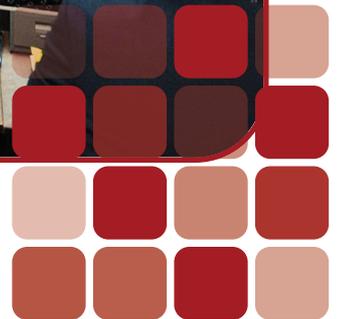


# ALGERIA'S MILITARY CHANGES AND NEW DOCTRINE



ABDENNOUR TOUMI





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## Introduction

In Algeria, the military power structure is a full institution that leads ultimately to the defense minister. Usually, in Algeria, the president keeps the defense minister's portfolio for himself as the new president, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, has done. President Tebboune kept this sensitive post in the republic for himself and, historically, the president in Algeria does not trust his defense minister. This played out in June 1965, January 1992, and with the deputy minister of defense in April of 2019.

Arab armies operate within a centralized authoritarian system comprised of officers who are loyal and obedient (they act like good *Aḡas*). Nevertheless, the military is seen as the only functioning institution and a rampart necessary for the survival of the regime. This is true whether in Syria, where the army did not hesitate to gas its innocent population or in Egypt, where it overthrew a democratically elected president in July, 1 2013, and it is intimidating the inhabitants in order to maintain its interests and protect its existence.

Algeria, however, after obtaining independence in 1962, had defeated one of the world's major military powers. Those who fought, are termed freedom fighters (Al-Moudjahidine) and Algeria's independence invented modern guerrilla warfare. In fact, the word "asymmetrical," so commonly used in military and security jargon, acquired its meaning in the streets of the Algiers Casbah in 1957. There are two important dates, though, to remember, August 20, 1955 and notably, August 20, 1956. These dates mark the Algerian political system's turning point in its complex relationship of power between the military and the civilians.

On November 1, 1954, the first armed shots of the first freedom fighters (Al-Moudjahidine) took place. The revolutionary organization, by the armed action that it had unleashed, provoked a complete break with the old methods of political opposition. The National Liberation Army (NLA) was the instrument of realization of these aspirations. Also, and since the outbreak of the armed struggle, civilian and military leaders of the National Liberation Army, (French acronym ALN), armed wing of the National Liberation Front, (French acronym FLN) focused on setting up the structures of the army. In accordance with one of the guerrilla principles, the units are comprised of small groups.

The crisis of summer 1962 or the "Wilayas' Crisis" put the future of the young, independent and fragile Algerian Republic in danger, after a bloody war that lasted eight long years (1954-1962). This crisis was marked by clashes between the political clans and the young war chief leaders. This summer was tragic and was the remake of the Soummam Conference leaders' disagreement in 1956. Hence the primacy of politics over the military was settled on September 9, 1962, where the military leaders of units commanded by Colonel Houari Boumediène accompanied by a charismatic leader Ahmed Ben Bella entered Algiers.

Colonel Boumediène imposed the entry of his battalions in the capital on September 9, 1962 and Ahmed Ben Bella declared: "The National People's Army is in Algiers, the Political Bureau has triumphed thanks to the people." At the end of 1962, the army was restructured into military regions (Régions militaires). This had the effect of definitively dissolving the National Liberation Army (NLA) as well as the historical wilayas (military regions) and this gave the birth to the National People's Army (ANP).

The (FLN) and the (ALN) were indissolubly linked and each had drawn their *raison-d'être* from the will of the Algerian nation for liberation against the colonial presence and reliance on the energies of the entire people. Applying the strategic principles of the revolutionary war, the National Liberation Army (NLA) spearheaded a struggle for which the Algerian people emerged victorious.

On June 19, 1965, Defense Minister Colonel Boumediène overthrew President Ben Bella, declared a state of emergency, created a revolutionary council, and dissolved the constitutional assembly. On December 15, 1967, President Colonel Boumediène took command of the army from Colonel Tahar Zbiri, whom he dismissed for organizing a failed coup-d'état.

## The Algerian Military in the Constitutions

An Algerian constitution was first adopted by a referendum in 1963, following the Algerian Liberation War of Independence (1954–1962). Originally, it was to be drafted by a constitutional assembly led by a civilian politician, Mr. Farhat Abbas, but this body was sidelined by Algeria's first president, Ahmed Ben Bella. This constitution was suspended by the military coup of June 19, 1965. After years of ruling by executive orders as leader of the revolutionary council, Colonel Houari Boumediène issued a second constitution in 1976, emphasizing the importance of socialism and formally restored political institutions to their primacy over the military establishment. Colonel Boumediène was then elected the country's second president, after having left the post vacant for eleven years.

In 1986, Colonel Boumediène's successor, Colonel Chadli Bendjedid, modified the con-

stitution to allow free market reforms, and, after this, the 1988 October Riots brought in a new constitution in winter 1988. This was approved in a referendum by 73% on February 23, 1989.

It introduced a multi-party system, removing the FLN party from its role as leading a one-party system and made no mention of socialism. Instead it promised "freedom of expression, association and assembly." The January 1992 military coup introduced a state of emergency, which suspended parts of the new constitution, as the Algerian Civil War broke out and lasted from 1992 to 1999.

Recently, a preliminary draft constitution was made public according to the drafted constitution's article 30: Algeria might, within the framework of the United Nations, the African Union and the Arab League states, participate in peacekeeping operations. In addition, the president can decide to send troops abroad after a two-thirds majority vote in the two chambers of the Algerian parliament, according to Article: 91-2. The constitutional amendment is read by many analysts that Algeria is correcting its bad judgement regarding national security following the Libyan crisis in 2011. This will allow the military troops to be more proactive if another conflict erupts in neighbouring countries such as Mali, Niger, Tunisia, and even in Mauritania. All these are considered to be fragile states.

Theoretically, nothing constitutionally prevents the president from launching an external operation. Algerian troop units took part, alongside the Egyptian army, in the 1967 and 1973 wars against the Israeli army. Soldiers also intervene under the U.N. mission within the framework of peacekeeping operations, in particular within the MINUSMA in Mali. Ac-

According to the (Army National Popular) ANP's El-Djeich magazine, the first mission of the Algerian army, from January 1989 to January 1991, was an observation mission, watching the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

By changing the constitution, Algeria's new president is sending a dissuasive message to the outside world and making it clear that it has a say in everything that is happening on its borders, particularly in Libya, where several foreign forces are involved in the conflict.

Several other operations followed in Cambodia, Haiti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali (despite the denial of the Malian authorities).

The Algerian army is mainly involved in humanitarian and cease-fire observation tasks. In fact, Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who was elected in 1999, had taken over a doctrine: the non-intervention of his troops abroad. He considered that the blood of his soldiers should only be spilled for national defense.

By changing the constitution, Algeria's new president is sending a dissuasive message to the outside world and making it clear that it has a say in everything that is happening on its borders, particularly in Libya, where several foreign forces are involved in the conflict.

Algeria has never wanted to intervene militarily in the Sahel, only secret special operations and punctual interferences, notably on Mount Chaambi on Tunisia-Algeria borders, have been observed in the context of the fight against terrorism. In fact, Algerian decision-makers have always preferred to take the political route.



Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika did not waver in winter 2013, when the French operation Serval was launched in January 2013, when some officers considered that it was not up to France to intervene. He had then taken a judgment of Solomon by allowing, (a small revolution), the overflight of Algerian skies by French fighter planes. A decision that was perhaps not unrelated to the attack by members of (Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb) AQMI on the gas plants of Sonatrach in Aïn Amenas in south-eastern Algeria, one week after the launch of the Serval operation.

This attack completed the process of convincing the generals in Algiers of the need to revise Algeria's military doctrine, and, to some extent, the beginning of the end of the power struggle that was going on between the ex-president and the intelligence chief. This is a struggle the ramifications of which are continuing between the new president, the military and the remains of Ex-Intelligence Chief General Toufik.

### Algerian Army and New Construction of Perception

This constitutionalization reflects a change of the country's strategic goals. Although, Algeria tends to favor political solutions, it is not a fan of "all politics." But its position has changed significantly since the terrorist attack of the Aïn Amenas gas plants site. The Algerian army has changed considerably as a result of its recent activities against terrorism and contraband in the south of the country. Algeria is seeking to redefine the role of its armed forces and actively participate in peacekeeping missions in Africa. It could give priority to special forces in short-term interventions, involving a strike force, precision attacks, withdrawals and termination of the mission. When

Algerian diplomats were taken hostage in Gao in March 2012, Algeria was seriously considering an intervention in Mali.

In 2013, Algeria became Africa's largest arms buyer, accounting for 36% of the continent's total imports, with military spending exceeding \$10 billion, an increase of 176% since 2004. The country is also among the top 10 major buyers in the world and, with high military spending, Algeria has improved its positioning in the regional balance. According to the American Defense Center, the Algerian army moved from 54th in 1994 to 26th place in the world in 2016.

According to the 2018 Trends in World Military Expenditure report. Algeria's well-equipped, trained and robust military is playing a major role in the region in fighting terrorist armed groups since 2010 in the Sahel.

Indeed, Algeria has always sought to remain neutral in regional conflicts and, when possible, to serve as an intermediary. Militarily, Algeria, the world's sixth-largest arms importer from 2015 to 2019, has acquired 12 Su-34 bombers and Terminator II combat vehicles from Russia, and is reportedly planning to buy a dozen Su-57 jets. Between 2013 to 2015, it bought 42 Mi-28N combat helicopters, 8 Mi-26 transport helicopters and two Project 636 Varshavyanka (Kilo-class) submarines Ouarsenis and Hoggar. According to the 2018 Trends in World Military Expenditure report. Algeria's well-equipped, trained and robust military is playing a major role in the region in fighting terrorist armed

groups since 2010 in the Sahel. This is in cooperation with Mauritania, Niger and Mali, the Joint Operational General Staff Committee (CEMOC5), based in Tamanrasset, Algeria's largest province.

Algeria did oppose France's counterterrorism mission, Operation Barkhan, deploying 3,000 soldiers of the member states of the G5 Sahel with the backing of the African Union. Algeria called on the U.N. Security Council to set up an international force to neutralize armed groups, help national reconciliation, and establish stable democratic institutions in Libya and Mali.

### **Military as Central Pillar in the Decision-making process**

In 1992, the army intervened in the political process to prevent the ex-FIS party (Islamic Salvation Front), from gaining power, a move that divided Algerians, and led to a decade of a bloody civil war. In 1999, General Mohammed Mediène, alias Toufik, was Algeria's strongest man and, alongside top generals, peers had engineered to bring Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to become Algeria's 7th president. For Ex-President Bouteflika this was an opportunity for revenge to rise to power after he was left out by the military and its intelligence department (LaSM) in 1979.

Since then the rock deal made with the generals began to crack, when Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced the departure of his intelligence chief, General Toufik, in 2015. Many read the development as ushering in a new era in the Algerian state's historically troubled civil-military relations. General Mohammed Mediène, alias Toufik, reigned over the country's fearful Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS by its French acronym) for a quarter of a century. But when Ex-President

Abdelaziz Bouteflika sought to run for a fourth term in 2014, General Mohammed Mediène was said to have objected, prompting the president to terminate his powerful general's duties, in what was largely seen as an effort to consolidate civilian control over the military.

Thus, the divorce, however, abrupt, would prove difficult to execute in a country where the military played so significant a role in running the country. For the military, abandoning their political role would be synonymous with jeopardizing their nation. Algeria's past and the nature of the ruling FLN party, both a revolutionary party and armed movement, blurred the state-army divide. The army and the presidency each exercise power over their respective spheres of influence which are ever in flux. To be sure, the president is not a powerless figurehead. Instead analysts describe politics in Algeria as a mutual pact, its strength depending on the president's charisma and the state of the economy.



### **Replacing Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika**

In 2014, considering the president's failing health, the military thought it unwise for Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for a fourth term. However, in a rare moment of indecision, the army is believed to have con-

ceded to the ailing president's demands, deeming it necessary to preserve stability in times of uncertainty. Within months of his reelection, Ex-President Bouteflika announced through a series of decrees the dismissal of a number of officers suspected of disloyalty.

Prominent amongst those dismissed were the president's defense advisor, General Mohammed Touati, and Army Chief of Staff General Mohammed Lamari. Some analysts believed the army had finally been tamed and would henceforth work on guarding the borders and focus on professionalization. But professionalization does not necessarily mean becoming less politicized. The professionalization of the army is a fact. The People's National Army invested in quality training, and reduced military conscription from 18 to nine months. It also invested in women's training and their integration. It does not mean that they are withdrawing from the political arena. Their influence remains intact, it's worth mentioning how the military did manage the political crisis following the "resignation" of Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 2, 2019, and the management of the crisis until the election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in December 12, 2019.

A triangular system was born, the presidency, the army, and the ex-DRS are separate entities, all involved in a constant struggle to control the state.

Five years prior to the departure of the man [Mediènne] who is referred to as 'Rab D'zayer', "Algeria's Lord!", a showdown took place opposing the presidential palace and

this security leviathan that was the ex-DRS. As with all matters relating to the secret service, it is through an unpublished presidential decree that the head of state, Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, buried this super structure created in 1990, a mix of a political police and intelligence service agency.

A triangular system was born, the presidency, the army, and the ex-DRS are separate entities, all involved in a constant struggle to control the state. Then the late military's chief of staff, General Ahmed Gaïd Salah, described in a 2008 leaked cable by U.S. Ambassador to Algiers Rob Ford as "perhaps the most corrupt official in the military apparatus," was reinstated by Ex-President Bouteflika and General Mediènne because of his vulnerability. He was appointed head of the army in 2004 when Mohammed Lamari was dismissed. At the time, the late General Ahmed Gaïd Salah was not the obvious candidate. There were at least two or three candidates more senior to him.

Why was he appointed? He was the weakest link in the military and it meant that General Mediènne and Ex-President Bouteflika could blackmail him. If this is the case, Mediènne's dismissal is the product of inner machinations within the ruling elite.

## Stability and Continuity: Hirak 2019

Algeria's institutions need to be recast if the country is to be in a position to fully assume the role of an important regional power. The authority and respective roles of the army, the ex-DRS, and the civilian leadership must be defined more clearly. A necessary and long overdue initial step would be the appointment of a minister of defense, a post that Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika had arrogated to himself since becoming president

in 1999. Whoever is appointed needs to be appointed for a long period and not simply be sacked.

Parliament and its various commissions, notably of foreign affairs and defense, need to be given oversight authority and the means and latitude to perform this function. Among other things, these commissions should have the authority to vet strategies presented by the government. Back in 1989, the army had to decide whether or not it wished to include the middle class in the decision-making process and to encourage the entry of Algeria into the global economy. A generation later, it faces the same question.

The intelligence services still have considerable sway over the country. It is not because the intelligence service changed names again, the DSS or Department of Surveillance and Security, that the structure has actually

been dissolved. Despite the fact that Ex-President Bouteflika and Ex-Premier Ouyahia did not get along, it is believed that the latter was imposed on the ex-president when he was appointed chief of staff in 2014 and prime minister for the fourth time in September 2017.

It is believed that those like the ex-president's brother, Saïd Bouteflika are ephemeral actors who will be asked to step down eventually, and if they do not, corruption scandals will force them to. This is the ex-DRS' way of doing business. There is an unusual position within the regime in terms of communication in its crisis management of the people's peaceful uprising (Hirak). As a result, close observers to the Algerian sociopolitical situation prefer not to see the ex-FIS party fate scenario. It was a plausible solution to avoid a deepening crisis, the military had been loyal to the end towards Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.



During these protests, Algerian people have been chanting: "army, people brothers, brothers, army and the people are one hand." The fact that they have not gotten what they wanted, says nothing about them and everything about the institutional and social and societal barriers they confront. The people showed some gratitude for the role that the military played during the Hirak, in particular to the late General Gaïd Salah, who became Algeria's national hero, for overthrowing the ex-president and his clique as he himself named it, the Al-Essaba (Gang). Meanwhile he established order and discipline in the military institution, notably in the high ranks. On December 23, 2019, days after the election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, General Gaïd Salah died. And his right hand and trusted man, General Saïd Chengriha was appointed as interim military chief of staff.

### Algeria Military Turnover

The ghost of Gaïd Salah, in fact remains following the surprise resignation of General Ben Ali who was holding a position of strength and power. General Ben Ali resigned after having met with ten generals at the headquarters of the Presidential Guard in Bordj Al-Kiffan, east of Algiers, when General Interim Chief of Staff Saïd Changriha was on an official working visit in the United Arab Emirates to negotiate a new arms deal. Some sources in Algiers and Paris quickly believed that General Ben Ali, was about to be appointed to the post of deputy defense minister, a position the current chief of staff, General Saïd Changriha, does not hold, unlike his predecessor, the late General Ahmed Gaïd Salah.

On the eve of the 58th anniversary of Independence and Youth, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, the minister of defense and com-

mander-in-chief of the armed forces, promoted the army corps general, Commander of the Republican Guard Ben Ali Ben Ali, to the rank of general of the army. Such, a rank was never achieved by a senior officer of the People's National Army (ANP) since independence. Besides this, the acting chief of staff, Major-General Saïd Chanegriha, has been promoted to the rank of army corps general.

Noting that, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, also, promoted senior officers, colonels, and generals to senior ranks. These promotions have put an end to all the speculations and hypothesis which were reported by French media and Algerian so-called independent media for months on the relations between the new president in Al-Mouradia Palace and the military in Ali Khoja HQ.

These promotions in the military ranking will enhance the reforms, which will not necessarily turn Algeria into a western-style democracy, nor need that be their aim. However, their adoption will help ensure clear lines of responsibility and allow Algeria to project its power and influence more effectively. Whatever the quality of the ex-DRS, the army or the country's diplomacy, a major effort at clarifying Algeria's strategic aims seems imperative for what is the largest country in Africa. Algerian leaders need to engage more with foreign partners and explain to the country's 42 million what the country's regional strategy is. This will ensure greater transparency and overall stability.

### An Interim that Lasts

The appointment of the retired general, Abdelaziz Medjahed, as advisor to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, responsible for security and military affairs, on the other hand, demonstrates a strengthening of the networks of

the chief of staff. Former director of the Military Academy of Cherchell, General Abdelaziz Medjahed, was retired in 2003.

He knows General Saïd Chengriha well, having been his superior in the operational sector of Bouira (military region) in the '90's. They are both well trained and have proven professional experience in the field.

The turnover continues at an accelerated rate at the top of the military, which does not seem to have found its homogeneity. It was General Ali Ben Ali who concluded an agreement in 2019 with the late General Ahmed Gaïd Salah and had negotiated the guarantees that surrounded the forced departure of Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

### Progressive Destabilization

The neutralization of General Bouazza could be the prelude to other resignations, even arrests, within the army, where the networks of the DGSJ were numerous. The arrest operation with General Bouazza was to lead a destabilization campaign against certain chiefs of the regime. The powerful patron of com-

munications in the defense ministry, General Lachkham whose central role played in the election of Abdelmadjid Tebboune, is known to be one of the first victims of this re-structuring, for better or for worse, of the military.

Algeria's defense doctrine is outdated, better suited to a Cold War-era security environment than to meeting the security challenges the country faces today.

The Algerian army, which never stops stitching up the fractures born from the decapitation of the ex-DRS (Algerian Intelligence Service) in 2015, looks more than ever like a drunken boat, according to experts on the military question in Algiers. General Mohammed Kaïdi was appointed, by presidential decree on March 26, 2020 head of the "Employment-Preparation Department", the operational base of intelligence at the level of the Defense Ministry.



## Framing a New Defense Doctrine

Algeria's defense doctrine is outdated, better suited to a Cold War-era security environment than to meeting the security challenges the country faces today. While it is imperative that Algeria proceed to updating its defense doctrine, over the years, a number of powerful private groups have arisen which are challenging the status-quo. However, the Algerian government typically has responded to these pressures and demands by showering subsidies on consumers when the price of oil is high and suddenly making deep cuts when it falls.

Until the military accepts that bold economic reforms to modernize the Algerian economy will strengthen the economy, the weak performance of the non-oil sector, the cronyism, which too often characterized those private sector entrepreneurs, who were close to the rulers during Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's system, and the difficulty of creating real jobs in industry will continue to challenge the new administration.

The economic and political reforms initiated by President Chadli Bendjedid and his Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche (1989-1991) were blocked by the military, which used the emergence of the Islamic Salvation Front to sow fear among the middle classes, causing them to support a repressive policy that provoked a civil war, which resulted in up to 150,000 deaths. Arab rulers across the MENA region have used similar strategies with the same disastrous consequences. An economy which continues to be a victim of the "oil curse" does not offer a solid foundation for reliable social cohesion, a bold foreign policy, or greater influence in the Maghreb and the North African region.

Nevertheless, Algeria remains reluctant to send troops abroad because it fears their being turned into auxiliaries of a major power. The consequence of Ex-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's physical absence from the political scene due to his poor health made Algeria even more reluctant to do so. Six years later, no one in Algeria could have taken a decision of such an important matter in the state. The chief of staff of the army had a role of a crisis manager but has no legal or political obligation to be accountable before the Algerian Parliament's two chambers. The chief of staff has never publicly outlined a strategy and a policy framework on defense. One can only conclude that a non-intervention policy is no longer valid according to all the national security imperatives Algeria is facing today.

A crucial problem stems from marked differences between the ex-DRS and the army high command in their attitudes toward foreign counterparts. The Algerian army has always been reluctant to engage in any form of joint military exercise that might suggest its idea or *modus operandi* is being challenged. This lack of accountability goes together with a fierce nationalism, which simply tolerates no debate on ideas, weapons, and tactics with members of other armed forces and more and more Algerian officers are trained abroad to handle weapons bought in the U.S., Germany, Russia and Italy.

Algeria's institutions need to be recast if the country is to be in a position to fully assume the role of an important regional power. The authority and respective roles of the army, the Intelligence Service DSS, and the new civilian leadership must be defined more clearly. A necessary, and long overdue initial step would be the appointment of a minister of defense to a post that President

Abdelmadjid Tebboune has kept to himself. Whoever is appointed needs to be appointed for a fixed period and not simply be sacked. Parliament and its various commissions, notably of foreign affairs and defense, need to be given oversight authority and the means and latitude to perform this function.

Among other things, these commissions should have the authority to vet strategies presented by the government. The army had always to decide whether or not it wished to include the middle class in the decision-making process and to encourage the insertion of Algeria into the global economy. Two generations later, they face the same question.

The army sought to diversify its weapons purchases. By the late 1980s, after years of negotiations with France, Russia and the United States, the military opted to buy American air defense equipment and radar systems. During the civil war in the '90's, pitting radical Islamist armed groups against the regime, the West imposed an arms embargo against Algeria.

Since then, Algeria's military spending has inflated, as the country has embarked on a major effort to upgrade its defense capabilities. In 2007, Algeria converted its \$7 billion debt with Russia into an arms purchase of similar value. Algeria has thus become the second-leading customer for Russian weapons (after India) and the largest overall purchaser of weapons on the continent. However, these massive arms purchases are problematic for several reasons. First, the transactions have been conducted in a manner that has allowed many officers to enrich themselves. Second, this buying spree has stocked the Algerian armed forces with more weapons than are realistically needed for defense purposes.

Third, Algeria has received little, if any return on these purchases in the way of technology transfer.

This modernization went hand in hand with improvements in the training of the armed forces. The personnel of the various defense services received quality training in the use of sophisticated equipment and in anti-terrorist operations. The army has considerably increased its combat capabilities, its mastery of new advanced technologies and its stock of armaments. Second in Africa after Egypt, Algeria has 325 000 soldiers, 2 000 tanks, 300 combat aircraft, 160 transport aircraft, mostly Soviet-made, and 180 multi-functional helicopters. The Algerian army is among the most organized in the North African region.

It has significantly increased its capacity to control and master modern weapons technologies and is ranked 25th in terms of its capacity to master modern defense technologies and the use of complex electronic systems. Much of the armaments supplied in recent years are attack equipment.

In 2007 alone, Algeria had obtained 28 Sukhoi fighter aircraft, 36 "Mig" fighter jets, 16 "Yak 130" training aircraft, over 300 "T90 S" war tanks, and 8 ground-based defense systems in the form of "Tongoskei" surface-to-surface missiles. This equipment is largely intended for conventional combat. Algeria is constantly trying to return to the golden age of its diplomacy and regain its role. The 1970s and 1980s were the halcyon days of Algerian diplomacy. In 1974, Algeria helped oust the apartheid regime of South Africa from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). During the next year, Algeria was instrumental in the PLO obtaining UNGA observer status and succeeded in brokering an agreement

between Iran and Iraq to settle their border disputes.

### “Interim” Meant to Stay

Is the appointment of General Kaidi a sign of a strengthened consensus within the army? And is this the prelude to the upcoming confirmation in office of the current chief of staff, General Saïd Chengriha, who could no longer be an insignificant “interim”?

An essential question remains unanswered. It is not known whether the newly promoted candidate to the post of the Military Service Coordination will combine his new functions with his former prerogatives of service coordinator. If this is the case, the appointment of General Kaidi indicates a real restructuring at the head of the security forces where all the Algerian military services are now under the control of the general staff. The rise of General

Kaidi in the intelligence world, where he is not from, leaves open all the ambitions for General Lachkham, the boss of communications of the ministry of defense who becomes his subordinate. One certainty is, the re-distribution of the cards within the high military, which is accelerating, and the pledge made for the sustainability of the state, which does not appreciate being led by a simple “interim.”

### Conclusion

Algeria since 2011 showed awareness and concern in its new vision for national security, this being because of the latest developments in Libya, the Sahel, and in the entire MENA region. In this way, security concerns provide Algeria a solid interest and will to end the Libyan civil war and to end the ongoing turmoil in Mali following the military coup of last Au-

gust. This is as it has been doing in Mali since the crisis broke in 2012 in north Mali, and particularly in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks at the gas facility in An Amenas and hostage crisis in 2013 in the eastern province of Illizi close to the Libyan borders.

This attack has changed the dynamic of power struggle within the Algerian regime between the military and the civilian president since the 1962 so-called Summer Crisis.

This wake-up call was for the military and the intelligence service to reinforce domestic security and regional cooperation to fight the supranational armed groups across the region. The regional security explanation may justify a quantitative interest for Libya but it cannot explain its quasi-unanimous content.

Although, it would be in Algeria's best interest, it is tough to keep a balance of power in North Africa. Algeria's foreign policy usually focuses on a balancing role in a region that is integral to both regions, Africa and the MENA region. Algiers does not have any preference for who controls Libya, despite its support for the legitimate Libyan National Accord Government, this being for a stable Libya rather than another state of chaos on its borders.

It would not be natural to not be astonished and surprised by last year's Algerian's “Smile Revolt” or Mosaic Hirak. Nonetheless, all analysts agree on the country's trench war behind the scenes, and, finally, the military leaders decided to end the ex-president's fourth term and send him to rest. Unlike in 2014, when Algeria's generals and other power brokers okayed handing the presidency to a man who had a minor stroke in 2013, the generals then must know that they miscalculated when they decided to give Ex-President Bouteflika another term. To resolve this prob-

lem of their own making, they have pledged to undertake reform, but they are more likely going to use the time they have gained searching for a way to rescue a political system that represents their continuity in Algeria's political system.

In an op-ed of April, 2019's military magazine, (Al-Jeish), the message was lucid enough to the regime's oligarchs: there is neither a cohesive opposition nor a homogeneous protest movement leadership that is causing any direct threat to the military like ex-FIS did in 1991. This time, even if the military decided to end the protest movement and postpone the elections, they would not commit their peers' mistake of letting the elections go on democratically, as in the December 1991 parliamentary elections.

At that some experts have had predicted a future political model à la Chile. That is, the military in Algeria has already shown its political impartiality (the military insists it bears constitutional neutrality). If there is anything to note from Algeria's peaceful uprising against the ex-president's fifth-term candidacy and his clique, and the role of the military, it is that the democratic process that commenced three decades ago emerged from popular riots provoked by the regime's reformist wing in a surprising political confusion maneuvered by President Chadli Bendjedi. He then judged it necessary that the country was ready for political reforms. So, together, he, the moderate-nationalists in the FLN party, the Islamists, Nationalist-Democrats, and the Social-Democrats' opposition made an implicit visionary deal.

Accordingly, in the same year in 1989, Chile's generals led by General Pinochet changed Chile's political landscape. Chile's

social contract, the regime in Santiago admitted its failures and kneeled to the people's long struggle demands, accepting the sharing of power. What is interesting in Chile during the last three decades is that its political expansion and socioeconomic development drew a fair parallel with what happened in Spain post-Franco (the "Caudillo"). The Chilean political process succeeded because of the model that inspired this matter, the Spanish model. For an instructive insight on the part of Algeria, consider the maturity of the Chileans' opposition leaders and the elite to Pinochet's system.

As far as the new changes and defense and security shifting policy in the Algerian military go, there is a new generation of officers who emerged fully patriotic and republican and are less French ties oriented unlike their elderly, who either were past, are retired or are in exile. These elderly played a major role in the January 1992 coup and their management of the post-coup crisis led by the so-called "General quarteron." In the "General quarteron" the French intelligence presence was very strong with the generals in Algiers, using the alibi of fighting and coordinating the ex-FIS party militants and Islamic Armed Groups i.e. (GIA).

Recently the role of France has been diminished a great deal and the military's new doctrine is for more diversification of partners with Russia, China, and recently Turkey. This is following the latest developments in the East-Mediterranean and in the Maghreb, notably in Libya through intelligence sharing and military and police training. There is also a new cooperation with the U.S., owing to the U.S. national security interest and its global fight on terror, Algeria has become an imperative stand in the U.S. national and security

policy in the Maghreb and the Sahel. This is an opportunity for Algiers to split from Paris.

The latest French-Algerian relations are not on good terms and the new administration in Algiers feels less close with the French connection in Paris and Algiers. Algeria is really concerned about the turmoil in Libya and in the entire Sahel region, even though it is not fully adhering to Paris' Sahel policy such as the G5. Other moderate nationalist analysts in Algeria are also speaking about the Turkish model post-President Halil Turgut Özal, a model which would make possible a political and societal evolution. This evolution would be with the emergence of a new middle class to enhance the country's socioeconomic cohesion. Therefore, Algerian generals who have been trying to bring about some change for their people would benefit from reading the Chilean and the Turkish stories.

Algiers, on the other hand, maintains its multilateral policy with super-powers, refusing to get into the "polarizations" that are often undesirable in the alliances formed in the region. In this position, Washington has always accommodated itself to the Algiers balancing act to the point of diversifying its channels of purchase of military equipment and training of senior officers with a great penchant towards the historic Russian "ally". Americans seemingly did get why Algiers refuses temporary projections like the G5 Sahel and why only an attitude of the type "playing the long game", adopted by Algiers, remains the most relevant in conflicts of such complexity, like the Malian and the Libyan ones.

Algeria's institutions need to be shaped if the country wants to fully assume the role of an important regional power. The authority and respective roles of the army, the DSS,

and the civilian leadership must be redefined more clearly for the military power in its sub-regional and regional ambitions. This shift could allow Algeria to effectively perform its self-proclaimed role as a powerbroker and regional stabilizer, the first step towards a shift in its foreign policy that is more in tune with Algeria's desire to be recognized as a regional security provider.

This new paradigm of Algeria's foreign policy is: "Active and Pre-emptive." As a foreign policy it is still too early to qualify whether there will be a significant change in Algeria's foreign policy. However, one thing is certain, the doctrinal rigidity of non-intervention is no longer sustainable for Algeria's security and national interests.

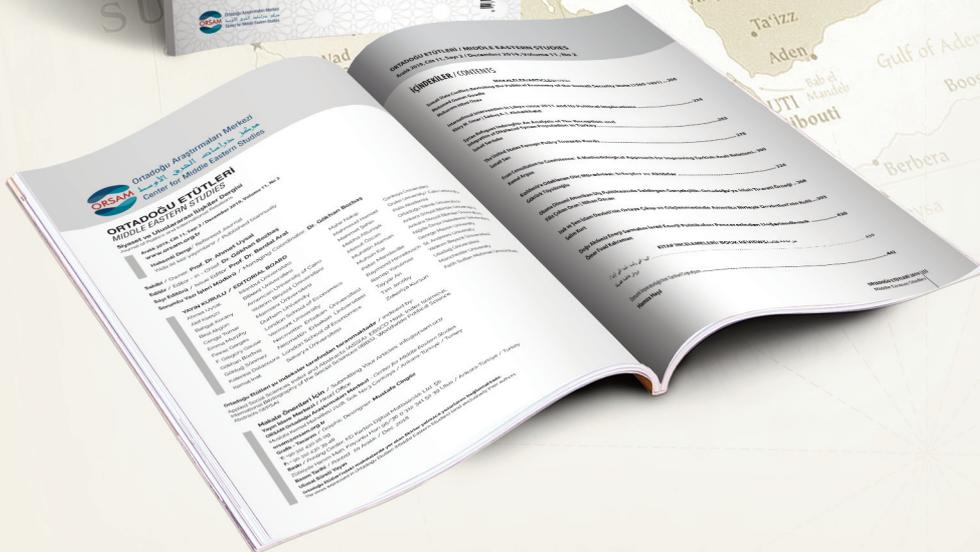
National security imperatives are sustaining Algeria's military deployments, which are significant enough to militarily contain neighbouring states' inefficiency and non-state supra-national groups actors operating in the region. They would not only break the decades long inactivity of Algeria's foreign policy, but also send a clear message that Algeria is back and wants to be in the driving seat.

The draft of the new constitution, proposed by the Algerian president, is adopted as it stands by referendum in November 2020. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and the military want to reintroduce a form of deterrence. The military doctrine of the late '70's is no longer the one that prevails domestically today in Algeria's military vision post-Hirak, Arab uprisings regionally, and recently in the wake of COVID-19 geo-economics, impacts and consequences on the country's national security dimensions.



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