for communication and documentation, which is in charge of relations with the media. Its special forces devoted to anti-terrorist operations became an independent body in its own right. Several high-ranking officers of the DRS were made to retire, and acting defence minister, Major General Abdelmalek Guenaïzia, was replaced by General Ahmed Gaid Salah, who is also chief of staff. In addition to the DRS units, the counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics files were transferred to the defence ministry: previously, some units dealing with these two issues had been under the control of the interior ministry and the gendarmerie.

All these political, military and diplomatic dynamics initiated by Algeria expresses a willingness to reposition itself on the international stage as a key partner in the region without jeopardizing the fundamentals of its foreign policy.

III/ The Mediterranean dimension in the Algerian Foreign Policy

Cooperation frameworks in the Mediterranean, is a priority area of the Algerian foreign policy. We should notice that Most of these cooperations are highly institutionalized. For Algeria, the same doctrinal philosophy dictates all cooperation frameworks from Barcelona Process to the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), through the Association Agreements launched by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue. These cooperation frameworks are seen by Algeria as responding to a logic that can be summarized in:

- They are inclusive and dilute their regional specificity;
- They are unilateral dimension and annihilate the role of the South Pole as proposals;
- They are highly institutionalized and dependent on a bureaucracy;
- They are strongly influenced by the imbalance of forces between

a convergent and integrated Europe and the straggling countries of South.

In this few lines we will discuss the Algerian foreign policy vision from a Mediterranean perspective, through two poles the Maghreb & the E.U

1- Algeria and the Maghreb

Since its independence, Algeria has met with the Maghreb countries a so-called policy of cooperation and complementarity. Algeria's vision of the Maghreb Union is built on the following points:

- Work towards the stability of the region by developing good relations and balanced economic cooperation;
- Opt for a peaceful resolution of conflicts without resorting to military force;
- Refuse political alliance blocks and political spheres of influence induced by the question of Western Sahara since 1975;
- Ensure respect for the right of peoples to self-determination;
- Respect the division of borders inherited from colonialism.

Led by its membership in the Maghreb, Algeria encouraged the idea of the creation of a Maghreb union. Founded in 1989, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) had planned to set up in a first step, a free trade area and to achieve by 2000 a common Maghreb market.

However, undermined by disputes and political conflicts including the one related to the question of Western Sahara, UMA is unable to assert itself as sub-regional organization. its achievements appear very modest due not only to these political disputes, but also because of the cross-border challenges such as desertification, security challenges at borders.

The economies of the Maghreb countries continue to advance in a disorganized manner, even if there are a few initiatives such as the creation of a Maghreb Union of Employers in February 2007 and a Maghreb Union Fairs in January 2008 and held its first exhibition in Algiers in November of the same year. While the

creation of the Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade was expected since 1991, has been postponed indefinitely.

Despite the 37 signed conventions related to Maghreb economic and trade agreements so far, the common achievements are modest. The current situation of inter Maghreb exchanges reveals a weak stream of economic transaction between inter Maghreb companies, which contrasts with the rates of exchange of the Maghreb countries with the European Union, This latter remains the main customer and supplier of the Maghreb countries. And this trade is about 66% with the EU and do not exceed 3% between AMU countries.

The closing borders between Algeria and Morocco since 1994, restricts the free movement of persons & goods between the two countries and greatly benefits the informal economy and penalizes in the same time, the companies who find themselves forced to make transshipments via Europe for trade between the two countries.

According to the observations of experts, a Maghreb economic integration will save nearly for every country up to 5 billion USD, which is in the exchange a transactions between 2000 and 3000 Maghreb's SMEs (PME) per year. The establishment of a free trade area would boost North African economies and have a direct impact on two to five years.

The Maghreb sub-region has many assets that can facilitate this integration. These include:

- A cultural homogeneity;
- A young population;
- An energetic, industrial and agricultural potential;
- Its proximity to Europe and gateway to Africa.

Losing the major regional player status is a perspective that Algeria apprehended in a sub-regional context and in full turbulence mutation in this region. A homogeneous peaceful Stability in the Maghreb represents a double geopolitical and economic interest for Algeria. While leaving time to various political and historical disputes including that of Western Sahara

between Morocco and Algeria, inhibiting the construction of the Maghreb sub-region, to find solutions, Algerian rulers would choose:

- Develop a trilateral convergence policy of Neighborhood and Partnership between (Algeria-Libya-Tunisia) to be expanded gradually;
- Maintain its major active role in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel-Saharan region;
- Continue to work towards a political solution in order to low intensity conflicts in Mali and Libya;
- Continue to energize the 5 + 5 dialogue and cooperation because it is a flexible framework for negotiation;
- Continue the reform program of modernization and professionalization of its armed and security forces, as part of a strategic vision of sub-regional power non-hegemonic and must meet the following objectives:
 - Getting into the standards to develop its operational capabilities as part of the military cooperation with NATO,
 - Dealing with defense and security issues in a geopolitical area characterized by different regional conflicts (Libya, Mali, the Sahel ...)
 - Fighting against terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and human trafficking, etc.

The risk for Algeria to lose its leadership status as stabilizer of the regional order remains a reality. Thus Algeria undertakes actions such as providing financial assistance to Tunisia or offer assistance to Libya to secure its borders.

Indeed, three agreements on financial cooperation between Algeria and Tunisia were signed in May 2014. These are: a deposit agreement between the Algerian Central Bank and the Tunisian Central Bank amounting to 100 million USD, and another protocol for granting non-repayable financial assistance. This support has already been expressed by Algiers in 2011 through financial assistance of 100 million USD granted following the visit of the Prime Minister of the Tunisian Interim

Government. Assistance consists of 50 million USD to the Tunisian Central Bank, 40 million USD in the form of soft loan of 1% and, finally and a donation of 10 million USD.

Reconciliation with the new Libyan leadership and the involvement of the Algerian diplomacy in the inter-Libyan dialogue could be detrimental to Algeria. The adopted attitude towards this neighbor is to preserve the Maghreb regional balance, this especially because Libya is still, despite the instability that reigns, a key element in the stabilization of the Sahel region.

2- *Algeria, E.U and 5+5 cooperation*

Algeria, at the eve of its independence, has built its multilateral and regional relations on the fundamental principle which is opposed to all forms of cooperation that become a source of any intervention in its domestic policy. This irrevocable principle makes Algeria suspicious of regional initiatives and sometimes hesitant to engage in it, especially when these involve different geopolitical actors. However, in its foreign policy, Algeria is more comfortable in a bilateral diplomacy than in a multilateral diplomacy.

With the European Union, Algeria signed an association agreement which entered into force in 2005, allowing for a gradual tariff dismantling and the establishment of a free trade area by the 2014 deadline postponed until 2017 the request came from Algeria. An evaluation of the Association Agreement with the EU is currently on the agenda. The Algerian authorities are also continuing negotiations with the WTO with a view to acceding to it in 2016/2017. However, the Algerian authorities decided to freeze all free trade agreements until Algeria joined the WTO. The former Minister of Finance Djoudi, on behalf of the Algerian Government, confirmed this position by stating that "Algeria is not there to follow a fashion phenomenon, but to ensure an upgrading of its economy and to be a good partner for the European Union".

Algeria has also been engaged for more than a decade in a Mediterranean political dialogue with NATO and continues to strongly support the dialogue between the countries of the Western Mediterranean, known as the 5 + 5 initiative, and has been actively involved since its creation and reactivation.

In a certain way, the 5 + 5 framework for dialogue and cooperation appears to Algeria as a palliative to the shortcomings of other cooperation frameworks. Indeed, the Barcelona process is virtually paralyzed by the interruption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the Lebanon war in 2006, the war in Gaza in 2009 and the Arab revolts in 2011.

The struggles for influence and Leadership have private, in the eyes of Algeria, the UfM (Union for Mediterranean) of flexibility and pragmatism.

The ENP (European Neighbourhood Policy) is being Blacklisted by Algeria, while the Association Agreement with the EU is constantly re-evaluated at the request of Algerians. As for the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue with Algeria, it corresponds more to the expansion of pre-existing cooperation with its inherent rules and standards than to the establishment of a (win-win) partnership. On the Algerian side, the absence of an individual plan of activities is undoubtedly the expression of persistent unwillingness.

Algeria considers that, in comparison with other Euro-Mediterranean cooperation initiatives such as the Barcelona Process or the UfM, the 5 + 5 initiative has shown through its results, its relevance and its effectiveness. It has emerged that this framework of cooperation is a response to a reality badly managed by Europe, due to the diversity of political, societal, historical and cultural relations between each of the European players, South and East Mediterranean.

The 5 + 5 Dialogue is an informal discussions forum created in 1990 by the Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Affairs in Rome. This dialogue brings together countries from both shores of the Mediterranean. On the European side: Portugal, Spain, France,

Italy and Malta, and on the Maghreb side: Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. It operates with a rotating presidency between its members.

This regional initiative aims to establish a framework for dialogue and cooperation among members on issues of: Security and Stability, Economic and Regional Integration, and also Immigration in the Mediterranean.

In this context of the 5 + 5 framework, it is almost recurrent that Algeria takes the initiative and makes proposals. For example, Algeria is at the origin of proposals for tourism co-operation. In the "5 + 5 Environment", Algeria has also distinguished itself through the proposal to create the Mediterranean Environmental Observatory. Projects responding to a national need, insofar as Algeria tries to escape its structural dependence on hydrocarbons, but which are also part of a strategy to give Algeria a certain regional visibility. In addition, the "5 + 5 Interior and Defense" offer to Algeria the opportunity to assert its strengths. The Algerian military has stepped up its efforts to counter the threats: having increased its budget by 176% since 2004, it now spends \$10 Billion per year on defence, the highest sum ever recorded in Africa. Although the procurement of weapons will be affected by the unexpected drop in oil prices, some deals have already been put on ice.

From a practical point of view, the role of Algeria is highlighted because instead of the 5 + 5, it is rather 3 + 3 that we must speak, considering that Portugal and Malta, in the North, Mauritania and Libya in the South are less active in the dialogue, for different reasons such as: problems linked to their internal political situations, their means or their interests. Also, taking into consideration the instability in Tunisia and the chaos in Libya, the 5 + 5 would be concretely reduced to a 3+2 with an extra weight for Algeria.

However, and without any doubt that the 5+5 framework is the appropriate regional cooperation to Algeria compared to other

multilateral frameworks for dialogue and cooperation with Europe. It corresponds to the principles on which Algerian foreign policy is founded and on which the 5+5 dialogue perfectly follows. This regional cooperation format respects the limits imposed by Algeria (non-interference, respect for international legality) and its close to the notion of a fair partnership to which Algeria is extremely attached. The 5+5 dialogue helps to establish a climate of confidence wanted by Algeria.

IV/ Conclusion and outlook

It is in a new international context that Algeria is invited to revisit its doctrine in foreign policy and to assert itself. The upheavals facing the MENA region in particular and the redistribution of roles in the context of a geopolitical recomposition of the region, undoubtedly push Algeria to rethink its strategic positioning.

It is clear that the future development of Algeria's foreign policy will continue to be based on its fundamental principles, namely: the defense of national independence, the recovery of national identity, the denial of any form of Interference, refusal of any foreign military base on its soil, rejection of alliance policy and military pacts, and active participation in the struggle against underdevelopment and poverty.

With the evolution of international relations at the end of the Cold War and the shift of certain countries from the non-aligned movement to the NATO, Algeria realized the need to build and develop new bilateral And multilateral relations, diversify its partners and strengthen cooperation in all sectors. has become a unique and valuable key player in the global war on terrorism (GWOT), Algeria has thus experienced a strategic rapprochement with the United States of America, beyond its historical partners such as Russia and France.

Algeria's military, which was always at the epicenter of the country's politics, is thus preparing for what is expects to be yet another crucial battle against terrorism. It is making use of the three C's which it successfully employed during its fight against terrorism in the 1990s –Containment, Conflict, and Conciliatory

measures- and has added a new one: Cooperation with partners. Although this openness, Algeria's foreign policy paradigm will remain irrevocably dependent on its principles of self-determination, Respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States.

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