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"It is man's eternal desire to be free and independent"

Kennedy's relations with Algeria

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Ben Bella's visit to the White House, October 15, 1962

Preface

I have always been interested in American politics, and America's place in the World, especially American foreign policy. I got interested in the 1960's through music, first The Rolling Stones, then The Beatles and further Motown. I got interested in the stories behind the songs, and the culture that blossomed. So much of the culture came out of the tragedy of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. I began to read more of what Kennedy meant to America, and in my youth I became fascinated by his life, and what he meant to the World. When I got the opportunity to write a master thesis, the choice was simple, it had to be American foreign policy in the early 1960's.

First, I want to thank my supervisor, professor Tore T. Petersen, for giving me the opportunity to write about what I wanted to write about, and giving me the idea of writing of Kennedy and Algeria. I never would have come up with this theme without his help, and he has given me constructive criticism, which only has made this thesis better.

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Abbreviations

FLN - *Front de Libération Nationale* (Algerian National Liberation Front)

PAG (GPRA) – Provisional Algerian Government (*Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne*)

GOF – Government of France

OAS - *Organisation armée secrète* (Secret Army Organization)

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

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1. Introduction

When John F. Kennedy became President in 1961, America's policy toward Algeria was dominated by neglect. He had inherited a policy toward the Afro-Arabian World from former President Dwight D. Eisenhower, which he was determined to change. Algeria had been under French rule for over 130 years and had rebelled since the Second World War. In 1954, this rebellion evolved into a war; this war raged on until the Algerian rebels and the French government signed a peace agreement in Evian, on the French shore of the lake Lac Léman, March 18, 1962. This agreement would not only effectively end the war, but also grant Algeria its independence, the agreement stated:

GENERAL DECLARATION

The French people, by the referendum of January 8, 1961, recognized the right of the Algerians to choose by means of a consultation of direct and universal suffrage their political destiny in relation to the French Republic.

The negotiations that took place at Evian from March 7 to March 18, 1962, between the Government of the French Republic and the F.L.N. [Algerian National Liberation Front] reached the following conclusions:

A cease-fire is concluded. Military operations and the armed struggle will come to an end on March 19 throughout the Algerian territory.

The guarantees relative to the application of self-determination and the organization of public powers in Algeria during the transition period have been defined in common agreement.

The formation, after self-determination, of an independent and sovereign state appearing to conform to the realities of the Algerian situation, and in these conditions, cooperation between France and Algeria corresponding to the interests of the two countries, the French Government considers, together with the F.L.N., that the solution of the independence of Algeria in cooperation with France is the one which corresponds to this situation.

The Government and the F.L.N. have therefore defined this solution, in common agreement, in the declarations which will be submitted to the approval of the electors at the time of the self-determination vote.¹

Up until this point, the French had claimed that all matters concerning Algeria was internal French affairs, and that, in fact, Algeria was a part of the French *Metropole*.² During the

¹ English translation of the Evian accords. "Algeria: France-Algerian Independence Agreements (Evian Agreements)," *International Legal Materials* vol. 1, no. 2 (1962).

² Being a part of the French Metropole or *Métropole Française* meant that Algeria was an integrated part of France, on the same level as Toulouse or Orléans. Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985). 30.

rebellion, the Algerian question had been discussed several times in the United Nations, which had angered the French greatly. France had not participated in the UN discussions, and the US had abstained their vote. The French saw the American abstention as a betrayal; this led to a deterioration of relations between the two allies.

The debates in the UN happened when Eisenhower time was President. He was eager to see the war end but did not see it as essential that Algeria should gain its independence as soon as possible. Kennedy thought differently, from his time in the Senate he had spoken out against the Eisenhower administration's handling of the Algerian question, and in 1957 he held a speech that summed up all his criticism.

This thesis will discuss Kennedy's policy towards Algeria during and after the Algerian war. The first time he spoke publicly on Algeria was in the Senate speech in 1957, where he criticized both France and the Eisenhower administration of their handling of the Algerian problem. This speech would define his policies towards Algeria, which he brought with him into his presidency. While Eisenhower chose to prioritize anti-communism before anti-colonialism, Kennedy chose to focus on anti-colonialism before anti-communism.

This thesis divides Kennedy's policies towards Algeria during his presidency into three phases. The first phase, Algeria is under French rule and an integrated part of France. In this phase, Kennedy's main objective was to get Algeria independent without destroying Franco-US relations. Kennedy had opened up for more contact with the Algerian rebels³ and only pulled back when the French insinuated that if the Americans continued down that road, France would have to react.⁴

In the middle phase, Algeria is on the brink of chaos, and there is a fear of a civil war. In this period, Kennedy's policy toward Algeria was to separate France and Algeria as two separate entities and support the Algerians through the rough time. The Evian Accords had established

³ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, February 2, 1961. The Papers of President Kennedy National Security Files. Box: 4 Countries Algeria, Folder: Algeria general 1/20/61-4/23/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁴ The French said that relations between France and the Soviet Union had been broken because of Soviet contact with the Algerian rebels. Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, April 6, 1961. The Papers of President Kennedy National Security Files. Box: 4 Countries Algeria, Folder: Algeria general 1/20/61-4/23/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

a provisional government, which the French, and few others, supported. The Americans did not want to recognize this provisional government because the Algerians made it clear that they would not accept this option, and the Americans did not want to recognize the Algerians' provisional government in fear that they would take this as a recognition of their power in Algeria and stop the scheduled elections.

In the third phase, Algeria had elected their government and the US tried to create regular diplomatic contact with the country, and start to inform the French on their dealings in Algeria instead of discussing what they could do. France did not accept that the Americans did what they wanted in Algeria. The French kept the Americans out of the development of the country and had the Americans provide conventional aid, instead of scholarships and education. The Americans on their side did not like that the French still controlled what other countries could do in Algeria, but complied, they saw no reason for provoking the French on this when they thought things were going in the right direction. The Americans were more afraid of the Algerian leaders' increasingly close connection to Communist countries.

Kennedy's main goal was to keep Soviet out of the Third World. Communism and Socialism was no longer the enemy, the Soviet Union itself was. In the last months of his life, he changed his policy from making the World free for democracy to making the World free for diversity. It was the uniformity of the Soviet Union that was hurtful for the World, not the left as such.

The logical next question is why Kennedy shifted US policy in Algeria. Were his policies based on ideology, and doing what would be best for Algeria, or based on his own political advances? Kennedy's sentiment came, according to Kennedy's advisor Arthur M. Schlesinger from a deeply seeded anti-colonialism.⁵ Kennedy saw the Algerians struggle being similar to the American's war for independence from the British.⁶ From early on, Kennedy had a special interest for the African continent, and had studied African countries extensively; in some instances embarrassing African leaders when he knew more about their own history than they did themselves. At the same time, his Algeria speech gave him foreign relations background

⁵ Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002). 508

⁶ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 37-41.

and awarded him the Chairmanship of the Senate's Foreign Relations African Subcommittee.⁷ His foreign relations experience positioned him better for the Democratic Party presidential bid in 1960, and further challenge the Republican opponent, and current Vice-President, Richard M. Nixon.

Historiography

President Kennedy's foreign policy has been researched extensively. Much of that research has been on Kennedy's relations with Arabian states and leaders, but Algeria has not received the same attention. There are those who have researched Kennedy's policies towards the Algerian war, and recently Philip Muehlenbeck researched Kennedy's relations with African nationalist leaders. Other than that, there is a great hole in the research on Kennedy and Algeria. This paper will rectify some of this.

Kennedy's foreign policy in Algeria was determined by whether the Algerian war would end and Algeria could become independent. The Algerian war was fought between the French military and Algerian rebels as a colonial war, and the French claimed that Algeria was part of *Metropole de Française*, an integral part of France, and not a colony. That an American president supported rebelling agents against one of their closest allies is remarkable, this has not gotten the proper attention that it deserves, and it is strange that Kennedy's relations with the Algerians have been researched as little as it has.

De Gaulle, France, and the war

The War itself has been researched quite a bit, but there are still unanswered questions and uncertainties. In the early research of the war, de Gaulle has been hailed as the man who managed to end the war, with some claiming that he had a plan for ending the war even before he reentered the Presidency. The Americans had high hopes for a new line from the French when the Fourth Republic fell, and de Gaulle returned. De Gaulle seemed to want to end the war, Irwin Wall claims that "The combination of political instability, collapsing authority, and military rebellion proved enough for the Americans to have done with the Fourth Republic and

⁷ Philip E. Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders* (Oxford University Press, 2012). 36.

to take their chances on de Gaulle.”⁸ However, the Americans were saddened when de Gaulle doubled down in Algeria; the war would go on, under the Fifth Republic too.⁹

The theory that de Gaulle had a plan for ending the war all along has largely been attributed to French scholars and has been called de Gaulle’s “Grand Design”. In this theory, de Gaulle was the savior of the French state and a father of the modern France. The theory has largely been discredited, Gil Merom was the first to really analyze the theory, and promptly dismantle it. Merom claim that the theory of de Gaulle’s “Grand Design” stands on three “pillars”

First is the claim that de Gaulle decided to give up Algeria because he estimated that maintaining it was too costly economically and against France's scheme of global preference, which focused on Europe. Second is the claim that de Gaulle's general objective of relieving France of the Algerian burden, even if not the details of the strategy to achieve it, was conceived well before his return to power in 1958. Third is the claim that what seemed an erratic, slow, and indecisive progress toward Algerian independence was in reality de Gaulle s well-orchestrated, consistent, and deceptive policy calculated to overcome the sentiments of the French people toward Algeria.¹⁰

Merom argues that de Gaulle never wanted Algeria to become independent before it was unthinkable that Algeria could stay as part of France after the war was over. De Gaulle wanted the war to end, but that does not mean that he wanted Algeria to become independent. The facts are clear on this, de Gaulle even wanted to split Algeria in two and keep the part that was most prosperous to France, while the other gained independence. Hardly a move by a person who wants Algeria to become independent. Merom claims that de Gaulle only ended the war because it had become unbearable for the French people to continue it. He claims that de Gaulle not only, did not have a plan from the start, but hardly had a plan at the finish, but Merom gives de Gaulle credit for realizing when the war was lost.¹¹ Wall explains that it was not on the battlefield France lost the war, but on the international stage. The Algerians won the struggle for world public opinion, and the war was increasingly unpopular among the French and Algerian population.¹²

⁸ Irwin M. Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2001). 136.

⁹ Ibid. 177.

¹⁰ Gil Merom, "A "Grand Design"? Charles De Gaulle and the End of the Algerian War," *Armed Forces and Society* 25, no. 2 (1999). 267.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 265.

There was never any reality in the idea that the war could end and things would revert to the way it had been before the war.

Our analysis demonstrates that every one of the three major pillars of the "grand design" thesis is flawed. De Gaulle could not have been motivated to give up Algeria by the state of the economy. He could not have become deceptive and manipulative because the French people had to be psychologically converted before they could digest the loss of Algeria. And his policy was not preplanned or consistent, but rather took on a pattern of forced adaptation resulting from a series of trials and errors.¹³

Even at the end of the war, the Americans put their faith in de Gaulle as the right man to govern France. The Tunisians had attacked a French military base in Tunisia and the French had retaliated, this led to an uproar against France in the UN; this uproar led to a vote. Schlesinger claim that Kennedy thought that de Gaulle was the best hope for stability in the region, and a free Algeria. The Berlin crisis and French annoyance over the Americans refusal to help with the French atomic program would not be better without de Gaulle at the helm in France.¹⁴ Therefore, though the Africans would not like it, Kennedy instructed UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson to abstain the vote.¹⁵

Change in policy - Kennedy's Algerian policy

Kennedy's foreign policy on Algeria was formed early in his career. When his brother Edward Kennedy finished college in 1956, John suggested that he should go to Africa, to study the continent; Edward traveled together with Fred Holborn, a distinguished Harvard political scientist, and saw the terrors of Algeria first hand. He met up with John on a boat in the Mediterranean, where John had taken a vacation. Edward told John about the situation he had seen in Algeria, and John took notice.¹⁶ Only a year later Kennedy spoke publicly on the situation in Algeria.

¹³ Merom, "A "Grand Design"? Charles De Gaulle and the End of the Algerian War." 281.

¹⁴ De Gaulle were under huge pressure from the Generals, and were subject to a failed coup earlier that year.

¹⁵ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. 561.

¹⁶ Edward Moore Kennedy, *True Compass : A Memoir* (New York: Twelve, 2009). 109-111.

Most historians agree that Kennedy changed American policy towards the Algerian War from the previous administration. Kennedy's policies put more pressure on the French to end the war, and where Eisenhower's main objective was to keep communism out of North Africa, Kennedy's main objective was anti-colonialism. Moheddine Hadhri argues that Kennedy cultivated relationships with the countries that wanted to have a close relationship with the US, like Morocco and Tunisia. "Nevertheless, despite the great interest showed by Kennedy toward the Algerian cause, Tunisia and Morocco remained most prominent as strategic priorities within U.S. foreign policy in the Mediterranean basin."¹⁷ Both Tunisia and Morocco were easier to handle, and that is exactly why Kennedy did not have to cultivate the relationship as much. Kennedy's struggles to get on the good side of the Algerians were not as fruitful as the relationship with the more friendly countries in Northern Africa, but had by no means less attention.

When Kennedy entered the White House, Algeria's independence was a foregone conclusion; there was only a matter of time. The election of Kennedy had unquestionably led to direct talks between the French and the Algerian rebels,¹⁸ and the Kennedy administration was careful to say anything in either direction, to make the French think that he would be harder on them than he really intended to be. In that way pressuring de Gaulle to a quicker resolution.¹⁹ Miloud Barkaoui argues that Kennedy had little impact on the settlement of the Algerian war. As Senator, Kennedy had been a harsh critic of the Eisenhower administration, but Barkaoui claims that as President, he had changed his tone and been much more lenient towards the French.²⁰ This discounts the realities of the situation, as stated Kennedy did not have to be as strict, for one the talks between the two sides were about to start, and the Americans were optimistic that de Gaulle would end the war as quickly as possible.

¹⁷ Mohieddine Hadhri, "U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Africa During the Cold War: From Eisenhower to Kennedy (1953–1963)," *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 5, no. 2 (2014). 110.

¹⁸ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. Page 267.

¹⁹ Memorandum preparing for talks between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President elect John F. Kennedy on December 6, 1960, December 5, 1960. Papers of President Kennedy, President's office files, Special correspondence, Box: 29A, Folder: Eisenhower, Dwight D 3/30/60-12/5/60, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰ Miloud Barkaoui, "Kennedy and the Cold War Imbroglia: The Case of Algeria's Independence.(President John F. Kennedy)," *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)* 21, no. 2 (1999). 39-40.

If one claims that Kennedy had little effect on the outcome of the war, one diminishes the impact of his speech in 1957. Eisenhower's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said to Kennedy that he had used his Algerian speech as leverage over the French.²¹ Kennedy's words were a warning to the French that America could change their sentiment if the war would not end sooner rather than later. Barkaoui's point is taken, Kennedy was milder in the French, but not because he no longer valued Algeria as much, but because he did not have to.

With a greater understanding of the continent and a highly competent Under Secretary of African Affairs Mennen Williams, Kennedy tried to change the culture in the State Department, from an adversary tone between the Africa Bureau and the Europe bureau to a more collaborative tone. The conflict between the Europeanists and the Africanists, as the two groups were called, revolved around a zero-sum game, where if Africa won any ground Europe would suffer, and vice versa. Kennedy believed that it did not have to be like this, Africa could get more attention without Europe getting less attention this was one of the great struggles in the State Department under President Kennedy.²²

Barkaoui claims that Kennedy held the international organizations out of the Algerian question, implying that they could have helped the war end quicker.²³ The realities were that the French would not like that any international organizations meddle in the Algerian question, the French distrusted the UN and NATO, which they saw as controlled by the US.²⁴ The consequences of including international organizations could have, in the worst-case scenario, prolonged the war. The Algerian rebels were gaining support on the international stage and could have demanded more from France, which France surely would have refused.

Cold war problematics

Kennedy's main goal in Algeria was the same as Eisenhower's. They wanted to keep Soviet out of North Africa but had different ways of doing it. Because of his anti-communistic policies,

²¹ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper Perennial Political Classics, 2009). 65.

²² Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. 155.

²³ Barkaoui, "Kennedy and the Cold War Imbroglia: The Case of Algeria's Independence.(President John F. Kennedy)."

²⁴ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 174, 231.

Eisenhower alienated the Arabs with his policies in the Middle East and therefore made them more likely to choose the Soviets.²⁵ Kennedy, on the other hand, thought that if they embraced the communist and socialist Arabs, they would not have to turn to the Soviets. The Algerians got help from the Soviets, but by not punishing them on it, the Americans kept their foothold in the country and the region.²⁶

Algeria was the reason for French non-participation in NATO.²⁷ De Gaulle wanted to make a French-led pillar of NATO covering Algeria, Africa, and the Mediterranean, but the other members, especially the Americans would much rather see the Algerian war end than extend NATO into Algeria.²⁸ The Americans were afraid that if they pushed France harder on the Algerian question, they would exit NATO altogether.

Ideology vs. opportunism

Why did Kennedy change America's policies towards the Third World and specifically Algeria? There are three options: (1) either he did it as part of a political scheme to position himself as a prominent political figure, eventually get the presidency, and create a good legacy for himself. (2) He did it because he really cared for the Algerian people, and wanted what was best for all the people of the World, or (3) a combination of the two.

Arthur Schlesinger talks about US support and help to Africa, before Kennedy. He claims that in no other place in the Third World had Kennedy's policies more effect than in Africa. Kennedy put Africa first and center, at least in the media and when talking to Assistant Secretary Williams and others in the Africa bureau.²⁹ From early on in the Senate Kennedy had shown an affinity for the African continent, which gave him legitimacy when he talked with other that had a special interest in Africa.³⁰

²⁵ Robert J. McMahon, "Eisenhower and Third World Nationalism: A Critique of the Revisionists," *Political Science Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (1986). 463-464

²⁶ Hadhri, "U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Africa During the Cold War: From Eisenhower to Kennedy (1953–1963)." 110.

²⁷ Irwin M. Wall, "De Gaulle, the 'Anglo-Saxons', and the Algerian War," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002). 126.

²⁸ Martin Evans, *Algeria : France's Undeclared War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). 238.

²⁹ Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. 551-555.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 552.

Schlesinger also claims that if Algeria had become independent in 1957, Algeria would have had a progressive, Western-leaning government, with a functioning economy, but the prolonging of the war saw the rise of the left, precisely as Kennedy had predicted. Muehlenbeck claims that Algeria was important to Kennedy because of Ben Bella's high standing with the other African leaders, especially Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah and Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, two of the most important leaders on the continent.³¹ This discounts Kennedy's interest in Algeria before Ben Bella was back in Algeria, but is a good indicator for why Algeria was important after the war was over.

Eisenhower's policies in the Arabian world had clearly not worked. Kennedy tried to cultivate the relationships with the nationalist Arabian leaders, to keep them turned towards the West. If this worked or not, can be discussed, but the thinking is that, if the leaders of the African countries saw that they could get more out of a close relationship with the Americans than the Soviets, they would most likely choose the Americans, even if they leaned to the left politically.

Schlesinger outlines Kennedy's change of policy in the Third World in the later part of his presidency. Kennedy had talked of a world free for democracy; at the end of 1963, he changed it to a world free for diversity. This new policy was supposed to mark a new direction in US foreign policy; no longer should communist and socialist countries be punished simply for being leftist, the great enemy was not the left, but the Soviet Union itself. Kennedy believed that by helping the African countries on their terms, rather than trying to change them into capitalist countries, America's reputation and standing would become better, and more countries would go to America before they went to the Soviets. The food for work programs and the Peace Corps were the most apparent indicators of this new policy, but if Kennedy had not died, more and better programs would have been started.³² Theodore Sorensen backs this up and says that the leaders of the third world saw what Kennedy was doing and, and there was a large wave of renewed trust in the US.

In time most of the neutralist leaders came to respect Kennedy's concepts of independence and diversity and to respect the man who put them forward. (...) – and that the United States had a President who both understood and welcomed the nationalist revolution and believed that the most relevant

³¹ Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. 123.

³² Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. 585-586.

contributions from his own country's experience were not its concepts of private property or political parties but its traditions of human dignity and liberty.³³

African leaders and Kennedy

Muehlenbeck claim that Kennedy had a unique policy on African affairs in the US. Kennedy saw it as essential to keep Africa sympathetic to the West, and the only way to do this was to talk to the African leaders and be engaged in the Africans' problems and matters. Kennedy increased the aid programs to Africa considerable, Eisenhower gave little to no aid to the continent,³⁴ and after Kennedy, Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon cut the aid programs. At the end of the 1960's economic aid to African countries was 29% of 1962 levels.³⁵

President Kennedy and the Algerian leader Ben Bella had a good personal relationship, but Ben Bella was not impressed with American policy, and he pushed the Americans on what they tolerated from a leftist African leader. Kennedy's affinity for Algeria became harder and harder to defend, as Algeria moved towards The Soviet Union.³⁶

CIA

What exact role the CIA plays in the Algerian war is uncertain. CIA had agents in the Algerian resistance movement, the FLN³⁷, but it is disputed whether they had agents in any of the opposing camps. Most historians tend to think that the CIA did not have agents in the French military or the European antirevolutionary movement, OAS³⁸. Since the US did not officially have contact with the FLN, the State Department ran a covert operation through CIA director Allen Dulles.³⁹ In 1961 there was a coup attempt against de Gaulle, it failed, but as it happened stories of the CIA helping the coup-makers started to emerge, the Americans vehemently denied

³³ Sorensen, *Kennedy*. 539.

³⁴ Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. 29-30.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 232.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 138.

³⁷ *Front de Libération Nationale* (Algerian National Liberation Front) Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 79.

³⁸ *Organisation armée secrète* (Secret Army Organization) Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution : Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). 4.

³⁹ Jeffrey Lefebvre, "Kennedy's Algerian Dilemma: Containment, Alliance Politics and the 'Rebel Dialogue'," *Middle Eastern Studies* 35, no. 2 (1999). 64.

the allegations, and the story died down. Wall does not believe that the CIA had anything to do with the coup,⁴⁰ Connelly leaves the door open for some rogue agents to have helped the coup-makers.⁴¹ Lefebvre says that it could have been the French themselves, which put out the rumor that the CIA helped the coup-makers. He suggests that it was the French who set out the rumor themselves, they needed someone to blame the attempted coup on, and the CIA was a perfect scapegoat. He claims that the CIA themselves, did not believe that the coup would succeed, this stands in stark contrast to my findings.⁴²

Under the court proceedings, General Challe testified that there had been no connections between the coup-makers and the CIA,⁴³ this was widely reported, and it would seem that the French accepted this, at least that was what they said publicly. In 1975, the US Senate investigated if the CIA had anything to do with the coup and found no evidence of this.⁴⁴ Ordinarily, I do not delve too much into conspiracies, but if the Senate had found evidence and made it public, US-French relations could be permanently damaged. 1975 was only five years after the death of de Gaulle, and the wounds of the coup-attempt would be ripped open again.

This thesis will not say much of Kennedy's motives in Algeria, but lays it as a premise that his policies were fueled by both ideology and realpolitik. This thesis will revolve around what Kennedy actually did in Algeria, and what the Americans believed they could accomplish. This thesis will also break with earlier research on the role of the CIA, but will further entrench that Kennedy's policies in Algeria, shortened the war, and helped to keep Algeria closer to the West than they otherwise would have.

⁴⁰ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 140-141.

⁴¹ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution : Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*. 71, 239.

⁴² CIA memorandum for the President, April 24, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/24/61-4/30/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass; From same CIA memorandum, attached excerpts from most significant intelligence reports that had come in during the 24 hours leading up to the writing of the memo, heavily redacted. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 72, Folder: Central Intelligence Agency 1/61-5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁴³ Challe Denies CIA spurred Him to Rebel. Article from unknown newspaper, published May 7, 1961. Collection: General CIA Records. Document number: CIA-RDP75-00149R000100740010-2 Accessed September 19, 2017. <http://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rpd75-00149r000100740010-2>

⁴⁴ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 446, 498

Questions

The central question in this thesis is what the Kennedy administration's policies towards Algeria were. I will show how the Kennedy administration almost bent over backward to help the Algerians. They supported the leftist regime through hard times, and tricky political situations. All this to make sure that Algeria remained non-aligned, and that they did not fall into the Soviet sphere of influence.

I have divided the period up into three phases. The first phase was when Algeria was a part of France, the second is between Algeria gained independence, and they elected a government, and the third is between Algeria elected their new government and Kennedy's death. In the first phase the Americans tried to balance between the Algerian rebels and France, but how far did they go, and in what ways did they do it? The Americans themselves talked about "get in on the ground floor with future Algerian leaders"⁴⁵ What were the Americans fears of what the French and the Algerians could do if the Americans did not support them?

The next phase shows how fragile a newly independent country can be. This period was dominated by chaos, and I will show how the Americans helped the Algerians through this turbulent time. Also, the threat of Algeria being thrown into a civil war, only months after the last war was over, was very real. Several factions were jousting for power. The French had put into place an organization, known as PROVEX⁴⁶, that according to the Evian agreements should run Algeria into a new government could be elected. On the other side, there were the political faction of the FLN, the Provisional Algerian Government (PAG)⁴⁷. These two was the essential players at that stage of the conflict. The Americans and the French were also afraid that Ben Bella and the FLN would take control of the country before an election could be held, thereby creating a dictatorship. The questions for the US was how they should balance the different factions in Algeria, and in the end, who they should back.

⁴⁵ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, January 30, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 1/20/61-4/23/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁴⁶ Provisional Executive "Algeria: France-Algerian Independence Agreements (Evian Agreements)."

⁴⁷ *Provisional Algerian Government*, or the G.P.R.A *Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne*. Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 315-317.

In the third and final phase, Algeria had elected their government, and the Americans started close to normal relations. The Algerian leaders leaned to the left, could the Americans keep the Algerians out of the Soviet sphere, or was it just a matter of time until the Algerians slid closer to the Soviets? The new Algerian government had little experience in diplomatic relations, which made the relationship with the Americans strained. Ben Bella's trip to Cuba and a border skirmish with the Moroccans are examples of how labored the relationship between the two countries was. The Americans helped the Algerians with their crippled economy, and France was not happy with what they perceived as the Americans taking their place in Algeria. The situation after Algeria had gained independence and elected a new government was not much easier for the Kennedy administration than the situation when the war was still going on.

American relations with Algeria play into a bigger picture of US policy toward France, and the Afro-Arabian World in general. One questions are what Algeria had to say for the French pulling out of NATO's Central Command. Egypt was an essential ally to Algeria, and the Americans saw a close relationship with them as a way to ingratiate themselves to Nasser. If they could get Algeria to choose the US over the Soviets, they might, in time, get the rest of the Arabian leaders to do the same; the same can be said about other African leaders, like Nkrumah, and Guinea's Sékou Touré. In this context, Kennedy's shift in rhetoric from democracy to diversity is paramount. Could this change be seen in Algeria, and could Algeria be a trial project of this new policy?

Findings

This thesis connects two parts of research on Kennedy's relations with Algeria. Kennedy's relations to the Algerian war and his relations with Algeria as an independent state has not been connected before. There are apparent consistencies in his dealings with Algeria, through the three years, even though Algeria's situation changed dramatically. Kennedy wanted to support the Algerians more than the Americans did, but did not want their French relations to deteriorate even more. After Algeria gained their independence, the Americans wanted to set up an embassy as soon as possible, but the struggle between the PAG and PROVEX made the situation hard. PROVEX was put more and more to the side, and it seemed like all accepted

this, even PROVEX itself,⁴⁸ except France. The Americans wanted to recognize the PAG but were afraid of how this would be perceived by the French. In the eyes of the Americans, the French were too slow to see the changes in Algeria, and they were not realistic in what they hoped would happen.

In the first phase, Kennedy pulls back from the rhetoric that he had used as a Senator. He hoped that his earlier statements would pressure de Gaulle enough, and purposely did not comment on Algeria in the first months of his presidency. He opened up for communications with the Algerian rebels and pulled communications partially back when it angered the French too much. When it looked like de Gaulle abandoned his plan to give Algeria independence, Kennedy used any opportunity to talk to him about the subject, which de Gaulle never wanted. When there almost was a coup in France in the spring of 1961, and the CIA became implicated, Kennedy offered naval units to de Gaulle, but de Gaulle refused. That CIA has done things in the past, which the US does not want to stand behind is common knowledge, and there is more than a small probability that the CIA helped in the coup attempt of 1961. Kennedy uses the first phase to help the Algerian rebels whenever he could, and it would not anger the French too much. France was always the Americans' first priority, but the Americans wanted to separate France from Algeria, to give the West a better reputation in the Arab World.

When the PAG and PROVEX tried to get the power in Algeria, and hold an election, the Americans were afraid that there would not be an election at all. Ben Bella, was massing for insurrection, the situation was tense, and could evolve into a civil war. Ben Bella and his followers were going around the country to campaign,⁴⁹ and it got increasingly certain that Ben Bella would get the power in Algeria. This reassured the Americans, and the election happened without many problems, even in the city of Oran, which was occupied by the OAS at that time, elected Ben Bella as the first Prime Minister of Algeria.⁵⁰ In this period the US was preoccupied with French reactions to Algeria becoming independent, they did not want to recognize the PAG as long as France had not done it first. They saw PROVEX as a failed experiment almost

⁴⁸ Telegram from Consulate Algiers to Secretary of State, July 10, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria General 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁴⁹ Telegram from Embassy Tunis to Secretary of State, April 23, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁵⁰ Evans, *Algeria : France's Undeclared War*. 339.

from the start and were afraid that they had not recognized the PAG sooner, as the Soviet Union had done, would come back and punish them with a worse relationship with the Algerians. Because the Americans were slow to recognize the PAG as Algeria's legitimate transitional government, the Algerians harbored some resentment. Ben Bella was not happy with the Americans' slow recognition and saw it as America's true policy; these resentments did not transfer over to Kennedy, which he quite liked, and looked up to. This resentment came on top of the resentment of America's capitalist ideals, the US and Algeria had a strained relationship from the start of Algeria's independence.

France gets less and less significant to the relationship between Algeria and the US in the final phase. Ben Bella had been elected Algeria's first Prime Minister and some months later was elected Algeria's first President, more and more power got concentrated in one person, for a short time he also embodied the title of Foreign Minister, after the previous Foreign Minister was assassinated. All other parties than the FLN were prohibited, and Algeria slipped closer and closer into the realm of dictatorship. The main problem for the Americans in the early months of this period was Ben Bella's affinity for Cuba. They tried to persuade him that Cuba was a puppet state of the Soviet Union, but it was not until Nasser conveyed the same message that Ben Bella changed his tone. Ben Bella's close relationship with the Cubans, made it harder for the Kennedy administration to support Algeria, and that they opened closer relations with the North-Korean regime did not help. The Kennedy administration was more and more afraid that Algeria would turn to the Soviet Union, even though the Algerians said that communism was not for them, the Algerians said that they were too religious and felt bad for the Cuban people that they saw as equally religious.⁵¹

The Americans poured aid into Algeria, though they never intended Algeria to become a big aid benefactor. A large part of Algeria's population had not gotten through the 1962-63 winter had it not been for US aid.⁵² The US tried to broaden their efforts to help build institutions and educate teachers and leaders, but France did not like this and asked the Americans to stay away

⁵¹ Memorandum from conversation between The President, Assistant Secretary of State, G. Mennen Williams, Mr. Robert Komer, White House Staff, Mr. Peter Hooper, Acting Deputy Director, AFN, and Mr. Muhammed Yazid, Special Representative of President Ben Bella, His Excellency Cherif Guellal, Ambassador of Algeria, November 8, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria General 11/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass

⁵² Memorandum for the President by R. W. Komer. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 10/16/62-12/31/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

from such programs. The French were still sore from losing Algeria and were afraid that the US would take their place, as they saw it, it was their responsibility to build the new government together with the Algerians, and did not want help from any other countries.

In the last two months of Kennedy's life, Algeria and Morocco started a border skirmish, the Moroccans were allies of the Americans, and they saw significant problems with the situation. They did not want to be dragged into a conflict, but a news story about American pilots flying Moroccan troops to the front made this impossible. The Americans refuted the story, but the damage had been done, and the Algerians did not fully trust that the Americans had not done it.

Kennedy's anti-colonial line was stronger than most other American politicians at that time. His predictions in his Algerian speech was mostly correct, Algeria became a bigger and bigger issue for the West as time went by. The 1957 speech became huge news in Africa, and the Algerians saw Kennedy as a friend in the American government. In my research, I was struck by the way Kennedy tried to better the relations with Algeria often at the expense of French relations. It has to be said that Kennedy never favored Algeria over France, and always contemplated French reactions to new US policy toward Algeria. France was the more crucial ally to America of the two countries. Even though Africa gained importance under Kennedy, Europe was the most important continent and the most vital piece to keep the Soviet Union at bay.

My sources indicate that the CIA was involved in the coup attempt on de Gaulle in 1961. The CIA director Allen Dulles wrote a memo to Kennedy, telling him that the US had to be ready to recognize the new French government, the CIA was confident that the coup would succeed; that leads to the question: why? I would say that it is naive to think that the CIA did not have, at least, informants in the French military in Algeria. The CIA knew that the date for the coup had been pushed up, and what they were about to do, the French government believed that the Americans were involved, and someone gave the instinct impression that they were. Kennedy did not want the coup to succeed and placed American naval units at de Gaulle's disposal;⁵³ this does not count out that CIA might have done something different. The tone of the American

⁵³ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 241.

ambassador to France, James M. Gavin, when talking about the situation, was strange and suggests that he and the administration knew more than they were ready to put down on paper.⁵⁴ If the CIA had encouraged the coup, it would not be strange if the Americans would want it hidden. A case like this could harm US-French relations to this day.

On every turn, the Americans tried to show the Algerians that they supported them, even though they did not always do so. Internally in the US, there was opposition to Kennedy help to a stated socialist country, and therefore his administration often had more focus on how Algeria's actions would look to the US than trying to understand why the Algerians did what they did.

Method and sources

Method

There is not one way to work with history. There are different degrees of reliance on theory, but generally, historians are interested in the special and leave the generalizing to the social sciences. The two primary tools historians use are *qualitative* and *quantitative* methods. Quantitative method is more applied in economic history, and I have not used this method to any large degree, other than when several sources point to the same conclusion. The method I have used the most is qualitative method; there had to be a qualitative analysis of my sources before I could use them in any quantitative manner. Here is *Hermeneutics*, which means to interpret, a relevant term. One has to interpret the sources to understand what they say and what lies behind it, what the people who wrote it actually meant and thought. In the field of political history, qualitative method is the more commonly used method, which this thesis is an example.⁵⁵

There have been many different ways to write history, and the historian has to be conscious of his or her place in history. As historians we can only recreate the past it can not be observed, we look at the sources and try to recreate the course of events, and thereby show causality, or what might be coincidences. Sorting out the most probable scenario is a historian's job, though

⁵⁴ Message from Embassy Paris to the White House, April 25, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 70A, Folder: France General 4/22/61-4/30/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass; Telegram from Embassy from Paris to Secretary of State, May 3, 1961. . Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass

⁵⁵ Knut Kjeldstadli, *Fortida Er Ikke Hva Den En Gang Var : En Innføring I Historiefaget* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1999). 183.

it might be hard to find out. This thesis is part of political history and is, therefore, more concentrated on the actors and not the structures they act in. That is not to say that there are no structures, there very much are, and Kennedy and the politicians of the middle of the 1900's were part of breaking up some of those patterns, though many of the same patterns still exist today.

In the second chapter, I will show how the situation was when John F. Kennedy became President, with thoughts to the Algerian problem. I will look at the political climate in France, how the Algerians organized themselves politically, President Eisenhower's policy and how it came to be, and at the end, the second chapter will look at Kennedy's Algeria speech, why he held it, and how it was received. The three next chapters are about the three phases Algeria went through as Kennedy was President. The sixth chapter is about France and how the Americans related to them losing Algeria. Finally, in the epilogue, US-Algerian policy after Kennedy's death is described, and some lines of Algeria in the following years.

Sources

One of the most important traits of a historian is source criticism. The sources can be interpreted different ways, and sometimes one has to read between the lines, there might be situations when those who wrote the sources did not want the reality on paper or changed aspects, and sometimes the sources has more to do with what the person wished than reality. There is also a problem that some documents still are classified. I tried to gain access to many of the documents, but only got some of them. There might still be classified information in the Archive that could damage US relations, or harm US national security. This might lead to over analysis, but I do not believe I have taken many leaps of judgment.

What might be a problem, is that some the rulers of Algeria back in the early 1960s still rule Algeria today. Algeria's president per 2017 is Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Ben Bella's foreign minister after the assassination of Mohamed Khemisti. Bouteflika was also involved in the coup of President Ben Bella in 1965.⁵⁶ That there are people in power in Algeria that was in power back in the Kennedy days makes this issue problematic, and this might be the reason that some

⁵⁶ Benjamin Stora et al., *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2004). 141.

the documents still are classified. That any US agency has done things in Algeria, they do not want to become public cannot be dismissed either

I retrieved the sources from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. The JFK Library is part of NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) and houses most of the documents from the time Kennedy was in the House of Representatives, the Senate, and President. The archive is partitioned into categories; I mostly looked at the National Security Files (NSF), but also looked into the White House Central Files, Personal Papers, Pre-presidential Papers - Senate Files and President's Office Files. The way I organized my sources was to replicate the filing system in the archive. First referring to which part of the library I found the source in, then the box, and lastly which folder. I think this is the easiest way to reference and for others to find and verify my research.

2. Historical Background

Introduction

Algeria spelled the fall of the Fourth French Republic, and the return of de Gaulle, and four years later the war would end, but not after hard negotiations between the Algerian rebels and the French Government. In the end, Algeria gained their independence through the political and international system and not on the ground in Algeria. France insisted that Algeria was part of *Métropole de française*, and therefore an internal matter, and could not be discussed in the UN, but the Algerian rebels managed to get votes in the UN with help from African and Arabian countries.

The Afro-Arabian world had gotten more important as more and more countries gained their independence. Many of these countries were headed by left-leaning leaders, which challenged their old colonizers, one example of this is Egypt. The French and the British had been humiliated in the Suez crisis, and the American president Dwight Eisenhower did not want a similar situation in Algeria. He, therefore, supported the French effort to keep Algeria French. This did not mean that the tension between the US and France subsided in any meaningful way, Algeria stayed one of the biggest problems between the two countries.

The Algerians had fought for better conditions since France took control of the area in 1830. They had fought side by side with the French in both World Wars, and been promised more autonomy and rights, but had not gotten much to show for their efforts, and in 1954 the Algerian war for independence broke out. The most influential rebel organization was the FLN, and Algeria's first Prime Minister and President, Ahmed Ben Bella was one of the most important leaders of the organization. The French had an overwhelming army, and the Algerian rebels had not a chance of winning a straight out war. Under the Suez Crisis, Egyptian President Gabel Adel Nasser made the Algerian problem an Arab problem, and the French could no longer claim that the Algerian war was an internal affair with any conviction. The war ended with the signing of the Evian Accords, this marked, in many ways, a further decline of French power.

In 1957, then Senator Kennedy, held a speech criticizing the Eisenhower administration and the French government for their handling of Algeria. This was a turning point, and French newspapers looked at it as a warning, the US would not stand by French Algeria policy if a new

generation came to power in the US. Kennedy was quite alone on the issue inside the government, but received much praise from the people, and became a prominent figure in American, African policy in the Senate.

De Gaulle and France

One of the central players in the later stages of the Algerian war was General Charles de Gaulle. Under the Second World War, he was the leader of the free French forces and was based in Britain. He despised the British, disliked the Americans, and did not appreciate the close relationship between Britain and the America. The relationship between France and the US did not improve when the Americans dropped the two nuclear bombs over Japan, France saw their *great power* status dwindling. They wanted a way to keep their status and thought that nuclear bombs would do it, but the Americans did not share their technology and actively sabotaged any attempt to acquire the technology without them.

The French were on the defensive on the colonial issue after 1945. France had seen its relative power in the World dwindle most of the 20th century, and they were afraid that this would further erode their *great power* status. The First Indochina War broke out in 1946, and the French fought back to keep dominion over the area. France pulled out of the war in 1954 and left it to the Americans to clean up their mess, at least that was what the Americans thought.⁵⁷ At the same time, the situation in Algeria escalated, and the war broke out. Many of the troops were shipped directly from Indochina to Algeria, without setting their feet on French soil in the meantime.⁵⁸ France would be in an almost continuous state of war from 1939 to 1962, the Indochina war had made the French people increasingly war-weary, they looked forward to peace, but instead, they got the Algerian war.⁵⁹

Franco-American relations had long been difficult. The question of what to do with Berlin and Germany, and the French atomic program, and its integration into the French fighting force, *Force de Frappe*, were difficult issues. To meet some of the French wishes for nuclear weapons, the US put some missiles at the disposal of NATO, but did not relinquish their veto powers on the missiles usage. This angered the French, what use would it be to have missiles, if they had

⁵⁷ The Indochina war led to the Vietnam War, it changed from a territorial colonial war, to an economic and ideological “colonial” war.

⁵⁸ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 102-103.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 69.

to check with the US before using them.⁶⁰ France and the US had different ideas of how the Berlin problem should be handled.⁶¹

Throughout the fifties, France was a highly unstable country. This instability can be seen in the continuing revolving door of foreign ministers. When Robert Schuman who had been the Foreign Minister since 1948 was replaced in 1953, France had six foreign ministers until Maurice Couve de Murville took over in 1958. One of the most significant factors for this unrest was the Algerian war, and it was the main reason that the Fourth Republic fell in 1958.⁶² At the end of the Fourth Republic, the French president René Coty asked de Gaulle for help and later had to hand over the presidency to de Gaulle. The return of de Gaulle marked the end of the Fourth Republic and the rise of the Fifth French Republic.⁶³

Soon after de Gaulle had returned, he realized that the Algerian problem had no outcome in which Algeria would go back to the situation that had existed before the war. He started to find a way to stop the war and at the same time keep Algeria close, de Gaulle could probably not keep Algeria *Algérie Française*⁶⁴ like wanted, but he could keep some power in an independent Algeria nevertheless.

Algeria, the FLN, PAG and Ben Bella

Today, Algeria is Africa's largest country; it is extremely rich in oil and natural gas. It lies on the northern shore of the African continent and sticks like a spearhead down into the Saharan desert; this is where most of Algeria's natural resources lie. The population is mostly Muslim and has a long history of being ruled by foreign powers. Before France took control of the area known as Algeria, many of the cities had been used as safe havens for pirates and smugglers. This stopped in 1830, the French Empire took control over the northern part of Algeria but would use most of the 19th century to take control of the Saharan parts of the country. The Algerian people fought against the French occupiers from the start, but after a while, the

⁶⁰ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 67.

⁶¹ The Soviets were provoking the Western powers in Berlin, which lay in the middle of East-Germany. They wanted West-Berlin integrated into East-Germany, but this was inconceivable to the West. This made the situation a point of contention between the two countries. Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle the Ruler 1945-1970* (London: Harvill, 1993). 218.

⁶² Wall, "De Gaulle, the 'Anglo-Saxons', and the Algerian War." 126.

⁶³ Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution : Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era*. 168-169.

⁶⁴ French rule in Algeria. Lacouture, *De Gaulle the Ruler 1945-1970*. 161.

rebellions died down. Under the First and Second World War Algerian soldiers fought side by side with the French troops, and each time they were promised more autonomy, which they did not receive.⁶⁵ Many South Europeans moved to Algeria, not only French but Italians and Spaniards too, there were large amounts of uncultivated soil, and the climate was good. France integrated Algeria into *Metropole de française*, the French metropole, which meant that Algeria was a part of France and not just a colony.

That Algeria was seen as part of the metropole gave the people some advantages over other French dominions. Any Algerian could become a French citizen, but the French government did not give citizenship to Muslims. To become a French citizen Muslims had to convert away from Islam, and few Algerians saw this as an option.⁶⁶ Another problem was that Muslims were hardly represented in the Algerian assemblies, and Algeria as a whole did not have a single representative in the French national assembly. The first sparks of rebellion after the Second World War started already May 8, 1945, the first day of peace in Europe. A Huge demonstration in Setif sparked violent meetings between the Muslim and the so-called *pieds-noirs*⁶⁷. The situation did not get much better, and violent demonstrations sparked all over the country, and under the elections in 1949, there was clear evidence of voter fraud.⁶⁸ The Algerians anger at the state continued to rise into the fifties, organizations that were fighting for Algerian independence began to mobilize, and the war broke out in 1954.

The most important rebel organization was the FLN. They were both a political organization and a militant organization but had a militant under-group called the ALN, *Armée de Libération Nationale*⁶⁹, who were more ruthless than the FLN, and fought the French with guerilla techniques. Many of Algeria's postwar leaders had been leaders or was part of the FLN, such as Ahmed Ben Bella. Ben Bella had fought in the French army in the Second World War and

⁶⁵ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 42.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 37.

⁶⁷ *Pieds-noirs*, is a term used on the non-Muslim and mostly European population in Algeria. Refers to black feet, or black shoes. Were ether a reference to the black shoes of the French military or based on the patronizing view from metropolitan French that they had burned their feet black from the sun. Ibid. 29-30.

⁶⁸ Barkaoui, "Kennedy and the Cold War Imbroglia: The Case of Algeria's Independence.(President John F. Kennedy)." 32.

⁶⁹ *Armée de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Army) Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 133.

was appalled by what he saw when he returned home to Algeria.⁷⁰ Most of the leadership in the FLN were socialist and left-leaning and enjoyed much support from the Soviets, who would like nothing more than a communist Algeria, and maybe a communist revolution in France itself. Algeria's second neighbor to the east, Egypt, were also a big supporter of the Algerian case, and both Tunisia and Morocco harbored Algerian refugees and thereby FLN fighters.

Ben Bella was a quiet, introverted man, and after the French captured him in the autumn of 1956 and held him incarcerated until the end of the war, he became even more introverted. Ben Bella was one of the most important people in the building of the FLN and the building of Algeria as an independent country after the war. When he was going to meet President Kennedy in 1962, the Americans described him like this:

The Algerian Prime Minister is product of long years of conspiracy and imprisonment. Conspiratorial period (Secret organization activity and development of FLN) toughened him and developed ruthless qualities of revolutionary leader which he has shown in his drive for power here in past three months.

The reflective and withdrawn side of his nature perhaps results from long confinement. He appears at times to be in thought remote from his environment. He is in no sense extrovert, and while he will smile, in public he rarely relaxes. His public appearances are interesting in that during his speeches he does not attempt to rouse his audiences or sway them through persuasion or eloquence.⁷¹

In the summer of 1958, a group of Algerian rebels got together and formed the PAG. They would stand for the diplomatic contact and work to try to liberate Algeria. They lobbied in the UN and were the organization that negotiated with the French on the peace process. The PAG was very important in the last stages of the war, and their chief negotiator Belkacem Krim, and the two presidents of the organization, Ferhat Abbas, and Benyoucef Ben Khedda became prominent opposition politicians to Ben Bella after the war.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 74.

⁷¹ Telegram from Embassy Algiers to Secretary of State, October 8, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4A, Folder: Algeria general 9/1/62-10/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The War, the Peace and the Evian Accords

Author and philosopher Albert Camus described the living conditions of the Algerian people in his *Algerian Chronicles*. This book consists of articles and letters, telling the Algerian people's story, out in the villages and rural areas, these were the people who had the worst conditions in all of Algeria. The articles and letters had been published in newspapers in France, and most of the articles were printed in 1958, right after the fall of the Fourth Republic.⁷² The stories Camus told, shocked and horrified the French audience, and contributed to the opposition to the war. The French would not even acknowledge that the Algerian war was a war until 1999, it was known as the *War with no name* or the *War without a name*.⁷³

The French could have easily won the Algerian war on the ground; it was not there it was lost. The French army had much better weapons and equipment, they outnumbered the Algerian rebels almost 20 to one, and both its Atlantic and Mediterranean fleet lay outside the coast of Algeria. The FLN were losing on the battlefield, but winning diplomatically and on the international arena. As the peace talks started the war had gotten increasingly horrible, women and children were killed for suspicions of someone in the family fighting for the other side, torture was usual, and voices on both sides called for the total destruction of the other side.

The *pieds-noirs* were afraid that if the Arabs gained power in Algeria, their status would change, and was afraid of what would happen to them. If the Arabs won, a redistribution of wealth was guaranteed to happen, at that time the Europeans controlled most of the wealth in Algeria, and they were afraid that they would lose it, and it be given to the Muslim population, or the state could hold on to it themselves. Their fears were not unfounded, the rebels were increasingly hostile towards the *pieds-noirs*, and turned more and more to the left.⁷⁴ But almost from the start, there could be only one solution to the war, the French had alienated the Muslim population for over hundred years, and few of the promises of better representation and democratic reforms had been fulfilled.⁷⁵ In the last months of the war, the OAS fought harder and harder against the FLN and tried to create a climate that made it impossible for the French

⁷² Albert Camus, *Algerian Chronicles* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

⁷³ Martin Alexander and J. F. V. Keiger, "France and the Algerian War: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002). Page 1

⁷⁴ Lefebvre, "Kennedy's Algerian Dilemma: Containment, Alliance Politics and the 'Rebel Dialogue'." 72.

⁷⁵ Wall, *France, the United States, and the Algerian War*. 265.

to leave Algeria, but to no avail, the war ended, and the Algerian rebels had won. When the war was over many of the dispossessed Algerians returned. The Europeans had been fleeing Algeria for months, and the Algerians who had fought on the side of the French found it impossible to stay. The Europeans took with them all they owned and Algeria was quickly drained of wealth.⁷⁶

The basis for the peace talks was that both sides wanted close relations with each other after the fighting was over, this was, not surprisingly, extremely hard. The negotiations went on for months, and both sides tried to double-cross the other. France's priorities became clear when they tried to get the Algerians to agree to split Algeria in two. The northern part was going to be the newly independent Algeria, and France was going to keep the southern part. The southern part was where the oil and natural gas was, and it was this the French wanted. The Algerians refused, and the French had to drop their demand. Instead, Algeria gave France drilling rights in the Sahara. The signing of the Evian peace agreements on March 18, 1962, marked the end of the war. This did not mean that Algeria was peaceful, and the OAS kept up fighting and bombing for some time after this.⁷⁷ The troubles were not over for neither Algeria nor France.

Eisenhower and the Suez Crisis

So much of Eisenhower's policy toward Algeria in particular and all of North Africa, in general, was clouded by the Suez crisis. The Suez crisis was a pivotal moment in history, it changed the balance of powers in the Arab World, and vaulted the Non-aligned powers to a leading role in the area. In the years leading up to Suez, the US had pushed both France and Britain on decolonizing the African continent, but after Suez adopted a more cautious approach.

When Gabel Adel Nasser, president of Egypt, nationalized the Suez Canal, he both angered France and Britain and showed that the old empires had to listen to the Arab nations. The French and the British were ready to fight the Egyptians for the Canal, but the US would not support them, and the French and British had to retreat. Neither of the sides understood each other's motives and reasons. In the speech that Nasser gave the signal to the military to seize control of the Canal, he also proclaimed, "We can never say that the battle of Algeria is not our battle."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Evans, *Algeria : France's Undeclared War*. 318-322; Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. Page 535

⁷⁷ *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*; *ibid.* 523-526.

⁷⁸ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York u.a.: Simon & Schuster, 1994). 530.

Forever linking the failure of the great powers in the Suez crisis to the Algerians struggle for independence.

Egypt and Nasser had won a diplomatic battle with Israel, balanced the great powers excellently against each other, and made a split between the western powers. With France beginning to lose the status of great power, holding on to Algeria would be increasingly difficult and increasingly important. Nasser had taken the Algerian problem and made it an Arabian problem, Arabian nationalists in Algeria knew now that they had Egypt on their side, and more importantly, it could no longer be seen only as a French internal affair.⁷⁹

Following the Suez crisis, Eisenhower supported France in Algeria, but kept the US out of the conflict, militarily and diplomatically. He had seen what Nasser was capable of and was afraid of getting another leftist leader in North Africa or even worse creating a power-vacuum, in which the Soviet Union could expand. The Algerian rebels already leaned to the Soviets, so it was not such a stretch to believe that this was a plausible outcome. Eisenhower's hands-off approach was preferred internally in the US, but neither the French nor the Arabian nationalists liked how the US handled the situation. The French felt that they should have Eisenhower's support, France was a close ally after all, and the Arabian nationalist thought that the US did not follow their stated goal of spreading democracy in the world.⁸⁰

The Soviets had similar fears to the Americans They feared a power-vacuum in which the Americans would place a capitalist leader that the Americans could control, opening up for the Americans to have a greater foothold in Africa and the Arab World.⁸¹

The Eisenhower administration's policy and contact with the Africans were almost non-existent. Eisenhower's Vice-President, Richard M. Nixon, was seen as a big supporter of the black Americans, but had little positive to say about the people living on the African continent, commenting, "some of the peoples of Africa have been out of the trees for only about fifty

⁷⁹ Ibid. 530.

⁸⁰ Hadhri, "U.S. Foreign Policy toward North Africa During the Cold War: From Eisenhower to Kennedy (1953–1963)." 103; Egya N. Sangmuah, "Eisenhower and Containment in North Africa, 1956-1960," *Middle East Journal* 44, no. 1 (1990). 80.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). 45.

years.”⁸² The same can be said about most of the Eisenhower administration, they had little respect for African people and little understanding of African culture and geography, “Furthermore, Secretary of State Dulles once confused Tunisia for Indonesia, and State Department officials repeatedly were perplexed over the difference between Niger and Nigeria.”⁸³ Eisenhower himself felt that when US officials visited the Togolese capital, they should live like the natives, in tents and dirt huts, he said to the Togolese president Sylvanus Olympio, this was probably meant as a joke, but it was not well received, and the Togolese president was highly offended.⁸⁴

Eisenhower’s Algeria policy did not divert far from his general policy on the African continent. He was careful to not bring the subject up with de Gaulle and other French leaders, and only sparingly commented that French suppression of African nationalism could drive the Third World into the Soviet’s sphere. To Eisenhower France and the other Western European powers were more important to placate than any, and all, of the countries in the Third World.⁸⁵

⁸² Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 5.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 5.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* Page 16-17.

3. First Phase, Kennedy changes America's policy on Algeria

Introduction

Kennedy changed US policy towards Algeria. The ideas that he proposed in his speech in 1957 continued through to his presidency, where the main objectives in Algeria was to stop the war and Kennedy saw no way of stopping the war that would not entail Algeria becoming independent. His administration's policy was to carefully help the Algerians achieve independence without offending the French. Kennedy put a much higher emphasis on the African continent and their right to self-determination than the previous administration, and Algeria was one of the prime examples of this.

Kennedy endeavored to get the French to grant independence to Algeria and were ready to discuss the subject with President de Gaulle, at any meeting. The second coming of de Gaulle, in 1958, had the Americans hoping for a swift resolution of the Algerian question, and Kennedy had hoped that the process would be further along when he entered the Presidency in 1961. The Americans were afraid that de Gaulle did not see the realities and the dangers they saw in keeping the war going. The main reason for stopping the war was the alienation effect it had on the Afro-Arabian World.

Kennedy's policies came from his deep-rooted anti-colonialism but were implemented to get a better relationship with the Arabian and African leaders, especially Nasser of Egypt and Nkrumah of Ghana. Whenever the Americans could help the Algerians without the French getting too offended, the Americans did it. The French saw any contact the Algerians had with any foreign government as meddling in French affairs, there were peace settlement talks that would eventually give Algeria its independence, but how the new Algeria would look after that was not certain. The Americans adopted a cautious but escalating contact with Algerian rebels and would back off rather than not go up to the line of what the French thought was acceptable. This is not to say that they valued the French relationship less than the relationship with the Algerians, in fact, the relationship with the French was much more important than the relationship with the Algerians.

The Americans would not sacrifice French relations for better relations with the Algerians. Kennedy believed that if Algeria became independent, relations with France would improve

too, Algeria was one of the three biggest problems between the two Western powers, and with the end of the Algerian war, the West's reputation in the Third World would rise.

During the last years of the war, France was subject to one failed coup and that a European anti-independence group took control of the administrative center in Algeria. There are strong indications that the CIA supported the coup, and that they helped the anti-independence movement, and when the rumors of CIA involvement became public, it led to a decoration of Franco-US relations.

After the peace agreement had been signed, the Americans became more aggressive in their contact with the Algerians. They no longer saw Algeria as a part of France, even though it still technically was, but as an independent country, it was no doubt in their mind that Algeria would become independent after the July referendum. The Americans still held the French updated on their dealings in Algeria, but it became less and less detailed. They tried to help the Algerians in preparation for the referendum but began to worry about what would come next in Algeria. That the leaders were socialist and leftist was one thing, but they did not seem to value democracy and the necessary freedoms that they thought essential to a developing state was worse.

Kennedy's Algeria speech

Kennedy held his Algeria speech on Tuesday, July 2, 1957. He saw the Algerian problem escalating and feared a similar situation to Indochina, where the Americans had been dragged into the situation as the French lost control. Kennedy claimed that Algeria was the single biggest problem-spot at the time, with the fear being that Algeria would fall to the Soviets, and be the base for spreading communists influence throughout Africa.

Mr. President, the most powerful single force in the world today is neither communism nor capitalism, neither the H-bomb nor the guided missile – it is man's eternal desire to be free and independent. The great enemy of that tremendous force of freedom is called, for want of a more precise term, imperialism – and today that means Soviet imperialism and, whether we like it or not, and though they are not to be equated, western imperialism.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, speaking against President Eisenhower's Algeria policy, on July 2, 1957, on the Senate floor, Manuscript collected from JFK Library, Boston, Mass, Papers of President Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 784, File: Algeria Speech, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Kennedy said that the US had failed its anticolonial duty. He stated that France was Americas first and one of their most important allies and that France was helping neither themselves nor the West, by holding on to Algeria. Both France and the US was wrong in insisting that the Algerian situation was an internal French problem and that the international organizations should keep out of the situation, Kennedy claimed. He said that the way the Eisenhower administration handled the Algerian problem, threatened the US's reputation as an international leader, and as a fighter for free people everywhere. Kennedy said that the US was risking losing more of the World to the Soviet Union and anti-western sentiment.

Kennedy's speech was big news, not only in the US but in France and on the African continent too. Kennedy's standpoint was controversial and polarizing, he was heavily criticized by other members of the Democratic Party, and the Party held a "demonstration" against him, that was printed on the front page of *France-amérique*, the French newspaper for the United States.⁸⁷ There came mail from all over America, and even from France, there were strong feelings on both sides. In fact, he received more correspondence for the Algerian speech than anything he did as a Senator except when he ran for president.⁸⁸ By the French newspaper *Le Monde*, the speech was seen as a warning to the French, and that Kennedy had found a big audience in America.⁸⁹ He received a handwritten letter from the Democratic National Committee, telling him that he just did not understand the situation and that his position would change if he talked with the French, and were better informed.⁹⁰ Telling Kennedy that he was not informed on the Algerian issue in 1957, was as silly as it was infantilizing, Senator Kennedy had researched the

⁸⁷ Newspaper clipping from *France-amérique*, *Le Journal Français des Etats-Unis*, May 4, 1958. Papers of President Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Senate Files Legislation, Legislative Assistants' Background File 1953-1960, Box 765, File: Foreign Relations - Algeria, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁸⁸ In the JFK Library, they have two boxes of correspondence relating to this one speech. The Papers of President Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Boxes 919-920, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass; Arthur Schlesinger notes that Kennedy received more mail from the Algeria speech than any other address. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*. 553.

⁸⁹ Memorandum, French opinion on the Algerian problem, Reactions of the French press to Senator J.F. Kennedy's speech on the Algerian question, July 9, 1957. The Papers of President Kennedy Pre-Presidential Papers, Senate Files Holburn, Research Materials 1958-1960, Foreign Relations: Africa – Algeria, Boxes 570, Folder: Foreign Relations Algeria (3 of 3 folders), John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁹⁰ Letter from Senate Majority leader Mansfield to President Kennedy. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 111, Folder: Algeria General, 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

situation in Algeria for a long time, and his aides had regularly filled him in on happenings in the country. Kennedy was not only well informed on the subject, but he was also correct. The relationship between the US and France was hurting because of the Algerian problem, and France was suffering politically.

Kennedy's Algeria policy up to the election of 1960

After his Algeria speech, Kennedy became the “man to see” in Washington for African diplomats visiting the capital. He gained experience and influence in the foreign relations circuits. After a bombing raid by the French in 1958, with planes provided by the Americans, which veered into Tunisia, Tunisian ambassador, Mongi Slim, informed Secretary of State Dulles, that he intended to take this to the UN Security Council. Dulles refused to take a stand on the matter, which prompted Kennedy to speak from the floor of the Senate

We have ignored the explosive situation in Algeria and neglected our anxious friends in Tunisia for too long, both in the United Nations and in our economic aid program, while handing the Communists and the anti-American extremists every opportunity to pose as the champions of freedom.⁹¹

Again, he spoke out in support of the Algerians and legitimized their efforts to be independent. In a press release in March 1958, Kennedy continued his criticism of French and American policy on the Algerian question. He saw the Algerian situation worsening, and were afraid that if the war continued, NATO could be destroyed, and “left drift” as he called it would turn Algeria over to the communists sooner rather than later. However, personally, he had begun to question if he was in the right on this issue. Under the presidential election he spoke of Algeria twice, but then in a different tone, he wanted to distance himself from the Algeria controversy.⁹²

In 1959 he praised de Gaulle for his change in policy on Algeria, hoping that de Gaulle would finally end the war. Abdelkader Chanderli, of the FLN, wrote a reply to Kennedy on this change in tone. Chanderli claimed that Kennedy's assessment of de Gaulle as having “cool appraisal of the realities of the day” had no grounds in the real world.⁹³ Chanderli's letter has to be viewed

⁹¹ Ronald J. Nurse, "Critic of Colonialism: Jfk and Algerian Independence," *Historian* 39, no. 2 (1977). 320.

⁹² *Ibid.* 321.

⁹³ Letter from Algerian Office via the New York Herald Tribune, May 12, 1959. Papers of President Kennedy, Pre Presidential papers, Box 570 Senate Files Holburn Research Materials 1958-1960

in the light that he was on the opposite side of the affair as de Gaulle, but the fact that Chanderli did criticize Kennedy in this way show a shift in Kennedy's policy. Kennedy might have seen the Algerian situation as a losing cause and tried to distance himself from the controversy, or he might believe that de Gaulle would right the wrongs in Algeria. Additionally, Kennedy said that he was happy that de Gaulle was not President of France when he held his Algeria speech.⁹⁴ If this means that he thought de Gaulle did the right thing or if he was intimidated by the French General, is hard to say. Either way, this marks a shift in Kennedy's policy, to a more France supportive position.

Getting in on the ground floor

From the start of the Kennedy administration, there were changes to the culture and the policies, they tried to back the PAG, but were afraid of French reactions and tried to do it hidden. The Americans were afraid that if they backed the PAG too aggressively, they would upstage the French, which they did not want to do. The American ambassador to France said in late January that it was a perfect moment to get in on the start of a new country, but they should be cautious to go too hard into Algeria, as not to upstage the French.⁹⁵ The first months of the administration, they tried to feel out the middle way between the Algerian rebels and the French government. The Eisenhower administration had had the same ideas; but in their case been highly on the side of the French, the Kennedy administration tried to position themselves closer to the middle.

On February 2, 1961, the American embassy in Paris requested clarification on how to handle the FLN representatives. American charge d'affaires in Paris, Cecil Lyon, asked if they could wait to change policies to after talks between French and Algerians had begun.⁹⁶ The talks between the PAG and the French government started soon after, and Kennedy opened for limited, but official contact with the Algerian rebels.

Foreign Relations: Africa – Algeria, Folder: Foreign Relations Algeria (1 of 3 folders), John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁹⁴ Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. Page 156

⁹⁵ Telegram from Embassy(Cecil B. Lyon) to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, January 30, 1961, Papers of President Kennedy National Security files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 1/20/61-4/23/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁹⁶ Telegram from Embassy(Cecil B. Lyon) to Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, February 2, 1961, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 1/20/61-4/23/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Kennedy's more relaxed tone was also made easier by de Gaulle's sudden turns in 1959 and 1960, where he reversed his position on the possibility of an independent Algeria. Reporter, Cyrus Sulzberger had had an "off the record" interview with the French President, where they discussed Algeria. He said that de Gaulle had the most liberal view on the Algerian problem than any other French government official up to that point. De Gaulle had pointed out that there was not really a war anymore, few people died each day, and that the situation was in the Algerians hands. Sulzberger later conveyed this information to the American embassy in Paris; his report contributed to the Kennedy administration's handling of the Algerian problem. Sulzberger thought that de Gaulle took too lightly on the problem, and was taking a solution to the Algerian problem for granted.⁹⁷ If de Gaulle told Sulzberger what he really believed, then he hardly understood the situation in Algeria at all. De Gaulle abdicated any moral high ground he had left on the question, and if de Gaulle acted on the assumption that the Algerians needed to take the first step, it would spell disaster for Algeria and French foreign relations.

The situation in Algeria was dire, even though the death toll had gone down, there were no indications that the war was over. The war was fought as a guerrilla war, from the Algerians side, and the small death tolls are easily explained by this. I do believe that de Gaulle saw the problem in Algeria, and worked to end the hostilities. The Evian talks would soon be afoot, and the Americans saw the end of the war coming.

De Gaulle was openly calling for a ceasefire and a referendum on Algeria's independence, at the start of 1961. Kennedy was pleased that de Gaulle was moving in the right direction In a meeting with the French ambassador, Alphand, and the President of the French National Assembly, Chaban-Delmas, President Kennedy "expressed his admiration for the Algerian policy followed by France at present."⁹⁸ In this meeting, the French expressed a growing fear that the FLN leaders had come under the influence of Moscow and Peiping (Beijing). They hoped that the Americans would stop doing business with them until Algeria had elected a new

⁹⁷ Incoming telegram from embassy in Paris to the Department of State, February 18, 1961 Papers of President Kennedy National Security Files, Box: 70A, Folder: France General 1/20/61-3/15/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

⁹⁸ Memorandum from conversation between USA: The President, The Secretary, Dean Acheson, McGeorge Bundy, Foy D. Kohler, E. S. Glenn (Interpreter), and Chaban-Delmas and Hervé Alphand March 10, 1961 Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 70A, Folder: France General 1/20/61-3/15/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

government, preferably a more Western, and especially French-leaning. The French did not understand that this was the reason for American involvement in Algeria, to keep the Algerians from going to the Soviets when they became independent. If the Americans stopped the contact with the Algerians at that point, Kennedy would be no better than Eisenhower. This could be seen as the Americans pushing the Algerians away, and directly into the hands of the Soviets. Although Kennedy was more favorable to the Algerian cause, the US was wary of acknowledging the FLN and the PAG. The fear was that the PAG would lose the election, and the US would look bad for not understanding Algeria, which was one of the points the Kennedy administration prided itself on, this would be especially bad if they had supported a leftist losing side.

The US did not acknowledge the PAG but would come to regret it. The USSR had recognized the PAG, and the Americans were confident that they would regret that decision. In a telegram from the State Department dated October 26, 1961, Secretary of State, Dean Rusk outlined how the US should proceed in the coming months regarding French-Algerian and North African policy. Rusk believed that in an election the PAG would win, but if they recognized the organization at that point, PAG would be looked at as Algeria's legal government, which could spur them to either postpone elections or not have any elections at all.⁹⁹ Secondly, the war was not over, and France had still jurisdiction over Algeria, and the French government was the Algerian government too.

By autumn 1961, Algeria's independence was all but certain. The Americans thought that if Algeria became independent without an agreement with France on how independence should be achieved and Algeria's path forward, independence would come with a sour taste. If this were to be the case, the relationship between the US and Algeria would be impaired from the onset. Rusk thought that if Algeria did not have an agreement with the French the relations with, not only Algeria but all of North Africa would suffer as a result. This was everything the Americans did not want, again the most crucial point for the Americans in Algeria was keeping them out of the Soviet sphere. Rusk said that there should not be any closer relations with FLN, only if they had anything important to say to the US, or if the US anything important to say to

⁹⁹ Outgoing Telegram from State Department to embassies in Paris, Tunis, Rabat, and consulate in Algiers October 26, 1961 Papers of President Kennedy National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 10/61-11/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

them, should there be contact. If such a need arose, there would be interest in raising the level of contact.¹⁰⁰ In other words, the State Department did not think an independent Algeria was far away, and they saw the FLN have a central role in the construction and the governing of the new state. The State Department was correct in their assertions, the PAG was the prominent political entity at that time, but as the incarcerated FLN leaders were let go after the signing of Evian, their significance rose considerably.

In the policy plans for Algeria in 1962, the Americans laid out what they wanted to happen in Algeria. The first point is centered on the burden that would be lifted off France, and the relationship between France, the US, and NATO. They hoped that without Algeria, the French would re-engage in the NATO central command. This shows that after all the rhetoric; France was still their first priority in matters concerning Algeria. The Americans most important goal for the independent Algeria was that it had to be bloc-independent, and it certainly could not be a North African base of operation for the “Sino-Soviet” bloc. The Americans did not think that Algeria should be partitioned, this would not solve the problem, the Algerians would never agree to such a resolution, and it would seed contempt among the other Arabian states.¹⁰¹

The Americans thought that the partition of Algeria would be disastrous. They laid out several scenarios that could occur if it happened. The worst scenario was that the PAG would seek military assistance from both east and west, the east could act much faster upon the request because they would not have France to think about. This would give the Bloc an “inn” in an Arabian country far to the west, close to Western Europe. If a partition occurred a collected effort to stem the Bloc from gaining influence in Algeria would almost be impossible, the strains on the French-US relationship would be too great, and the possibility of Algeria falling into the hands of the Bloc, and France leaving NATO would be escalating.¹⁰² This shows just how serious the Kennedy administration took the Algerian situation; they were afraid that the French would not let Algeria go, on the Algerians terms. This could create rifts between the Afro-

¹⁰⁰ Outgoing Telegram from State Department to embassies in Paris, Tunis, Rabat, and consulate in Algiers October 26, 1961 Papers of President Kennedy National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 10/61-11/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰¹ Draft for policies concerning Algeria, January 30, 1962, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria General 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰² Draft for policies concerning Algeria, January 30, 1962, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria General 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Arabian World and the West. These rifts could almost push that part of the world into the Soviet sphere of influence. Kennedy's biggest fear that the West might lose all of the Third World to French stubbornness.

When the PAG and the French government finished their talks, the peace was very much on the Algerians terms. In the days leading up to the resolution that there would be a referendum on Algerian independence, there were many reports from US diplomats that a resolution would come soon.

Basis of agreement is acceptance by GOF [Government of France] and FLN of principle of self-determination vote leading to sovereign Republic of Algeria "in cooperation with France". Though GOF has yielded implicitly, if not formally, to recognition of Algerian independence and sovereignty over all Algeria and Sahara, by agreements when fully implemented France will retain important economic, cultural and military presence in the independent state, and has obtained from PAG commitment of executive guarantees for safeguarding persons, property and future of the million-plus non-Moslem natives of Algeria. In return for advantages to France and French interests, GOF has agreed to continue financial assistance to new state (at current levels of \$300 to \$400 million annually) for at least three years.¹⁰³

The Americans nightmares had not come to fruition, Algeria would become independent as one state, and the Americans hoped that they could start regular diplomacy as soon as possible. The tension had decreased quite a bit, but there was still tension, in the waning months of *Algérie Française*, the US's biggest difficulty would be to help the process along and at the same time not step anyone on their feet. The consulate in Algiers would not become an embassy before after France and Algeria had voted yes to Algeria's independence, but the situation would not get much better in the next months of Algeria's road to statehood.

The General Challe coup attempt and the OAS

In the early months of the Kennedy presidency, the Americans had concerns that there could be a military coup in France. De Gaulle's position was on shaky ground, and the military leaders had begun to turn against him. The CIA reported to the President on how many soldiers France had, and where the French soldiers were, and speculated on where the military leaders'

¹⁰³ Airgram to Secretary of State from Consulate Algiers, March 23, 1962, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria General 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

allegiances lay. The leaders in Algeria tended to side with the opposition to de Gaulle, and the CIA believed that most military leaders would not oppose a coup. As the French seemed to let Algeria go, the threat of a coup was increasing.¹⁰⁴

A coup seemed imminent in April of 1961, Paris was almost locked down, and there was a no-fly zone over the city. In those tense moments, reports surfaced that the US was supporting the coup-makers. CIA was said to have close contact with General Challe, the leader of the coup, and the military in Algeria. These reports came from several sides, it was said that the reports emanated from the “extreme right,” but other reports emanated from the left, and it was said that Soviet was the originator. That the report has no clear originator, and both the left and the right used it for different reasons does not prove either way if the CIA did meddle in this instance. The French were already displeased by the American meddling in the French nuclear program and therefore were more likely to believe the reports.

In a telegram marked “EYES ONLY SECRETARY” ambassador Gavin writes that the CIA was convinced of a coup by the military was imminent and could be successful, but the embassy was not in that opinion.¹⁰⁵ The administration probably did not support General Challe, but the CIA certainly made the impression that they did, the CIA director had advised Kennedy that the US should be ready to recognize a new government in France, after the coup.¹⁰⁶ The CIA operatives in France and Algeria was certain that the coup could spread from Algeria and into France.¹⁰⁷ Gavin simply put it “The idea of U.S. support certainly found strange bedfellows during a very hectic week, but I think in retrospect we must attribute it to the extraordinary milieu in which French governmental affairs sometimes operate.”¹⁰⁸ Precisely what Gavin meant by this comment is hard to ascertain, but I believe that it alludes to all the outlets that

¹⁰⁴ CIA memorandum for the President, April 24, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/24/61-4/30/61 John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰⁵ Telegram from Ambassador Gavin to Secretary of State Rusk. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰⁶ CIA memorandum for the President, April 24, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/24/61-4/30/61 John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰⁷ CIA memorandum for the President, April 24, 1961, CIA field report attachments. Papers of President Kennedy, President’s Office Files, Box: 72, Folder: Central Intelligence Agency 1/61-5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁰⁸ Telegram from Ambassador Gavin to Secretary of State Rusk. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

commented on CIA involvement and that it was hard to control the information-flow in the week of the coup.

After the coup, there was considerable anger inside the French government. France had been close to being taken over by the military, which was humbling and embarrassing for the old, great power. Ambassador Gavin was aware of this and found it prudent not to ask too many questions close up to the events. He surmised that the French knew that the American knew, and expected that the French also knew that the US would help in any way if they could.¹⁰⁹ Gavin stated in a message to the White House, that any reports which said that the American Consulate General (AMCONGEN) in Algeria had had a meeting with General Challe was denied outright by Press Secretary Pierre Salinger.¹¹⁰ I find it strange that there was any need to tell the President that they had denied. If there weren't any meeting and the administration denied it, why was there any need to send a message to deny that there had been a meeting? On the other hand, if there were a meeting and the consulate denied, it would be prudent to tell Washington what they were denying. It is hard to ascertain what exactly all this adds up to, Gavin and Rusk had a strange tone in their messages to each other, unlike any other messages between the two men. All this leaves us with the impression that there is more to this situation than Gavin and Rusk would like to put into words. In my opinion, ambassador Gavin knew that the CIA helped the insurgents in their coup attempt, but did not approve. I have no explicit support for this claim, but clear indications of collusion between the CIA and the coup-makers. I would, however, add that if the CIA assisted Challe in the coup attempt, this would go against what President Kennedy wanted and had instructed. If the CIA did help in any capacity, they probably did it without the President's blessing.

The coup in early 1961 ultimately failed because of lacking support in the *Metropole*.¹¹¹ General Challe and the military had aligned themselves with the extremist European organization OAS, and they wanted to extend their power over the Mediterranean. The OAS had a strong support

¹⁰⁹ Telegram from Ambassador Gavin to Secretary of State Rusk. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹⁰ Incoming message to The White House from ambassador Gavin, 25 April, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 70A, Folder: France General 4/22/61-4/30/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹¹ Memorandum from conversation between Secretary Rusk and Ambassador Alphand, January 3, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 71, Folder: France general 1/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

by the European *colons*¹¹² and therefore had a strong base of operation, but they were not certain how they would be received in the *Metropole*. It would be clear that the OAS had little support in France, and it soon became clear that a coup would never succeed, the OAS's chance of stopping the independence of Algeria or getting a more friendly regime was dwindling.

After the coup had failed, and Challe had got arrested, there was a sense that the danger was over. The Evian talks could continue without the possibility of the French government collapsing, but it would be a short-lived. In October 1961, the OAS had changed, they no longer believed that they could change the rulers of France, but they could make it impossible for them to give Algeria its independence. France began to fear that the OAS would use their power to effectively take control in Algeria, in response to this fear the Delegation General moved from Algiers to a supposed safer site at Rocher Noir. In the middle of this brewing crisis, the French had helped the Algerians build up an Algerian security force, which made the situation potentially explosive. The Americans thought that a new attack from the OAS would come sooner rather than later, this reasoning came from the assessment that France probably would let Algeria go soon, this gave the OAS a shorter window of opportunity.¹¹³ The assumption that OAS would have to strike sooner was correct; it would be tough for the OAS to keep on their terror after the Algerian rebels and the French had signed an agreement. Also, the *colons* were fleeing Algeria in high numbers. If the OAS did not do anything quick, they would have lost their base of support.

On January 5, 1962 an emergency CIA message was sent to the White House. The OAS had attacked Rocher Noir, the military was still divided, and the military leaders had little faith in de Gaulle, this meant that the CIA was uncertain which side the military would take.¹¹⁴ Coincidentally, the CIA wrote a memorandum on the same day, outlining the problems facing Algeria. The rising OAS activity, and how the army might handle a situation, if the OAS attacked, were some of the main points of the report. The Kennedy administration did not like

¹¹² *Colons* was a name used to describe the European Algerians. Wall, "De Gaulle, the 'Anglo-Saxons', and the Algerian War." 120.

¹¹³ Airgram from American Consulate in Algeria (Porter) to the Secretary of State October 12, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria General 10/61-11/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹⁴ Emergency message from CIA to the White House, January 5, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria General 12/61-1/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

how the situation was unfolding, and if the CIA had supported the coup in April 61, they did not this time. The CIA memorandum also states “Should De Gaulle be assassinated during the period of the uprising; the situation would radically change for the worse.” The fear of an OAS uprising was mounting in the days leading up to January 5. When the uprising began, there was total chaos over who would fire upon who. The Americans were afraid that the French army officers would join the uprising if they had not already joined the OAS rebels.¹¹⁵ The French were humiliated again, under a year after the failed coup, they had lost the administrative center in Algeria.

On January 3, the French ambassador, Alphanand warned Rusk that the OAS could “Cause Trouble.” Alphanand saw the threat of OAS as minor, which the French could handle. He based this on OAS lack of support in the *metropole*, and that a negotiated settlement was the most likely of outcomes in Algeria.¹¹⁶ Although Alphanand was correct in the assertion that a negotiated settlement would be the outcome, the notion that there would only be a little *trouble* was a big miscalculation.

At Evian, CIA sources said that the negotiations between the Government of France and PAG came to a total standstill, after the OAS attack. The PAG was in no way happy with the way the US had handled the situation. According to CIA, the PAG refused to continue the talks as long as GOF did not take concrete and public action against OAS, this inability to act made them wonder if de Gaulle really did want Algeria to become a free state. Such a change, of course, would be hard to defend and would cast France into more deep water with the US and all of the Afro-Arabian World. CIA had no real answers of why the French military and civil society did not do more to prevent OAS from gaining power, or why they did not fight back harder when the insurrection was a fact. The CIA did not have a particularly positive outlook on the future in Algeria.

[Redacted] quotes both Saad Dahlab, PAG Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Abdelhafid Boussouf, Minister of Armaments and Communications, as being

¹¹⁵ CIA memorandum on the reported imminent OAS military attack, January 18, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 12/61-1/62. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹⁶ Memorandum from telephone conversation between, Secretary of State Dean Rusk and French Ambassador to the US Hervé Alphanand, January 3, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: France General 1/62. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

quite convinced that there will be “an agonizing blood letting in the cities of Algeria between the OAS and Algerian civilians.”¹¹⁷

The US National Security Council were worried that the OAS might have gotten the impression that the US would support them if they seized power. Robert Komer asserted that a quick reaction was only natural given the situation. “As you gathered, prompt reaction is of the essence; chief purpose of exercise is to discourage any OAS types who might think that, if they seize power, we’ll embrace them. Pierre should have a press statement in his pocket.” In the Americans eyes, this would hinder the OAS in spreading their insurrection; the OAS relied on foreign help if the French did not support them.¹¹⁸ This point is important, what could have given the OAS the impression that the US would support them in the first place? If the CIA had helped and supported the coup in 1961, the OAS might think that they would receive help a second time. There were allegations that the US supported the uprising in 1962, but there are no indications of this. When President Kennedy read the message from Ambassador Gavin, saying that the US was supporting the OAS, he was said to react with “indignation” to allegations of that nature. Rusk noted that “while you realize these rumors probably planted by both OAS and Communists for opposite reasons.”¹¹⁹

While there are no indications of CIA involvement in 1962, there is a strange story of two men; presumably, American that helped the OAS. Alistar Horne talked with Raoul Salan, the OAS leader after Challe got arrested, on his contact with the CIA.

During the anniversary celebrations of North African landings at the Arc de Triomphe on 8 November 1961, two men purporting to be agents of the C.I.A. made contact with our people who were present, saying that they wanted to come to Algiers to see me. They turned up in Algiers the following week – one of them under the conventional cover of ‘Vise-Consul’. I saw them, then passed the whole affair over to Degueudre. I was sure they were serious, because they knew all the right people, and their credentials were perfect. No, they were not agent provocateurs. Why? Because they actually began delivering the goods; a shipment of some fifty machine-guns arrived from Spain, via a small port near Cherchell.... I know nothing more....¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ CIA Information Report January 18, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 12/61-1/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹⁸ Note from Robert W. Komer to McGeorge Bundy, February 5, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹¹⁹ Telegram from Rusk to Embassy in Paris, February 14, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹²⁰ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 498.

If these men were from the CIA is hard to answer, but at that point, the OAS was losing support, and no one expected the OAS to get what they wanted. The only thing a prolonged OAS insurgency would accomplish would be a continuation of the war, and the CIA did not want that.

By early 1962, the OAS had neither the power to stop Algeria's independence, nor topple de Gaulle's regime. The only play the OAS had left was to take control over one of the big cities and hold it hostage, until after the referendum, to cast doubt on the result. Algeria's second largest city, Oran, stayed under OAS siege for a long time, as they tried to scare the population into not voting. By March 1962 there were severe confusion in the French military, and the deputy mayor of Oran told an American contact that if the conscripts were ordered to side with the OAS, they would fire on their officers. The *colons* and the OAS were not popular with the lower ranks in the military, although they were in the officer corps.¹²¹

The OAS continued to lose bite in the following months. As a last-ditch effort the OAS began to send letters to several governments, they plead their case, saying that they wanted to run Algeria as they wanted without interference from the French. The Americans thought that these letters only were sent to solicit questions from reporters and get a discussion around the PAG's legitimacy as the representatives for the Algerians. Porter thought that it would be better to not talk about the letter at all, and only answer questions from reporters with "No such letter has yet been received in department or at White House, to my knowledge."¹²² Ambassador Gavin had a different approach and thought that the letters were part of a "Charm offensive", and thought that questions should be answered with "We have been informed by CONGEN Algiers that it has received such letter. CONGEN Algiers has received instructions not to forward this letter".¹²³ According to Gavin, this would cut out the speculation on whether this letter would be sent to Washington, but the State Department had a different take on this. They thought that the existence of the letter would not be a secret for long, many governments had

¹²¹ Report from "Ziggy", March 8, 1962, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹²² Telegram from CONGEN ALGIERS to Secretary of State March 13, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/10/62-3/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹²³ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, March 14, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/10/62-3/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

received one, and OAS could publish it, State Department preferred to answer questions about the letter like this.

I understand that such a letter was delivered to the Consulate in Algiers. Many messages are sent to Government daily. As with others, contents of this letter, which I understand has been addressed to other governments as well, will be noted when it arrives in Washington.¹²⁴

In the State Department's view, it would be a mistake to give the public the interpretation that they treated this letter in a very unusual way, this could spark more controversy than it warranted. This letter has no meaning in the big picture, but it shows the strange territory the Americans found themselves. In my opinion, I think the State Department was correct; if they had answered the letter in any other way, it would have given it more meaning than the government themselves placed on it. The US policy towards OAS at this point was one of containment and isolation.

While the OAS fought their hopeless war against public opinion and the FLN, the talks between the French government and PAG continued. The *colons* continued to fall in popularity in France and in the lower ranks of the military, as the war was getting increasingly unpopular and the *colons* were seen as keeping a lost war going. OAS was assuming a more governmental form, which the Americans did not like, the OAS started producing Visas, and stamped over French coins.¹²⁵ If OAS should challenge the new government in Algeria after the independence, and Algeria got two opposing systems, one right wing and European in OAS, and the other, left-wing and Arab in FLN; the war in Algeria would be a long way from finished.

Ceasefire to Referendum

The signing of the Evian Accords marked the ceasefire and the end of the direct hostilities of the Algerian war. After that point, the focus shifted over to the referendum that would decide if Algeria should become independent. The presence of the OAS was hanging over the process, and there was a worry that the referendum result would be tainted if the people of Oran could

¹²⁴ Telegram from State Department to Embassy Paris and Consulate Algiers, March 16, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹²⁵ Telegram to Secretary of State from consulate Algiers, March 15, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/10/62-3/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

not vote freely. When the referendum was over Algeria had become an independent, and could prepare for the first independent elections, and was looking forward to joining the UN. Even though Algeria gained independence, the Americans were worried that Algeria would slide into the sphere of the Soviets, and not become a Western-leaning country.

There was a debate on how the US should congratulate France and Algeria on the ceasefire. The discussion centered on the question of giving the PAG and the government of France the same level of recognition, should the President issue a statement, and simultaneously write to de Gaulle and Ben Khedda? There was a chance of offending both the Algerians and the French; the Kennedy administration had not balanced the two parts so carefully, to lose either on the home stretch. If the Americans treated the two sides equal, the French might get offended, if they did not congratulate the Algerians, they might get offended. The plan for the Americans on further action on the Franco-Algerian ceasefire was to send a congratulatory message to de Gaulle, and a message just short of recognition of the FLN to the Algerians.¹²⁶ The Algerians had got what they wanted, a referendum, and enjoyed that the Americans almost recognized their political leaders, it was a big step towards independent country status.

The French were not as happy with the American response, especially de Gaulle wanted more credit for his part in the peace proses. Salinger called the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, William R. Tyler, saying that “the [French] Embassy was concerned at the omission from the statement which the White House had issued of any specific reference to the role and achievement of General de Gaulle with regard to cease fire.”¹²⁷ Tyler told Salinger that this was done deliberately, to not give one side more credit than the other, US could not officially congratulate an organization they did not recognize. Salinger felt he was in a bind and tried to get the US out of a potentially difficult position; he asked if the US or France could leak that ambassador Gavin had been instructed to congratulate de Gaulle? Since Gavin had never been asked to do so, Tyler said that they could tell the press that Gavin had been instructed to give his regards to the Government of France.¹²⁸ This episode gives one small indication of how

¹²⁶ *Foreign Relations of the United States : Diplomatic Papers : 1963:21 : 1961-1963 : Africa*, vol. 10290, Department of State Publication (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1995). 84.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 91.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* 91.

hard the US had to work to balance between France and Algeria, and how many hoops the Americans had to jump through to please them.

After the ceasefire, the US was much freer in making connections with Algerians. In an Airgram from U.S. mission to Geneva March 9, only nine days before the ceasefire took effect, there were some talks of ideas on how the US could help Algeria in the near future. Still, the French would not let the Americans help Algeria the way they wanted to; the Americans had to coordinate their efforts with the French, who still claimed some power over Algeria. Even though France still claimed that they were the principal and all other nations were secondary in Algeria, The Americans could take a more active role in giving the Algerians and French advice on how to proceed. "Our concrete involvement nevertheless, apart from political advice and counsel to both French and Algerians, when appropriate, will surely focus on systematic planning for assistance to Algeria in economic, technical and social fields."¹²⁹ Mission to Geneva suggests that the undertaking of helping Algeria to build their country should be bigger, and involve more countries, not only France and US, especially since France would attempt to be the predominant force in Algeria even after Algeria's independence. The Americans feared that, when the Algerians took control over their own land, they would push out French and Western influences. There were real possibilities that some persons in the future Algerian government would be anti-French and anti-USA.¹³⁰

Ambassador Gavin talked to de Gaulle, about his admiration of the way de Gaulle had handled the situation, and on how the US best could help Algeria. De Gaulle shot down the notion that the US could help Algeria in any way before the proses of self-determination were finished, and probably not until Algeria had chosen their new government.¹³¹ The Americans were discouraged by this but continued to push the French on the issue. At the same time, the relations with the Algerians blossomed; there was more and more contact between Algerian and US diplomats.

¹²⁹ Airgram from US mission to Geneva, March 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³⁰ Airgram from US mission to Geneva, March 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/1/62-2/14/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³¹ Telegram from Paris embassy to Secretary of State, February 20, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/15/62-3/9/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The Algerians had considerable contact with the Egyptians, and the Americans were afraid that the new Algeria would go down a similar route. If the Algerians went down an Arab nationalistic path, it could make the European population quite uncomfortable, and would only antagonize OAS sympathizers. Delegate-General Jean Morin said that to secure the rights of both Muslims and Europeans, there would be construction of courts with both Europeans and Muslims, and the French would still have a military presence in Algeria for at least a 15 year period. The French would also get the opportunity to run businesses in Algeria, such as petroleum rights in the Sahara. The Americans hoped that Morin's side would not get overruled by the new government.¹³² In a continuation of this, Rusk asked FLN representative Chanderli, whether Algeria could become communist, Chanderli answered, "Any systems or practices adopted from Communist, capitalist or other ideological background would be used solely to promote Algerian national interests."¹³³

On March 14 good news began to come in from the Evian talks, the ceasefire agreement was imminent and would be signed the next day. The French would free Ben Bella and detained Ministers, and Ben Khedda was going from Rabat to Tunis on the 15th or 16th, where he would stay for two-three days¹³⁴ The ceasefire was not signed before the 18th and would not go into effect before noon on the 19th.¹³⁵ There had been many false reports that the Evian Accords was close to being signed, but it had finally happened, the war was over, but Algeria was a long way from a functioning stable democracy.

Ben Bella did not trust the French to take him back to Algeria, and it fell upon the Americans to fly him to Morocco. The Americans got a request of two US planes, to transport Ben Bella and his associates from Geneva to Morocco. The request came from Belkacem Krim via the Moroccan king.¹³⁶ Americans saw this as a potential in with the Algerians, it was not an

¹³² Telegram from consulate Algiers to Secretary of State March 13, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 2/10/62-3/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³³ Telegram from Department of State, March 29, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³⁴ Telegram from embassy Tunis to Secretary of State March 14, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/10/62-3/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³⁵ Airgram from consulate Algiers to Department of State, March 23, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³⁶ Telegram from embassy Rabat to Secretary of State, March 19, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

impossible request, but they had some pause at the request of two planes. They asked if two planes were needed, and the Algerians agreed to scale it down to one plane. This plane was made available to Ben Bella, and the US hoped for a speedy acceptance of the offer because the plane initially was scheduled to transport 159 passengers from Europe to the US.

The Americans hoped that their help with the plane would not look bad to the French. It could be looked at as a validation of Ben Bella's fear that the French could do something to him if they got the chance. He had been captured on a plane, which the French ordered to land in Algiers, after all.¹³⁷ Undersecretary of State, George Ball said that they should refer to that the King of Morocco had conveyed the request, and therefore it would be most hard to refuse the request. Ball said further that they should make it clear that this was not meant as a political stance, and that it should not be given any political significance.¹³⁸ This was no hard request for the Americans to accept, though they did not enjoy that the Algerians changed the schedule at the last moment and the unnecessary request for two planes. This situation showed the Algerians, Moroccans and all that supported the Algerian cause that the Americans supported it too.

There was going to be a big reception for Ben Khedda when he traveled from Geneva to Tunis in Tunisia. The Americans discussed if they should attend the reception with their ambassador, this would be the return to North Africa by the leader of the PAG for the first time after the signing of Evian, but quickly thought it was a bad idea. The French would not like the optics of it, and once again it would be dangerously close to an acknowledgment of the PAG, which they still saw as a bad idea. It would almost be like treating the French and the PAG as equals. In Lyon's own words "Acting such as Ambassador meeting Ben Khedda could cause criticism of this nature to increase and would have an unfortunate cumulative effect on our relations with France."¹³⁹ The Americans wanted to show that they supported the Algerians, but saw that this could damage the relations with the French more than it was worth, it might have been more

¹³⁷ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace : Algeria 1954-1962*. 159-160.

¹³⁸ Telegram from Department of State (Ball) to embassy in Rabat and Paris, and consulate Geneva, March 20, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹³⁹ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, March 30, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

positive than negative if one could measure such things, but the relationship with France was more important to the Americans.

Regular relations between Algeria and the US was beginning to take shape in the spring of 1962. Open talks between Algerians and US officials were conducted without notifying the French each time. There were talks of elevating the consulate in Algiers to an embassy, and the former consulate general William J. Porter was considered for the ambassadorship. Porter had been a career diplomat and had served most his time in Mediterranean, and predominantly North-African countries.¹⁴⁰ Questions of aid were regularly discussed in correspondence, Algeria was, in the eyes of the Americans, an independent state, which still had no actual government, not as it really was, a part of France until the referendum in July. The Americans still considered French reactions but saw it less and less relevant to notify them on business they had with Algerians or in Algeria.

When Ben Bella returned, he returned as a hero of the people, and a critical political figure. Soon after, Ben Bella was the most popular politician in all of Algeria, and he traveled around the country to incite people to vote on the referendum for independence. Because of Algeria's sparse infrastructure, Ben Bella tried to get a hold of some helicopters to take them around. The Americans had heard rumors that the Soviets had supplied helicopters, but had never seen any. The Americans saw an opportunity to spread goodwill across the Arabian world, and quell any lasting rhetoric from left-wingers, who said that the US did not want Algeria to become independent. If the Algerians did not have Soviet helicopters and the Americans asked if they had received any, it could potentially blow up in their faces, but if they offered helicopters, and the Soviets had not offered the Americans would look even better.¹⁴¹ It was almost a no lose scenario, it would not cost the Americans much, and if the Algerians already had helicopters, it would look good that they had offered them either way.

Ben Bella was a headache for Kennedy from the moment he was released. He massed for open revolt against the PAG, with his followers streaming out in the streets whenever he spoke, and

¹⁴⁰ Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy, Enclosure: Bio of William J. Porter, April 4, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁴¹ Telegram from embassy Tunis to Department of State, April 23, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

marched for Ben Bella to become the leader of the new country. The US was troubled by the possibility that Ben Bella, and FLN, might not want a multiparty system after the referendum, and that a large part of the population followed him. Even on the day of the referendum, thousands of people marched in the streets, in support of Ben Bella. The US feared a coup even before the Algerian state was recognized.¹⁴² Adlai Stevenson talked with Chanderli on democracy and if Algeria was going to have a multiparty system. Chanderli reassured him that Algeria was going to have a multiparty system, though his reasoning was somewhat flawed.

[Chanderli] Said after independence FLN would permit multi-party system. FLN strong enough to dominate political scene for years and can afford beneficial luxury of opposition parties as most other new countries cannot.¹⁴³

The Americans wanted to hear an unequivocal support for democracy from the Algerian leaders, but only got an answer fit for a dictator. The FLN saw democracy as a luxury, and not an essential part of a developing country. The Americans were skeptical of the Algerians priorities and with good reason. Algeria became a multiparty system, but in name only, FLN was so strong that they, in reality, was a one-party country from the start, and as Ben Bella's power increased, Algeria went further down the road of a single-party system. Even when Algeria moved in that direction, the US continued the relations they had built. They tried to incentivize the Algerians in a more Western direction, at least as long as Kennedy was President.

The OAS was not dead and had claimed control over Oran for some months. They seemed intent on keeping Algeria French. The OAS became increasingly desperate, the French pushed harder and harder against them, and more and more of the *colons* turned hostile against their former heroes.¹⁴⁴ In a last-ditch effort, they pushed back against the French, harder and harder. The Americans received a letter signed Algerian People's Movement (MPA), a right-wing Muslim splinter group. The letter said that the loss of Algeria, for the West, would be the biggest

¹⁴² Priority message, marked 3451, July 2, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁴³ Telegram from UN in New York, conversation between Chanderli and Stevenson, May 30, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from "Ziggy" to McGeorge Bundy, April 10, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 71, Folder: 4/1/62-4/12/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

since the loss of China. Komer said that the MPA most probably was the OAS.¹⁴⁵ OAS called for general strikes and tried to keep people from voting in the referendum, but nothing seemed to work, most of their supporters had already left Algeria for the French mainland, and more and more moved away in the months leading up to and after the referendum.

¹⁴⁵ White House note for Bundy and Smith, March 23, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 3/16/62-3/30/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

4. Middle phase, Chaos

Introduction

The period between Algeria's independence and their first elections was a period clouded in uncertainty. Supporters of Ben Bella surged through the streets, and the Americans were afraid of what would happen if he did not win the election. Opposing provisional governments contested for power, and the Americans struggled with not angering the French and giving the Algerians the support they wanted to give them. The Evian Accords had set down a provisional government, who the French supported throughout the period, but no other nation acknowledged it, even the provisional government itself gave up and melted into the PAG. This embarrassed France, and the Americans could not support the PAG without making their relationship with France very difficult.

The Americans was afraid that the Algerians did not see democracy as essential as they did themselves. They were afraid that the Algerian leaders would push back the elections, perhaps indefinitely and in this way creating a dictatorship. If the PAG did this without Ben Bella and the FLN supporting the takeover, Ben Bella would surely attempt a coup, Ben Bella was no more democratically disposed than the PAG, but had most of the rebel fighters, and the Algerian people on his side. The Americans was afraid that the situation could become volatile and end in a bloody civil war. They believed that Ben Bella would become the first Prime Minister of Algeria after the elections, he leaned more to the left than his opposition, Ben Khedda, but was more positive towards the West, and the Americans thought that he was their best bet for a Western leaning Algeria. This notion was shattered when they heard that Ben Bella planned a trip to Cuba before he would go to the US.

The situation in Algeria was not as volatile as the Americans initially thought. The PAG had only pushed back the election, not suspended it, and Ben Bella was the clear favorite to win, therefore there were little chance that he would rebel against the PAG. France had made the situation harder than it had to be, they was so embarrassed from losing Algeria and their provisional government melting away that they had made it hard for the Americans to open real diplomatic relations with the Algerians.

The next step for the Americans were aid programs in Algeria. The Americans wanted to bring out all their aid programs, and help the Algerians in any way they could, but once again the French hindered the Americans in following their plans. The French wanted to teach the Algerians to run their country themselves, and said that the US would do better help if they stuck to conventional aid. The French did not like the way the Americans did conventional aid either, they wanted the Americans to help in the large cities and the Americans concentrated on the rural areas. When the elections in Algeria came closer, the Americans had gotten enough of following the French lead, when they thought that the French did not understand what was going on in Algeria.

Kennedy's Algeria policy was from the start, to separate Algeria from France. After the referendum Algeria was independent, but the Americans still had to take instructions from the French. At the end of this period, the Americans try to separate France and Algeria more than it ever had, they were tired of balancing and felt that the French had to accept that Algeria was independent, and no longer a part of France.

The Situation looked bad

The threat of a civil war was looming as Algeria gained independence. Thousands of Muslims surged through the cities of Algeria celebrating their newly won independence and calling for Ben Bella to take control of the country. The French and the Americans feared that Ben Bella would try to take power in Algeria without any elections, and if someone fought back, it could spark a long and bloody civil war.

The Americans were not certain how Ben Bella would react in different. He had been away from Algeria a long time, and he had far left leanings. Ben Bella had much of the Algerian guerrillas on his side and was a force to be reckoned with. The peace in Algeria was fragile, and Ben Bella could destroy it with a word. If he did not attempt a coup before the elections, he could decide not to accept the election result if he did not win. He had the numbers on his side and most of the FLN supported him, but there would be a significant opposition, the Americans were afraid that the Algerian war would become Africa's Vietnam.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Priority message from Stroud to McCabe July 2, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The Evian Accords stated how Algeria should be ruled in the interim period between the independence referendum and the first elections. A new provisional government was going to run the country, and begin the process of bringing Algeria into the global community, it would also protect everybody's rights, and secure Algeria's path to a country ruled by laws. The first chapter of Evian outlined the provisional government's duties, and its name. The organization was called the Provisional Executive and was referred to as PROVEX.

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC POWERS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD AND SELF-DETERMINATION GUARANTEES

D. Until self-determination has been realized, the organization of public powers in Algeria will be established in accordance with the regulations which accompany the present declaration. A Provisional Executive and a court of public law and order shall be set up. The French Republic shall be represented in Algeria by a High Commissioner. These institutions, in particular the Provisional Executive, will be installed as soon as the cease-fire comes into force.

E. The High Commissioner will be the custodian of the powers of the Republic in Algeria, in particular in matters of defense, security and the maintenance of law and order in the last resort.

F. The Provisional Executive will, in particular, be responsible for:

- Assuring the conduct of Algeria's own public affairs. It will direct the administration of Algeria and will have the task of admitting Algerians to positions in the various branches of this administration;
- Maintaining public law and order. For this purpose, it will have police services and a security force under its authority;
- Preparing and implementing self-determination.¹⁴⁷

PAG, FLN, and PROVEX all thought that they should rule Algeria. The FLN took a backseat in the interim period, but still, people were afraid that they could take power before the elections, but it was the PAG and the PROVEX that struggled for power in the interim period. The PAG had acted as Algeria's government in exile since 1958 and did not believe that it had to give away power before the elections, even though they had signed an agreement to do so. The French supported PROVEX and did not recognize any other government in Algeria before the elections. When the PAG refused to give up their power, they were the first to break Evian, though no one seemed to care much about that. The PAG took more and more control of internal matter, and they had never lost their place on the international stage. PROVEX let it happen

¹⁴⁷ "Algeria: France-Algerian Independence Agreements (Evian Agreements)."

without much pushback, which meant that PAG controlled Algeria almost unopposed, but only until elections could be held.¹⁴⁸

The Americans began to second-guess their decision on not recognizing the PAG as they gained power in Algeria. The decision to not recognize the PAG had been the right in relations to the French, but now the PAG was pressuring the Americans to choose between the PAG and PROVEX. As the date for France to give over power to PROVEX approached, tensions were rising. PAG did not want PROVEX having contact with any foreign governments; the Americans were put in a tough spot, they did not want to recognize PAG, but could be pressured into doing so, or else lose any contact they had with the Algerians until the election. By the time the election came, the Algerians could be so disillusioned with the Americans that any goodwill the Kennedy administration had built would evaporate.

PAG asked USG to choose between two alternative for interim period.
Alternative which PAG prefers is that USG send message to PAG President Benkhedda (not PROVEX) acknowledging Algerian independence and starting USG prepared enter discussions leading to establishment diplomatic relations
Second alternative, USG would await elections and formation new government before recognition, negotiating embassy, etc. (CONGEN Algiers could continue function as such).¹⁴⁹

If the Americans gave the PAG recognition, as most other countries had, what would stop them from not holding elections? The Americans were afraid that Algeria was slipping away from them, into the totalitarian communist/socialist camp. The PAG gave the Americans no alternative to recognize PROVEX as France wanted them to do, but opened up for relations even though they had not recognized the PAG.

Rusk echoed the sentiments that Algeria could become a dictatorship in a telegram in June 1962. He states that he was afraid that the PAG would either “absolve or dissolve PROVEX.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Telegram from Department of State to Consulate Algiers, Embassies Paris, Rabat, Tunis, London, Bonn, Rome, July 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁴⁹ Telegram from embassy in Tunis to Secretary of State, June 28, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵⁰ Telegram from Department of State to consulate in Algiers and embassy in Paris, June 30, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

That PROVEX no longer sought power, only made the PAG stronger. The USSR had already recognized the PAG, and France asked the US not to do so.¹⁵¹ Even though Algeria was an independent country, the Americans had no official contact with their government, and they were falling behind the Soviets and the other Arab countries. The situation was dire for the Americans; the situation was spinning out of their control, the French did not see the realities, as the Americans saw them, in Algeria and would not give up on PROVEX. Not even PROVEX claimed to have the authority that France asserted that they had, and on top of that more and more countries recognized PAG.¹⁵² The Americans remained uncommitted and continued not to support either side, they thought that if they supported one side, this could be used as political leverage in the conflict, the US wanted to avoid this at almost any cost.¹⁵³ If the Americans supported the PAG France would be furious and if they supported PROVEX it could damage their relationship with the Algerians almost beyond repair. The PAG and FLN were pushing back the election dates, perhaps even postponing them indefinitely. The Americans were afraid that their nightmare of Algeria becoming a dictatorship was moving closer.

The Kennedy administration could not afford a dictatorship in Algeria. They had put too much political capital into the project and would be crucified in the US if it happened. Ben Bella looked more and more like the lesser of two evils, he was a leader of FLN, had dictatorial tendencies, and by Larry Collins, a NEWSWEEK chief he was hard to work with but less inclined to communism. Ben Bella's principal opponent, Ben Khedda was more oriented towards the Soviet bloc, but would appear more willing towards the West. Everything tended towards Ben Bella winning the election¹⁵⁴

The Americans wanted to elevate their consulate to an embassy as soon as possible, but the chaos of PAG and PROVEX made this hard. They wanted to do this as soon as Algeria had

¹⁵¹ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, July 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵² Telegram from Consulate Algiers to Secretary of State, July 10, 1962 Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4A, Folder: Algeria general 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵³ Telegram from Department of State to embassy in Paris, Tunis, and consulate in Algiers, June 29, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵⁴ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, July 13, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4A, Folder: Algeria general 7/1/62-7/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

become an independent country, and had planned it for a while. But as long as the Americans did not recognize any government in Algeria they could not establish an embassy, this did not hamper the communication between the two countries, but it looked bad for the Americans, that wanted a close relationship with the Algerians.

Things were not as bad as they seemed

In reality, there might not have been such big problems as the Americans thought. There was no big danger of Ben Bella taking power by force. Ben Bella was confident that he would win an election, and therefore did not need to take power by force, he was much more popular than any other politician, and he would gain much more from being elected rather than take the power, especially outside of Algeria. The problems between PAG and PROVEX dissipated as PROVEX melted into PAG, and Ben Bella does not seem to accept the merger, as Porter reports on July 10.

In sum, with the PAG and the PROVEX in accord, with no visible opposition on this subject from the Ben Bella group, and with no allied government inclined to follow (judging from statements of other Consuls General here) French example in making declarations to Fares [PROVEX], French appear to be out of step with everyone else (PROVEX is not even seeking juridical recognition French are so anxious about, and in fact have clearly declared their non-competence in foreign affairs. Moreover PROVEX has not in any way contested PAG statement, reiterated again yesterday by Ben Khedda, “this Government (GPRA) which is today recognized by 33-states, is the sole authority in Algeria”).¹⁵⁵

France had made the situation a bigger problem than it had to be. The Americans were most afraid that the leaders of Algeria seemed to have dictatorial tendencies, but the French had other concerns. It had not only lost a colony but an integrated part of France. At the same time, Algeria was throwing off the governing tools France had set up for it, which made France look even worse. France was quickly losing its status as a great power, and Algeria might have been the last nail in the coffin. France’s place in Algeria could disappear if the Algerians did not respect the Evian, as they had shown they did not do. The Americans thought that the French were too slow in understanding the changing world, understood some of their frustrations, but saw much of the problems as of French making. In a conversation with Special Advisor to the President

¹⁵⁵ Telegram from consulate in Algiers to Secretary of State, July 10, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4A, Folder: Algeria general 7/1/62-7/15/62 John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Henry Kissinger, the old French General Stehlin had said: “He replied that we should not give France credit for the fact that its stupidities sometimes have unexpected side effects.”¹⁵⁶ The Americans thought that the French had not seen the scope of what they were doing in the war, and what would happen when it ended; the Americans had little sympathy for French complaining on the Algeria situation.

When Ben Bella returned to Algeria, he had been clear in how he thought Algeria should be reconstructed. He had said, “the revolution must go on with a rifle in one hand and a shovel in the other.” According to Louis Joxe, French Minister for Algerian Affairs, Ben Bella had eased up on the rhetoric. Joxe said that Ben Bella had not known the situation in Algeria, but after a while, he had understood that such talk could not help. Joxe was optimistic of the situation and thought that there would be little to no deviation from the Evian agreement.¹⁵⁷ He might have been more optimistic than he had reason to be, but it was uplifting for the Americans that at least one Frenchman saw it that way.

During the election campaign, Ben Bella traveled to Cairo to talk with Nasser. He had not been invited, and the Americans were uncertain what this meant. Had Ben Bella too close ties to Nasser, or would this help the Americans in getting a better relationship with Egypt than they expected if they befriended Ben Bella. Though it could be beneficiary to the Americans, they were afraid that it would not help the US, but rather turn Algeria away from the West and into Nasser’s sphere. Even though the trip to Cairo worried the Americans, Ben Bella’s next trip worried them more; he was supposedly planning a trip to Cuba.¹⁵⁸

A Ben Bella visit to Cuba would be a disaster for the Americans. The optics in the US would be really bad if Ben Bella traveled to Cuba without also going to Washington to meet Kennedy. It would look like he valued Castro over Kennedy. At the same time, it would look bad if he came to Washington as a part of a trip to Cuba if Cuba was the main reason for going. If the

¹⁵⁶ Notes on lunch with General Stehlin in Paris, February 5, 1962 by Henry Kissinger. February 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 320, Folder: Staff memoranda Henry Kissinger 2/1/62-2/12/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵⁷ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, April 27, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁵⁸ Telegram from Department of State to Embassy Tunis, Embassy Paris, Rabat, Cairo, Consulate Algiers, Embassy Benghazi, April 11, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

trip had Cuba as the main destination, there would be no possibility of this situation being good for Kennedy. The relations between the US and Cuba had been bad since the revolution in 1959, but after the Bay of Pigs disaster, US-Cuban relations had been freezing at best. PAG Diplomatic Liaison Chief Keramane informed the Americans that, there were no plans for Ben Bella to travel to Cuba. The Americans thought the visit would come in the not so distant future, and therefore asked to be informed if there were any changes in Ben Bella's plans.¹⁵⁹ By this point, the Cuban Missile Crisis had not yet happened, but Ben Bella would get caught right in the middle of it when he finally went to the US and Cuba. The US's caution and fear of a political backlash, and cries from the Congress for all help to Algeria to cease were highly justified.

Aid

In the period between France gave Algeria independence and Algeria elected a government, the US tried to find out how they could best help the new country. Before Algeria became independent, there were discussions in the administration on how fast and to what extent the US should involve themselves to begin with, in Algeria.

With Algeria now moving toward independence, I would like, before any firm decision or commitment is made with respect to an AID program or the type of AID mission which we send there, an opportunity to discuss this with you both. My attention was drawn again to this matter by a cable from Paris consenting on what apparently were proposals by AID with respect to Algeria. You might infer from this note that I question whether we should dash madly into this situation.¹⁶⁰

Kennedy wanted the Algerians to see that he still supported their cause and argued for early and substantial help to the country. France demanded to be the main actor in Algeria, and the US did not want to take France's place in Algeria; this made giving aid to Algeria difficult. Ben Bella's Cuba-trip, his close connections with Egypt and talks with the USSR made Algeria a political headache for Kennedy. He got considerable criticism from the people, Senators, and

¹⁵⁹ Telegram from Embassy Tunis to Secretary of State April 13, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁶⁰ Memorandum for G. Mennen Williams (Assistant Secretary of State) and Edmond C. Hutchinson (Assistant Administrator Agency for International Development) by Ralph A. Fungan (Special Assistant to the President), March 28, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Congressmen as Ben Bella got increasingly difficult to handle and his communist tendencies began to show.¹⁶¹

Conventional aid, like food relief and resettlement, in Algeria would be easy for the Kennedy administration, but France made this difficult too. France welcomed the programs, and the only obstacle was the coordination with France, programs like trainee and student programs would be much harder to accomplish. The French did not like that the US was teaching the Algerians how to run their country, in fact, they did not like that any nation, except France, helped their earlier subjects in such a manner. They wanted to teach the Algerians how to run their country themselves and saw it as humiliating for others to teach the people which they had responsibility. The Americans thought that the French did not see it from the Algerians' side, they could ask for help from the US because France was not able to give them enough help. This would not reflect badly on the French, but rather good on the West if they helped in any way they could. Because of the French opposition to the Americans helping in such ways, the US limited teaching programs to start with. They concentrated on more pressing conventional programs instead. Even this was not as easy as it should be; the French thought that the Americans concentrated on the wrong areas. They saw the unrest in the big cities as the main problem, but the Americans concentrated on rural programs, like the food for work programs. In fact, the French did not want to discuss aid to Algeria at all, in June 1962, Couve said to Rusk "it would be best to not discuss aid for many months."¹⁶²

The Americans were afraid that if they did not get into aid programs in Algeria as quickly as possible, the Soviets would get there first. The Soviets did not care if the French did not want help in Algeria, Algeria was an independent country, and they could seek help from whomever they chose. When the Americans had to worry about how the French would take any change in US policy towards Algeria, they got a severely shorter playbook. Kennedy had worked too hard on the Algerian question to have the Soviets swoop in and reap the benefits.

¹⁶¹ Letter from Senate Majority leader Mansfield to President Kennedy. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 111, Folder: Algeria General, 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁶² Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, April 29, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass; Memo for McGeorge Bundy from Robert W. Komer, June 22, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

With independence expected July 5, I don't think we can wait any longer for the French lead. The Soviets certainly won't. After trying for seven months to play ball with Paris, we too simply have to put ourselves in a position to respond to the Algerian request almost certainly in the offing.¹⁶³

It had come to the point that the Americans were ready to jeopardize some of the relationship with France. They were increasingly afraid that the Soviets would outshine them. This was unthinkable for the Americans, therefore for the first time, the Americans considered to cut out the French in their dealings with Algeria.¹⁶⁴ The Americans had tried to make Algeria and France separate affairs for a long time. They were tired of being held back by the French in Algeria and were ready to help the Algerians without taking directions from the French.

¹⁶³ Memo for McGeorge Bundy from Robert W. Komer, June 22, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁶⁴ Telegram from Embassy Algiers to Secretary of State, April 17, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

5. Second Phase, Socialist, not Soviet

Introduction

“Things seem to be breaking our way in Algeria. Ben Bella has settled down, patched up his relations with the French and begun focusing on his acute domestic problems. He’s been pressing us for more aid, and I think your intervention has produced a reasonably good response.”¹⁶⁵

The last phase of Kennedy’s Algeria policy was dominated by bringing Algeria into the World community and keep them out of the Soviet sphere of influence. The period started with Algeria electing their first official government, and ended with Kennedy’s death. The Arabian countries wanted to induct Algeria into the United Nations as soon as possible, and even before they had elected their new government, France especially disliked this notion, and the Americans agreed that it would be a mistake to have a special assembly for the sole reason to induct Algeria. Neither the Americans nor the French believed that Algeria would be ready before the General Assembly in October 1962.

After Algeria had become independent in the spring of 1962, they had begun to flirt with Cuba. The Americans was afraid the relationship between the two countries would blossom; and in that way pull Algeria closer to the Soviet Union. When the newly elected Prime Minister went to the UN General Assembly to witness Algeria’s inclusion into the UN, he used the occasion to visit Kennedy, and to the Americans’ dismay visit Havana and Fidel Castro too. The situation was even tenser because the Americans knew that the Soviets had placed missiles in Cuba at that time. Ben Bella’s visit was only a week before the Cuban Missile Crisis. Ben Bella admired Kennedy, but had not the same admiration for the rest of the American government. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, Ben Bella became more skeptical to Cuba, but claimed that he had not been told anything or seen anything that would lead him to believe that there were Soviet missiles in Cuba.

The Pressure on Kennedy to cut contact with Algeria was rising, as Ben Bella looked more and more dictatorial. When the Algerian foreign minister was assassinated, the Americans were

¹⁶⁵ Memorandum for the President written by Robert W. Komer, February 4, 1963 Papers of President Kennedy, Presidents office files, Box: 64, Folder: Komer, Robert W. John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

afraid that Ben Bella would keep the post for himself and by that concentrating more power in himself. Kennedy had stopped aid to Algeria for a small time after Ben Bella had been to Cuba, but this can only be seen as a symbolic action, and the Ambassador Porter claimed that the Algerians would not get through the winters without aid from the US. Algeria was moving away from the West in the eyes of Congress, and Kennedy's continued support looked like he was soft on leftist foreign leaders.

Algeria was going through a difficult period, and if the Americans supported them through this period, the Americans believed that the Algerians would move towards them and away from the Soviets, though they were leftist. There was an uprising in the Kabyle area, and it got linked to an escalating conflict with the Moroccans. In the end of 1963, the Moroccans and the Algerians got into a border dispute, that the Americans were afraid should escalate into a full-fledged war. The Americans tried to support both sides, without supporting anyone, and were pulled into the conflict when they were accused of flying Moroccan troops to the front. The Americans refused the accusations, but it is still unclear what the Americans did exactly. The skirmish ended with an arbitrated peace, on the encouragement of the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, and the Americans were heavily involved behind the scenes.

Kennedy's policies in Algeria were always to keep the Soviets out. He did not like that, the Algerian government was leftist, but it was not enough of a hindrance for him not to help the Algerians. He believed that if one refuses to help someone because of their political conviction, one could never move them closer to oneself, only push them away.

UN

After Algeria had become independent, to be taken up in the United Nations was the next step. The Arab League wanted a special General Assembly to vote in Algeria in August of 1962, so Algeria could participate in the UNGA in October. The US did not want a special General Assembly for the sole purpose of inducting Algeria; they did not think that Algeria would be ready in August, and therefore believed that it was a bad idea. There was chaos in Algeria in the months after the referendum, and the Americans' assessment of the situation was probably the correct, it would have been hasty to induct Algeria into the UN in August, they had not even chosen a government yet. It can be discussed whether Algeria was ready in October, during UNGA. The French had brought up this issue with the Americans; they had asked the US to

argue against a special assembly.¹⁶⁶ The French wanted Algeria in the UN, and as quickly as possible at that, but thought that it would be unwise to have a special assembly for this one purpose. To be inducted into the UN in August would not have helped the Algerians, they had enough problems at home to sort out if they had to familiarize themselves with many foreign problems they had nothing to do with, could not have helped the internal chaos to settle. It was important for Algeria to join the UN, but Algeria was not ready in August.

The French usually had sponsored their former colonies to the UN for induction and wanted to do the same with Algeria. They thought that Algeria should be inducted after they had formed a definitive government, but the “Casablanca powers”¹⁶⁷ had voted on a resolution saying Algeria should be admitted into the UN as soon as possible after July 5 election. As usual, France was not happy with other countries meddling in, as they perceived it, their business. The question of Algeria’s induction into the UN was hard for France altogether, and by proxy hard for the US. The Americans hoped that France could do as they had done with old colonies before, but as the African continent’s power in the UN was increasing, this seemed to become harder and harder. If France did not present Algeria quickly to the UN, other countries would do it for them. The French understood that they had to present Algeria in 62, and Couve thought that Algeria would be ready for admission into UN in the fall of 62, before the UNGA.¹⁶⁸ The US had taken the back seat on this issue but were happy that Algeria had become an independent state, and they hoped Algeria would become a democracy and be a model part of the UN.

UNGA, Ben Bella visit, and support for communists

Ben Bella said that he wanted to build a bridge between the Bloc and the Western Democracies. He was loved by the non-aligned movement and was seen as a model for how to balance the West and East. Not only Nasser had done under the Suez Crisis, but Ben Bella’s constant struggle to have equal amounts of meetings with representatives from the Bloc and the West. This balancing was the reason that Ben Bella gave when he went to UNGA, met with Kennedy

¹⁶⁶ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, June 2, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, File: Algeria General 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁶⁷ Egypt, Morocco, Ghana, Guinea, Libya and Mali, later also Algeria *Foreign Relations of the United States : Diplomatic Papers : 1963:21 : 1961-1963 : Africa*, 10290. Page 345-346

¹⁶⁸ Telegram from Embassy Paris to Secretary of State, June 20, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4, Folder: Algeria General 4/62-6/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

in Washington, and after that went to Cuba to visit Fidel Castro, two days later. In the early years of Algerian independence, they were often referred to as “Darling of the non-aligned movement.”¹⁶⁹

Not long after Algeria had gotten its independence, rumors arose that Castro and Che Guevara was planning visits. The tensions between the Kennedy administration and Castro’s Cuba was high. The US saw Castro as a Soviet puppet, and they did not want the Algerians to be swayed into the Bloc’s influence, but rather see Cuba the same way that they did, and hopefully, take the Americans side on the Cuba issue.¹⁷⁰ The Americans used Kennedy’s Algeria speech for all it was worth, and Ben Bella himself was quite grateful for Kennedy’s support for the Algerian cause. Ben Bella did not see Cuba as a puppet state and did not understand why the Americans did not want them to have relations with Cuba. He claimed he understood, but probably did not, and the Americans continued to talk him out of it. Either way, this was part of Ben Bella’s plan to support both sides of the East-West conflict, he hoped he could be an intermediary between Cuba and the US. The biggest problem in the relationship between the two countries was that they did not understand the other’s position. When asked by a New Yorker reporter (Liebling) what he wanted from the US, Ben Bella answered understanding.

Liebling asked Ben Bella “if you could have anything you wanted from President Kennedy, what would you choose?” Ben Bella said “understanding; not necessarily approval, but at least understanding.”¹⁷¹

Ben Bella believed that his biggest and most important job was to keep Algeria really “non-aligned”. He felt that the Americans was pressuring him to choose a side and that they did not see how hard he worked to stay between the two sides, and he believed that Cuba also was striving for a similar position. The Kennedy administration knew the Cuban situation better and felt that the Algerians did not listen to them when they said that Cuba had chosen a side, and they felt that the Algerians chose the Soviets over them by having close relations with Cuba. The Algerians had a much closer relationship with Cuba than any other non-aligned, Egypt,

¹⁶⁹ Martin Evans and John Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed* (New Haven [Conn.]; London: Yale University Press, 2007). Page 67

¹⁷⁰ Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. Page 132

¹⁷¹ Telegram from embassy in Algiers to Secretary of State, May 31, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria General 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

which was one of Algeria's closest allies, had denounced Cuba, on the basis that Cuba tried to look like it was non-aligned but clearly was a Soviet puppet, at least in Nasser's eyes.¹⁷²

Kennedy had not only France and Algeria to think of he had the Congress too. Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, was highly critical of American aid and friendliness toward Algeria, he requested information from ambassador Porter. Porter wrote back saying what the situation in Algeria was.

The situation here can be described as one of uneasy calm. Ben Bella continues to consolidate his position, to remove all opposition to his leadership. One-man rule has in fact emerged. Even persons of prominence who were with the Prime Minister in his drive for power last summer have been discarded. [...] Almost every politician of stature holds himself apart from the Ben Bella Government, although many have been solicited by the Prime Minister.¹⁷³

Mansfield did not like what he read. He thought that Porter's categorization of Ben Bella would be enough to stop sending aid to Algeria, and pressured Kennedy on the subject. Clearly, Mansfield read the letter with a bias toward socialism, that the people of Algeria wanted Ben Bella was not important, and that by stopping aid the US would worsen the situation in Algeria was not a consideration.

Ben Bella feels that his political base is among the masses, and there is considerable evidence that he, as time passes, is increasing his ability to "reach" the people. Unquestionably, he is the best known and perhaps the best liked of all the Algerian leaders, though in certain regions such as the Kabylie and Setif he would run second to Krim and Abbas.¹⁷⁴

Porter went on to describe Ben Bella's contact with the people and his modest living arrangements. Porter seemed to think that Ben Bella was uniquely suited to run Algeria in such a tumultuous time. Senator Mansfield only saw the negatives, though the negatives were vast,

¹⁷² Visit of Algerian Prime Minister October 14-15, 1962, Background Papers. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria subjects Prime Minister Ben Bella Briefing Book 10/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁷³ Memorandum for Senator Mansfield from Ambassador Porter, July 4, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 111, Folder: Algeria Security 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁷⁴ Memorandum for Senator Mansfield from Ambassador Porter, July 4, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 111, Folder: Algeria Security 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.



1. Jackie holds John Jr waiting for the President and Prime Minister Ben Bella. The Kennedy children were seldom part of official receptions, but here Jackie brought with her John Jr. Coincidentally the dress she was wearing is the same dress she was wearing in Dallas on the day John Kennedy was shot.

2. Ben Bella and President Kennedy meet Jackie and John Jr. before going in for luncheon and meeting.



and completely at odds with American values and ideals, he did not see that the only thing that held Algeria together at the time was French-Algerian cooperation and US food. To cut support to Algeria would be the best way to cast the entire African continent into the hands of the Soviet Union. Kennedy did not see Algeria as an isolated issue, but as part of the bigger picture and a good way to keep the Africans better inclined towards the US. By giving Algeria significant aid, it insured that the Algerians would not go to the Soviets as often for help, in this way cutting down their relations. Porter understood what Kennedy was trying to achieve and therefore painted Ben Bella as a benign dictator, who had broad support in the people, which he certainly did at that time.

Ben Bella was going to UNGA in 1962, to see Algeria become a part of UN. Neither Ben Bella nor Kennedy would not let the opportunity for Ben Bella to visit the White House pass. The meeting was set up on October 15. As the first foreign head of state, Ben Bella was officially welcomed with a reception on the South Lawn of the White House.¹⁷⁵ The talk between the two leaders was good. Though Ben Bella had great admiration for President Kennedy, stemming from the Senate speech, it did not translate to good relations with the US as a whole. Kennedy was not able to convince Ben Bella not to visit Cuba, and two days later, he traveled to Havana to meet Castro. Ben Bella's trip to Cuba looked bad in the US. Congress wanted Kennedy to disinvite Ben Bella, but that would be even worse, Kennedy had supported the Algerians on many occasions, but it had become harder and harder, neither side of the aisle liked Kennedy's perceived flirtations with the leftist revolutionary Algerians, and his support of them drew critic from all sides. The situation did not get better when a Washington Post interview with Boumediene, Algeria's number two man, called "Number One-B" by Porter, who referred to Le Monde's description of him, on one occasion,¹⁷⁶ came out on September 15. Boumediene said that Algeria could take a similar path to the Cubans and that it contained "very attractive elements." Boumediene's comments made the Americans even more skeptical of what degree they should support the Algerian regime. "Consequently such statements serve reinforce doubts being expressed in some quarters here over nature emerging Algerian leadership with

¹⁷⁵ Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. Page 131

¹⁷⁶ Memorandum for Senator Mike Mansfield by Ambassador Porter, July 4, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, President's Office Files, Box: 111, Golder: Algeria Security 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

consequent effect on degree of general US sympathy for new Algerian state.”¹⁷⁷ The relationship with the Algerians was eroding the Congress’ support for Kennedy’s foreign policy in the Third World.

The Algerians could have seen that the previous regime in Cuba had not been good to the Cuban people and that they thought Castro would help to rectify this. They had not seen Cuba slipping into the Bloc, and thought that Cuba was a socialist nationalistic country like them, and hoped to tap into something similar in Algeria. The Algerians were not Communists, and Boumediene said that Communism had done little for Algeria and Algeria would most certainly not go in that direction.¹⁷⁸ The Americans tried to convince the Algerians to reconsider their trip to Cuba but to no avail.

The Kennedy administration did not want to punish the Algerians for what they saw as taking sides. The Algerians had a stated goal of being a true non-aligned, and the Americans thought that a visit to Cuba was against this. The Kennedy administration knew that if they did nothing after Ben Bella had been to Cuba, Congress would be furious, and make the Kennedy administration’s job much harder. The administration cut off support for a short, symbolic time right after the visit, to signal the Algerians that their close relation with Cuba went against US wishes and that if they continued the close relationship, there would be lasting consequences. Porter assured Kennedy that it would be disastrous if the US cut off aid to Algeria indefinitely. US aid was not token aid, a large part of the Algerian population needed American food to survive the winters.¹⁷⁹ The signal did not seem to sink in when US aid again flowed into Algeria; Ben Bella did not stop with controversial statements, and he had gone beyond any other non-aligned with strong support to the Communist regime in North Korea.

Further irritation of the Cuba issue at this time will not RPT not fail to be related in US opinion to fact Algeria has just gone considerably beyond most

¹⁷⁷ Telegram from Department of State to consulate Algiers and embassy Paris, Rabat and Tunis, September 17, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 9/1/62-10/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁷⁸ Telegram from Department of State to consulate Algiers, and embassy Paris, Rabat and Tunis, September 17, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 9/1/62-10/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁷⁹ About 35% of Algerian population completely dependent on US food over the winter of 1962-63, according to Komer’s rapport. Memorandum for the President by R. W. Komer. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 10/16/62-12/31/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

non-aligned nations in entering diplomatic relations with Communist regime of North Korea, formerly bitter enemy of US and many UN nations, and recognized by only two other non-Communist nations (Guinea and Mali).¹⁸⁰

The Americans did not look kindly on what they perceived as Algerian meddling in the “Angola problem”. In general, it looked like the Algerians took the side of Communists on every time they had a chance. Porter hoped that the leaders in Washington would not punish Algeria for statements he thought was spontaneous and not well thought out by the Prime Minister. He thought that after the Cuban affair, US influence would continue to increase if they hold a consistent policy.

In fact, our influence and powers of persuasion seem likely to grow if we continued demonstrate, as we did after their Cuban errors, that we are not going to be deflected from our policy by off-the-cuff statements, however silly, by Ben Bella or anyone else. I hope Department agrees with this.¹⁸¹

The Americans policy was to try and keep the Algerians on good terms, and in that way keep them from seeking too much towards the Soviets. To some degree this policy was successful, there were forces in Algeria who wanted to cut much of the contact with the US, and were only waiting for a reason to do so.

That Ben Bella went to Cuba just a few days after he had met with Kennedy could be excused almost any other time than in the autumn of 1962. At the time of Ben Bella’s visit, the Americans knew that the Soviets were placing missiles in Cuba, but could not say anything to Ben Bella. Ben Bella was in Cuba October 17 and 18, and a half week later the Cuban Missile Crisis started on October 22. Ben Bella’s visit had been so close to the start of the crisis, and the Americans wanted to know if he had seen, been shown or told anything about Soviet weapons on Cuba. He said that he did not see anything, but there were areas he could not get in, and on the contrary, he had been assured that there were no weapons on Cuba.¹⁸² The Americans became quite suspicious. Ben Bella would change his view of Castro, but not of

¹⁸⁰ Telegram from Department of State to Embassy in Algiers, April 22, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁸¹ Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Algiers, January 18, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁸² Memorandum for the President by R. W. Komer, December 12, 1962. National Security Files, Box 322 Meetings and Memoranda, Folder NSAM 211 U.S. Policy toward Algeria, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Cuba, after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and said that his loyalty was to the Cuban people, not Castro and that he was “ready to sacrifice myself for Cuba”.¹⁸³ This fixation on Cuba was hard for the Americans to understand, They did not see what Algeria gained from such a close relation with the tiny island state, compared to the potential fallout from pushing the US away.

Khemisti assassination

In the spring of 1963, Algeria’s foreign minister Mohammed Khemisti was assassinated. In the days following, no one was certain if he would survive and who would take over the role of Foreign Minister. Algeria had not yet elected a President, and Ferhat Abbas was president in the interim, and Ben Bella was Prime Minister and had concentrated most of the power in him by that point. When Khemisti was shot, Ben Bella took over the mantle of Foreign Minister and that way he had control over Algeria’s foreign policy too. Khemisti died after a short time, and the concentration of power in Ben Bella worried the Americans, and they wondered if Ben Bella intended to keep the role as Foreign Minister or if he intended to find a replacement.

I [Porter] asked Ben Bella this afternoon whether he plans to appoint successor to Khemisti soon or will handle foreign affairs himself. He said he would act as Foreign Minister for the time being. He added that though appointment of successor to Khemisti is urgent matter, it is “complicated”. He expressed deep appreciation for message from President Kennedy, Secretary Rusk, and Assistant Secretary Williams concerning Foreign Minister Khemisti. He said he still wished to consider this isolated affair with no special political significance.¹⁸⁴

The Algerian’s believed that the assassination was a political statement, but who could have done it? The Algerians did not think that that the French had anything to do with it. The situation stands as a mystery to this day; no one really knows what the reasons for Khemisti’s murder were. That pro-western Algerians or right-wing groups like the OAS stood behind the

¹⁸³ Department of State, memorandum of conversation III of VI, subject: Cuba and the United States-Algerian Relations, Present: US: The President, Assistant Secretary of State G. Mennen Williams, Mr. Robert Komer, White house Staff, Mr. Peter Hooper, Acting Deputy Director, AFN. Algeria: Mr. Muhammed Yazid, Special Representative of President Ben Bella, His Excellency Cherif Guellal, Ambassador of Algeria. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria general 11/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁸⁴ Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Algiers, April 15, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

assassination is a possibility, but there is also a possibility that he was killed by a madman, with no discernable motive.¹⁸⁵

As a single situation, the Khemisti assassination was not important, but it shows what the Americans thought of Ben Bella and the Algerians. In most other cases, the Americans would not be worried whether the Prime Minister would give away his power as foreign minister or if he would keep the title. The Americans were afraid that someone on the inside could have taken out Khemisti because he had too much power. All the Americans worries were laid to rest when the Algerian Prime Minister appointed Abdelaziz Bouteflika to new Foreign Minister. Bouteflika sat as Foreign Minister for about 16 years and through some rough times.¹⁸⁶ He was later one of the conspirators against Ben Bella in 1965¹⁸⁷ and has been President of Algeria since 1999.¹⁸⁸

Support through hard times

Algeria did not do particularly well in the months following their independence. They needed huge amounts of food and aid. After the Cuban debacle, the Congress was not as happy to provide Algeria with the sorely needed aid. In the letter to Senator Mansfield, Ambassador Porter said that one of the few things holding Algeria up was American food. He was afraid for the future of Algeria, and further, America's standing in the Arabian World, if the US should stop their aid programs.¹⁸⁹

The situation in Algeria was about to get worse. There was a revolt in the Kabylia region, unlike other regions Kabylia consisted of mostly Berbers. The Kabylians was one of the peoples that had been treated worst in the last decades of the French rule. Camus wrote a series of letters and articles about the situation in Algeria from 1939 to 1958. One of the articles chronicled the situation in Kabylia as one of the worst situations in the world at that time, with little food coming in and the crops failing, the only food they had was acorn soup, which really was water

¹⁸⁵ Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Algiers, April 17, 1963, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4B, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁸⁶ Evans and Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. Page 114.

¹⁸⁷ Stora et al., *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*. Page 141, 145.

¹⁸⁸ He is still President as of 2017. Evans and Phillips, *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. Page 255.

¹⁸⁹ Memorandum for Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield by Ambassador Porter, July 4, 1963. President's Office Files, Box 111 countries, Algeria security, 1961-1963, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

and one acorn.¹⁹⁰ The situation Camus described back in 1939 did not get much better during the Second World War and the ensuing Algerian revolutionary war. When the revolt in Kabylia started in 1963 the rest of the country was starving too, and the Berbers were not the highest prioritized.

The Americans did not think that the situation would spread out into the rest of the county, there was a possibility, but it was unlikely. Should the revolt spread, it would be a disaster for Algeria, the whole Algerian state could be toppled after only a year as an independent country. Even though Ben Bella was not the Americans favorite, a destabilized Algeria would be worse. Ben Bella assured the support of the local leaders, and the problem seemed contained, but in Algeria's weakened state, Morocco would try their luck in a border dispute they had with the Algerians.¹⁹¹

The Exodus of the European population had not only drained Algeria of skilled workers. The *colons* had owned most of the wealth, and had held most government jobs, when they disappeared, Algeria was already struggling with the economy, and had been totally dependent on France, after they got their independence and the *colons* left, Algeria's economy collapsed and there were few who knew how to run a country left.¹⁹² It is hard to fault the Algerian's for wanting independence, but like many other old colonies, their colonial masters had not prepared them for a time after independence. France wanted to help Algeria but found them hard to work with. That the Algerians had problems with the French had to be expected, and the Americans were frustrated that the two sides did not seem to work well together.

Both the French and the Americans supplied the Algerians with considerable aid. The US preferred work for food programs, where the Algerian people were set to work and would get food for their efforts, this did not cost the Americans that much. There were some rumors that huge US aid packages would come, and the US wanted to quash these rumors. Still Algeria

¹⁹⁰ Camus, *Algerian Chronicles*. Page 44

¹⁹¹ Memorandum for Mr. McGeorge Bundy by Executive Secretary Benjamin H. Reed, October 14, 1963, Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria general 10/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁹² Visit of Algerian Prime Minister October 14-15, 1962, Meeting Papers, Algerian Foreign Relations. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 5, Algeria subjects Prime Minister Ben Bella Briefing book 10/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

became one of the biggest benefactors of US aid in 1962 and 1963. Good programs were given to the Algerians, but they were never one of the countries that received the most.¹⁹³

By late 1962, help to Algeria was met by hard criticism in the US. In 1957 he had been praised by many Americans for his outspokenness and support for independence in Algeria, but this dissipated as Algeria became more dictatorial, and in the eyes of the critics, a Soviet state. With all the mounting factors in Algeria, it was no wonder that Porter believed that US aid was one of the few factors holding the Algerian state afloat. Kennedy's policy in Algeria was increasingly hard to implement, but he believed that by helping the Algerians he would better the US's reputation in the Third World.

Moroccan crisis

In late 1963 the Algerians and Moroccans made life hard for the Americans. A dispute about the southern part of the border between the two countries heated up and fighting broke out, in October 1963 the conflict was still concentrated around the border, but the Americans were afraid that the conflict would spiral into a full-fledged war between the two neighbors.

The conflict between Morocco and Algeria had sizzled for a while. In the months leading up to, and following Algeria's freedom Morocco had supported the Algerian leaders, as in the request for planes for Ben Bella. Feelings between the leaders of Algeria and Morocco soon took a turn for the worse. In a Department of State, research document from October 1, Algeria's relations with their neighbors was described like this.

For the moment, Ben Bella's ties with the UAR are manifold, while his relations with neighboring Morocco and Tunisia have been far from cordial. (...) On the other hand, the present Algerian leadership has been vexed by the cautious endorsement of Morocco's King Hassan II and Tunisia's President Habib Bourguiba. Moreover, both nations harbor territorial claims in the Sahara which have fostered deep resentment among Algerians. Indeed Morocco's ill-restrained ambitions already have produced clashes in the Tindouf and Colomb-Bechar areas. We estimate that this strain in Moroccan-Algerian relations is likely to persist over the next several months and,

¹⁹³ Telegram from Embassy Algiers to Secretary of State, January 15, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 1/63-5/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

consequently, will strengthen Egypt's relative influence within the Algerian ruling oligarchy.¹⁹⁴

The real animosity started when Morocco had arrested supposed Algerian spies and activists, for attempting to kill the Moroccan King Hassan. In July of 1963 King Hassan arrested some leftist opposition agents, charged with trying to assassinate him, he implied that some of this operatives had ties to Algeria. This, not surprisingly, angered the Algerian leadership. This left the US in an awkward position, if they did believe Hassan, they could not in good faith continue to support Ben Bella and the Algerians if the animosity would increase. The US did believe Hassan in that Ben Bella had some connection with the Moroccan rebels but were skeptical of Hassan's "proof". On the other hand, there were reports that said that King Hassan had supported the Algerian rebels in Kabylia.¹⁹⁵ The Americans could, in good faith, not openly support any side, the situation was too convoluted. Military buildup on the border commenced, and reports said that fighting started after Moroccans crossed into the disputed area, and the Algerians fired upon them.¹⁹⁶

The roots of this border dispute herald back to the time when France controlled both Algeria and the Eastern part of Morocco. Algeria's borders had not been shored up before late in the 19th century, in fact, the French did not conquer the "southern territories" until late in the 1800s and early 1900s.¹⁹⁷ The Algerians said that the borders between Algeria and Morocco had been set a long time ago and that they certainly had been set after Morocco had become independent. Morocco on their side said that the border had been moved back and forth since the two countries had been established and that the border was not set. This was the background of the dispute and had the relationship between the two countries been good in 1963; there might have been a negotiated settlement before any conflict could happen.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research document, October 1, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 9/1/62-10/15/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁹⁵ Note written for Robert W. Komer by HHS, November 1, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 407 Komer, Robert W., Folder: Algeria (10/62-11/22/63) Algeria/Morocco Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁹⁶ Memorandum for the record, October 29, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 407 Komer, Robert W., Folder: Algeria (10/62-11/22/63) Algeria/Morocco Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁹⁷ Stora et al., *Algeria, 1830-2000: A Short History*. Page 7.

¹⁹⁸ Memorandum, RWK: OCI memo on Moroccan-Algerian border may leave false impression that a Hassan decision to occupy disputed territory triggered the October fighting. November 1, 1963. Papers

The Americans saw the Moroccan-Algerian crisis as a big problem. Morocco had largely been isolated from the other Arabian and African countries, because of its massive territorial claims; Komer thought that one had to see the claim of the border areas with Algeria in this context.¹⁹⁹ The Americans could not stop their support of Algeria; this would look bad to the entire Arabian and African world. Morocco was supported by Franco's Spain and urged France and the US to do the same. The US already supported Morocco with weapons and trained Moroccan pilots; this last point would spell problems for the Americans, as the skirmish escalated.

If there was any doubt that this conflict had anything to do with US-Algerian relationship, the *Cristian Science Monitor* made it relevant. The *Christian Science Monitor* was a paper based in Boston, sprung out of the Christian Science community; they had been opposed to Kennedy from the start and followed the tradition with an article saying that US pilots flew Moroccan troops to the front line in Morocco.²⁰⁰ Though it was correct that US pilots trained and flew Moroccan troops, the US vehemently denied these allegations. Not surprisingly, the leftist media in Algeria picked up the article and ran with it, Moroccan sources did little to deny the allegations, even in some instances give the impression that the article was correct.²⁰¹ Algeria had the military upper hand in the conflict; earlier Tunisian Foreign Minister Mongi Slim had said in a conversation with Ambassador Porter that Algeria had enough arms to supply all of Africa.

I [Porter] asked Slim if arms shown in holiday parade were typical of those in possession of Algerians. He replied they were typical, but added "you know, they have enormous quantities, including some MIG planes." I said we had heard some rumors concerning MIGS. Slim said in fact there are enough

of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 407 Robert W. Komer, Folder: Algeria (10/62-11/22/63) Algeria/Morocco Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

¹⁹⁹ *Foreign Relations of the United States : Diplomatic Papers : 1963:21 : 1961-1963 : Africa*, 10290. Page 33.

²⁰⁰ Telegram from Department of State to Embassies Rabat and Algiers, October 14, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰¹ Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Algiers, October 17, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria general 10/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

arms in this country, and by no means all in the possession of government, to supply all of Africa.”²⁰²

There was probably some truth to Slim’s words. He was worried about what Algeria’s aggression could mean for Tunisia. Tunisia has a long border with Algeria, and Algeria could decide that the border between the two countries were wrong too. They had nothing to fear from the Algerians, it might have been the Algerians that fired the first shots, and the Americans was more inclined to stand on the Moroccans side, but it was the Moroccans who were the aggressors and wanted to change the borders and had greater territorial ambitions.

The article in the Christian Science Monitor, understandably, made the Algerians quite upset. Exactly what the situation was is not certain, as the Americans still hold some of the documents still are classified. It is certain is that the Americans did more than they wanted the public and the Algerians to know, but if they went as far as actually help the Moroccans in their warfare is uncertain, they probably kept out of that particular wasp nest.

The article stated that Morocco had asked the US to fly Moroccan troops to a staging area near the Algerian border; the reason for this was that Morocco lacked pilots. The article was published on October 12; it did not say that the US still did this, but had done it previously. The reporter of the article, later itemized to the US government that he never intended to give the impression that the US still did this, this led to the Monitor retracting the story.²⁰³

The US trained Moroccan pilots and did fly supplies for the Moroccans. The Americans did not dispute this, but they denied that they had done what the article said they had. The State Department confirmed that US troops had helped the Moroccans in moving troops and military cargo after the border conflict had gotten into the “acute phase” on October 8.

Both US air training missions and French training missions have suspended anything which might have been construed as operational support to Royal Moroccan forces during present period of tension and skirmishes with

²⁰² Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Algiers, November 5, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 4A, Folder: Algeria general 10/16/62-12/31/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰³ Telegram to Secretary of State from Embassy Rabat, October 19, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

Algerian troops. Since border difficulties entered acute phase Oct. 8, some informal Moroccan requests were made at operational levels for US pilot support in flying some of six C119 cargo planes and six C47 transports in airborne Moroccan troop movements. In several instances US personnel before Oct. 11 did help air lift Moroccan troops or military cargo but not into frontier/provinces Oujda and Quarzazate, the trouble zones.²⁰⁴

If we believe the Americans, they did not do anything they should not have. The situation is completely different from the Algerian point of view. The Americans helped their enemy, maybe not to the front, but the Monitor had it right that the US helped the Moroccans in their war effort, there can be no doubt on this, even if they said: "US and France observing attitude of strictest neutrality in current Algerian squabbles".²⁰⁵ But again the US government was not in agreement with themselves; Ball came with the correction that no troop or cargo movements had been flown by Americans, only parachuting training had been done in the months leading up to the border conflict.²⁰⁶ This contradicts much of what the Americans had said up to this point, what were the Algerians to believe. The US clearly did not have control of what USAF was doing in Morocco, if the last telegram is to be believed, why had not the Department of Defense sorted out the misunderstanding before. Whether the Americans did help the Moroccans or not, was not as important as the Algerians believed they had done so, and the relationship between the US and Algeria was permanently damaged. Bob Komer also wrote a rather cryptic message to Kennedy on October 21.

Though the denial rarely catches up to the lie, we've had some success in major effort to kill story US pilots are helping Moroccans. Algiers 810, 19 October, says "US deniale [sic] appear for time being to have forced GOA back away from this point..."²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Telegram from Department of State to Embassies Algiers, Paris, Rabat and Bamako, October 18, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰⁵ Telegram from Department of State to Embassies Algiers, Paris, Rabat and Bamako, October 18, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰⁶ Telegram from Department of State, October 30, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰⁷ GOA-Government of Algeria. Memorandum for the President, by Robert W. Komer, October 21, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

That the Americans said they were neutral, but seemed to favor the Moroccans made the Algerians more skeptical of how far the US would support them. In reality, the Kennedy administration wanted to support Ben Bella, because they thought he had more staying power than King Hassan,²⁰⁸ but could not take a side, because of pressure internally and from European countries. As a consequence of the perceived American bias towards the Moroccans, Algeria relied more and more on the Communists, Cuba, and Soviet, getting arms shipments from Cuba and the US suspected that Russians were helping the Algerians in a more hands-on approach. Egypt was also a big contributor to the Algerians, and the Americans were afraid that this was going to become a much larger conflict than it was.²⁰⁹

The Americans thought that the peace process should be started by the countries in the region. They were afraid that the peace process could be tainted if it looked like dictated the terms. The Americans supported efforts from the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie to end the conflict peacefully before it escalated into a regional conflict. This did not mean that the Americans kept out of the peace process, while Selassie worked with the two sides, the US prodded and worked behind the scenes. They did not believe that if their covert involvement became common knowledge, it would help the situation, especially when the Algerians was suspicious of their ultimate goals.

The Americans were heavy into the peace process, held in Bamako in Mali, and tried to get Selassie to form the peace agreements the way they wanted it, but struggled to contact the Ethiopian Emperor.

FYI. We realize difficulty of delivering message to Emperor in Bamako and possible problem of misunderstanding by Keita and parties to dispute should U.S. role become known. Strongly hope matter can be handled in way which will minimalize risk disclosing U.S. hand. To this end, emphasize to Emperor or his representative this be entirely confidential with him. Knowledge of overt U.S. role could be counterproductive. END FYI.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Memorandum for McGeorge Bundy from Robert W. Komer, November 1, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 407 Robert W. Komer, Folder: Algeria (10/62-11/22/63) Algeria/Morocco Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²⁰⁹ Memorandum for the President by R.W. Komer, October 24, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 5, Folder: Algeria general 10/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²¹⁰ Telegram from Department of State to Embassy Bamako, Rabat, Algiers and Paris, October 29, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 142, Folder: Morocco general 10/63 Folder 1 of 2, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The Americans did not want to choose between the Algerians and the Moroccans. They wanted the situation to revert to the way it was before the conflict, so deliberation and diplomacy could resolve the issue.

In the windup to the armed conflict between the Moroccans and the Algerians, Jackie was scheduled for a visit to King Hassan. The trip was seen as highly unsafe²¹¹ but was carried out, and the trip was a success, the talks between the American First Lady and the Moroccans might have helped the Moroccans to the negotiations table, which they had left many times before.²¹²

²¹¹ Memorandum for President by Robert W. Komer, October 8, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 5, Algeria subjects Proposed Prime Minister Ben Bella Visit 1963 7/31/63 10/20/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²¹² Memorandum for the President by Executive Secretary Benjamin H. Reed, October 14, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 5, Algeria general 10/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

6. France

Introduction

When France finally had given Algeria its independence, they had to make a move on NATO. The Americans believed that the loss of Algeria would be like a “millstone” of the neck of de Gaulle and the French,²¹³ and that the Franco-American relationship could get better. The Americans hoped that the French would reintegrate their fleet into the central command, but it soon became clear that the French never would do that. France’s pullout of NATO in 1966 should not have come as a shock to the Americans after de Gaulle, not only, refused to reintegrate the Mediterranean fleet but pulled the Atlantic fleet out too.

When de Gaulle was subject to the assassination attempt in 1962 the Americans thought what could happen in France if de Gaulle disappeared. Even though they did not like de Gaulle and saw him as a nuisance in the integration in Europe and his position on NATO, the UN and the American’s relationship with the British, they saw him as the most stabilizing leader in France.

The relationship between Algeria and the US is interesting enough in itself, but I think that I would do a great disservice, if I do not say something about the aftermath of the Algerian war in France, and what Algeria really meant in the greater scheme of things. This chapter is about what happened with France and the US-French relationship after Algeria had become independent.

Pullout of NATO

The main reason Eisenhower did not pressure France on Algeria was that he feared that the French would exit NATO all together. In the late 1950’s and early 60’s the three biggest problems in the Franco-American relationship was the French atomic program and its integration into the French fighting force, Force de Frappe, the Berlin situation and the Algerian question. The French had pulled their Mediterranean fleet out of NATO command and had moved their Atlantic fleet to support in the Mediterranean, further they had moved a large

²¹³ Memorandum from National Security meeting, February 10, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 318 Meetings and Memoranda, Folder: Key National Security Problems General 1/61-2/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

percentage of their army to Algeria, and most of the French military had not been under NATO control for a long time.

When I started researching the Algerian war, I believed that the Algerian war contributed to France pulling out of NATO sooner than they otherwise would have, this turned out to be false. When de Gaulle pulled the Mediterranean fleet out of NATO, he used the excuse that he needed it in the war efforts in Algeria, but the Atlantic fleet was still in NATO command. When the war ended the Americans hoped and expected that the Mediterranean fleet would be reintegrated, but instead de Gaulle pulled the rest of the French fleet from the NATO command, citing that it was an oversight that it had not already been pulled.²¹⁴ De Gaulle claimed that this in no way was a further pullout of NATO, but rather just giving the Atlantic fleet the same flexibility that the Mediterranean fleet had.²¹⁵ In reality this was de Gaulle's next step for a full pullout of NATO central command.

The French source of this information, Manet, who is a foreign office official attached to French general staff, said this decision was taken by de Gaulle purely on basis of "principle involved," namely his strong feeling against any French forces, particularly naval, integrated into NATO. Why de Gaulle in a matter of principle held off until 1963 was not made clear.²¹⁶

In the end of the Algerian war, the US was increasingly worried about what would become of the French military after the war's conclusion. De Gaulle's disdain for the UN is well documented, but in May 1961 the Americans saw de Gaulle viewing NATO more and more in the same way. In meetings with Kennedy, de Gaulle expressed that the US and France still could have strong bonds and work together in many areas, but this might be done outside the NATO framework.²¹⁷ Kennedy was not interested in breaking up NATO and have bilateral

²¹⁴ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, May 24, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 72A, Folder: France – General withdrawal of naval forces 5/63-9/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²¹⁵ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, June 26, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 72A, Folder: France – General withdrawal of naval forces 5/63-9/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²¹⁶ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, May 24, 1963. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 72A, Folder: France – General withdrawal of naval forces 5/63-9/63, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²¹⁷ Memo re: report on the French army mutiny in Algeria and its consequences, May 22, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 5/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

protection agreements; rather, he wanted a stronger Western Europe that could stand against the Soviet bloc.

A reorganization of the French military had to follow the end of the Algerian war. From 1939, France had been in an almost continuous state of war. The Indochina war followed the Second World War, and the Algerian war had followed the Indochina war. The French was war-weary and the Americans was afraid that the French would downsize the army to a so large degree that they would lose all their military power. In April 1961 the French army consisted of about 728,000 troops with 400,000 of these serving in Algeria,²¹⁸ the Americans believed that there were no way France would keep an army force that large after it no longer was in active war. France settled on reducing the number of troops and lengthening the serving time; the French claimed that this would keep French military power on the same level. The US was skeptical of the reasoning, but could do little to prevent it. De Gaulle would be deaf to arguments that such a reduction would weaken NATO.

It is clear that the process that de Gaulle started in 1959 with the extraction of the Mediterranean fleet ended in the French extraction from the central command in 1966. The Algerian war drew this process out, and there is a possibility that if the two situations did not happen simultaneously they would be much shorter affairs. Therefore it can be speculated that de Gaulle did not pull the full fleet out of NATO sooner, to give the Americans the impression that the French could be persuaded to reintegrate the Mediterranean fleet when the war was over, when he never had intentions of doing this. If these speculations are true, de Gaulle played both the Eisenhower and the Kennedy administration beautifully. Had the Americans known that France never would reintegrate fully into NATO and eventually exit the central command either way. The Americans would most certainly have been harder on the French to end the Algerian war and give Algeria independence. When the Americans believed that the French still intended to be in NATO they supported, or at least, kept mostly out of the Algerian question.

²¹⁸ Memorandum for President by Director of the CIA Allen W. Dulles, April 24, 1961. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box 4, Folder: Algeria general 4/24/61-4/30/61, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The OAS and de Gaulle assassination attempt

OAS continued to be a problem for the Algerians and the French even after the war was over. In Algeria, they had occupied Oran, and tried to sabotage the process of independence of Algeria. One of the last, biggest operations they stood behind has been made into a novel and two films, the Jackal, the assassination attempt of de Gaulle.

The Americans were not fans of de Gaulle, but neither were the opposition in France and the French military began to resent him as time went on. Henry Kissinger had talked to General Stehlin in the start of 1962, Stehlin was highly critical of de Gaulle and the peace process in Algeria. He was afraid that Algeria would become independent and turn to the Soviet Union as fast as the ink was dry on an independence agreement.²¹⁹ Many Americans and French hoped that when the war were concluded, de Gaulle would step down from politics, but he stayed in power until 1969. The Americans hoped that France's earlier Prime Minister Antoine Pinay would become the next president of France. In 1962 they saw him as the next in line, and the perfect candidate.

Certainly Pinay is the obvious heir-apparent; but, of course, there is a good deal of wishful thinking about when de Gaulle goes. Like Adenauer, I don't think de Gaulle himself has much inclination to leave the scene – either now or even once he has settled the Algerian situation.²²⁰

De Gaulle was not popular in the Kennedy administration and in the US as a whole. This did not change with the assassination attempt on de Gaulle, but the Americans understood that the situation in France was volatile and that de Gaulle possibly was the best bet to keep France stable.

²¹⁹ Notes on lunch with General Stehlin in Paris, February 5, 1962 by Henry Kissinger. February 9, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 320 Meetings and Memoranda, Folder: Staff Memoranda Henry Kissinger 2/1/62-2/12/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

²²⁰ Personal letter from Ambassador James M. Gavin to Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Foy D. Kohler, February 8, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 71, Folder: France general 2/10/62-2/16/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

The assassination attempt was like taken out of an action movie, and it was almost miraculous that de Gaulle was not injured. The message the Americans got from Paris told of a dramatic and close to fatal situation.

De Gaulle with MME de Gaulle and son in law in lead car, followed by second car with two bodyguards, and by two motorcycle police set off last evening from Elysee for military airport at Villacoublay on return to Colombay. (De Gaulle has recently been going back and forth by air.) Convoy traveling at high speed used same route as it had used earlier in day en route from Villacoublay to Elysee. At intersection not far from airport small truck was parked at side of road. Another car was parked in side road. As convoy approached machine gun (not submachine gun) fire was opened by men standing by truck and by men near car in side road convoy was then caught in heavy cross fire. Numerous bullets hit de Gaulle's car and nearly killed one motorcycle police. Although rear tires of de Gaulle's car were punctured, car was able to continue into safety of Villacoublay. Assassins got away in third car which was parked nearby.

Doustin said de Gaulle's escape had been miraculous as bullets had gone within inches of his head. He surmised that attack was work of OAS commando let ex captain Sergent who is "Chief of Staff" of metropolitan OAS and from whom security forces have been looking for long time. He also believed that machine guns were probably stolen from CRS camp last week.²²¹

De Gaulle continued to serve as President long after the assassination attempt. For a few hectic moments, the Americans got to imagine what France would look like without de Gaulle, and they did not like it.

²²¹ Telegram from embassy Paris to Secretary of State, August 23, 1962. Papers of President Kennedy, National Security Files, Box: 71A, Folder: France general 8/62, John F. Kennedy Library, Boston, Mass.

7. Epilogue

Johnson and Algeria

Ben Bella had scheduled a trip to the US in the fall of 1963, but could not do it because of the Morocco crisis and economic conditions. Kennedy died in 1963, and America's African policies reverted to obscurity. President Lyndon Johnson did not follow the same ideals, and the road Kennedy had laid out. Africa lost its place as a priority, and the Africans felt it, by the end of the 60's the US's aid budget to Africa had been reduced to 29% of 1962 levels.²²² In Africa Kennedy's time as president was looked upon with nostalgia and Kennedy's name graced the name of streets, schools and newborn alike. Kennedy had had a personal connection to Africa, something neither Johnson nor Nixon had.

Kennedy's policies might not have prevented that Algeria and most of Africa slid into the Soviet sphere of influence, but delayed it considerable. Johnson's new line with a total support of Israel angered the Arabians, and only contributed to alienating them. Johnson's policies let and in some ways pushed the Arab World into the orbit of the Soviet Union.²²³ This culminated in the *Six-Day War*, Johnson stood cleanly on the side of the Israelis, which on the part of the Algerians, resulted in them breaking off all official contact, though they kept contact through the Swiss embassy in Algiers.²²⁴ By that point the Algerian's had toppled Ben Bella's regime in a 1965 coup, and a more Soviet-friendly regime had taken over. Kennedy had managed to pull the Arabian World closer to the West, but Johnson was about to undo all of Kennedy's progress.

Johnson's actions in the Third World leaves much to be desired. But he had ideas that could have propelled the developing countries. He wanted to expand his policies of the Great Society outside of the US, and it has been claimed that it was the cloud of the Vietnam War that held the most ambitious plans back.²²⁵ Johnson's foreign policies has not been celebrated in the same

²²² Muehlenbeck, *Betting on the Africans: John F. Kennedy's Courting of African Nationalist Leaders*. 232

²²³ Robert David Johnson, *Lyndon Johnson and Israel : The Secret Presidential Recordings* (Tel Aviv: S. Daniel Abraham Center for International and Regional Studies, Tel Aviv University, 2008). 17.

²²⁴ *Foreign Relations of the United States. 1964-1968. Vol. 24, 1964-1968. Vol. 24*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999). 61.

²²⁵ Francis J. Gavin and Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Beyond the Cold War Lyndon Johnson and the New Global Challenges of the 1960s* (2014). 5.

way as the foreign policies of Kennedy and Nixon, and in Africa and towards the Arabian nations, it was deserved.

The coup of Ben Bella, the Arabian Spring and rising tensions with Morocco

Ben Bella became increasingly dictatorial in the years following Kennedy death. It ended in a coup by his primal opponents, only Ben Bella's foreign minister Bouteflika, who had support from the opposition and was part of the coup, sat through the coup and continued to serve as foreign minister afterwards. Ben Bella had been far to the left politically, but had been more open to the West, the new government was not as leftist but in return was much more inclined to seek help from the Soviets.

Algeria has been plagued by internal unrest from the 60's, and in the 90's there were a war internally in Algeria. Islamist groups rose up, because the military refused to acknowledge the election results of the 1991 election, and the military fought back. The security forces won the war, but the state was changed, and a permanent state of emergency was enacted. Bouteflika became president in 1999 and still is the president. Even though the Algerian government had been accused of corruption and that the country was fragile and there were huge food shortages, the government survived the revolts. Algeria had become a de facto one party system, and the government was not providing what they had promised, when Bouteflika had been elected for a third time in 2008, which only was made possible when the government removed the term limits.²²⁶ The people began to protest and the opposition believed that the Algerian protest would be bigger than those in Tunisia that sparked the Arabian Spring.²²⁷ The situation that had arose after the military had taken control in the 90's under the war, had suppressed and oppressed the people of Algeria, but the fair of the government disappeared in the late 2000's and early 10's.²²⁸

²²⁶ Mahmoud Belhimer "Political Crises but Few Alternatives in Algeria" *Arab Reform Bulletin*, March 17, 2010, accessed November 8, 2017, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110213143442/http://carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=40363>

²²⁷ Lamine Chikhi "Algeria army should quit politics: opposition" January 21, 2011, accessed November 8, 2017, <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE70K02X20110121>

²²⁸ CBCNews "Algeria protest draws thousands" February 12, 2011, accessed November 12, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/algeria-protest-draws-thousands-1.1065078>

Under the demonstrations in 2011, the government lifted the 19-year-old state of emergency. Little changed in reality, the government enacted reforms and programs to tackle the high unemployment, but held on to many of the points from the state of emergency, and the military would still be able to involve itself into domestic security.²²⁹ Unlike Syria, Egypt and Tunisia, the Islamic groups in Algeria did not challenge the government as much, and this could be because of the lessons of the decade long civil war in the 90's.²³⁰

The border skirmish in 1963, commonly referred to as the War of the Sands, did not end the hostilities between the Moroccans and the Algerians. Recently the problems between the two countries has started to heat up again. As recently as 2016 then UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, called the Moroccan presence in Western Sahara an occupation, and Morocco has again begun to slide out of good faith in the region. There is little to believe that the situation would escalate into a full-fledged war, there is even less reason to believe that the situation will be resolved anytime soon. Bouteflika is of poor health, and a change in the Algerian leadership can change the situation, but in what direction? Politicians on both sides of the border has started to trade insults and the former CEO of Air Algérie and then deputy of FLN, Wahid Bouabdallah, spoke highly on the Moroccan King, he was arrested by the Algerian intelligence services.²³¹ There is a rift between the two countries that is widening, and this will be a region that will be interesting to follow in the coming years.

Further research

This thesis is meant to show the big picture of Kennedy's relation to Algeria, not the details. The research of the relations between the US and Algeria is not over with this thesis, rather the opposite. There are still many unanswered questions, but there can be no doubt that the Kennedy administration put much political capital into the relationship with the Algerians. This thesis is based solely on American sources, this means that there are uncountable other approaches to this theme. Additionally new sources is being released sporadically, these new sources can shed light on unanswered questions.

²²⁹ Aljazeera "Algeria repeals emergency law" February 23, 2011, accessed November 8, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/02/2011223686267301.html>

²³⁰ Quinn Meham "The evolution of Islamism since the Arab uprising" October 24, 2014, accessed November 8, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/24/the-evolution-of-islamism-since-the-arab-uprisings/?utm_term=.c29836fdb4f9

²³¹ Raphaël Lefèvre, "Morocco, Algeria and the Maghreb's Cold War," *The Journal of North African Studies* 21, no. 5 (2016).

The War of the Sands, and the Algerian-Moroccan relationship, has not been researched fully, at least not from an American point of view, and with rising tensions between the two countries today the situation is more relevant than ever. What were the Americans true hopes for the struggle? Did the Americans fly Moroccans, or was it all a misunderstanding?

Even after all this time CIA's history has many holes, and their dealings in Algeria is certainly one of them. Most historians claim that it is unthinkable that the CIA would help the coup and OAS. CIA has meddled in situations all over the World and many times helped both sides of struggles. Why is CIA involvement unthinkable in Algeria? This question is perhaps a highly difficult question to research, but if the CIA decides to release papers, some questions can be answered.

The relationship between the Americans and Algeria can be looked at from an Arab nationalist movement's point of view or an Algerian point of view, a French point of view, and all the other countries involved point of view. This requires that one is capable of reading and understanding, first French and secondly Arabic. This would be extremely exciting, and would complete the picture considerable.

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Morocco Box: 142.

Trips & Conferences

Box: 234.

Departments & Agencies

Box: 283.

Meetings & Memoranda

Box: 314, 317, 318, 320, 321, 322, 339, 340.

William H. Brubeck

Box: 381.

Robert W. Komer

Box: 407, 438.

Personal Papers

Series 10.4 The Strategy of Peace

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Box: 61A.

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Pictures

All pictures curtesy of John F. Kennedy Presidential Library

White House Photograph Collection (#5012)

Front Picture – Series #1 Abbie Rowe, Box #28, Folder: 1962-10-15-A, AR, Arrival ceremony for Ahmed Ben Bella, Prime Minister of Algeria, 11:45AM. AR7540-A→E; H, I.

Picture 1 and 2 – Series #3 Robert Knutsen, Box #24, Folder: 1962-10-15-A, KN, Arrival ceremony for Ahmed Ben Bella, Prime Minister of Algeria, 11:45AM. KN-C24517→24548.

Appendix 1. List of important people

US

President

Dwight D. Eisenhower 1953-1961

John F. Kennedy 1961-1963

Secretary of State

John Foster Dulles 1953-1959

Christian Herter 1959-1961

Dean Rusk 1961-1969

Ambassadors to France

C. Douglas Dillon 1953-1957

Amory Houghton 1957-1961

James M. Gavin 1961-1962

Charles E. Bohlen 1962-1968

Cecil B. Lyon 1958 -1964, Minister plenipotentiary and deputy chief of mission Paris, also Charge d'Affaires for about a year. "American Embassy officer"

Ambassadors to Algeria

William J. Porter (between July and November 1962: Charé d'Affaires, later Ambassador) 1962-1965

National Security Council

National Security Advisor: McGeorge Bundy

Robert W. Komer

France

President

René Coty 1954-1959

General de Gaulle 1959-1969

Foreign Minister

Robert Schuman 1948-January 1953

Georges Bidault January 1953-June 1954

Pierre Mendès-France June 1954 January 1955

Edgar Faure January 1955-February 1955

Antoine Pinay February 1955-February 1956

Christian Pineau February 1956- May 1958

René Pleven May 1958-June 1958

Maurice Couve de Murville June 1958-1968

Ambassadors to the US

Maurice Couve de Murville 1954-1956

Hervé Alphand 1956-1965

Algeria

Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (PAG)

Ferhat Abbas 1958-1961

Benyoucef Benkhedda 1961-1962

Abdelkader Chanderli

Belkacem Krim – negotiator

Free State

President

Abderrahmane Farès July 1962-September 1962

Ferhat Abbas 1962-1963

Ahmed Ben Bella 1963-1965

Prime Minister

Ahmed Ben Bella 1962-1963

(Office abolished 1963-1979)

Foreign Minister

Mohamed Khemisti 1962-1963

(Interim: Ahmed Ben Bella 1963)

Abdelaziz Bouteflika 1963-1979

I do not criticize them as individuals, because they were representing the highest administration policy.

In his statement Ambassador Dillon recalled with pride that "the United States has consistently supported France when north African subjects have been discussed in the United Nations"; and that American military equipment—particularly helicopters—had been made available for use against native groups in Algeria.

The United States—

Ambassador Dillon emphasized—stands solemnly behind France in her search for a liberal and equitable solution of the problems in Algeria.

Our proud anticolonialist tradition, he said, does not place the Algerian problem in the same camp as Tunisia and Morocco.

Naturally the French were delighted with Ambassador Dillon's statement. Premier Mollet expressed his nation's pleasure at having the United States "at her side at this moment." Le Monde described it as "a victory of the pro-French camp in the State Department over the champions of anticolonialism and appeasement of the Arabs." But the leader of the national Algerian movement, under house arrest in France, expressed his dismay that the United States had departed from its democratic traditions and ally itself with French colonialism and to favor "the military reconquest of Algeria at the expense of the self-determination of peoples."

Similarly, when in 1955 the U. N. steering committee was asked to place the issue on the agenda of the General Assembly, and our Ambassador to the U. N. insisted that Algeria was so much an integral part of the French Republic that the matter could not properly be discussed by an international body, his Algerian spokesman countered that his United States should identify itself with a policy of colonial repression and bias contrary to American political traditions and interests.

The General Assembly, as the Senate will recall, overruled the committee's decision and placed the question of Algeria on the agenda, causing the French delegates to walk out of the Assembly, the United States again voting against discussion of the issue. Two months later, of course, the matter was dropped and

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the French returned. In the 1956-57 session the United States again labored to bring about a compromise resolution postponing U. N. consideration for at least a year until the French had settled the matter as they saw fit.

This is not a record to view with pride as Independence Day approaches. No matter how complex the problems posed by the Algerian issue may be, the record of the United States in this case is, as elsewhere, a retreat from the principles of independence and anticolonialism, regardless of what diplomatic niceties, legal technicalities, or even strategic considerations are offered in its defense. The record is even more dismal when we turn to the period of several years to follow, when U. N. consideration of the Tunisian and Moroccan questions.

NOW SUBJECT ARE THE OBJECTS TO MY ANTI-COLONIALIST CAMPAIGN.

I realize that no magic touchstone of "anticolonialism" can overcome the tremendous obstacles which must confront any early settlement relating to the Algerian and Tunisian or Moroccan questions and which must distinguish them from the Tunisians or Moroccans. But let us consider the long-range significance of these objections and obstacles, to determine whether our State Department should remain bound by them.

First, the first obstacle is the assertion that Algeria is legally an integral part of metropolitan France and could no more be cut loose than Texas could be severed from the United States, an argument used not only by France but by American spokesmen claiming concern over any U. N. precedent affecting our own internal affairs. But this objection has been largely defeated by the French themselves, as I shall discuss in a moment, as well as by the pace of developments which have forced Algeria to become an international issue, as I have already pointed out. I believe it will be the most important issue on the agenda of the United Nations this fall.

Second, the second hurdle is posed by the unusually large and justifiably alarmed French population in Algeria, who fear for their rights as French citizens, their property, and their lives, and who compare their situation to that of American colonists who drove back the native Indians. Their problem, in my opinion, is one deserving of special recog-

nition in a final settlement in Algeria, but it does not reduce the necessity to move forward quickly toward such a settlement. On the contrary, the danger to their rights and safety increases the longer such a settlement—which in the end is inevitable—is postponed.

Third, the next objection most frequently raised is the aid and comfort which any reasonable settlement would give to the extremists, terrorists, and saboteurs that permeate the nationalist movement, to the Communist, Egyptian, and other outside antwestern provocateurs that have clearly achieved some success in perverting the movement. The objection is that by not taking the correct line it is not right to "negotiate with murderers." Yet, once again this is a problem which neither postponement nor attempted conquest can solve. The fever chart of every successful revolution—including of course, the French—reveals a rising temperature of terrorism and counterterrorism; but this does not of itself invalidate the legitimate goals that fired the original revolution. Most political revolutions—including our own—have been buoyed by outside aid in men, weapons, and ideas. Instead of abandoning African nationalism to the antwestern agitators and Soviet agents who hope to capture its leadership, the United States, a product of political revolution, must redouble its efforts to earn the respect and friendship of nationalist leaders.

Fourth, finally, objection is raised to negotiating with a nationalist movement that lacks a single cohesive point of leadership, focus, and direction, as the Tunisians had with Habib Bourguiba, or as the Moroccans certainly had after the foolish and self-defeating deposition of Sultan Ben Youssef in 1953—now Mohammed V of Morocco. The lack, moreover, of complete racial homogeneity among the African Algerians has been reflected in cleavages in the nationalist forces. The Algerians are not yet ready to rule their own country, it is said, on a genuine and permanent basis, without the trained leaders and experts every modern state requires. But these objections come with ill grace from a French government that has deliberately seized educational opportunities for Algerian students, jailed, exiled or executed their leaders, and outlawed their political parties and activities. The same objec-

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tions were heard in the cases of Tunisia and Morocco—where self-government has brought neither economic chaos, racial terrorism, or political anarchy, and the problem of the plural society, moreover is now the general, and not the exceptional, case in Africa.

Should we antagonize our French allies over Algeria? The most important reason we have sided with the French in Algeria and north Africa is our reluctance to antagonize a traditional friend and important ally in her hour of crisis. We have been understandably troubled by France's alarmist responses to all proposals for independence, by her warning that the only possible consequences are political and economic ruin, "the sulfurous or the coffin."

Yet, did we not learn in Indochina, where we delayed action as the result of similar warnings, that we might have served both the French and our own causes infinitely better, had we taken a more firm stand much earlier than we did? Did that tragic episode not teach us that, whether France likes it or not, their overseas territories are sooner or later, one by one, inevitably going to break free and look with suspicion on the Western nations who impeded their steps to independence? In the words of Turgot:

Colonies are like fruit which cling to the tree only till they ripen.

I want to emphasize that I do not fail to appreciate the difficulties of our hard-pressed French allies. It is easier the imagination to realize that France is one nation that has been in a continuous state of war since 1899—against the Axis, then in Syria in 1939—against the Axis, in Tunisia, in Algeria. It has naturally not been easy for most Frenchmen to watch the successive withdrawals from Damascus, Hanoi, Saigon, Pondicherry, Tunis, and Rabat. With each departure a grand myth has been more and more deflated. But the problem is no longer to save a myth of French empire. The problem is to save the French nation, as well as free Africa.

Mr. President, no amount of mutual politeness, wishful thinking, nostalgia, or regret should blind either France or the United States to the fact that, if France and the West at large are to have a continuing influence in North Africa—and I

certainly favor a continuation of French influence in that area—then the essential first step is the independence of Algeria about the lines of Morocco and Tunisia. If concrete steps are taken in this direction, the United States and France will find themselves in a position where they will inevitably only be a hollow memory and a feeble failure. As Mr. David Schoonman, in his recent excellent volume "As France Goes" cogently argues: France must either gamble on the friendship of a free North Africa or get out of North Africa completely. It should be evident after the Egyptian fiasco that France cannot impose her will upon some 22 million Africans indefinitely. Sooner or later the French will have to recognize the character of the people, the character of the character in terms of men, money, and a chance to salvage something from the wreckage of the French Union.

Indeed, the one ray of hope that emerges from this otherwise dark picture is the indication that the French have acknowledged the bankruptcy in their Algerian policy however they may resent our saying so, by legislating extremely far-reaching and generous measures for greater self-government in French West Africa. Here, under the guidance of M. Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the first Negro cabinet minister in French history, the French Government took significant action by establishing a single college electoral system, which Algeria has never had, and, by providing universal suffrage, a wide measure of decentralized government, and internal self-control. Here realistic forward steps are being taken to fuse nationalist aspirations into a gradual and measurable evolution of political freedom.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN INDUSTRY, TUNISIA, AND MOROCCO?

Not only the French, however, needed to be convinced of the ultimate futility and cost of an Algerian-type struggle. The United States and other western allies poured money and material into Indochina in a hopeless attempt to save for the French a land that did not want to be saved. In a war in which the enemy was both everywhere and nowhere at the same time, as I pointed out to the Congress on several occasions, we accepted years the predictions that victory was just around the corner, the promises that Indochina would soon be set free, the arguments that this was a question for the French alone.

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And even after we had witnessed the tragic consequences of our recitation, in terms not only of Communist gain but the decline of our political effectiveness, we still listened to the same predictions, the same promises and the same arguments in Tunisia and Morocco. The strong pro-French bent in each of these countries today despite beruelling offers from the Communist East, is a tribute to the leadership of such men as Prime Minister Bourguiba, whose years in French confinement never dimmed his appreciation of Western democratic values.

Certainly the French cannot claim sole credit for this prowestern orientation. Although in Tunisia, and even more in Morocco, which has a far more diversified and flexible economy, the French left impressive testimony of economic achievement, the fruits of this progress were by no means equitably distributed through the native populations; and there was almost no parallel growth of educational and political opportunity. Though a nationalist political party—the Istiqlal in Morocco and the Neo-Destour in Tunisia—gathered force in each country, they were cramped by close French surveillance, by long periods of illegality, by the arrest, isolation, or imprisonment of almost every important political leader, and by a lack of opportunity to share real political responsibility. Trade unions, which in Africa provide one of the best pools of political experience, were given little freedom for development.

In the years after the Second World War a succession of military commanders and resident-generals in both Tunis and Rabat seemed to look upon their missions in north Africa as primarily concerned with public order, the suppression of dissent by force, and the plunging up of nationalist outbreaks. The Istiqlal Party was suppressed outright from 1952 to 1954, while no effective Moroccan press was allowed to publish outside of French and Spanish restraint. Liberty was as low as 10 percent among Tunisians, only somewhat higher among Moroccans.

Two years prior to the achievement of Moroccan independence, the French called the Sultan and replaced him with the puppet Ben Aradj, thus creating a sure of the French and of El Ghoul, the

Pasha of Marrakech, who had conspired with Marshal Juin to depose the Sultan. These crude steps, the attempt to impose a military solution on Morocco and the sabotage by the French Government and "colons" of the only genuine reform effort of Resident General Grandval in 1955, in fact insured the independence of Morocco. For opinion decisively rallied to the side of the exiled Sultan, and the French had increasing difficulty in dealing with the Moroccan Army of Liberation and the underground tactics of the Istiqlal Party.

In Tunisia the garrison policy of the French was not quite as vindictive and thorough—but no real concessions were made, and the leader of the Tunisian Neo-Destour Party, Bourguiba, was kept in isolation.

THE UNITED STATES RECORD ON TUNISIA AND MOROCCO

Unfortunately the Tunisians and the Moroccans also know they owe little, if anything, to the United States for their new-found freedom. To be sure, we hedged our consistent backing of the French position with occasional pieties about ultimate self-government and hopes for just solutions. And, fortunately, our Government did not offer recognition to the French-sponsored Ben Yrain after the deposition of Sultan Ben had conferred at the time of the Casablanca Conference. But in the series of United Nations conferences on Tunisia and Morocco, the United States, in vote after vote, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, refused to deal with these issues, or after this argument had petrified, that to do so would only inflame the situation. In short, on every single U. N. vote concerning the issues of Morocco and Tunisia, we failed to vote against the French and with the so-called anticolonial nations of Asia and Africa even once.

TUNISIA, MOROCCO, AND THE WEST TODAY
Fortunately for the United States and France and in spite of—not because of—our past records, neither Tunisia nor Morocco has a natural proclivity toward either Moscow, Peking, or Cairo today. But it is apparent, nevertheless, that the latter constitute possible alternate magnets if the Western nations become too parental or tyrannical. In Tunisia, the

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political opposition to Premier Bourguiba, led by the self-styled Sultan Ben Youssef, is clearly seeking to implore the support of the Egyptian and Russian Governments. In Morocco the revolutionary and traditionalist forces which could come to power if the present West-ern-minded government falls, seems to be groping for support in Cairo, and probably Moscow as well, and we in this country are finally fully aware of the fact that Russia possesses an effective repertoire of economic inducements and political tricks; that Egypt appeals persuasively in the name of African nationalism, for China offers nations emerging from a colonial state a ready answer on how to achieve quickly the transition from economic backwardness to economic strength.

United States policies in these areas—to provide an effective alternative to these forces, who aided Tunisian and Moroccan independence while we remained silent—cannot be tied any longer to the French, who seek to make their economic aid and political negotiations dependent upon the recipient's attitude toward Algeria. We cannot temporize as long as we did last year over emergency wheat to Tunisia. We cannot offer these struggling nations economic aid so far below their needs, so small a fraction of what we offered some of their friendly neighbors that even so staunch a friend as Premier Bourguiba was forced to reject Ambassador Richards' original offer—just as he had rejected an offer of \$75 million in Morocco, 600,000 aid has fallen short of the new nation's basic needs.

We must, on the other hand, avoid the temptation to initiate the Communist program, promising these new nations automatic increases and quick cures for economic distress, which and only too readily to subverting their governments. But we can realistically contribute to these programs which will generate a sizeable economic strength as well as give relief from famine, drought, and catastrophe. The further use of agricultural surpluses, and the new revolving loan fund making possible long-term planning and commitment, should be especially well-suited to the requirements of Morocco and Tunisia, which have moved beyond the point of most underdevel-

tempts to suppress local critical news-paper and public comment.

Second, the French have continued to tell the U. N. of their present and proposed economic and social reforms in Algeria, promising a better life for all if they can ever end the fighting. It is true that the French have finally opened up greater employment opportunities for the Moslems, have expropriated some land for redistribution, and have made some efforts to increase wages of agricultural workers. But the largeness of these reforms, and the narrow-mindedness of the French minority in Algeria which over the past 20 years defeated the reform efforts of the Algerian Moslems, have moved so far, and to take root, only that these palliative efforts are too little and too late for a situation of how can we accept the lesson of all nationalist movements that economic and social reforms, even if honestly sponsored and effectively administered, do not solve or satisfy the quest for freedom. Most peoples, in fact, appear willing to pay a price in economic progress in order to achieve political independence.

Third and finally, the French conception of settlement has stubbornly adhered to the concept of Algerian incorporation within France itself. This area, it should be recalled, was taken only by the French a little more than a century ago—the southern desert area has always been governed from Paris like a crown colony—and although the populous and fertile northern coastland was legally made a part of France in 1871, native Algerians were not made French citizens until 1947. Even then, that move was made to cement French control rather than to grant equality, for at the same time a system of electoral representation in the French National Assembly and Algerian Assembly was established giving equal power to 2 strictly separated electoral groups—1 consisting of over 7 million Algerians and the other consisting of some 1 million French citizens. Only 75,000 African Algerians had full voting rights—and only 30 seats from Algeria, mostly filled by French politicians, were elected to the French National Assembly. Given those seats are vacant now, of course, the 1958 elections not having been extended to crisis-torn Algeria.)

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they did regarding Indochina in 1954. The so-called pacification policy of M. Lacoche does consist of more imaginative measures than simple military repression, since it attempts to combine the elimination of rebel and terrorist activity in individual localities with measures of social reform and reconstruction. But the rebellion is now too contagious to be treated by pacification methods, even if the French could afford to increase substantially the manpower already poured into the area, and despite the steady stream of optimistic French commu-

For, as General Wingate wisely pointed out in the last war, "Given a population favorable to penetration, a thousand resolute and well-armed men can paralyze for an indefinite period the operations of a hundred thousand"; and this is precisely what has happened in Algeria. The French had to look to the Algerian Moslems for the kind of militarily checkmated when in fact each identifiable rebel has behind him the silent or half-articulate support of many other Algerians. Thus, nearly half a million valiant French soldiers face an enemy with no organized forces, no acceptable strategy, no military installations, and no identifiable lines of supply. They themselves fight not with the zeal with which they defend their own liberty, but fight in vain—and it has throughout history been in vain to curb the liberty of another people.

The United States, contributing to French military strength and refusing to urge mediation of a cease-fire, has apparently swallowed the long series of counterstatements offered by the French suggesting why the war in Algeria did not end long ago. From time to time we have been told that the war was being kept alive only because of interference and meddling by Colonel Nasser, that the rebellion was active only to gain the attention of the United Nations, or because of help from Morocco and Tunisia, or because of unwarranted interference by American shirshavee diplomats and journalists, or finally because of Russian and Communist meddling in Algeria. None of these explanations which seek to make outsiders the real agents of the Algerian rebellion carries much conviction any longer, even to the French, as shown in the multiplicity of recent at-

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oped states but not yet attained the strength of most Western economies. Another step which we can take immediately, of the highest priority yet small in cost, is to step up considerably the number of young people of North Africa who have so far come to the United States for higher education and technical training, and to increase our own educational and training missions in that area. The building up of a national civil service, a managerial talent, and a pool of skilled tradesmen and professionals is an immediate prerequisite for these countries—and the addition of even a few trained administrators, engineers, doctors, and educators will pay off many times over in progress, stability, and good will.

In these ways, we can help fulfill a great and pending opportunity to show Arab and Muslim nations, with an Arab heritage, can establish itself in the Western tradition and successfully withstand both the pull toward Arab feudalism and fanaticism and the pull toward Communist authoritarianism.

WHAT ARE THE PRESENT ELEMENTS OF A SETTLEMENT IN ALGERIA?

The lessons of Tunisia and Morocco, like the lesson of Indochina before them, constitute, I hope, the final evidence of the futility of the present French course in Algeria and the danger of the present frozen American posture. Preempt settlement is an urgent necessity—for north Africa, for France, for the United States, NATO, and the Western World. Yet what are the elements of "settlement" put forward from time to time by the French, in which we have placed our faith? They are three: First, military reconquest or pacification; second, social and economic reform; and third, political union with France.

I respectfully suggest that these three elements represent no settlement at all, that the continual emphasis upon them is only postponing, not hastening, the day of final reckoning. Permit me to examine each point briefly.

First is the French insistence upon pacification of the area, in reality reconquest, before further talks proceed, a policy which only makes both settlement and a cease-fire less likely. For to encourage the Nationalists to assume that they are in a sense of assurance in which they are sure of the success and tenacity of French politicians will finally snap as

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The result of this gap between word and deed, and the continued reluctance of the French to permit more than spasmodic and slight reforms at the expense of vested interests in France and Algeria, has been to alienate most sections of Algerian opinion so that assassination is now a fruitless line of effort. There has been a progressive increase in the number of African Algerians, once committed to a program of integration with France, who have renounced and joined the movement for independence (the most notable instance, of course, of Ferhat Abbas, one of the ablest nationalist leaders, who long argued for the assimilationist approach and did not wholly despair of such a settlement until shortly before 1956, when he joined the National Liberation Front).

Had there been consistent progress in extending to all Algerians political equality and opportunity, so that over a reasonable period of time there would have been a common standard of French citizenship, and had a steady effort been made to enlarge the political rights which were at least inherent in the 1947 statute for Algeria, it is possible that a responsible solution could have been reached. As late as 2 years ago a promise—with a specific date lag on it—that would have given genuinely equal voting rights to the French National Assembly, and at least parity in Algerian municipal government, might well have won general Moslem support. But the French were unwilling to see as many as 100 Moslem deputies in Parliament and to provide—at a cost no greater than the strict Algerian war—common social services and education. And it is this failure on the part of the French to accept the consequences of their own conception that has closed the door forever on the possibility of a true French Union, and made Algeria irrevocably an aspect of the broader search for political independence in Africa. Moreover, nationalism in Africa cannot be evaluated purely in terms of the historical and legal niceties argued by the State Department, far accepted by the State Department. National self-identification frequently takes place by quick combustion which the rain of repression simply cannot extinguish, especially in an area where there is a common Islamic heritage and where most people—including Algeria's closest neighbors in Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya—have all gained political in-

dependence. New nationhood is recorded in quick succession—Ghana yesterday, Nigeria perhaps tomorrow, and colonies in central Africa moving into dominion status. Whatever the history and lawbooks may say, we cannot evade the evidence of our own time especially we in the Americas whose own experiences furnish a model from which many of these new nations draw inspiration. **WHAT COURSE SHOULD THE UNITED STATES ADOPT IN ALGERIA?**

And thus I return, Mr. President, to the point at which I began this analysis. The time has come when our Government must recognize that this is no longer a French problem alone; and that the time has passed, where a series of piecemeal adjustments, or even a last attempt to incorporate Algeria fully within France, can succeed. The time has come for the United States to face the harsh realities of the situation and to fulfill its responsibilities as leader of the free world. It is in NATO in the administration of our aid program and in the exercise of our diplomacy—in shaping a course toward Political Independence for Algeria.

It should not be the purpose of our government to impose a solution on either side, but to make a contribution toward breaking the vicious circle in which the Algerian controversy whirls. Nor do I insist that the cumbersome procedures of the U. N. are necessarily best adapted to the settlement of a dispute of this sort. But, direct United Nations recommendation and action would be preferable to the current lack of treatment the problem is receiving; and in any event, when the case appears on the U. N. agenda again, the United States must drastically revise the Dillon-Lodge position in which our policy has been constricted too long.

Moreover, though the resolution which was adopted at the last session in general gave backing to the French effort to localize the dispute, there was nonetheless a proviso—a proviso which served to warn to that measure. It is a measure which I put France on a provisional status and I warn to that measure. I have now come to the Assembly. We have now come to the halfway point of this interim period, and the situation has only further deteriorated. To prevent a still more difficult situation in the fall session, our State Department should now be

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seeking ways of breaking the present stalemate. And I am asking this body, as it has successfully done before in cases of Indonesia and Indo China, to offer guidance to the administration and leadership to the world on this crucial issue.

I am submitting today a resolution which I believe outlines the best hopes for peace and settlement in Algeria. It urges, in brief, that the President and Secretary of State be strongly encouraged to place the influence of the United States behind efforts to bring about the good offices of the Prime Minister of Tunisia and the Sultan of Morocco, to achieve a solution which will recognize the independent personality of Algeria and establish the basis for a settlement interdependent with France and the neighboring nations.

This resolution conveys my conviction that it should not be impossible to break a deadlock in a matter of such close concern to NATO and to mediatory forces in the rest of north Africa. The governments of Tunisia and Morocco, neither members of the Arab League and each concerned to continue western connections, provide the best hope, and indeed, they furnished such help, as already noted, last summer and early fall. Two weeks ago M. Bourguiba again made an appeal for an Algerian solution within an overall French oriented north African federation. Even the Indian Government, often assumed to be spokesman of nationalism for nationalism's sake, offered last summer to act as a possible intermediary in a solution which would grant political independence to Algeria but confirm special protections for French citizens and to place Algeria in a special economic federation with France.

Neither reasonable mediators nor reasonable grounds for mediation are impossible to find. The problem in Algeria is to devise a framework of political, economic interdependence with France. This is not an illusory goal. Algerian Nationalist leaders are mostly French speaking; Algeria has an inherent interest in continued economic and cultural ties with France as well as in western aid generally. But these natural links with France will ebb away if a change is not soon made. Last November, when

Algeria was under U. N. consideration, Premier Bourguiba expressed the anguish which admits the responsible nationalistic of north Africa on the Algerian question:

The voice of free Tunisia will be strident France but it would be a mistake to believe that we are happy about this conflict. I had hoped sincerely that Tunisia would be a bridge between the Occident and the Orient and that our first independent vote would be cast in support of the Algerian position that has proved to be impossible. I still cannot bring myself to despair, for the first time in my life, of the wisdom of the French people and their government. The day may perhaps yet come, if the government of the Republic acts swiftly enough, when French citizens will be able to help defend in and around the United States the interests of a French North African Confederation.

The United States must be prepared to lend all efforts to such a settlement, and to assist in the economic problems which will flow from it. This is not a burden which we lightly or flinchily assume. But our efforts in no other circumstances are seeking the initiative in foreign affairs, demonstrating our adherence to the principles of national independence and winning the respect of those long suspicious of our negative and vacillating record on colonial issues.

It is particularly important, inasmuch as Hungary will be a primary issue at the United Nations meeting this fall, that the United States clear the air and take a clear position on this issue, on which we have been vulnerable in the past. And we must make it abundantly clear to the French as well as the North Africans that we seek no economic advantages for ourselves in that area, no opportunities to replace French economic ties or exploit African resources.

If we are to secure the friendship of the Arab, the African, and the Asian—and we must, despite what Mr. Dulles says about our not being in a popularity contest—we cannot hope to accomplish it solely by means of billion-dollar foreign aid programs. We cannot win their hearts by making them dependent upon our handouts. Nor can we keep them free by selling them free enterprise, by denouncing the Perils of communism, or limiting our charges to military aid. No, the strength of our policy must be in the key population—and it is in that our appeal, and not that of the Commu-

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plaints—in our traditional and deeply felt philosophy of freedom and independence for all peoples everywhere.

Perhaps it is already too late for the United States to save the life from the total catastrophe in Algeria. Perhaps it is too late to hope for a change in our policies on these issues, to repudiate the decades of antiwestern suspicion, to press firmly but boldly for a generalization of friendship among equal and independent states. But we have not failed to make the effort.

Men's hearts wait upon us—
Said Woodrow Wilson in 1913—
Men's lives hang in the balance; men's hopes call upon us to say what we will do, and what will live up to the great trust? Who dare fail to try?

Algeria
or
SPEECH

HON. JOHN F. KENNEDY
OF MASSACHUSETTS
IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES
Monday, July 8, 1957

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I wish to reply briefly to the criticisms of my recent speech on Algeria delivered yesterday by the French Minister for Algeria, Robert LaCoste, and by others who have joined in that new criticism. I might say at the outset that I was fully aware, when preparing my speech of last Tuesday, of the disfavor with which it would be regarded by our Department of State, the French Government, and others; but I felt nevertheless that the facts set forth by me needed to be stated fully and frankly.

The reaction to my remarks both at home and abroad has further strengthened my conviction that the situation in Algeria is drifting dangerously, with the French authorities reluctant to seek a fresh approach, and our American authorities refusing to recognize the grave international implications of this impasse. No amount of hopeful assertions that France will handle the problem with no amount of cautious warnings that things are matters best left unmentioned in public, and no amount of charges against the motives or meth-

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eds of those of us seeking a peaceful solution can obscure the fact that the Algerians will they turn to the West which has seemingly ignored their plea for independence to the Americans whom they may feel have rejected the issue as none of our affair while at the same time furnishing arms that help crush them; or to Moscow, to Cairo, to Peking, and the pretended champions of nationalism and independence?

And who, by that time, will be leading the Algerians—the moderates with a prowestern orientation with whom negotiations might still be conducted now, or the extremists, terrorists, and outside provocateurs who inevitably capture such a movement as the conflict drags on? Finally, what will such a settlement in Algeria at some distant date mean to France then? Will it not mean the loss of all her economic, political, and cultural ties in north Africa which could still be salvaged in a settlement today? Will it not mean that France will have suffered a weakened economy, a decimated army and a series of unstable governments only to learn once again—as she learned too late in Indochina, Tunisia, and Morocco—that man's desire to be free and independent is the most powerful force in the world today?

Of course Algeria is a complicated problem. Of course, we should not assume full responsibility for that problem's solution in France's stead. And, of course, the Soviet Union is guilty of far worse examples of imperialism. But we cannot long ignore as being none of our business, or as a French internal problem, a struggle for independence that has been and will be a major issue before the U. N. that has denuded NATO of its armies, drained the resources of our French allies, threatened the continuation of western influence and bases in north Africa and bitterly split the free world we claim to be leading.

The Algerian situation is a deadly time bomb steadily ticking toward the day when another disaster to the free world—worse than Indochina—might erupt. The roll is called on Algeria this fall in the United Nations, as it must inevitably be in this Nation will be forced to face this issue publicly. If no reasonable proposal for settlement has

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by then been put forward by the French and encouraged by the West, will we be able to do this? The General Assembly in all sincerity that progress has been made? Will we again vote a check at the anticolonial bloc that controls the world balance of power? Or will we finally take back from the Soviets the leadership that is rightfully ours of the worldwide movement for freedom and independence?

I repeat my opening observations of last Tuesday: We dare not overlook in our concern over legal and diplomatic niceties, the powerful force of man's eternal desire to be free and independent. The worldwide struggle against imperialism, the sweep of nationalism, is the most potent factor in foreign affairs today. We can resist it or ignore it, but only for a little while; we can see it exploited by the Soviets, with grave consequences; or we in this country can give it hope and leadership, and thus improve immeasurably our standing and our security.

Mr. HUMPHREY. Mr. President, will the Senator yield?

Mr. KENNEDY. I yield.

Mr. HUMPHREY. I was unable to be present in the Senate at the time the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts made his original statement on Algeria. However, I have read it and have discussed it privately with the Senator from Massachusetts. I feel he has performed a service to the cause of American foreign policy, of human freedom, and national independence for peoples who long for it and are looking forward to that eventful day.

The fact that the Senator from Massachusetts has received criticism from some quarters is indicative of the quality, soundness, and persuasiveness of his remarks. I am happy to associate myself with the endeavors of the Senator from Massachusetts. The people of France can find no better friends than the United States Senate or the United States of America. We admire and respect our faithful and trusted friend and ally, the Republic of France. Our views are expressed not as anti-French, but as a recognition of what is taking place in the 20th century. It is the benefit of the people of France and to the free peoples everywhere that there be free and open discussion of these delicate and complex issues of foreign policy. We seek to cooperate not dominate. In

the spirit of friendship to France we seek to advise not chastise. How both Americans and Frenchmen alike both bolstering in liberty, equality, and fraternity, cannot honorably and logically deny or resist the legitimate aspiration of people for self-determination, freedom, and independence.

Mr. KENNEDY. I thank the Senator from Minnesota. He knows from his experience in the United Nations what we adopted in the Hungarian resolution, we sought power to condemn Soviet imperialism. What will be the decision of the United States when a resolution relating to Algerian independence is put forward, as it inevitably will be? We cannot vote "yes" in one instance and abstain from voting "yes" in another.

Resolved, That, taking cognizance of the Senate Resolution 153
SENATE RESOLUTION 153
Resolved, That, taking cognizance of the war in Algeria, its repression of legitimate achievement of independence.

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nationalist aspirations, its growing contamination of good relations between the nations of north Africa and the West, its widening erosion of the effective strength of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the mounting international concern it has aroused in the United Nations, the President and Secretary of State be and hereby are urged to lead the United States to join with the United States, to lead the United States through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or through the good offices of the Prime Minister of Tunisia and the Sultan of Morocco, to achieve a solution which will recognize the independent personality of Algeria and establish the basis for a settlement interdependent with France and the neighboring nations, and be it further

Resolved, That if no substantial progress has been noted by the time of the next United Nations General Assembly session, the United States support an international effort to determine for Algeria the basis for an orderly achievement of independence.