

**Franco-American Rivalry
over Interests in Algeria,
1989 -2004**

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Abstract

The main intention of this paper is to investigate the idea of split between Washington and Paris on policy toward Algeria, from 1989 to the end of the first term of the Bouteflika Presidency in 2004. The focus, however, is on the two countries' respective policies toward the democratic opening, the rise of Political Islam, and the significant improvements in Algeria's relations with France and the USA under the administration of President Bouteflika. More specifically, it attempts to identify whether the American moves in Algeria are meant to undermine France's traditional economic and political role in the region and, consequently, intensify the post-cold war global Franco-American rivalry. The paper concludes with some remarks and suggestions concerning the French and American approaches to Algeria within the period under study.

ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث الاختلاف في السياسات الفرنسية و الأمير كية تجاه الجزائر خلال الفترة الممتدة من 1989 إلى غاية انتهاء العهدة الرئاسية الأولى للرئيس بوتفليقة في 2004. حيث تم التركيز على مواقف كل دولة تجاه التفتح الديمقراطي، ظهور التيار الإسلامي، و كذلك التغييرات الإيجابية على العلاقات الجزائرية مع كل من فرنسا و الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية التي أحدثتها الرئيس بوتفليقة. كما تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى البحث في حقيقة التواجد الأمير كي في الجزائر و الذي نتج عنه تنافس حاد غير معلن على المصالح الاقتصادية و الإستراتيجية في الجزائر التي تعتبرها فرنسا منطقة لنفوذها. في ختام هذه الدراسة هناك مجموعة من الملاحظات والاقتراحات حول المواقف السياسية الفرنسية و الأمير كية تجاه الجزائر في الفترة المذكورة أعلاه .

The political openness, economic liberalisation, and the rise of Islamism in Algeria in the 1990s stimulated significant concerns in

both France and the United States. These deep concerns came mainly from Algeria's potential resources and its geopolitical location between Africa, Southern Europe, and the Middle East. The West has always regarded Algeria as a strategically and an economically important country: it has a lucrative market, it has been a source of raw materials, a zone of hegemony, and especially a source of illegal immigrants and Islamic fundamentalism considered a threat to Southern Europe's security and identity.

Given this strategic importance, it was not surprising that the West, particularly France and the United States, showed interest in the country's democratic experience. Soon, however, they became particularly concerned over the rise of political Islam which, since 1989, presented an image of rejection of both the internal order and the international system.

With the arrival of President Bouteflika to power, Algeria showed signs of recovery and re-emergence on the international scene and won praise from the USA for backing the US-led "war on terrorism" following the September 11 attacks. As a result, French officials began to think that America was seeking a dominant role in Algeria.

Alarmed by the unilateral and interventionist American global role in the war on terrorism and visibly worried about the American diplomatic advances in Algeria, and fearing the loss of influence in its former colony, France reacted by declaring Algeria a strategic priority. It pledged to bring it completely within its sphere of influence in an attempt to preserve its privileged status in the face of the growing US influence.

France was apparently worried that it would be displaced by the United States, which was making progress with Algeria on all fronts: diplomatic rapprochement, oil prospecting and exploitation contracts, trade agreements, and military cooperation. As a result, the French concentrated on deepening the political dialogue, support for reforms, strengthening of France's economic presence in Algeria, and improvement in the conditions of the movement of people.

The aim of this paper is to study the evolution of the French and American foreign policy concerns towards Algeria, within the period between 1989 and the end of the first term of the Bouteflika Presidency in 2004. The focal point, however, is on the two countries' respective approaches toward the rise of Islamism, and the subsequent

improvements in Algerian relations with both France and the United States.

More specifically, the paper attempts to identify whether the US encroachment on France's important traditional zone of hegemony is meant to boost America's power in an area regarded by France as its sphere of influence and, consequently, intensify the global Franco-American rivalry. The paper concludes with some remarks concerning the two countries' policies in Algeria.

However, an understanding of Algeria's post-independence foreign policy as well as a better knowledge of the different historical experiences of France and the U.S. in Algeria, and the dissimilar interests and divergent policies of Paris and Washington toward Algeria over the few past years, are useful in understanding today's enhanced relations and apparent rivalry.

Post-independence Algerian foreign policy was strongly based on ideology. The Algerian War of Independence played an important part in defining the principles that stressed Algeria's identification with the newly independent under-developed countries. Dividing the world into the rich industrial nations of the North and the poor, former colonies of the South, Algeria declared its deep opposition to what it saw as a world spoiled by colonialism, imperialism, Zionism, and economic dominance by the former colonial powers. By implication, these attitudes meant a degree of distrust and antagonism toward the capitalist states of Europe and North America, and sympathy for liberation movements whose fights reflected Algeria's own struggle. Consequently, Algeria developed strong relations with the communist bloc especially the Soviet Union and China and adopted state socialism (Ruedy 211).

Relations between France and her ex-colony Algeria were complicated by a mixture of emotional and cultural complexities. However, despite strained political relations that originated from disputes over the Algerian expropriation of abandoned French property, their disagreements concerning particular issues such as the nationalization of French gas and oil companies, the Algerian emigrants, the Western Sahara question, and disputes over natural gas pricing, Algeria maintained a favoured position in French foreign policy, because of geographic proximity and the established trade links between the two countries, making the former colony strategically and economically important.

The foreign policy objectives of Algeria and the United States always collided. As Yahia Layachi argues, “Algerian domestic development and foreign policy orientation, during the first independence years, and the nature of the American foreign policy together contributed to widening further the gap between the two countries and sharpening further the images they had of each other” (*The United States* 33).

On the one hand, Algeria's devotion to strict socialism and to a global revolution against Western capitalism and imperialism worsened relations with the United States which it perceived as representing all that the revolution refuted. On the other hand, the United States' upholding of good relations with France and Israel meant adverse relations with Algeria in the years after the War of Independence. Moreover, the United States' intervention in Vietnam and other developing countries, Algerian backing of the Palestinians and assistance to revolutionary groups, America's sympathies for Morocco in the Western Sahara conflict and complete support for Israel all worsened a deep-seated ideological and political antagonism.¹ It is safe to say that from 1962 to the 1980s relations between the United States and Algeria were diametrically opposed on international issues, while economic and political relations between the two countries remained correct albeit not close (Adamis 229).

In the late 1980s, Algeria's economic and political problems together with the altered global situation brought about by the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union had restricted its foreign policy to a new “period of self-preservation from 1988 onwards” (Stone 228). Consequently, Algeria dropped socialism that characterized its political identity following independence and progressively moved toward political and economic openness “which came to constitute one of the Afro-Arab world's boldest experiments in political pluralism, liberalism and democratization” (Entelis and Arone 23). These reforms provided a new starting point for interaction and improvement of its relation with both France and the United States.

At first, Western officials were fascinated by the emergence of democracy in Algeria; they soon started to wonder whether the Algerian elections were really going to inaugurate multiparty rule, as other elections started to do in many parts around the world. At that time, democracy was regarded as the coveted outcome of victory in

the Cold War, but in Algeria, it seemed to suggest something different. Hence, some Western countries, including France and the USA, speculated about the consequences of democratically elected governments and about the relationship between Islam and democracy. In other words, Western policymakers faced a dilemma in Algeria. They wondered about how to implement democracy and promote reform without undermining their key interests. They were compelled to make a choice between a less democratic status quo and the potential outcome of an Islamist government that would actively reject Western values and interests. It was a battle of interests and ideals.

The rise of fundamentalism turned Algeria into a battlefield where a radical fundamentalist ideology and the Algerian authorities contended for power. This resulted in a virtual civil strife where even foreigners were targeted and forced to leave the country. Algeria became “the country where Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ would be the new test for ‘Western’ policy toward political Islam” (Rosenfeld). The latter’s thesis means that there exist irrefutable, clashing differences between civilizations, such as the gap between the West, with its secular values, and the Islamic world, which has not fully accepted secularism. This thesis explains why Muslim extremists would fight secular people.

For many reasons, what happened in Algeria seemed, in the eyes of France and the United States, to have large implications for North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The first and most important concern was the potential which Algeria had to become the “next fundamentalist state.”² The second concern was the possibility of considerable emigration to Europe as a result of an eventual government fall down. A third and more significant concern revolved around energy security because of large European and American interests in Algeria’s vast oil and gas reserves. Finally, and more reasonably, there was the probability of exporting the Islamic revolution to neighbouring countries in the Maghreb and the Middle East.

European worries over the rise of political Islam were such that some European officials regarded the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa as the major threat facing Europe at that time (Pipes). From the same perspective, the Civilian Affairs Committee of the North Atlantic Parliamentary Assembly published a report that

pointed out the increasing worry among member nations concerning political Islam:

The rise of Islamic radicalism in North Africa, whose most extreme manifestation is in Algeria, is worrying not only to the governments in the region, but also to those of the Alliance countries, which feel threatened by: 1) the erosion of confidence in democratic values to which this movement testifies, an erosion that could, moreover, spread to European countries with large Muslim communities; 2) the risk of a spread of terrorism based on blind defence of Islamic values; 3) the danger of large-scale migration that could accompany civil strife in the Maghreb. (qtd in Zoubir 68)

In 1992, the United States policy toward the rise of Islamism in Algeria was ambivalent and characterized by uncertainty. By 1994, however, the United States began to adopt a policy that would exclude the radical fundamentalists in Algeria, despite the fact that this was in contradiction with American support for democracy. James A. Baker, who served as Secretary of State during the four years of the Bush Sr. Presidency, argued that “We didn’t live with ‘democracy’ in Algeria because we felt that radical fundamentalists’ views were so adverse to what we believe in and what we support, and to what we understand the national interests of the United States to be” (Pipes and Clawson).

Political officials in France and the United States believe in democracy, the respect of human rights, and in constitutionalism, in limits of governmental power, and in pluralism. In the case of Algeria, however, the two nations were in a state of total uncertainty about what democracy really meant and how to promote it. The outcome was differing policies in a situation where the stakes for both countries were considerable. Consequently, while French policy supported the Algerian authorities and opposed an Islamist takeover, the American policy encouraged political reforms that would include “moderate” Islamists in the government (Rodman).

The rise of religious fundamentalism in Algeria had serious implications for France. Despite the fact that it wanted to see a peaceful settlement to Algeria's internal crisis, it strongly backed the successive Algerian governments since early 1992 largely because it feared that the arrival of Islamic fundamentalists to power would

cause an unwanted wave of new immigrants from this part of the Maghreb.

In fact, France remained the country with the closest links with Algeria, taking the leading role in setting the European Union's policy towards the latter. France convinced the Europeans not to use their power to influence the course of events within Algeria and, in return, the Algerian authorities ensured the prevention of huge external migration or overflow of violence into Europe, and guaranteed the flow of crude oil and natural gas without disturbance (Damners 180). The tacit backing of the French government turned into an explicit support of the Algerian government and opposition to an Islamist political takeover. Toward this end, Paris ordered a large offensive against Islamists activists in France, and encouraged other Western powers to help Algeria along economic recovery through financial assistance (Layachi, Algerian Crisis 5).

When the increasing violence in Algeria reached France, the latter started to look for greater security cooperation in the Maghreb countries. Some compelling reasons were behind this French attitude. Paris wanted to prevent the overflow of the Algerian crisis to the other Maghrebi countries so that Islamic fundamentalism could not obtain any political strength in either Morocco or Tunisia. Moreover, it wanted to assure some political stability and security in this region to preserve and enhance its investments. Most importantly, the French emphasised the importance of recognizing the Maghreb countries as a region of great interest to Europe in terms of security, social stability, and economic investment.

During the 1990s, when French policymakers started to worry about the impact of the Algerian crisis on neighbouring countries and on Southern Europe, the American authorities put forward policies which favoured the development of a more democratic system which would allow a broader political participation in the government. In effect,

The official U.S. outlook reflects the reality that, since the Iranian revolution of 1979, the White House has always carefully avoided antagonizing Islamist movements out of a belief that they may inherit the rule in a friendly country (Layachi, Algerian Crisis 4).

The United States preferred a political outcome to a military one in Algeria hoping that it can secure the support of the Islamists

through neutrality. Therefore, the United States insisted on "dialogue", urging the Algerian government to talk to its Islamist opposition. This U.S. attitude clearly worried the French who, since the beginning of the crisis, never stopped supporting the Algerian authorities. On a number of occasions, Paris tried vainly to convince the United States to abandon its dialogue with the FIS (Al Kabalan 1).

After the election of President Zeroual by a large majority in 1995, American policy toward Algeria became, in some ways, more balanced. The United States started to support Algeria economically. Politically, however, the U.S. continued the policy known "positive conditionality," meaning that acceptance or approval of the Algerian government as legitimate is dependent on the Algerian government's implementation of its promises of reconciliation, dialogue, and political and economic openness (Rodman 2).

This U.S. stance toward the rise of Islamism in Algeria was driven by two reasons. The first was to preserve and enhance its economic interests and opportunities and protect the safety and security of its citizens in the region. The second was to prevent what the United States believed might become a domino effect, because it feared that an anti-American Islamic rule in Algeria would almost undoubtedly give power to other Islamists in the region (2).

In its relationship with the Islamic movement in Algeria, France acted as a participant directly concerned with the social and political problems troubling the country. France threw its weight behind the existing political system by interceding in its favour in Europe, urging its partners to give it aid and loans, mobilizing its media machine in an ideological, political war against "Islamic fundamentalism," and providing the logistical and security expertise needed to crush the fundamentalists (Belkaziz 1).

In contrast with France's refusal of anything fundamentalist, the United States seemed more favourable to the Islamists and to dialogue with them. In fact, its analysis of the Algerian crisis finally impelled it to suggest that the ruling authorities look for a political settlement through dialogue with the Islamists. The United States' dialogue with the Islamists stemmed from Washington's desire to avoid the Iranian experience. In fact, the Americans tried to recognize the new political facts, adapt to them, and build a relationship with the Islamists that would protect its interests in the region.

The clash between the French and the American attitudes toward the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Algeria can be attributed to their different historical experiences and to their battle of interests over this area. France has always believed that Algeria is at the heart of its sphere of influence. It has always considered it as a natural extension of the French culture. Its objective for cultural influence in Algeria may be a pretext for economic hegemony, but that does not change the fact that it assembled all its potential to accomplish the dream of cultural dominance in Algeria. The strengthening of the Francophone trends in its educational programme in the Maghreb in recent years is a tangible indication.

With the revival of the Islamic collective culture that started to gain ascendancy within Algeria in the 1990s, France's cultural policy found itself challenged with a new opponent that was threatening the prevalence of its cultural influence. Consequently, France refused the idea of power falling in the hands of Islamists that could eradicate its cultural system.

The contradictory interests of the two countries concerning Algeria can be summed in the following way:

While France is seeking a Francophone Arab Maghreb that makes it feel the extension of its cultural and linguistic interests, the United States is seeking an Arab Maghreb market for its goods and an Arab Maghreb military foothold for its Mediterranean strategy against an emerging united Europe. So it doesn't care who rules the Arab Maghreb—the bearded elites or the allied elites—as long as its interests are protected. It is a conflict between two opposing interests, but in the first place, it is a conflict between two logics: the intellectual's logic vs. the merchant's logic (Belkaziz 2).

The French soon became convinced that the contradictory American approach toward the rise of Islamism in Algeria is hard evidence that Washington is worried more with strategic, security, and economic interests than by other necessities. Driven by this conviction, the French refocused their attention on Algeria. France's backing and funding of the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Initiative was part of the attempt to re-establish France's authority and control in the region through the European Union. In addition, France

sought to engage the economic support of the EU to tackle the economic problems facing Algeria.

This means that during the first years of the Algerian crisis French policy was far more consistent than American policy in opposing the rise of Islamism, certainly because of the enormous stakes France had in its former colony. However, from 1995 onwards, both the French and Americans provided support to preserve the stability of the Algerian regime, and to make sure that the latter was kept secure from any international interference.

Abdelaziz Bouteflika's fascinating offensive to improve Algeria's relations with the USA and even with France and his subsequent visits to France and the United States reflected the two powers' approval of his success in restoring national and international belief in the country.

Indeed, Algeria's request for closer relations with the United States has been met by U.S. approval of its important political and strategic role. George Bush's meeting with Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Washington twice in 2001, and subsequent visits to Algeria by senior administration and congressional officials, including State Secretary Collin Powell, helped to pave the way for such rapprochement.

Moreover, the United States recognised Algeria as a geographically strategic country with a wealth of human and mineral resources and whose proximity to Europe gives it the possibility to play a vital role in both the Arab world and Africa. Moreover, it pledged to work in collaboration with Algeria toward the building of a stable, secure, and democratizing country, which is fundamental to the U.S. strategic goals in both regions, by means of backing democratization, promoting projects for economic integration in the Maghreb region (the Eizenstadt initiative), encouraging U.S. corporations to reinforce their presence in the Algerian hydrocarbon sector, and supporting the Algerian authorities' endeavours in the fight against terrorism.

Emerging as a pivotal state, Algeria –as Paul Kennedy argued— was considered a country whose collapse would spell trans-boundary mayhem: “Its steady economic progress and stability, on the other hand, would bolster its region's economic vitality and political soundness” (Zoubir 66). Along this assumption, the United States realized that the stability and prosperity of Algeria is very important not just for the region but for the world as a whole.

France's pleasure to find in President Bouteflika an enthusiastic partner quickened the mending of relations with Algeria. During this process, France indicated that it was working to address issues of concern to Algerians, including the ease of movement for Algerian citizens and air traffic between the two countries, and the reopening of closed French consulates. Consequently, in recent years France fully supported Algeria's integration into the global economy by backing its signing in April 2002 of a Euro-Mediterranean partnership (EMP) agreement with the European Union and by supporting its application for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Faced with the failure of its previous policies toward Algeria, and alarmed by the warmth and depth gained in the relations between Algeria and the United States, France began to espouse the realism of U.S. policy toward Algeria by starting a political, social, and cultural rapprochement with Algeria in order to achieve further cooperation at different levels. The visits of the French President Jacques Chirac and a number of French officials, and the hosting of the Year of Algeria (*l'année de l'Algérie*) in 2004, and the visits of the President Bouteflika to France were obvious indications of improving relations.

The simultaneous warmth in U.S.-Algerian ties and cooperation, and the strengthening of the Franco-Algerian relations seem to indicate that France and the United States began a new competition for interests in Algeria. More than this, some analysts consider that the Americans were interested in obtaining an influential presence in North Africa hitherto considered an exclusive arena for France. Others believe that the French moves were intended to oppose the diplomatic advances achieved by the United States in Algeria.

In its concern with its economic interests in the Mediterranean region, the United States promoted a series of regional initiatives relevant to the southern Mediterranean, such as the Casablanca economic summit in 1994, and the Eisenstadt Initiative proposed in 1998. The US-North Africa Economic Partnership (USNAEP), formerly named the Eisenstadt initiative, was basically a US attempt to integrate the markets of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco and to enlarge their market size, so that US companies would to some extent find the region economically attractive and invest more heavily there. The plan also encouraged the three countries to build a regional market and increase the volume of intra-regional trade, and trade between North Africa and the United States. Moreover, the Bush

Administration proposed in May 2003 the idea of a Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) including the southern Mediterranean countries.

Such American regional initiatives witnessed the progressive presence of the Americans in a region that was, before the end of the Cold War, under the total monopoly of Europeans. In this respect, Yahia Zoubir opined:

The Eizenstadt Initiative revealed an important change in U.S. policy with regard to the Maghreb; the United States no longer considered the Maghreb as France's or Europe's *chasse gardée* (private preserve). U.S. officials consider the Maghreb market big enough for both the United States and the European Union. In particular, they view positively the Euro-Mediterranean initiative, as long as there is no discrimination against U.S. companies, because it contributes to the liberalization of the economies in the region, encourages more regional integration and reduces trade barriers (75).

Knowing that France and the United States have significant interests in both Morocco and Tunisia as long-time allies, one may venture to assume that recent political and economic developments and initiatives directed toward the region were all motivated by the recent recognition by both the French and Americans of Algeria as a pivotal state.

This assumption stems from three main reasons: the United States and France thought that the events that followed the rise of political Islam in Algeria could, for better or worse, influence, the neighbouring countries in North Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The second reason is that Algeria was considered a main source of Energy for Europe and the United States. Finally, the political openness and economic reforms and the freedom of the press undertaken by Algeria were highly praised by Western countries and regarded as unique experiments that should be followed by other Arab counties in North Africa and the Middle East. That is why France and the United States continued to battle for interests in the North African country and to assist it to reach political stability and economic prosperity.

Prior to the 1990s, the United States had neglected Algeria because a great deal of its attention and resources had been directed towards other countries in North Africa and Eastern Europe with focus on the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, fascinated by President

Bouteflika's statements on building ties with the United States following his election in 1999, and pleased with the great changes and significant reforms he projected in Algeria, the United States decided to improve ties with Algeria.

In this respect, Assistant US Secretary of State Martin Indyk visited Algeria in 1999 to strengthen US-Algerian relations and to look into prospects for future cooperation. According to him, Washington viewed Algeria as a regional force capable of playing a main role, both in the Maghreb and the Middle East (El-Qaffas 14-20).

Diplomatically, the Americans urged Algeria to settle its differences with Morocco over the Western Sahara issue. Economically, the United States supported Algeria in its efforts to reform its economy considering the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) a useful medium for trade and cooperation among the Maghreb States. Moreover, the United States expressed its willingness to provide help to the Maghreb countries that sought to join the World Trade Organization, or to negotiate Free Trade Agreements with the North African governments. Politically, the United States supported Algeria to work toward more political openness and real democracy. Finally, because Algeria is important, the United States has been considering a partnership with the Maghreb countries individually and collectively.

Another sign of improvement in ties between Algeria and the United States, and consequently the increase in U.S.-Franco rivalry, was the expanding military cooperation that the two countries began to establish. The growing interest of the United States in military cooperation with Algeria in 1998 caused serious concern in Paris which immediately displayed its wish to expand military cooperation with Algeria. In 1999, the Americans held joint exercises with the Algerian navy, and soon after the French Vice-Amiral Paul Habert, the Naval Commander for the Mediterranean, visited Algiers for urgent talks (Roberts 285).

The Franco-American rivalry became more visible when France and other European countries started to oppose American unilateralism and to raise objections against the use of force in Iraq. Replying to the Europeans and specifically to the French vision of an alternative world order that would challenge American leadership, the Americans under the pretext of global war on terrorism and the promotion of democracy, elevated their interest in Algeria.

France was obviously losing influence in its former colony due to the progressive presence of the United States. Consequently, the French intensified their diplomatic contacts with the North African countries and assertively supported the idea of building an all-North Africa economic union which would call for the settlement of the differences between Algeria and Morocco over the question of Western Sahara. The visits of Jacques Chirac to Algiers in 2004 and a number of French ministers in June and July 2004 were meant to open a new chapter in relations between France and Algeria, and to promote political dialogue, cultural and technical collaboration, as well as economic partnership.

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks, the Algerian government's position was reinforced. Given the role that Algeria might play in the fight against international terrorism, Algeria's strategic importance for the U.S. tangibly increased. In addition to its newly acquired strategic importance, Algeria became an economic attraction for the United States. Today, both countries share a great convergence of views on a wide range of issues of mutual interest, and project to establish a mutually desired strong and long-term strategic partnership.

France was not pleased by the U.S.-Algerian rapprochement and by the U.S. attempt to escalate its presence in an area regarded by France as its sphere of influence. Against this background, France wanted to open a new chapter in the history of its relationship with Algeria. In this respect, President Jacques Chirac signed a document known as the "Algiers Declaration" which meant to stimulate political dialogue, cultural and technical cooperation, and an economic partnership between the two countries.

Despite these remarkable improvements in diplomatic relations between Algeria and both the United States and France, there are still some obstacles to be removed so that such relations could acquire much depth in the future. The United States' stance regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the problem of the Western Sahara is still negatively viewed by Algiers. Moreover, there are no significant social connections between Algeria and the U.S.A. that could sustain a closer and strategic relationship. Therefore, the actual positive relations between the U.S. and Algeria are the product of some imperative interests that could, in the future, easily improve or worsen.

Contrary to the U.S.A., there are multiple and deep human links that unite France and Algeria. This Franco-Algerian intermingling could lead to a strategic partnership because it is in the interest of both countries. This would be possible when a vast field of political and economic cooperation is reached between the two countries.

The ongoing rivalry over Algeria should not prevent France and the United States to work together in North Africa because this region is big enough for both nations and offers real opportunities for economic investments. Consequently, they should realize that their interests would be enhanced if they cooperate and collaborate in addressing the problems of Algeria. They must bring the economic advantages necessary to alleviate the distress of the people, promote the emergence of strong civil society, and work for the promotion of democracy. Further, both nations should find other areas of cooperation in addition to the collaboration in the hydrocarbon sector, such as in the fields of cultural, technical, medical, and scientific exchanges.

France and the United States should not compete over dominance in this region especially Algeria, because the latter is well positioned to serve as a lucrative market and a major energy supplier for both Europe and North America. France should refrain from trying to win Algeria back at any cost and keep the U.S. away from its backyard. The United States, on the other hand, whether under the pretext of fighting international terrorism or promoting democracy, should try balance its policies and avoid pressing for global dominance which can only affect its own prosperity and international stability. The two powers should reshape their policies toward Algeria along transatlantic lines.

Notes

¹ See Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State*, (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1996).

² See Ian O.Lesser, "Policy toward Algeria after a Decade of Isolation" *Mediterranean Quarterly*-Vol.12, N°2 (2001)

³ See George Joffe, ed., "Perspectives on Development: The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (London: Frank Cass,1999).

⁴See Richard B. Parker, "North Africa: Regional Tensions and Strategic Concerns" (New York: Praeger, 1984

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