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National Intelligence Estimate

NIE 62-2-62

Washington, November 7, 1962

Source: CIA Files, [] According to a note on the cover sheet: "The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate: "The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force." All members of the U.S. Intelligence Board concurred in this estimate on November 7 except the Atomic Energy Commission Representative and the Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who abstained on the grounds that the subject was outside their jurisdiction.

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THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK IN ALGERIA

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Seven years of rebellion and terror have left the Algerians weary, uncertain, and divided. Moreover, the established bases of the society and the economy have been altered; two-thirds of the Europeans have left the country, and 50 percent or more of the labor force is jobless. To a great extent the modern sector of the economy is in a state of collapse. Many enterprises have been abandoned by their European owners, and the arteries of commerce and communication have broken down at many critical points. (Paras. 1, 4, 18-19)

B. The current period is one of relative political calm. Ben Bella has seized control, and for the moment at least has the support of the largest and best disciplined military force in the country. He is trying, during the present respite in political activities, to consolidate his political position, to improve his popular image, to impose his authority over the Armed Forces, and to revive the economy (Paras. 8-9, 15-16)

C. Ben Bella, who calls himself both an "Arab Socialist" and a Marxist, appears at the present time to be much closer to Nasser in policy and doctrine than to the Communists. This judgment, however, is based upon his words and actions to date on both national and international matters; there is as yet not enough hard evidence on the new regime to permit us to assess with any degree of finality Ben Bella's basic philosophic leanings; he may indeed prove to be far more radical than he now appears. At the present time Ben Bella does not appear to be vindictive toward France, and he does not now plan major economic changes likely to affront major French interests. The Ben Kheddists, who oppose him, and Colonel Boumedienne, who now supports him, appear to be more radical than Ben Bella. (Paras. 9, 12-13)

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D. Little has yet been accomplished in economic revival, and the chances are poor that much will be accomplished in the next few months. Thus, the population in the cities, now dependent upon foreign charity, may become increasingly frustrated, and living standards in the rural areas, already barely sufficient to sustain life, may be further driven down. (Paras. 18-23)

E. While Ben Bella's immediate prospects for holding power are fairly good, we believe that within a year he will be confronted with severe political challenges. The intractable nature of Algeria's economic problems, the somewhat chaotic conditions which will persist, and latent hostility to his rule in important sectors of the society, all will tend to undermine Ben Bella's position. Any one of a number of oppositionist leaders might seek to exploit the dissatisfactions of the jobless, and there is always danger of unrest in the countryside. Ben Bella must also somehow establish his authority over the radical Defense Minister, Colonel Boumedienne, and a showdown between the two seems likely to occur sooner or later. If Boumedienne became tired of political infighting, if there were growing insecurity in the cities and subversion in the countryside, or if there were irresolution and confusion in the government, Boumedienne might simply step in and establish a military dictatorship. (Paras. 24-28)

F. We do not believe Algeria's announced policy of nonalignment will be followed with purity and consistency. Already the Algerians have sided with Cuba against the US. But at the same time they are bound to France by a host of cultural and economic ties. The present leaders will probably not deliberately move toward the Soviet Bloc, but they probably will, more often than the US or France would like, support Communist initiatives on a variety of international issues. They will almost certainly accept military and economic assistance from the Bloc. Indeed, we cannot rule out the possibility that Ben Bella himself may adopt a more radical international stance in response to internal pressures or external blandishments. If a more radical leader—such as Boumedienne—succeeded Ben Bella, Communist influence and ideology in both domestic and foreign policy would probably significantly increase. (Paras. 29, 31, 34-36)

[Here follows the discussion.]

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 62-2-62

The Short-Term Outlook in Algeria

Submitted by the
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Approved by the
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

at Washington, D.C.

ON 10 NOVEMBER 1962

NO CHANGE IN CLASS

NO REVIEW NEEDED

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The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this estimate:

The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force.

Concurring:

Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army
Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy
Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF
Director for Intelligence, Joint Staff
Director of the National Security Agency

Abstaining:

The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB, and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited.

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The Short-Term Outlook in Algeria

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THE SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK IN ALGERIA

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Seven years of rebellion and terror have left the Algerians weary, uncertain, and divided. Moreover, the established bases of the society and the economy have been altered; two-thirds of the Europeans have left the country, and 50 percent or more of the labor force is jobless. To a great extent the modern sector of the economy is in a state of collapse. Many enterprises have been abandoned by their European owners, and the arteries of commerce and communication have broken down at many critical points. (*Paras. 1, 4, 18-19*)

B. The current period is one of relative political calm. Ben Bella has seized control, and for the moment at least has the support of the largest and best disciplined military force in the country. He is trying, during the present respite in political activities, to consolidate his political position, to improve his popular image, to impose his authority over the Armed Forces, and to revive the economy (*Paras. 8-9, 15-16*)

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DISCUSSION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The new Algerian Republic was born inauspiciously and bears the marks of a long and painful labor. Seven years of rebellion and its brutal aftermath have radically altered the established bases of the society and the structure of the economy. Premier Ben Bella, who in the first weeks of independence was preoccupied with winning a divisive power struggle, faces the arduous tasks of consolidating his control and revitalizing a hungry and impatient nation. Severe hardships lie ahead and the opportunities for Bloc exploitation of the situation appear abundant.

II. MAJOR POLITICAL FORCES

2. The war against France never fully united the Algerian people behind a single set of leaders or a commonly accepted political philosophy. Historically, Algeria has always been a geographical area without a sense of national unity. There are sharp ethnic divisions, not only between Europeans and Moslems, but within the Moslem community itself. The exigencies of the rebellion accentuated these divisions and strengthened parochialism. Algeria was divided into military zones (Wilayas) in which guerrilla commanders operated almost autonomously. Across the borders in Tunisia and Morocco fairly sizable military forces (the external army) were established, which by and large remained intact and well disciplined throughout the latter years of the rebellion and eventually developed political identities of their own.

3. In like manner the leaders of the rebellion were separated from one another during most of the war. Not only were local Wilaya commanders in Algeria proper isolated from their political chiefs and inclined to carve out semiautonomous territories for themselves, but in addition the principal civilian leaders were variously located in Tunis, in Cairo, and in French prisons. These leaders tended to view the objectives of the rebellion according to the circumstances in which they found themselves. Thus, the relatively well equipped and trained external army disagreed with the weary internal guerrilla forces over the urgency of coming to terms with the French; the operating Provisional Government located in Tunis and headed by Ben Khedda regarded guarantees for the European population of Algeria as practical necessities, while the imprisoned Ben Bella and his associates, removed from the realities of Algerian economic life, feared that these guarantees constituted dangerous openings for "neocolonialism."

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4. The period between the signing of the Evian agreements and the election of the first constituent assembly had been intended as a time of transition, during which nationalist leaders would assume increasing governmental responsibility, European fears would be assuaged, and some of Algeria's more pressing problems tackled. It did not work out that way. Instead, for months much of Algeria was plunged into terror and chaos by the depredations of European terrorists in the Secret Army (OAS). Although the last important OAS leaders departed the country in June, they left behind enormous legacies of physical ruin, particularly of educational facilities and community installations. Far more important for Algeria's future, however, was the impact of the OAS reign of terror on the dwindling European population. The exodus was accelerated and still continues; today more than two-thirds of the European population of one million appears to have abandoned the country.

5. At the same time divisions within the rebel movement erupted into public quarrels. Differences arose over the concessions made by the Provisional Government's negotiators at Evian, over the role of the external army, and over reports that some members of the Provisional Government had been involved in truce deals with the OAS. By mid-June a split had developed between the Provisional Government and its parent body, the National Committee of the Algerian Revolution. A struggle for power between the factions of Ben Khedda and Ben Bella ensued. With the help of the external army Ben Bella established a hold on the principal cities and confined the followers of Ben Khedda's Berber ally, Belkacem Krim, to the Kabylie area.

6. In this power struggle political rivalries were added to or combined with regional differences and animosities. Ben Kheddists were arrayed against Ben Bellists, Wilayas against Wilayas, Berbers against Arabs, and units of the external army against units of the guerrilla forces; some powerful local leaders turned their backs on the national struggle and quietly cultivated their own gardens.

7. From this struggle there has emerged a fairly clear picture of current political forces. However in the present fluid situation much can change and probably will. The major elements on the scene today are: (a) the Ben Bella government and its political apparatus; (b) Colonel Boumedienne and the military forces responsive to him; (c) a heterogeneous assortment of oppositionists; and (d) the weary and disturbed Algerian masses.

8. *The Ben Bella government and its political apparatus.* Premier Ben Bella probably retains the support of a majority of the old National Liberation Front (FLN) cadres. His greatest public following is in the western cities of Algeria, but he has recently strengthened his position in the Algiers region. While Ben Bella has excluded from his cabinet

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some of the best educated Algerians, he nevertheless appears to have a number of competent but inexperienced ministers. There are no figures in the generally youthful cabinet or elsewhere in Ben Bella's faction of the FLN who currently have the stature to rival him—with the possible exception of Defense Minister Colonel Houari Boumedienne.

9. Ben Bella has described his political philosophy as "Arab Socialism," but he also calls himself a Marxist. Moreover, he has stated that the Algerian people will never accept a materialistic philosophy. At the present time he appears to be much closer to Nasser in policy and doctrine than to the Communists. This judgment, however, is based upon his words and actions to date on both national and international matters; there is as yet not enough hard evidence on the new regime to permit us to assess with any degree of finality Ben Bella's basic philosophic leanings; he may indeed prove to be far more radical than he now appears. At the present time Ben Bella does not appear to be vindictive against the French and, in fact, regards working out his relations with France as a priority matter for his government.

10. *The National Popular Army (ANP)*. The Algerian military forces consist of some 80,000 troops. The most important element of these forces is the relatively well equipped and disciplined external army of some 30,000 under the command of Colonel Boumedienne. It was Boumedienne's troops which enabled Ben Bella to evict Ben Khedda from control of the government machinery in Algiers and later to rid the city of the troops of the independent local warlord, Si Hassan. Although Boumedienne has won the loyalty of some Wilaya leaders and their troops, it is not yet clear whether their loyalty will withstand the elimination of the Wilayas as separate commands, as intended by Ben Bella.

11. Boumedienne is currently Defense Minister, but he has displayed little patience with politicians in the past, and his presence in the cabinet symbolizes the fact that Ben Bella owes his own position in large part to Boumedienne's bayonets. The Colonel is a doctrinaire and an ascetic, and he is probably more dogmatic than Ben Bella on such issues as land reform and redistribution of wealth. He greatly admires the Cuban revolution and has declared himself attracted to Castro's internal policies. Of all leaders of the rebellion he has displayed the strongest disapproval of concessions to France and the deepest resentment of the West's assistance to France during the rebellion. We know little of his background.

12. *The opposition*. The Ben Bella regime's opposition includes a heterogeneous group of disgruntled followers of Ben Khedda, deposed Wilaya II officers, the Kabylie chiefs and almost all prominent leaders of Wilaya III, and the leadership of the as yet skeletal student and labor organizations. Virtually all the identified dissidents, save those

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from the Kabylie area, were barred from election to the National Assembly and hence can only criticize the regime from the outside. The small and ineffectual Algerian Communist Party was similarly excluded from the Assembly, but is permitted to publish its own newspaper in Algiers.

13. The deep differences that now separate the followers of Ben Khedda and Ben Bella more often originated over personal rivalries and tactical disputes than over doctrinal matters. If there is a political difference, it is that Ben Khedda and most of his lieutenants appear to have a more radical approach than Ben Bella and his colleagues. Sharp criticism of Ben Bella exists in both the labor and student organizations for his rejection of the FLN's traditional "collegial" approach to leadership and for his adopting "the cult of personality."

14. *The masses.* In general the Algerian masses have been deeply disturbed by the possibility that their leaders would plunge them into a civil war for reasons of personal ambition; on certain occasions civilians actually imposed themselves between opposing military units to prevent the outbreak of open violence. By and large the Algerian populace is now primarily interested in finding a means of livelihood as quickly as possible. They are weary of political maneuvering and have no particular political ideology or fixed concept of Algeria's future social and economic structure. Should Ben Bella, or for that matter any other leader, succeed in getting the economy moving again, the public will not question his methods. It will not, for example, object either to heavy French assistance or to an influx of Bloc aid and technicians. Any signs of an economic revival would probably fortify Ben Bella's position throughout the country.

III. THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION

15. A moratorium on political warfare now appears to be in effect, and at least for the moment Ben Bella has the support of the ANP, the largest organized and disciplined force in Algeria. The Premier is using this respite to establish a government, to improve his own popular image, and to begin the job of resuscitating the national economy. He plans to transform the FLN apparatus into a mass party organized to mobilize the Algerian masses in support of his policies. He has recently made official visits to the US, Cuba, and the UN, and has used all his public appearances to pose as the symbol of the revolution and of Algerian nationhood.

16. Ben Bella is now apparently beginning to recognize that the task of reviving the economy and finding jobs for the approximately two million unemployed (some 50 percent or more of the total working force) is at least as important as building a tight political machine. To this end he has been making strenuous efforts to persuade European ex-

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residents to return to Algeria, attempting to improve security conditions, and stating that his government will honor the Evian agreements. So far, however, few Europeans have been persuaded that security has been improved and few are convinced of Ben Bella's good faith. Only a small number have returned. Similarly, the generous inducements being offered to French civil servants to take temporary positions in Algeria have not proved particularly fruitful.

17. Up to the present, then, Ben Bella and his none too solidly anchored regime have produced little concrete for the frustrated Algerian people. The government's principal assets at the moment are that it is in power and that the public is tired of political maneuvering. The government also enjoys the forbearance of Defense Minister Boumedienne, who has openly expressed scorn for the machinations of all Algeria's political leaders. Although he accepted his cabinet position with grace, he probably has little faith in Ben Bella's cautious approach to major political and economic problems. Given the magnitude of the economic difficulties on hand and in prospect, it is quite possible that Ben Bella's fragile authority may soon be undermined. He may be confronted at any time not only with a worsening economic situation but a rapid deterioration of the political calm now prevailing.

IV. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

18. The present disarray of the Algerian economy has largely been caused by the war's dislocations and the departure of European entrepreneurs, expertise, and capital. To a great extent the modern sector of the economy is in a state of collapse; many enterprises are shut down and abandoned by their erstwhile owners. In addition the arteries of commerce and communication between cities and rural areas have broken down at many critical points. Vast numbers of Algerians, particularly those in the cities, survive only on handouts from foreign (French, Moroccan, and Yugoslav, as well as US) sources.

19. These circumstances, while unique for Algeria, have not as yet lowered living standards significantly below what they were during the height of the rebellion. Algeria has always been a poor country one of whose most profitable exports for many years was labor; the rural and mountainous areas have for some time been moving closer to the edge of economic disaster. In recent years, however, two important developments gave some promise for brighter long-range prospects: the discovery of oil and gas in the Sahara, and the French undertaking to develop modern industry and commercial facilities (the Constantine Plan). However, neither of these developments had produced profound effects on the overall pattern of the economy before independence, and most of the initial financial benefits were drawn into the economy of the metropole and the European community of Algeria.

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20. There are two fundamental problems. In the first place, urban residents, who had over the years grown accustomed to dependence upon a rather sophisticated but essentially artificial economy, now appreciate that the basis for this economy no longer exists: the French presence has been dramatically reduced. Instead of an expanding investment rate in the country as there had been for the last several years, capital is now in full flight; the continuation of advantageous investment and trade ties with France is at the best open to question. Consequently, restoration of the economic life of the principal cities to preindependence levels of prosperity and business activity is unlikely for many years to come. While Moslem workers may be able to survive on charity, great numbers will be unemployed for extended periods of time.

21. In the second place, the long-range development programs which were designed to raise living standards may not receive the French support which had been projected. Thus, the expected benefits, which at best would hardly have been adequate if France had remained, will come slowly, if at all. While the Algerians will also receive some financial benefits from the exploitation of oil and gas resources, the amounts will initially be very limited and probably largely dissipated in meeting current governmental expenses. Accordingly, Algeria's already marginal rural living standards, which might otherwise have kept pace with the country's galloping population rate, will continue inexorably to be driven down.

22. For the short run, it appears that the most serious economic problems could quickly become political in character as the masses of jobless workers in the cities grow increasingly frustrated with their condition and resentful at the regime. This problem will probably become worse unless the central government gets on with the job of establishing its authority and restoring social services and marketing facilities in the countryside. An influx of disoriented and disgruntled peasants to swell the cities' unemployed could begin at any time. In short, an unstable situation susceptible to exploitation by Ben Bella's numerous critics and enemies could soon develop in any or all of Algeria's major cities.

23. The regime evidently needs large-scale external assistance, not only for future economic development, but also for the every day necessities of its people. This assistance may not be provided soon enough and in sufficient amounts. The French are committed by the Evian agreements to extend generous credits through the end of 1962, but some of these disbursements have already been held up for extended periods pending resolution of various Algerian political crises. Moreover, the level of French financial assistance beyond 1962 is by no means agreed upon and if the French run true to past form, they will use their aid flexibly, rewarding Algerian gestures of cooperation and withholding disbursements to punish unwelcome acts or policies. Since

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Ben Bella has indicated that he will not now expropriate major French property interests or execute major agricultural reforms, there will probably not be any early affronts to French economic interests.

V. PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY

24. Ben Bella's prospects for holding on to power at least for the next several months are fairly good. During the period of relative political calm which lies immediately ahead, we expect Ben Bella to concentrate his efforts upon further cultivating his political image, widening his political base by converting the FLN into a mass party structure, attempting to reduce the size of the Armed Forces and impose his authority over them, and trying to get economic revival started.

25. We think it unlikely, however, that Ben Bella can hold power for very long without meeting some severe political challenges. Indeed, we believe there is a good chance that within a year he will be confronted by one or more political crises which could topple him from power. The intractable nature of Algeria's economic problems, the somewhat chaotic conditions which will persist, and the latent hostility to his rule which exists in important sectors of the society, all will tend to undermine his position.

26. Opposition forces that are momentarily content to play a waiting game in the capital are by no means so restrained in their home districts. Cadres for the ranks of the opposition will come from among those purged for their association with or support of Ben Khedda. The Berbers in the Kabylie are certainly a force to be reckoned with. The Kabylie leaders are the main anti-Ben Bella group in the Assembly, and in some important respects they differ from other oppositionists. They are less radical in outlook, and they have a strong interest in maintaining close ties with France, where hundreds of thousands of their fellow Kabylie still work and send money home. We believe it unlikely that the Kabylie will spearhead a subversive opposition movement; rather, they seem likely to remain in sullen isolation for some time to come. Ben Bella for his part seems to have concluded that it is prudent to permit them some degree of autonomy, provided they do not attempt either legal separatism or organized subversion in collaboration with other oppositionists.

27. Certainly one of Ben Bella's most serious vulnerabilities is the desperate economic situation. The cities are a critical danger spot and are likely to remain so. Anyone of a number of oppositionist leaders might seek to exploit the dissatisfactions of the jobless. If, in addition, there were rumblings in the countryside, either as a result of Kabylie agitation or growing poverty, Ben Bella might face a deteriorating security situation. Much will depend upon the continuance or discontinuance of ~~the~~ **APPROVED FOR RELEASE** feed Algeria's millions and upon positive

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signs of economic revival. Moreover, the extent of French confidence in the regime and the extent of French assistance might prove crucial to Ben Bella's survival.

28. Ben Bella also faces the problem of clarifying the role of the military forces in the new regime. If he is to attain a firm political position, he must not only develop a mass base of political support but also make the military leaders subservient to him. Most importantly, he must somehow establish his unquestioned authority over Colonel Boumedienne, and the latter could be a most formidable opponent. Should Ben Bella not move carefully or cautiously, he might find himself the quarry rather than the hunter. Boumedienne himself may merely be waiting for an opportunity to seize power. In any event, a showdown between Ben Bella and Boumedienne seems to us likely to occur sooner or later. If Boumedienne became tired of political infighting, if there were a growing insecurity in the cities and subversion in the countryside, or if there were irresolution and confusion in the government, Boumedienne might simply step in and take over. The result would probably be a harsh military dictatorship.

VI. FOREIGN POLICIES

29. The announced policy of the Ben Bella government is that of nonalignment, and the new regime will certainly insist on demonstrating its independence. But to follow a course of nonalignment will be an extremely difficult matter. The regime is in some degree bound to France, not only by the Evian agreements, but by a host of cultural, political, and economic realities. It needs France and Frenchmen to revive the economy, and in a variety of ways French influence will almost certainly remain strong. At the same time, the new leaders are revolutionaries; they are strongly imbued with Marxist ideas; they owe some of their success to Soviet Bloc assistance; they are implacable enemies of imperialism and colonialism. Conspirators by force of circumstance if not by persuasion, and successful in revolt against a great colonial power, they feel bound by emotional and ideological ties to revolutionists everywhere.

30. Ben Bella's visit to Castro together with his somewhat extravagant praise of Castro's revolution was the result of these sentiments. It was necessary in any case to counterbalance his visit to the US; it was intended as a demonstration of independence. It may also have been a concession to those leftists in Algeria—of whom Boumedienne is one—who have long felt a kinship between their revolution and Castro's. Ben Bella and his advisers apparently concluded that despite US opposition and whatever might be the truth about Soviet influence in Cuba, the Cubans—like the Algerians—had fought against great odds and won independence.

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rent crisis indicates how deep are the Algerian leadership's sympathies with the Cuban revolution. It also suggests that these sympathies are likely to persist and be reflected in developing ties with Cuba.

31. We do not believe that Algeria's policy of nonalignment will be followed with purity and consistency. While in the interests of safety and neutrality, the government will probably try to avoid taking sides on grave international issues, it may perforce do so—simply because of its revolutionary proclivities. We do not believe the present leadership will consciously and deliberately move toward the Bloc in international politics, but it probably will, more often than the French or the US would like, support pro-Communist or Communist initiatives and will almost certainly develop ties with the Communist countries. Like other new states, however, it will be fiercely independent and resent pressures or intimidation from any direction.

32. Franco-Algerian relations have so far been surprisingly correct, thanks largely to French indulgence during the frenetic period following independence. Both sides are strongly motivated to maintain cordial relationships, the French because they have special economic and strategic interests which they wish to maintain, the Algerians because it is to their advantage to maintain at least a small French presence which will be economically fruitful and politically docile. The Evian agreements detail a significant French presence, including the quartering of troops, maintenance of bases, joint exploitation of oil properties, and access to nuclear and missile test sites in the Sahara. Some of these arrangements can give strength to the new regime, but in some circumstances, as, for example, if the French should insist upon nuclear weapons tests in the Sahara, they could also develop into serious friction points between the two countries.

33. On balance, we believe that while some Franco-Algerian differences are likely to arise in the short term, the Algerians are unlikely to take actions damaging to those special interests which the French wrote into the Evian agreements. However, as time goes on and particularly if the political situation in Algeria should become highly unstable or fundamentally altered, serious differences are almost certain to occur.

34. Ben Bella clearly plans to play a prominent role in the Arab world. The new regime, which enjoys close relations with Nasser, has made no secret of its reservations about the governments of Hassan in Morocco and Bourguiba in Tunisia; Algeria assumes for itself a position of superiority in the Mahgreb. Ben Bella resents Moroccan claims to certain border territories and bitterly resents Bourguiba's past support of Ben Khedda. Under these circumstances the regime is likely to maintain correct but cool relationships with both neighbors until internal affairs are sufficiently stable to permit more aggressive external policies. Over the long run, any Algerian government will almost cer-

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tainly press hard, even to the point of military action, to resist Moroccan claims in the Sahara and to impress both Morocco and Tunisia with its ascendancy in the area. We see no prospects for the development of an effective Mahgrebian federation for some time to come. Within the Arab League, Algeria will almost certainly be sympathetic to the nations aligned with Nasser, but will at all times retain its freedom of action.

35. The Communist Bloc enjoys certain initial advantages in its efforts to widen its influence in Algeria. Many Bloc countries recognized the Provisional Government sometime before independence and thereby occupy a privileged position in the diplomatic community. In addition, Bloc assistance to the rebellion was not inconsiderable, particularly in armament deliveries toward the end of hostilities. The Algerians generally regard Bloc education of their students as a normal and fruitful experience and will probably make strong efforts to retain a large outflow of youths to various Bloc universities. The Algerians will almost certainly accept whatever Bloc economic and military assistance is offered so long as no visible strings are attached.

36. On balance, we believe that if Ben Bella remains in office he will be anxious to steer Algeria carefully away from too great a dependence on the Bloc. However, practical economic necessity may force him into accepting increasingly higher levels of Bloc assistance and influence, particularly if Western aid is made available only intermittently. Moreover, we cannot rule out the possibility that Ben Bella himself may adopt a more radical international stance in response to internal pressures or external blandishments. A Boumedienne government would, we believe, adopt a far more cooperative attitude toward the Bloc than will Ben Bella and would probably undertake more vigorous harassments of European interests.

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