

THE MEDITERRANEAN: A GEOPOLITICAL ORBIT OF ALGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY



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Abstract:

This article discusses the Mediterranean as a geopolitical orbit of Algerian foreign policy. It sheds light on the challenges posed by the Mediterranean region and its significance in the context of Algeria's foreign relations. The article examines the geopolitical challenges faced by Algeria within this orbit and presents key points for achieving balance and influence in the region. It underscores the importance of the Mediterranean as a source of opportunities and challenges for Algeria and emphasizes the need for effective strategies to navigate this complex geopolitical sphere.

key words: *International Relations; National Security; International Conflicts; Regional Policy; vital orbits, Russian war on Ukraine.*

JEL classification: *F50,F51;F59; R50.*

ملخص:

يتناول هذا المقال البحر المتوسط كمدار جيوسياسي للسياسة الخارجية الجزائرية، لذلك، فهو يسلط الضوء على الرهانات التي يطرحها الفضاء المتوسطي وأهميتها في سياق العلاقات الخارجية للجزائر. فيتطرق إلى التحديات الجيوسياسية التي تواجهها الجزائر ضمن هذا المدار، وبعرض بعض النقاط المحورية للنجاح في تحقيق التوازن والتأثير في المنطقة. يعكس المقال أهمية البحر المتوسط كمصدر للفرص والتحديات للجزائر ويسلط الضوء على ضرورة وضع استراتيجيات فعالة للتعامل مع هذا المدار الجيوسياسي المعقد.

الكلمات الأساسية: العلاقات الدولية، الأمن الوطني، النزاعات الدولية، السياسة الإقليمية، المدارات

الحيوية، الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية.

تصنيف جال: *F50 ؛ F51 ؛ F59 ؛ R50.*

.Introduction:

Algeria is considered as a pivotal country within its geopolitical spaces, which fall within three main spheres: the Mediterranean, the Arab world, and Africa. These spheres serve as the main framework for shaping and determining Algeria's foreign policy, whether as a framework for achieving regional balance, defining diplomatic and economic relations, the content of cooperation and partnerships, or in accordance with the requirements of protecting Algerian national security that extends across these spaces. This is clearly stated in the Algerian constitution, which describes Algeria as "an Islamic land, an integral part of the Great Arab Maghreb, an Arab and Amazigh land, a Mediterranean and African country."

Located in North Africa, Algeria holds a strategic position as it borders to the Mediterranean Sea. This geographical location grants access to important trade routes and maritime resources. Additionally, the country's proximity to Europe and its role as a transit point for goods and energy resources further enhances its geopolitical significance in the Mediterranean.

Algeria's geopolitical position in the Mediterranean has implications for various aspects, including politics, security, and economics. The country actively engages with Mediterranean regional organizations, such as the Union for the Mediterranean, to promote cooperation and address common challenges. Algeria's stance on regional issues, such as migration, terrorism, and energy security, also influences the dynamics of the Mediterranean region.

Furthermore, Algeria's geopolitical role extends beyond its immediate neighborhood. The country has established diplomatic relations with countries in Europe, Africa, and the Arab world, further expanding its influence. Algeria's active participation in international forums, such as the United Nations and the African Union, allows it to shape regional and global agendas, particularly in relation to North Africa and the Mediterranean.

Overall, the Mediterranean holds a significant geopolitical orbit for Algeria, impacting its foreign policy, regional relationships, and economic development. The country's strategic location and active

engagement in regional and international affairs contribute to its role as a key player in the Mediterranean geopolitical landscape.

This study addresses the topic of "The Mediterranean: A Geopolitical Orbit of Algerian Foreign Policy" in light of developments in the international arena, which encompass various economic and cooperative practices. The study benefits from the urgent and geostrategic nature surrounding the often-discussed issues. Based on that, the study poses the following question:

What are the challenges and opportunities that the Mediterranean presents as a geopolitical orbit for assessing the strength and performance of Algerian foreign policy?

The answer to these questions and addressing their issues lies in identifying the hypotheses that cover the study's angles and explain its terms. These hypotheses can be defined as follows:

Algeria seeks to leverage its vital depth in the Mediterranean as a multi-dimensional geopolitical sphere to which it belongs as a powerful pivotal state. It possesses a significant vital space that carries regional and international weight and intersects with important geopolitical trajectories of major powers.

The study methodology requires combining multiple adjacent and integrated approaches; the study relies on functional approaches within the framework of the binary formula of Algerian interaction and within global, regional, and local environments. In this context, geopolitical analysis is one of the theoretical approaches that take a specific trajectory in analyzing state behavior. It considers "land" as a fundamental level of analysis that can be utilized for political, economic, social, and military purposes. Geopolitical analysis has accurately explained many aspects of political phenomena in the 21st century, relying on political analysis methodologies, especially those related to the strategies of regional and international powers and the competition among states within the international system.

THE MEDITERRANEAN, REGIONAL SPHERE OF ALGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY

For the first time in its history, the Constitution of the Algerian state in 1989 referred to this pivotal dimension in Algerian foreign policy (DPAR), which was confirmed in a statement by the President of the Algerian Republic stating that "Algeria has entered a stage of consolidating its belonging, which we proved during the Mediterranean Games in Oran in 2022. and thus we affirmed our Mediterranean part of our belonging." (APS, 2023) Algeria presents itself as "one of the most influential actors" (Hafsi, 2020) in the Mediterranean region, which is considered a crossroads between the European geopolitical space and the African geopolitical space, with its northern and southern shores. This confers upon it a deep historical strategic significance, with economic and political importance that has made it throughout the ages an environment conducive to conflicts and a framework that presents specific cultural interactions.

Algeria's presence in this region, despite the strategic advantages offered by the Mediterranean Sea, also poses instability factors that threaten its economic and political security. Therefore, Algeria explicitly emphasizes the activation of the Mediterranean dimension in its foreign policy in order to exploit its presence in confronting regional and international powers that are striving to inflame crises in the region and exploit them according to their interests. The region is known and continues to experience deep geographical, geological, and climatic disturbances. At the same time, it is characterized by political and cultural divisions as it has been a zone of contact and conflict between different civilizations over the centuries. It has witnessed profound changes in politics and statehood along its two coasts, dominated by the presence of the European Union in the north and the Arab-Islamic world in the south, which are the primary frameworks for Algerian foreign policy interactions.

The Mediterranean Sea has been a shared space since ancient Roman times, serving as a cradle for Western culture and the three major monotheistic religions. However, it is now primarily seen as a space of conflict (migration, religions, territories), but also a space of cooperation (energy, transportation). As a region located at the center

of the world and at the heart of the Earth geographically, the geopolitical situation cannot be separated from the magnitude of human flows and their cultural interactions that take place through it. It is one of the most dynamic and vibrant transit areas, yet least stable, encompassing approximately 23 countries and political, human, and cultural entities. This has made it a space for economic, cultural, and political convergence due to its social diversity and the historical events it has undergone since the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, accelerated after World War II until the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1990s, which turned it into an arena for American-Chinese-Russian competition.

Different actors in the region attempt to leverage the disruptions that characterize the relationships between its two shores in order to enhance their positions and better defend their interests. This is done by casting doubt on the intellectual, ethical, and normative models adopted by European countries to attract Southern countries (Ausseur, 2022). This calls for a reconsideration of cooperation between the North and the South in a presumed political integration project that aligns with the democratic aspirations of Arab peoples.

1-The Mediterranean, a Sensitive Area and an Open Field for International Tensions:

The Mediterranean experiences periodic tensions, manifesting as the final form of deeper and more complex interactions. It has become a laboratory for power relations, where new balances of global and regional forces are "reproduced." It serves as a center for numerous declared or potential crises that directly or indirectly affect the majority of its inhabitants. These include the Balkan wars, proxy wars in the Levant, and the repercussions of the Arab Spring revolutions in Libya and Syria.

Today, the Mediterranean is evident as a space of direct confrontation due to ongoing border tensions, notably the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus. This is reminiscent of its role during the World War and the Cold War. The security situation in Tripoli and the instability in post-internationalization of the Libyan conflict, events in Sudan, and the situations in Chad and Mali, which constitute strategic depth for

Mediterranean countries, periodic chaos in Syria, the Iranian-Israeli animosity, the political situation in Turkey, and Turkey's comprehensive strategy in the region, the political environment and economic crisis in Tunisia, the cooling in Algerian-Spanish relations and the repercussions of the Sahrawi issue, the fragility of Cyprus and the issue of its oil and gas-rich maritime coast. Despite its distance from new strategic polarization centers and areas of geopolitical tensions such as the South China Sea and the northern Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean remains a center of international geopolitical interests along with its shores.

a- Major Challenges and Infinite Stakes:

The Mediterranean is simultaneously a crucial gateway to European markets and a gateway to Africa. It serves as a maritime transit zone and a key contact area between the European, Asian, Middle Eastern, and African blocs. As a result, it poses as a region of periodic tension between three continents, making it a center of current and future interests for international actors. In its narrow space, it provokes all local and regional parties, requiring them to coexist and interact within it, due to the following factors:

- It is one of the major energy trade routes in the world.
- It is a "secret cord" for economic relations between East and West.
- It provides a framework for regional security balances, but with an unstable societal environment.
- It is a known area of vulnerability, as it is more penetrable than any other border region due to its physical and geographical nature.
- The Mediterranean coastline is sensitive, particularly vulnerable to the polluted effects of crises.
- It is an interface between the rich and the poor, serving as a direct contact zone between the advanced North and the underdeveloped South.

However, this geographically confined yet geopolitically open region represents:

- A space caught between Africa, which is experiencing immense demographic growth, an Arab world plagued by periodic tensions, and a Europe torn between openness and protectionism.

- It is characterized by chronic instability in the eastern Mediterranean.

- It exists in an environment marked by political and social fever in North African societies.

- It is a region at risk of growing migration threats from southern countries to the north.

- It is directly exposed to the threats of climate change and the increasing consequences of global warming, which have impacted security in all its dimensions: food, energy, economic, humanitarian, and societal.

2- Militarization of International Relations and the Investment of Global Powers in the Mediterranean:

The militarization of international relations and the investment of global powers in the Mediterranean have become increasingly prominent in recent years. This phenomenon involves the strengthening of military presence, the establishment of military bases, and the deployment of naval assets by various global actors in the region. Let's delve deeper into the key aspects and implications of this trend.

▪ **Geopolitical Significance:** The Mediterranean holds immense geopolitical significance due to its strategic location as a crossroads between Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. It serves as a vital gateway for trade, energy transportation, and migration routes, making it a focal point for global powers seeking to protect their interests and maintain influence in these key areas.

▪ **Resource Access and Energy Security:** The Mediterranean is rich in natural resources, including oil and gas reserves. Global powers aim to secure access to these resources to meet their energy demands and reduce dependence on other regions. The militarization of international relations allows them to safeguard their resource

interests and protect critical infrastructure, such as pipelines and offshore drilling platforms.

- **Maritime Trade and Shipping Routes:** The Mediterranean Sea is a vital maritime trade route, connecting Europe, Asia, and Africa. It facilitates the movement of goods, including vital commodities and manufactured products. Global powers invest in the Mediterranean to ensure the security of these shipping lanes, protect their commercial interests, and prevent disruptions that could impact global trade flows.

- **Influence Projection and Power Dynamics:** The presence of global powers in the Mediterranean allows them to project influence in the region and assert their geopolitical dominance. It enables them to shape political outcomes, support allies, and counter the influence of rival powers. Military bases and naval deployments serve as visible symbols of power projection, signaling capabilities and deterrence.

- **Security Challenges and Conflict Resolution:** The Mediterranean region faces various security challenges, including ongoing conflicts, terrorism, piracy, and illicit trafficking. Global powers invest in military capabilities to address these challenges and contribute to regional security. However, the militarization of international relations can also exacerbate tensions and increase the risk of unintended escalation. Thus, efforts should be made to promote dialogue, cooperation, and diplomatic solutions to conflicts in the region.

- **Regional Stability and Cooperation:** While the presence of global powers in the Mediterranean can have destabilizing effects, it also offers opportunities for cooperation and multilateral engagement. Countries in the region can collaborate with global powers to address common security concerns, promote maritime security, and enhance regional stability through joint exercises, information sharing, and capacity building.

▪ **Implications for Small and Midsize States:** The militarization of international relations in the Mediterranean has significant implications for smaller states in the region. It can create dependencies, influence their foreign policies, and potentially limit their decision-making autonomy. These states must navigate complex power dynamics and balance their own interests with those of the global powers present in the region.

In summary, the militarization of international relations and the investment of global powers in the Mediterranean reflect the region's geopolitical significance, resource access, and power dynamics. While it can enhance security and stability, there is a need for careful management to avoid unintended escalation and promote cooperative approaches to address common challenges.

The Mediterranean remains a pivotal space in the series of transformative events in human history, serving as a security and economic gamble for global actors more than for regional states. While the Mediterranean basin is a significant strategic area for the United States, China is enhancing its commercial presence in the Mediterranean within the framework of the "New Silk Road," consolidating its political and economic influence by gaining control over several ports.

Meanwhile, with the United States withdrawing its military presence from the region, Russia is seizing the opportunity to expand its influence in other parts of the world. The Mediterranean is viewed by Russia as a crucial gateway to warm seas, and its control over the Turkish straits offers a convenient path for its expansionist goals. Demonstrating its intentions through actions such as the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the establishment of the Tartus naval base in Syria in 2015, and the strengthening of relations with Turkey since 2016, Russia is actively pursuing its strategic objectives.

These developments align with Russia's longstanding doctrine in the region, which aims to destabilize the European Union while establishing a durable military presence in the eastern and central Mediterranean. By employing a combination of military interventions and political maneuvering, Russia seeks to exert influence over the

redistribution of gas resources in the area. This comprehensive strategy, as demonstrated during the Ukrainian war, fosters instability and enables Russia to leverage its operations in the region, all while exerting significant political influence. Regional powers, whether aligned with Western countries or not, also play a role in increasing tensions in the Mediterranean to expand their influence there. Among them are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt on one hand, and Turkey and Qatar, sometimes linked to Iran, on the other.

For Europe, the Mediterranean represents 25% of global maritime transportation and 30% of global oil flows. The Mediterranean seabed is also home to energy supply networks and a large number of submerged wired and wireless communication lines that facilitate the transmission of billions of digital data and endless streams of information. Additionally, in 2022 alone, 25,000 ships passed through the Suez Canal, accounting for 10% of global freight transportation (Jean-Marie Dedeyan, 2023).

ALGERIA IN THE FACE OF POWER DYNAMICS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN:

The phenomena in the Mediterranean Sea are a common source of challenges and opportunities that affect the participating countries in the region. The security, cultural, and geographical questions revolve around issues of cooperation and dialogue, requiring shared strategies to address them. Historically, events in the region have been interconnected, starting from the Suez Crisis in 1956, the Middle East wars in the 1967 and 1973 decades, the repercussions of the reopening of the Suez Canal in 1980, the end of the Cold War and the Barcelona Process in 1995, and even the events of September 2001 and the Iraq War in 2003 and their impacts on regional balances. These events form a "strategic memory" that helps in understanding current events and developing appropriate strategies to deal with them. Given the significance of energy routes in the region, Algeria finds itself obligated to develop diplomatic tools with a strategic approach to address these challenges.

The new stakes imposed by international transformations in the aftermath of the Russian-Ukrainian war have provided a starting point

for new diplomatic interactions for Algeria in the Mediterranean, based on old/new premises dictated by the power perceptions of the Algerian state and the requirements of the conflict over energy outlets and resources. The opportunities presented by the Mediterranean allow Algeria to play more active and dynamic leadership roles based on its interests and sovereignty. This is reflected in a systematic and comprehensive framework of policies that target different and varying parties, demonstrating a rational and balanced engineering of foreign policy. It stems from fixed and flexible axes and aims to align its conceptualizations with the endeavors of influential powers to maximize their security and preserve their interests in the region, especially due to the direct threat imposed by the series of regional changes and new border challenges, amidst the renewal of traditional alliances in the region.

Algeria exists within this geopolitical space that cannot be explained by simple bilateral relations but can only be understood by identifying the network of interactions and the type of relationships that govern the entities within it. Understanding the dynamics of changes in Algerian foreign policy in the Mediterranean is linked to tracing the intersection of the geopolitical circles to which it belongs and analyzing the resulting interactions from power relations and influence that occur beyond those circles.

The Mediterranean roots play an important role in Algeria's history, which began with the Barcelona dialogue in November 1995 to implement Euro-Mediterranean partnerships. This was followed by the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, initiated by French President Sarkozy, which has so far been unable to achieve its goals due to the divergent interests of the participants. Therefore, the Algerian-Mediterranean relationship is a mixture of regional considerations and globalization outcomes, which require the development of local and international collective action mechanisms.

1- The repercussions of the Russo-Ukrainian war on Algeria's position in the Mediterranean:

The repercussions of the Russo-Ukrainian war on Algeria's position in the Mediterranean can be analyzed from several perspectives. Here are some potential impacts:

- **Diplomatic Relations:** The conflict may have an impact on Algeria's diplomatic relations with Russia and Ukraine, as well as with other countries involved or affected by the war. Algeria's stance and actions regarding the conflict could influence its relationships with Mediterranean and international actors.

- **Energy Dynamics:** The war may have implications for energy dynamics in the Mediterranean, including the supply and pricing of natural gas. As both Russia and Ukraine are significant players in the European gas market, any disruptions or shifts in energy flows resulting from the conflict could indirectly affect Algeria's energy position and its role as a gas exporter.

- **Geopolitical Considerations:** The conflict could lead to shifts in geopolitical dynamics within the Mediterranean region. It may impact alliances, partnerships, and power balances, potentially influencing Algeria's strategic positioning and its role as a regional actor.

- **Migration and Security Challenges:** The war contribute to migration and security challenges in the Mediterranean. Escalations in the conflict could lead to increased displacement and migration flows, potentially impacting Algeria as a transit country or as a destination for refugees. It could also pose security concerns related to regional instability and the spread of extremist ideologies.

- **Economic Factors:** The economic consequences of the conflict, such as sanctions or changes in trade patterns, could indirectly affect Algeria's economic ties with Mediterranean countries. Trade relations, investment flows, and economic cooperation may experience shifts or adjustments due to the externalities of the war.

The importance of Algeria as a primary energy supplier to Europe lies in its strategic position in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While countries in North Africa share concerns about the instability in the region, the influence of Russia is increasing, and significant security and economic challenges are anticipated.

The common interests between Europe and Algeria form the basis for a broad partnership that goes beyond energy cooperation to include economic partnerships and coordination of foreign policy, this partnership can help meet Europe's energy needs and enhance regional stability in the southern region.

Algeria is currently striving to enhance its role as a regional power. The repercussions of the Russian war in Ukraine amplify the domestic and foreign policy challenges facing Algeria, necessitating a reassessment of its security partnerships.

The aftermath of the Ukraine invasion has boosted Algeria's position as an energy supplier capable of assisting Europe in bridging the gap in gas supplies due to many countries ceasing to deal with Russia. These energy opportunities align with Algeria's duty to stability in the region and Europe's desire for new security partners following the deterioration of relations with Russia. Based on these shared interests, there are significant potentials for a broad partnership that goes beyond energy cooperation. Both Algeria and Europe are exploring ways to build a more consistent and diversified relationship on these foundations.

It's important to note that the specific impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war on Algeria's position in the Mediterranean would depend on various factors, including the duration and intensity of the conflict, the responses of regional and international actors, and Algeria's own actions and policies in response to the situation.

There are significant possibilities for a broad partnership between Europe and Algeria, with their current partnership largely focused on the energy sector. However, Algerians and Europeans are exploring ways to enhance and expand this partnership.

Several European officials, including the President of the European Council, the European Commissioner for Energy, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, have been hosted in Algeria. The French President and the Italian Prime Minister have also led delegations to strengthen bilateral relations between the countries (Ghibouli, 2023).

Following the conflict in Ukraine, new opportunities for cooperation between Algeria and Europe emerged. Russia used natural gas as a weapon in an attempt to pressure European countries to abandon Ukraine, and Algeria benefited from its reputation as a reliable energy supplier in southern Europe.

When the Mediterranean region was affected by the disruptions resulting from the Arab uprisings, Algeria became a safety valve for security and energy cooperation in the region, ensuring gas supplies to Spain and Italy.

Algeria capitalized on the opportunities that arose after the invasion of Ukraine, offering assistance to fill the gap caused by Russia's halt in gas supplies. New contracts worth \$60 billion were signed, and cooperation in renewable energy and technology transfer was enhanced.

Algeria signed agreements with France and Slovenia for natural gas supply and expanded its liquefied natural gas exports. The Italian energy company also signed an agreement for joint hydrocarbon production and emissions reduction.

In addition to energy, Algeria is working on broader investments in renewable energy sources and other industrial sectors such as information and communication technology, tourism, and education. There is also potential to enhance cooperation in other areas such as infrastructure, trade, and investment.

Overall, Algeria and Europe are seeking to deepen their partnership and expand the scope of cooperation in various fields. The energy sector is currently the main focus, but there are opportunities to strengthen cooperation in other areas for mutual benefits.

Algeria has been positively affected by the cessation of Russian gas supplies to Europe after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. After more than a year and a half, Algeria managed to become the second-largest energy supplier to Europe through pipelines, following Norway, according to the "Gas Exporting Countries Forum" report.

Algeria accounted for 20% of energy exports to Europe, second only to Norway, which held a 54% share. Algeria significantly

increased its share of gas exports to Europe during the years 2022 and 2023, as Russia had long dominated gas exports to the European continent, both in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and via pipelines(2023 الأوسط،).

Algeria is among the major beneficiaries of the effects of the war in Ukraine on global gas markets. Due to the sanctions imposed on Russia, European countries faced an energy supply crisis, and Algeria seized the opportunity to increase its gas exports to the continent. Italy is one of the largest importers of Algerian gas during the Russian war on Ukraine. Algeria aims to enhance its capabilities in energy exports to Europe and explore the potential for expansion in the renewable energy sector.

2- Algeria As a geopolitical actor in Mediterranean strategic transformations:

The geopolitical and strategic landscape in the Mediterranean region is undergoing significant changes, and Algeria finds itself at the forefront of these transformations:

- Regional Power Dynamics;
- Maritime Security;
- Resource Exploration and Management;
- Regional Cooperation.

Algeria's response to these geostrategic and strategic transformations in the Mediterranean reflects its commitment to safeguarding its national interests, promoting regional stability, and contributing to the overall development of the Mediterranean region.

Algeria's outlook on regional and international levels indicates its significant comeback as an important diplomatic player. Algeria has benefited from the transformations and changes in the international and regional landscape to enhance its relations with various countries and strengthen its role as a mediator and source of peace and security.

In the European context, economic relations between Algeria and several member states of the European Union have expanded, particularly in the energy sector, where Algeria is considered a potential alternative to Russian gas. Some European countries have

also requested Algeria to play a more active role in regional security, especially after France's withdrawal from Mali.

Relations between Algeria and the United States have been strengthened in the field of counterterrorism, while Russia has remained a key pillar for Algerian defense. Algeria has also sought to expand its relations with other powers such as China, Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa through its request to join the BRICS group of emerging economies.

Algeria is also striving to enhance its role in Arab and African issues, as it has hosted the 31st Arab Summit, the Mediterranean Games, and the African Nations Championship. Algeria seeks to position itself as a supporter of just causes and a leader in resistance against the normalization process between Arab countries and Israel.

In summary, it can be said that Algeria seeks to leverage regional and international transformations to enhance its diplomatic role and expand its network of relations with various countries, whether in the West, East, or the African continent, with the aim of strengthening its position and pursuing its national interests.

The changing dynamics of the international and regional landscapes have presented Algeria with opportunities to broaden its relationships and strategically pursue a multi- or poly-alignment approach.

Algeria's emerging role in the Mediterranean is gaining attention. The country's military capabilities are expanding, along with the enlargement of its Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), and its growing assertiveness, causing concerns within the region (Maccabelli, 2023). The proposed 2023 budget reflects an astonishing 130% increase in military spending, reaching an unprecedented peak of \$22.78 billion, equivalent to 13.8% of Algeria's estimated GDP. It is worth noting that the global average for military expenditure is approximately 2.2% of national GDP (Troisi, 2021)

Even prior to this significant increase, Algeria already held the highest defense expenditure among African nations. However, such a substantial rise would further widen the gap between Algeria and other African states, solidifying its position as a central player in

Northern Africa and Mediterranean affairs. Additionally, as noted by Troisi (2021), the escalating level of instability in the Mediterranean over the past decade has prompted Algeria to strengthen its naval capabilities. This includes the procurement of three Chinese Corvettes of the Adhafer – C28A class, two Meko A200 multipurpose-combination ships of German production, and two Kilo 877EKM class and four Kilo 636 class submarines of Russian production (Troisi, 2021).

These acquisitions not only significantly enhance Algeria's naval capacity, positioning it as one of the major naval powers in the Mediterranean, but they also raise concerns due to the level of military cooperation with Moscow and Beijing. This, in turn, fuels strategic and security apprehensions among European states.

At the same time, military cooperation between Algeria, Moscow, and Beijing raises some strategic and security concerns among Mediterranean European countries for several reasons:

- **Increased regional influence:** Some view the military cooperation between Algeria, Russia, and China as bolstering their regional influence beyond the scope of the Atlantic partnership and granting them a greater presence in the Mediterranean. This could affect regional balances and European interests.
- **Military and technological convergence:** The military cooperation between Algeria, Russia, and China raises concerns regarding the transfer of military technology, training, and the development of Algerian military capabilities. This could lead to an improvement in Algeria's military capabilities and increase its competitiveness in the Mediterranean and the region.
- **Impact on regional security and stability:** Some European countries are concerned about the impact of military cooperation between Algeria, Russia, and China on regional stability in the Mediterranean, especially given the existing

tensions in the region. The increase in Algeria's military capabilities could contribute to escalation and regional tensions.

- **Economic and trade implications:** Military cooperation between Algeria, Russia, and China is considered part of comprehensive relations between these countries. This could have implications for economic and trade relations between Algeria and Mediterranean European countries, raising concerns about economic dependence and trade exchanges.

These concerns reflect some of the strategic and security challenges faced by European countries regarding military cooperation between Algeria, Russia, and China, and require careful monitoring and assessment of developments in the region.

Conclusion :

The Mediterranean holds significant geopolitical importance for Algeria. As a North African country with a vast coastline along the Mediterranean Sea, Algeria benefits from its strategic location in several ways: economic importance, energy resources, maritime security, regional influence, migration and refugees.

Algeria's foreign policy in the Mediterranean differs from other countries in the region in several ways such as Mediating Role, Non-Alignment: Algeria has pursued a policy of non-alignment, maintaining a balanced approach and avoiding aligning itself with any particular regional bloc or power. This allows Algeria to maintain its independence and leverage its position as a neutral actor in the region. Focus on Security and Stability, Algeria places a strong emphasis on security and stability in the Mediterranean. It actively cooperates with neighboring countries and regional organizations to combat terrorism, organized crime, and other security challenges, seeking to create a safe and stable environment in the region. and Economic Cooperation, Algeria promotes economic cooperation and integration within the Mediterranean region. It seeks to enhance trade relations, investment opportunities, and economic partnerships with neighboring countries, contributing to regional development and prosperity.

The effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine continue to impact the world and the Mediterranean region to this day. This situation has provided Algeria with an opportunity to benefit from the financial and strategic advantages resulting from this war in recent months. The benefits have not been limited to that alone; they have also contributed to the reassertion of Algeria's diplomatic foundations on the global stage, particularly in the Mediterranean region, including the reinforcement of the role of the Non-Aligned Movement. This has prompted Algeria to take new, proactive, resolute, and risky measures in its foreign policy, such as considering the possibility of Algerian military intervention in Libya and suspending the Treaty of Friendship, Good Neighborliness, and Cooperation with Spain, which was signed two decades ago due to geopolitical disputes.

Furthermore, Algeria seeks to play a pivotal and dynamic role in the region to regain its diplomatic position. This desire is evident through its continuous support for just causes, such as the conflict in Western Sahara and the Palestinian issue. This includes its diligent efforts to adopt a Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip following the brutal Zionist aggression in response to the events at Al-Aqsa Mosque. Additionally, Algeria was recently elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term starting in January 2024. Algeria also faces new challenges in the regional circumstances that have redefined its traditional principles in foreign policy, including regional conflicts and instances of instability in its neighboring countries.

Algeria believes in the importance of multilateralism and regional cooperation. It actively engages in regional organizations such as the Union for the Mediterranean, the Arab League, and the African Union, advocating for collective decision-making and cooperative approaches to address common challenges.

Algeria adopts a diplomatic approach to manage its relationships with neighboring countries involved in conflicts. The country's foreign policy principles, such as non-interference, respect for sovereignty, and the peaceful resolution of disputes, form the basis of its approach.

By adopting these approaches, Algeria aims to contribute to conflict resolution, support stability in its neighboring countries, and

prevent the spillover of conflicts into its own territory. Algeria's emphasis on diplomacy, non-interference, and political solutions helps to maintain constructive relationships with conflicting parties and positions the country as a regional mediator.

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