

## "The Algerian strategy in African Sahel: towards a regional security architecture"

Lotfi Sour

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law and Political Sciences,

University of Mustapha Stambouli - Mascara, Algeria

### Abstract:

This paper aims to clarify the Algerian approach towards the Sahel region, and figure out the strategy that is mobilized by the Algerian government to counter all of those problems that are facing the country and to protect its national security. The Sahel security issues in Africa and the Malian crisis in particular have brought the region to the center of the Algerian foreign policy concerns. Algiers has been an indispensable provider of stability in the African Sahel. In recent years, weak governances, political instability and fragile security have become common features of the Sahelian states. The large quantity of natural resources of the Sahel has paved a road for foreign intervention and increasing rivalry among the world economic powers across the region. Like any regional power, Algeria has interests in the Sahel-Sahara owing to geographical contiguity, strategic depth and historical ties. In order to safeguard the long-term security in its backyard, in many times Algeria have promoted state-building and dialogue as the best ways to lift states of the Sahel out of crisis.

**Key words:** Algeria – Mali – Security - The African Sahel - Counter Terrorism

### الملخص:

تناقش الدراسة المقدمة إشكالية الأزمات البنيوية في منطقة الساحل و دور استراتيجية الدولة الجزائرية في حلها، حيث تؤكد أغلب المؤشرات الصادرة عن مراكز الأبحاث (Kaufmann Political Stability Index و Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) و Afrobarometer (AFR) Cingranelli Richards Human Rights , Dataset (CIRI) و Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) و كذا برامج الأمم المتحدة للتنمية (NDP) على احتمالات فشل عدد من دول الساحل مستقبلا بالنظر لضعف الاندماج الاجتماعي، العجز الاقتصادي، وهشاشة البناء السياسي لهذه الدول وهذا ما سوف يؤثر على الأمن الجهوي للساحل ويستدعي التدخل للحد من تبعات الإنهيار المحتمل، وبالنظر الى هذه المخاطر، ينهض التصور الجزائري في مقارنته لحل الأزمة في الساحل الإفريقي على أربعة أبعاد أساسية تشكل صلب المقاربة الاستراتيجية الجزائرية وتتمثل في: احترام السيادة والوحدة الترابية لدول المنطقة وسلامة حدودها، ورفض التدخل

الأجنبي في شؤونها ثم العمل على ضرورة تشجيع الحوار بين أطراف الأزمة فيها بتنظيم مرحلة انتقالية منتجة للاستقرار مع عزل التنظيمات الإرهابية، وأيضاً بتشجيع الحوار بين الجماعات السياسية والسلطات في هذه الدول إلى جانب العمل في مجال مكافحة الإرهاب على اعتباره تهديداً عابراً للأوطان على المستوى الجهوي، حيث يتطلب القضاء عليه وعلى ارتباطاته الإجرامية تفعيل الآليات التي طورتها دول الميدان (الجزائر – مالي – موريتانيا – النيجر)، أما فيما يتعلق بالبعد الرابع فالمقاربة الجزائرية تهدف لجعل حل الأزمة شاملاً حيث يقوم على إعادة بناء القدرات الذاتية لدول المنطقة سواء على المستوى الاقتصادي، السياسي والعسكري والأمني مع العمل على تنمية جهوية تضمن استقراراً طويل الأمد في هذه الدول .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الاستراتيجية الجزائرية – منطقة الساحل – التدخل العسكري – مكافحة الإرهاب.

## Introduction

The Sahel Region in Africa has become one of the most significant and complicated security regions in the world. In fact, several reasons have contributed to the importance of this area. Over the past decades, Algeria has been increasingly focusing on the African Sahel' security issues under the fear that the region could become a safe place for armed terrorist groups. The Sahelian countries - which share long borders with Algeria- have witnessed insecurity situation because of the instability in their political systems, the current situation in the Sahel came as result of a political instability affected mainly by different crisis that many countries in the region like Mali have been dealing with. Such kind of a weak political situation is obviously demonstrated by the theory of Domino. The collapse of one state could provide a domino effect that might destabilize the whole area. The security status have been very fragile, organized crimes, terrorist groups, arms trafficking, food insecurity, fragile governance malnutrition, and other problems have been big challenges for the efforts of building Stability in this area. The security situation in the Sahel remains precarious, the deterioration of the politico-security situation of Libya after the collapse of the old order, the political dilemma and persisting security challenges in northern part of Mali, the increasing number of terrorist activities throughout the region, particularly, those carried out by armed extremist groups including kidnappings for ransom, continue to have negative effects on local people.

All of these problems - the Malian case in particular - represent major challenges to Algeria as a regional power. This paper will then focus on state of Mali that represents the case of study. It tries to give an overview on the Algerian dealing with the political and security instability in this country, and also discuss the proposals which were given by Algiers to find

a solution for the Malian crisis. Moreover, the Libyan crisis in particular has unleashed unforeseen consequences on the West African Sahel states, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Mauritania. Following an inflow of weapons, ammunition, and armed fighters from Libya's 'Islamic Legion into northern Mali, a dormant Tuareg rebellion was revived, leading Malian government forces to launch an offensive. The succeeding months witnessed a military coup and the takeover of northern Mali by armed and Islamist groups in a battle for autonomy. Northern Mali has become the shelter of AQIM katibas, and more recently the fertile ground for other newly created non-Algerian groups (MUJWA and Ansar al-Sharia). However, Algeria seems to be best positioned to play a significant role in a cooperative regional security effort. It is the wealthiest country in the region, its military budget exceeds that of all of the Sahelian countries combined and, its military is the best equipped and experienced in leading such an effort. However, several reasons exist for Algeria's failure to fill the leadership gap in the region.

### **Research Questions:**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- Will the Algerian strategy be able to prevent the worsening of an already fragile humanitarian situation and to eradicate hardliners, extremists and criminal elements that are expanding in northern Mali?
- Given its counterterrorism expertise, and its long inflexible positioning toward violent Islamists, how will Algeria manage to keep the door open to a dialogue with Ansar Eddine?
- How will the crisis in Tighadouine's gas platform and its bloody end play out into the whole Algerian positioning in this increasingly unstable environment?

## **I. Strategic importance of the Sahel in relation to Algeria**

Algeria's approach to the Sahel is neither partial nor cyclical, to the extent that the ties between the country and the Sub-Saharan region are longstanding and multifaceted and are closely linked to the overall vision of the Algerian leadership, both in terms of the regional geostrategic space and the nature of international affairs and their developments which are rapid and sometimes unpredictable.

### *1- Geographical contiguity*

The Sahel region covers basically the expanse stretching from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, encompassing parts of Eritrea Sudan Chad Nigeria Niger Burkina Faso Mauritania and Senegal, more than 80 percent of which is comprised of desert lands. This large land links between three

seas and two oceans.<sup>1</sup> The Sahel as semi-barren land corridor, it functions as a giant dry river that traverses from coast to coast through central-north of the African continent, demarcating the transition between the Sahara desert and savanna. The Sahel is a natural extension of the Saharan borderlands of Algeria to the extent that the country shares a very long border with two countries in the Sahel region: Mali (1300 km) and Niger (1200 km). Like the northern part of these countries, the south of Algeria is made up of vast ergs and immense sand dunes studded with oases inhabited by sedentary populations, while the transhumance areas are travelled by nomad populations essentially living off an agro-pastoral economy.

### 2- *Ethnic Identity:*

The Tuareg living in the southern parts of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are descendants of the Berber peoples of the central Maghreb.<sup>2</sup> The Tuaregs are traditionally nomadic and have been moving across in the western part of the Sahel belt and, to this day, ties remain between these people and the Tuareg populations living in southern Algeria and Libya. Other tribes inhabiting the Sahel, such as the Toubou people and the Moors, lay claim to an Arab heritage. All Tuareg people are Sunni Muslims worshipping according to the Malikite rite combining the customs of the local brotherhoods.<sup>3</sup>

### 3- *Historical and political sediment*

The roots of Algeria's Africanity are ancient and deep, dating back to the times when its Berber inhabitants (or Numidians, in the parlance of the day) fought against domination by the Roman Empire, beginning in the 10th century BCE. One of the Berber kings, "an ally of Rome, but not its vassal, Massinissa\* managed to contain the imperialistic aims of his allies through the famous slogan *Africa for Africans*"<sup>4</sup>. Later, the *Sanhaja* Arab-Berber tribes of the central Maghreb spread out through the Sub-Saharan region and, by 734 CE, they dominated the Ghana Empire, which was founded in the 3rd century by the Soninke tribes that still populate certain

<sup>1</sup> Yve Lacoste, "Sahara: perspectives et illusions géopolitiques", *Revue Hérodote*, (Vol. 142, No.3, 2011), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Micaud, eds., *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa*, (London: D.C. Heath and Company, 1972), pp. 345-360.

<sup>3</sup> Harry. T. Norris, *The Tuaregs: Their Islamic Legacy and Its Diffusion in the Sahel*, (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1975).

\* Masinissa, (born c. 238 BC—148 BC), ruler of the North African kingdom of Numidia and an ally of Rome in the last years of the Second Punic War (218–201). His influence was lasting because the economic and political development that took place in Numidia under his rule provided the base for later development of the region by the Romans.

<sup>4</sup> François Bertrandy, «Cirta», *Encyclopédie berbère*, 13, 1994, pp. 1964-1977.

regions of northern Mali and Niger<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the *Tijaniya* and *Qadiriya* brotherhoods, which originated in Algeria, contributed to the propagation of the Malikite maraboutic rite in the Sahel region beginning in the 20th century.<sup>2</sup>

Algeria's ties of solidarity with the Sahel and hence with the rest of Africa continued throughout French colonization with the liberation struggle engaged in the country in November 1954 and which hastened independence in Sub-Saharan African countries beginning in 1960.<sup>3</sup> In turn, these countries provided diplomatic and logistical assistance to the Algerian cause, one notable example being Mali. Following its independence, which was won in 1962, Algeria supported the political, cultural and economic emancipation of the countries of the Sahel by joining the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 as one of its founding members, as well as through the regional integration project in the Sahel area initiated in 1976, which was undermined by the drought that hit the Sahel region hard during that same year.<sup>4</sup>

## II. Elaborating the Algerian strategy in the Sahel

In the Sahel, Algeria set in place a similar strategy that ensued from its own doctrine. This doctrine was inspired by the experience of the Algerian leadership, which prioritized a determination to rely on the resources of their own people, as they had done during the war of liberation against French colonialism, as well as on the preservation of independent decision making, as was the practice following the independence of the country.<sup>5</sup> Thus defined, the doctrine was structured around four essential parameters in practice.

### *1- Territorial integrity of the States*

This principle reflects the experience of the Algerian leadership to the extent that they managed to preserve the unity of their people and the territorial integrity of their country during the war of liberation against

<sup>1</sup> Salem Chaker, *Dialecte*, In *Encyclopédie berbère*, (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, Vol. XV., 1995), pp. 2291–2295.

<sup>2</sup> Fait Muedini, "The Promotion of Sufism in the Politics of Algeria and Morocco," *Islamic Africa*, (Vol. 29, No.3, 2012), pp. 201-206.

<sup>3</sup> Slimane Chikh, 'L'Algérie et l'Afrique (1954–1962),' *Revue algérienne des sciences juridiques, économiques et politiques*, Algiers, (vol.3, issue 5, 1968), pp. 726–728.

<sup>4</sup> Yahia H. Zoubir, "Algeria's Roles in the OAU/African Union: From National Liberation Promoter to Leader in the Global War on Terrorism", *Mediterranean Politics*, (Vol. 21, issue 1, 2015), pp. 59-64.

<sup>5</sup> Laurence Aïda Ammour, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria's Pivotal Ambivalence," *Africa Security Brief*, (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, No.18, February 2012), p. 5.

French colonialism. It was therefore logical that Algeria, which became independent in 1962, adhered strictly to the principle of the inviolability of the borders inherited from colonialism, which was endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on its creation in 1963. This concern was obviously a reaction to the efforts made by Morocco to coerce the Algerian government to open talks on the revision of the border on grounds that a substantial portion of the Moroccan territory had been arbitrarily granted to Algeria during the French colonization of the Maghreb. Since the war declared on Algeria by Morocco in March 1963 on the subject of the borders, Morocco's territorial irredentism has not faded, at least in statements by the media and political party leaders, particularly after Algeria granted its support for the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination in the framework of the United Nations decolonization process.<sup>1</sup>

The separatist temptations sporadically expressed by Tuareg groups in Niger and Mali are received by the Algerian government not only as a violation of the principle of the inviolability of borders, but also as a risk of national fragmentation that could lead to narrow religious or nationalistic conflicts and the destabilization of the whole Sahel-Saharan region.<sup>2</sup>

Algeria's attachment to the inviolability of borders explains its past opposition to attempts at secession, as was the case in Biafra, Nigeria, in 1967-1970 and in Shaba, formerly Katanga, Congo, in 1978. In the light of its ideological positions, it must have also been disappointed by the division of Sudan in July 2011, and is likely apprehensive about the potential fragmentation of nations such as Iraq, Syria and Libya.

## 2- Commitment to counter-terrorism:

Based on its own experience in the fight against terrorism, Algeria has developed a principle of non-negotiation with terrorist groups in cases of hostage-taking where ransom or exchanges of prisoners are demanded for their liberation.<sup>3</sup>

In the diplomatic sphere, Algeria took firm action for the condemnation and banning of the payment of ransoms by international bodies such as the UN and the African Union in exchange for the liberation of hostages. Algeria is leading calls for the international community to take a stronger stance against paying ransoms to terrorist organizations, something which once again demonstrates the importance of this illicit industry in the region. However, some European countries have paid

<sup>1</sup> Isabelle Werenfels, *Managing Instability in Algeria: Elites and Political Change since 1995*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> International Crisis Group, "Mali: Last Chance in Algiers", *policy Briefing*, (N°.104, 18 November 2014), pp. 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis and Andrew Liepman, *North Africa's Menace: AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2013), p. 16.

ransoms for the liberation of their nationals who had been taken hostage, for reasons linked to domestic politics, neglecting their commitments to uphold non-payment of ransoms.<sup>1</sup> On the international level, Algeria in October 2016 hosted the “5+5 Defense Initiative” meeting with the participation of Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia, France, Spain, Italy, Malta, and Portugal.

The government declared its willingness to strengthen global efforts to combat expanding security threats. And in March 2017, Algeria, in cooperation with Morocco, tightened its border controls in order to curb illegal migrant flows, particularly toward Libya.<sup>2</sup>

### 3- *A policy of self-reliance*

The fight against terrorism in the Sahel must be led first and foremost by the affected countries themselves, without interference by foreign countries, and the joint approach proposed by Algeria is inspired by the doctrine enshrined in its legislation in terms of the development and implementation of foreign policy promoting non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. This attitude implicitly emanates from a fear of foreign interference in domestic affairs and the erosion of the national sovereignty which was so hard won by Algeria's leaders in the fight for freedom from French colonialism. The quest for solidarity and support from other powers should be seen solely as a contribution to the policy of cooperation and coordination set in place by Algeria and its partners in the Sahel region and not as a replacement for this cooperation.<sup>3</sup> Although regional and sub-regional cooperation in the fight against security threats is a necessity, it remains that Algeria is determined to rely solely on its own strengths in developing a domestic political consensus and mobilizing its military and human resources without disregarding the contributions of the other countries in the Sahel region and foreign powers, which, however, should be viewed as an adjunct to and not a replacement

<sup>1</sup> Annelies Pauwels, *Competing for ransom: AQIM vs. Daesh*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) June 2016, on:

[https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert\\_23\\_Terrorist\\_kidnapping.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_23_Terrorist_kidnapping.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> “Algeria: 8th Meeting of Chiefs of Staff of '5+5 Defence' Initiative Opens in Algiers.” *All Africa*, October 19, 2016. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201610191095.html>

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Filiu “Could Al-Qaeda Turn African in the Sahel?”, *Carnegie Papers*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA:Washington DC, N.112 - June 2010), p. 1.



for the efforts of the Maghreb and Sahel countries in their common fight against the threats and menaces they face.<sup>1</sup>

### III. Implementation of the Algerian strategy in the Sahel

Measuring the gravity of the situation in the Sahel and the dangers that could arise from its repercussions on national security and stability and continuing the fight against “residual terrorism” on the Algerian territory, Algeria has worked with its partners in the Sahel region to implement a joint, bilateral strategy based on concentration and cooperation between the various army and security services corps, and to take on a mediation role in facilitating conflict settlement in the Sahel in the sub-regional framework.

#### *1- Reinforcing security dynamics between Algeria and the Sahel region states*

In bilateral terms, Algeria has reactivated the border committee with Niger to ensure that the border area was secured and ensure coordination between both countries’ security services in the framework of the cooperation mechanism established by an MOU signed in Algiers on 30 October 1997. It has also resumed the sittings of the Algerian-Malian joint commission which took place in Algiers in March 2014 and culminated in the signing of a cooperation agreement in the area of defense. It also hosted the 2nd meeting of the bilateral Algerian-Malian committee on the situation in northern Mali in April 2014, which was attended by Mali, Niger, Mauritania and Burkina Faso. At the regional level, Algeria set up a cooperation mechanism with its partners in the Sahel on the fight against terrorism through the creation of CEMOC and the UFL, as mentioned above.<sup>2</sup> Several meetings were held between the Ministers of Defense of Algeria and other Sahelian countries and several others took place between their heads of national security<sup>37</sup>. This coordination allowed them to carry out joint operations in the Algerian-Malian-Mauritanian border triangle.

#### *2- A role as a crisis-resolution mediator in a very transforming context*

Contrary to what has been suggested by a certain analyst of Algeria’s policy in the Sahel, Algeria’s efforts to mediate the conflicts between the Tuareg and the central authorities, in Niger or Mali where an Azawad state was proclaimed in the north of the country in 2012, did not follow a

---

<sup>1</sup> Lotfi Sour, “The Algerian domestic strategy of counter-terrorism from confrontation to national reconciliation,” *Romanian political science and international relations review*, (Bucharest: Academia Romana, Vol. XII, N° 2, June 2015), pp. 28-34.

<sup>2</sup> Anouar Boukhars, Rethinking security across the Sahara and the Sahel, *Policy Brief*, (N° 199 - April 2015), p. 2.



rationale of temporary good offices and were not tainted by narrow interests, private greed or a temptation to seek regional hegemony.<sup>1</sup>

The mediation role that Algeria has always played ensues from its position as a stakeholder in security matters<sup>2</sup> and has been saluted by all of the protagonists in the Malian conflict, although elements belonging to the MNLA occasionally tried to involve other powers from outside the Sahel region in mediation with the Malian authorities. However, due to the confidence of the international community in the impartiality, discernment and perspicacity demonstrated by Algerian diplomacy, Algeria eventually took the lead in international mediation in the Malian conflict<sup>3</sup>. The efforts undertaken by Algeria to create a rapprochement between the two parties to the conflict in Mali culminated in the signing of a peace agreement in Algiers on 15 May and in Bamako on 20 June 2015, during a ceremony attended by Algerian officials.<sup>4</sup>

To implement the measures established in Algiers during negotiations between the parties to the conflict in Mali, an international monitoring committee on the Peace and Reconciliation agreement was set up in Bamako on 21 June 2015 under Algerian chairmanship. Since then, the committee has met to implement the peace process launched in Algiers, but is constantly faced with divergences and conflicts of interests expressed by the signatories of the Algiers Agreement.<sup>5</sup>

### 3- Use of non-military methods

The fight against religious extremism, which is viewed by Algerians as fertile ground for terrorism, hinges on a policy aimed at re-establishing ancestral values, and notably the image of a tolerant and open form of Islam. This seems to have been put into practice recently in the education system and the mosques. The stated aim is to effectively counter imported ideologies and proselytism that are contrary to the Malikite rite, which is predominant not only in the Maghreb, but also in the Sahel-Saharan region. Algeria has launched religious training for students from Sahel countries at the University of Adrar and in the Islamic Institute of Tamanrasset in the southern region of Algeria. It has also called for coordination between

<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Pezard and Michael Shurkin, *Achieving Peace in Northern Mali: Past Agreements, Local Conflicts, and the Prospects for a Durable Settlement* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2015), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Sebastian Lecocq, *That Desert Is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Contemporary Mali (1946–1996)*, (Amsterdam: Universiteit von Amsterdam, doctoral thesis, 2002), p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> Ricardo René Larémont, op cit, pp. 242-268.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Boutellis and marie-Joëlle Zahar, *a process in Search of Peace: Lessons from the Inter-Malian Agreement*, (New York: International Peace Institute, June 2017), pp. 12-14.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Sahelian countries against violent religious extremism. To this end, Algeria hosted the constituent congress of the league of ulamas, preachers and imams of Algeria and Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) in January 2013. Two further meetings were held in the Algerian capital in April 2013 and November 2015. During the latter conference, the chairman of the league, Cheikh Daouda Abdou Boureima of Niger, recalled that the fight against terrorist groups "cannot be conducted through military might alone, but by cultivating the values of tolerance and the basic tenets of Islam" and that the religious extremism raging through their societies was "everyone's responsibility"<sup>1</sup>.

#### *4- Reliable regional actor untrustworthy environment*

While Algeria's strategy in the Sahel region was met with positive reactions and served the countries' own national interests, it has become apparent that certain specific considerations of the other Sahelian countries do not fit with the interests of Algeria in relation to security and stability in the Maghreb and in the Sahel-Saharan region. These considerations can be summed up as follows:

- The fact that Mali, apparently in the name of the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS), resorted to French intervention in northern Mali (Operation Serval) following the rebellion led by Tuareg separatist groups and the emergence of Jihadist groups. In the name of the principle of non-interference in states' domestic affairs, Algeria has always been opposed to foreign intervention in internal conflict settlement,<sup>2</sup> both in Africa (Mali and Libya) and in the Arab world (Iraq and Syria).
- The creation of a security mechanism in the Sahel region known as G5, comprising Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Chad. Algeria perceived this initiative as an attempt to remove those countries from the reach of its uncontested role in the common fight against terrorism. One analyst of African political affairs views the creation of this new cooperation framework as a "diplomatic and military alliance" with a military command unique in the Sahel-Saharan strip, including 3000 "prepositioned" men and a string of French military bases that will "ring the southern borders of Algeria and Libya"<sup>3</sup>.
- Weak coordination of the fight against terrorism in the Maghreb due to a lack of mutual confidence among the countries of the region. Indeed, a

<sup>1</sup> Ricardo René Larémont, 'Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel', *African Security*, (Vol.4, No. 4, 2011), pp. 242-248.

<sup>2</sup> International Crisis Group, "Mali: Last Chance in Algiers", *op cit*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Sereni, *Coordination militaire discrète entre l'Algérie et la France dans le Sahel. Un tournant dans les relations algéro-françaises?* On : <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/coordination-militaire-discrete-entre-paris-et-alger-dans-le-sahel.0591>

policy of "every man for himself" seems to predominate, which would explain the failings of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) since the 2000s.<sup>1</sup> However, a positive relationship seems to exist between Algeria and Tunisia in the fight against terrorist groups, particularly those operating in the Chaambi Mountains\* near the Algerian border.<sup>2</sup> With Libya, on the other hand, Algeria lacks a reliable partner in the light of the fragmentation of power in the country and the importance of the Jihadist factions linked to Islamic State (IS) in Libya's political landscape. Despite the deterioration of the political and security situation in Libya, Algeria pursues its efforts to find a political solution to the crisis experienced by its neighbour to the East based on inclusive national dialogue, without foreign interference in Libyan affairs or military intervention by foreign powers.<sup>3</sup>

Due to disrupted relations between Algeria and Morocco, chiefly due to disagreements over the future of the Western Sahara<sup>4</sup>, it has not been possible to establish collective security mechanisms at the level of the Maghreb. The two countries therefore lead individual strategies in the fight against terrorism and affiliated smuggling rings in the Maghreb and the Sahel-Saharan region. In the Sahel, Algeria is fully engaged in joint mechanisms to fight terrorism in conjunction with other Sahelian countries, notably through the foundation of CEMOC in April 2012 with Mali, Niger and Mauritania, as well as through its mediation efforts in the conflicts in Mali and Libya;<sup>5</sup> while Morocco has attempted, albeit with no tangible success, to set up a framework for security coordination with other African countries on the Atlantic coast as well as to revive the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), which has languished since the death of Colonel Gaddafi, who founded and funded the organization. Morocco joined the African Union (AU) in January 2017, which could disrupt the operation of the continental organization due to the opposing positions that will

<sup>1</sup> Yahia H. Zoubir, "Tipping the Balance Towards Intra-Maghreb Unity in Light of the Arab Spring", *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, (Vol. 43, issue. 3, 2012), pp. 83-85.

\* Mount Chaambi (Jebel Chaambi) is a small mountain close to the Algerian border, covered with vegetation, 120 km<sup>2</sup> in area and an altitude of 1,544m. Three-quarters of the area is classified as a national park.

<sup>2</sup> Geoff D. Porter, "Algeria Moves Toward Regional Security Cooperation, Within Limits", *World Politics Review*, 19 September 2013. On : <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13227/algeria-moves-toward-regional-security-cooperation-within-limits>

<sup>3</sup> Christopher Chivvis and Amanda Kadlec 'Algeria: Bastion of North Africa.' *The National Interest*, August 2015, on <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/algeria-the-bastion-north-africa-13545>

<sup>4</sup> Anouar Boukhars, "Rethinking security across the Sahara and the Sahe"l, *op cit*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Anouar Boukhars, 'The Paranoid Neighbor: Algeria and the Conflict in Mali', *Carnegie papers*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2012), p. 12.

inevitably be displayed by advocates of the principle that the Sahrawi people have the right to self-determination and those in favour of maintaining the Western Sahara under Moroccan occupation.

### III. Rethinking the Algerian approach in Sahel the ‘arc of crisis’

#### 1. Transnational threats in the Sahel region

Algeria shares about 6280 km of borders with the Sahel countries. This large space of desert that has been a transit area between the north and South African continent for years, represents a big challenge to control it. In the last decades, the Sahel has become a source of security threats to Algeria, and the Algerian government realizes that their country actually is located in a region where many other countries are witnessing deep internal crises such as growing ethnic conflicts, weak economies and fragile governance, affecting negatively the security situation in the region.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the Sahel has become a safe haven for terrorists and organized crime groups as referred in UN's reports, where 30 to 40% of drug trafficking in the world pass through this region<sup>2</sup>. The Sahel today is the second biggest black market for arms trafficking; also, it is considered a preferred place for terrorist groups like al-Qaida and Boko Haram. Thus, this fragile security situation pushed the Algerian government to build a general security approach towards this region to counter all kind of security threats may threaten its national security.<sup>3</sup>

**Table.1 Comparison of military assets in the Sahel 2017**

Country	Defense budget (in Millions (\$))	Military Strength Ranking on 133	Military Expenditure (in Millions (\$))	Military Forces
Algeria	10.570.000.000	25	10217	792.350
Chad	120.000.000	88	267	30.500
Mali	76.160.000	117	369	7500
Mauritania	39.140.500	130	136	15.870
Niger	85.000.000	114	166	5500

Source: <https://www.globalfirepower.com> 2017, SIPRI Yearbook 2016.

<sup>1</sup> “Algeria and Its Neighbours”, Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa, (Report N°164, October 2015), pp.6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Shaw, *Leadership Required: Drug Trafficking and the Crisis of Statehood in West Africa*, (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Alexis Arief, *Algeria and the crisis in Mali*, (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), July 2012).

According to the Algerian leaders' perception, there are five main security threats to the Algerian national security:<sup>1</sup>

- The challenge of Tuareg issue, Algeria worries about the rise of some extremist groups in Tuareg ethnicity who may call for separation.
- The rise of organized crime such drug trafficking, arms trafficking and illegal immigration.
- The foreign intervention under the reason of humanitarian reasons.
- The rivalry among the world major powers on the natural resources of the Sahel such petrol, gas and uranium.
- The military projects proposed in the African continent to build a military bases like AFRICOM that proposed by US. The idea that has been refused by many Sahelian countries.<sup>2</sup>

All of those issues cited above represent soft and hard threats to security of Algeria, so that the Algerian security approach tries to combine the security and the political solution to counter those problems. In other words, this approach does not focus just on the military choices to face the security threats in the region, but also it takes in consideration the diplomatic and other peaceful means such as: promoting dialogue, negotiations and states-building process.

## 2. Algeria and the Tuareg Question

The Sahel has been a source of concern for Algeria for a long time due to a variety of reasons. Beyond the problem of terrorism, Algeria has been quite concerned about the turn of events regarding the Tuareg question and events in northern Mali after the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in Libya. The Tuareg issue is not new but it has taken dangerous proportions since Fall 2011. Colonial France's redrawing of African borders resulted in the dispersal of the Tuareg population throughout the Maghreb and Sahel regions. However, as scattered as they are, the Tuareg have been able to maintain some links owing to the seasonal movements (transhumance) across the region. The Algerian government recognized the rights of its Tuareg population in the late 1960s and was resentful of Gaddafi, who accepted the creation of training camps and encouraged the emergence of a Tuareg independent movement and even the establishment of an independent Tuareg state as a way of exerting leverage over rival actors in the region, especially Algeria. One of the major consequences of the civil war in Libya was the massive return of the well-equipped and highly experienced Libya-based Tuareg to Mali and Niger in August 2011. Certainly, this has increased Algeria's security concerns as effective

---

<sup>1</sup> Anouar Boukhars, *op cit*, p.11.

<sup>2</sup> Yahia H. Zoubir, "The United States and Maghreb-Sahel security", *International Affairs*, (Oxford : oxford university press, Vol. 85, Issue 5, September 2009), pp. 990-992.

management of the Tuareg issue has always been one of the pillars of Algeria's strategy in the region. This explains why Tuareg aspiration for statehood has always been met with disapproval in Algiers. While Algerian policymakers empathise with Malian Tuareg, they view Tuareg claims for autonomy or irredentism suspiciously. Unsurprisingly, regardless of this empathy, they reacted negatively to the proclamation of the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA) of an independent state in northern Mali in April 2012.<sup>1</sup>

This attitude is consistent with Algeria's policy against secessionist movements and any political, social or ethnic categories that could threaten the internationally-recognised national unity and territorial integrity of a state. Since the late 1960s, Algerians have succeeded in integrating their Tuareg population into the political process through the representation of notables in the parliament or in the structures of the National Liberation Front (FLN) or by settling Tuareg populations in southern cities, providing them with the necessary modern means to improve their living conditions. Therefore, any secessionist desires are seen as a threat to Algeria's own national security and territorial integrity. This is why Algeria has mediated between the Tuareg in northern Mali and the central government in Bamako in the 1990s, 2006, and 2012.<sup>2</sup> Algeria's opposition to foreign intervention derives from the position of its foreign policy as well as fears that intervention may strengthen jihadist ideology and consolidate secessionist sentiments. The ideal scenario would be a political solution based on the separation of the Tuareg groups represented by the MNLA and Ansar Dine from AQIM and MUJAO. The rationale is that distinction would be twice as effective as addressing the Tuareg's demands and also prove to be a fight against the terrorist groups, possibly with Tuareg assistance.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore, foreign intervention has the potential of destabilizing an already volatile region astride Algeria's southern borders. One of the premises of the state's policy toward the Tuareg is that governments in the region should address the socioeconomic, political, and cultural demands of their respective Tuareg minorities. In fact, it was partly the non-compliance of the Malian president, Amadou Toumani Touré, with the Algiers-brokered agreements between the Tuareg and the Malian government that led to the events of early 2012, resulting in the debacle of the Malian army in northern Mali and the military coup that overthrew him. Surely, the coup that

---

<sup>1</sup> Grégory Chauzal and Thibault van Damme, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving beyond the 2012 Crisis," (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, March 2015), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Grégory Chauzal and Thibault van Damme, *Op.cit.*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Djallil Lounnas, "Confronting Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghrib in the Sahel: Algeria and the Malian Crisis." *The Journal of North African Studies*, (Vol.19, No. 5, 2014), pp. 810-811.



plunged Mali into a political crisis compelled Algeria to reassess the management of its security along its southern borders and seek a peaceful resolution for the conflict.<sup>1</sup> It essentially aims to contain the effect of Azawad's search for independence on other Tuareg populations in Mali, Niger, Libya and Algeria. In addition, there is fear that foreign intervention could lead to yet another influx of Malian refugees into Algeria, which already hosts about 20,000 Malian refugees that escaped earlier 2013.<sup>2</sup> Ever since France decided that military intervention was necessary to preserve its interests in the Sahel region, Algeria has sought to convince its African partners to reestablish Mali's territorial integrity through dialogue with the Tuareg.<sup>3</sup>

### 3. Into The Quagmire: The French Military Operation in Mali

By the beginning of 2013, Paris launched an armed intervention in Mali, includes air strikes and ground operations<sup>7</sup> against the rebel movement in the north after extremist armed groups fighters suddenly moved on to the south part of country and defeated the forces of Malian army in the city of Konna. The United Kingdom and other European states were providing support as well as The United States that was sharing information with Paris and ready to provide logistics and surveillance, some reports referred. France had claimed that the military operation based on the Malian state's request for assistance, portraying operation Serval as indispensable step to prevent the capital from falling into armed groups' hands, and additional deployments of French army in Mali as helping to provide protection and secure almost six thousands of French citizens living there. The French deployments in Mali aimed also at deterring actors who might try to attack or further destabilize the interim government of Bamako.<sup>4</sup>

French government stated on January 2013 that the period of the military operation would be a question of few weeks. However, some experts referred that the rebel groups were better equipped and trained than French army forces expected, the question that would make the French mission more complicated. Given that Malian army was internally divided,

<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group, 'Mali: Avoiding Escalation', *Africa Report N° 189*, (18 July 2012), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Arslan Chikhaoui, "Migration and Refugees in Algeria and the Sahel: Targeting a Win-Win Neighborhood Policy in the Mediterranean", Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.) *Escaping the Escape Toward Solutions for the Humanitarian Migration Crisis*, (Rutgers University Press, 2017), p. 317.

<sup>3</sup> Alexis Arieff, "Crisis in Mali", *CRS Report for Congress*, (Report Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress US, January 14, 2013), on: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42664.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Alexis Arieff, *Op.cit*, p. 3.



lacks the ability to effectively project force, has been implicated in human rights abuses, and is very small, it was uncertain whether the Malian military would be capable to follow up on French military strikes effectively by taking control of liberated region and providing security.<sup>1</sup> Prior to French armed intervention, leaders of regional countries as well as the international community had warned of a rising threat to international security associated with an widespread an influence of extremist groups and scope of operations in Mali, a possible expansion of violent extremist ideology, and state fragmentation. The major armed groups in northern Mali, Al Quaida, Ansar al-Din and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa coordinated their attacks and shared militants. Reports of foreign jihadists from many African countries and beyond have raised worries, as had reported ties among the terrorist groups and transnational smuggling networks, including arms and drug traffickers.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, there were many other rationales behind the French military intervention away from the ones given by Paris. Firstly, France has been present as main player in the region for decades, and it is well known that Africa has been a zone of French influence since long years.<sup>3</sup> Paris still keeps stronger economic and politico-military relations with the regimes of its former colonies in framework of what has been known as *Françafrique*<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the French operation in Mali in 2013 was one of many previous ones that Paris had done in Africa in order to protect its national interests in the Continent over the past decades. Secondly, French economic interests in the West Africa represent another explanatory element of its armed intervention in Mali.

In spite of the limited French economic interests in Mali compared with other African countries, the country is located in a vital region to the French economic interests<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the fragile governance and security instability in Mali threaten directly the security stability of the neighboring countries like Niger and Burkina Faso, where there a big number of French economic investments exist, especially that Nigerian uranium mines which

---

<sup>1</sup> Steven Erlanger, Alan Cowell and Adam Nossiter, "Malian Town Falls to Islamist Rebels, France Says", *The New York Times*, January 14, 2013, on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/world/france-mali-intervention.html>

<sup>2</sup> Alexis Arieff, "Crisis in Mali", Op cit.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Bach, *State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence*, (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique : Le Plus Long Scandale de la République*, (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Bernard Adam, *Mali : de l'intervention militaire française à la reconstruction de l'État*, (Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité, Bruxelles, 2013), p. 10.

are located near the Malian borders provide the major needs of the French nuclear power stations<sup>1</sup>.

In addition, the French armed intervention in Mali should be read in context of the French offensive policy that has been followed by Paris in Africa during the last years, as a response to the rivalry in Africa among the world major economic power (US and China).<sup>2</sup> The French influence in Africa had been at risk of decline over the years of George W. Bush's administration that pursued interventionist policy in Africa. In framework of the global war on terror (GWOT) that was just the sort of opportunity that the Project for the New American Century sought, some analysis said. In fact, the global war on terror provided an ideological pretext to secure the militarization of many regions like the African continent that has become very important to national interests of US. The American administration at that time had already defined oil of Africa as a strategic national interest, and an energy resource that US might choose the hard power to control. It was the reason why Ed Royce, the chairman of the US Congress African sub-committee, called in January 2002 for African oil to be treated as a priority for US national security post 9/11. And, as US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, Michael Westphal, explained in a Pentagon press briefing in April 2002, why the African continent matters to the Washington. Westphal reiterated the point two months later, stressing that Africa was already supplying 14 per cent of US oil imports, and had the potential to increase that amount substantially over the next years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Damien Deltenre, "Gestion des ressources minérales et conflits au Mali et au Niger", *Note d'analyse*, (Bruxelles: groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité GRIP, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Harmon, "Securitization Initiatives in the Sahara-Sahel Region in the Twenty-first Century", *African Security*, (Vol. 8, Issue 4: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa, 2015), pp. 227-248.

Fig 2. Map of Mali



Source: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/images/mali-map-may13.jpg>

Nigeria that 'African oil is strategic national interest to us' and that 'it will increase and become very important as we go forward'<sup>1</sup>. So, behind the purpose of bolstering of US political and military influence in the African continent, George W. Bush's administration aimed included the diversification of US sources of energy and also the protection of maritime energy transit routes which pass by the African coastline. Therefore, all those reasons cited above can give explanations of the motivations of the French operation in Mali, and why it has become necessary for Paris to protect its interests in the Sahel. The armed intervention in Mali that launched by Paris on January 2013, had effectively succeeded in scattering, and severely weakening, the rebel movements that had taken control of the north for few months. The French intervention helped then to bring most of the liberated areas back under at least nominal central government control. Serval operation ended officially on 15 July 2014, and was replaced by Operation Barkhane, that launched by Paris again on 1 August 2014 to fight extremist groups in the region.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Keenan, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa*, (Pluto Press, New York, 2009), pp. 168-169.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Griffin, *Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram: French counterterrorism and military cooperation in the Sahel*, (Abu Dhabi: TRENDS Research & Advisory, May 2015), pp. 24-26.

#### 4. *Reshaping the Sahel: what a future for the Algerian role?*

With a GDP of USD 178.4 billion and foreign reserves estimated at USD 97.67 billion<sup>1</sup>, Algeria is the largest economy in the region.<sup>2</sup> The healthy state of the economy is due to the country's status as the leading oil and gas producer in North Africa, and has allowed Bouteflika's regime to remain stable despite instability in neighboring Mali, Libya and Tunisia over the past two years. The economy remains highly dependent on hydrocarbons, which represent 98 % of total exports and roughly 60 % of the government's revenues. This wealth has allowed Algeria to invest in its security sector – it has the largest military budget in Africa –, and the Algerian government aims to improve its equipment and develop strong capabilities in the field of counter-terrorism.<sup>3</sup> The Algerian Department of Intelligence and Security\* is regarded by some as one of the 'most effective intelligence service when it comes to fighting al-Qaeda in the Sahel'<sup>4</sup>. Although some also point at the unorthodox methods used by the DRS in counter-terrorism activities, including the infiltration of terrorist groups<sup>5</sup>, Algeria's deliberately uncompromising counter-terrorism policy derives from the country's experience of internal armed conflict during the 1990s. The war between the Algerian military regime and armed Islamist groups is estimated to have cost 200 000 lives, and it shaped the North African state's approach to fighting terrorist groups. This experience has made Algeria a key ally in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel for the US and many EU countries, such as France, since the early 2000s. Examples of counter-terrorism collaboration include the 2002 Pan Sahel Initiative – which became the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership in 2005 –, currently coordinated by the US military Africa Command (AFRICOM) based in Stuttgart.<sup>6</sup>

Algeria has also been part of important regional initiatives aimed at fighting terrorism. Among these is the decision taken in April 2010 by the four countries most directly affected by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – to create the Joint Operational General

<sup>1</sup> World Bank indicators 2017; National Statistics Office, [www.ons.dz](http://www.ons.dz)

<sup>2</sup> IMF Country Report No. 16/127, May 2016, on : [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The\\_roots\\_of\\_Malis\\_conflict.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The_roots_of_Malis_conflict.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Lahcen Achy, "The Price of Stability in Algeria", *Carnegie papers*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2013), p. 22.

\* Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has dissolved the DRS on January 2016. The DRS was replaced by the Department of Surveillance and Security DSS which, unlike its predecessor, report directly to the presidency as the entire security and intelligence apparatus.

<sup>4</sup> John Schindler, "The Ugly Truth about Algeria," *The National Interest*, 10 July 2012, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-ugly-truth-about-algeria-7146>

<sup>5</sup> John Schindler, Op cit.

<sup>6</sup> Yahia H. Zoubir, The United States and Maghreb-Sahel security, *International Affairs*, (Oxford : oxford university press, Vol. 85, Issue 5, September 2009), p. 989.

Staff Committee (CEMOC)<sup>1</sup>, based in Tamanrasset in South Algeria, 400 km from Algeria's southern border, with the purpose of ensuring better cooperation among these countries in the fight against terrorism, kidnappings and trafficking, and the conduct of joint operations in each of the participating states. In September 2011 an international conference on the fight against terrorism in the Sahel was hosted by Algeria, with the aim of further strengthening cooperation among the participating countries.

Following the international military intervention in Mali, extremist armed groups started maneuvering. Alliances shifted and splinter groups were created and re-aligned. Some claimed that, the different groups aimed to strategically position their own agenda at the table of the peace negotiations. However, this process continued and the number of major armed groups associated with the peace process rose from two (the MNLA and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad and HCUA) in 2012, when the crisis started, to eight by the signing of the Algiers agreement in 2015. The pushback against the jihadist groups allowed the MNLA to make a comeback.<sup>2</sup>

In the ensuing peace process, the international community made a distinction between politico-military groups (like the MNLA and its offshoots), which would be engaged in negotiations, and rebel groups, which were considered legitimate military targets. The lines of differentiation among the actors were nevertheless blurred. Most notably, many supporters of Ansar al-Din crossed over to join the HCUA (Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad), which signed the 2015 peace agreement alongside MNLA as part of a coalition of armed groups. Later in the negotiations, two additional groups, the Coordination for Movements and Fronts of Patriotic Resistance (CMFPR) and the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), became integral parts of the peace process. The establishment of these new movements marked a turning point in the negotiations. Unlike the MNLA and HCUA, which claimed independence for Azawad, the CMFPR and MAA were loyalists, advocating national unity. The CMFPR represented a range of self-defense movements that had been active in reconquering territories which had fallen into the hands of rebel and jihadist groups, and these movements came together primarily to ensure that their communities were not side-lined in the peace negotiations.<sup>3</sup> The transitional government encouraged the inclusion of these loyalist movements in the negotiations as a means of countering the influence of the MNLA and

<sup>1</sup> Alexis Arief, *Algeria and the crisis in Mali*, (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), July 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Cecilia Hull Wiklund, and Claes Nilsson, *Peace in Mali? An analysis of the 2015 Algiers agreement and its implementation*, (Swedish Defense Research Agency, Stockholm, 2016), p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibrahim Maïga, "Groupes armés au Mali: au-delà des étiquettes rapport sur l'Afrique de l'ouest", *rapport sur l'Afrique de l'ouest*, (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), N. 17, Juin 2016), p. 4.



HCUA. Nevertheless all movements except the HCUA experienced fragmentation.<sup>1</sup>

By the time the next round of peace negotiations started in Algiers in June 2014, the rather numerous politico-military movements had formed two main coalitions: the Coordination coalition of Azawad movements (CMA), an alliance of the MNLA and HCUA and others, and the Platform Coalition of Armed Groups (the Platform), a coalition of loyalist groups. Both the CMA and the Platform were coalitions of armed groups with multiple and diverging claims on the state of Mali. A distinction between them is that the CMA's constituent movements consistently pursued claims of self-determination for northern Mali, while the movements within the Platform sought to resolve grievances within the unitary state of Mali. However, coalition neither has presented a clear agenda of its claims nor specifically outlined which constituents it represents. It means they presented a clear agenda to find a solution for the Malian problem but this agenda don't represent the real beliefs of those party that the CMA's constituent movements consistently pursued claims of self-determination for northern Mali <sup>2</sup>.

## Conclusion

The fragile security situation in the Sahel coupled with political instability, weak governances and new transnational threat (soft and hard threats) are creating a need for adaptation in the Algerian security approach towards the region, including a militarization of borders which is neither expected nor desired. Particularly, the outbreak of crisis in the Malian state in 2012 was unprecedented, involving for the first time not only Tuaregs movements fighting against the Malian government, but also terrorist and trafficker armed groups. New security reality has risen in the Sahel region, creating a new challenge for Algeria. Hence, this role Algeria want to play in order to assert its regional leadership also will encourage a strong mobilization in the global fight against terrorism.

In the case of Mali, Since the Sahel is considered by Algeria as traditional backyard of its influence; and as a strategic actor it has participated in all negotiations of the Malian conflicts since the rebellion of 1990s. The Algerian mediation succeeded many time in bringing the opposition forces to agree to the peace accords with the Malian government. However, Algeria should review its security approach towards the Sahel, especially, about the role of Algerian military defined in the Algerian constitution that does not allow the military to participate in armed operations outside Algeria. Since *In*

---

<sup>1</sup> International Crisis Group, "Mali: Avoiding Escalation", *Africa Report N°189*, 18 July 2012, pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup> Cecilia Hull Wiklund, and Claes Nilsson, *Op cit*, pp. 14-15.

*Amenas*, Algeria is working effectively on border for the security of its gas facilities.

The major threat for Algeria remains the security situation in surrounding or neighbouring countries such as Tunisia, Libya and Mali. Although Algeria has successfully thwarted terrorist incursions from its immediate surroundings, long-term instability in its geographic space could amount to a war of attrition for the country, in light of the increased mobilization of human and material resources entailed, which, over the long term, could prove extremely demanding and costly. Hence, with the rise of new security challenges in the region (terrorist groups in particular), Algeria should find a new formula that would allow the army to intervene outside the country's borders in framework of Preventive Military operations to counter all kind of threats that might threaten its national security, this formula might help the Algerian security approach towards the Sahel to become more and more effective in terms of fighting terrorism and the other soft and hard security threats in the Sahel region.

## References:

### A. Books & periodicals

- 1- Achy, Lahcen, "The Price of Stability in Algeria", Carnegie papers, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 2013).
- 2- Adam, Bernard, *Mali : de l'intervention militaire française à la reconstruction de l'État*, (Groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité, Bruxelles, 2013).
- 3- Alexis Arieff, *Algeria and the crisis in Mali*, (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), July 2012).
- 4- Alexis Arieff, *Algeria and the crisis in Mali*, (Paris: Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI), July 2012).
- 5- "Algeria and Its Neighbours", Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa, (Report N°164, October 2015).
- 6- Ammour, Laurence Aïda, "Regional Security Cooperation in the Maghreb and Sahel: Algeria's Pivotal Ambivalence," *Africa Security Brief*, (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, No.18, February 2012).
- 7- Arieff, Alexis, "Crisis in Mali", *CRS Report for Congress*, (Report Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress US, January 14, 2013), on: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42664.pdf>
- 8- Bach, Daniel, *State and Society in Francophone Africa since Independence*, (London : Macmillan, 1995).
- 9- Bertrand, François, «Cirta», *Encyclopédie berbère*, 13, 1994.



- 10- Boukhars, Anouar, 'The Paranoid Neighbor: Algeria and the Conflict in Mali', *Carnegie papers*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2012).
- 11- Boukhars, Anouar, Rethinking security across the Sahara and the Sahel, *Policy Brief*, (N° 199 - April 2015).
- 12- Boutellis, Arthur and Zahar, marie-Joëlle, *a process in Search of Peace: Lessons from the Inter-Malian Agreement*, (New York: International Peace Institute, June 2017).
- 13- Cecilia Hull Wiklund, and Claes Nilsson, *Peace in Mali? An analysis of the 2015 Algiers agreement and its implementation*, (Swedish Defense Research Agency, Stockholm, 2016).
- 14- Chauzal, Grégory and van Damme, Thibault, "The Roots of Mali's Conflict: Moving beyond the 2012 Crisis," (Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, March 2015).
- 15- Chikh, Slimane, 'L'Algérie et l'Afrique (1954–1962),' *Revue algérienne des sciences juridiques, économiques et politiques*, Algiers, (Vol.3, issue 5, 1968).
- 16- Chikhaoui, Arslan, "Migration and Refugees in Algeria and the Sahel: Targeting a Win-Win Neighborhood Policy in the Mediterranean", Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.) *Escaping the Escape Toward Solutions for the Humanitarian Migration Crisis*, (Rutgers University Press, 2017).
- 17- Chivvis, Christopher S., and Liepman, Andrew *North Africa's Menace: AQIM's Evolution and the U.S. Policy Response*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 2013).
- 18- Deltenre, Damien, "Gestion des ressources minérales et conflits au Mali et au Niger", *Note d'analyse*, (Bruxelles: groupe de recherche et d'information sur la paix et la sécurité GRIP, 2012).
- 19- Filiu, Jean-Pierre, "Could Al-Qaeda Turn African in the Sahel?", *Carnegie Papers*, (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, USA: Washington DC, N.112 - June 2010).
- 20- Griffin, Christopher, *Operation Barkhane and Boko Haram: French counterterrorism and military cooperation in the Sahel*, (Abu Dhabi: TRENDS Research & Advisory, May 2015).
- 21- Harmon, Stephen, "Securitization Initiatives in the Sahara-Sahel Region in the Twenty-first Century", *African Security*, (Vol. 8, Issue 4: Rethinking Challenges to State Sovereignty in Mali and Northwest Africa, 2015).
- 22- Ibrahim Maïga, "Groupes armés au Mali: au-delà des étiquettes rapport sur l'Afrique de l'ouest", *rapport sur l'Afrique de l'ouest*, (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), N. 17, Juin 2016).
- 23- International Crisis Group, 'Mali: Avoiding Escalation', *Africa Report N° 189*, (18 July 2012).
- 24- International Crisis Group, "Mali: Avoiding Escalation", *Africa Report N° 189*, 18 July 2012.

- 25- International Crisis Group, "Mali: Last Chance in Algiers", *policy Briefing*, (N°.104, 18 November 2014).
- 26- Keenan, Jeremy, *The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa*, (Pluto Press, New York, 2009).
- 27- Lacoste, Yve, "Sahara: perspectives et illusions géopolitiques", *Revue Hérodote*, (Vol. 142, No.3, 2011).
- 28- Larémont, Ricardo René, 'Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: Terrorism and Counterterrorism in the Sahel', *African Security*, (Vol.4, No. 4, 2011).
- 29- Lecocq, Jean Sebastian, *That Desert Is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Contemporary Mali (1946–1996)*, (Amsterdam: Universiteit von Amsterdam, doctoral thesis, 2002).
- 30- Lounnas, Djallil. "Confronting Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghrib in the Sahel: Algeria and the Malian Crisis." *The Journal of North African Studies*, (Vol.19, No. 5, 2014)
- 31- Mark Shaw, *Leadership Required: Drug Trafficking and the Crisis of Statehood in West Africa*, (Institute for Security Studies (ISS), 2012).
- 32- Micaud, Charles eds., *Arabs and Berbers: From Tribe to Nation in North Africa*, (London: D.C. Heath and Company, 1972).
- 33- Muedini, Fait, "The Promotion of Sufism in the Politics of Algeria and Morocco," *Islamic Africa*, (Vol. 29, No.3, 2012).
- 34- Norris, Harry. T., *The Tuaregs: Their Islamic Legacy and Its Diffusion in the Sahel*, (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1975).
- 35-Pauwels, Annelies, *Competing for ransom: AQIM vs. Daesh*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) June 2016, on: [https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert\\_23\\_Terrorist\\_kidnapping.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Alert_23_Terrorist_kidnapping.pdf)
- 36- Pezard, Stephanie and Michael Shurkin, *Achieving Peace in Northern Mali: Past Agreements, Local Conflicts, and the Prospects for a Durable Settlement* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2015).
- 37- Salem Chaker, *Dialecte, In Encyclopédie berbère*, (Aix-en-Provence: Édisud, Vol. XV., 1995).
- 38- Sour, Lotfi, "The Algerian domestic strategy of counter-terrorism from confrontation to national reconciliation," *Romanian political science and international relations review*, (Bucharest: Academia Romana, Vol. XII, N° 2, June 2015).
- 39- Verschave, François-Xavier, *La Françafrique: Le Plus Long Scandale de la République*, (Paris: Éditions Stock, 1998).
- 40- Werenfels, Isabelle, *Managing Instability in Algeria: Elites and Political Change since 1995*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).
- 41- Zoubir, Yahia H., "Algeria's Roles in the OAU/African Union: From National Liberation Promoter to Leader in the Global War on Terrorism", *Mediterranean Politics*, (Vol. 21, issue 1, 2015).

- 42- Zoubir, Yahia H., “The United States and Maghreb–Sahel security”, *International Affairs*, (Oxford : oxford university press, Vol. 85, Issue 5, September 2009).
- 43- Zoubir, Yahia H., “Tipping the Balance Towards Intra-Maghreb Unity in Light of the Arab Spring”, *The International Spectator: Italian Journal of International Affairs*, (Vol. 43, issue. 3, 2012).

#### Internet sources:

- 1- Sereni, Jean-Pierre *Coordination militaire discrète entre l’Algérie et la France dans le Sahel. Un tournant dans les relations algéro-françaises?* On : <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/coordination-militaire-discrete-entre-paris-et-alger-dans-le-sahel,0591>
- 2- “Algeria: 8th Meeting of Chiefs of Staff of '5+5 Defence' Initiative Opens in Algiers.” *All Africa*, October 19, 2016. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201610191095.html>
- 3- Porter, Geoff D., “Algeria Moves Toward Regional Security Cooperation, Within Limits”, *World Politics Review*, 19 September 2013. On : <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13227/algeria-moves-toward-regional-security-cooperation-within-limits>
- 4- Chivvis, Christopher and Kadlec Amanda ‘Algeria: Bastion of North Africa.’ *The National Interest*, August 2015, on <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/algeria-the-bastion-north-africa-13545>
- 5- Erlanger, Steven, Cowell, Alan and Adam Nossiter, “Malian Town Falls to Islamist Rebels, France Says”, *The New York Times*, January 14, 2013, on: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/world/france-mali-intervention.html>
- 6- World Bank indicators 2017; National Statistics Office, [www.ons.dz](http://www.ons.dz)
- 7- IMF Country Report No. 16/127, May 2016, on : [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The roots of Mali s conflict.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/The_roots_of_Mali_s_conflict.pdf)
- 8- John Schindler, “The Ugly Truth about Algeria,” *The National Interest*, 10 July 2012, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-ugly-truth-about-algeria-7146>