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PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA HOLDS HEARINGS WITH MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF KEY DEPARTMENTS



Algiers – As part of his hearings of government members, President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika devoted a session examining three objectives and strategy of key sectors, including higher education, scientific research, water resources, agriculture, and road projects. The strategy of developing and reforming these sectors for their implementation from 2005 to 2009, places their major goals within the project of national revitalization initiated by the President in 1999.

MESSAGE OF GOOD WISHES FROM AMBASSADOR AMINE KHERBI TO THE ALGERIAN COMMUNITY ON THE OCCASION OF EID-EL-FITR



My dear Compatriots:
As the blessed month of Ramadhan comes to a close, it is with great pleasure that I extend to the members of the Algerian community living in the United States of America, my best wishes on the auspicious occasion of Eid-el-Fitr.

ALGERIA-NIGERIA PRESENT TRANS-SAHARAN GAS PIPELINE PROJECT

A study examining the feasibility of a Trans-Sahara pipeline linking Nigeria and Algeria, via Niger, and then into Europe, concluded that such a project was “reliable” and “profitable.” The study released last month, showed the technical and economic feasibility of NEPAD’s regional project.

Algeria’s Minister of Energy and Mining, Mr. Chakib Khelil, said, “This initiative is considered one of the best current options to successful economic integration of the region.”

During a joint conference with Niger’s Minister of Energy and Mining, Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi, and Nigeria’s Minister of Oil Resources, Mr. Edmund Dokuru, Minister Khelil indicated that the actual construction of the pipeline is not scheduled to begin until 2015 and that the invested amount in the project would be \$10 billion for the pipeline and \$3 billion for gas-gathering and Nigerian infrastructure.

Mr. Khelil stressed that there were “no problems” with financing the venture. International partners are being sought to help fund and implement the project.

The three ministers highlighted the advantages of the project for all the countries involved, including Europe, which will secure a new source of natural gas. Minister Khelil addressed the remaining steps to be taken: the signature of intergovernmental agreements, the harmonization of the standards of realization of the pipeline, and the studies on the impact of the project on the environment.

He also touched upon the benefits of the pipeline in diversifying EU supply options and boost the regional economic energy cooperation. The new pipeline project will also provide substantial employment benefits for the countries involved as well as opportunities to tap into the pipeline at regional levels to attract investors into gas-based industries and electricity generation.

The gas pipeline will be 4,128 km in length, with 1,037 km in Nigerian territory Nigerian, 841 km in Niger and 2,310 km in Algeria. It will have a carrying capacity of about 20 to 30 Bcm of Nigerian gas a year. Sufficient reserves will be in place on the Nigerian side and there will be ample market potential for Europe with the 20-30 Bcm/year after 2015.

This study had been entrusted to the British company PENSPEN IPA for a cost of \$2.04 million in May 2005.





“MEDITERRANEAN PRIZE FOR DIPLOMACY”, initiated by Foundation "Mediterraneo", will be awarded next October

20 to Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui

Algeria's Foreign Minister, its organizers announced. The awarding ceremony will take place in the foundation's headquarters in Naples, on the sidelines of a visit the head of the Algerian diplomacy will pay to Italy from October 19th to 21st.

ALGERIA TO CHAIR 2007 IMF- WORLD BANK ANNUAL MEETINGS



Algeria has been elected to chair the next annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) scheduled for Fall 2007 in Washington DC.

ENERGY AND MINING MINISTER, CHAKIB KHELIL, ELECTED VICE- PRESIDENT OF OPEC FOR 2007



While in Vienna for a dialogue between oil-producing and consuming states, Algeria's Energy and Mining Minister, Mr. Chakib Khelil, was elected Vice-President of the Organization of

Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) for the year 2007.

During the meeting, Minister Khelil took the floor of the international seminar entitled *OPEC in a New Energy Era: Challenges and Opportunities*, and said that OPEC "is determined to keep such a dialogue going with the objective of facing the oil industry's challenges."

Minister Chakib Khelil declared that OPEC's role in the new energy era has reached a "large consensus about sufficient conventional resources and non-conventional resources to satisfy the demand throughout this century."

The new president of OPEC is Emirati Energy Minister, Mr. Mohamed Bin Dhaen Al Hamli.

AMBASSADOR AMINE KHERBI'S PARTICIPATES IN CSIS PANEL



The Ambassador of Algeria to the United States of America, H.E. Amine Kherbi, was part of a panel CSIS including Prime Minister José Maria Pereira Neves of Cape Verde, to de-

bate *“Broad Security Issues Facing Africa in Order to Facilitate a Dialogue and Understanding Between African and US Officials and Policy Makers”*.

This gathering was organized on October 4th by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The Algerian Ambassador's presentation focused on the need for developing a consistent and collective approach to transnational threats.

US STUDY ESTIMATES INVESTMENT FOR ALGERIAN PORTS



A US study on the development of Algeria's maritime transports by the year 2025 concluded that modernization and expansion of Algerian ports require a global investment of about \$2 billion in order to meet the growing needs of the ports over the next 20 years.

The study which was released on September 17th, was conducted by the American engineering and design institute, Moffat-Nichole.

He seized this opportunity to reflect about the intolerable manifestation of terrorism and about the inadequacy of international institutions in view of the new threats. More specifically, he put the emphasis on the need for a new approach to security, on the complexity of the issue, and on the necessity of the commitment of all countries and the development of new forms of international solidarity.

UNDP AND US COMPANY ANADARCO AGREE ON “KSOURS” PROJECT



The United Nations Development Program and the US Oil Company Anadarco signed an agreement on September 10, 2006 about a contribution to the “The Roads Ksours” tourist project for southern Algeria. The financial contribution of \$80,000 from Anadarco will support the activities of development projects in the Ouargla province, in particular to renovate the Ksar of Temacine. The agreement was signed in Algeria by Mr. Marc Destanne de Bernis, UNDP’s representative in Algeria, and Mr. François Gautier, Algeria Anadarco’s Director-General.

This project will involve the four wilayas of Bechar, Adrar, Ouargla and Ghardaia. According to Mr. De Bernis, the project will address agriculture development and revive the local economy while working with local civil society organizations.

UNDP has recently approved a new cooperation program in Algeria for 2007-2011. The program will focus on three domains: government, human development, and environment and disasters prevention.

THE MAGHREB PAGES RELEASES ECONOMIC ANNUAL REFERENCE GUIDE ON ALGERIAN AND FOREIGN ENTERPRISES

The Maghreb Pages Edition is a recently released reference guide of Algerian and foreign enterprises operating in Algeria. *The Maghreb Pages* is a company incorporated under Algerian law and is a branch of a French firm that specializes in web applications and databases. Its mission is to make available a viable and useful database in an edition, which creates networking opportunities and fosters partnerships. *The Maghreb Pages* aims to constitute a space used for reference, research and interaction between those who envision starting a business in Algeria.

The Maghreb Pages’ president, Mr. Michel Bisac, announced in Algiers on September 17, 2006, that “there is disparate information in Algeria that, once gathered and put together, will become an accessible reference for all Algerian and foreign enterprises.” Over 170,000 Algerian enterprises and 10,000 foreign firms are part of the edition.

After six months in Algeria, *The Maghreb Pages* has opened representative offices in the East in Annaba and in the West in Oran, with a total staff of 50 people. Mr. Bisac said that by the end of 2006, the staff would increase to 200 with new offices in Algiers and Ouargla. According to *The Maghreb Pages*, the firm has invested \$10 million in Algeria.

The Maghreb Pages hope to publish monthly studies that indicate societal trends and follow the significant evolutionary steps made.



NEW OIL LAW ENSURES ADEQUATE PROFIT

The law on hydrocarbons toughening energy investment terms guarantees adequate profits for foreign firms, many of which want to participate in the next licensing round, Algeria’s Energy and Mines Minister Chakib Khelil said in a recent statement.

Khelil said foreign companies had not sent him any signal that they were worried about the law. "I've seen no sign of worry from the international companies. The law remains attractive. I've not been approached by them," he said. "Even if informally they are not happy to be taxed on the large profits, it's the law of the republic and it guarantees them an adequate profit."

"We are not going to decide on it [the round] soon," he said. "I know that a lot of companies want to participate; that signifies that the Algerian market remains interesting for them."

US COMPANY *MEDTRONIC* DONATED MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, SAVING LIVES



Eight patients, between the ages of 33 and 65 years, at the University Hospital Center Nafissa Hamoud, in Algiers, benefited from an implant surgery of biventricular pacemakers and defibrillators donated by the US company *Medtronic*.

French specialists who are part of a framework of “scientific exchange and transfer of technology” supervised all eight procedures, the first ever-performed in Algeria. The Director of the Cardiology Division at the hospital, Dr. Mourad Redjimi, said that their assistance permitted the Algerian cardiology specialists to perform this specific procedure.

The equipment donated helped improve the contractions of the cardiac rhythm by stimulation. They were directly placed into the hearts of the patients, according to *Medtronic*'s consultant, Dr. Yacine Berrah. As a result of the surgery, the life of each patient is supposed to have been extended by 10-15 years and patients are expected to resume a normal lifestyle.

ALGERIAN OIL EXPERTISE IN HIGH DEMAND IN CHAD

Emmanuel Nadingar, Chad's oil minister, was in Algeria last week to negotiate a potential business partnership between Algeria and Chad. The Chadian Government, which has sought to develop its own National Oil Company (NOC) Société des Hydrocarbures Tchadiens (SHT) is looking to Algeria's experience in this field for inspiration. Sonatrach, the Algerian NOC, will apparently assist SHT in the development of Chadian petroleum activities. Technology transfers and technical assistance may be complemented with an equity stake in SHT for Sonatrach. In the meantime, Chakib Khelil the Algerian energy minister and his Chadian colleague Nadingar have signed a bilateral cooperation agreement which should see the birth of a viable Chadian NOC.

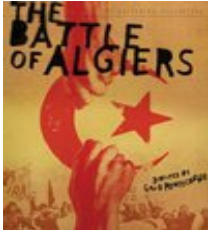
Chad was in dire need of a partnership agreement with an established player in the oil industry in order to import the expertise it needs to develop SHT into a profitable enterprise. The alliance with Algeria is strategic for Chadian partners' expertise and interests.

ALGERIA'S PLAN TO PRIVATIZE TOP BANK

Algeria's third-largest state-owned bank, Crédit Populaire d'Algérie (CPA), is set to become the country's first to be privatized, as announced by the minister responsible for privatizations, Abdelhamid Temmar. According to the minister, the government will sell off 51% of its 100% holding in the CPA before the year's end. The sell off is expected to be fully completed by February next year. A number of foreign banks have expressed interest in acquiring a stake in the CPA including the French financial businesses, Credit Agricole, BNP Paribas and Société Générale. Also in the running are U.S.-based Citigroup and the British HSBC bank. The government will also be putting forward another bank, the Banque de Développement local (BDL), for privatization in the near future, Mr. Temmar said.

The CPA occupies around 12% of the Algerian banking market and has around 130 branches nationally with more than 4,000 staff. Algeria is increasingly becoming a strong investment market principally due to the country's well-tuned liberalization plans and solid natural resources. With European and American businesses seeking to expand their presence in North Africa, Algeria may provide an ideal opportunity as an emerging economic market.

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY FEATURES “BATTLE OF ALGIERS”



The Foreign Service Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, held a screening of “The Battle of Algiers” on September 21st, 2006. The Center is hosting a Film Series themed “Forms of Resistance,” and said that the film was selected because it is “one of the most influential in political cinema.”

GILLO PONTECORVO, FILM MAKER, DIRECTOR OF “THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS” DIES



President Abdelaziz Bouteflika sent his condolences to the family of Mr. Gillo Pontecorvo, the Italian Film maker and director of “The Battle of Algiers”, who died in Rome on October 12, 2006. The Algerian President praised his contribution in shedding light on the arduous struggle for freedom and independence of the Algerian people.

YOUNG PIANO VIRTUOSO, MEHDI GHAZI, MESMERIZES AUDIENCES

Already at the young age of 17, Mehdi Ghazi, has proven to Algerian audiences that his talent is unique and unprecedented. Ghazi performed his first public piano recital to a large audience in Algiers on September 10th at the Algerian National Radio’s Auditorium, playing pieces by world-renowned musicians.

At the end of the performance, Ghazi turned to a loud and resonating applause that he later told *Algerie Presse Service*, “touched” him deeply. He said that he was “very moved” by the flowers and the unforgettable public reaction.” Ghazi said that he owes his success to the teachers who encouraged and trained him.

Ghazi, a native of the city of Oran, was discovered in May 2005 during the European Cultural Festival in Algeria. He took a training course at the Oxford Arts Center in Quebec, Canada.

Specialists consider Ghazi a real discovery that promises to be an excellent soloist. Claims have already been made that he will be the next Mohammed Iguerbouhene, a well-known Algerian musician and composer in the 1940s.



INTERNATIONAL COUSCOUS FESTIVAL IN ITALY: “ALGERIAN COUSCOUS IS THE BEST”



The New York Times “Dining In-Dining Out” food section featured a long article (“High in Algeria’s Mountains, a Kingdom of Couscous”, NYT, September 20, 2006, page D7) about an Algerian family, the Lahlous of Frikat, Kabylia, who entered the Eighth Annual San Vito lo Capo, Sicily, International Couscous Festival and earned top honors for their hand-rolled version of couscous, the millennia-old staple food of Algerian cuisine.

The Lahlous couscous “beat couscous made by Tunisians, Moroccans, Palestinians, Senegalese and people from the Ivory Coast to win the couscous gold medal” last September. The Algerian contestants “will defend their title at the festival that runs through Sunday” (September 24th). Although the dish is common to other countries in North Africa and around the Mediterranean Basin as well as in Western Africa, the Algerian contestants at the international competition wowed the panel of judges at the Sicilian festival.

The *Times* writer, Craig S. Smith, describes in his long article how the Lahlous started a family commercial venture to preserve a tradition and sell hand-rolled (“fluffier and softer than machine-made”) couscous for the modest price of one dollar for a bag of about two pounds, with ambitions to expand their business and market their product in Europe and North America. Smith’s article focuses prominently on this Algerian family’s industriousness and business spirit and highlights the significance of couscous in our country’s table as well as in those of the North African region.

The article equates gatherings every Friday around “fluffy mounds of couscous” with a “fading” similar tradition in America, the Sunday dinner and describes extensively the elaborate preparation necessary that makes homemade couscous so different from the store-bought version.