

# ALGERIA TODAY

Volume 9, Issue 10

Monday, July 3, 2006



## **WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATED IN ALGERIA**

Algeria hosted the World Environment Day celebrations and activities on June 5<sup>th</sup>, focusing on protecting dry lands against desertification. President Bouteflika called for "adopting a universal charter on deserts and the fight against desertification." He stressed the need for "combining efforts, harmonizing means and putting them in service, so that our common aspiration for a future when the current and the raising generations could live in a world of peace and security, can be fulfilled."

During a news conference held in the presence of representatives of several ministries, associations, and the United

See ENVIRONMENT, page 4



## **PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA APPOINTS MR. ABDELAZIZ BELKHADEM AS ALGERIA'S NEW HEAD OF GOVERNMENT**

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appointed Mr. Abdelaziz Belkhadem as the new Head of Government on May 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Belkhadem said that "I am so proud of the confidence and I am aware of the importance of the task which was that of my predecessors and which will be that of my successors in the service of the homeland, in order to better handle the challenges which will make Algeria a proud country."

## **MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MR. BEDJAOUI IN BEIJING**

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, participated in the Arab-Chinese second ministerial meeting held in Beijing, China, on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The two-day forum served to strengthen cooperation between the Arab League members and China, and establish a strong partnership. In attendance, were all the Ministers of Foreign Affairs from the Arab League states, the Secretary General of the League, as well as the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs.



In a speech delivered at the forum, Mr. Bedjaoui expressed his "satisfaction" with the significant progress of the Chinese-Arab cooperation in several areas as well as the increase of trade volume between both sides," which he said reached \$50 billion in 2005, compared to \$7 billion in 1999."

## **US HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISOR, MRS. FRANCES TOWNSEND, MEETS PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA**

Mrs. Frances Townsend, Homeland Security Adviser to President Bush, visited Algeria on June 18<sup>th</sup> for talks with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika on the Algerian - American cooperation on counter terrorism. She told reporters that her meeting with President Bouteflika had been "absolutely exceptional."



Mrs. Townsend extended greetings to President Bouteflika from the U.S. President as well, saying that President Bush had sent his "warmest and best wishes."

## ALGERIA CAUCUS INAUGURATED AT THE US CONGRESS



On June 27, 2006, Ambassador Amine Kherbi joined Representatives Ed Royce (R-CA), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), and Joseph Pitts (R-PA) and numerous dignitaries to celebrate the formation of the Congressional Algeria Caucus. This event represents a major landmark in the increasingly close Algerian-American relations and is a timely and welcome development in a history characterized by friendship and cooperation for decades. The Algeria Caucus is also the consecration of efforts by both countries and their leaders to deepen their relations and reinforce a promising strategic partnership.

Symbolized and encouraged by the warm and friendly relationship established between Presidents Abdelaziz Bouteflika and George W. Bush, relations between Algeria and the United States have now entered a new and dynamic phase and are stronger than they have ever been. Both countries consult with one another on a broad range of regional and international issues, cooperate closely in the area of counter-terrorism, and are committed to take their relations to a higher and more promising level.

Algeria and the United States share more than common interests. They share a steadfast love of freedom and recognize the value of hard-won independence. At this historic juncture of the Algerian-American relationship, the Congressional Algeria Caucus will serve to further consolidate their ties. To paraphrase the comments made by Congressman Ed Royce, the longtime Chairman of the House Africa subcommittee and current Chairman of the House Terrorism subcommittee, the mission of the Algeria Caucus will be more than that of a parliamentary group or lobby focused on promoting friendship (between Algeria and the United States); it will be a bipartisan gathering of members from both Houses of the US Congress who want to give the Algerian-American relations a new dimension commensurate with the significant opportunities they offer in terms of cooperation, partnerships, and investments that can be developed for the benefit of both countries and their peoples. Ambassador Amine Kherbi expressed his confidence that the Algeria Caucus “will play multiple leading roles in advancing that cooperation even further” because “not only will it be a bridge between our two peoples and promote better understanding of our respective societies and cultures, the Algeria Caucus will also help to energize and channel local opportunities to foster an even greater level of exchanges, commerce and prosperity between individual US states and Algerian local communities.”

## AMBASSADOR AMINE KHERBI DISCUSSES ALGERIA'S ANTI-TERRORISM EXPERIENCE AT THE HUDSON INSTITUTE



The Hudson Institute hosted Ambassador Amine Kherbi on June 28, 2006, at a luncheon discussion focused on Algeria's experience in combating terrorism and on the lessons learned in confronting this transnational scourge. Speaking candidly before a large audience, including representatives of foreign embassies, numerous think tanks, international organizations, members of the US and foreign media, and Congressional staffers, the Algerian diplomat said that Algeria had confronted “for over a decade and on its own” the

threat of “transnational” terrorism which tried to impose “imported values and culture” and establish a theocracy in a “secular country with a long tradition of hospitality and acceptance of religious diversity” and “which has always practiced a moderate and enlightened form of Islam”. At the time, added ambassador Kherbi, Algeria had been ill-prepared to hold free elections in “a weak State” whose leaders had misread the real and hidden intentions of radical Islamist groups. The Ambassador dismissed the now-known canard that cancellation of the second round of elections triggered terrorist acts. He reminded his audience that Islamist groups embarked on their terrorist orgy on November 27, 1991, when they attacked a border post close to Tunisia, well before the elections were held. Today, Algeria's claims have been verified; the world community woke up to the “transnational” nature of terrorism after September 11, 2001, and is now engaged in an increasingly joint effort to combat this scourge, said Mr. Kherbi. The Ambassador stressed that Algeria's successful anti-terrorist experience is now sought after and that Algeria is a leading and active partner in this fight. Indeed, its demonstrated cooperation in combating terrorism is now praised as “exemplary” and “outstanding” by US and NATO officials. Before closing his remarks, the Algerian diplomat indicated that his country, “having restored social peace” and completing it through a program of national reconciliation, is now focusing its energies on “development and the preservation of democracy through the consolidation of the rule of law.”

## 50 AMERICAN COMPANIES AMONG PARTICIPANTS AT THE 39th ALGIERS INTERNATIONAL FAIR

According to the Algerian Fairs and Exhibitions Company (SAFEX), over 1,600 exhibitors were at the 39th Algiers International Fair (AIF) held from June 1st to June 8<sup>th</sup> at the Exhibition Palace in Algiers under the theme, "Economic growth support plan: Vehicle of the sustainable development." About 34 countries participated in this year's fair.



In a press release, SAFEX confirmed the participation of up to 522 Algerian companies (84 public and 431 private), alongside 1100 Foreign participants.

Fifty American firms were present at the American pavilion of the AIF and represented telecommunication companies, as well as companies specializing in ICT, tourism, construction, transportation, agriculture, pharmacy, energy, hydraulics, and banking.

The AIF is a major event in Algeria and one of the most important economic and commercial events in the Maghreb and Africa. Mrs. Elizabeth Lord Stuart, Operations Director at the US-Algeria Business Council, told *Algérie Presse Service* that the American companies participating in the fair had the opportunity to discover Algeria's market.

## ALGERIAN-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP

A workshop bringing together Algerian and American members of Parliament was held for four days starting May 27<sup>th</sup> in Algiers, in an effort to share experience from the legislative field. The workshop, which was supervised by five American experts, aimed to improve legislative capacities in Algeria and the entire Maghreb region.

During the opening statement of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) workshop, the Speaker of the Algerian Parliament, Mr. Amar Saâdani said: "The goal that brought us together... is to consolidate the

See WORKSHOP, page 5



## AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION VISITS ALGERIA

Two members of the American Bar Association (ABA), Mr. Eugène Brott and Mr. Francis A. Mc Laughlin, experts in comparative and international law, visited Algiers at the invitation of the Algerian Bar Association and the National Union of Magistrates.

During their visit that started May 23rd, they participated as guests in the forum on "Deontological ethics of magistrates," organized by the daily *El Moudjahid*. The ABA members said that effective deontological ethics of magistrate profession "is likely to ensure them more independence facing external pressures." They relayed their international experiences and said that Algeria is a country that is evolving fast in reform, namely in the judicial sector, but that it still has legislation to implement.

The U.S. experts insisted that the "independence of a magistrate from external pressures remains a *sine qua non* condition for integrity and efficiency" and stressed the necessity of informing the justices and public about the magistrates' rights and duties through the code of practice.

## H.E. AMBASSADOR AMINE KHERBI, CONNECTS WITH COMMUNITY

On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ambassador Amine Kherbi met with the members of the Board of Directors of the Algerian-American Association of Greater Washington at a working luncheon at his Residence. The Ambassador and his guests considered many issues relating to the Algerian community living in the United States, including the activities and efforts undertaken by the Embassy to pursue fostering stronger and closer relations with the national community. Ambassador Kherbi reiterated the Embassy's availability to assist and support our compatriots and to help them with any concerns that they may have.

The Ambassador and his guests also discussed a program of activities planned for the next few months, such as organizing a Cultural Week in the fall focusing on Algerian cinema.

## ALGERIAN BUSINESS LEADERS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

On June 5<sup>th</sup>, Ambassador Amine Kherbi hosted a delegation of Algerian business leaders at a dinner given at his Residence. The delegates, members of the newly-established Algerian franchising Association, were in Washington to participate in the symposium on franchising organized in the framework of the Commercial Law Development Program of the US Department of Commerce, (May 31-June 6).

## CISCO SYSTEMS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN ALGERIA

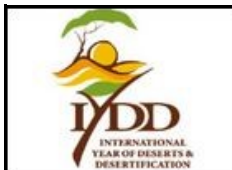
The office of the American group *Cisco Systems*, the world leader of Internet networks solutions was inaugurated



on May 31<sup>st</sup> by the Minister of Posts and Information Technology and Communication, Mr. Boudjmaâ Haïchour, at the Hilton Hotel in Algiers. Minister Haichour said that CISCO's office will enable Algeria to "diversify cooperation in this domain with Asians, Americans and Europeans and benefit from their experiences. Mr. Mark Simon, the Vice President of CISCO, said that Algeria was one of the first countries in the Middle East and North Africa region where *CISCO Systems* opened an office. He highlighted the fact that Algeria was also more attractive because of its human capital and a large number of young engineers.

## ENVIRONMENT, *continued from page 1*

During a news conference held in the presence of representatives of several ministries, associations, and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), Algeria's Environment and Town Planning Minister, Mr. Chérif Rahmani, said that activities centered on "three main broad lines: culture, science and awareness," as well as sustainable development. In addition, another international conference attended by national and international organizations was held on desertification and bio-diversity.



President Bouteflika was honored by UNEP in recognition of his considerable efforts towards environmental protection. The UN Secretary

**WORKSHOP**, *continued from page 3*  
the institutional capacities of Algeria.”

Mr. Boualem Tatah, Secretary General of the People’s National Assembly, said that the discussions at the workshop were “efficient and valuable.” According to Mr. Steven Rauschenberger, the Illinois State Senator and the Chairperson of the NCSL, the U.S. is interested in strengthening ties with Algeria through programs of parliamentary exchange because “The United States of America is impressed by the Algerian democracy and optimistic for its future.” He also said that the meetings were a “learning experience for everyone.”



### **ICG’S MR. ROBERT MALLEY IN ALGIERS FOR A CONFERENCE**

Mr. Robert Malley, Adviser to former US President Bill Clinton, and currently the Middle East Program Director for the International Crisis Group, was a guest speaker at a conference organized by the National Institute of Global Strategic Studies (INESG) at the Hilton Hotel in Algiers on June 8th. He told the press that “it is in the interest of the Middle East, Algeria, and the entire Arab world, to promote a political Islam instead of a radical Islam because the former is more accepting of democracy, civil society, and mindful of minorities.”

### **ALGERIAN AUTHOR ASSIA DJEBAR ELECTED TO THE ACADEMIE FRANCAISE.**



On June 22, 2006, world-renowned Algerian novelist, scholar, poet and filmmaker Assia Djébar became the first North African woman to be admitted to the prestigious Académie Française. Born Fatima-Zohra Imalayen, Ms. Djébar, 69, has often been the first one in many instances in her life: First Algerian and African woman to enter, in 1955, the famous French Ecole normale supérieure. A prolific writer (she wrote her first book when she was 19), saluted by The New York Times as a writer “whose works are noted for confronting obstacles faced by women in Algerian society”, Assia Djébar is considered a “Classic” among North African authors writing in French. Ms Djébar teaches French literature at New York University. She is the recipient of the prestigious Neustadt Prize for Contribution to World Literature in 1996 “for perceptively crossing borders of culture, language, and history in her fiction and poetry” and the Yourcenar Prize in 1997.

### **Message of congratulations from Ambassador Amine Kherbi to the Algerian community living in the United States**

On the occasion of the Celebration of Algeria’s Independence Day, I am delighted to extend my best wishes of success, prosperity and progress to all the members of our community living in the United States of America. On July 5<sup>th</sup>, I invite every Algerian man and woman living in the United States to join me in celebrating the gift of freedom and the pride of our national heritage. I also seize this opportunity to reiterate to all of you the availability and support of your Embassy as you build prosperous and successful lives in the United States of America.

**EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE’S  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS  
TEL: 202-265-2800  
FAX: 202-667-2174  
EMAIL:  
AMBASSADOROFFICE@YAHOO.COM**