

## Editor's Note

Welcome to the first issue of the Maghreb Center Journal. It will be published on a yearly basis to shed light on current political, economic, cultural and international relations issues affecting the countries of North Africa and pertinent to today's policy debates. Each issue will focus on a Maghrebi country or given theme. Algeria has been selected as the topic for this Spring/Summer 2010 issue.

The contributions lead off with a paper by Amel Boubekeur, from the Carnegie Middle East Center, and the Ecole Normale Supérieure and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. She offers a detailed review of the Islamist movements in Algeria and the process of their integration into the Algerian political system. This has contributed significantly to a decline in political violence, and to the stabilization of the country after years of quasi-civil war.

The Algerian economy relies heavily on a single major export, petroleum and natural gas. To promote economic diversification, the Algerian government has adopted policies that include its 2009 foreign direct investment regime. José G. Gijón-Spalla, an economist at the International Monetary Fund writing in a personal capacity, examines the potential effects of the new FDI rules. To provide useful policy lessons, he presents two examples of commodity exporters that have pursued successful export diversification strategies: Chile and Malaysia. Both share certain common features with Algeria, and relied heavily on FDI to foster diversification and become less vulnerable to trade shocks.

Hakim Darbouche, from the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, provides an overview of the evolution of EU-Algerian relations since 1995 in "Energising EU-Algerian Relations". He examines the energy factor and its potential to optimize relationships between Algeria and its European neighbors across the Mediterranean.

Yahia H. Zoubir, from Euromed Marseille School of Management, examines US-Algeria relations since the North African country attained independence in the early 1960s, as well as their future prospects, through an analysis of the determinants of Algerian foreign policy. He delves into US interests relating to energy supplies, relations with Morocco, the Western Sahara issue, the emergence of political Islam, the events of September 11th and trans-Saharan security issues.

Jacob Mundy, from the University of Exeter, observes that "the Algerian regime's stake in the Western Sahara conflict has been one of the most contested yet little understood aspects of the three-decades-old dispute between Morocco and Sahrawi nationalists." He traces the history of this support and highlights some lessons for the Western Sahara peace process.

For the Journal's book review section, Abdelmajid Hannoum, from the University of Kansas, contributes the essay "Writing Algeria: On the History and Culture of Colonialism." He considers three books: Patricia Lorcin's *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice and Race in Colonial Algeria* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996); James McDougall's *History and Culture of Nationalism in Algeria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Hugh Roberts' *The Battlefield Algeria 1988-2002: Studies in a Broken Polity* (London: Verso, 2003).

Francis Ghilès, from the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB), reviews two recent publications on Algeria: Pierre Daumon's *Un siècle de passions algériennes, Une Histoire de l'Algérie Coloniale 1830-1940* (Fayard 2009), and John W. Kiser's *The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader, A story of true Jihad* (Monkfish Book Publishing Co. 2008).

Finally, on the theme of De Gaulle and Algeria, Azzedine Layachi, from Saint John's University, reviews the most recent publication of the prominent historian of Algeria, Benjamin Stora: *Le mystère de Gaulle : Son choix pour l'Algérie* (Editions Robert Laffont 2009).

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