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ALGERIA

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Internal Affairs

Nahnah Discusses Prospects for Government Dialogue

92AF1064B Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 7 Jul 92 p 9

[Article: "Minister of Defense Has Been Protecting Algeria From Civil War for Eight Months"]

[Text] Algiers—Algerian Hamas Movement leader Mr. Mahfoud Nahnah, a leading figure in the reclusive Islamic Front in Algeria, announced that the discussions between the government and the opposition had reached agreement on the democratic course of the nation and the adoption of dialogue between all nationalistic forces as a means to emerge from the crisis, in addition to the rejection of violence in all its forms and origins, whether it be the violence of authority or the violence of groups acting in the name of intellectualism and Islam. Nahnah said that Mr. 'Ali Kafi, Higher State Council chairman, was well known for his long-running struggle and firm positions since inception of the Algerian Revolution, and that, "We have too high an opinion of him to suspect that he may fall into the trap of stopping the dialogue, because that would tear the social fabric of Algeria".

The Hamas Movement leader maintained that General Khaled Nezzar, Algerian defense minister and the most powerful man in the Presidential Council, holds fast to dialogue with all nationalistic and opposition forces in confronting certain other elements within the Council, which seek to disrupt the progress of the dialogue.

Mahfoud Nahnah added that the crisis Algeria is currently undergoing will abate within the next few weeks as a consequence of the Higher State Council's striving for a government reshuffle that will not clash with the [sacred truths] and tenets of Algerian society.

The preceding is from AL-AHRAM's meeting with Mr. Mahfoud Nahnah, Algerian Hamas Movement leader, which took place in Mr. Nahnah's office in the heart of the Algerian capital at 2030 two nights ago. Our first question concerned his conception of the state of affairs in Algeria after the assassination of Algerian President Mohamed Boudiaf. His reply:

[Nahnah] The current state of affairs in Algeria is one of extreme regression ("due to the skidding") we had warned against prior to its occurrence and whose consequences and motives we wanted to be removed. The problem of Mr. Boudiaf's assassination is a consequence of the lack of vision about a dialogue and an escalation of worry, which led to increased tension. Today we repeat the need for the causes of violence to be removed and for the violence not to escalate in the coming days.

[AL-AHRAM] You revert to cautioning against violence, despite the Algerian Higher State Council's inclination towards dialogue....

[Nahnah] (interrupting) Two days ago the Council gave publicity to two important indicators: first, the refusal of Council members to nominate themselves for president during the upcoming elections and, second, this Council's endeavor to surround itself with a group of socially and politically active forces in this country. If Mr. 'Ali Kafi, the

leader of the true representation of active movements that promise to expand the scope of consultation, was to continue to abide by these two indicators, the matter would take its natural course towards easing tensions in the manner exemplified by the consultations scheduled to take place within a few weeks. However, should the Council refuse to listen and proceed contrary to its proclamation, then no one can predict the consequences.

[AL-AHRAM] In your view, how would the expected easing of tensions be achieved?

[Nahnah] It is essential that the recommendation of both the executive and consultative councils be obtained. The absence of a purposeful recommendation by these two councils, which would give all of the operative parties the opportunity for the domestic representation, would result in the erosion of the Council from within. We have too high of an opinion of Mr. 'Ali Kafi to suspect that he might allow that to happen. He is well known for his struggle that began at the inception of the blessed Algerian Revolution. In order for him to avoid this trap, he should live up to the responsibility he was given. Otherwise, he may cause the social fabric of the Algerian people to tear and squander the gains for which the sons of this nation have sacrificed for the last 30 years.

Most Powerful Person on the Presidential Council

[AL-AHRAM] In light of the consultations that took place between yourselves and the Presidential Council, how do you picture the situation now?

[Nahnah] In truth, the situation appears positive. However, the president should make his decisions in light of the political problem we now face, and he should announce his opinion of the standing government because it is neither of his doing nor of his creation. This would help the Resident to pose solutions to the crisis.

[AL-AHRAM] Is General Khalid Nezzar in favor of dialogue?

[Nahnah] Information has shown that the defense minister has taken up the dialogue question. This is a glimmer of hope and a positive contribution toward attaining guarantees of liberties, security, and stability.

[AL-AHRAM] But does he have the authority to force the dialogue on the disapproving factions?

[Nahnah] (interrupting) Were it not for Khalid Nezzar's authority, Algeria would have been flung into civil war eight months ago. He is among the most active members of the Presidential Council.

[AL-AHRAM] Nevertheless, generals, such as Interior Minister Larbi Belkheir, yesterday announced their opposition to dialogue with the Islamic Front, in which you are a leading figure?

[Nahnah] Perhaps the interior minister was thinking of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS], which was disbanded by a judicial ruling. Rejection of dialogue with one party does not denote the stoppage of dialogue with most of the other parties. As long as there is an agreement to talk, this constitutes a positive step that must be seized and improved upon.

[AL-AHRAM] Does this mean a retraction of your support for the FIS?

[Nahnah] (interrupting) It is clear and conclusive from our previous statements. We repeat that the FIS, under the leadership of Abassi Madani, had been a pragmatic and strong party. Despite its actions, as they say, the Front boasts elements with the ability to debate and achieve the positive results that all Algerians need.

[AL-AHRAM] Nevertheless, we have heard of government contacts and other attempted contacts with elements of the FIS. Is it true?

[Nahnah] Ask the FIS or the government about this matter.

[AL-AHRAM] On another subject: What are the differences between your course and that of the FIS, considering the fact that you represent opposition under the banner of the Islamic Front?

[Nahnah] I do not wish to enter into a comparison; the Islamic movement is suffering greatly today. I could be answerable to these statements. We act in accordance with three principles: knowledge, work, and justice; and three particularities: provincialism, realism, and objectivity. All of this is linked to preservation of fundamental liberties, including the democratic course. All parties involved accept the rotation of power. In a nutshell, we in Hamas have embraced constructive, positive opposition in accordance with our motto: "shuracracy" [following a policy of consultation.] Consequently, we believe in strength of character and are receptive to cooperation. We do not live in isolation from this age, and we are working with all sectors of society to emerge from the state of darkness to one of prosperity...one that is far removed from an inflexible view of texts or one that stifles the understanding of Islam.

[AL-AHRAM] In this context, what is your justification for certain acts of violence in Algeria some members of Islamic groups have been accused of perpetrating?

[Nahnah] It is true that there are those who may resort to violence, but who has pushed them to these acts? When subjugation and suppression are aggravated, some are compelled to abandon the system in the absence of the teacher, the instructor, and in the face of life's economic and social crisis. In our opinion, dialogue contains the solution. Islam rejects violence and does not condone extremism.

Plan To 'Destabilize' Nation Analyzed

92AF1295A Algiers HEBDO LIBERE in French
9-15 Sep 92 pp 16-18

[Article by Abderrahmane Mahmoudi: "Technical Analysis of the Plan To Destabilize Algeria: Details on 'Plan C'"]

[Text]

[Boxes, p 16]

The analysis we are presenting here is the fruit of extensive research done by the HEBDO LIBERE team, which has made Algeria's stability its credo and the fight against any threat to it the very essence of its battle.

This document, which we hope will be useful, should provide every citizen with a background sufficiently broad

and flexible to enable him to understand and calmly evaluate all events, events which, when considered separately, give a false impression of disorder and incoherence.

In forging our own analytical tools, we have grouped all situations that fit into the category of unmistakable aggression now being visited upon our country as Plan C. Nor is this accidental, because the plan is preceded by a Plan A and a Plan B. Plan D is already in the works.

Thus it is that knowledge enables us to foil all plots.

1. The priority given by the artisans of Plan C to the killing of policemen and gendarmes and the sudden halt in attacks on soldiers or officers belonging to the ANP [People's National Army] stems from lessons they learned from the attack on the military post at Guemmar. The first such lesson is that ANP units are far too heavily protected and isolated from any direct contact with the people to be approached without too many casualties being inflicted on the attackers.

The second lesson is that, instead of setting off blind, savage reactions, the attacks on Guemmar and the Admiralty actually caused the Army to strengthen its own security arrangements and become even more effective and professional.

The third lesson is that the attacks caused the ANP to close ranks and generated greater vigilance for subversive elements liable to instigate any kind of political agitation.

These three essential elements led the authors of Plan C to halt any action aimed at strictly military objectives.

2. While elements of the National Gendarmerie were positioned around the group ambushed at Khazrouna, three gendarmes were attacked while on a routine patrol and two of them murdered in cold blood. The connection between the two events is not gratuitous, but rather, suggests that the instigators of the Khazrouna contact tried to force the gendarmes to seek blind revenge and engage in indiscriminate acts of slaughter against the people of Khazrouna.

Likewise, every "contact" of this type is preceded or accompanied by a series of attacks against elements of the security forces in an attempt to engage the latter in a cycle of repression-blind revenge.

What the authors of Plan C do not fully understand is that, while the repression factor has definitely been incorporated by security forces, the element of revenge has scarcely any place when dealing with people who are only one of many parts of a nation to which we all belong.

3. Taking full advantage of the deepseated and disturbing state of disrepair into which our security services had fallen at the end of Bendjedid's reign, the designers of Plan C tried to lend credit to the thesis that certain murders of members of law enforcement agencies were the result of a secret war under way between the different security corps, the so-called "Corps War." Actually, the lack of any close coordination between these corps was no secret and such comments were consequently common.

Because that gap has been filled by an organic rapprochement between the different commands, it turns out that what we are actually witnessing is a war between all Algerian services combined against well-known foreign services.

4. By systematically attacking gendarmes and plainclothes policemen and mingling with local people, the authors of Plan C are trying to force security services to go back to their barracks and surrender the people to the Fundamentalists. Mechanically mouthing the teachings of Ho Chi Minh, they are fighting to win the exclusive right to spread their message among the people. It is therefore no accident when gendarmes are killed while washing their cars, visiting their relatives, or having coffee with friends. [End boxes]

Following the slaughter at Khezrouna, there can be no further doubt about the real objectives of the subversive war being waged under our very noses. Thinly veiled appearances conceal nothing less than the application of a well-designed plan running like clockwork. To be convinced, one has but to go over the facts one by one and fit them into their own dynamic.

If one goes back to the launching of Plan C starting with the arrest of the FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation] leadership, one discerns the following stages:

1) The execution of law enforcement officers. The essential purpose of this phase, aimed at putting security forces on the defensive, is to "set things in motion," meaning creating ambiguous feelings in members of security services: a constant insecurity resulting in an intensification of aggressiveness aimed at Islamists. The figure of 1,000 executions must be taken very seriously because, in the minds of those who set it, it corresponds to a threshold of violence sufficiently high to transform members of law enforcement agencies into killers incapable of reasoning, forcing them into forms of antisocial behavior in which universal repression may be a constant temptation.

2) If the execution of anonymous rank-and-file officers turns out to be insufficient to sow panic, the plan was to attack those known for their affability, civic-mindedness, and honesty in order to exacerbate the feeling of hatred for Islamists.

3) As for the execution of officers, it is designed to make up for the failure of the rank-and-file security services to react. Actually, the fact that police officers, gendarmes, and special forces remained exceptionally coolheaded when confronted with such aggression encouraged the authors of Plan C to risk a number of executions of officers, which in their opinion would set off a destructive rage they had previously been unable to generate. Posing an extreme risk, this variation yielded precisely the opposite result of the one sought and organically solidified all echelons of the security corps hierarchies by demonstrating that there were no shirkers in the fight against the partisans of the subversive war.

4) The fourth phase of Plan C began with the slaughter on Rue Bouzrina, where no less than six policemen were executed for a very precise purpose. This dreadful mass killing can only be understood in light of events that had taken place a few days later, less than 100 meters from the very place where the six young policemen were killed on Rue Bouzrina. Indeed, it was in a house in the Casbah that five armed fundamentalists suspected of killing the six officers were found. It is strikingly obvious that under such conditions, intervention by the forces of law and order could only occur with maximum caution and minimum risk. Nevertheless, what actually happened was the precise opposite of what the authors of Plan C wanted, to wit, that: a) law

enforcement officers would proceed just as the mad dogs of Bigeard were wont to do, surrounding the Casbah, conducting a general search, making arbitrary arrests, punching and kicking at random, but above all, accompanying everything with the customary "dirty rats," "dirty Arabs," and "dirty scum"; b) following this Bigeard-type reaction, the people would automatically unite behind the fundamentalist killers and set off a widespread confrontation between the Casbah, on the one hand, and law enforcement, on the other.

However, in place of this catastrophic scenario, things went far more "Algerian" than expected. First of all, law enforcement officers do not view any single population group as "foreign," so that, instead of surrounding the Casbah, they confined their action to sizing up the situation with the people, isolating the killers, and proceeding to neutralize them without inflicting any casualties upon residents of the Casbah, free of hatred or passion and, above all, fear on the part of the local people or security forces.

Thus it was that, instead of setting off another Battle for Algiers, the killing of the six young policemen at Place Bouzrina turned out to be no more than a dreadful slaughter for which the people of the Casbah will never forgive the authors of Plan C. This in turn explains the people's scant enthusiasm for uniting behind an enlightened band of candidates for suicide!

Following the resounding failure of Operation Bouzrina-Casbah, they repeated the experiment at Aquiba (Belcourt), Telemly, and Baba Hassan, based on the same principle: a) the killing of policemen or gendarmes; b) planting the group of killers among a specific population group, if possible, in the home of a resident who is a blood relative to at least one member of the group; c) tipping off police to the place where the group is hiding anonymously so as to allow for all manner of manipulation; d) highly violent and sustained reactions by group members to the approach of law enforcement officers so as to block any peaceful solution to the conflict, in accordance with categorical orders issued to groups never to surrender to police; and c) [sic] an attempt to implicate locals by shots fired in the direction of passers-by or from the windows of nearby buildings.

All such operations, conducted for the purpose of implicating law enforcement forces in widespread repression and luring part of the people into the killers' camp, have failed miserably due to a completely erroneous evaluation of the people's thinking and the true state of mind of security forces. Instead of drawing the only logical conclusion after this series of failures, the authors of Plan C stubbornly believe the flaw lies solely in the wrong choice of locations where the break would occur and the insufficient number of law enforcement officers killed. Having understood that the cities offer no possibility of a general uprising (for reasons they do not understand and which we are not about to reveal), they now deem it more judicious to attempt their criminal experiments in semi-urban (Baba Hassan) or semirural (Khazrouna) areas, places where they think that family solidarity and blood ties are easier to rouse and more apt to determine political or ideological choices.

In the case of Khazrouna, not only did the people not fall prey to such macabre calculations, but it was the very relatives of the group's leader themselves who tried to

reason with him and beg him to turn himself in to the police. It is useful here to point out a single fact that speaks volumes about the professionalism of the authors of Plan C. Determined, no matter what the cost, to instigate massacres in every confrontation between fundamentalist groups and law enforcement agencies, they take great pains to supply members of the group with hard drugs (cocaine), the sole factor guaranteeing that they will lose all power of discernment and therefore of rational choices. Above all, their physical ability to withstand bullet wounds will be intensified and they will thus be provided with another means of creating a feeling of emotional solidarity among witnesses to such incidents.

In this and other cases, the opposite occurred when the group of killers, probably not sufficiently high on cocaine, gave in to their instinct for survival and took a family hostage. Not only did this serious miscalculation rouse a feeling of profound revulsion among the locals vis-a-vis this cowardly act, but it rechanneled all emotional support toward the National Gendarmerie lieutenant who did not hesitate for a second to sacrifice his life to free the hostages!

5) The fifth phase of Plan C, designed in principle to derive all substance from the preceding phase, has failed to materialize. It is the phase that was to set up undergrounds that would incorporate elements supplied by the Casbah, Aquiba, Baba Hassan, and Khezrouna operations. Thousands of "maquisards" [members of the underground] were expected to flow from the results of the fierce repression anticipated from security forces when they clashed with the people, who would theoretically take in and protect the bands of Fundamentalist or other killers.

Seriously compromised and totally doomed to failure, this fifth phase posed the authors of Plan C with a serious problem: How to set off the "terror virus," which alone could transform the members of law enforcement agencies into bloodthirsty beasts and instill a bit more confidence in killers who would, in the long run, finally understand that they are sacrificing their lives for nothing!

5a) This is where the Houari Boumediene Airport attack comes in, a mere extension of a series of bombings that had begun several weeks previously. Designed to destroy the people's morale, the bombing, whose anticipated effects were even more dramatic than those obtained, ended up by forcing the government into widespread repression stemming from initial panic. However, above all, it caused the people to lose their confidence in the government, awarding it instead to those who constantly present themselves as privileged spokesmen for the "Historic Reconciliation."

Given the extraordinary coolheadedness manifested by the Algerian people and the intelligence of the government, which never fell into the trap of repression, there is good reason to fear that the hatred and haste of the authors of Plan C might rise in a great crescendo to operations even more murderous than those at Houari Boumediene Airport.

6) Simultaneously with actions aimed at launching a civil war by any possible or imaginable means, the artisans of Plan C have been caught totally off guard by the response of the government, which, instead of "closing the vice on the Islamists," as so-called "democrats" and other non-Islamists might wish (quite awkwardly, moreover), has begun, with totally remarkable determination, to empty all

security camps in the southern region of the country and revert to a legal treatment of problems. The option, which would rectify a very serious error born of criminal maneuvers of leftover Chadlians resulting in the opening of such camps (used for training more than security), does not seem to have rallied the support of any partisans of national reconciliation. Ali Yahia Abdennour, who unhesitatingly described the camps as "worse than those of the Nazis," did not issue a single statement hailing the closure of the camps, as if it seriously thwarted plans to destabilize Algeria. Likewise, Ali Yahia Abdennour, Ait Ahmed, Ben Bella, and Kasdi Merbah were careful not to denounce attacks on magistrates for the obvious reason that the attacks, which have so far had no tragic aftermath, were not aimed at killing judges, but rather, at frightening them into refraining from handling "political-Fundamentalist" cases, fully realizing that the death of a single judge would unfailingly rouse a coalition and the hostility of all judges in the country against the fundamentalists. Maintaining the security camps therefore served no further purpose. The death of a single magistrate would have such drastic consequences that even a trial of the dissolved FIS leaders could be easily moved from military jurisdictions, which have been very lenient, to civilian jurisdictions. If they apply the law, the latter would have great difficulty in not meting out at least five death penalties for the serious crimes committed in June 1991.

No Chance for Plan C

In light of the analysis of the thought structure and glaring blunders in appreciation that governed the drafting and application of what we have named "Plan C" for the sake of convenience, one can draw at least one major conclusion:

1. The plan's authors tried to adopt the methods of Captain Leger and Colonel Godard, the so-called methods of revolutionary war applied with so little success against the FLN [National Liberation Front] and the ALN [National Liberation Army]. Conceived by the French as early as the period from 1959 to 1962, the methods soon revealed an imbecilic mimicry that led to the Rue des Abderames political disaster and the unspeakable catastrophe of Rue de Thebes. Expecting to achieve the same effect as the one obtained by FLN bombers at the Milk Bar and the Casino de la Corniche, the killers of the 2d French Bureau merely widened the gap between the French and the Algerian people.

Even today, Captain Leger's emulators continue to get it all wrong and, instead of bringing about a break, merely help us strengthen our institutions, rebuild our security services (imploded by 13 years of Chadliism), recognize the outside threat, reorder our priorities, unify patriots, isolate political criminals once and for all, and respect true opponents, those who work to improve Algeria rather than destroy it.

2. The plan's authors increasingly realize they are not alone in employing subversive techniques in Algeria. Other powers, the Americans in particular, play their own game and for their own benefit manipulate large factions of the Islamist movement in directions yet to be determined, thus distorting the most precise calculations.

3. The greatest experts on subversive warfare are powerless when confronted with the indisputed and indisputable masters of revolutionary war. By himself, Mohamed Boudiaf, past master in this domain, toppled in 166 days what Chadli and his allies took 13 years to build. Boudiaf's assassination

demonstrates the fact more decisively than any analysis could because it was an assassination that could not prevent the Algerian people from regaining control of their destiny through the ANP and HCE [Higher State Committee].

4. The psychological moment during which the civil war could have been set off artificially in Algeria is long gone. Furthermore, the blow dealt to attempts at political destabilization by fraudulent third parties allows the designers of Plan C no further chance. Nevertheless, the redeployment of players in the subversive war in major areas of the public sector must be carefully studied. It is as if the Chadlian seraglio were trying to revert to methods used under Boumediene, methods consisting of building "pro-French" citadels within the Algerian system. But this is no longer Plan C. At best, it is Plan D and it will come in for further study.

Airport Bombing; Outlook 'Fatalistic'

93AF0010A Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
3-9 Sep 92 p 7

[Article by Meziane Ourad: "The 'Arab Cafes' Are Reverberating"]

[Text] Paris—Wednesday, 26 Aug—Within hours of the horror that swept Dar El Beida Airport, a TFI reporter asked: "Do you have any idea what happened?" He must have been nuts. Like all my fellow countrymen here or in Algeria, I was astounded. What could I say? Who, what, how, and, above all, why? I found myself in an impenetrable cloud. Such questions, coming back to me now like the stabbing blows of a murderer's knife, are suffocating. Enough! A few years ago, Algeria led the way among the countries fighting terrorism. Algerians talked of Ireland, Corsica, the Basque Country, Italy, or Germany with repugnance and a certain offhandedness, thinking they were insulated. Never, ever, could anyone then have believed the noise of an explosion would rip the peaceful air we breathed. Because of a few corrupt individuals who claimed to be fit to run the country when they would be lost behind the cash register of a grocery store, we have reached that point. The worst has happened. Death lurks in the streets of Algeria.

It haunts all of our footsteps.

Madjid Ali Bouacha is a doctor of linguistics who teaches at Jussieu University and designs methods of teaching French in quite a number of countries. He spent three years in Algeria in the early '80's. Sickened, he left: "I am literally overwhelmed. I can't understand anything of what is going on in the country. It is true that I am not familiar with what is at stake, but I nevertheless find it bewildering that they could have taken off on such a tangent. I left with the conviction that they were doomed to underdevelopment. It seemed obvious and I do not think I was mistaken. Nevertheless, I could never have imagined the solution of arms and bombings. I am grieved." Madjid can find no words; he cannot understand. Nor can the others. Karim Chekkour is a student. Half emigre and half Algerian, he feels even more concerned than do his Parisian compatriots: "I experienced October, but I have the impression that nothing has been settled since. On the contrary; the situation seems to be deteriorating by the day. The airport attack shocked me deeply, but what troubled me the most is the casual attitude of the people of Algiers toward terrorism. I observed it during my stay there this summer. Things are serious."

Serious. Hend, a doctor of mathematics and a university professor in Paris, agrees, but as a seasoned observer recalls that this bombing is one of many, whatever its degree of horror: "All the attacks before pointed to it. You cannot speak of any 'qualitative evolution' in discussing crime. There is clearly a greater will for destruction, but that destruction began a long time ago. Who is at the root of the act? I cannot say. I do not rule out the fundamentalists, but I am not sure they did it. Such attacks benefit too many people. There is a whole bunch of potential silent partners in Algeria. Fundamentalism has also helped a lot of people.... Whatever the case, to get back to the airport bombing, I would say it is no more and no less revolting than the killings of policemen. I think that we have embarked upon a period of violence that will not end soon, but that will perhaps mobilize people a bit more. Is it the work of FLN [National Liberation Front] bosses? I would not go that far, but I remain convinced that a certain confusion would not displease them. The only thing left to do, the pledge that every Algerian must make, is that henceforth there must be no compromising with violence. A nation that kills its children has no future!"

This wise and fatal sentence was uttered by Hamid Bedjaoui, a Chaabi singer well-known in France who never stops reminding people that he bears the burden of a quarter century of emigration. He continues: "I would never have thought Algeria would reach this point. My God! What kind of a country is it when everyone is the enemy of everyone else? This bombing is not the work of the fundamentalists! They would stand to lose everything. This attack is a job authored by people seeking to gain time, to cover their tracks. When one has accounts to settle, one always wants to delay the deadline. Belloucif headed the Army for 30 years. Now he's in the can because he was lining his own pockets all that time. Do you think that for him or his cohorts, it would be that difficult to plant a bomb? Do you think that for these people, the effects of the TNT, however murderous they might be, would be a moral obstacle? Abdesslam speaks of a 'foreign hand.' That is perhaps possible, but I know that no foreign hand can get into Algeria without the help of an Algerian hand.... It is the latter that we must find. We have a proverb in our country that says almost the same thing: 'Of what is the handle of the ax used to chop down the tree made? Wood!' The nation is made up of individuals and individuals have brains. One corner of the brain is called the memory and the memory records.... Too many mistakes have accumulated; too much persecution has gone on. Anyone who has suffered from it could plant a bomb today. People never forget! When one is forced to sleep with one's sister for 30 years, one is capable of anything when rebellion finally reaches the boiling point!"

Cassis (what a sweet, funny pseudonym!) is a Cheb from Oran who lives in eastern France and sings "rai" with some success. When asked, he echoes Hamid: "This is not the work of the FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation], for it would mean that they are seeking final annihilation. I think that even when policemen are killed, someone is settling accounts. There is total confusion in Algeria. Anything is possible and any scenario would play. Could foreigners be involved? Why not? Our country is a veritable sieve and our young people are at the mercy of any adventurer. There are people who would sell Algiers for a visa!"

Reflections here are bitter and fatalistic. No one believes in anything anymore. More than their fellow countrymen who still reside in the country, the emigres are sickened by the corruption, the fundamentalism, the shootings, the hidjab, the camps, in short, all the sores that have in the end disfigured Algeria. This impression is all the stronger because the French press does not hesitate to paint a blacker picture or exaggerate the least little row in the country. The fact remains that since the airport bombing, skepticism and even a certain fear has taken over the people. Abderrazak Hamoud, Kamel, the son of Colonel Si Haoues to close friends, a doctor of physics, conceals neither his disgust nor his doubts: "It is quite vague, but it strangely resembles Boudiaf's murder. It went so well that it necessarily puzzles one. There is talk of a political and financial mafia; it is very fuzzy...."

"The CIA reportedly warned that 16 terrorists (including eight Algerians) trained by Tehran would be set free. Algeria could not have failed to know this. Could they have behind the Dar El Beida bombing? It is impossible to know...."

"We speculate about France, singing that the terrorists would have targeted it, which is ridiculous.... It was Algeria they mined, not its former colonizer. If they had wanted to target France, they would have planted the bombs at Orly rather than Houari Boumediene. This being the case, we must not think that this attack marks a serious turning point. Algeria has not tottered over into civil war. Italy, France, Germany, and many other countries have experienced or are still experiencing terrorism. In some countries, it is a necessary, inevitable evil. That act was signed by Algerians and I cannot see why they systematically attribute troubles originating here at home to foreigners. Algeria is an unstable country. Total confusion reigns at all levels, in all sectors. The existing parties are inoperable and it is totally normal for phenomena such as terrorism to appear."

Kamel thinks the myth about united Algerians, brothers who would never do the slightest harm to one another, is totally unfounded: "Algerians are like anyone else in the world: a succession of generations each different from the rest. Our parents' generation fought for independence; our children's generation is fighting for their scalps. It is logical—but not necessarily normal—for it to use every possible means to reach its ends. You know, the bombings and death...you can kill in the name of the proletariat as well as in the name of God. What we must keep saying to ourselves, the thing of which I am convinced and which reassures me, is that Algerians will not plunge into terrorism en masse. Our current troubles will certainly last for some time, but they will end. Worse things happen in Egypt every day, but they don't talk about them as much. The news focuses on Algeria because it is two hours from Paris, but everyone knows Algiers will never be another Beirut."

Getting back to the subject of the airport bombing itself, Kamel came up with an idea not without interest: "The fact of planting a bomb at the precise spot where the emigres depart and arrive means they were trying to challenge them in a violent way. Not long ago, one of your files contained evidence that our fellow citizens living abroad were returning home en masse despite the murderous events happening there. Perhaps this was an attempt to make them understand, in a murderous way, that they were after all concerned and implicated. Frightening the emigres, barring them from returning home, is also a way to disturb the economy...."

"Only one solution remains. Stability can be achieved only if we opt for true democracy. The dictatorship has demonstrated its inanity everywhere on the planet. We cannot go on like this, shadowboxing."

Filmmaker Brahim Tsaki, who represents Algeria abroad with dignity, agrees with Kamel: "It is increasingly confusing, but it seems to be more complicated than the reaction of Islamists. Whatever the case, as long as the political parties are discredited, the situation will remain corrupt. There is but one way out: parliamentary democracy."

Hachemi is a businessman who does rather well even if Paris is no piece of cake. He returns from Algeria where he had gone on vacation: "That bombing is not the work of the FIS, but of someone pulling the strings from within or on the fringes of government. They have blamed the fundamentalists so much that it is beginning to look exaggerated and therefore difficult to swallow. In France, as soon as Carpentras happened, they thought of the National Front.... FIS extremism must suit a lot of people. Algeria is sick, and yet it would take very little to make its economy healthy.... The predators of corruption seek to turn Algeria into another Lebanon, but in my opinion, they cannot gild the pill even though I have said ever since Boudiaf's assassination that anything was possible. Algeria needs money and organization. If some parties want to serve the country, then let them do so before it is too late."

Paris awakens under a cloudy sky, a coolness in the air stings the French, and profound uneasiness digs at the hearts of emigres. Never have the Arab cafes reverberated (or reasoned!) more loudly! The turbulence shaking the country rouses systematic replies in Barbès, Belleville, and Aubervilliers.... And yet, the uneasiness manifested by everyone is not a sign of despair. On the contrary; everyone is convinced here that Algeria is not finished, no matter what the mad bombers think!

Airport Bombing: Role of Foreign Hand Discussed *93AF0010B Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French* 3-9 Sep 92 p 8

[Article by M. Hamdi: "Mullahs: The New Godfathers"]

[Text] By virtue of its scope and, in particular, the real or alleged objectives attributed to it, the catastrophe at Houari Boumediene Airport brings the hypothesis of "the foreign hand" sharply into focus. Nevertheless, it in no way rules out the possibility of Algerian participation, either by complicity, alliance or manipulation.

Without prejudging the results of the investigation under way, the total responsibility of fundamentalism is strikingly obvious. Its rhetoric and actions have made political assassinations and terrorism possible, although they were a phenomenon previously unknown in our country. It is tantamount to walking a perilous and totally irresponsible political tightrope to wander around near the Sunna mosque, pick up the latest issue of MANBAR ALDJOU MOU'A, or suggest to the underground leadership of the FIS [Islamic Front of Salvation] any position that might whitewash it before God. Today's declared war is not a state of mind. It has a name, actors, stakes, and a battleground. One has to have taken up a solid position among the bodies of law enforcement officers, the *djounoud*, and the Dar El-Beida victims to bargain over a

possible position against violence and a dubious dialogue implicating this faction, whether directly or indirectly.

What happened at Dar El-Beida challenges Algeria, as its citizens have understood, even though they have been unable to follow this completely failing "political class." "The political parties still exist," they often note. The real threat to democracy is clearly the indifference of the citizenry. This total "forfeit," combined with a gradual weakening of the government and its institutions, becomes a godsend for foreign interference, like that extraordinary confrontation waged at the highest levels of government between the tenants of what Algeria was not so very long ago and what it should be. Silent and cunning but unrelenting nevertheless, this war is never clarified, which makes the situation even more fragile. Abdesselam, the first to use the phrase "foreign hand," was relayed by his minister of interior, who added the "combination of interests of Islamism and big-time banditry." Such an articulation can be verified by a reading of the facts and in no way extirpated from the situation. The bombing was preceded and followed by a resurgence of attacks and acts of sabotage, forest fires, and so on, which place it squarely within the framework of destabilization. If observers all agree to emphasize the impossibility of deriving immediate, direct political dividends from this act, if not the one of contributing to its degeneration, they consequently arrive at the fact that the act itself can be but a phase in a process whose shape will be revealed in the days ahead.

Consequently, the "boost" provided by a foreign party "interested" in the "project" becomes increasingly likely. Since January, several reports of "the interest" of certain intelligence services foreign to the FIS and its activities were revealed in the press and not contradicted. This was the case of meetings of FIS leaders in Tehran and Paris with officials from the Iranian and French services organized by one Colonel Grossman. This was also the case of contacts between the FIS and CIA elements revealed by the newspaper VSD. The latter, echoing an officer from the French services, stated in particular that "the Americans have doubled the number of personnel working on the FIS for Paris and Berlin and tripled the figure in Madrid," adding that "the Americans believe they will be able to handle them this way." More recently, L'EXPRESS stated without fear of denial that "the young Algerians in the FIS are trained in the most sophisticated techniques of sabotage and terrorism by Western special services, particularly the CIA and DGSE [General Foreign Security Directorate]." After L'EXPRESS predicted a civil war in the fall, THE NEW YORK TIMES in mid-August foresaw chaos and a sole winner, the FIS. In the meantime, a former official went up to the battlements and "positioned himself" using a dubious media setup. Everyone thus prepared for the fall session and they got what they were waiting for at Dar El-Beida.

While, in the absence of confirmations, it is still too early to collate all these elements and draw any conclusions, it is quite easy, in contrast, to link them with a central point as soon as the underlying motive remains the country's new orientation that began in January and found its complete expression in the ouster of President Chadli. The determination to make a break with both the old system and fundamentalism seems to have made waves not only here. Let us recall that Boudiaf's assassination was celebrated

quite properly, meaning without any restraint among our mullah cousins. While the Iranians were not content to express satisfaction openly over the death of Boudiaf, who in their opinion "paid for his betrayal of Algerian Muslims" by going so far as to promise "the same fate" to his successors, they were not content either with a "simple" political position because very early on, they invested the "Maghreb rank-and-file." This was revealed by ACHARQ EL AWSSAT not long ago when it reprinted a 118-page document entitled "The Green Book." The document is an annual analytical report on Iranian foreign policy drafted for political decisionmakers by a team of researchers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In it one reads: "For over a decade, we did not realize the possibilities" of successful revolutions in Central Asia and Africa.

"The reason, understandable in a sense, is that it was important for our revolution to face its enemies in the Middle East and the Gulf first."

"However, the time has come to base the efforts of the revolution on other regions where victory is promised," the document states, naming Africa, Algeria, Sudan, and Nigeria as the places "where the chances are greatest." While the document deemed that the weakening of the FIS leadership is likely to compromise the chances of victory, one easily understands the frustration of the Iranian leadership after 3 January.

Consequently, the Tehran-Khartoum axis has entered a phase of strengthening by adopting a squarely aggressive tone. Countries in the region such as Tunisia and Egypt are reacting.

Algeria will long maintain a reserve that has not seemed to disturb its "partners" excessively. It was probably because of its reliance on Algeria's "fragility" that the Tourabi international bet on the Algerian "case." The Egyptian newspaper ROSE EL YOUCEF will reveal the existence of 15 training camps in Sudan attributed to Islamists. Also according to the same weekly, these camps are under the authority of a Sudanese colonel named El-Hadi Abdallah, allegedly commander in chief of the Sudanese Army. On this subject, the Cairo press reports a deposit of some \$20 million by Iran in one of the banks with headquarters in Khartoum in order to maintain the camps.

As one can see, terrorism has no borders. Since it needs air to breathe, it places itself squarely in the hands of the providers of oxygen. God knows that plenty are interested in the Algerian "case!" Today the "foreign hand" is far from being the spectre wielded to calm public opinion's sudden moods or act as a kind of automatic self-defense mechanism to ensure the continued existence of the government in power. More than unity, it is the very existence of Algeria that is threatened.

Security in Industrial Areas Strengthened

New Measures in Arzew

93AF0011A Algiers EL MOUDJAHID in French
6 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by Fatma-Zohra Mancera]

[Text] Because of the climate of insecurity that has prevailed throughout the country in recent weeks and risks of sabotage

and other criminal acts committed against the national interest and personal safety, strict inspection and security measures have been taken in industrial zones and at economic complexes and public establishments throughout the entire governorate of Oran.

A visit to the industrial zone of Oran Es-Senia enabled us to observe the beefing up of surveillance at businesses and the deployment of heavy security day and night.

Public access is strictly controlled and all businesses are on the alert to ward off any threat.

It is a time for maximum vigilance and compliance with all security measures in order to halt criminal attempts to destabilize the country.

The sole objective of these measures and others planned is to protect administrative and industrial facilities and ensure the safety of persons.

Every citizen therefore owes it to himself to respect such measures and contribute to their effectiveness by demonstrating responsibility and determination, in addition to cool-headedness and calm, so that daily life may proceed without incident.

Stricter Measures in Constantine

93AF0011B Algiers *EL MOUDJAHID* in French
6 Sep 92 p 3

[Article by R.R.C.]

[Text] Terrorism, the fight against terrorism, and restoring the government's authority top the government's agenda. We must fight this violent expression of political demands that a single faction would impose on all society. "Terrorism is solely the work of the enemies of the people and their authors," observes the head of a major industrial facility in Constantine.

"It is in fact from among fugitives from justice that potential assassins are recruited," he continues. "It is generally fringe elements, frustrated individuals, misfits, and other antisocials that the hidden powers of money turn into useful tools. Our enemies have understood this and are organizing the destabilization of the country in the hope of capturing its enormous resources."

"What can we do to awaken the consciences of these young people who are losing hope? What can we do to put an end to the despair of the young? How can these young people be reinserted into the working world? The only answer to such questions is obviously economic recovery, but the country has been brought to its knees and economic recovery is not in sight. Therein lies the problem."

"In the meantime, our establishment has taken various security measures including beefed up security personnel and inspection stations. Even our own personnel may be searched if it is deemed necessary. Other measures that we regret not to list have been studied and some already implemented."

Also in Constantine, security measures have been taken by certain government agencies, the governorate, and the APC [People's Communal Assembly], among others, where all citizens must present proper ID to enter. One citizen told us

he had been refused entry because he was not carrying such documents. "I found it absolutely normal," he observed philosophically.

'Repressive' Policy Toward 'Islamists' Questioned

93AF0044A Paris *LE MONDE* in French 6 Oct 92 p 1

[Unattributed article: "'Big-Stick' Policy in Algeria"]

[Text] Has the government chosen the methods of repression at all costs in an attempt to suppress the Islamic rebellion? The decree just signed by Mr. Ali Kafi, chairman of the Higher State Council (HCE), which provides for the creation of three special courts to judge the authors of terrorist or subversive acts, would seem to indicate that it has. This is a more than symbolic return to former times, because these special courts were abolished by the Constitution of February 1989, adopted through a referendum after the bloody riots of October 1988.

Unsettled by violence that it cannot control in spite of successful "raids" which, however, must constantly be started all over again, the government is now trying to intimidate its fundamentalist opponents whose determination, unfortunately, it seems to underestimate. It applies this big-stick policy simultaneously with the "discussions" it just started with the country's "live forces," which, under these conditions, can hardly be expected to have a satisfactory outcome.

To achieve their aims, Mr. Kafi and his team do not pull their punches. Apparently, there will be no public trials for "terrorists," since the judges' identity cannot be disclosed without incurring two- to five-year jail sentences. Individuals can now be held in police custody for 12 full days instead of 48 hours. The penalties for acts of terrorism have been increased: from a minimum of five years to the death penalty. However, members of "armed groups" who should repent within a two-month grace period will not be prosecuted.

The age for criminal responsibility has been lowered from 18 to 16. As a result, minors may be tried by the special courts. This is a way to discourage youths from getting involved in demonstrations of a political or religious nature. In fact, the main body of fundamentalist demonstrators has always consisted of teenagers from poor urban neighborhoods where the former Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is strongly established.

As for the more radical elements of the "armed groups," belonging to a foreign terrorist organization—in other words the "Afghans" formerly enrolled in the resistance against the Kabul regime—they risk heavy penalties. The new regulations define a whole series of actions considered to be terrorist or subversive: attempted murder, interfering with freedom of religion, attempts against public or private liberties, or against symbols of the State, hindering traffic on a public thoroughfare, reproduction of documents deemed subversive.

These provisions, which pave the way for all sorts of abuse, could just as easily be used against political forces other than the former FIS, to repress purely social movements, or even to silence mere individuals who might be tempted to oppose any aspect of the government's policy. In other words, the government, under pressure from the army—or at least from some of its most influential leaders—is embarking on a most perilous course.

Purchasing Power Dwindling; Policies Criticized
93AF0043C Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
16 Sept 92 p 9

[Article by Lakhdar Kaidi, FNTR (National Federation of Retired Workers) national secretary: "Application of the Law, a Must To Restore Credibility and Confidence"]

[Text] At a press conference held following his appointment as prime minister, Mr. Belaid Abdeslam stated that, as far as making sacrifices was concerned, he could no longer ask anything for from the working class. This is a commendable position, which is imposed by the country's present situation.

The purchasing power of active or retired workers, which was already so low before, has been under such strain in the past year that it cannot get any lower. Food prices, including those of bare essentials, are steadily getting out of sight, to the extent of making everything an unaffordable luxury for the poorest. Even the products, which the government had promised would be revalued only moderately, saw their prices double or even triple. This is true of milk, bread, oil, and semolina. As for canned tomatoes, their price doubled first in March, then a second time in July, so that the 500-gram can rose from 6 dinars to nearly 25 dinars, i.e., by 400 percent. And what should we say of oil, the price of which was fixed at 100 dinars for a 5-liter can, but which actually sells for 140 dinars, although consumers paid only 30 dinars for it a few months ago.

The worst is that the government chose these critical times for people with fixed incomes—who are therefore especially vulnerable—to apply and generalize the VAT [value-added tax]; hence, conditions that further compound a situation that is becoming increasingly untenable.

Under these conditions, the prime minister's statements were just a polite way of describing the deplorable and lamentable situation with which the working class must cope among mounting anxiety as to an uncertain future.

The problem, therefore, is not to ask active, and especially retired, workers to make new sacrifices—they cannot tighten their belt any more—but to make courageous decisions that will enable them to go through the hard times the country is experiencing.

Certainly, the working class, which harbor true patriotism and suffer more than others when they see their country bogged down, are prepared to show understanding and make the necessary efforts, and once again to rise to the occasion, as long as those who own billions do what the nation expects of them and fulfill their duty; and it is the government's role to force them to do so through all legal means.

National solidarity consists in asking those who can afford it to make efforts in helping all those who are in difficulties. In this respect, however, we must observe that we have not gone beyond pious wishes, empty formulas, not to say mere prattling.

Retired workers, most of whom belong to the underprivileged social strata, are among those who must be helped.

In this, they are not asking for any kind of privilege. They are merely asking for the application of the law, in its spirit

and in its letter. At a time when prices double, triple, or even quadruple, they are merely asking for compliance with the laws and regulations recently adopted concerning the revaluation of old-age pensions. If these laws and regulations were scrupulously observed—and it is already a shame that they are not—pensions should have been revalued by 30.4 percent, not 10 percent as was the case last April.

The law must be applied if credibility and confidence are to be restored. There is no other way.

Chemists, Biologists Unemployed, 'Unrecognized'
93AF0043A Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
17 Sept 92 p 9

[Article by Hakima Boussaidane: "Unemployed Chemists and Biologists: Years of Schooling Wasted"]

[Text] Unemployed chemists and biologists held a general assembly last Tuesday, at the UMA [Algerian Medical Union] headquarters, on the initiative of a committee created late in July. Through the media, the committee called on other unemployed colleagues, and the meeting was held to discuss their problems and to propose solutions.

Biologists with advanced degrees, chemists (public-sector industrial chemical engineers) and graduates in other specialties gave their support to the new committee; their goal is to be heard and to practice their professions in society. Many have been denied that right since the date of their graduation, 1989 for many of them.

The committee members invited their colleagues to submit their applications after the Ministry of Employment, working together with the Ministry of Industry, proposed a "possible recruiting project." In his statement to committee members, the UMA president said that the delegates and the rest of their colleagues were trying to create an association that might have more weight and authority to promote their professional skills within society.

To assess their situation, they decided to form a working group to consider various themes, including "hygiene clinics," in order to achieve recognition.

The debate started with proposals and solutions to their problems and on behalf of future biologists and chemists who may fall into the same abyss, namely unemployment.

In this respect, biologists intervened to say: "Whoever knows what a biologist or a chemist is? Industries don't, nor factories, nor businesses, because they don't have any; nor do those who have taken over the laboratories where we are supposed to work... We all have gone from door to door to get hired in our specialties, but until now no one and no organization wants us, because they don't trust us, and because they have no regard for us..."

Another biologist went on: "I bitterly regretted being a biologist; we never gained recognition...biologists with advanced degrees, public-sector engineers specialized in industrial or plant chemistry, and more! Our society doesn't care whether or not we practice our profession; years of schooling wasted...and it is the fault of those who possess status, who hold the budget, in brief money."

Others, chemists, despaired: "We might as well stop training biologists or chemists, considering that they are useless.... We are ashamed of having chosen this specialty."

These people in a turmoil, each rebelling for everybody's sake, paid no heed to the small stifling room.

The project to recruit some 300 biologists and chemists is still going nowhere. The committee decided to approach the ministries involved once again, to obtain recognition and to practice their specialties (professions), as they are entitled to.

Tourist Sector: Significant Drop Reported

*92AF1274C Algerian EL WATAN in French
31 Aug 92 pp 1, 3*

[Article by Chahed C.: "Tourism: Slow Decline"]

[Text] With vacations winding up, the 1992 summer season will soon be over, and professionals in the tourist industry are already saying the balance sheets look bad—which is very likely a warning signal.

"Tourism is in a state of crisis," confides the director of ONAT [Algerian National Tourist Office] (Victor Hugo). "In fact, it is facing two crises: a temporary recession, and a chronic anemia that has persisted for the last 15 years." The debate was launched: temporary recession, chronic weakness, and finally prospects.

"There were no foreigners this year." Thus tourist activity declined significantly from the previous year—itsself not one of the best.

It is still too soon to get precise statistics, so we had to content ourselves with a broad overview of 1992. The tourist season, usually at its height in the month of July, was confined this year to August. Occupancy at hotels and campgrounds, for example, stood at a mere 40 percent in July, whereas the normal rate for that time of year is close to 140 percent.

All regions without distinction were affected by this disaffection.

Foreigners were not the only tourists to shun Algeria: There were also fewer Algerians on holiday this year. Many factors enter into the explanation of this significant decline in hotel activity: First and foremost, the very tense social and political climate prevailing in Algeria since the Gulf war, especially since the assassination of Mohamed Boudiaf, has discouraged both foreigners and Algerians.

Although in previous years many vacationers from the interior of the country would take advantage of summer to visit the capital and spend the season in a hotel complex on the coast, this year many must have been afraid to risk themselves in a city of doubtful tranquility (the most recent events, moreover, have not been such as to restore a climate of confidence and security). In addition, many Algerians (especially government workers) could not take their vacation until August, another factor that clearly dampened tourist activity. Finally, and this too is an essential factor, families with modest incomes were unable to take vacations because of reduced purchasing power. None of this in itself is cause for alarm; but in addition to temporary recession,

there is an endemic anemia, which is the result of political decisions on tourism and tourist promotion.

A few statistics will illustrate the chronic weakness of Algerian tourism: Out of the 45,000 rooms in existence, only 20,000 are real tourist beds, i.e., accommodations meeting the minimum comfort requirements that must be offered by hotels hoping to attract a European clientele accustomed to a certain standard of luxury. Scarcely a single bed has been added in the last decade: Algeria, of course, has 1,200 km of coast, but there is not one hotel on the beach between Algiers and Tunis.

For some years now, tourism has accounted for only 2 percent of the national budget, Algeria has only about 30 tourist buses, and it is impossible under these conditions to organize diverse excursion routes, particularly into the south. This leads us to observe that the recent restructuring of the sector has not yielded convincing results when, as we know, EGT (Tourist Management Enterprises) has only two hotels to run, and there are clearly not enough flights to the south. How are tourists supposed to get around in the country?

Decline

Besides, there are no hotel chains as in Tunisia or Morocco. Our campgrounds look more like "stalags" than vacation spots. ONAT is no longer able to market tour packages that include rented cars, quite simply because it no longer has an automobile fleet!

Since the Gulf war, ONAT, aware of Algeria's poor image, has redoubled its efforts to promote Algerian tourism abroad, participating in every international exposition and providing all Algerian consulates abroad with brochures, tourist guides, etc. But without a real tourism policy, its efforts will only amount to a last-ditch stand.

At a time when global tourism is experiencing a formidable "boom" (the discovery of new countries: the Orient, Africa, and America for Europeans), Algerian tourism is cut off and falling behind. A few comparisons: The island of Malta offers tourists 120,000 "tourist-class" beds, 55 million tourists visited France in 1991, 57 million visited Spain....

What then are the reasons for the decline of Algerian tourism? According to the ONAT official, the reasons are numerous and have to do mainly with Algeria's policy decisions. There has not been a tourism policy since the 1970's. Tourism in recent years has always been "paired" with some other sector. The Ministry of Tourism has improved its position in the current government, but recovery requires more than political will: A real tourism program must be established, one that strengthens the accommodations and transport infrastructure (creation of "quality" hotels, opening of new flights, a policy for promoting Algerian tourism, encouragement of private investment, diversification of programs, with niches for the "medium budget" and "semideluxe" markets). The country's hotel capacity can be increased tenfold if a coherent tourism policy is put in place, if private investment is encouraged. Because so far there has been no large-scale private investment. Especially by Algerians. Don't they have enough faith in the country to invest in it?

The recent creation of a Ministry of Tourism seems to show that the government has understood the "SOS" sounded by professionals "disgusted" at the sector's stagnation.

With a strong and profitable tourism sector, tens of thousands of people would find employment, arts and crafts would flourish, an entire environment would evolve. Tourist revenue would benefit the whole population: taxi drivers, restaurant owners, artisans, farmers. In Tunisia and Morocco, artisanal crafts are strong and prosperous, but that is only because tourism is strong.

Staoueli

There is one problem though: Is it realistic to promote tourism when citizens must still stand in line for basic necessities? Actually, the question should not be formulated that way. It's just the opposite: Tourism is the beginning of a solution. Tourism is profitable in Tunisia because the government understood it had to allow tourists to get what they wanted (from American cigarettes to whiskey, and including well-stocked supermarkets, etc.).

Another example: Morocco produces Coca-Cola under American license, and the cost of licensing it is largely offset simply by all the beverages tourists consume in the summer, quite apart from local consumption. Spain too has understood the urgency of developing its tourist sector, whereas under Franco it never carried any economic weight. Since then, the tourist sector has been the object of unprecedented promotional efforts.

Salutary 'Manna'

Spain welcomed 57 million tourists in 1991, and every tourist brought with him a minimum 2,000 to 3,000 francs: Work out the numbers yourself....

We need go no further than Staoueli: This region has experienced dramatic growth since it improved its hotel infrastructure. Open bars, and restaurants and bistros that observe at least minimal sanitation standards, have brought new life to the region. People go out on the streets at night.... It is a perfect illustration of the positive spinoffs of tourism on an entire region, where everyone benefits from this manna: farmers, who find in it outlets for their produce, butchers, restaurants, taxi drivers, etc.

Algeria has no cause to be envious of its neighbors: It has its own splendid vistas and beautiful beaches that require nothing more than sensible exploitation. But what is unique about us—and what our neighbors lack—is the Hoggar, the Sahara, in all its vastness, its magic, its seduction. Algerians themselves nowadays feel the need to know their country better, and vacations at home are no longer enough: Education has piqued their interest in discovering their own land. ONAT understands this very well, since for some years it has been beefing up its travel packages for Algerians: It has added more excursions to the south, made an effort to see that its prices are competitive and within reach of average budgets.... But what is in store for the future? The creation of the Tourism Ministry offers new hope for a moribund industry. But one problem is still far from resolved: Are Algerian attitudes mature enough for the bold leap into tourism? The current environment and existing attitudes are hostile. Westerners know this, and it dissuades them from coming to spend their vacations in Algeria.

At any rate, next to petroleum, tourism certainly seems to be the "manna" that can solve our economic and financial problems. All it takes is willingness to observe the most elementary standards of international tourism.

Press Future Questioned Due to Limited Funds

93AF0044B Algiers ALGER REPUBLICAIN in French
18 Sept 92 p 1

[Article by Abdelhamid Ben zine: "Press: Uncertain Future"]

[Text] For financial reasons, an organ of the written press, LE QUOTIDIEN D'ALGERIE and its JEUDI, have discontinued publication.

As is known, that newspaper and ALGER REPUBLICAIN do not follow at all the same editorial line. Far from it.

Nevertheless, we must deplore its demise, as we set great store by media pluralism and well-conducted debates on ideas.

We feel all the more confident in saying so as our newspaper was forced to discontinue publication for 25 years (from June 1965 to 1990), but that was for strictly political reasons.

In addition to the loss of fixed and movable assets, estimated at tens of billions of centimes, in addition to the commercial damage it suffered for a quarter of a century, our readers know that most editors and staff members of ALGER REPUBLICAIN were arrested, tortured, and sentenced to jail during the sixties (see the book: *Les torturs d'El-Harrach* published by Editions de Minuit, Paris) or forced to go underground for years during this time. All because they stood up for certain democratic principles, including freedom of speech.

At the time, neither Mr. Kamel Belkacem, nor some others who now lecture us on democracy (for instance, the big-mouth FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] lawyer and former minister), stood up to protest and denounce the arbitrary measures directed against us. Quite the contrary, all professional "solidarities," then and even more recently, worked against us.

But, some will say, these were different times, a different political context. That is true, and we are among those who are prepared to forget insults in order to serve shared causes.

But these times are now over and we are going through lean years, in an Algeria that is overwhelmed by an unprecedented crisis.

In the midst of strict but equitably shared austerity, we all shall have to watch and manage our money according to the implacable law of supply and demand, and according to market rules.

That will not be easy because, where the press is concerned, we cannot say that all conditions are met for a just application of the law of supply and demand. While printers are perfectly right in demanding payment of their bills in order to ensure that their printing presses go on working, and to import paper and other consumables paid for with strong currencies, what can editors do when they cannot recover the amounts owed them by distribution companies (the ENAMEP's [Algerian Press Distributing Service]) which,

like the printing plants, belong to the public sector? To mention just one example, the West Enamep has not paid ALGER REPUBLICAIN for 18 months.

We shall not mention the complete failure of distribution, over which editors have absolutely no control. What are newspapers to do then, when, like ALGER REPUBLICAIN, they are faced with shrinking advertising income?

We shall not mention, either, the de facto monopoly that prevails as far as distribution in the East is concerned. Nor the fact that the APS unilaterally decided to multiply thirteenfold the price of its services, thus forcing us to give up the AFP [French Press Agency] telex.

Actually, there are still too many problems to solve before we can cope with sound competition. Under these conditions, it is obvious that other newspapers—high-quality newspapers perhaps, but commercially not viable—will disappear sooner or later.

It would be a pity for the creative democracy that we want, because the patriotic political press is in great danger of disappearing and leaving a clear field to the moneymaking press. This press that still believes that money has no smell.

Mr. Abdesselam's government does not seem to be aware of the danger. The measures it took (e.g., the circular on advertising), and other measures announced to reorganize this particularly delicate sector, might begin to put some order in a "chaos" that would suit quite a few of those who benefitted from the old regime.

As far as ALGER REPUBLICAIN is concerned, we hope that the rule of law that started with the return of "chahid" Boudiaf—despite criminal destabilization attempts—will eventually make up for the injustice of which it was the victim and, at the same time, pay tribute to our newspaper's "chouhada" by restituting, in one form or another, at least some of the assets seized in 1962 and 1965.

The latest news is that the settlement of the dossier submitted over three years ago (in July 1989) and transmitted to every successive government, is making good progress. While making allowance for the serious financial difficulties experienced by our country, we still believe that a limited compensation will enable us to pay our most pressing debts, to complete this very difficult stage in the life of ALGER REPUBLICAIN, and, with our faithful readers's continued and generous help, to improve the quality of our daily. To go on serving, and serving always better, Algeria above all.

Malaise of Urban, Rural Life Described

Growth Surpasses Infrastructure

92AF1197A Algiers EL WATAN in French 14-15 Aug 92
pp 1, 5

[Article by Okba Khiair: "Algiers: The Lost Soul"]

[Text] Several changes have occurred in Algiers over the past 20 years, whether it be in the urban landscape or population growth. The growing imbalance between the city's capacities, its existing infrastructures, and the size of its population, which is growing rapidly and haphazardly, has generated tension and unrest, resulting in an obvious deterioration in the standard of living of its inhabitants.

Of all the ills from which Algiers residents suffer, one of the most serious and most urgent is the wave of discouragement and demoralization and the loss of hope felt by nearly all the citizens regarding their future and their lives as they grow more complicated by the day.

Following independence (and even long before), the capital expanded at a fast pace until 1966, with an average annual growth rate of over 4 percent, much higher than the national average. In contrast, that rate fell to 3.38 percent between 1966 and 1977, then continued to oscillate between 1 and 1.5 percent until the present time. Growth over the past decade is clearly lower than that of other large cities (Oran, Constantine), which had rates of 2.38 and 2.44 percent, respectively, between 1977 and 1987. This was a period of expanding development of the so-called "suburbs" and outlying urban districts, which took place at the expense of the capital. Algiers has therefore experienced a kind of "demographic hemorrhaging" resulting in a negative migratory trend of over 120,000 persons between 1977 and 1987 for the governorate as a whole (see ONS No. 29). This decline in growth is part of a trend observed elsewhere in the larger cities, mainly in the north, where the relative drop in the birthrate, on the one hand, and the lack of infrastructure, mainly housing, on the other, have forced young couples to migrate to the suburbs.

However, if Algiers has observed a clear slowdown, such is not the case of its periphery, which has experienced major population growth in an area that is but an extension of it. This peripheral space will be incorporated and subsequently absorbed by the urban core in the near future.

Suffocating Belt

The movement and explosion in space have therefore expanded "Algiers' area of concentration" (Cote) considerably, without thereby resolving its problems. In other words, it is a disguised slowdown.

Are the people of Algiers satisfied with their standard of living? No, obviously not, although the discontent in itself tells us nothing we did not already know. What can one offer Algiers residents in terms of solutions? Is it possible to go beyond what is currently being proposed to them?

All observations confirm that in recent years, the health of city residents was in many cases worse than might have been thought, this despite (relative) improvements in the sanitary environment. A malaise frequently described as odd and often psychological in origin has taken hold of residents, "the city syndrome": hypertension, migraine headaches,

ulcers, depression, symptoms often diagnosed by doctors as early signs of a collective depression.

City dwellers also complain of a general feeling of fatigue. The phenomenon is all the more astonishing because, on a strictly physical level, it is certainly less widespread than it was a few decades ago.

Does the repetition of the same gestures and attitudes in daily life accentuate fatigue? Or is it the noise and, quite simply, bitter life experience and the fear of confronting an uncertain future?

Weariness: This is the human condition in low-income housing developments. These large complexes, better known as *cites* (Ain Naadja, Ganidi, Dergana, and so on), latecomers to the urban fabric, are often turned over to their residents with no related structures. The results are often more serious: The individual feels isolated and exhausted, a feeling compounded by the absence of any recreation centers where people could get together. The individual becomes agitated and his condition translates into a series of scenes repeated over and over again in daily life: fights on buses, in the endless lines, at the market, between drivers, and so on.

Often labeled "cement cities" or "dormitory complexes," compounds without souls, these enormous developments have no human features, a fact made worse by the social diversity of the residents, which has contributed to their compartmentalization. In terms of open spaces, children do not know what they are and their parents recall them with nostalgia.

Women complain of having nothing to do. The compounds are not designed for them and they are therefore confined to their apartments and their own inner thoughts. Young people, often idle, engage in destructive acts (particularly as they emerge from the stadiums) in an environment into which no one has been able or known how to integrate them. Never in the history of independent Algeria has the problem of law enforcement been so much debated as it has in recent years.

As far as housing is concerned, no one wants to talk about it (see EL WATAN, Sunday, 8 February 1992). We shall simply say that a family apartment often houses 10 to 12 persons. In the evening, the mattresses are brought out. It is easy to imagine "the unpleasantness" of a promiscuity that is increasingly difficult for young people to tolerate.

In addition, city dwellers have less time than before, harried as they are by the pace of life, constant movement and the fatigue this causes. Social life is a thing of the past.

Beyond Intentions

Four years after it was written, the song "El Assima" by A. Meskoud is still relevant.

Containing and guiding Algiers' growth, restoring the capital's real role seems to be the only solution. The government and local communities, aware of the continuing deterioration of Algiers residents' standard of living, agree that they must face up to the decline and achieve a symbiosis between the city and standard of living that is satisfactory to everyone. However, the gap between statements of intentions and concrete decisions is enormous.

Nearly everywhere in Algeria today, particularly in recent years, more and more associations are being formed at all levels in an effort to rouse effective participation and continuing, responsible creativity in collective life. Operations are under way to set up complexes where a new relationship will emerge between urban growth and the living place, with better use of space and facilities serving everyone. Such moves, sometimes ephemeral and always fragile, do not yet have enough consistency or interconnections to assert their specific contribution in a difficult situation and facing "the powers that be" more interested in protecting their own privileges. And yet, such promising germination can only come to fruition within a climate and sociopolitical context that understand and stimulate it.

Can we improve the environment in which the people of Algiers live? To a great extent, the answer will depend on the solutions we find in the future.

Drugs, Housing Shortages, Poverty

92AF1197B Algiers EL WATAN in French 16 Aug 92 p 5

[Article by Amel Boumediene and Kamel Benekadi: "The Suburbs: The Wound"]

[Text] Bachdjarah, Baraki, El-Harrach: three suburbs in the Algiers region where poverty seems to have put down roots and sent out its shoots once and for all. This is one of the places where life is the hardest. The result: Social evils in all their diversity develop here at a horrific pace. A microcosm of a society caught in a profound malaise, these suburbs express the evolution of an Algeria that is "torn."

Only a few years ago, no one dared venture into the HLM [low-income housing complex] compound known as El-Harrach. This "Harlem" in East Algiers was infested with criminals and other hardened offenders. Even law enforcement officers thought twice before finally going in. Things have not changed much. A new race of rebels has taken over. Gangs are forming and drugs are becoming commonplace.

"No one is ashamed to smoke hashish. No longer is it just a habit; it is a necessity in order to get away from the monotonous daily grind, where problems no longer leave room for any joy of living." On 5 October 1988, the residents of this low-income district had an opportunity to express their discontent for the first time. Tires were burned just as the people are forced to burn with their own pain. They turned over buses and took pleasure in destroying anything representing government authority.

Women who once would have stood by quietly participated "modestly" with their "you-youing" wails of support. The response by the riot squads resulted in several deaths. Order was finally restored, but the wound remained open.

In the twistings and turnings of such a wretched life, whether one is named Mohamed, Said or Fatima is not important. Every day, the people rise from their beds to face a host of ever growing problems. At the top of the list is their cramped living quarters. Young people over 30 cannot even dream of marrying.

Priority is given to the eldest, more out of tradition than anything else. Entire families live in promiscuity. "We have no intimacy left. We all sleep in the same room and getting dressed is something else again," one girl says.

Some sleep in the hallways. In the summer, when the temperature soars, men openly erect tents in front of building doorways and spend the night arguing and playing cards or dominos before drifting off to sleep.

The second major problem is unemployment. "Why do you even want to talk about it?" Mohamed asks. "It is useless to complain; it won't change anything."

Mohamed tried to kill himself twice. The first time, he took an overdose of barbiturates because he failed the "bac" [high school graduation exam]. "I could not bear to think I failed. I wanted to help my parents out of the situation they are in. When I failed, all my dreams were shattered." A few years later, he tried again. The parents of his girl friend still refuse to give their daughter's hand in marriage to an "unemployed man."

Politics Old Hat

Mohamed went even further the second time, slitting his wrists. Rushed to the hospital, he was pulled back from the jaws of death, but remains bitter: "I did manage to complete a training program in civil engineering. I have never found work even though I have looked and looked. I have even gone south."

An unusual phenomenon, the advent of multiparty affiliations has split families. Young people have chosen political parties based on their own views. Most have joined the FIS [Front of Islamic Salvation]. "It is the only party that condemns the *hogra*; it has promised us greater justice. At least with it, we will all be on the same footing. Furthermore, it pledged to reduce national military service to six months," one unemployed man says. Families are all at odds. Discussions often degenerate into violent arguments. Around tables that once were a meeting place where memories were shared, outbursts are routine. Everyone advances arguments to defend his party and ideological positions.

Supporters of other parties (the FFS [Front of Socialist Forces], PAGES [Socialist Vanguard Party], and so on) work more discreetly, but as time passes and social life deteriorates, politics ceases to be an effective means of change and becomes a trivial subject for discussion. "How can it be otherwise when leaders monopolize the conversation for hours on television without ever analyzing anything? In our situation, it is even worse. Some belittled it in their inconsistent speeches," says Abderezak, an economics student.

This lack of concrete results has generated despair. In Bachdjarah, even children follow the movements of crowds that occasionally try to riot. The FLN [National Liberation Front] *kasma* was destroyed before the December elections while the party was waging its campaign. The Oued Ouchaih tunnel is occasionally barred to road traffic because barricades have been erected halfway through.

In these housing compounds, where modernity seems reduced to an electric light pole and a faucet still without water, one cannot help hoping for some slight improvement, but even if patience is one of the cardinal virtues, it has its limits.

For many, summer seems a time of respite. Young people hope to find a bit of quiet on the beaches at Boumerdes, Tamentefoust, or Tipaza. Days are whiled

away swimming and lying in the sun. And yet, evening brings a blinding return to reality.

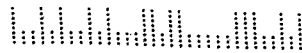
Because of all these problems, the suburbs' avenues now seethe with anger. To try to ignore them will in the end only result in more 5 Octobers that will vary only in their degree of gravity, not a good omen when violence becomes the daily fare.

In Algeria today, the suburbs are bound to remain an open wound difficult to heal.

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