

“Algeria’s National Security Doctrine: Sovereignty, Resilience, and Regional Challenges”

العقيدة الأمنية الجزائرية: السيادة، المرونة، والتحديات الإقليمية

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Laboratory: Arab policy reform under the constraints of globalization

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الملخص:

شكل الأمن القومي الجزائري ركيزة أساسية ضمن استراتيجياتها الدفاعية والإقليمية، حيث تتعامل الجزائر مع مجموعة من التحديات الأمنية التي تتطلب تفاعلاً متكاملًا بين السياسة الداخلية والخارجية. في هذا السياق، تتبنى الجزائر عقيدة أمنية ترتكز على المبادئ الثابتة للسيادة الوطنية، استقلال القرار السيادي، وحماية التراث الوطني من مختلف أنواع التهديدات. تقوم الإستراتيجية الجزائرية على عدة مرتكزات أساسية، بما في ذلك ضمان الأمن الداخلي عبر تعزيز الاستقرار الاجتماعي والاقتصادي، ومواجهة التهديدات غير التقليدية مثل الإرهاب والجريمة المنظمة العابرة للحدود.

من خلال استراتيجيات دبلوماسية نشطة، تسعى الجزائر إلى تعزيز التعاون الإقليمي في مجال الأمن، مع التأكيد على ضرورة عدم التدخل الخارجي في شؤونها أو في شؤون دول المنطقة. كما تضع الجزائر ضمن أولوياتها الأمنية، الدفاع عن مصالحها الحيوية في مواجهة التحولات الجيو-سياسية والتهديدات الأمنية المتزايدة في محيطها الإقليمي، لا سيما في منطقة الساحل الإفريقي. في هذا الإطار، تتبنى الجزائر سياسة أمنية تهدف إلى تعزيز قدرتها على التكيف مع الواقع الأمني المتغير، مع الحفاظ على استقلالية قراراتها السياسي والعسكري

الكلمات المفتاحية: العقيدة الأمنية، الأمن الإقليمي، الأمن القومي، الجزائر، التحديات .

Abstract:

Algeria’s national security doctrine constitutes a cornerstone of its defense and regional strategic outlook. Positioned in a geopolitically sensitive environment, the country confronts a spectrum of security threats—both conventional and asymmetric—that necessitate a coherent integration of domestic stability policies and foreign policy imperatives. Anchored in core principles such as national sovereignty, strategic autonomy, and territorial integrity, Algeria’s security approach is multidimensional and proactive.

Key pillars of this doctrine include the consolidation of internal security through socio-economic resilience, and the strategic response to asymmetric and transnational threats, notably terrorism and organized crime. Algeria actively employs preventive diplomacy to

foster regional cooperation while firmly adhering to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states.

This study examines the foundational elements of Algeria’s security doctrine, including its categorical rejection of foreign military intervention, its refusal to negotiate with terrorist organizations, the institutional criminalization of ransom payments, the opposition to foreign military presence on national territory, the principle of preemptive deterrence, and the autonomy of military decision-making. The paper further analyzes the evolution of these principles in response to shifting regional and global security dynamics, particularly in the context of persistent crises in the Arab world and the African Sahel region

key words: Security doctrine, regional security, national security, Algeria, challenges.

Introduction:

Algeria, due to its strategic position in the heart of North Africa and the Sahel region, faces a dynamic and complex security environment, presenting significant challenges to its national security. In light of rapidly evolving geopolitical transformations, the threats Algeria faces are multifaceted, not limited to conventional military risks, but also encompassing non-traditional threats such as cross-border terrorism, organized crime, and irregular migration. Algeria is situated in a region that is inherently vulnerable in terms of security, where regional and political conflicts in neighboring countries, such as Libya and Mali, have a direct impact on its internal stability, further complicating the national security equation.

Algeria’s response to these challenges necessitates a comprehensive strategic review of its national security, based on flexible security approaches capable of adapting to the constantly changing regional and international landscape. In this context, Algeria’s security doctrine strongly emphasizes national sovereignty as a fundamental pillar, underscoring its commitment to maintaining independence in its political and military decisions while rejecting foreign intervention in its domestic or regional affairs. Furthermore, Algeria strives to preserve its internal stability by reinforcing social cohesion, as well as safeguarding its national borders, which are central to its security strategy.

One of the central concepts in Algeria’s security doctrine is preemptive deterrence, which translates into preventive measures aimed at averting threats before they materialize. This requires coordination between the armed forces and security agencies to address challenges before they escalate. Additionally, regional cooperation plays a crucial role in this strategy, particularly in the Sahel region, where terrorist threats are increasingly pervasive. In this context, Algeria seeks to strengthen its relationships with neighboring countries through enhanced regional security coordination, while remaining vigilant to preserve its national decision-making autonomy in the face of international pressures.

Therefore, Algeria faces the need to update and develop its security doctrine to address contemporary security challenges, while preserving its traditional strategies that ensure stability and sovereignty in an increasingly volatile regional and international environment.

Research Problem:

This research addresses the **conceptual and theoretical framework of Algerian national security**, by analyzing the **security approaches** adopted, as well as studying the **pillars of Algeria’s security doctrine** and the factors influencing its development,

with a focus on the **challenges facing Algerian security** in a complex regional and international context.

Thus, the main research problem is: **How can Algerian national security adapt to contemporary security challenges through the adopted security approaches, in light of the evolving regional and international environment?** And how can the **pillars of Algeria's security doctrine** contribute to strengthening **national sovereignty** and maintaining **internal stability** in the face of growing threats such as terrorism, regional conflicts, and international pressures?

To what extent can Algeria’s security approaches contribute to strengthening national security and safeguarding the country’s vital interests? And how can the **strategic pillars of national security** be activated to address these increasing challenges?

Research Hypothesis:

The Algerian national security is capable of adapting to contemporary security challenges through the development of its adopted security approaches, within the dynamic regional and international environment; and the pillars of the Algerian security doctrine can contribute to strengthening national sovereignty and maintaining internal stability in the face of increasing threats such as terrorism, regional conflicts, and international pressures

The main methodologies used in this study include:

1. The Analytical Method: This method serves as the foundation for understanding the internal components of the security doctrine. It involves disassembling the security doctrine into its core elements (principles, objectives, perceptions of threats) and analyzing the connections between them. It is also used to analyze official texts such as constitutions, strategic documents, and presidential speeches to identify fixed principles (like sovereignty and non-interference) and variable ones (like the flexibility of intervention outside borders).

2. The Historical Method: Since the security doctrine is rooted in the state's experiences, the Historical Method is essential for understanding its evolution. This involves tracing the stages of the security doctrine's development over time, starting from its founding (the post-independence and revolution period) through periods of major crises (the Black Decade, the Sahel crises), and up to the recent amendments. It also involves linking major historical events, such as the Libyan or Malian crises, to the adjustments made to Algeria's security principles, and analyzing how the "collective memory" (the history of the Liberation Revolution and the principle of non-alignment) influences current security decision-making

- Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical approaches addressing the Algerian security doctrine in this article constitute a theoretical framework that studies state behavior within the context of national security and international relations, taking into consideration the historical, geographical, and ideological underpinnings that form the core of the Algerian doctrine (such as the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention). These approaches are as follows:

1. Realism: This theory interprets Algeria's adherence to the principle of absolute sovereignty

and the rejection of foreign intervention as a mechanism to guarantee its national security and protect its vital interests in a turbulent region (the Maghreb and the Sahel). It also explains any amendments to the doctrine (such as the 2020 constitutional amendment allowing missions outside the borders) as a **pragmatic response** to new threats (terrorism and

organized crime in neighboring countries) to enhance its self-security.

2. Constructivist Approach: Here, threats and power are not defined purely materially; instead, they are constructed and interpreted through the state's **shared history** and **belief system**. This approach contributes to understanding the Algerian doctrine as a product of the **history of the Liberation Revolution** and the **principles of non-alignment**, which establish an identity defending just causes and rejecting hegemony. This identity shapes its concept of regional security and directs its foreign policy in the African continent.

3. Human Security Approach: Interest in the Human Security approach has recently emerged in the study of the Algerian security doctrine, especially with the expansion of the scope of threats. This approach shifts the concept of security from protecting the state to protecting the **individual** and their communities, encompassing economic, social, environmental, and health security, in addition to military security, mainly through combating poverty and enacting laws dealing with illegal immigration.

4. Role Theory: Role Theory is used to understand how decision-makers define their perceptions of the appropriate standing for the state in the regional and international system. It examines how foreign and security policymakers define the roles and missions their state should continuously perform. This theory analyzes Algeria's role as a "**regional power**" or "**middle power**," and explains its endeavor to export its security approach—based on dialogue and non-direct military intervention—to the Sahel countries as part of its self-concept of its role as a **balancing power** in the region.

- **Algeria’s Security Doctrine: Towards a Comprehensive and Adaptive National Security Strategy**

Algeria’s security approaches reflect a gradual evolution in its national security doctrine, shifting from a traditional military-centered paradigm toward a broader and more integrated conception of security. This multidimensional perspective incorporates political, economic, social, and technological dimensions as intrinsic components of national defense. Rooted in a historical legacy of sovereign resistance and a deep commitment to autonomy, Algeria’s security vision continuously adapts to a turbulent regional and international environment. This context compels the state to redefine its security priorities and develop flexible, forward-looking strategies capable of responding to emerging and complex threats

- **1.1- the Sovereignty-Based Approach: National Security as a Projection of State Sovereignty**

The sovereignty-based approach constitutes a central pillar in the architecture of Algeria’s national security doctrine. Sovereignty is not merely perceived as a legal principle safeguarding the independence of the state, but as a strategic compass that governs both its security and political decision-making processes. This approach draws its legitimacy from the historical legacy of Algeria’s anti-colonial war of liberation (1954–1962), which instilled in

the country a deep-rooted sensitivity to any form of external interference—military, political, or economic.

This doctrinal orientation manifests itself across multiple dimensions:

- ✓ **Rejection of Military Alliances and Foreign Coalitions:** Algeria remains firmly committed to the doctrine of "the three no's": *no intervention, no military alliances, no foreign military bases*. This position was clearly illustrated during the rise of transnational terrorist threats such as ISIS. Despite the real danger posed along its southern borders, Algeria refused to join the U.S.-led international coalition against terrorism in the Sahel. Instead, it opted to confront the threat autonomously, within the framework of its own sovereign vision and capabilities.
- ✓ **Total Opposition to Foreign Military Presence:** Algeria has consistently refused the establishment of any foreign military bases on its territory or in its immediate regional environment. This is codified in its official defense doctrine. According to the *National Defense Guide* issued by the Ministry of National Defense: “*National sovereignty is a red line that cannot be compromised under any pretext, including counterterrorism or cross-border threats*”¹
- ✓ **Balanced Bilateral Security Cooperation:** Algeria prefers bilateral security partnerships with neighboring states—such as Tunisia, Mali, and Niger—rather than multilateral alliances that may constrain its strategic autonomy. This preference is reflected in its limited engagement in the Sahel-Saharan regional security mechanisms, and its refusal to host foreign troops, in contrast to countries like Niger or Chad.
- ✓ **Constitutional Anchoring of the Principle of Sovereignty:** The 2020 constitutional reform formally enshrined sovereignty in Algeria’s legal framework. Article 31 bis of the revised constitution states: “*Algeria rejects interference in the internal affairs of states and conducts its defense and security policies independently, in a way that guarantees the protection of its territorial unity and full sovereignty.*” This demonstrates a clear transition from political orientation to constitutional doctrine.
- ✓ **A Realist Conceptual Foundation:** The sovereignty-based approach is theoretically grounded in classical realism in international relations, particularly as articulated by Hans Morgenthau. He argued that “the nation-state is not merely a rational actor, but a sovereign unit whose survival is inherently tied to the preservation of its security and autonomy.” Algeria’s security posture echoes this realist conviction by placing national sovereignty at the heart of its defense logic.

1.2- the Proactive Security Approach: Toward Strategic Preventive Engagement

The proactive security approach constitutes a strategic cornerstone in Algeria’s national security doctrine, representing a paradigmatic shift from reactive defense mechanisms to anticipatory and preventive security logic. This approach stems from Algeria’s acute understanding of the increasingly complex and volatile security environment that characterizes its geopolitical neighborhood, particularly the fragile transborder zones of the Sahel-Saharan region, which are vital to its national stability. Algeria’s proactive strategy operates on multiple operational and strategic fronts:

- ✓ **Early Warning and Strategic Foresight:** Algerian security institutions have invested in the development of early-warning mechanisms and foresight capabilities, often in collaboration with national strategic studies centers. These tools aim to anticipate emerging threats such as terrorism, arms trafficking, and irregular migration before they metastasize into systemic crises. This intelligence-driven posture is increasingly integrated into national public policy and security legislation.
- ✓ **Regional Operational Coordination through CEMOC:** The establishment of the Joint Operational General Staff Committee 2 in 2010, headquartered in Tamanrasset, is a hallmark of Algeria’s proactive vision. This structure facilitates real-time coordination between Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania to counter terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel. 3
- ✓ , CEMOC is a rare example of an African-led security architecture that prioritizes sovereign cooperation over external tutelage.
- ✓ **Integrated Border Security Strategy:** Algeria adopts a multi-layered strategy for securing its vast southern borders. This includes the deployment of specialized military units, the establishment of advanced monitoring outposts, and the incorporation of local tribal networks into the surveillance ecosystem. Advanced aerial surveillance and electronic monitoring systems complement the ground-based infrastructure to create a comprehensive early defense shield.
- ✓ **Linking Security with Development:** Algeria perceives insecurity in the borderlands not only as a military challenge but also as a socio-economic one. Therefore, it embraces a "developmental security" approach, wherein investment in infrastructure, employment, and basic services in vulnerable regions is seen as a preventive mechanism against radicalization and instability.
- **1.3: The Diplomatic-Security Approach: Promoting Regional Stability Through Peaceful Solutions**

Algeria believes in the pivotal role of diplomacy in addressing regional and global security threats, considering it a central tool for preventing conflicts and promoting stability in its geographical surroundings. This approach goes beyond direct military solutions, focusing on the use of peaceful and negotiable means to resolve crises. According to the 2020 Constitution, Article 31 emphasizes the principle of "settling disputes through diplomatic means," signaling Algeria's commitment to playing a leading role in addressing regional crises.4

- ✓ **Mediation in Regional Crises:** Algeria actively contributes to mediation efforts in crises that threaten the stability of the Maghreb and Sahel region, particularly in countries such as Libya, Mali, and Niger. Algeria, based on the principle of "dialogue first," avoids direct military intervention and instead pushes for finding consensual solutions between conflicting parties. This diplomatic approach aligns with Algeria's security strategy, which prioritizes strengthening friendly relations and regional cooperation as a fundamental mechanism for building sustainable regional security.
- ✓ **Algeria's Participation in Regional and International Organizations:** Algeria continues to engage actively in regional and international organizations such as the African Union, where it prioritizes peaceful mediation. For example, Algeria contributed to resolving the Mali conflict by providing a platform for dialogue

between the conflicting parties, while its participation in the African Peace and Security Council demonstrates its strong commitment to collective security cooperation.

The diplomatic-security approach of Algeria demonstrates a commitment to the concept of "security through cooperation," where peaceful solutions are seen as the foundation for regional stability, avoiding military solutions that may complicate matters further.

- **1.4: The Defensive Military Approach: Modernizing Defense Capabilities to Secure National Borders**

Algeria places great importance on the modernization of its defense systems to safeguard its vast territorial expanse and extensive borders. The National People's Army (NPA) plays a central role in executing this approach, through the enhancement of combat capabilities, operational readiness, and the adoption of asymmetric warfare techniques to counter threats such as terrorism, smuggling, and cyber warfare. According to the Algerian Army magazine (2023), "Adapting to new patterns of warfare is critical, as these now include cyberattacks and information warfare, beyond just conventional military clashes" ⁵

- ✓ **Strengthening Operational Readiness:** Algeria's military strategy focuses on maintaining high levels of preparedness to respond to both conventional and unconventional security challenges. The NPA's continuous modernization includes investment in advanced technologies and training to handle hybrid threats. The capacity for rapid mobilization and deployment in critical regions, particularly along the southern borders, reflects the proactive military posture of Algeria.
- ✓ **Asymmetric Warfare and Non-traditional Threats:** The evolving security landscape necessitates the development of capabilities to confront non-traditional threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, and the trafficking of illicit goods. The NPA has incorporated specialized units to address these challenges, emphasizing the need for a flexible, agile response framework. Additionally, Algeria's participation in joint military exercises with regional partners helps to bolster its defensive capabilities and increase interoperability in counter-terrorism operations.

Algeria's defensive military approach seeks to integrate modern technological advancements with traditional military strength, ensuring the country is adequately prepared to defend its sovereignty against an array of evolving threats.

- **1.5: The Socio-Economic Approach: Linking Security with Development to Achieve Internal Stability**

Algeria views security not only from a military perspective but also from a developmental angle, recognizing that social vulnerabilities provide fertile ground for security tensions. Therefore, the national security approach also includes policies aimed at combating poverty, unemployment, and social instability within a comprehensive vision.

- ✓ **Combating Poverty and Promoting Social Justice:** Algeria works to improve the living standards of its citizens, particularly in vulnerable areas, where providing job opportunities, education, and healthcare services is part of the security strategy. These policies aim to reduce economic and social disparities that may fuel political or social unrest.
- ✓ **Security through Development:** The role of developmental security in addressing factors leading to political and social violence is central. The "Human Security Report in Algeria" ⁶ stated that "the lack of social justice and economic inequalities can transform into structural

threats to internal security," highlighting the need for a holistic approach that integrates security with development efforts.

Based on this approach, Algeria seeks to balance security and social justice, thereby strengthening internal stability and reducing the risks that may arise from economic and social disturbances.

- **The Legal Approach: Strengthening Legal Frameworks to Combat Transnational Threats**

Algeria has established a robust legal framework to address contemporary security threats, particularly those that transcend national borders. By signing multiple international agreements and adapting national legislation, Algeria seeks to enhance its ability to combat terrorism, corruption, human trafficking, and other transnational crimes.

- ✓ **Anti-Corruption and Counter-Terrorism Legislation:** Algeria has adopted stringent laws to address corruption and terrorism, aligning its legal frameworks with international standards, such as the United Nations conventions on terrorism. The implementation of Law No. 06-01 on Anti-Corruption ensures transparency and accountability within the security sector.
- ✓ **Cross-border Security Cooperation:** Algeria's legal approach also extends to cross-border cooperation, where the country has actively participated in regional treaties and conventions to combat trafficking networks and organized crime. This transnational legal collaboration strengthens its position in regional security frameworks.

- **1.6: The Regional and International Approach: Enhancing Security through Shared Cooperation**

Despite its strong commitment to the principle of non-intervention, Algeria remains open to security cooperation within regional and continental organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the African Peace and Security Council (PSC). Algeria has been actively involved in peacekeeping missions and has contributed to strengthening the security capacities of Sahelian countries.

- ✓ **Regional Security Collaboration:** Algeria participates in joint operations aimed at countering terrorist groups and ensuring regional stability. Its involvement in the AU Peace and Security Council illustrates its strategic investment in collaborative security arrangements.
- ✓ **Security Partnerships:** Algeria’s security approach is characterized by a commitment to shared regional security, where the focus is on joint efforts rather than unilateral actions. This cooperation has contributed to a more stable and integrated security environment in North Africa and the Sahel region.

2-Foundations of Algeria’s Security Strategy and Mechanisms for its Implementation

In recent years, the Algerian regional environment has undergone numerous geopolitical changes. These transformations have been linked to the actions of various actors and parties, creating a new security situation. The strategic location of Algeria in North Africa and the Southern Mediterranean, acting as a bridge between Africa and Europe, has posed challenges and repercussions that the country has been compelled to face, given their significant impact on national security. The collapse of regimes in neighboring countries (Libya, Mali, Niger), political instability in Tunisia, and the normalization of relations between Morocco and Israel have all contributed to expanding the scope of security threats in various forms. Additionally, the foreign presence in the region has further complicated the situation. As a result, Algeria

has had to confront numerous security challenges surrounding it, leading the country to adapt its security strategy in response to these contemporary global shifts.

- **2.1- Foundations of Algeria's Security Strategy**

Algeria’s approach to security within its borders is based on a set of principles and foundations that guide its actions. The country’s security policy is driven by several key standards, most notably respect for the sovereignty of states and the rejection of interference in their internal affairs. Algeria prioritizes diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts within the Arab and African groups and ensures good neighborly relations. These principles have historically shaped Algeria's foreign policy in all its dimensions, and they will be examined through the following points:

- ✓ **Rejection of Foreign Intervention**

One of the fundamental principles of Algeria’s security policy is the rejection of foreign intervention. Algeria’s opposition to foreign military presence, particularly in the Maghreb and Sahel regions, is grounded in its historical principles of anti-colonialism in all its forms. This was clearly evident in Algeria's stance regarding the Libyan crisis, which had wide regional repercussions, as it became a crossroad between various countries, including Algeria. This situation paved the way for Algeria’s intervention in Mali.

- ✓ ***Refusal to Negotiate with Terrorist Groups***

Algeria categorically refuses to negotiate with terrorist groups, regardless of their form or origin. This position is rooted in Algeria’s foundational security principles. A clear example of this was the 2013 terrorist attack on the gas facility in Tiguentourine, which resulted in nearly 700 hostages being taken, including 132 foreign nationals. The terrorists demanded that the Algerian authorities negotiate with them, including securing 20 four-wheel-drive vehicles and a safe passage to the Malian border, as well as the release of their members. However, Algeria decided on a military solution to ensure its security, using the army to free the hostages rather than engaging in negotiations. The foreign intervention and external pressures were also rejected as part of Algeria’s commitment to national sovereignty, which is considered the responsibility of the National Popular Army to defend and maintain ⁷

. This operation received widespread international support, particularly with statements from the White House, where President Barack Obama held the terrorists responsible for the attack, and from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who stated, "No one knows better than Algeria the ferocity of terrorists, especially since Algeria has led a strong war against terrorism for several years, resulting in significant material and human losses" ⁷

- ✓ **Criminalization of Paying Ransoms**

Algeria has firmly opposed any involvement with terrorist activities, including the payment of ransoms to terrorist groups, as it is seen as financing terrorism and expanding its operations. This led Algeria to advocate for the adoption of a 2007 resolution at the United Nations aimed at criminalizing ransom payments to terrorist groups. The resolution received international and UN approval, and was endorsed by the Security Council on December 17, 2009, which criminalized the payment of ransoms to various terrorist groups and individuals. This resolution complements UN Resolutions No. 1267 on combating terrorist financing and No. 1373 on combating terrorism and its funding.

- ✓ **Rejection of Foreign Presence and the Establishment of Military Bases on National Territory**

Algeria rejects foreign military presence on its soil and in its immediate vicinity. This position has contributed to maintaining a balance in the Maghreb and African spaces. Algeria’s desire to maintain independence in its security policy and regional dominance is rooted in the historical context of its anti-colonial war of independence, which is a cornerstone of Algeria’s security strategy. This sensitivity to foreign military presence stems from its past and a belief in the importance of local solutions, relying on regional cooperation and coordination to ensure security, without foreign intervention. This aligns with another principle in Algeria’s strategy, which advocates for peaceful conflict resolution and the rejection of the use of force, as seen in the Western Sahara, Mali, and Libyan conflicts 8.

✓ Proactive and Deterrent Defense

Defense is one of the main pillars of Algeria's security doctrine, with a focus on confronting various threats and risks within the geostrategic framework, preventing any aggression or military action on its national territory, as demonstrated in the 1963 Sand War with Morocco. However, given the evolving international security environment and the emergence of new threats, Algeria has enhanced its security strategy. Non-state security phenomena such as terrorism, organized crime, and drug trafficking cannot be contained within national borders alone, as they sometimes spread regionally and globally. This has necessitated the extension of Algeria's security response beyond its borders, as seen with groups like Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, which operates regionally and globally 8

✓ Independence in Military Security Strategy

Algeria’s neutrality and its refusal to participate in any form of military alliances or coalitions highlight the independent nature of its military strategy. The distinction between alliances and military blocs is critical here. A bloc represents a military alliance based on a shared ideological orientation, with members typically having similar sectarian characteristics, whereas military alliances do not necessarily share such traits 9

✓ The 2020 Constitution and New Foundations

Although Algeria’s security strategy has historically focused on the rejection of military presence and external interventions, new security threats and conflicts of interest between regional states have posed challenges. Given the escalating security risks and their impact on national security, Algeria has had to revise its security strategy to adapt to the new reality. This shift emphasizes proactive measures and preventative approaches rather than reactive responses. This was reflected in Articles 30 and 31 of the new 2020 Algerian Constitution, which include a new paragraph in Article 31 stating: “Algeria refrains from resorting to war to violate the legitimate sovereignty and freedom of other peoples, and endeavors to settle international disputes through peaceful means. Algeria may participate in peacekeeping missions in accordance with the principles and goals of the United Nations, the African Union, and the Arab League” (Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2020).

Additionally, the amendment in Article 30 emphasizes: “The National Popular Army is responsible for defending the country’s vital and strategic interests in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution,” expanding on previous wording regarding the military’s role in safeguarding national independence and defending the territorial integrity and air, land, and sea boundaries of the country (Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 2020)

2.2- • Mechanisms for Activation:

Algeria aims to achieve its national security, and based on that, it adopts a comprehensive security strategy that includes all frameworks and pillars. To activate this strategy and enforce its strategic logic, Algeria has worked on strengthening its defensive capabilities, in addition to coordinating joint security mechanisms at all internal, regional, and local levels to ensure security and stability both regionally and internationally.

✓ **Strengthening Algeria's Security Capacities:**

Algeria has placed significant emphasis on enhancing its military and security infrastructure to address growing regional and international security challenges. The defense budget plays a central role in Algeria’s security strategy, reflecting the importance placed on ensuring the country’s defense readiness. In 2023, the defense budget amounted to \$21.6 billion, positioning Algeria as a dominant regional power in North Africa ¹⁰.

The 2024 budget maintains the same amount, with a substantial portion directed towards the acquisition of modern defense systems and the modernization of the armed forces. This is part of Algeria's broader goal of staying ahead of potential regional conflicts and challenges.

✓ **Membership in Military Agreements:**

Algeria participates in several collective security agreements, including the partnership agreement with the European Union that came into effect on September 1, 2005. The agreement covers political, security, economic, and humanitarian cooperation. It also establishes an organizational framework that includes a partnership council, committee, and subcommittees that meet annually in Algeria and Brussels. A high-level dialogue on regional security and counterterrorism is part of this agreement, demonstrating Algeria's commitment to regional and international cooperation ¹¹.

✓ **African Union Membership Mechanism:**

As a member of the African Union (AU), Algeria has contributed to the establishment of the African Standby Force, a peacekeeping and conflict prevention initiative launched in 2015. Algeria has actively participated in the studies and efforts required to realize this force, underscoring its role in regional security and peacekeeping.

✓ **Mediterranean Dialogue Mechanism:**

In addition to its AU membership, Algeria is part of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue, represented by its ambassador in Brussels. The Mediterranean Dialogue allows Algeria to maintain a strategic relationship with NATO and to engage in training and cooperation activities aimed at enhancing regional security.

✓ **Bilateral Military Relations Mechanism:**

Algeria has established several bilateral military agreements, particularly with Russia, a key partner in defense cooperation. Algeria imports a significant portion of its military equipment from Russia, including fighter jets, military transport vehicles, and attack helicopters. In addition to its ties with Russia, Algeria seeks to strengthen military relations with other countries, including NATO members such as Italy, Spain,

the UK, and Turkey. Algeria also cooperates with Tunisia on security issues, including intelligence sharing on terrorism and criminal networks, and providing logistical and training support to Mali's military forces. Algeria is also a founding member of the Global Forum on Counterterrorism in New York ¹².

✓ **Regional Security Coordination Mechanism:**

Regional security cooperation is essential to Algeria’s strategy for addressing regional crises. The regional leadership center in Tamanrasset was established to coordinate security efforts with neighboring countries. This initiative is key for enhancing the operational coordination of the armed forces of the region. The Joint Military Staff, consisting of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, plays a crucial role in countering terrorism and transnational threats. The Tamanrasset Agreement serves as a basis for joint operations in the Sahel region, particularly in combating terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

✓ **International Security Cooperation Mechanism:**

Algeria’s strategy for combating terrorism includes international cooperation, particularly through intelligence sharing and technical and logistical support, without direct military intervention. This approach aligns with the U.S. strategy, which views Algeria as a key partner in the fight against terrorism. Algeria’s position in North Africa, especially its role in preventing terrorism from spreading to Europe, is critical to U.S. interests. After the September 11 attacks, Algeria positioned itself as a key ally in the global war on terrorism, securing military and technological support from the U.S., including the provision of military equipment and specialized training for the Algerian armed forces.

3- Challenges to Algerian National Security

Algeria, as a pivotal actor in North Africa and the Sahel-Saharan region, faces a multifaceted and evolving array of national security challenges that are shaped by both regional upheavals and the complexities of the international system. These challenges not only test the resilience of its strategic doctrines but also compel a continual reconfiguration of its security apparatus. Despite Algeria's historic position as a bastion of sovereignty and anti-colonial resistance, the country must contend with destabilizing elements across its borders and beyond.

3.1 Regional Instability and Border Security Pressures

➤ **Libya: The Epicenter of Regional Instability**

Following the **NATO-led military intervention in 2011**, which resulted in the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime, Libya descended into a **prolonged civil war** marked by competing governments, tribal militias, and the proliferation of arms. The destruction of the Libyan state apparatus created a massive **security vacuum** along Algeria’s **eastern border**, spanning over 1,000 km. This porous frontier became a key corridor for:

- **The smuggling of light and heavy weapons**, some originating from Gaddafi’s looted arsenals, which later fed terrorist groups in Mali and Niger.
- **The movement of jihadist fighters**, including veterans of various Islamist movements such as AQIM and foreign fighters with links to ISIS.

The **weaponization of Libya’s chaos** has thus created a spillover effect, pushing Algeria to **fortify its eastern frontiers** and enhance surveillance through UAVs, satellite systems, and joint patrols.

➤ **Mali: A Sanctuary for Jihadist Insurgency**

In Mali, the 2012 rebellion led by Tuareg separatists, followed by a military coup in Bamako, opened the door for jihadist factions—AQIM, Ansar Dine, MUJAO—to seize large parts of **northern Mali**. This region, particularly **Kidal and Gao**, is strategically important due to its proximity to the Algerian border. Several attacks and infiltration attempts have been traced back to **Malian-based insurgents**.

Algeria has responded by:

- Strengthening **logistical and intelligence support** to the Malian armed forces.
- Engaging in **diplomatic mediation**, notably hosting the 2015 Algiers Peace Agreement aimed at stabilizing Mali.
- Leading **regional military coordination** through the **Joint Operational Staff Committee (CEMOC)** in Tamanrasset, alongside Mali, Niger, and Mauritania.

➤ **Niger: The New Flashpoint**

The **2023 military coup in Niger** and the subsequent political crisis have further destabilized the region. Niger, which previously hosted **U.S. and French counterterrorism bases**, has become a contested space between **foreign powers and local insurgent groups**. For Algeria, Niger’s instability raises concerns on two fronts:

- The risk of **terrorist infiltration** through the **Tassili n'Ajjer and Hoggar mountains**, which are difficult to control.
- The threat posed by **illegal migration and human trafficking networks** operating across the **Tamanrasset-Agadez axis**.

Algeria has increased **military cooperation** with Niger, focusing on intelligence sharing and border control, but the absence of a stable partner government complicates these efforts.

Strategic Implications for Algeria

In response to this regional disorder, Algeria has adopted a doctrine centered on:

- **Preemptive defense and strategic depth**, treating crises in neighboring countries as direct national security threats.
- **Military modernization**, including the acquisition of drones, electronic surveillance systems, and enhanced mobility for desert operations.
- **Non-interventionist diplomacy**, advocating African-led solutions and opposing foreign military presence in the Sahel, while still playing a key mediating role.

Algerian academic circles view these developments not only as traditional security threats but also as **hybrid and systemic challenges** that require a **holistic strategy**, combining military vigilance, regional cooperation, and socio-political stabilization efforts ¹³

3.2 The Threat of Transnational Terrorism and Organized Crime

➤ **The Crime-Terror Nexus in the Sahel-Sahara Region**

Across the vast and sparsely governed expanses of the **Sahel-Saharan strip**, particularly along Algeria’s borders with Mali, Niger, and Libya, terrorist groups such as **AQIM (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb)**, **ISGS (Islamic State in the Greater Sahara)**, and factions from **Jama’at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM)** have developed symbiotic relationships with **drug traffickers, arms dealers, and human smuggling rings**.

These groups fund their operations through:

- **Cocaine trafficking routes** that originate in Latin America, transit West Africa, and pass through southern Algeria toward Europe.
- **Cannabis resin trade** routed from Morocco through Algeria’s western and southern flanks ¹⁴
- **Arms smuggling**, capitalizing on instability in Libya to channel light weapons and explosives into the Sahel.
- **Human trafficking and migrant extortion**, particularly along the Tamanrasset-Gao and Agadez routes.

These actors exploit **ungoverned desert zones**, local tribal dynamics, and weak border governance in neighboring states to operate with impunity, creating what Algerian scholar **Dalia (2016, p. 97–100)** terms a “**mobile security archipelago**” that challenges traditional notions of territorial defense.

➤ ***Strategic Implications for Algerian National Security***

Algeria’s military doctrine remains firmly grounded in the **non-negotiation principle with terrorists**—a stance forged during its civil war—and has been institutionalized in its **foreign policy engagements**, particularly at the United Nations. Algeria was a major proponent of **UN Security Council Resolution 1904 (2009)**, which called for the **criminalization of ransom payments** to terrorist groups—a practice Algeria sees as a financial oxygen line for kidnappers in the Sahel

In parallel, the country has invested heavily in:

- **Border militarization**, including advanced surveillance systems (drones, radars, patrol aircraft).
- **Special Forces training**, focused on desert warfare and counter-infiltration operations.
- **Legal frameworks**, such as the 2014 anti-terrorism law that expanded judicial tools for dismantling terrorist-financing networks ¹⁵

Additionally, the **Algerian gendarmerie and intelligence services** work in tandem to monitor cross-border criminal networks, often intercepting large arms or drug shipments in provinces such as **Illizi, Tamanrasset, and Adrar**—considered high-risk zones

➤ ***Algeria’s Regional Role in Countering the Nexus***

As a **regional security provider**, Algeria leads initiatives aimed at **intelligence sharing** and **joint patrol coordination** through structures like the **Comité d’État-Major Opérationnel Conjoint (CEMOC)** in Tamanrasset, as well as participation in **African Union and Arab League counterterrorism mechanisms**.

Despite rejecting foreign military bases on its soil, Algeria collaborates discreetly with international partners (e.g., **the U.S., Italy, and Germany**) in providing **training, equipment, and tactical coordination**, all while **preserving its doctrine of strategic autonomy**

➤ ***Future Challenges and Strategic Imperatives***

The convergence of terrorism and organized crime creates a **mutually reinforcing threat** that is likely to persist due to structural conditions:

- Weak state institutions in the Sahel.
- Endemic corruption and local complicity in smuggling economies.

- The geopolitical tug-of-war between foreign military presences (e.g., Wagner Group in Mali, U.S. drone bases in Niger) that sometimes contradict regional stabilization efforts.

For Algeria, countering these intertwined threats requires a **multidimensional strategy** combining **military readiness**, **regional diplomacy**, **economic development in border areas**, and **societal resilience**, particularly in marginalized southern provinces where grievances could be exploited by extremist narratives.

3.3 Geopolitical Rivalries and the Normalization of Moroccan-Israeli Relations

Algeria’s strategic calculus has also been disrupted by the 2020 normalization of diplomatic ties between Morocco and Israel under the Abraham Accords. This geopolitical shift has exacerbated Algerian concerns about encirclement and foreign military presence in the Maghreb. The deepening security cooperation between Rabat and Tel Aviv is perceived by Algiers as a direct threat to its national sovereignty and regional influence, particularly in light of unresolved tensions over the Western Sahara issue. In response, Algeria has severed diplomatic ties with Morocco and increased its military readiness in the western theater.

3.4. The Rise of Foreign Military Presence in the Sahel and Africa

The proliferation of foreign military bases in the Sahel, most notably the French-led Operation Barkhane (recently withdrawn from Mali) and U.S. drone bases in Niger, has complicated regional dynamics. Algeria opposes the establishment of foreign military bases on its soil, a position enshrined in its national doctrine and constitution. Nevertheless, the expanding presence of extra-regional powers—be it France, the United States, Russia, or Turkey—has created a competitive and often unstable security environment in Algeria’s strategic vicinity. This situation challenges Algeria’s principle of strategic autonomy and its ambition to lead localized, African-led security solutions.¹⁶

3.5. Cybersecurity and Hybrid Threats

In the age of digital warfare and hybrid conflicts, Algeria faces growing vulnerabilities in its cyber domain. State and non-state actors may engage in disinformation campaigns, cyberespionage, and infrastructure sabotage. The country has taken steps to build cyber defense capabilities, but institutional fragmentation and limited technological integration continue to hinder a cohesive national cyber strategy.

3.6 . Climate Change and Environmental Security

Although less immediate, environmental stressors such as desertification, water scarcity, and food insecurity are increasingly recognized as security issues. These challenges, if unaddressed, could exacerbate human displacement, border tensions, and resource-driven conflict in Algeria’s southern peripheries. Algerian academics and defense planners have called for integrating environmental risk assessments into strategic planning ¹⁷

Conclusion:

- This study has demonstrated that Algeria’s national security approach constitutes a distinct and resilient model within a region characterized by chronic volatility and institutional fragility. By adopting a comprehensive and multidimensional security doctrine, Algeria has maintained internal cohesion and avoided the systemic collapse that has afflicted several of its neighboring states. This resilience is underpinned by a clearly articulated vision that balances preventive diplomacy, robust defense capabilities, and strategic autonomy—

most notably through the categorical rejection of foreign military intervention on national soil.

- Algeria’s experience during the “Black Decade” has indelibly shaped its counterterrorism doctrine, reinforcing a security paradigm grounded in non-negotiation with terrorist entities and the primacy of sovereign, homegrown security capacities. These principles have enabled Algeria to position itself as a strategic anchor of stability in the Sahel-Sahara region, particularly through its sustained investment in bilateral and regional coordination mechanisms rooted in sovereignty and non-alignment.
- Looking ahead, the viability of Algeria’s security model will increasingly depend on its ability to adapt to emerging threats such as cybersecurity vulnerabilities, hybrid warfare tactics, and environmental stressors—notably desertification and water scarcity. Furthermore, its continued role as a regional stabilizer will require stronger integration between military strategies and socioeconomic development, especially in marginalized southern territories.
- Future research may explore the potential for Algeria to enhance its leadership within African-led security initiatives, expand its cyber defense architecture, and engage in multilateral dialogues on non-traditional security dimensions. Such inquiries are essential to assess whether Algeria’s historically grounded doctrine can meet the evolving demands of a complex and interconnected security environment.

- **Key Findings**

- Algeria has developed a multidimensional national security architecture that strategically integrates deterrence, regional engagement, and sovereign autonomy, enabling the state to manage both conventional and asymmetric threats.
- The emergence of new-generation threats, including transnational organized crime, hybrid terrorism, and cyber-infiltration, has compelled Algeria to revise and expand its traditional security paradigms, prompting a shift toward more adaptive and anticipatory frameworks.
- Through sustained logistical and intelligence-based support to neighboring states, Algeria has positioned itself as a strategic pillar of stability within the Sahel-Sahara region, reinforcing its role as a regional security provider.
- Algeria’s unwavering adherence to its sovereign security doctrine—particularly its criminalization of ransom payments and categorical rejection of foreign military intervention—has enhanced its normative credibility and leadership within international security dialogues.
- The institutional strength of Algeria’s national security apparatus, marked by a professionalized military, robust intelligence services, and proactive strategic diplomacy, has insulated the state from the systemic breakdowns that have destabilized its regional counterparts..

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