

**THE CIVIL CONCORD:
A PEACE INITIATIVE WASTED**
9 July 2001



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THE CIVIL CONCORD:

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(Original Version in French)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The civil war between the Algerian army and Islamist guerrillas, sparked by the refusal of the military to recognise the electoral victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in 1991, is not over. The Civil Concord Law, proposed by President Bouteflika in April 1999, approved by referendum in September the same year, and supported by the leaders of the FIS, has failed to convince the majority of the guerrillas to give up their arms and seek peace. No lasting political solution to this Islamist-military conflict has been found and the crisis threatens to spread to other parts of the community.

The Civil Concord law did create a genuine dynamic for peace in 1999. At first, the leaders of the FIS gave their public support to the President's initiative, in exchange for certain promises by the military regime, notably the release of prisoners and the possibility of creating a new political party in accordance with the 1996 constitution. But in November 1999, Abdelkader Hachani, number three in the FIS leadership, was assassinated and two other FIS leaders were put under house arrest. To date the regime continues to refuse to legalise the Wafa party, regarded as the political heir to the FIS.

Despite their military superiority and the evolution of the Islamist position, Algeria's rulers have not altered their security strategy and continue to regard the Islamists more as defeated enemies than political interlocutors. For the regime, however, the rehabilitation of a popular Islamist party would be the best strategy for combating the radicalism of

armed groups such as the GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and the GSPC (Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat), while also regaining a little legitimacy by playing the democratic game. If it did so, the last of the armed Islamist groups would likely progressively lose support from the ex-FIS electorate and could be gradually alienated with the possibility, like the Shining Path Movement in Peru, head towards self-destruction. In exchange for the regime's acceptance of the Islamists' return to the political scene, the leaders of the ex-FIS would have to engage in public debate, playing by democratic rules.

There are few options for the international community to pressure the Algerian government to accept the political liberalisation needed to bring peace to the country. Comfortably supported by oil industry income, the elite leadership is almost impervious to economic or political pressure. Fiercely protective of their sovereignty, they reject any external interference in their affairs. Moreover, international institutions have stated that Algeria's recent economic performance corresponds surprisingly well to their financial criteria.

Yet the political, economic and social crisis is omnipresent, and the status quo cannot continue. Long defined as an "Islamist-military" problem, the violence now threatens to take other forms. The recent riots in Kabylia (Berber dominated area) show that there is a risk of resurgence of ethnic conflict which could exacerbate the socio-economic turmoil, and which could in turn lead to

regional instability. In this context, it is clear that the security rhetoric of anti-Islamist repression by the army cannot function, and popular dissatisfaction with the inability of the regime to face its other political, economic and social responsibilities will do nothing but improve conditions for the armed groups. If the problems posed by the armed Islamist groups cannot be solved soon with courageous political choices by both sides, the “sub-conflicts” stemming from the apparent lack of political prospects will be even more difficult to resolve.

The international community must abandon the illusion that an authoritarian regime can, successfully, respond to the desire for change expressed by the population, with repression. A lasting solution to the crisis must be found urgently. Algeria is a social and economic time-bomb, capable of generating huge waves of migration and regional destabilisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES

1. When President Bouteflika visits Washington on 12 and 13 July 2001, strongly encourage him to liberalise political activity and improve respect for human rights, and in particular to legalise the Wafa party. Such encouragement should not be made hostage to the desire to achieve Algerian diplomatic and security cooperation on Western Sahara and Middle East peace process issues.
2. Create training programs for young Algerian Army officers.

TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

3. Make a declaration denouncing and unambiguously condemning the recent violations of human rights committed by the Algerian security forces, mainly in Kabylia, since April 2001.
4. Put pressure on Algeria as a signatory to the Barcelona Charter to continue the negotiations and conclude a partnership accord based on the Charter. Through the accord, put pressure on the Algerian government to establish clear laws and commercial practices to create greater economic transparency.
5. Support a meeting of political actors to restart the Sant’Egidio dialogue interrupted in 1995.
6. Invite members of the Algerian democratic opposition to the West and give them the opportunity to express their views publicly.
7. Support the inclusion of the case of Algeria at the next session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.
8. Encourage national jurisdictions to use or extend their powers to prosecute serious violations of human rights committed in Algeria, and accelerate procedures for laying complaints.

TO THE ALGERIAN LEADERSHIP

9. Accept the return of the Islamists to the political scene

- (a) Recognise the Wafa party of Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, which was banned without legal grounds by the Minister of the Interior. This party would enable the regrouping of all the Islamist factions within a framework of subject to constitutional rules.
 - (b) Release Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj and ask them to launch a national appeal for a cease-fire of all armed Islamists who haven't yet handed in their weapons.
 - (c) Initiate a public and transparent national dialogue to establish a timetable for new municipal, legislative and presidential elections.
10. Establish a political party to represent the interests of the army.
11. Establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the participation of all political and social actors. This commission must be guaranteed total independence as well as the ability to publicly identify guilty parties. Also, its mandate must permit it to compel all protagonists to give evidence.

TO THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

12. Respond to calls for a cease-fire and respect for democratic rules, in exchange for the recognition of the Wafa party by the regime.

Brussels, 9 July 2001



CIVIL CONCORD: A PEACE INITIATIVE WASTED

I. INTRODUCTION

The recent civilian massacres in Algeria are evidence of the failure of the Civil Concord policy promoted by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika following his election in April 1999. The Law on Civil Concord offered immunity from prosecution to members of the Islamic armed groups, provided that they surrendered before 13 January 2000, and had not committed any crimes or acts of terrorism. Despite widespread popular support for this policy, as demonstrated by a referendum held in September 1999, the Civil Concord and government policy in general over the past two years have not succeeded in bringing to an end the civil war which has raged in Algeria for 10 years¹.

The war started when the Algerian Army refused to recognise the results of the legislative elections held in December 1991, which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won in the first round. This rejection immediately led to confrontation between FIS supporters and the national security forces. The following year, 1992, the assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf, the dissolution of the FIS, the incarceration of its militant members in Saharan camps and the repression of its sympathisers all sharpened the sense of popular revolt against the regime. From 1993 onwards, the supporters of an Islamic State organised themselves into armed groups and waged real war against the established authorities. Between 1993 and 1995, this fighting seriously weakened the regime, which seemed likely to collapse under the severe blows struck by the armed groups. Between

1995 and 1998 however, the Army regained the initiative and launched a "total war" against the Islamic armed groups. Its anti-guerrilla strategy weakened the armed groups considerably, forcing the armed wing of the FIS, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), to declare a ceasefire on 21 September 1997. Despite its military superiority however, the Army failed to restore civil peace to Algeria. During 2000², several thousand people lost their lives and massacres, arbitrary executions and disappearances continued, with the authorities making no attempt to bring their perpetrators to justice.

The Presidential election campaign in April 1999 offered the prospect of reconciliation between the Islamists and the military authorities for the first time since the electoral process had been broken off in 1991. The exiled FIS leaders had no hesitation in calling the presidential election "the real start of a political solution"³. Certainly the election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the only candidate actually eligible following the abstention of the remaining six candidates, highlighted the weakness of his claim to legitimacy, and was a sign of difficulties to come in his attempt to break free from the power of the military. In April 1999 the IEFE stated that like Presidents Chadli, Boudiaf and Zérroual before him, "the new President faced the same problems which had been responsible for the failure of his predecessors and

¹ For the text of the Civil Concord, see <http://www.algeria-watch.de/infomap/infom09/concorde1.htm>

² 2,500 according to the US State Department <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/nea/index.cfm?d=644>; 9,000 according to the Algerian Free Officers Movement (MAOL). Information available on the MAOL site : www.anp.org.

³ Communiqué of the Executive Body of the FIS Abroad (IEFE), 28 December 1998, See : <http://members.aol.com/algFis/ribat/indexF.htm>.

which could cause a similar fate to befall him"⁴. To make up for his lack of legitimacy, President Bouteflika immediately announced his intention to make frequent use of the referendum process, but also to do his utmost to limit the powers of the military. Directly after his election, he declared that he enjoyed the "inestimable privilege of being the President of the Republic, Minister of Defence and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces" and that "the Army [was] only an institution of the Republic which in exceptional circumstances had had to exercise police powers. In good time it will resume its rightful role"⁵.

Two years after coming to power, the promises made during the presidential election campaign in 1999 have not been kept and Bouteflika's reconciliation policy is discredited. The President is accused of betrayal by the FIS leaders and of "treason" by the families of victims of terrorism. The population is complaining more and more openly about the regime's persistent brutality, as demonstrated by the riots in Kabylia in April 2001. The President's position is weakening in the face of an Army which is careful not to allow him too much freedom of action, at the same time being all too aware that his policy has failed.

Throughout the Nineties the Army justified its fight against the FIS, then the Islamic armed groups of the various guerrilla organisations, by maintaining that they threatened "democracy" and the "Republican" nature of the State. The anti-democratic talk of the ex-FIS leaders between 1989 and 1991 and the policy of massacres of civilians by Islamic armed groups strengthened the Army's resolve to eradicate the political and armed tendencies of Algerian Islam.

In ten years however, the Islamist movement has undergone significant political changes, due in part to their military weakness. Civil war produced a change in the Islamist stance, resulting in support for some of the ex-FIS leaders in the Wafa party of Taleb Ibrahimi, regarded as the heir to the FIS, but renouncing the use of violence. The AIS, the armed wing of the FIS, dissolved, and its members took advantage of an amnesty.

After ten years of fighting the Islamists, the military leaders have two options: to maintain a

war logic indefinitely until they win "total victory" against the groups that are still active such as the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), or to initiate controlled rehabilitation of the ex-FIS Islamists by legalising the Wafa party. The ex-FIS Islamists have lost the war but the crisis persists and risks becoming diversified.

Despite their military superiority and the change in the Islamic stance, the Algerian authorities have not altered their policy, as demonstrated by their refusal to legalise the Wafa party. But rehabilitating a popular Islamist party would be the regime's best policy for combatting the radicalism of the GIA and the GSPC, at the same time regaining a degree of credibility by playing the democratic card. The last Islamic armed groups would be certain to gradually lose the support of part of the ex-FIS electorate and would be increasingly marginalised. It is even possible that they could be driven to self-destruct, like the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) in Peru. The need for a change of policy is urgent. The riots in Kabylia clearly show that the Army's talk of security will not carry conviction for very much longer and that popular dissatisfaction with the regime's inability to handle its other political, economic and social responsibilities can only increase, eventually leaving the field wide open to the armed groups. It remains for the ex-FIS leaders to publicly accept the rules of the democratic game and for the military leaders to accept the return of the Islamists to the political arena.

⁴ IEFE communiqué, 30 April 1999.

⁵ Interview with President Bouteflika, *Radio Africa Numéro un*, 10 July 1999.

II. THE ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL CONCORD

Elected to restore civil peace in Algeria, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika very soon faced the limits of his powers. . Following his election in April 1999, and as the regime's official candidate and presidential winner by default, he promised to put an end to the civil war and to initiate a policy of reconciliation: "You know I don't expect congratulations for performing a miracle. I am trying to act with a modicum of good sense to get to the bottom of a tragedy which will soon have lasted for eight years. My personal feeling is that it is time for all this to stop. Life is not going to improve if we have 200,000 or 300,000 dead and three million victims of terrorism. The accounts have to be settled some time or other. I am trying to steer a narrow and tricky course through all the obstacles"⁶.

However, the lack of common objectives between the President and the military leaders soon paralysed the decision-making process. Bouteflika's objective was to successfully end the civil war by defining acceptable conditions for the reintegration of those Islamists willing to lay down their arms. As far as the military High Command was concerned, the objective of Bouteflika's election was to restore the lustre to an army entangled in a "dirty war"⁷. With his considerable diplomatic experience under the presidency of H. Boumediene⁸, Bouteflika was the man whose words were most likely to make people forget the "terrorist state" accusations made against the Algerian regime.

In fact during 1997-1998, under the presidency of Liamine Zéroual, a series of massacres of civilians caught the attention of the international community for the first time since the beginning of the conflict. The latter immediately called for explanations of the drama taking place behind closed doors in Algeria. To the military leaders, the risk of Algeria's problems coming under the international spotlight was perceived as a major threat. These massacres undermined the authority and credibility of the military establishment and

placed the Army at the centre of an international campaign of criticism over its responsibility in the civilian drama. The National People's Army (ANP) perceived this development as a genuine strategy of war being waged against it by "occult forces": "the third phase of the attack by the relentless enemies of our country targeted our military institution, the ANP" announced an Army editorial at the time⁹.

Behind the scenes the military High Command immediately organised an unprecedented media campaign against the entourage of Liamine Zéroual, highlighting his failure and implying that a new Head of State was now needed. The time had come for a new President and the announcement of an early presidential election focused attention on the new Staff requirements. It was stated at the outset that the future President would be a civilian, with a view to lowering the Army's profile in the power hierarchy. The task assigned to Bouteflika, nominated as the Army's official candidate, was thus to transform the regime's image from "terrorist State" to "democratic State", to silence the criticism of the military establishment and to make Algeria sufficiently attractive to foreign investors.

Naturally the leaders of the FIS had different hopes for the new President from those of the generals. As far as the FIS was concerned, "the priority of the next President of the Republic must be to reunite the Algerian nation, rather than contributing to its division and dispersal like Liamine Zéroual. Unless a candidate for the presidency of the Republic includes the following three policies in his program: a halt to the bloodbath, support for national unity and a return to national stability, there is no chance of him winning the vote of the majority of Algerians"¹⁰. The Islamists of the FIS expected the new President to recognise the violence they had suffered and their right to freedom of expression.

But the Concord was a compromise attempting to reconcile positions without proper negotiation between the various protagonists in the conflict. Too many of the interests at stake were left unresolved and consequently neither the decision-

⁶ Interview with President Bouteflika, APS, 10 July 1999.

⁷ Reference to book by Habib Souadia, *La sale guerre*, Paris, La Découverte, 2001.

⁸ Houari Boumediene was President of Algeria between 1965 and 1978.

⁹ *El Djeich*, January 1998.

¹⁰ "A Chance for Algeria", *El Ribat*, No. 241, 25 December 1998, See :

<http://members.aol.com/algFis/ribat/indexF.htm>.

making generals, the FIS nor the Algerian people gained any real advantage from it.

A. THE AIS TRUCE (1997) AND THE SECURITY STANCE OF THE ANP

The 1999 Law on Civil Concord was based on "agreements" negotiated between the Army and the AIS in 1997 and in the words of President Bouteflika, was "a political expression"¹¹ of these agreements.

In 1995 President Liamine Zéroual promulgated a law offering government clemency to armed Islamists who agreed to surrender. In May 1996 discussions began between the emir of the AIS and the Army, still headed by Liamine Zéroual and Ahmed Ouyahyia's government, with the same objective. General Boughaba, at that time in charge of the 5th military region (Constantinois) initiated contact with Madani Mezrag, emir of the AIS. Scarcely had negotiations begun when General Boughaba was replaced by Major General Smaïn Lamari, head of Internal Security. General Lamari's importance in the power hierarchy lent credibility to the discussions in the eyes of the Islamists and provided reassurance to the emir of the AIS on the future application of the undertakings made. This initial contact was finalised by an agreement during 1997, against a background of civilian massacres in the Mitidja. The newspaper Echarq El Awsat reported that the agreement between Madani Mezrag and General Smaïn Lamari was signed on 20 August 1997¹². On 21 September 1997, Madani Mezrag issued a communiqué "ordering all company commanders fighting under his command to halt combat operations from 1 October and (urging) the other groups attached to regional and national interests to rally to this call"¹³.

The impact of the truce on the scale of the violence was considerable. During 1998-1999 Algeria experienced the most peaceful period of the decade with "only 200 victims" a month. As an AIS communiqué stated, "the first months of the truce allowed progress to be made in developing the organisation and discipline of AIS troops. In the

field the benefits of the ceasefire soon made themselves felt. Hesitant to begin with, independent armed factions or those which had split from the GIA quickly realised the advantages of joining the truce. Over thirty armed groups not involved in the massacres of civilians, i.e. over 3,000 soldiers, joined the truce whilst still retaining their autonomy"¹⁴.

However, the "agreements" between the AIS and the Army have never been made public to this day, despite the insistence of the Socialist Forces Front political party (FFS). In December 1999, the newspaper Echarq El Awsat published only a "summary" of a five-page document thought to be the agreement between the AIS and the Army. The agreement set out a list of terms: "general amnesty for all groups joining the truce; concentration of all AIS factions and other armed groups in precise locations under the control of the ANP; integration of ex-servicemen in special ANP units; drafting of a law to provide a legal framework for the truce; release of ex-FIS leaders within 18 months; State compensation for all victims, etc..."¹⁵, but above all they culminated in a promise to the effect that the ex-FIS would be allowed to return to the political arena (under another name, with a new direction "totally unconnected with "the past" and "in accordance with the provisions of the 1996 constitution")¹⁶.

¹⁴ "Making the truce count", *El Ribat*, No. 229, October 1998, See :

<http://members.aol.com/algFis/ribat/indexF.htm>.

¹⁵ "Echarq El Awsat publishes what it claims to be the Power-AIS agreements", *op. cit.*

¹⁶ The agreement contained 13 points:

- 1 "General amnesty for all groups observing the truce"
- 2 "To regard all those who died during the years of violence as victims of the national tragedy"
- 3 "Full assumption of responsibility and compensation by the State of all victims"
- 4 "Creation of a mixed committee to monitor contacts between the ANP and the AIS"
- 5 "Creation of an interministerial committee comprising the Ministries of Justice and the Interior charged with supervising the release of ex-FIS leaders within 18 months"
- 6 "Concentration of all AIS factions and other armed groups at precise locations under the control of the ANP"
- 7 "Integration of these elements into special combat units against terrorist groups"
- 8 "A list of all weapons and ammunition in the possession of the groups joining the truce"

¹¹Speech by President Bouteflika, 9 July 1999, APS, <http://www.algeria-watch.de/boutefspeech.htm>.

¹² "Echarq El Awsat publishes what it claims are the Power-AIS agreements", *La Tribune*, 20 December 1999.

¹³ AIS communiqué, 21 September 1997.

Two months before the communiqué on the truce was issued, the authorities made several gestures of appeasement. For instance, on 8 July 1997, Abdelkader Hachani, the FIS's number three man, who had been held in detention awaiting trial since 22 January 1992, was released. On 16 July it was the turn of Abassi Madani, President of the FIS, to leave prison. The negotiations begun between the military authorities and the AIS seemed at the time to offer the likelihood of peace.

However, Madani's release in July 1997 was quickly followed by the Raïs massacre during the night of 28-29 August, then that of Béni Messous on 5 September, officially attributed to the Islamic Armed Groups (GIA). Madani was immediately placed under house arrest following his "appeal for an end to the bloodshed". Today some analysts suspect this chain of events of having been staged by the regime. The investigation into the Benthalha massacre by Nesroulah Yous¹⁷ and the testimony of Habib Souaïdia in his book: "The Dirty War"¹⁸ clearly implicate certain State departments in the massacres. One explanation put forward was that following the surrender of the AIS, these massacres were blamed on the GIA in order to completely destroy the credibility of this group, thereby disqualifying all the Islamic armed groups. If such was the objective of the departments involved, it has to be said that this policy failed. On the contrary, for the first time since the beginning of the civil war, it drew the attention of the international community to the violence in Algeria. The only way to clearly determine responsibility for these massacres would be to give a mandate to an international commission of inquiry.

B. THE ELECTION OF BOUTEFLIKA AND THE CIVIL CONCORD (1999)

The announcement of President Liamine Zéroual's resignation on 11 September 1998 and the organisation of an early presidential election in February, subsequently postponed until April 1999, temporarily distracted the media from the civilian killings and the politicians from the application of the truce agreements. The announcement by the outgoing President that the presidential campaign would be "free and transparent" implied that Algeria was embarking on a process of democratisation and reconciliation. But the promise of a free and transparent election was broken: Abdelaziz Bouteflika, "the predicted President" was elected by default in April 1999. The other six candidates effectively denounced the administration's decision in favour of Bouteflika and boycotted the election. Despite this abstention, the new President received the support of Madani Mezrag (emir of the AIS), Abassi Madani (President of the ex-FIS) and Rabah Kébir (President of the IEFE). Similarly, despite having appealed to the ex-FIS electorate to vote for Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi¹⁹, the Wafa party's independent candidate, the IEFE lent its support to President Bouteflika and his Bill on Civil Concord. The support of these three Islamist leaders lent clear credibility to Abdelaziz Bouteflika's "peacemaker" speech.

On 4 June 1999, Madani Mezrag, emir of the AIS, sent a letter to President Bouteflika informing him of his desire to work towards a return to civil peace²⁰. Since October 1997 the AIS had been

9 "Evacuation of the families of the groups joining the truce to safe locations far from the anti-terrorist operation zones"

10 "Drafting of a law providing a legal framework for the truce"

11 "Recognition by the AIS of the ANP as the only Army in Algeria"

13 "Decisive halt to all armed actions and an undertaking not to lend any direct or indirect support to any terrorist faction or group across national territory". Ibid.

¹⁷Nesroulah Yous, *Qui a tué à Benthalha ? Algérie, chronique d'un massacre annoncé*, Paris, La Découverte, 2000.

¹⁸Habib Souaïdia, *La sale guerre*, op. cit.

¹⁹"After studying the platforms of the candidates for the forthcoming presidential election, we are very pleased to note the positive steps taken by most of the candidates towards reconciliation and the achievement of real peace ...however, in our view the independent candidate, Dr. Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, is the man most likely to unite the Algerians and lead the country out of tragedy", IEFE communiqué of 6 April 1999.

²⁰ «Oh honourable President, doubtless you have studied the file on the truce called by the AIS...the AIS has worked to make this principle a reality (return of stability to the country as part of a legitimate and just solution), despite the obstacles ... which has led to a clear reduction in the scale of human and material losses, of which no one one can claim to be unaware ... There are still active contingents among the authorities who are trying to prevent this happening, through both ignorance and distortion...We wish to inform you that we have delivered a project into the hands of Algeria's decision-makers,

divided into sites allocated to its *maquisards** (Texenna to Jijel for example). Unable to overthrow the regime as they had promised in July 1994 when it was established, the *maquisards* of the AIS had no choice but to accept an unconditional unilateral truce in 1997 and to support Bouteflika in 1999. In response to his letter, Madani Mezrag received a dispatch from the Algerian Press Service (APS) saying that his "letter was a brave step" and that "the President would remain faithful to all the undertakings made throughout his campaign".

However it was the letter of support to Bouteflika from Abassi Madani of the FIS on 12 June 1999 which made the first overtures towards peace. For the first time since his arrest in 1991, Abassi Madani launched an explicit appeal to stop the fighting against the regime²¹. This faith in the President's policy was also evident in the stance adopted by the IEFE: "We call upon all officers, supporters and sympathisers of the FIS to give it their full support (the President's policy); we wish to express our appreciation of and support for the President of the Republic's position and his commitment to national reconciliation. In the face of his determination to bring the process of

aimed at putting an end to the crisis and stopping the bloodbath once and for all. This project contains clear objectives and precise stages and we maintain that if they had been implemented and given all the necessary support required of the authorities, the security situation would have been improved ... We put to you our views on the action that should be taken by the next President in order to resolve Algeria's crisis:

- "find a legitimate and just solution capable of giving religion its due place, the people their dignity and honour and the country security and stability"
- "as soon as you take the initiative expected of you, as soon as you give the truce a legal basis and political standing, as promised, and as soon as you reinforce your policy by implementing the action plan agreed with the Command of the National People's Army, then we promise you, on the word of Islam...that we shall issue an unequivocal communiqué clearly announcing our intention to genuinely cooperate with you in finally putting an end to the crisis and abandoning armed action"
- "it is easy for us to tell you that it will be simple to destroy the deviationist groups (GIA), neutralise the fire of the fitna (civil war) and put a stop to the bloodbath..."
- "we have high hopes of you as regards achieving peace and stability for the country. Letter from Madani Mezrag, emir of the AIS to President Bouteflika 4 June 1999, <http://www.fisalgeria.org/>.

²¹ Letter from Abassi Madani to President Bouteflika 12 June 1999, <http://www.fisalgeria.org/>.

national reconciliation to the desired end, we announce our total support for the direction taken by the President with the objective of restoring power and dignity to the people"²².

In his speeches the newly elected President was careful to refer to the "wrong" and the "violence" done to the ex-FIS.²³ Although following on from the truce agreements, symbolically Abdelaziz Bouteflika's policy opened up a new perspective for Algeria. The new President had no hesitation in stating that the revolutionary credibility of the regime inherited from the war of independence had failed and that the State must build on other foundations than those of the war of decolonisation. His calls for reconciliation were thus directed at the Islamists as much as at Algerian-born Frenchmen and Jews.²⁴ For the first time since independence, the Head of State was attempting to redefine the identity of the State which until now had been based on the trinity of Islam, Arab and Nation. Obviously this policy impressed the international community and particularly France, which saw in it an opportunity for its own reconciliation with Algeria. It also impressed a large part of Algerian society, who were willing to believe that the policy of the new Head of State had a sincere basis. The Law on Civil Concord was put to a referendum on 16 September 1999, and gained widespread popular support (officially 98.6 per cent voted "yes" with a participation rate of 85 per cent), giving rise to hopes that after eight years of war, Algeria was on the way to rediscovering stability and peace²⁵.

To give added credibility to his civil concord policy, the new President introduced a series of measures, notably issuing a decree in January 2000 granting "amnesty to members of the so-called "AIS" organisation in return for their unilateral decision to call a ceasefire in 1997, in order to help unmask the enemies of Algeria and Islam and to make an official transition to a definitive ceasefire after the Presidential elections on 15 April 1999.

²² Rabah Kébir, IEFE communiqué 14 June 1999, <http://www.fisalgeria.org/>.

²³"I happened to say that breaking off the electoral process in 1991 was an act of violence. I say it again". Interview with President Bouteflika, *Radio Africa numéro un*, 10 July 1999.

²⁴ Speech by President Bouteflika, 9 July 1999, APS.

²⁵The question asked at the referendum of 16 September 1999 was: "Are you for or against the general policy of the President of the Republic aimed at achieving peace and civil concord?"

And lastly, for having taken the decision to conclusively dissolve their organisation with a view to complete reintegration into Algerian society. These measures, which were taken pursuant to Article 41 of law 99-08 of 13 July 1999 relating to the re-establishment of civil concord, resulted in immunity from prosecution²⁶.

Promulgated three days after the deadline for surrender laid down in the Law on Civil Concord, 13 January 2000, this presidential decree backed up the President's guarantees and desire for peace with the members of the armed groups, already expressed in the Law on Civil Concord. According to Amnesty International, "government sources confirm that some 5,500 members of armed groups surrendered [between July 1999 and January 2000]. A little over 1,000 were members of the AIS and the Islamic League for the D'wa and the Jihad (LIDD) who benefited from the presidential amnesty; the others, who belonged to the GIA, were treated in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Civil Concord"²⁷. According to government sources, 5,000 prisoners, sentenced for "acts of subversion and terrorism" were released thanks to a presidential decree, which seemed akin to a whitewashing of terrorists.

However, promulgation of the decree provoked criticism, since contrary to the Law on Civil Concord²⁸, it permitted an amnesty for crimes and terrorist acts. Thus Amnesty International pointed out the paradox that "other prisoners, also sentenced since 1992 following unfair trials, and serving sentences extending to life imprisonment,

had been kept in detention...while individuals who were active members of armed groups or led such groups for years, benefited from amnesty or immunity from legal prosecution a few days after surrendering"²⁹. Furthermore, six months after promulgation of the Concord Law, the Islamic movement increasingly came to see it as a "police measure". The promises made in July 1999 had not been kept and the law never generated any negotiation process between all the Islamists and the authorities, as Madani had requested in his letter to Bouteflika in June 1999.

In reality President Bouteflika had little room for political manoeuvre in terms of proceeding beyond simple promulgation of the law. Despite having an "official majority" in the National Assembly, the President could not rely on any political party to support his policies. Subjected to pressure from the Army, the new President had no other links at national level necessary to support his political action. His many trips abroad demonstrated that he was seeking to make up for this lack of internal support by winning over international opinion. This inability to influence internal political development led the Islamists of the ex-FIS to distrust the true power of the President.

²⁶The decree stipulated that "people belonging to organisations who voluntarily and spontaneously decided to stop acts of violence and who placed themselves completely at the disposal of the State and whose names are listed in appendix to the original of this decree...shall be entitled to all their civic rights and have been granted immunity from prosecution". In theory the decree was directed at the AIS, which thus benefited from an amnesty, although the release of certain emirs of the GIA implied that the latter were benefiting from this decree when they should legally be subject to the regulations of the Law on Civil Concord which stipulated terms of imprisonment. Decree no. 2000-03 of 10 January 2000. For the text of the presidential pardon: <http://www.algeria-watch.de/farticle/ais/aisamnistedecret.htm>.

²⁷ *Truth and Justice should not be Obscured by Impunity*, Amnesty International, 8 November 2000, <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/MDE280142000?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\ALGERIA>.

²⁸ See text of the Civil Concord, infra No. 1, and of the presidential pardon, infra No. 26.

²⁹ *Truth and Justice*, op. cit.

III. THE FAILURE OF THE LAW ON CIVIL CONCORD AND THE SENSE OF BETRAYAL AMONGST ISLAMIC SUPPORTERS OF THE CONCORD

Within the space of a few months, the leaders of the ex-FIS moved from "unconditional" support to total rejection of the President's policies.

Firstly, few of the undertakings made by the government in July 1999 were kept. The supporters of the truce with the AIS felt that they had been manipulated by the authorities. Abassi Madani, Rabah Kébir and Madani Mezrag had given a clear indication of the means to achieve peace³⁰, including the release of political prisoners and the initiation of political dialogue between the parties to the conflict. None of these measures was implemented.

Next, following the assassination on 22 November 1999 of Abdelkader Hachani, number three in the FIS, who opposed Bouteflika's reconciliation policy, doubts about the truth of the authorities' intentions of achieving "a just peace" intensified. A sense of betrayal emerged, particularly in the case of Abassi Madani. He wrote a letter withdrawing his support for the President's policies³¹. Madani's

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- ³⁰ 1) Create a climate of trust through:
- release of political prisoners
 - return of exiles and captives
 - lifting of state of emergency
- 2) Initiate a "serious dialogue" bringing together Algerians and foreigners
- in the presence of all the responsible parties
 - at a venue meeting all objective conditions on issues of security, etc.

See IEFE communiqué of January 2000, letter from Madani to Bouteflika 11 June 1999, letter from Mezrag to Bouteflika 1 June 1999.

³¹"Dear brother Sheikh Benhajar, and all the others. At this precise moment as I continue to suffer with as much sadness as bitterness the tragic assassination of the dearest of my sons, snatched from the cause of the Algerian people, murdered and martyred ... the authorities have proved themselves incapable of telling the difference between an appeal for a just peace which would allow the people to recover their rights, and the unhealthy and despicable nature of the appeal by the authorities, an appeal which is nothing less than a betrayal of the pact sealed with Allah and a betrayal of the people. Bouteflika had promised to deliver the country from the crisis through a political solution, a policy which we supported, with a view to reaching a conclusive solution in the interests of

withdrawal was accompanied by an appeal to the leaders of the AIS: "Dear brother, I ask you to forward this letter to all the brothers, heroes of the Jihad for God and for peace, which guarantees to the people their right and not their surrender, to our brothers known for their sincerity Madani Mezrag, Ahmed Bénéaïcha and all the emirs and leaders amongst our brothers both inside and outside the country"³².

Furthermore, the Concord increasingly appeared to the Islamists as a measure imposed by the victors on the vanquished rather than a gesture of reconciliation. In fact, at the same time as the assassination of Abdelkader Hachani and Madani's withdrawal of support for the President's policies, the Army announced its intention to relaunch its offensives against the *maquisards* who had not laid down their weapons after 13 January 2000. This declaration was followed by a clear escalation in violence during 2000-2001.

It became obvious that for the "decision-making generals", the policy of national reconciliation was an attempt to give new credibility to their own authority rather than to negotiate with the Islamists. The Islamists realised that the military leaders had no intention of negotiating their return to the political arena after having defeated them militarily. The Law on Civil Concord merely offered a way out for the Islamic *maquisards*, militarily weakened after eight years of guerrilla warfare³³ and was a device that enabled the military to show that they had no wish to "eradicate" them completely, by allowing all those who accepted military defeat to be reintegrated into society.

true reconciliation without injuring any parties whatsoever. Bearing in mind that reconciliation can only take place openly through balanced dialogue ... the stubbornness shown by the authorities in their monologue is clear proof of their bad faith and their unwillingness to resolve the crisis", letter from Abassi Madani dated 26 November 1999,

http://www.ccfis.org/cmnmq/cmnmq_15_trad.html.

³²Ibid.

³³A sense of victory had predominated since 1995 amongst Army leaders, as illustrated by the interview with General X (rumoured to be General Mohamed Lamari) in the magazine *Politique Internationale*: "In military terms, we broke their back (GIA) towards the end of 1994. The worst period was spring 1994, when the GIA and to a lesser extent the AIS took the initiative in several areas by attacking economic and military targets...But since 1995 the wind has changed direction once and for all". *Politique Internationale*, No. 79, Paris, 1998.

There were already tangible signs of the Islamists' concern regarding this policy of reconciliation even before the deadline of 13 January 2000. According to Abdelkrim Ould Adda, spokesman for the IEFÉ, the authorities had tried to change application of the truce agreements into a "surrender" in December 1999. While President Bouteflika stressed his desire for a "just and equitable" reconciliation, the so-called "eradicators" among the "decision-making generals" had "taken the lead within the regime and was holding it hostage". In January 2000 the spokesman stated: "we want to integrate the political arena into the Constitution. A new page must be turned, leading to national reconciliation instead of this apartheid in which they are trying to keep us confined. We are absolutely determined on this reconciliation. If it fails, the authorities will be to blame"³⁴. It was the same concern felt by the emir of the LIDD, Ali Benhajar, who had agreed to add his support to the truce in October 1997. In November 1999 he stated: "But in reality we see that this law – the Civil Concord - is an imposed law, imposed by the victor on the vanquished. Those who took up arms have become lost sheep, criminals, penitents who are pardoned, while the other party is treated as "undesirables" ". Consequently this is no longer a reconciliation but a security agreement, if it exists and is implemented in this manner. And we reject this approach. This does not mean that we plan to wage war. But this approach, whether it takes six months or six years, has nothing to do with us and is not a true call for national reconciliation... It is simply a tactic to keep us quiet"³⁵. And in January 2001 the balance sheet clearly did not endorse the Law on Civil Concord, with an average of 300 dead per month since the start of the year, according to the press.

To many FIS leaders, the Law on Civil Concord proved to be a "police measure", establishing a scale of sanctions against the Islamists from amnesty for those with no blood on their hands to terms of imprisonment for others. Decisions on these sanctions were shrouded in secrecy, allowing no controls over arbitrary action. Ali Benhajar, emir of the LIDD, said that the law "is not clear: the law itself excludes those who declared a halt to armed action of their own free will before the law

was promulgated (...) in which case who is the concord with? The members of Antar Zouabri and Hassan Hattab's groups, who have rejected reconciliation and dialogue?"

This arbitrary and unilateral approach explains why the law failed to rally all the Islamic groups to the cause of peace. With the exception of the AIS, which had already laid down its arms in October 1997, the other armed *maquisards* effectively remained distrustful of the law and held to their positions.

It also reinforced the position of the radical Islamists who had rejected the truce of October 1997 and subsequently the Law on Civil Concord. According to Mourad Dhina, spokesman for the Coordination Council of the FIS (CCFIS)³⁶: "the so-called civil concord policy, which the decision-making generals instructed it to promote, has not restored peace to Algeria. The FIS has always rejected this 'Concord' because it ignored the political nature of the crisis, its sole aim being to absolve the generals and their allies of the crimes they are guilty of committing"³⁷.

In conclusion, it seems clear that the only people to benefit from the Law on Civil Concord were the members of the AIS and the LIDD. The political leaders of the ex-FIS did not benefit from the policy of reconciliation: Hachani, the FIS's no. 3, was assassinated; Madani and Benhadj are still under house arrest; and T. Ibrahim, the independent candidate, was unable to obtain

³⁴ *Le Soir*, Brussels, 7 January 2000.

³⁵ *Libre Algérie*, Algiers, 25 October - 7 November 1999.

³⁶ The CCFIS was created on 5 October 1997 and is chaired by Ahmed Zaoui. It is a rival faction to Rabal Kébir and more radical than the IEFÉ. The objectives of the CCFIS are: to unite FIS members and sympathisers abroad; support popular resistance within the country; work on drafting the Islamic plan for society... "with regard to the truce, the CCFIS notes with regret the persistence of several signs that confirm the reservations it had expressed; the CCFIS feels that as a military decision the decreed truce is the prerogative of the Jihad companies (armed groups) in the interior of the country. It points out however that such a truce will not achieve any strategic objective unless the following minimum conditions are all met: accord the truce a political dimension with clear announcement of agreements and decisions; ensure that an effective contribution is made to the negotiations by Sheikhs M. Abassi and Ali Benhadj; allow an independent commission to be set up to investigate the massacres, etc." CCFIS communiqué No. 3 30 March 1998.

<http://www.ccfis.org/dispcol.asp?art=26&HiddenPage=3>.

³⁷ CCFIS communiqué No. 19, 5 July 2000,

<http://www.ccfis.org/dispcol.asp?art=14&HiddenPage=1>.

approval for his party, the Wafa. With its military wing defeated, split into several factions, and its leadership neutralised, the FIS is seriously weakened. The Army is in a position of strength, but at the same time it has denied itself a recognised contact with whom to conduct vital political dialogue in the short or medium term.

IV. THE ARMY'S STRATEGY: MILITARY VICTORY, POLITICAL DEADLOCK

Although it had succeeded in gaining the upper hand over the Islamic *maquisards*, the Algerian Army was still in political deadlock. After eliminating the FIS at political level and destroying the Islamists of the FIS-AIS pairing³⁸ at military level, the Army now lacked the resources and ideas to put an end to the persistent violence. Overwhelmed by the scale of popular protest when the FIS was banned in 1992, the military leaders tried, once they had regained the military advantage, to reach an "agreement" with the leader of the FIS, Abassi Madani. This agreement was subsequently accepted by the AIS in 1997 on more or less the same terms and complied with the spirit of the Law on Civil Concord in April 1999. In other words the Army had defined its terms in 1995 and had changed nothing since.

In May 1995, direct negotiations took place between the President and A. Madani. The regime proposed disarmament and an amnesty for the soldiers and the FIS's return to the political arena under a different name. These negotiations failed owing to the refusal by the leader of the FIS to "appeal for an end to the acts of violence"³⁹. The

³⁸ The leaders of the ex-FIS probably underestimated the Army's ability to adjust to the conflicts and in particular to modernise its combat units to make them more efficient. It is possible that the Islamists' negative perception of the Army (corrupt, inefficient, etc.) prevented them from believing that the Army could change over the course of the decade.

³⁹ Abassi Madani was asked: "to launch an appeal himself for an end to acts of violence. This would be followed by the release of all the leaders of the dissolved party agreeing to participate in this solution;

2) Once this phase had been accomplished, a time limit would be granted to the elements of the armed groups to lay down their weapons.

3) When this second phase was completed, the leaders of the dissolved party could return to political activity in a new group with a new name.

4) In order to consolidate the national reconciliation process, the elements involved in the violence would be subject to the legal provisions of *rahma* (clemency) and a graduated scale of clemency".

In response to this proposal by the President, A. Madani asked to meet with other FIS leaders and issued counter-proposals, including: "Exclusion of the institution of the ANP from political affairs; 2) renunciation of force as a

reason for this refusal was doubtless his belief that the AIS would win the war militarily or that the Army would not withstand a lengthy conflict. Madani probably expected that mass desertion of conscripts together with the incompetence of the military leaders in anti-guerrilla warfare would result in the Army's defeat. This expectation was illustrated in 1995 in the many communiqués issued by the Islamists, calling for young recruits to desert in order to join the *maquis* *. Thus in 1995 the military leaders were unable to impose their vision for an end to the war which set them against the Islamists. Furthermore they saw the creation of "a political platform" at Sant'Egidio⁴⁰ as foreign interference that was likely to weaken them further. Unable to reach agreement with the leaders of the FIS, the Army planned to enter into negotiations with the leaders of the AIS, but in order to do so it would first try to regain the ground lost in order to be able to "negotiate" from a position of strength.

A. ERADICATE AND "TERRORISE THE TERRORIST"

Between 1994 and 1997, the regime was to apply a security policy based on the slogan : "Terrorise the terrorist". As an exiled soldier commented: "It was therefore decided to liquidate many suspects in secret. Then, when the terrorists started to massacre young conscripts, repression moved up a level. Fearing desertions, the hierarchy decided to strike blow for blow. It was then that the reprisals became systematic: combing a district as soon as an offence was committed, summary execution of three, four or five young people selected at random...".⁴¹ The Army's strategy of terror was based on its realisation that people were no longer sufficiently afraid of the Algerian Army: the Islamists were challenging it and the population no longer feared it. Consequently it launched a policy

means of remaining in power or coming to power and the right of the people to defend their choice through legitimate channels; 3) compensation of all victims of the crisis, etc.". Negotiations ceased in June 1995. See *La Tribune*, Algiers, 12 July 1995.

⁴⁰ In November 1994, a first meeting of representatives of the FLN, FIS and FFS, as well as other leaders, was held in Rome, under the auspices of the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio. In January 1995 the main opposition parties met again and established a "platform for a peaceful political solution to the Algerian crisis". See <http://www.algeria-watch.de/farticle/docu/platform.htm>.

⁴¹ *Le Monde*, Paris, 16 September 1994.

of mass repression that resulted in systematic human rights violations.

In order to "make fear change sides"⁴² the Army resorted to arming civilians. The use of self-defence to protect the villages but also to fight against the Islamic *maquis* forced part of the population to choose sides, thereby laying themselves open to reprisals by the Islamic faction. The creation of legitimate defence groups and communal defence brigades was accompanied by a movement of these militia against civilians suspected of sympathy or even membership of the Islamic movement. The militia were soon being accused of violence, racketeering or assassination of civilians, which they then blamed on the Islamic armed groups⁴³.

In 1997 the effects of this militarisation of society had become obvious: the Islamic armed groups were losing control of many areas and had to retreat into the mountains, losing some of their capacity to inflict harm. And the massacres of civilians again generated what the Army leaders wanted: respect based on fear. Thanks to the systematic violation of human rights by the Army, its policy of terrorisation of populations suspected of Islamic sympathies and its strategy of abandoning civilians to massacres perpetrated by the armed groups, the Army achieved its objectives: the armed wing of the FIS, the AIS, agreed to negotiations⁴⁴.

⁴²This Army slogan was based on the fact that between 1989 and 1993, it was the opponents of the Islamists who lived in fear of the establishment of an Islamic state.

⁴³ In April 1998 Algerian newspapers revealed the existence of a mass grave containing 79 bodies in Relizane; the mayor and a dozen members of the patriots were arrested on suspicion of committing these killings. For the sanctions exacted by the militia, see the report submitted in July 1998 by the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) to the UN Commission on Human Rights, <http://www.fidh.org/rapports/r263.htm>.

⁴⁴ The emir of the AIS justifies his call for a ceasefire: "In order to thwart the plans of those waiting for an opportunity to harm Algeria and the Algerians...the emir of the AIS orders all the commanders of the combat companies under his command to cease combat operations from 1 October and calls upon the other groups attached to religious and national interests to rally to this call in order to unmask the enemy hiding behind these appalling massacres and to isolate the criminal remnants of the hardcore extremists of the GIA and those hiding behind them amongst the enemies of Algeria and religion". AIS communiqué of 21 September 1997.

A lasting link was established between Madani Mezrag and the ANP. It remained for the Army to eliminate those opposed to this policy among the Islamists of the ex-FIS, and it would attempt to do so by dividing the Islamic movement as far as it possibly could.

B. DIVIDING THE ISLAMISTS

The unilateral truce adopted by the AIS forced the political leaders of the ex-FIS to realign themselves. In July 1997 Madani backed the truce, obtaining a conditional release in return, which he lost after appealing - the day after civilian massacres - for a firmer commitment from the international community in Algeria. Similarly Abdelkader Hachani, under house arrest since 22 January 1992, regained his freedom but like Madani, was placed back in detention shortly afterwards following comments made to the press. In fact the Army's strategy of political legitimisation of the truce came to rest on Rabah Kébir, President of the IEFE. Between 1997 and 1999, the Army tried to reinforce the Madani Mezrag-Rabah Kébir link in the hope of reaching a solution. This policy provoked criticism from the CCFIS and Hachani, who felt that the Army was only trying to divide the Islamists in order to impose its security solution. Kébir's backing for the Law on Civil Concord provoked bitterness from Hachani, who saw it as a "betrayal" of the "cause". Thus in an interview Hachani said of Kébir: "The person you are talking about does not subscribe to the political ethos in which I believe and for which I am campaigning. When it comes to national reconciliation, I have been campaigning personally since leaving prison for the restoration of peace and the total elimination of violence from our country once and for all, while preserving the dignity and beliefs of all the parties. Resolving the phenomenon of violence depends however on true political openness involving fair and equitable treatment of the various excesses that have occurred on both sides. Personally I do not believe in absolution by amnesty and it might be advisable to consider South Africa's experience in this area"⁴⁵.

Hachani was to pay for his scepticism with his life. The Army played the neutralisation card on the FIS leadership by his assassination, placing Madani

back under house arrest and isolating Ali Benhadj, another FIS leader.

However this reconciliation by force and division was doomed to failure. Ali Benhadj's absence from the negotiations following the truce probably accounts for the continuing violence of the Islamic resistance fighters. More than Kebir or Madani, Benhadj seemed to represent the face of indisputable authority to the Islamic armed groups. Moreover the ban on political reconstruction of the Islamists through a new political party such as Taleb Ibrahim's Wafa party continued.

The Minister of the Interior's refusal to this day to recognise the Wafa party, regarded as the heir to the FIS, arguing that the direction taken by the Wafa party was partly set by former FIS leaders, caused bitterness amongst the Islamic political leaders. According to Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim, President of the Wafa: "recent years have shown that the dissolution by legal means of this political movement (FIS), has in no way erased its political reality and here is the proof: the authorities negotiated with the political management of the FIS in prison... Is it necessary to kill three million Algerians who voted for the FIS? To deprive them of their civic rights in defiance of the Constitution and the Law on Civil Concord?"⁴⁶. According to Mourad Dhina, CCFIS spokesman: "We believe that Mr. Bouteflika could have a role to play along these lines if he breaks free from the grip of the "fifteen or so generals who are corrupting Algeria" and rallies to the true representatives of the people. If he does not have the courage to adopt such a position, he would do better to tell the people so and "go home".⁴⁷

Do the military's inability to restore peace and the President's inability to ensure compliance with his promises favour the attrition strategy of the Islamic groups opposed to the regime such as the GIA and the GSPC?

C. MISTAKES MADE

After a decade of war against the Islamists of the ex-FIS, a number of Algerian generals are starting to acknowledge the mistakes that have been made

⁴⁵*Le Temps*, Geneva, 19 October 1999.

⁴⁶*La Tribune*, Algiers, 23 November 2000.

⁴⁷ CCFIS communiqué 19, 5 July 2000, <http://www.ccfis.org/dispcol.asp?art=14&HiddenPage=1>.

and to formulate other solutions to the conflict than the "eradication" of the Islamists.

1. Interruption of the Electoral Process in December 1991

According to General Attaïla, a very close associate of President Bouteflika, the Army's first political mistake was to call a halt to the political process in 1991. Political responsibility for the war rested with those who, like General Khaled Nezzar (former Minister of Defence), encouraged the breaking off of the legislative elections: "Those who worked to stop the electoral process must take the blame, since this was the underlying cause of the Algerian crisis. If they had listened to me at the time, we would have avoided disaster. I told them that the FIS should be allowed to govern once the President possessed all the constitutional powers to restore the status quo if they went astray, since it is difficult to pass judgement on a party which has not governed. One of our proverbs says: he who is far from the battle knows how to lead it. If this party had been given an opportunity, the people would soon have abandoned it because it was responsible for so many ill-considered actions⁴⁸". By attacking the taboo of the FIS party ban, General Attaïla was the first to raise the fundamental question of the causes of the war. Similarly he questioned the whole policy of the regime since 1992, whose aim was to "close the FIS file once and for all". Recognition of this political "mistake" is an encouraging sign, since it breaks away from the eradication approach to the Islamic question in Algeria.

The balance sheet on the political and human cost of suppression of the FIS supports General Attaïla. In fact the ban on the FIS was based on the need to save democracy and prevent a civil war. Ten years on it was hard to justify defending this line of thought. General Attaïla went even further and defended a position which was far from unanimous amongst Algerians - a general amnesty: "there are no other options. If we do this we shall resolve our problems 90 per cent, or maybe even 100 per cent...those who are still in the *maquis*, whether they belong to the Hattab group or the others, need guarantees that only the President of the Republic can give. I do not think that an armed element can take risks unless it has concrete and realistic guarantees allowing it to be reintegrated into

society... the danger is still there, every day. The truce has been frozen because it only affected the AIS. The truce must be general and the amnesty must be general and fair"⁴⁹.

And here is what General Benyellès had to say in an outspoken written profile on Bouteflika: "But it was on the issue of peace, which he had made his number one priority, that great things were expected of Bouteflika. He talked about it so passionately that he ended up convincing the population that he was not only determined to achieve this objective, but that he had the means to do so and a precise plan for achieving it. That is what his policy on peace implied... It will soon be realised that this 'policy' was merely a slogan designed to package all the legal and police regulations decided long ago... One would have to be very naïve to think that Bouteflika had been brought to power in order to change the established order" and to decide to organise "a real presidential election"⁵⁰.

2. Sant'Egidio: A Failed Initiative

A meeting was held in November 1994 between the representatives of the FLN, the FIS and the FFS and other leaders in Rome, under the auspices of the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio, in order to consider the options for peace. In January 1995, the main opposition parties met again and drew up a "platform for a peaceful political solution to the Algerian crisis". But the Army's High Command violently rejected this initiative. In a position of military weakness compared to the Islamists, it perceived the initiative as a threat of marginalisation. In an effort to counter it, the High Command organised a presidential election on 16 November, followed by legislative and municipal elections in 1997, designed to show that the FIS was no longer the main player in the political arena. In 1995, the election of Liamine Zéroual sustained the illusion amongst the international community that peace was possible and Islamic violence could be reduced to "residual terrorism". This illusion lasted until 1997 when civilian massacres revealed the full extent of the Algerian drama to the international community.

Was the Sant'Egidio initiative premature? Perhaps it was. In fact in 1994-1995 the Army's military

⁴⁸ *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, Oran, 26 March 2000.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Le Matin*, Algiers, 17 September 2000.

position prevented it from considering negotiations since it was under military threat⁵¹. At that time the prevailing perception was that the regime was in a state of collapse. The armed groups were "at the gates of power". The Army's acceptance of the Sant'Egidio initiative during this period would have been interpreted as capitulation in the face of "Islamic barbarism". First of all it had to regain military control of the situation and above all inspire feelings of respect and fear in its enemy, which was convinced during this period that victory was close at hand.

3. A Closed Presidential Election in 1999

Despite its military superiority, the Staff could not risk a free and open presidential election in April 1999 and hence the risk of an Islamic victory. Within the Army the balance between the "eradicators" and the "reconcilers" remained fragile. The fear that a candidate representing the Islamists would win the election was still seen as a "strategic threat" by all those who had encouraged the stoppage of the electoral process in January 1992. The ANP had been traumatised by the ability of the Islamists of the ex-FIS to politically exploit the liberalisation of the system that had occurred between 1989 and 1991. The prospect of the establishment of an Islamic state through the "ballot box" and the fear of becoming the scapegoats partly accounted for the military's radical attitude towards the Islamists of the ex-FIS. All the literature produced by retired generals over the course of the decade mentioned this sense of fear the day after the FIS victory in 1991. The violence of the remarks made against President Chadli Bendjedid by the military leaders of that decade was caused by fear of the "risky experiment" of opening up the political system. Between uneasiness at the political risk and assurance of a "victory" against the Islamic armed groups, the military leaders felt it was in their best interests to maintain a security logic.

In 1999 the reconciliation candidate would probably have been Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, representing the Islamic-nationalist element. But as far as the Army was concerned, allowing him to be elected would have risked triggering off a holy union between all the armed organisations passionately opposed to the Islamists. In short the "victors" of the anti-Islamic struggle (legitimate

defence groups, self-defence brigades, special anti-terrorists combat units, etc.), united in hatred of the Islamists (political, armed, sympathisers), could have initiated a real scorched earth policy based on fear for the future, but also on a refusal to bow down in "political capitulation" before the Islamists without "military capitulation". However, these paramilitary organisations occupied territory, applied their laws in the small towns and villages, were involved in racketeering and assassinated anyone who did not approve of them.⁵²

D. THE INTERESTS OF THE ARMY IN MAINTAINING A STATE OF WAR.

In truth the refusal to truly democratise the system was partly due, as far as the Army was concerned, to the immaturity of the Algerian political class. The drifting of the FLN during the Eighties, its inability to evaluate the political changes in the Algerians and its incompetence in managing the regeneration of the political system between 1989-91 (choosing the electoral ballot for the legislative elections in December 1991, a two-round majority vote in the absence of proportional representation), were ample proof of this. The incompetence of the FLN and the puerility of the FIS left their mark on the military decision-makers. This lack of a political contact partly explains the Army's fears concerning the establishment of a civil democratic power. The Army had no Institutional Revolutionary Party like Mexico's and no National Security Council like Turkey's, capable of regulating the political game. Consequently it focused on weakening the political parties (FFS, FIS) likely to play a political role in the absence of any control mechanism or a party directly representing the Army. However the Army needed political guarantees. And the Constitution was far from sacrosanct: each President wanted to create his own Constitution and the Ministers of the Interior had no hesitation in breaking its laws. In 1989 the Minister of the Interior recognised the legality of the FIS despite its unconstitutionality; in 2001 the current Minister of the Interior does not recognise the Wafa party despite its compliance with the Constitution! As Minister of the Interior Zehrouni said when he refused to legalise Taleb Ibrahimi's party: "he would not be the one to sanction the return of the banned party".

⁵¹ See *infra* No. 31.

⁵² See *infra* No. 39.

Sustaining armed confrontation suits the regime better than political confrontation. The Nineties confirmed that contrary to the warnings of disaster, the military conflict against the Islamists had strengthened its security apparatus and helped to neutralise the political arena.

We should not forget the financial benefits that violence has secured for the Army commanders. The civil war has brought real profits to a small sector of the military authorities and the fight against the Islamists provides the necessary smokescreen for embezzlement of public funds and seizure of new resources. The civil war does not cause unhappiness alone, on the contrary it provides an opportunity to redistribute the wealth of Algeria without the application of any controls. The liberalisation of Algeria in the midst of civil war has enabled 27,000 import-export companies to secure a lucrative niche for themselves⁵³. Similarly the privatisation of 17 holding companies representing national companies accounts for a sizeable stake in the redistribution of economic and financial power in Algeria. Exchange rate controls also constitute one of the fastest ways of accumulating wealth. Currency speculation on the black market has been one route to rapid wealth since the time of Chadli Bendjedid. Lastly, contrary to popular belief, the oil sector is not the sector most liable to corruption: probably because oil revenue is the only financial sector that allows the regime to hold its own. It is true however that opening this sector up to international companies in 1991 has led to rapid growth, and over twenty international companies are now represented in the Sahara, investing approximately 15 billion dollars since 1991. Oil revenue (import of foodstuffs, pharmaceuticals, semi-industrial, etc.) partly explains why certain leaders find it to their advantage in maintaining the country on a war footing since it provides the best cover for illicit activities.

Lastly, the ambiguous attitude of the military decision-makers is also due to their fear of being accused by international organisations of violating human rights and the concern that political liberalisation will open the way for military commanders to be tried. These are the generals who held office in the Nineties, some of whom are now being referred to by name by Amnesty

International. The impact in Algeria of the Pinochet affair should not be underestimated and the fear that Bouteflika's presidency could turn into a trial of the Nineties, witness the remarks of General Attaïla, is serious. It probably accounts for the tough line adopted by the Staff with regard to the initiatives taken by the President at political and military level⁵⁴. In short the autonomisation desired by the President is supported by part of the Staff but arouses fear in those who had to administer "the dirty war" against the Islamists. This situation is described by Saïd Sadi, President of the RCD and a member of the government, as "the death throes of the regime"⁵⁵.

⁵³ Talahite F. "Corruption: the price of counter-reform," *Libre Algérie*, Algiers, 9-22 November 1998.

⁵⁴ Resignation of Prime Minister A. Benbitour, replaced by a friend of the President, Benflis, as well as appointments within the Army Command, among others.

⁵⁵ *Le Soir*, Brussels, 12 February 2001.

V. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT SINCE 1988

The leaders of the ex-FIS had no hesitation in saying it: the war had been fatal for them and yet paradoxically their hopes lay in a democratisation of the political system they had previously rejected. This represented their only opportunity to express their ideals once more.

A. FROM FIS TO WAFI PARTY: POTENTIAL REINTEGRATION OF THE ISLAMISTS INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA

The fear conjured up in the early Nineties of the risk of an Islamic State under the flag of the FIS no longer seems relevant. According to Redha Malek: "The State has a shape, the shape of the Republic, changing it is unthinkable. There is no question of changing Algeria into an emirate or a sultanate. In order to move forward we must condemn terrorism"⁵⁶. In January 2000, the Islamists of the IEFE stated that they opposed an amnesty for "those who refused and chose to continue their armed action"⁵⁷. In short, they considered it lawful for the ANP to fight those who rejected the Law on Civil Concord. Explicit recognition that the strategy of violence had failed, both by the AIS and the IEFE, formed the basis on which a new policy was drafted, culminating in the rehabilitation of an Islamic party keen to respect Algeria's legality and multi-party political system⁵⁸. The document published by the IEFE in May 1997, entitled: "In favour of a strategy aimed at ending the crisis in Algeria" clearly illustrated the new approach taken by the Islamists of the ex-FIS who put forward the "political solution" as the "only and best solution to the conflict". The Islamists of the ex-FIS had begun their political reinvention: condemnation of the GIA and support

⁵⁶ *L'Humanité*, no. 295, 1995.

⁵⁷ IEFE communiqué, 13 January 2000, <http://www.algeria-watch.de/farticle/ais/aiskebir2.htm>.

⁵⁸ Remember that in 1991 the FIS wanted to establish an Islamic State and set little store by democracy. The comments of its leaders against women, France and political freedom caused fears that if victorious they would establish a regime based on virtue and as such likely to force opponents to comply with its agenda. An anti-democratic party, the FIS profited from the democratic opening up of Algeria to become the country's leading political force.

for the candidacy of Ahmed Tabel Ibrahimi in the presidential elections demonstrated the concessions made by the exiled leaders of the ex-FIS compared to the party's claims during its infantile period (1989-91). The representatives of the IEFE no longer demanded the establishment of an Islamic State. They appeared to have realised that the radicalism they had advocated had had fatal results for them.

The Wafa party is probably capable of embodying these political changes in the Islamists of the ex-FIS, facilitating their socialisation in a political arena that has been reconfigured during the civil war⁵⁹ and creating a political outlet for the Islamists of the ex-FIS seeking reintegration into the political arena. This need for a return to the political stage by an Islamist people's party is due to the failure of the moderate Islamic parties of Mahfoudh Nahnah (Movement for Peace in Society) and A. Djabballah (National Reform Movement) to win over this electorate. The political infiltration of these groups forced them towards moderation on a large scale, particularly the MSP. As A. Djabballah stated on television on 9 March 1999: "it was precisely the quest for senior posts that prevented our movement from making progress and which, on the contrary, led to dissension and division".

B. THE MAQUIS: PERSISTENT VIOLENCE

The year 2000 provided confirmation that Islamic guerillas well and truly existed outside the AIS. The GIA and GSPC groups launched continuous military actions against the security forces, causing the loss of 607 soldiers and 113 reservists, according to the MAOL.⁶⁰ The groups of Hassan Hattab and Antar Zouabri are radically opposed to the policy of Civil Concord. Approached recently by General Attaïla, a general close to Bouteflika, they allegedly repeated their refusal to follow the path taken by the AIS and take advantage of the policy of reconciliation.⁶¹ Although unable to overthrow the regime, these armed groups (whose

⁵⁹ T. Ibrahimi's platform aimed at promoting "reconciliation" between Algerians by "leaving behind the ideological phobias which generated hatred and bitterness"; promoting "an emancipated society which endorses pluralism and diversity, etc."

⁶⁰ *Le Monde*, Paris, 5 June 2001.

⁶¹ *Le Matin*, Algiers, 2 April 2000.

numbers are estimated at 1,500) represent a serious obstacle to the restoration of civil peace in Algeria.

What reasons lie behind the refusal of these Islamist organisations? Several factors might explain the refusal of these groups to abandon violence, but the two main ones appear to be geographical and political isolation. As refugees in the mountains, their soldiers have gradually lost touch with political, social and cultural developments in Algeria during the last decade. Like The Shining Path in Peru during the Eighties, they are living in a political world sealed off from all outside links. At a military level this isolation is an asset, as it prevents infiltration by the Algerian services and also betrayals, but on the other hand it presents a real obstacle to negotiations. From a military point of view these guerillas are capable of continuing for many years, since their objectives are limited: they harbour no ambitions to occupy a town or terrorise the capital - which would expose them to heavy losses - but rather to conduct a war of attrition against the security forces. Splintered into a huge number of armed groups, these guerillas do not allow the Algerian Army to "strike at their hard core", because no such core exists. The strength of these armed groups lies precisely in their flexibility and their ability to sustain themselves in isolated geographical areas.

The second factor that accounts for the persistence of these guerillas is their ability to accumulate wealth through violence. The tax levied by the *maquisards* on the local populations certainly provides for the upkeep of the armed groups, but it also enables them to accumulate personal wealth. However it would be wrong to conclude that these groups are only fighting for money. The main motive of these guerillas is still the desire for establishment of an Islamic state by Jihad. They remain convinced that the war of attrition which they are waging against the security forces will bear fruit in the long term. Although small in number, they have a reservoir of young people likely to join them. The "professionalisation" of the GSPC, which has been responsible for most of the attacks against the security forces over the last two years, demonstrates the resolve of its fighters to settle down to a long war.

The persistence of these guerillas is responsible for the continuing "eradication" element within the Army, and consequently discredits the policy of Civil Concord and marginalises the AIS. The latter,

convinced that the Algerian Army is incapable of stamping out the GIA, offered its assistance to the military in January 2001: "With regard to the struggle against the GIA and the other organisations which are committing massacres, stated Ahmed Benaïcha, we have said that both the strategy and method of combat are beyond the means of conventional armies; we have the resources, the methods and the strategy to stamp out these mobile groups".⁶² The emir of the Western District of the AIS in fact proposed incorporating his Islamic *maquisards* into the Army in order to fight the GIA. It remains for the Staff generals to assess the risks inherent in stamping out the GIA by forcing regular Army troops to co-exist with former *maquisards* of the AIS! Added to this fear is a more cynical argument citing the advantages of maintaining a "low intensity" guerrilla force in a country whose economy has been ravaged by corruption.

Legalisation of the Wafa party and integration of the AIS *maquisards* would be a serious option in terms of reducing the violence of the GIA and the GSPD. However, an appeal launched by Benhadj to the armed Islamists would be even more effective. The latter - if he is still alive - is the man with the greatest influence over the radical armed groups. The political means of achieving such a gesture have yet to be found. It is possible that recognising the Wafa party, releasing prisoners and initiating a democratic process would enable Ali Benhadj to finally play an important part in ending the war in Algeria.

⁶² AFP, February 2001.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLITICAL OPTIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The failure of the Civil Concord is obvious: civil peace has not returned to Algeria. Elected on a platform of peace and a plebiscite to reconcile the Algerian people, President Bouteflika remains incapable of changing the attitude of the Army and has hence become a target of criticism by all those who had placed their hopes in his policy. The President recently announced that he planned to extend the Civil Concord into a National Concord. What real impact could this change have when the Civil Concord has failed? The diagnosis made by Bouteflika in order to achieve peace was correct, but he has yet to find the political means of applying the remedy successfully.

This remedy can only be applied if the military engages in real dialogue with the Islamists and grants them a role on the political stage.

A. WORKING TOGETHER TO RESUME THE DIALOGUE

The first two gestures required in order to build trust between the Islamists and the authorities would be to legalise a real political party capable of channeling Islamic demands. Recognition of Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi's Wafa party, banned for no legitimate reason by the Minister of the Interior, would promote a political regrouping of all the Islamic tendencies within a party bound by the constitution.

Next, the authorities must be encouraged to release Madani and Benhadj and to ask them to launch a national appeal for a ceasefire to all the armed Islamists who have not yet laid down their weapons. In return for such a gesture, the regime must undertake to initiate a public and open national dialogue aimed at establishing an electoral agenda to define a real democratic project for Algeria that encompasses the whole political spectrum. This dialogue would also enable an electoral timetable to be drawn up for new communal, legislative and presidential elections.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission must be set up involving all the political and social players. This commission must be granted total autonomy

and the power to identify the guilty publicly. Furthermore, it must have a mandate to convene all the protagonists.

In return, the Islamic movements must undertake to call an immediate ceasefire, combat the residual violence of the die-hard *maquis* and respect and uphold the rules of democracy.

B. ECONOMIC SANCTIONS OR FINANCIAL CONDITIONS?

How can the ANP be persuaded to drop its security logic towards the Islamists? Several methods of action were proposed over the course of the decade as a means of "forcing" the ANP to change its policy towards the Islamists of the ex-FIS.

Are economic sanctions viable? Assessment of the impact that embargoes have had on Cuba and Iraq shows the ravages wrought by economic sanctions on the population. An embargo against Algeria would reduce Algerian society to a state of poverty, the immediate result of which would probably be an escalation of violence. Furthermore, embargoes would result in huge migratory exoduses to Europe and North Africa. It is unlikely that European governments would be willing to take this risk, since immigration is one of the most sensitive political issues as far as their electorates are concerned. Lastly, Algeria is one of Europe's main suppliers of gas, and it would be unrealistic to expect Europe to forgo this non-polluting energy source.

Reference has also been made to the conditions imposed on financial aid in 1994, a period during which Algeria was engaged in discussions with the IMF with a view to establishing a structural adjustment plan. But in practice this option would be difficult to implement in Algeria. Algeria is an oil-producing country rich in energy resources, which protect it against external financial pressures or at least make it independent of external financial aid. Moreover, Algeria is a State with massive debts (although the debt for 2001 has fallen from 31 billion dollars to 25 thanks to the rise in oil prices) and imposing any conditions on financial aid would only penalise the countries which are its creditors, should the Algerian State go bankrupt. In reality, imposing conditions on financial aid would quite simply have no effect on the political decisions of the military as long as revenue from

the sale of hydrocarbons provides them with a more than adequate income.

Internally in fact the regime is in a position of strength which allows it to follow its own agenda, as the Nineties demonstrated. Despite its "in-fighting", the ANP remains a solid institution led by generals to whom the threat of a coup by young officers seems inconceivable in the short term. Financially speaking, owing to the rise in the price of crude oil, the ANP has sufficient revenue to protect the government from a financial crisis such as the one in 1993. At the political level, apart from ambivalent relations with the President, the ANP rules over a sterile political arena where, since the legislative elections in 1997, the parties have accepted the fact that the military leaders remained the real political force. Lastly, at the security level, the Islamic armed groups, although not eradicated by the anti-guerrilla war, no longer pose a threat to the regime.

Furthermore, the European States fear that terrorism is the payback for their interference in Algerian affairs. For example, the acts of terrorism committed in Paris in 1995 could be interpreted as a warning signal to the French government in reprisal for its widely advertised resolve to apply pressure to the Algerian government.

C. CONCRETE AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN ACTION

It is therefore a matter of urgency for the American government and the European institutions to apply joint pressure to the regime. During President Bouteflika's visit to Washington on 12 and 13 July 2001, he must be encouraged to liberalise political activity, improve the human rights situation and legalise the Wafa party. This encouragement should not however be linked to negotiations on diplomatic and security cooperation in the Western Sahara and the peace process in the Middle East.

Europe must drop its passive attitude as a matter of urgency and show that it has imagination. The European institutions have several options when it comes to applying pressure to the situation in Algeria. Firstly, multilateral pressure as part of the Barcelona process could have a political impact. The European Union must put pressure on the signatory governments of the Barcelona Charter to proceed with negotiations and reach a partnership

agreement based on this Charter. Through this agreement it will be possible to insist that the Algerian government establishes clear laws and commercial practices, makes economic management more open and complies with the criteria for political stability.

Secondly, the European institutions can make joint declarations unequivocally denouncing and condemning the recent violations of human rights committed by the Algerian security forces. Thirdly, on the issue of justice and the fight against impunity, several actions can be initiated: first the initiative proposed by the Green party for a Euro-Algerian committee of inquiry in Gothenburg on current events must be upheld. Next, it is necessary to promote sponsorship by a specific country of the introduction of Algeria's case at the next session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Lastly, the member States can encourage their national courts to use or extend their universal jurisdiction to rule on serious violations of human rights committed in Algeria and to speed up proceedings concerning complaints already on file.

D. KEEPING ALGERIA ON THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA'S AGENDA

Similarly the media and civilian organisations must put pressure on the European governments and encourage national courts to use or extend their universal jurisdiction to rule on serious violations of human rights committed in Algeria and to speed up proceedings concerning complaints already on file. They must obtain evidence from victims who have suffered human rights violations and institute proceedings against the leaders of both the camps (military, Islamist, militia) in which these violations occurred.

It is particularly important that the Algerian crisis maintains a high profile in the non-French speaking media.

E. ESTABLISHING LINKS BETWEEN WESTERN ARMIES AND THE ANP

The ANP is a people's army (60 per cent of its manpower) and the impact of such accusations may raise the awareness of young officers to the international condemnation of the generals' policy. The example of Habib Souaïdia illustrates how

young officers are undoubtedly becoming increasingly reluctant to apply a policy of war which has not succeeded in restoring peace in ten years.

It is necessary to encourage the younger generation to break away from an ineffective war logic. It is also extremely urgent for the authorities to put an end to the almost total impunity which is rife in Algeria and to initiate transparent inquiries on human rights violations and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

It is vital for the ANP to maintain contact with western military institutions. A total end to military cooperation would indirectly have a devastating effect on the political training of Army officers, who would consequently maintain contacts with pariah countries (Syria, Iraq, North Korea, etc.), whose "People's Armies" tend to repress the population rather than protect the State.

Europe and the USA must therefore make stronger representations with a view to forging relations with the ANP, not in order to dispose of stocks of

weapons but to impart political know-how on Army deployment. With this in mind, a rapprochement between the ANP and NATO would make Algerian officers realise that the modernisation of an army requires a peaceful society, a transparent economy and confidence in national institutions. Thus instead of bowing to prejudice and cutting links with the ANP because of its policy towards the Islamists, it would be preferable to establish a real policy of cooperation, whose medium-term objective would be to promote the emergence of a generation of officers capable of political reasoning and of avoiding the political mistakes of the past decade.

These contacts with the outside world might encourage the Army to create a political body to represent the Army's interests. This representation of military interests could serve to channel the Army's demands in both the public and political sectors.

Brussels, 9 July 2001

APPENDIX A

INDEX OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIS:	Islamic Salvation Army
ALN:	National Liberation Army
ANP:	National People's Army
CCFIS:	Coordination Council of the Islamic Salvation Front
FFS:	Socialist Forces Front
FIS:	Islamic Salvation Front
FLN:	National Liberation Front
GIA:	Islamic Armed Group
GLD:	Legitimate Defence Group
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
HCE:	Senior State Committee
IEFE:	Executive Body of the Islamic Salvation Front Abroad
LIDD:	Islamist League for the D'wa and the Jihad
MSP:	Movement for peace in society (HAMAS)
NAHDHA:	Party of the Renaissance
OUA:	Organisation of African Unity
RND:	National Democratic Assembly
Wafa:	Party of Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

6 October 1988. Declaration of a state of siege, following bloody riots which left several hundred dead.

23 February 1989. Adoption by referendum of a new Constitution, opening the way to a multi-party system.

26 December 1991. Following its major victory in the municipal elections of June 1990, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won 188 seats in the first round of the legislative elections against 15 for the National Liberation Front (FLN), 25 for the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and 3 for the Independents.

11-14 January 1992. President Chadli Bendjedid is forced to resign and is replaced by a Senior State Committee (HCE) headed by Mohamed Boudiaf. The second round of the elections is cancelled, thereby robbing the FIS of victory.

9 February 1992. Declaration of a state of emergency.

4 March 1992. Dissolution of the FIS.

29 June 1992. President Boudiaf is assassinated. He is replaced at the head of the HCE by Mr. Ali Kafi.

30 January 1994. The Senior Security Council, in which the Army Chief of Staff sits, appoints General Liamine Zéroual, Defence Minister, as "State President". The latter would win the presidential election in the first round, on 16 November 1995, with over 60 per cent of the vote.

13 January 1995. The main opposition groups, including Islamists, sign a "national agreement" in Rome, specifically calling for a halt to the violence. The authorities reject this agreement.

15 July 1997. Release of Mr. Abassi Madani, leader of the ex-FIS and Mr. Abdelkaker Hachani, number three in the party.

21 September 1997. The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) orders its troops to halt "combat operations" from 1 October.

23 October 1997. After winning the legislative elections in June, Mr. Zéroual's National Democratic Assembly (RND) wins over 55 per cent of the seats in the communal assemblies.

1997-1998. The massacres which have punctuated the confrontation between the Army and the Islamic groups for years, reach their peak.

End July-early August 1998 : A UN mission led by former Portuguese President Mario Soares visits Algeria.

11 September 1998. Mr. Zéroual announces his resignation as President.

15 April 1999. Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika wins the presidential election in the first round of voting with 73.8 per cent of the vote, after the other six candidates withdraw, citing "massive fraud".

5 July 1999. The new President calls for national reconciliation and shows his desire for a new openness by pardoning several thousand Islamists.

16 September 1999. Referendum on "Civil Concord" wins approval of 98.6 per cent of the electorate.

22 November 1999. Abdelkader Hachani, number three in the ex-FIS, is assassinated in Algiers.

13 January 2000. Deadline for "Civil Concord" offering amnesty to all Islamists not implicated in murder, rape or similar crimes.

13-17 June 2000. Official visit by President Bouteflika to France.

12 October 2000. Publication in France of "Qui a tué à Bentalha?" by Nesroulah Yous, accusing the Army of complicity and failure to intervene during a massacre of 400 people in September 1997.

8 February 2001. Publication in France of "La sale guerre" by Habib Souaïdia, ex-officer, an account of the practice of torture and serious human rights violations committed by Algerian armed forces against civilians.

13 February 2001. Official visit to Algiers by French Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert Védrine.

18 April 2001. Riots break out in Kabylia.

* Translator's note : the terms "maquis" and "*maquisards*" refer to rural guerillas ; originally used to denote resistance fighters of the French Underground during World War Two.

APPENDIX B

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is a private, multinational organisation committed to strengthening the capacity of the international community to anticipate, understand and act to prevent and contain conflict.

ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts, based on the ground in countries at risk of conflict, gather information from a wide range of sources, assess local conditions and produce regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers.

ICG's reports are distributed widely to officials in foreign ministries and international organisations and made generally available at the same time via the organisation's internet site, www.crisisweb.org. ICG works closely with governments and those who influence them, including the media, to highlight its crisis analysis and to generate support for its policy prescriptions. The ICG Board - which includes prominent figures from the fields of politics, diplomacy, business and the media - is directly involved in helping to bring ICG reports and recommendations to the attention of senior policy-makers around the world. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari; former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has been President and Chief Executive since January 2000.

ICG's international headquarters are at Brussels, with advocacy offices in Washington DC, New York and Paris. The organisation currently operates field projects in eighteen crisis-affected countries and regions across three continents: Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia in Europe; Algeria, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe in Africa; and Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan in Asia.

ICG raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. The following governments currently provide funding: Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of China (Taiwan), Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Foundation and private sector donors include the Ansary Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Open Society Institute, the Ploughshares Fund, the Sasakawa Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the U.S. Institute of Peace.

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APPENDIX D

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