

dersecretary of State for Economic Affairs S. Allen Wallis, to "open up Japan's markets for U.S. exports." The delegation included officials from the National Security Council, Treasury, Agriculture, and U.S. Trade Office and ostensibly was aimed at acquiring Japanese cooperation in the areas of pharmaceuticals, forestry products, telecommunications, and electrical products.

The result was that Kissinger Associates partner and ex-Foreign Minister Saburo Okita will head a 10-man ministerial advisory group to meet with their U.S. counterparts in Hawaii during February and March. Okita has been one of the most vociferous opponents of the SDI and U.S.-Japanese cooperation in the projected construction of Thailand's Kra Canal, the key project for the rapid economic development of the entire Pacific Basin region.

Whether Kissinger and his State Department allies will be capable of undercutting Nakasone and the ongoing secu-

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urity cooperation between the United States and Japan depends on the pace of the incorporation of the Japanese into the SDI project. The Soviet-backed forces in Japan are looking to chip away at U.S.-Japanese SDI cooperation before the consolidation takes place.

The Soviet military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star)* has attacked Nakasone for supporting the SDI. The role of the Japanese Socialist Party, according to another Japanese source, will be to whip up the latent anti-nuclear hysteria against Nakasone's position not just in parliamentary debates, but by beginning to mobilize political demonstrations against him. Informed sources in Japan were quick to point out that the New Zealand announcement that it will deny U.S. nuclear-armed or nuclear-powered ships port of entry will fuel the anti-nuclear hysteria inside Japan.

What Nakasone has done in "defying the taboo" has opened up new potentialities in U.S.-Japanese relations. If the Kissinger-backed forces are allowed to sabotage this effort, then the Reagan administration's chance for pushing a "new Pacific policy" may be lost for some time to come.

# Alliances changing

by Thierry Lalevée

The unexpected announcement that Algeria's President Chadli Benjedid will visit the United States on April 17 will create waves for quite some time. Not only will it be the first visit ever of an Algerian President to Washington, but it represents a significant shift of alliances in North Africa. A direct result will be to enhance the ability of the United States to consolidate what is often rightly considered the southern flank of NATO, across the Strait of Gibraltar.

Ever since Chadli became chief of state after Houari Boumedienne died of a long illness in a Soviet hospital, Algerian-American relations have been put on a new footing. Indeed, after the regime of Ahmed Ben Bella which had brought Algeria near bankruptcy in 1965, and the more than 15 years of Soviet-sponsored "Islamic socialism" under Boumedienne, Chadli Benjedid was chosen as one of the remaining historical figures of the independence war considered a moderate. Over the years, this assessment was confirmed: Chadli first oriented Algeria toward more diversified relations, away from the Soviet bloc to Europe, then toward the United States. Economic realities, such as the need to export Algerian gas to America, played a key role. More recently, military and commercial ties in general between the two countries have increased.

The stage for Chadli's trip to Washington was set last October when one of U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger's closest associates, General Burns, undersecretary for North African and Middle East affairs, led a high-ranking military delegation to Algeria. Little of the discussion filtered through publicly until December when it was revealed that the first units of the Algerian Popular Army would be sent to the United States for training—the monopoly held by the Soviet Union and its allies was broken.

Preceding and following Burns were visits to Algeria of other U.S. officials, including Agriculture Secretary John Block and many representatives of the State Department—among them the grotesque Gen. Vernon Walters, an intimate of Henry Kissinger very familiar with the entire Mediterranean terrain and intent on making sure the Reagan administration does not "break profile" and launch economic development policies outside the framework of the International Monetary Fund.

## Opportunity for Reagan

The Washington trip of President Chadli will represent a unique opportunity for precisely the break in "profile" Kis-

# in the Maghreb

singer and Walters fear. As for many other countries of the Maghreb and of the African continent, Algeria's pro-U.S. shift is a slap in the face to policies followed by both the Soviet Union and most of Europe. More than 15 years of close political, military, and economic ties with the U.S.S.R. have wreaked havoc in Algeria, despite its oil wealth. On Feb. 9, Chadli Benjedid made it official that the 1976 National Charter imposed by Boumedienne and considered a "sacred text," would be put into question as "not adequate to the present problems."

Chadli referred to the extreme nationalization policy enforced by the previous regime. It not only killed the creativity of industry but led to a new class of "socialist" profiteers like those of the East bloc. He particularly had in mind the catastrophic situation of agriculture in a country which used to export many products and is today a net food importer of basic commodities, thanks to decades of "socialization" of the land. Hence without breaking with the basic tenets of Algerian socialism—yet—Chadli wants to return to a more productive mixed economy where farmers would be encouraged to have their own production. This change in the economy will take time, and depends on growing economic ties to the United States.

Another aspect of the new outlook in Algiers is growing suspicion toward Western Europe. Relations to France will always be a cornerstone of Algeria's economy, as several million of its workers are in France, but a move toward the United States is aimed at decreasing the blackmail power too often used by Paris either through economic reprisals against Algiers or by the on-again-off-again fostering of Islamic fundamentalism within the Algerian expatriate community in France.

## **Soviets' regional gambit**

If Paris doesn't appreciate the pro-American turn in Algiers, Moscow likes it even less. The recent visit to Algiers of Navy head Admiral Gorshkov received little coverage in the Soviet press. There was little to cover, as Gorshkov reportedly left the country very unhappy. Algerian military circles candidly assess that Moscow aims to stage a coup against Chadli, or whatever is required to prevent an Algiers/Washington axis. Moscow has not given up on what was once a privileged relationship, and it does have a few friends in the Algerian military establishment who are nostalgic for the Boumedienne era and want to strike soon.

These same circles joined hands with Libya's Colonel Qaddafi in the 1970s to sponsor international terrorism, from Direct Action in France to Germany's Baader Meinhof, to Spain's ETA, Grapo, and Gari. One of their men, Slimane Hoffman, was forced out of his decade-long position of director of the external relations of the FLN—the party in power—under which cover such contacts were maintained, into an early and obscure retirement. But another Boumedienne legacy still hangs around Chadli's neck, the Polisario claiming the former Spanish Sahara now occupied by Morocco. When, in mid-1983, Chadli was close to making an agreement with Morocco's King Hassan which would have paved the way for a settlement, Polisario under Libyan guidance launched a series of raids to blow up the talks. Then Qaddafi himself decided to dump Polisario to join hands with Morocco, a relationship whose only aim was to hand the burden of the Polisario to Algeria again.

## **Rabat looks to Moscow**

Months of this kind of diplomacy, fostered by Moscow, have brought the region close to a regional war. Egged on by Qaddafi, Morocco's King Hassan has hardened his stance, and is making no secret that, while Algeria looks toward Washington, Rabat looks toward Moscow. The Soviet Union is after all Morocco's biggest phosphate customer. King Hassan surprised everybody on Feb. 9 when he told Spanish television that the "Soviet Union will not tolerate that Spain as a member of NATO holds the keys of Gibraltar as well as of Ceuta and Melilla" in reference to the two Morocco cities occupied by Spain today.

No further explanation has yet been given but the meaning is clear. Despite the catastrophe it can bring for Morocco, King Hassan then announced he would celebrate the anniversary of his accession to the throne in the Saharan city of Laayoune, claimed by the Polisario, a most embarrassing situation as many diplomats of countries who do not recognize Morocco's de facto annexation will refuse to attend. Included in the lot is the U.S. ambassador, who has received Washington's orders not to go—a gesture to Algeria, but a significant break with Morocco.

However, Washington still has a little influence in Morocco and it will have to be brought to bear, as doubtless Chadli will request. Despite present alliances, there is no doubt that Washington, Rabat, Algeria, and Tunis should have a common aim in the region—to neutralize and ultimately get rid of Muammar al Qaddafi. Hence it is directly relevant to that crisis that one of Chadli's main topics of discussion with President Reagan will be America's economic policy toward Africa and North-South relations. A radical change in U.S. economic policy toward Africa would be the key to breaking up the Morocco/Libyan alliance, originally prompted by Morocco's need for financial help to counterbalance the austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund.