

# ALGERIA TODAY

Volume 7, Issue 8

Wednesday, May 3rd, 2006

## **PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA ADDRESSES DEMOCRACY IN ALGERIA**

*Algeria is "an authentic national and social democratic experience"*



The President of the Republic, accompanied by a ministerial delegation, made a working and inspection visit to the city of Constantine on April 16<sup>th</sup>, where he inaugurated several economic, social and educational projects. Mr. Bouteflika also chaired the opening of a colloquium, entitled "Democracy in Algeria: Realities and Prospects." In his speech he called Algeria's political system "an authentic national and social democratic experience," and underscored the unrestrained access by the population to education, employment and healthcare."

The President expressed pleasure with the "intensive pace" of implementation of the provisions of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. Through the Charter, "we have given all that was possible to give to people who suffered too much," President Bouteflika said in his address at the opening of the conference, "Everyone must know, both inside and outside (Algeria), that we cannot give more than that," he continued.

Mr. Bouteflika's visit coincided with the national celebration of "Youm El Ilm" (Knowledge Day), a day that honors Cheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, a major leader of the national movement for independence in the 1930s, who, said the President, is a figure that stood for democracy in Algeria. "Democracy is a reality that dates back to ancient history in our country," stated the President in his speech, "and that cannot be forgotten."

President Bouteflika recognized that democracy is prevailing in Algeria as fundamental issues, such as good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, promotion of a productive economy, and the emergence of an involved and concerned civil society, are being consolidated.

## **FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER, H.E. MR. BEDJAOU, ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT IN WASHINGTON**



The strength of the Algerian-American partnership was clearly demonstrated this month when Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, made a "fruitful" visit to Washington where he held "very interesting and constructive discussions" with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, as well as with Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, David Welch and other high officials of the U.S. Government. Mr. Bedjaoui said "our meeting is in keeping with the strengthening of our relations and the concertation between our two countries" and that "it translates the willingness of both President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and President George W. Bush to give the Algerian-American relationship a

See BEDJAOU, page 2

**MAJOR GENERAL  
AHMED GAÏD SALAH,  
ALGERIA'S DEFENSE CHIEF  
OF STAFF, VISITS U.S.A.**



The People's National Army Chief of Staff, Major General Ahmed Gaïd Salah, made an official four-day visit to the United States starting on April 17th at the invitation of General Peter Pace, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. The meeting represented another opportunity for Algeria and the U.S.A to strengthen the strategic partnership cemented by numerous visits made by high-ranking civilian and military officials of both countries.

**U.S. UNDER-SECRETARY,  
MRS. PAULA DOBRIANSKY,  
NOTED "SIGNIFICANT  
PROGRESS" WITH  
US-ALGERIA RELATIONS**



In an interview with *Algérie Presse Service* in Washington D.C on April 3rd, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Mrs. Paula Dobriansky, said that the United States supports Algeria's progress in political reform and economic engagements.

Mrs. Dobriansky said that all of Algeria's recent measures have been positive contributions to the country's future development. In relation to the growth of Algeria's civil society, she said that the US hopes "it will be a reinforced and successful process." She added that there has been significant progress in US-Algeria relations in the past five years and that Algeria is considered an ally in the war on terror.

The U.S., said Mrs. Dobriansky, is seeking out increased cooperation with Algeria in science and technology, as well as in political development, democracy, human rights, and civil society. She told reporters that the U.S. offers training programs to Algerian specialists in various fields, from justice, press, banking, and other sectors. She concluded her interview by saying that both Algeria and the U.S. are pursuing a more active relationship and a "dialogue on a bilateral, regional and international level."

**BEDJAOUI, continued from page 1**

dimension reflective of the permanent common interest of both countries and their desire to establish a really strong and lasting partnership". The Minister of Foreign Affairs also said that his visit provided the opportunity "to foster dialogue and expand consultations to establish greater cooperation and a mutually profitable partnership between Algeria and the United States."

Welcoming the head of the Algerian diplomacy, Dr. Rice called Algeria "an important partner" with whom the United States "are working very well". During their meeting, Secretary Rice presented Minister Bedjaoui with a facsimile of the Treaty of Peace and Amity of 1795 signed between Algeria and the U.S.A.

Minister Bedjaoui also addressed the Council on Foreign Relations and spoke of "the spirit of friendship and cooperation" that characterizes Algerian-American relations. Today, he said, that spirit "is stronger than ever". Indeed, Algeria has been working very closely with the United States "to help defeat the threat posed to freedom and progress by the scourge of terrorism." Mr. Bedjaoui warned that the threat, which Algeria had faced on her own for more than a decade, "is still prevalent today, ill-defined, diffuse and transnational by nature, and bent on destruction and terror".

## **SIGNIFICANT GROWTH & JOB CREATION IN 2005**

*Prospects for 2006 are positive*

Mr. Mohamed Laksaci, Governor of the Bank of Algeria, declared that Algeria ranks "among countries having recorded the best growth rate in terms of balance of payments surplus," particularly because Algeria's surplus doubled between 2004 and 2005. Mr. Laksaci made this statement on April 13<sup>th</sup> after having conducted meetings with the chairmen of Algerian and foreign banks before releasing the report of monetary and financial trends in 2005.

According to financial forecasts released, there was significant job creation in 2005, 5.1% growth rate by the economy, good control of inflation, and a clear drop in unemployment. Growth was primarily stimulated by the construction industry (+7.1 %), followed by hydrocarbons (+5.8%) and services (+5.6%), whereas agriculture was up by 1.9%, according to the data included in the Government Council's release on April 12, 2006. The unemployment rate decreased to 15.3% in September 2005.

## **UN CONFERENCE ON FINANCE & OIL AND GAS TRADE IN ALGIERS**

From April 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>, 30 African ministers attended the United Nations 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Commerce and Development (UNCTAD) in Algiers, focusing on oil and gas trade and finance. President Bouteflika inaugurated the conference with a welcome speech that outlined four propositions. The President called for energy integration; projects that fight environmental pollution; safeguarding water resources and lastly, training available human resources.

H.E. Mr. Bouteflika called upon the international community to partner with Algeria in its plentiful energy domains, describing such an engagement as "durable and mutually beneficial."

The conference provided the opportunity for African decision-makers to form partnerships with energy organizations. Themes discussed were hydrocarbons and finance, legal reforms, oil negotiations, project financing, African cooperation, and the role of the international community.

The Chairman of the African Union, the Secretary-General of the UNCTAD, the President of OPEC, the Nigerian and Venezuelan Ministers of Energy, as well as representatives from other international organizations also attended the conference. Algeria was chosen as host due to its "leadership in regional integration and cooperation," said Energy and Mining Minister, Mr. Chakib Khelil.

## **AMBASSADOR AMINE KHERBI ADDRESSES FSI'S REGIONAL AREA STUDIES SEMINAR**

The Ambassador of Algeria to the United States of America addressed current issues in Algeria at a gathering of American diplomats and other US government personnel attending a seminar organized on April 25<sup>th</sup> by the Foreign Service Institute Regional Area Studies at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. The presentation offered the Ambassador the opportunity to bring the participants up to date on numerous developments taking place in Algeria, including the promising Algerian-American partnership, and to answer questions during the Q&A session that followed his remarks.

## AFRICAN MIGRATION EXPERTS MEET IN ALGERIA


African experts, complying with a decision taken by the African Union (AU), met in Algiers during the first week of April 2006 to examine migration issues in the presence of the current African Union's Chairman, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konaré. The agenda of the meeting was "African common stance on migration and development."

Representatives of African Union member states attended the three-day meeting, from April 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup>. The event started with a speech by Algeria's Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, who said: "The issue of migration, either legal or illegal, is a great challenge," and pointed out that "Africa has the most mobile population in the world."

The Algerian Minister-Delegate for African and Maghreb Affairs, Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, declared that Africa needs a "common strategy" for the "permanent and efficient" coverage of migrant issues, followed by a strategy for the affected countries and the international community.


At the end of the three-day meeting, experts discussing national, continental and international migrant measures adopted an 18-point plan of action  
See MIGRATION, pg 5

## UNDP ORGANIZES WORKSHOP IN SOUTHERN ALGERIA

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), along with  representatives from other UN organizations, and city officials from Bechar, Ouargla and Ghardaïa, hosted a workshop in Adrar (Southern Algeria) entitled, "Roads of Ksour" on April 2nd, 2006. The workshop is part of a project that aims at "renovating the tangible and intangible heritage of the Ksour region in the framework of sustainable development."

The project is part of the 2003-2004 action plan of the UNESCO intersectional project "The Sahara of Cultures and Peoples", and was adopted at the Ghardaïa International Workshop in Algeria, 19-21 April 2003. This project will be funded by the Algerian Government, UNDP, and UNESCO.

## *The New York Times* FEATURES ALGERIAN PASTRIES

Long underreported in the American media, Algerian cuisine is finally getting well-deserved recognition. In its March 29<sup>th</sup> edition, *The New York Times* featured a long article by Melissa Clark, relating her delighted discovery of the sweet side of the Algerian culture, on a visit to *Bague de Kenza*, an up and coming pastry shop in the French capital. The writer speaks of her attempts to "satisfy (her) new Maghreb pastry cravings", and of her pleading and begging to get the recipes from the shop owner. Finally, her "stalking" paid off and with the help of *Farid Zadi* ([chefzadi.com](http://chefzadi.com)), an Algerian chef who teaches at the California School of Culinary Arts, she was able to duplicate recipes of some of the "revelatory" sweets she enjoyed, including the aptly-named "Dziriate" ("Dziri" means "from Algiers" or "from Algeria"; "Dziriate" is the feminine plural and can be translated as "Algerine or Algerian women.") Amateur pastry chefs or anyone wanting to try their hand at baking Algerian pastries should check out *Les Douceurs de Kenza* (Minerva, 2005), a beautifully written cookbook co-authored by the shop owners, L'Hassen Rahmani and Samira Fahim 

## ALGERIAN RESEARCHERS RECOGNIZED FOR SCIENTIFIC WORK



Six women were among eleven young researchers who were rewarded in Algiers on April 16th during a ceremony recognizing the best scientific work of 2004-2005. The ceremony was organized by an Algerian non-governmental organization, the Foundation for Health Promotion and Research Development (FOREM).

The prize for the best "scientific work" was given to Dr. Abdelhamid Lalaoui, a specialist in nephrology and the president of the Algerian-Belgian Medical Association, for his efforts to revive organ implants in Algeria.

## FIRST REGIONAL DESERT ROSE SHOW IN OUARGLA

The first regional show of the desert rose and techniques of drawing on sand kicked off April 17th in Ouargla, Algeria. This cultural and trade event was inaugurated by local officials and other representatives. About ten young artists from the Ouargla and Laghouat provinces took part in this four-day event, organized by Ouargla's Chamber of the Craft Industry and Professions.



## MIGRATION, *continued from page 4*

which called for "effective judicial measures" to be taken against illegal migration as it encouraged "cooperation between the African countries" to work against illegal migration.

Nationally, the experts recommended a "reinforcement of mechanisms" that counter human trafficking and favor youth employment. The continental plan calls for the adoption of a strategic policy framework for migration and cooperation between African countries and the AU's involvement. On an international scale, the experts said that the global community needs to help the developing countries fight migration problems by promoting more development projects in those countries.

The document will serve as the foundation for a common African position at the next meeting between the AU and the European Union in Tripoli, Libya, in June 2006.



## MAWLID ENNABOUI IN ALGERIA REMAINS TRADITIONAL

Tuesday, April 11, 2006 marked the celebration of *Mawlid Ennabawi Esharif*, or *Mouloud* (as it is known in Algeria), the birthday of the Prophet Mohamed. In Algeria, families get together amid a festive mood light candles for every member of the family and paint henna onto the hands of small children and women.

Mouloud was celebrated in the most remote areas of the country, as shown by the Tuareg population of Tassili Azguer in Southeast Algeria, who remain deeply attached to the tradition. According to Sheikh Tekkaoui, 96, one of the oldest people in that region, the atmosphere in the Tassili is marked by the gathering of families and tribes, who take part in different rituals and activities in commemoration of the birth of the Prophet.

EMBASSY OF ALGERIA  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
TEL: 202-265-2800  
FAX: 202-667-2174  
EMAIL:  
AMBASSADOROFFICE@YAHOO.COM