

Interview de Monsieur le Ministre d'Etat, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération Internationale, Ramtane Lamamra, publiée le 31 mars 2017, par "The Washington Post".

In a troubled region, Algeria plays a key role in the stability of North Africa and the Sahel. Algeria's undeniable assets have enabled it to become a regional power.

“While remaining attached to the ideals that have always guided our diplomacy, it will continue to prove its capacity of adaptation and creativity,” said Ramtane Lamamra, minister of foreign affairs.

Algeria's ambition as an essential and powerful speaker for all African and Maghreb affairs dates to when the capital was a Mecca for independent-minded revolutionaries.

“If Muslims pray in holy places and Christians in the Vatican, revolutionaries do it in Algeria,” said Amilcar Cabral, the father of Guinée-Bissau independence. And in a popular gathering before imprisonment, Nelson Mandela, who spent early days training here, said, “Algeria is my second country” during an era when Pan-Africanism was on the rise.

During the 1990s, Algeria had to fight on its own against the scourge of terrorism. It was not until 10 years later after the 9/11 attacks that the world paid attention to this transnational threat.

“This challenge that we were able to overcome thanks to our own sacrifices and the merit of our people and our armed and security forces, applies today like an individual and collective antidote against any adventurism elicited by obscure and evil groups elsewhere” explained the minister of Foreign Affairs, Ramtane Lamamra.

Is the country equally immunized against another Arab spring?

For Lamamra, the head of Algerian diplomacy, it’s “a phenomenon of destabilizing transition, if not violence, not only for the country and the people who were targeted, but the fake ‘spring’ has equally favored the birth and expansion of a terrorist monster that attacks all countries and all its people.”



Security-related issues constitute a top priority in Algeria's foreign policy agenda, which includes the 5+5 Western Mediterranean Dialogue, the European Union, Mali, Libya, France, and so forth. Algiers has always been against an interventionist, hegemonic or conformist diplomacy.

The fight against terrorism requires a "multidimensional approach" to eradicate it, Lamamra said, and in Libya, the solution "cannot be anything but political." Algeria plays a crucial role in Mali with the signature of the Algiers Agreement for Peace and reconciliation in Mali. Algeria works to bring together Libyan protagonists, and brings financial aid to Tunisia and other neighboring countries, namely in the Sahel.

Its recent victory has banning ransom payments to terrorist groups by European states in exchange for the freeing of their hostages. Its active campaign with international bodies allowed for its universalization at the United Nations in 2014, a major blow to financing, an important niche of terrorism.

Diplomacy that serves the economy

To reduce Algeria's dependence on oil, Algerian diplomacy is mobilized to promote Algeria as destination and attract foreign direct investment. The use of diplomacy to serve the economy is an integral part of the Algerian foreign policy.

Asked about its relevance today, Lamamra noted its ability to adapt. He is convinced that “Africa constitutes an attractive economic hub that could be an important source of worldwide economic growth.”

A privileged partnership lies with the United States. “Our American partners recognize in Algeria an efficiency unequalled in the region in security matters; our ambition at the moment is to carry Algerian–American cooperation further.”

The multiplication of partnership agreements outside the hydrocarbon sector, in the economic, scientific and cultural domains, as well as the opening of the American International School in Algiers, are proven examples of increased momentum in Algerian–American relations.

“We hope that the number of American visitors increases as they become more aware of Algeria’s attractiveness. The majority of American citizens who visit Algeria do so for professional reasons; those who come for tourism are less numerous, but are regulars who return for the unique tourist potential and above all because of the legendary hospitality of the Algerians,” Lamamra said.

The head of Algerian diplomacy is convinced that the influx of American tourists will reach a crescendo: “They will be welcome in a country that is safe, stable and hospitable.”