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**United States Security/Military Ties to the Maghreb: The Cases of
Algeria and Morocco before and after 9/11**

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Dedication

First and foremost, I thank Allah for giving the strength and patience to accomplish this work despite all difficulties.

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved parents, the most important persons in my life for their support, encouragement, and sacrifice all the way long.

Unique thanks to my brothers and sisters for their endless support, encouragement and standing by my side from the beginning to the end.

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In the name of Allah, all Praise is to Almighty Allah, Lord of all the worlds, most Beneficent,
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Abstract

This research work examines the US security and military ties to the Maghreb countries specifically with Algeria and Morocco before and after the 9/11 events. Its main concern is to investigate how the US foreign policy shifts its interests to the Maghreb region since it was for many decades marginal to its policy and it fell under Europe's zone of influence, France's particularly. However, after the 9/11 events, the United States started to recognize the strategic importance of the Maghreb region and showed greater interests in many fields, specially the military ones. A significant shift in the relations of the US with the countries of the Maghreb, as it drew up its new strategies to combat terrorism. Also, prevent its spread on the region by establishing military and strategic ties including the military command AFRICOM, in addition to the other initiatives and strategic dialogues especially with Algeria and Morocco, which are the two dominant nations in the entire region. Those ties also witnessed economic efforts such as trade and investments for mutual benefit. Those military ties instead of bringing stability to the region, it enhanced the terrorist threats and domestic conflicts within the country or even the regional conflicts, which resulted in an antagonism between Algeria and Morocco, enhancing both US and Israel's influence in the region, which would put the region in a critical situation.

ملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة العلاقات الأمنية والعسكرية الأمريكية بمنطقة المغرب العربي على وجه التحديد مع الجزائر والمغرب. هدفها الرئيسي هو التحقيق في كيفية تحويل السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة اهتمامها إلى منطقة المغرب العربي حيث أنها كانت لعدة عقود هامشية لسياستها وكانت واقعة تحت منطقة نفوذ أوروبا، وخاصة فرنسا، لكن بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر، بدأت الولايات المتحدة تدرك الأهمية الإستراتيجية لمنطقة المغرب العربي وأظهرت اهتمامًا أكبر في العديد من المجالات، وخاصة المجال العسكري. تحول كبير في علاقات الولايات المتحدة مع دول المغرب العربي، حيث وضعت استراتيجياتها الجديدة لمكافحة الإرهاب و منع انتشاره في المنطقة من خلال إقامة علاقات عسكرية وإستراتيجية بما في ذلك القيادة العسكرية أفريقيوم. إضافة إلى المبادرات والحوارات الإستراتيجية، لاسيما مع الجزائر والمغرب وهما الدولتان المهيمنتان في المنطقة، كما شهدت هذه العلاقات جهودا اقتصادية مثل التجارة والاستثمارات من أجل المنفعة المتبادلة. تلك الروابط العسكرية، بدلاً من إحلال الاستقرار في المنطقة، عززت التهديدات الإرهابية والصراعات الداخلية داخل البلاد أو حتى الصراعات الإقليمية التي أدت إلى العداء بين الجزائر والمغرب ، مما عزز النفوذ الأمريكي في المنطقة ، الأمر الذي من شأنه أن يضع المنطقة في وضع حرج.

List of Abbreviation and Acronyms

AFRICOM	Africa Command
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CAERT	African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism
CASCF	China–Arab States Cooperation Forum
DOD	Department of Defense
EU	European Union
FOCAC	Forum on China–Africa Cooperation
FTA	Free-Trade Agreement
GSPC	Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JCET	Joint Combined Exchange Training
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MD	Mediterranean Dialogue
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPEO	North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PSI	Pan- Sahel Initiative
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
TIFA	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement

TOW	Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missiles
TSCTI/ TSCTP	Trans-Sahara counter-terrorism initiative/ partnership
UN	United Nation
USA / US	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

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Introduction

This research work tackles the US security and military ties to the Maghreb region particularly with Algeria and Morocco. It investigates the different relations that the US had with those countries before and after the 9/11 events and the different motives that attracted the US intention. In addition, it examines the different policies that the United States adopted towards the region for its stability.

This study takes as a case study both Algeria and Morocco and their foreign ties with the United States. Although both Algeria and Morocco belong to the same region and have a shared border, the United States of America view those countries differently. Therefore, the US took different approaches to deal with both countries. While, the Algeria-US relations were somehow superficial although the different factors that combine them together such as economic and security interests, the US-Morocco relations are different since they built a close ties dating back from signing the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1786.

The main objective of this study is to highlight the different strategies that the US adopted to provide security cooperation for the countries of the Maghreb region in the fight against terrorism. It also aims at highlighting the real reason behind those strategies especially after the 9/11 events that increased the US orientations towards the region especially with Morocco to prevent the increased influence of Russia and promote its presence.

The Maghreb is a strategic region that centers the world, as it is a gateway to Europe, the Middle East and African continent in the south. Where Algeria and Morocco are the two dominant countries in the region and leaders in world politics, the US foreign policy towards the region falls under the Middle East and North Africa as a whole. Although, the region witnessed an impressive economic growth especially Algeria, it is considered a small market to USA since their trade is only focusing on hydrocarbon while with other major countries especially China and

Russia the economic trade is on its highest level as well as the trade of military equipment.

Due to the growing importance in the Maghreb region, the US started to pay attention to the region especially after the 9/11 events since it shifts its interests towards the security field and fighting terrorism, where it was mainly economic ties for their wealth and richness.

In his article, “The United States and North Africa: Sustained Strategic Interests” Mohamed Z. Yakan examines the US government before 9/11 does not have an applicable strategies towards the North African countries. These strategies will eventually confirm that the US have lacked its consistency towards the region especially Algeria since it went through difficult times during the nineties.

Furthermore, in his article, “Security and Insecurity in North Africa” Jeremy H. Keenan examines the US security collaborations with the countries in the North Africa to bring political stability to the region and to the Sahel. He also tried to tackle the US goals by achieving the previously mentioned goal so that the US can establish itself as an elite power in the region. However, the US was unable to achieve this goal and maintain its power in the region because it created insecurity in the region.

This insecurity created regional conflicts between Algeria and Morocco to the point that Algeria stopped diplomatic relations with Morocco. It also created a regional disagreement about the Western Sahara conflict that Moroccan foreign policy always wanted to solve and obtain the territory. This conflict presented an opportunity to the US foreign policy makers to take an advantage of the situation since its regional interests goes in line with Morocco, it decided to support the Moroccan claims of the territory in exchange of normalizing diplomatic ties with Israel. An opportunity that the United States never had before, which it will likely to enhance its position and influence in the region as a major power for peacekeeping and stability.

This research aims at answering the following question: To what extent did the US

security and military collaboration with the Maghreb bring stability to the region? What are the implications of the US-Algerian security and military cooperation? What are the implications of the US-Moroccan security and military cooperation? To what extent the US-Algerian security and military cooperation correlates with the US-Moroccan cooperation in the security and military? What are its real goals behind supporting the Moroccan decisions about claiming the Western Sahara in exchange of normalizing with Israel?

This research depends on qualitative and the comparative methods aiming at explaining military policies and ties with the Maghreb region. This study based on the qualitative method used to give deep explanation of the different policies the U.S used to enhance security cooperation and fight terrorism in the Maghreb countries.

Given the nature of this research work, the comparative case study approach adopted; which involves the examination and the synthesis of similarities and differences across two or more cases. It used to examine the security and military policies that the US adopted towards Algeria and Morocco. Where both countries have some similar US foreign strategic dialogues and security initiatives in regards that they belong to the same region, they also have some differences in regards of the intensity of those security and military ties which resulted making Morocco the American pillar in the Maghreb and interference in normalization deal with Israel. As for Algeria, they were just formal ties seeking influence in the country and the region as a whole, and in its quest for competition with China and Russia. These are the two predominant approaches used for the achievement of this research work.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. This first chapter deals with the US relations with the Maghreb as a background of their relations. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the relations of the Maghreb countries with the USA in their early contacts. It also examines the situation of the Maghreb region in terms of the terrorist threats and conflicts.

The second chapter deals with why the US chose the Maghreb region for its foreign policies and fighting terrorism. It aims at recognizing the Maghreb as a strategic location by the US policy makers with rich resources for economic development. It also tackles the US competition with other Major Powers such as China and Russia to gain influence in the region. Also, it discusses the Western Sahara conflict and how it raised the tensions between Algeria and Morocco which led the USA to interfere and offering a deal to Morocco in exchange of normalizing with Israel.

The third chapter examines the US military policy towards both Algeria and Morocco as dominant nations in the region. It aims at examining the different military policies that they adopted to fight terrorism and achieve stability to the region, while they are just justifications so that the US can get access to the region and increase its influence.

Chapter One

The United States and the Maghreb

The Maghreb region has traditionally had a marginal or decreasing impact in the international affairs. This led the United States (US/ USA) foreign policy makers to shift their intentions to region especially at economic and security levels due to its important location as a gateway to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa in the south.

Algeria and Morocco, which are the most dominant nations in the Maghreb received an increased attention from the US especially after the 9/11 attacks and declaring the global war on terror afterwards mainly at the security level, as a result the United States changed its view about the region and became increasingly involved in the region affairs mainly due to few reasons such as the economic wealth, and the fight against terrorist organization.

This chapter is divided into six main points; it tackles the United States and the Maghreb. At first, it deals with reviewing the situation in the region, by examining the increased terrorist activities across the region and the need for creating and effective counterterrorism approaches. Second, it deals with the developing threats by illustrating the expansion of the terrorist networks especially in Algeria and Morocco, and also the critical situation in Libya. Third, it tackles the challenges to secure the region by examining the region's experience with terror. Fourth part discusses the US foreign relation with Maghreb and its differences with Algeria and Morocco. The fifth part tackles the early contacts of the US with the Maghreb region by examining them before the 9/11 events which characterized by antagonism especially from Algeria, and after the 9/11 which characterized by security and military policies implemented by both the Bush and the Obama administrations due to terrorism. The final part tackles the future of the US ties with the Maghreb region, under the Trump and the Biden administrations that characterized by negligence towards Algeria particularly, where Morocco on the other hand improved its ties due to the

Western Sahara conflict.

1. Review of the Situation

In the past, the Maghreb region has never been considered as a priority for the United States of America yet in recent years it has increasingly become a region of growing interest for the foreign policymakers in Washington. This newfound significance attached to the Maghreb is the result of a variety of factors including military, strategic, and security interests, which are the most important ones. Those set of factors are somehow linked to the political and energy interests, but most importantly, are tied to Washington's refocusing on strategic and security policies since the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 (Zoubir 1). This event was the turning point of the US foreign strategies towards the region that emphasized new approaches to deal with terrorist activities and Islamism to promote the foreign security in the region to prevent the spread of criminal activities.

For several reasons, North Africa has become a “more fertile environment for terrorist development, plotting, and activity than most parts of the world,” argued former deputy and acting CIA director John McLaughlin in a conference. Partially, growing cooperation between radical groups makes it more difficult to recruit and raise funds for terrorists. Moreover, long and the porous borders of this area are difficult to defend and there are many loosely governed or ungoverned spaces that provide for the terrorist groups' shelters not only in Libya, but also in surrounding border areas such as the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Sahel. Finally, complex and deep-seated socio-economic dissatisfaction and unjustified pervasive perceptions create a vulnerability that can be exploited by terrorist groups. When these elements exist at the same time, they create a unique security outlook for North Africa that gives the United States the "highest priority." government attention, McLaughlin said. (“Security in the Maghreb: Identifying Threats, Assessing Strategies, and Defining Success”). After what the countries of the

Maghreb region experience of the spread of the terrorism, political instability during the 2011 riots, and economic issues especially in Morocco, created a domestic frustration mainly to the young people who wanted to enhance their social conditions. This situation made the terrorist organizations to take advantage and to recruit young unemployed people and hire them as scapegoats to destabilize the local government.

2. Developing Threat in the Region

The current situation in the Maghreb region is extremely volatile, posing threats not just to the regional security but also to Western countries such as the United States and Europe since they have major interests in the region.

The major security challenges in the region are the terrorist threats in Algeria since it includes Libya's political breakdown and ultimate insecurity, and Jihadist presence and insecurity in the regional neighbors including other parts of the region, where smuggling, drug trafficking, and other illegal activities are common. Algeria was forced to establish a new military zone and deploy troops and elite Special Forces units in the Sahara desert and along the borders with Mali, Niger, Libya, Morocco and Western Sahara. These precautions are intended to stop not only terrorist attacks, but also drug trafficking and criminal organization networks (Zoubir 6). In addition, the political situation of the country had been through during uprising period where the country intended to make reforms to increase democratic ways of governing, which was faced disappointment by many people that worsened their resentment about the reforms.

Morocco like Algeria is suffering from the terrorist threats, where the Moroccan government made radical changes and made progress to achieve and improve the economic situation through trades and foreign investments, the overall economic conditions did not change where the youth became unemployed, they are being used by terrorist organizations as a scapegoats to spread the terror and instability in the country (Zoubir 7). Well, it is clearly that the

government did not succeed to prevent the influence of the jihadist over the youth unemployed and stop their activities since the government took economic measures to achieve that which was not enough.

According to Kim Cragin, a senior researcher at the National Defense University, less than a quarter of these individuals are in such a state; returned to North Africa's homeland. Even a small number of motivated and trained fighters pose a security risk; their effective surveillance requires considerable surveillance and detention resources. There were many jihadists who were put in jail, and yet participants stated that most were sentenced to three to eight years in prison. Their release determines which of them would still be considered a continued risk that poses serious tasks and challenges for local governments (“Security in the Maghreb: Identifying Threats, Assessing Strategies, and Defining Success”).

Growing terrorist activities in the region might lead to terrorists gaining control of Libya and other nearby countries, which have vast natural resources and riches. These areas run the risk of becoming a reliable source of funds for terrorist activity. El Sahara and the oil fields in Libya produce 350 thousand barrels per day, which is the equivalent of \$8 billion per year at today's pricing. The potential loss to foreign investors in the event that these fields are seized and their oil supply is cut off is \$2.5 billion per year (Wilson). Libya faces a serious political situation that could negatively affect the neighboring countries, particularly Algeria since the country is facing the risk of the return of the jihadist fighters who joined Al Qaeda.

Furthermore, radicalization is occurring at a faster rate than it has ever been before. The growing phenomena of "fast food jihadist," according to Brandeis University professor Mohammed Masbah, who begin with little theological education or knowledge of jihadi-Salafi, and in as short amount of time, they have radicalized their doctrine. Jihadi-Salafi groups are improving their skills at exploiting the situation of young people's psychological vulnerabilities,

which would appear to provide answers to concerns of identity and purpose. Masbah observed that while Middle Eastern governments regularly claim to empower youth, "in reality, it was Islamist movements who provided that [empowerment]." Dispersed groups of rapidly radicalized persons enable low-tech attacks by individuals. Who may or may not have a formal affiliation with a structure of a terrorist organization ("Security in the Maghreb: Identifying Threats, Assessing Strategies, and Defining Success"). Due to the technological development, the Jihadi-Salafi organizations are using new methods to operate and recruit mainly through the internet since cyberspace became very effective and easy way to spread radical ideologies to young people.

This instability in the Maghreb region, as well as developing terrorist organizations, might be used as a pretext to increase the American military involvement in the Maghreb region especially in Algeria and Morocco and their regional neighbors. The creation of comprehensive US dominance over the Maghreb region via military bases on the outside of the unstable zone may be used to compel regional regimes to cooperate more closely with the United States. A move like this would give the Americans more influence in the region and reinforce its presence as a great power (Wilson). It appears that, the more terrorist organization increase their activities in the region the more the US intervene in the region, not only for its stability and fighting terrorism but also to seize the opportunity and gain access to the region by assisting those countries by multilateral or bilateral security cooperation.

All of those threats will maintain to evolve and develop. Terrorist groups are ready to take advantage of a nearby disaster - regional crisis and internal conflicts- that might raise recruitment. Understanding the motives of these groups will be critical to developing more effective counterterrorism policies and plans that could put an end to the influence of these terrorist groups and stabilize the increased tensions in the Maghreb region, in addition to the internal and external

crisis that the countries of the Maghreb region experiencing as a result of bad methods of governing.

3. Challenges to Secure the Region

The United States of America has gradually but steadily succeeded in establishing some kinds of security networks that connect the Maghreb countries together. While the risk of the terrorist groups is real —Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) conducts violent strikes in the region for instance; the lethal attacks in Algeria and resorts to kidnappings of foreign nationals, and also the terrorist activities in Morocco that aimed to destabilize the local government.

Before the 9/11 events, the prospects of the Maghreb countries appeared to be extremely positive because terrorism was not a new menace to the Maghreb countries which resulted the relative achievements of the Algerian security forces against Islamist extremists, though Algeria is the most experienced country in the region with the devastation caused by terrorism, as observed through the 1990s when several groups resorted to terrorism as a strategic move against the state and its representatives, as well as against the academics and the civilian population. Morocco also, during the immediate threat, was able to restrain it through many reforms, as well as implementing counter-terrorism methods which somehow provided a good foundation for optimism. In recent years, however, security threats have reappeared as a result of:

- 1- Instability in Algeria that kept the Jihadist beliefs alive, signs of its presence broke through in some attacks and help from countrymen who fled to Europe and offered cooperation and support to groups in neighboring Morocco.
- 2- The new focus of the war in Iraq, since individuals and smaller groups in the two nations have realized that changing the political environment in their respective countries is more difficult than they anticipated (Botha 2). In addition to those, the

regional disagreement between Algeria and Morocco that started years ago about the Western Sahara, which become an obstacle that prevents the regional cooperation between the two countries to achieve stability to the Maghreb region.

After that period, on the other hand, some countries in the Maghreb region Algeria, in particular, was able to overcome extreme Islamism through the cooperation of the 'moderate' Islamist parties. In an attempt to prevent the emergence of Islamist extremism, Morocco had previously attempted the same technique, but it did not stop the bombings in Casablanca in 2003. In the case of Algeria, the National Reconciliation of 2005 offered former terrorist groups, regardless of their brutal attacks and conspiracies, pardon and the opportunity to engage in commercial activities with financial help and from the state (Zoubir 4).

The United States' strategy for counterterrorism in the Maghreb will require close collaboration with local regional governments, each of which combats terrorism using diverse historical experiences, techniques, and aims. In the months and years ahead, aligning these various initiatives with US aims and strategy will be a huge issue. Looking ahead, the United States must define its objectives to align the resources available to them with the desired outcomes. Underlying factors that contribute to radicalization It will be far more difficult than merely murdering terrorists to do this, According to The Center for Strategic and International Studies conference report, “ Without addressing the root causes of terrorism, the next cycle of violence is just a matter of time ” (“Security in the Maghreb: Identifying Threats, Assessing Strategies, and Defining Success”). Partnership with regional governments would be important. However, giving the incompatibility between Algeria and Morocco about certain issues, it would be difficult and challenging for the US to cooperate with those nations.

Regardless of these numerous tactics, the Jihadist movement remains to draw the attention of young people who are willing to commit martyrdom as seen in Morocco and Algeria. Despite

the nature of the jihadist destructive actions, the regimes that were, in many ways, responsible for the emergence of such nihilistic movements have gained the benefits of its existence, portraying Jihadism not only as a global phenomenon but also proclaiming themselves as the protectors of Europe and the United States against the terrorist threat.

As a result, not only have the Maghreb regimes become a part of the 'global war on terror,' but the US appear to have come to the conclusion that it is preferable to maintain relations with these kinds of regimes if they make some cosmetic changes than to allow Islamists to gain power. Since the Arab Spring, has become a prominent policy throughout the Arab world.

4. The US Foreign Relation with the Maghreb

Until quite recently, given the diversity of the Maghreb region, it would have been so difficult to talk in a coherent manner about the US foreign policy, including the military one, towards the region as a whole. Washington was dealing with monarchy in Morocco, with longstanding relations that began so many years ago. Algeria, however, had political tensions with the United States of America since its independence in 1962 and during the 1990s was in the grips of bloody and brutal civil war, which called the “Black Decade.” However, in the recent years, there has been a strong consensus in terms of the US strategies in the Maghreb region. With the majority of the region’s states discussing political reforms and the end of the Black Decade in Algeria and other countries that sever their ties to international terrorist groups, it is possible now to talk coherently about the US foreign policy to the whole region. While there are still many differences between the countries’ governments of the Maghreb, the most crucial ones have reduced as a result from the standpoint of the United States’ foreign policy (Hemmer 55).

However, the growing regionalization of the US- Maghreb countries foreign policy did not result any major shifts in Washington’s attitude towards the region. Instead, regionalization has just reinforced a number of previously established trends. In essence, the US is aiming to

include Algeria into the policy framework that already exists for American relations with Morocco. According to Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Welch, America's connections with North Africa have “undergone an unprecedented increase” in recent years. Building on its existing close partnerships with Morocco and ..., the US is also collaborating with other countries including Algeria "to build the foundation for relationships we expect to grow in importance in the coming years as they continue to emerge from war and isolation, respectively.” As a result, while America's view of Maghreb region has expanded to include recent changes in Algeria and Libya, its preferred policy responses in the region have not changed considerably (Hemmer 55).

The Maghreb region did not emerge as a significant region for the United States as the Cold War faded from prominence in American foreign policy; instead, it was considered as an afterthought to the more crucial Middle East. In the mid-1970s, the removal of North Africa from the African Bureau and its transfer to the State Department's Near East-South Asian Bureau reflected and codified this new status. Following Egypt's signing of a peace deal with Israel as part of the Camp David Accords, the government's stance on the pact influenced US relations with the Maghreb states' governments.

Actually, the United States' relation with the countries of the Maghreb region is somehow very complicated since it has its difficulties over the years, which actually started so many years ago. It even started before the North African states got their independence ; which was before and during the World War II, well, because of the landing of the forces of the United States in North Africa, the second phase the was the critical point in the US-Maghreb relations. The United States was perceived as a major power, in the eyes of the countries of the Maghreb region, that gained much force and influence over France after the latter was defeated in the war. On the other hand, the United States started to distinguish the Maghreb from the new American global

strategic interests.

5. The Early Contacts of the US and the Maghreb Countries

The United States have a long history of mixed relations with the Maghreb countries mainly with Algeria and Morocco. This relations can be divided into two phases; the first phase is before the 9/11 events, where the relations of the US with the Maghreb was unstable despite the fact that both Algeria and Morocco were among the first Arab countries to recognize the US independence as a sign of establishing a close ties especially in the economic field. The second phase is after the 9/11 events, where the US started to perceive the importance of the Maghreb as a strategic region centering the world to expand its global interests.

5.1. The US Relations with the Maghreb Countries before 9/11

The relations of the United States and the countries of the Maghreb region, especially Algeria and Morocco, was instable; where Algeria had some antagonism with the US and disagreement, Morocco was trying to gain the US support and build a friendly ties especially when they both signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

After a series of events, the awareness of the American leaders of the importance of the Maghreb region has increased and as indicated by the memo, which was drafted by the US National Security Council in 1946 for the President Harry Truman. Truman founded the groundwork for future US military policy in different parts of the world, including the Maghreb region and the southern shore of the Mediterranean. This paper is an excerpt from a confidentiality report that provided a comprehensive view of American policy towards the region: "In view of its strategic importance primarily, French North Africa is important for the security of the United States. . . This importance was revealed by the military events of WWII, the African base having made it possible to eliminate the German enemy. . . The shores of North Africa are an extension of the shores of Atlantic Europe and Mediterranean Africa. We cannot,

therefore, accept that these regions come under the control of a hostile power. We are, consequently, directly concerned by the political stability of these regions” (Hadhri 97-98).

During the Cold War, the circumstances were different since two powers (USA and the Soviet Union) were at war, the United States' relations with the Maghreb countries were shaped by the country's larger fight with the Soviet Union. Long-range bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles, for example, rendered America's new Strategic Air Command sites in Libya and Morocco obsolete as a deterrent to a Soviet nuclear strike. Similarly, Algeria's prominence in the non-aligned movement strained relations with the US throughout the Cold War, despite the fact that Algeria was not a Moscow ally (Hemmer 57). However, this did not prevent Algerian diplomacy to interfere and end the Iranian crisis in 1980.

5.2 The US Relations to the Maghreb after 9/11

After the end of the Cold War, the international scene witnessed a series of transformations where the United States found itself at the top of the international arena, as it was during the Cold War.

Post this period, and especially after 9/11 events, the American policy makers become more interested in the Maghreb region and its leaders become more aware about its importance in fighting terrorism and achieve stability, which has been the primary motivator for the US foreign policy makers to initiate ties with the Maghreb countries as allies and compete the Chinese and the Russian influence in the region by bilateral military exercises and discussions with Morocco and Algeria to secure the countries national security interests.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the United States became even more involved in the Maghreb region since terrorism continues to pose a significant and broad threat to national and international security. Terrorism and counter-terrorism have been at the forefront of politics since the 9/11 attacks and the "War on Terror." (Mansour-Ille 654) Especially under the Bush

administration where The policies at the national, regional, and international levels are being securitized and also under Obama administration where the situation in the Maghreb region became intense and challenging, especially at the political level due to the Arab Spring where the people protested against the ruling regimes.

5.2.1 The US Relations with the Maghreb under the Bush Administration

It has been only months of winning the election and governing the country until a catastrophic attacks occurred on September 11, 2001, which threatened the national security of the people the United States. The Bush administration at that time formed the basis of counter-terrorism strategy and search for solutions in order to eliminate terrorism and to incorporate the Maghreb into its program of battling terrorism in the "Greater Middle East" which changed the situation and altered this perception. Without this, the US would not have been able to formulate a policy toward the area as a whole, rather than just bilaterally (Arbia 6). Terrorism after this event becomes a real threat to the US national security and its interests in the Maghreb region. For a sign of cooperation, the Maghreb countries mainly Algeria and Morocco offered their help and assistance to the US in its global war on terror and benefit from their experience to achieve stability.

Under the Bush Administration, the struggle against terrorism has become a cornerstone of US-Maghreb ties after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Because the countries in the region like Morocco, and Algeria specially have a lot of experience with such attacks; Algeria in the 1990s, before the 9/11 bombing, spent ten years fighting a dirty war against radical Islamism and the terrorist groups, and Morocco suffered a catastrophic bombing in Casablanca on May 16, 2003 (Maghraoui). The United States became aware of the necessity for a massive military, and intelligence presence in the region after terrorist attacks in Algeria and Morocco, as well as a rise in al-Qaeda activity in the region.

The increasing interest and dependence of the United States on North African sources of power and oil on the one hand, and the instability of the security environment on the other hand, led the US Department of Defense (DOD) to interfere in the region under the excuse of combating terrorist activities and extremists such as al-Qaeda in the Maghreb region, within the framework of the global war on terrorism declared by the Bush administration after the events of September 11th, 2009, which the administration exploited to increase its military presence and influence in the region (Qasi 5). This increased tension for military presence in the Maghreb region is ultimately to protect its economic interests in the region by providing safety and military interference if needed.

Thus, the Bush administration went even further, confirming that North African oil had become a strategic concern for the United States of America, by establishing a US military command known as the Africa Command, AFRICOM; it includes the countries of the Maghreb region, which began operations in October of 2008. One of the most critical aims of this administration is to ensure the safety of oil installations facilities and provide the necessary security environment to expand American investments. The war against terrorism along the Sahel and other regions of the Maghreb was a good reason for the Bush administration to persuade the US Congress to provide the necessary funds needed to undertake these military projects in the region and justify the military presence there (Qasi 6). Due to the sensitivity of this sector, the US tried its best to offer security cooperation about the safety of these facilities to ensure that their interests are being taking care of since all these efforts to not to counter terrorism but for economic aims.

So, based on those terrorist activities that made the situation in the Maghreb region critical, the US formulated a series of efforts to counter the danger and combat terrorism in the region through counter terrorism initiatives, the most prominent of which is the "Pan- Sahel

Initiative" (PSI), which is later transformed to the TSCTI (Trans-Sahara counter-terrorism initiative) which conducted operations in 2004 (Rasouli121). This initiative marks the US persistence to provide its security cooperation to the countries of the Maghreb region in its global fight against terrorism.

5.2.2 The US Relation to the Maghreb under the Obama Administration

As for President Barack Obama's term, it synchronized with the events of the Arab Spring and the role that the latter played in these events especially through its intervention in changing the political situations of the Arab countries, which created some sort of discomfort to the US foreign policy makers at that time. So, the US National Security Strategy that was released in May 2010 aimed to strengthen the values of the North African partnership, which is based on shared responsibility and mutual respect, and calls for cooperation with North African countries because their economies are growing rapidly and their democratic institutions are maturing. On June 14, 2012, President Barack Obama decided to direct a policy that describes his vision for US policy in North Africa, and as a result, a new American strategy for North Africa arose, based on the following principles:

- 1- Ensuring the security of the United States by preserving US interests in North Africa (oil and energy resources) and reducing the threat to American security at home and abroad (anti-terror operations).
- 2- Fighting the al-Qaeda network, transnational and the organized crime and drug trafficking
- 3- Assist and improve the capacity of North African countries and regional organizations to deal with domestic and foreign threats such as the radical Islamist groups.
- 4- Encouraging the military forces of North African countries to work under the umbrella of the civil authority, respect the law, and contribute to stabilize the country.
- 5- Advancing peace and security in the Maghreb region and promote democratization.

- 6- Exchanging intelligence information between the United States and the countries of the Maghreb region about the terrorist's attacks (Arbia 107). Although a new administration has come, those new efforts to provide cooperation are just a completion of the previous' administration intention to get access to the region.

At this stage the US foreign policy under the Obama administration was also characterized by its adoption of security issues in the world by supporting regional and international efforts when appropriate, especially after the events of September 11, and this strategy is based on the belief that the American military presence has removed the barrier that is relied upon to eliminate the threat that it posed by the terrorist and extremist groups (Sabrine 143).

Motives and views the American interest in the Maghreb region has continued to grow under the President Obama, especially after neglecting the region in his first term, which was somehow one of the reasons that the countries in the Maghreb region are, back at that time, facing those crises of varying degrees such as: domestic disputes, regional conflicts, and other threat that have been performed by the radical groups which would encourage the use of violence that destabilize the country (Arbia 108).

Following the September 11 attacks, the United States' perception in the region shifted to a proactive approach which is basically "the shift to intelligence-based and proactive methods [with] the primary aim of preventing terrorist attacks, rather than responding to events and attempting to solve crimes after they occur" (Fenwick 259) based on its own national interests rather than the demands and interests of the international community. An important axis in the US policy agenda, as the White House faced a difficult task in re-examining its security doctrine, which had a significant impact on the security discourse toward the international system and on American policy toward countries and organizations, particularly in the energy sector, where it

had become the controlling factor of the international relations. And the US administration began to investigate various countries for terrorism and issued a number of demands, the most notable of which were:

1. The African participation including the Maghreb region countries in the coalition against terrorism, in addition to cooperate with the American intelligence.
2. Security cooperation and coordination with countries and regional organizations of the Maghreb region in combating terrorists and handing them over to the United States (Sabrine 149).

From the previous points, it appears that the Maghreb region is very important for the US foreign policy agenda to declare a global war on terror and stabilize the region in one hand, and to protect its economic and political interests in the region. That is what appears to the world of the US intention in the region. However, in fact, it has a deeper purposes or targets in tying a close relationships with those countries; on the one hand it tries to make an appearance and win allies in the region such as Morocco by making it “the American pillar in the Maghreb” as it is going to be shown in the next chapter, and on the other hand to fight both the French and the Russian appearances as Algeria has a good relations with both in almost all kind of fields which threatens ultimately the American interests.

6. The Future of the US Relations to the Maghreb

After years of the catastrophic events of 9/11, the circumstances changed and brought with it different opportunities that could make the countries united and oriented towards one direction of prosperity and peace.

Today, nations are becoming more interconnected to a greater extent, unified towards political stability, economic progress. The Maghreb region is no exception, and its countries such as Algeria and Morocco, are required to achieve the needed stability that depends on the

formation of the Maghreb, the foundation of the common wills and purposes. In addition, the security to its people depends on peace, the environment and international or regional cooperation (Ben Aboud 29). However, regional cooperation for the stability of the region between Algeria and Morocco is unlikely to happen since both countries are in a state of antagonism due to the recent events specifically the Western Sahara conflict which both countries adopted two different approaches to solve this issue.

6.1 Evaluation of the US Relations to the Maghreb under the Trump Administration

When Donald Trump came to the office in 2017, it marked serious realignment in Washington's worldwide priorities including the foreign policies and engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The US foreign policies under the Trump administration towards the Maghreb region in particular was characterized by a lack of interests, isolationism and apathy and focused on an overall US prioritization of its national interests under the notion of 'America first'. Since it has never been at a top focus of the US administration, its relevance to the US is basically reflected on its proximity to Europe and vicinity to Sahel, where more American military presence is on the rise. Moreover, the US administration's agenda back at that time was fully preoccupied with Russia, china, and Iran, which makes the Maghreb countries less urgent to address (Cherif 01). In addition, what furthered the relations between the USA and Maghreb region especially with Algeria is the policy he adopted towards the Palestine cause, which was unprecedented move. Therefore, on 2017, he recognized that Jerusalem to be the capitol city of Israel.

Under the Trump administration, the US foreign policy towards the Maghreb region basically did not change in regarding to the previous president Obama' plans at the office because the issues of illegal immigration to Europe, terrorist activities in the region, The security and political crisis in Libya and other issues are the same and Trump in his presidential campaign did

not identify new issues; rather, he expressed new perspectives toward the issues that were highlighted. He also discussed new ways for dealing with them (Ben Jdid 76). Furthermore, his administration's vision to the Maghreb region will not differ from that of prior administrations since the objectives are the same, but the methods and mechanisms to apply them are different.

Another evidence that we could depend on to anticipate the future of this relations is that the controversial decisions and policies that has been adopted under the Trump administration towards the Middle East that, in return, had an impact on the Maghreb region (Polidura). For example, The transfer of the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and declaring it as Israel's capital, the US retreat from Iran's nuclear program, and the many Arab-Israeli agreements promoted by Washington to normalize the relations which aimed for enhancing economic ties and also that the Arab countries to benefit from the Israel's technological programs.

It is expected that the difference between the Trump administration's policies and the previous ones are likely to be manifested with different approaches that could handle the concerns of its current circumstances to advance the interests and the priorities of the United States, since It is not excluded that the United States of America will maintain its interests in the Maghreb region, as it did during the Obama administration, but with a shift in implementation of procedures and tools, as well as a reorganization of priorities (Ben Jdid 77). In other words, Trump wanted a policy that could be dedicated to the whole Maghreb region, but not dealing with each country in particular. This is unlikely to happen giving the current situation between Algeria and Morocco that would not create a regional cooperation especially in the security field.

In an event that was held on November 23rd, 2020, Casa Árabe brought together four leading figures to discuss Trump's legacy in the Middle East and the Maghreb and the changes that the new Biden administration could bring. Rami Khouri, Professor of Journalism at the American University in Beirut pointed that Trump's legacy has not signaled a significant

departure from prior administrations. Trump has perpetuated the US's negative image in the region, as Rami Khouri stated that: "The Trump Administration has continued the policy of the past; we should not exaggerate the great difference, but has accentuated a failed policy that had been in place in previous administrations" (Polidura).

Briefly, it was clear that the Trump administration did not change its policies and views towards the Maghreb region from the previous ones, but rather it was an element of continuity under different procedures which was clearly obvious through his policies and orientation about reducing the Muslim immigrants to the US.

6.2 Evaluation of the US Relations to the Maghreb under the Biden Administration

As soon as the former US President left the office and was replaced by Joe Biden, the US President delivered his first speech after his inauguration and said that his administration "will restore the alliances of the United States of America, pledging to "protect the US Constitution," and promised Americans that the country would return to "leading the world," and that his administration would be a strong partner for "peace and security" (Naoum).

Well, from the first look, it appears that the Maghreb region is included in his agenda and it would get a little more attention from the US as a partner towards peace and prosperity in all the fields.

However, this was not the case since Morocco, unlike Algeria, was the only country in the Maghreb region that would receive such a huge attention and elevate its ties with the United States; especially under the Trump administration when he seized the a great opportunity in the region and took advantage of the conflicts and clashes between the Polisario and Morocco and attempted to push Rabat to normalize the relations with Israel in exchange for the US recognition for the sovereignty of Morocco to the Western Sahara territory, which would cause in return a great instability in the MENA region (Polidura).

Those decisions were seen by experts as clear indications there is an of continuity for any American administration even the current one under Joe Biden, especially since the issue is related to the major strategic interests of the United States in the regions of North and West of Africa. This makes it unlikely that the issues of electoral competition between the former President Trump and Biden will overlap and interfere with the files of American preoccupation with strengthening American-North African partnerships, which can be achieved only with the cooperation with the Kingdom of Morocco (Naoum). Well, such decisions created some kind of a loophole in the region, Where, Algeria, the major country in the Maghreb region did not receive as much attention as Morocco which therefore, would put the Maghreb region in critical condition beside the crisis in Libya.

This would give the impression that Washington has made little attempts to promote the ongoing political changes that other nations, such as Algeria, have pursued in recent years. Therefore, Biden has an opportunity to advocate for the defense of democracy and good governance, as well as a shift away from policies of exclusion, marginalization, and human rights violations that feed militancy and violence. Given the developments currently underway in these sectors, the Maghreb region should also be seen as a place where Biden can exercise more independence in establishing new policies and supporting democratic and good governance norms (al-Haj).

In the end, a question must be asked: what will Biden do? Which makes it difficult to predict the situation in the future during the current urgent circumstances that the countries are experiencing, and related to that matter, Intissar Fakir, one of the major figures that attended the event, which was previously mentioned, stated that “There is a general consensus that Biden will want to restore a sense of stability. A more predictable policy that is less erratic. With modest involvement North Africa or zero involvement” Therefore, it is important to point out on the

decisions and policies that he may adopt to stabilize the region whether by the military intervention like the former presidents or to provide diplomatic and non-diplomatic appearances to achieve stability, prosperity and balance in the region.

To sum up, The United States and the Maghreb region experienced complicated relations, especially with Algeria and Morocco. While Morocco, before the 9/11 events, worked to enhance its ties through military support, Algeria experienced some kind of antagonism with USA due to different ideological disagreement during the Cold War but this did not stop Algeria to successfully interfere and mediate between the USA and Iran to end the crisis. After the 9/11 events, terrorism in the Maghreb region has grown significantly which urged the US to develop its ties with Algeria and Morocco especially at the security and the military field which resulted establishing some military initiatives and strategic dialogues aiming at achieving national security interests of those countries and bringing stability to the region.

Chapter Two

Why the Maghreb Region Matters?

The Maghreb region is one of the best geographical areas in the world, and in North Africa in particular. It comprises of several countries including Algeria and Morocco, and it is the only region in Africa that borders both the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. The Maghreb region has a strategic geographical position that turned it as an object of the ambitions of the great powers as it was before under the French colonization, where for many years maintained its influence for strategic purposes.

The second chapter deals with Why the US chose the Maghreb region for its foreign policy. To do so, it necessary to begin with the different motives that led the USA to shift its interests. It examines the strategic, economic and the security motives. Then, it discusses the global competition that the US faced in the region since each major power such as the China or Russia wants to gain influence in the Maghreb due to its strategic importance. It examines the Russian and the Chinese orientations toward the Maghreb region to compete with the USA and become an elite power in the region especially in the economic field. Finally, it discusses the Western Sahara's unresolved issue. It examines how this issue raised the tension between Algeria and Morocco, and how the US exploit the situation to make a strategic move for its own benefits to gain access to the region.

1. Motives for the United States' Interests in the Maghreb Region

The United States has been interested in the Maghreb region for many years that followed the end of the Cold War because it represents not only a gateway to Africa or the Middle East but also its proximity to Europe that makes it a key area for security concerns, economic opportunity to challenge other great powers' influences such as China and Russia or even compete their allies in Europe such as France.

There are several motives that attracted the American attentions and interests in the region and represented their concerns at different levels for many years which are:

1.1 Strategic Motives

The Maghreb region occupies a strategic position in North Africa; it plays a very essential role in the international balances due to its proximity to Europe and important gateway to the African Continent and to the Middle East region. The US has begun to realize the strategic importance of the Maghreb region since it is rich in energy resources Rabat and Algiers are significant trans-Mediterranean transportation hubs connecting Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa. Not only through trade, but also through rising defense and security cooperation which made it a crucial area for the USA to achieve various political, economic, and security concerns (Mezran and Henneberg). This indicates that the growing interests of the US in the Maghreb is to expand its influence in the region since it is already under the influence of the Europe mainly France. This seems unacceptable to the US foreign policy makers and also to compete with the growing economic influence of both China and Russia in the region especially with Algeria.

The Maghreb region is a geographical extension of Europe's security perimeter. This issue is becoming more crucial for American policy makers, considering that the US is tied to it through several connections, in addition to being a European Union (EU) partner. The American presence in the Maghreb is embodied through bilateral framework, which explains why American interests in the Maghreb are weaker than in other regions, particularly in the Middle East, as well as when the Maghreb is incorporated into African or Middle Eastern plans (Rakah 22). Which means, that any criminal activities or instability in the region could have a negative impact on the security of the (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) NATO countries and their foreign policies.

This privileged geographic location comprises an element of diversity for a region which

considered to be an axis of the interaction of four geostrategic locations starting with the Mediterranean with its European extensions and the Middle Eastern region to the Atlantic dimension to the west, which eventually make it as a point of intersection of three continents (Africa, Europe and Asia). Such a special location increases its strategic importance and reduces the borders between the continents in the light of the new and the extended strategic ideas (Hadjadj 26).

Due to the previously mentioned above, these strategic characteristics of the Maghreb region make it a special distinct location for the western super powers such as the United States to look for a representation and fulfill its foreign policy and achieve political and economic gains.

1.2 Economic Motives

The Maghreb region constitutes an important economic-strategic asset for the USA as its countries provide a huge economic investment market due to their special location within the region. For example, Algeria, the biggest country in Africa, is considered as an important source of energy and oil reserves, as it ranks among the first worldwide countries in both producing and exporting the natural gas.

The economic trends in the US policy in the Maghreb region aim to achieve a group of the economic goals because they are an important source of superpower competition in the region due to the rise of the Russian influence and dominant trades. To the US, the Maghreb region is important in terms of natural resources, trade, and economic investments especially after the increased oil discoveries in them (Albursan 262). Due to the increased competition from the Russian side or even the Chinese, the USA is working to increase its presence in the region by promoting the economic ties especially in the hydrocarbon sector.

Due to its strategic importance, the Maghreb region as a geopolitical sector that is both economically important and security sensitive, symbolizes an area of attraction for the big

countries with its energy resistance and natural riches and also an area of competitiveness between the great powers such as the USA and Europe particularly France which wants to devote its influence through strategic projects such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighborhood Policy (Katt 446). Such policies made the US policy makers to increase their attention to the region despite the huge competition that they are facing and the critical security condition the countries of the region going through and the political crises.

Therefore, the US economic policy towards the countries of the Maghreb became embodied in what the US Secretary of Commerce stated during his tour to different North African countries just before the US President's visit to the region in mid-1998, that "Africa represents the last frontier for American exporters and investors, and has great and promising potentials. American businessmen... have already left African markets for a long time to be an area of influence for our European competitors" (Altayeb 188).

Since the Maghreb region countries (Algeria and Morocco) play a major role for the economic development of Africa and it is considered as the future market for the American investors alongside with their competitors in Europe.

This was confirmed by Madeleine Albright, a US Secretary of State from 1997 to 2001, who announced in one of her visits to some countries of North Africa that among the priorities of the America's foreign policies is the economic alliances with the military ones. Thus, such policies can be seen in the goals of the American economic movement in North Africa which were represented in a report produced in mid-1997 by an independent team of specialists commissioned by the Council on Foreign Relations, titled "Promoting the Economic Relations of the United States with North Africa." According to the analysis, the United States should be among the first big industrial countries to gain from the new opportunities in North Africa. As a result, the US administration has made significant efforts to integrate North Africa region into the

global economy through:

1. Encouraging the Maghreb region's countries to pursue successful economic policies that ultimately create better opportunities for trade.
2. Implementation of the North African Growth and Opportunity Act, which was approved by Congress in the context of realizing the new American vision on Africa (Arbia 93).

Although the 9/11 events that pushed the US foreign policy makers to shift their attention to operate in the security field in the Maghreb region, Algeria went through significant change especially the interesting growth in the field of the economic exchanges with the USA since the American private sector expressed a strong devotion in the Algerian hydrocarbon market, particularly in the natural gas field (Zoubir 222). This was confirmed when “The U.S. government has asked to meet Eni , Total Energies (TTEF.PA) and other energy companies operating in Algeria to see if more gas can be sourced from the country” (Jewkes et al). While with Morocco on the other hand, the US maintained a good and strong relations in political and security levels which would pave the way for the US foreign makers to achieve their goals.

Briefly, the Maghreb is a global region that represents a distinguished economic and energy pole. Such a strategic location, attracted the attention of the USA to launch some economic programs with the three main countries in the region and to become a huge competitor with other great powers; especially that Algeria is characterized with its important sources of gas and oil energies and Morocco as a US ally to strength bilateral relations at a security levels for the sake of the stability of the region and raise its influence there which is going to be discussed in the following part.

1.3 Security Motives

Alongside with the strategic and economic motives that prompted the US foreign policy

makers to shift their attention to the Maghreb region, the security one is one of the most important reasons that urged the USA to build a huge security ties with the countries of the Maghreb region especially Algeria and Morocco due to their important location and proximity to Europe. Such attention increased after the 9/11 events and motivated the US to build a good and strong military ties with those countries that would ensure the stability of the region, prosperity, eliminate terrorist groups, spread the American sense of democracy and peace at world level.

The events of September 11, 2001, are regarded as the turning point in the history of the United States of America, where it recognizes terrorism as a serious threat that demands the formulation of security plans and cooperation and combating this threat is at the forefront of the US foreign policy; especially since the challenges that will face American leadership and national security will not only come from its global powers competitors such as Russia and China, as it will be discussed later on, but also from its allies in Europe, particularly France, because of the rising influence of the terrorist groups that would risk the US interests in the region, and find its refuge by exploiting the existing regional conflicts and domestic crisis to spread instability in such important countries (Daqish and khedam 47).

The development of AQIM, a terrorist network that aims to destabilize the region and has orchestrated attacks in Algeria, Morocco, is one of the region's present issues. The movement of illegal immigrants and smuggling from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe via the Maghreb is another security problem. These security concerns are aided and increased by the economic crisis that the Maghreb region, particularly Algeria, is experiencing, as well as the strategic location of these nations, which has provided terrorist groups an ideal arena to carry out their operations and propagate terror (Eizenstat). Furthermore, the regional crisis between Algeria and Morocco over the unresolved border dispute of the Western Sahara territory has prevented a properly coordinated response by the Maghreb countries to these security and economic concerns.

The deterioration of the security situation of in the Maghreb region increased even more after the period of 2011 to the point that the countries of the Maghreb region witnessed numeral activities for the sake of destabilizing the region such as: the increased activities of the terrorist organization, the spread of the organized crime, internal crisis or even the undemocratic and the unconstitutional changes in power despite the regional organizations that could help to achieve security such as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) but such events prompted the major powers such as the USA to pay more attention to its interests to create the main cause for military intervention in the region, the establishment of military bases, or even military agreements with the countries of the region; especially that both Algeria and Morocco have a long experience with such critical situations where the terrorism is the main cause for instability. Moreover, there are several factors that led to the insecurity in the region which are:

1. The lack of the border cooperation between Algeria and Morocco that created a gap in the region and utilized by the terrorist groups such as El Qaeda to perform its activities.
2. The crisis that Libya experienced because of the political-military instability in the country that led to the civil war and also the NATO military intervention in the region.
3. The growing conflict between Algeria and Morocco over many issues after, according to Dworkin, “Morocco accused Algeria of involvement in a terrorist attack in Marrakesh in 1994 and imposed a visa requirement on Algerians visiting Morocco. Algeria closed the border between the two countries.” And also the sovereignty of the Western Sahara and other diplomatic issues (De Albuquerque).

In addition to such events, the activities of the AQIM’s operations expended to almost all the countries of the Maghreb region to achieve their objectives and overthrown the local

governments such as those in Algeria and Morocco, and replace them with fundamentalist authority of Sharia (Arieff). In other words, the AQIM is taking advantage of the regional crisis between Algeria Morocco in expanding its activities which would lead to posing a threat to the US interests in the region and also to Europe.

Such events, crisis, and terrorist activities that formed a real threat to the security situation and the stability of the countries of the Maghreb region, urged the USA to adapt some effective policies to counter such a threat by declaring a global war on terror due to their increased activities in the region since the 9/11 events, some of which are: the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI) that aimed to counter terrorism and later on evolved to Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP) to expend the counterterrorism program to the countries in the Maghreb region to protect their interests there especially the economic one which is primary the hydrocarbon sector.

2. The Superpowers' Intense Competition over the Maghreb Region

The Maghreb region's position and strategic importance in international politics has made it under the ambitions of the great powers. In order to benefit from the natural, mineral and energetic wealth especially the hydrocarbon sector, the entrances vary. For the Chinese side, it intervenes for the sake of economic interests and expanding the market to meet the challenges it faces against the American one. And as for the Russian side, in addition to the economic interests, the security field -mainly the imports of arms and military equipment- plays a major rule in the establishment of the Russian ties with the Maghreb countries; particularly Algeria, since they are allies from the cold war period and belong to the same camp against the US side.

China and Russia have established themselves as resurgent big powers in the Maghreb region since 2000. China's economic dominance has supported the expansion of its influence in North Africa. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has spread throughout the region, and Beijing

has taken the lead in enabling connectivity projects across the continent. Despite the fact that China's trade and investments in North Africa have aided socioeconomic growth. Russia's presence in North Africa, on the other hand, has grown. Russia's revival in the Maghreb region appears to be opportunistic, as Moscow has taken advantage of internal disputes in or among the region's countries. This has been done in order to obtain lucrative arms agreements and anti-Western allies in order to counteract the US rising influence (Ramani). Aside from the economic ties with China, Algeria also has great ties with Russia especially in arms trade and military equipment.

2.1 Russia's Quest for Influence in the Maghreb Region

Over the last two decades, Russia has been able to reassert its presence and position as a major international political force by employing different diplomatic policies such as weaponry, gas, nuclear energy, and other economic instruments, particularly in its geographical spheres of influence such as in the Maghreb region. Since the beginning of Putin governance, the relations between the Maghreb countries and Russia have been revived after a decline that the country witnessed during the nineties for political reasons related to instability and economic deterioration following the fall of the Soviet Union. Such policies allowed the Russian government to put at the forefront of its new emergence in the region its traditional allies, Algeria at the top of them, as an opportunity for bilateral relationships and at the same time deterring the US hegemony over the region (Hammoudi). These bilateral relations would undermine the US presence in the region since Algeria's main focus in arms dealing is with Russia especially in heavy arms and gears whereas only little equipment is needed from the US gears such as the night vision equipments.

Economically, Moscow is competing for the title the top arms exporter for the entire MENA area. The region is already Russia's second-largest arms buyer, while Russia remains the

world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States. The region provides prospects for energy cooperation and infrastructure development projects. Meanwhile, Moscow defends its presence in the region by claiming that it is necessary to maintain cooperation with its old allies in the battle against terrorism (Borshchevskaya).

On the other hand, there was a kind of retreat of the American influence in the region, particularly at the Trump administration since its main interests is to establish strategic policies, security cooperation being at the top, where other major powers are already filling up that void.

Strategically, the Russian government seeks to strengthen its regional footprint by recognizing the local military demands in the Maghreb region. In this regard, the recent visit the Russian Prime Minister's travel to Algeria, with discussions centered on increasing military equipment deliveries (aircraft and air defense systems) the Russian government wants to expand their commercial ties with Algeria and keep it as a major weapons buyer. According to SIPRI data, Algeria has signed deals to buy major weaponry from Russia every year from 1999 to 2016 which include the acquisitions of multi-role fighters Su-30MKI(A) and Mi-28 attack helicopters) (Chihaiia).

Russia's engagement in the Maghreb region is growing which offers the country to expand its influence and reinforce its presence that would undermine the US political and security presence in the region as an elite power. In addition to the Maghreb region, Russia is establishing a greater influence in the Middle East and expands its presence into the rest of the African continent

Despite the good relationships between Russia and Algeria especially at economic and strategic levels, Morocco on the other hand is in the progress for establishing strong relations with Moscow. This is proven by the king's visits to Russia in April 2016 to strengthen strategic ties. Morocco and Russia have built cooperation in two areas: economics, and security and

defense. Russia is embracing the chance to fill a gap and expand its influence once again by offering to supply Morocco with military equipment and expand economic connections such as the trade, investment and energy (Chihai).

All together, the Russians' foreign policies in the Maghreb region at economic and security levels represent a challenge for the USA's methods that are aimed to have a deep influence and gain allies for strategic purposes. The Maghreb represents a very important opportunity for the major powers such as Russia as source for energy, however, its inability to transform such a chance to strategic interests that would decrease the security threats and instability. Such a gap in major power's foreign policies (USA and Russia) in the region, paved the way for another global power, mainly China, to acknowledge its presence in the region where the economic sphere at the top of its policies.

2.2 China's Quest for Influence in the Maghreb Region

China's importance in the global scene has expanded in the recent decades, owing to the country's expanding economic and military dominance. As a result, the US policy makers today regard China as a geopolitical competitor that seeks to expand its foreign policy in the Maghreb region.

Economically, China's economic involvement in the Maghreb region has grown in recent years. The world power has developed close commercial ties with Algeria while also continuing to strengthen ties with Morocco and other Maghreb countries. Beijing, which sees the region as a geostrategic crossroads for the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and Africa, has prioritized bilateral relations while also participating in the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the China–Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) (Ridout). In its request for a strategic influence in the Maghreb region, China also is a major power which is economically present through trades and investments especially in Algeria.

In addition, under new strategy, China has strengthened its connections with the Maghreb region, notably through increased economic and commercial relationships. The China's trading with the countries of the Maghreb region plummeted to \$17.3 billion in 2020. Between 2005 and 2021, it made \$30.6 billion in investments and contracts, with Algeria obtaining the lion's share of \$24.6 billion. All Maghreb states are maritime economies ideally placed between Europe's sophisticated economies to the north and Sub-Saharan Africa's high-potential development to the south, across the Mediterranean Sea. Geographically, their proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean has drawn China's attention (Kuo).

Algeria is China's biggest historical partner in the Maghreb region, with Chinese exports totaling \$6.94 billion in 2019. Its main interests in the country are its significant hydrocarbon reserves: Focused on the infrastructure sector, with massive projects such as Algiers' great mosque, Algiers' airport, and the East-West highway. Compared to the Chinese's relations with Algeria in the former president's health conditions, Morocco represented a safer destination for Chinese funds due to the country's reliance on hydrocarbon pricing and also a rely point in the Maghreb for the China's (BRI) by being the first to join in 2017 among other United Maghreb Arab (UMA) (Barastegui).

Strategically, China's presence in the Maghreb region is increasingly being examined in the context of the US-China competition. Where the USA is the region's security provider, China's current and near-term security commitment in the region is limited under the policy of "development comes before security in promoting stability." This is due to a variety of issues, including China's military capabilities, in addition to, the principles of non-interference and non-intervention. Moreover, China's engagement in the region is limited to non-military activities such as weaponry trade and conflict prevention (Rózsa).

Briefly, the major element of the US-China competition over the Maghreb region is the

economic sphere, being the hydrocarbon field at the top of the line, in contrast to the strategic sphere, where the USA is leading by its different initiatives across the region.

3. The Western Sahara Conflict

In addition to the previous factors that motivated the US to shift its attention to the Maghreb region, the Western Sahara unresolved issue is one of them. A conflict that has started many years ago putting both Algeria and Morocco in a regional conflict and on the other side increased the US interests as a gap in the Maghreb region to gain access.

The Western Sahara situation is one of the longest unresolved conflicts in the world. This ongoing conflict is between the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)-Polisario Front- and the Kingdom of Morocco. It is dominated by the campaigns that led by the Polisario Front to gain fully independence and self-governing from the Kingdom of Morocco since it managed to control major parts of the country and labeled them under the name of Southern Provinces.

This conflict created a major regional disagreements and tensions between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Algerian government since they share borders with the country and its security conditions will affect the stability of the region. The Western Sahara faces a major issue due to the lack of international recognition. Where Morocco pursues a full control of the country, Algeria on the other hand pursues to support the Polisario Front to gain their independence and full control of the country.

3.1 How the Western Sahara Conflict Increases the Tension between Algeria and Morocco

Tensions between Algeria and Morocco increased lately due to the dispute over the Western Sahara situation. Where the two dominant countries in the Maghreb region have different views about the situation, it created a regional rivalry that would likely demand in the future for armed interference. However, the escalation of the Moroccan-Algerian relations is dated way back before this conflict which resulted that the Algerian government to close its

borders with Morocco. It only in the recent years the situation became worse when the United States government under the Trump administration to declare the sovereignty of the Moroccan government over the Western Sahara territories which led, as a result, for the Algerian government to close borders again, to stop gas shipment to Europe through Morocco and also three Algerian citizens to be killed by the Moroccan forces (Dworkin). As it would seem, it is in the advantage of the US foreign policy to declare such a decision since it lies on its strategic interests with Morocco rather than looking for more fair democratic solution based on self-determination of the Western Sahara people.

Despite the fact that both Morocco and the United States have the same view about the Western Sahara situation and pushing for full control of the territory by the Moroccan government, Algeria has a different one, since it always pushes the Front Polisario to gain independence and also it is responsible for the African Union interests in the Western Sahara which led to the Morocco to suspend its membership years ago. Plus, there is a side benefit for Algeria which is to get access to the Atlantic Ocean (Migdalovitz 4). Where Morocco and the US are seizing this opportunity to enhance their strategic interests in the region which would provide the US government in the region more presence and access, Algeria is seeking for regional stability and improving its ties with Morocco at the same time.

3.2 The Moroccan Normalization with Israel

As a package deal, the United States agreed to recognize the Moroccan claims over the disputed territory of the Western Sahara region as Morocco would agree to normalize relations with Israel which opens the doors for strategic interests between the two countries at many levels especially the economic one.

Regardless of the 1991 United Nation (UN) truce and continued call for Morocco and Polisario Front to come up with mutual agreeable solution of the Western Sahara situation,

neither of the two sides abundant their recognition of sovereignty of the territory. Such a decision prompted the Trump administration on December 10th, 2020, to announce the US acknowledgment of the Moroccan rights to claim the Western Sahara in which Morocco would normalize its diplomatic relations with Israel and start their partnership (“United States Recognizes Morocco’s Sovereignty over Western Sahara”).

According to The New York Times, this deal made “Morocco becomes the fourth Muslim-majority state to pledge warmer official relations with Israel this fall under accords brokered by the Trump administration.” (Jakes et al). This rapprochement has been under discussion since 2017, which makes Morocco the fourth state in the Arab Nations to start friendly relations and partnership with Israel, alongside with Bahrain, Sudan and the United Arab Emirates. As a result to this agreement, Algeria is in critical situation since it is surrounded by many challenges including the Libyan crisis, the terrorist organization in the country, especially in the Sahara, or even in the region, and its support of the Polisario Front for their independence in addition to the strategic move from Morocco in order to increase both the American and the Israeli presence in the region which would eventually destabilize the country.

Furthermore, this trilateral partnership between the three countries resulting signing agreements to enhance their ties including immunity for diplomatic visa holders, establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in civil aviation and development of water resources and reviving economic ties by enhancing trade and investment (Al-Anani). After all, this agreement can be described as Israel’s missions to expand its influence in the Arab world and to be accepted as an ally with mutual benefit especially in the economic field and cyber security due to its developed technology.

Importantly, this trilateral cooperation would undermine of the Algerian foreign policies as a major nation in the Maghreb region where at the same time enhancing the Moroccan position

in the region after improving ties with the USA and Israel and gaining its claims over the Western Sahara territory which was for decades the main priority of the Moroccan foreign policy.

Finally, the Maghreb is very important region in world politics, due to the strategic position of its countries as it represents a gateway to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Its countries mainly Algeria and Morocco present a good opportunity for economic development and stability through mutual cooperation, and arms trade deals, etc. Such a special location, attracted the attention of major global powers particularly the USA, China and Russia to compete over the region for the purpose of gaining access to the region, grow their influence and look after their interests; especially viewed by the major powers as a good source of energy mainly the hydrocarbon sphere. Another major factor that increased the US attention to the region is the Western Sahara conflict. While this issue is not resolved for a long time due to the different orientations taking by the involved countries mainly Algeria, Morocco and the USA, it created a regional conflict between Algeria and Morocco since the USA supported the Moroccan claims about acquiring the territory which posed a critical issue to the stability of the region. As long as it is not resolved, the tension between Algeria and Morocco will remain and this new imbalance is slowly driving the two countries to a military confrontation.

Chapter Three

US Security/Military Ties to the Maghreb: The Cases of Algeria and Morocco

The 9/11 events was the turning point in the US foreign policy toward the Maghreb region especially at the security level, in which it declared its global war on terror to expand its security and military interests in the region. Where Algeria and Morocco are the two great nations in the region, it was necessary for the United States to establish a close and strong military ties with them in order to fight terrorism and achieve stability in the region.

Algeria as a strong and capable partner in law enforcement and military capabilities is very important for the US in its counterterrorism policies in the region. Despite the political disagreement that the both countries are having, it is necessary for the United States to cooperate with Algeria and establish security ties considering that the country is bordered by unstable countries especially at the political level mainly Libya.

Morocco as well, as a major NON-NATO ally in the region is an important US partner to expand and establish its security and military interests that could benefit both countries in achieving the stability to the region considering the political tension that the region is experiencing due to the Western Sahara conflict.

I. Case of Algeria

Following the Algeria's independence from France in 1962, the diplomatic relations between the United States of America and Algeria began and were able to maintain a close ties since Algeria was among the first countries in the world to acknowledge the United States' independence in 1795. Because of the strong trade connection and Algeria's assistance in combating global terrorism, US-Algeria relations have benefited both countries.

The 9/11 events also added more to deepen the US relations with Algeria. Since Algeria was among the first countries to condemn the terrorist attacks that the USA experienced which

presented a space for cooperation between the countries in the fight against terrorism and opportunity to seek diplomatic understanding and economic development. The level of the cooperation between the two countries is highlighted in different formal visits made by political or military officials of both countries. The relationships between the two countries have entered a new functional and promising phase considering the situation the countries of the Maghreb region is experiencing from the spread of terrorism attacks and internal and regional crisis. Such a relations characterized by close partnership of national or international affairs of common interests which even developed and to build a close ties at the economic sector.

Thus, this part of the chapter deals with the US-Algerian military ties and highlights their collaboration in fighting terrorism. Before that, it tackles briefly the background their relations before the 9/11 events. Next, the economic sector between the two countries particularly the hydrocarbon sector. Then it shifts to discuss their relations in fighting terrorism. For better understanding of the US-Algerian collaboration, it focuses on the Algerian role in fighting terrorism. Then the security cooperation between the two countries including the military programs that seek to exchange intelligence information related to the terrorist groups.

1. A Brief Background about the US-Algeria Relations

The relations between the United States of America and Algeria can be divided to two periods which are before and after the 9/11 events. During the first period, especially from the independence of the United States in 1783 up to Cold War era; was characterized by some intensive naval activities that resulted numerous naval combats which affected the American trading interests in the Mediterranean and also capturing a number of American ships and many prisoners by the Algerian corsairs, which opened hostilities with USA, consequently; a treaty of peace was made between the USA and the Dey of Algiers in 1795; but for some reasons, it failed to maintain peace between the two countries (Maameri 43).

And after a many years of complicated history between the two countries up until the Cold War, where Algeria was in the Soviet camp and maintained close relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) it couldn't stop Algeria to maintain a working relationship with Washington. What characterized this era is that in 1980 when many attempts were made by the US president Jimmy Carter in order to free the hostages, Algeria managed to mediate successfully to end the Iranian hostage crisis under the terms of its accords in January 1981, and received much credit and appreciation from the US president for its assistance (Riedel). In general, some period of antagonism between Algeria and the United States, it did not reach to a direct military fights or wars. In the contrary, it slowly developed and become partners especially in the economic field.

Before tackling the security field that tightened the US relations with Algeria, trade and investment in the economic field is also a major factor that made the USA shifts its attention to the Maghreb region, particularly towards Algeria to invest mainly in the hydrocarbon sector that benefited both countries to develop their relations and expand them for future ties.

2. Trade and Investment

Algeria is one of the United States' most important trading partners in the MENA region. The hydrocarbon sector has attracted the majority of US direct investment in Algeria. Crude oil is Algeria's principal export to the United States. The two countries have signed a trade and investment framework agreement, which establishes common principles for their economic relationship and serves as a basis for further bilateral agreements to be negotiated. Algeria is encouraged by the United States to undertake the required changes to achieve economic diversification such as: to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), adopt transparent economic policies, and liberalize its investment climate. The US has contributed to a program in Algeria to help the country build a more active government securities market (U.S. Embassy in Algiers).

In 2001, the USA signed with Algeria a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) that provides a program for trade and investment affairs and also for bilateral consultations to develop the economic cooperation between the two countries by urging the US companies to invest more in this field especially the hydrocarbon sector, gas and oil energy (International Trade Administration). Within the framework the bilateral economic, the US Department of State for the economic development with Algeria, launched a US-North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity (NAPEO) to deepen the economic engagement in Algeria and overall in the Maghreb region (U.S. Department of State, “U.S.-North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunity”).

According to Office of the US Trade Representative, in 2019 Algeria is among the largest trading partner to the US with over \$3.5 billion in total (two ways); the top US export categories were machinery (\$324 million), cereals (wheat) (\$121 million), mineral fuels (\$119 million), plastics (\$81 million), and electrical machinery (\$73 million). In the other hand, the US imports from Algeria were \$2.5 billion in the same year; top categories such as mineral fuels (\$2.3 billion), fertilizers (\$116 million), special other (returns) (\$49 million), iron and steel (\$37 million), and edible fruit & nuts (date, fig, pineapple) (\$14 million) (Office of the United States Trade Representative).

Those programs helped and developed the Algerian economic field especially in the gas and oil sectors so that the country could manage debts and improve the investment climate.

3. The US-Algeria Security/Military Ties

Before discussing the US security and the military ties with Algeria such as the military programs, policies and initiatives they both adopted to fight terrorism which affected the stability of the country and the region as a whole, the terrorism in Algeria must be discussed since those terrorist organizations put the country in critical situation and focused their activities in the local

government, which posed a domestic threat that later helped and contributed to the rise of the transnational terrorism.

3.1 Terrorism in Algeria

The security order in Algeria was in critical situation for many years due to the terrorist attacks by the Islamist organizations mainly AQIM, that aims to overthrow the Algerian local government and pose the Islamic institute. Such organization benefited from historical events that the country experienced during the nineties better known as “the black decade” which was a devastating encounter for the Algerian governments that posed instability in the country.

During that period, many bombings were committed and The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which they are identified as a branch of AQIM later on, claimed responsibility for many of them in order to widespread the sense of fear and insecurity in the country. The number of the activities of such a group peaked after the 9/11 events in the USA, They conducted many attacks, for example: on December 10, 2006: an attack against a bus carrying employees of an American company kills one person in Bouchaoui (west of Algiers). In addition to the Algerian driver killed, the attack left nine injured, including eight foreigners. Another one which was conducted on April 11th: where 30 people dead, more than 200 injured in two almost simultaneous suicide attacks in Algiers, one targeting the Government Palace in the city center, the other one, perpetrated with the help of two car bombs, against a police station from the eastern suburbs claimed by Al-Qaida in the Maghreb (Journaliste 20minutes).

AQIM is an adaptive, strong organization that has shown a great intelligence against the counterterrorism operations that were made by the local governments or by the cooperative initiative between the US and Algeria, where the US interests such as the oil energy or even the American personnel in the region and particularly on Algeria become at stake since the terrorist

group is entirely focusing its activities inside the region. As a proof of that the 2013 attacks on gas facility Ain Amenas complex in southern Algeria, where many were killed mostly foreigner workers (Chivvis and Liepman).

To sum up, such organizations pose a real threat to the development of the region and its stability since they are formed in domestic groups taking the advantage of the domestic and regional crisis between the countries. Well, for such a threat a domestic military attacks would not be enough since it requires global cooperation and intervention especially from the USA to develop a joint military programs to combat the core of the Al Qaeda in collaboration with the Algerian government since it experienced those terror activities during the nineties and was able to eliminate them. Also to support and enable its local allies and partners in the region mainly Algeria to contain the AQIM threat according to its context.

3.2 Countering Terrorism

For a long time, Algeria's warnings against terrorism and its requests for international cooperation were ignored. It was only after the 9/11 attacks that changed the international perspective, and Algeria's warnings that terrorism was a global phenomena gained attraction. Several countries have expressed interest in Algeria's experience and competence in counter-terrorism operations especially during the black decade in the nineties. The United States was among the first countries in the world to recognize the need for international security collaboration and bilateral military programs in the battle against terrorism. As a result it declared a global war on terror that aims to eliminate the terrorist threat and spread democratization and stability.

In addition to the global war on terror, a regional terrorism is also a phenomenon that would pose a threat to both Algerian and American interests in the region. Therefore, the United States promoted a regional counterterrorism cooperation in the Maghreb region relying on

Algeria's military forces as it is considered as the best equipped and the most capable one in the region which prompted Obama to release a counterterrorism strategy in 2011 states that the US "will seek to bolster efforts for regional cooperation against AQIM, especially between Algeria and the Sahelian countries,..., as an essential element in a strategy focused on disrupting a highly adaptive and mobile group that exploits shortfalls in regional security and governance." (Arieff 13)

Algeria is a key and capable partner for the United States, with strong diplomatic, law enforcement, and security ties. Algeria's bilateral foreign aid from the United States is aimed at bolstering the country's ability to tackle terrorism and crime. Algeria's continued war against Da'esh, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and other hostile organizations in the region is assisted by foreign aid. The United States' relations with Algeria promote cooperation between the two countries in the battle against terrorism. Algeria was one of the first countries to denounce the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and to pledge its assistance for the US in the battle against terrorism in the years to come (Ott). In recent years, both countries have become close, when it comes to countering terrorism and law enforcement cooperation, Algeria and the United States have a civilian and personnel visits on a regular basis.

3.2.1 The Official Visits between the Two Countries for Security Purposes

The events of 9/11 are seen as the most contributing factor to the acceleration of the rapprochements between the two countries. Although Algeria had its own reservations about the United States' view of terrorism as pure Islamic behavior, it joined the International Anti-Terrorism Coalition under the American command and provided the American administrations with several lists of Islamic Algerian suspected of belonging to terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. Where in 2001, the Algerian president Bouteflika made two official visits to the United States and discussed security cooperation issues, fighting terrorism,

and exchange intelligence information. Those visits were very important for Algeria considering what it had been through few years before -the black decade- (Safrawi and Bouachba 165).

It was very clear that the two countries have the will to create security cooperation in the field of combating terrorism at all levels through several official visits between the two countries which took an ascending and interesting streak in the years 2003 and 2004 when the Algerian president Bouteflika declared on 22/09/2003 that Algeria was among the first countries to condemn the terrorist attack on 9/11 and to express its support for the White House's decision to initiate an international effort against this scourge [terrorism] “ Our country understood, perhaps better and earlier than others, America's pain after 9/11.” (Kaki 165) As US President George W. Bush stated, "America continues to rely on Algeria as its partner in its fight against terrorism, and in our common objective of promoting democracy and prosperity in your region and in the world" (Safrawi and Bouachba 166).

The strategic relations between Algeria and the USA are based on common interests as well as international obligations. The two countries have been cooperating with each other in different fields, from military dialogues to security cooperation meetings, one of which was a few years after the 9/11 events in 2006, when Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld visited the North African countries, Algeria included, as an effort to built military ties to discuss weaponry sales, At the top of those sales are night vision goggles and other military equipments, in addition to security issues mainly fighting terrorism in the region. As Mr. Rumsfeld reported, “They have things they desire and we have things we can be helpful with.” (Cloud).Such a limited sales does not fulfill the US interests and hopes since Algeria at the same time is increasingly demanding the Russian weaponry such as the aircraft fighters, tanks, weapons and other military equipments.

For the sake of building close military relations between the two countries for the fight against terrorism in the Maghreb region, in 2017, another bilateral dialogue was held in

Washington, D.C. which included officials from Department of State, Defense, and Homeland Security where Justin Siberell led the US delegation. On the other hand, the members of the Algeria delegation led by the Minister of the African Affairs, and the Arab League Abdelkader Messahel. The meeting aimed to enhance the US-Algeria alliance in the fight against terrorism in the region which they tackled regional terrorist threat and foreign terrorist fighter since Algeria is viewed as an important partner in this field with its capabilities (U.S. Embassy in Algeria, “Bilateral Dialogue between the United States and Algeria on Security and the Fight against Terrorism”). Such meetings are very productive and serve as a force against the terrorist attacks since both countries are willing to further their cooperation counterterrorism exchanges.

In January 2019, to emphasize the Algerian cooperation with the USA’s led coalition against terrorism, another strategic dialogue was held in Washington, D.C. between the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdelkader Messahel leading their respective delegations. In which they discussed to maintain their effective military cooperation to sustain the security in the region, advance shared interests, and most of fight extremist organizations such as: AQIM and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). They also reviewed economic interests, and future military programs to stress their engagement in their longstanding promising relations (U.S. Embassy in Algeria, “Algeria-U.S. Strategic Dialogue Reinforces Strong Bilateral Relationship”). It is proven from this meeting once again the importance of the Algerian military forces in keeping peace in the region, where the USA never doubted the Algerian capability of its military forces or even its intelligence in fighting terrorism.

In addition, another visit was made in the recent years by Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper, which is considered to be the second visit of Defense Secretary to the country since Donald Rumsfeld in 2006, when he visited Algeria and met with the current President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in Algiers to expand the military cooperation between the two countries

especially for regional stability. The two leaders examined the security situation in the country regarding the increased tensions in the neighboring countries such as the Libyan crisis that posed a real threat for the stability of the Maghreb region. In relation to that matter Esper stated that, “There are a number of areas where we plan to increase our cooperation, such as in counterterrorism. We look to improve our exercises and training together,” and he also added “We also discussed other issues involving our militaries, which I am confident will increase our interoperability as well” (Garamone). For that matter, such a meeting were needed to improve the US military cooperation with Algerian forces and increase the Algerian war on terror efforts since the activities of the extremist organizations are threatening both the US and the Algerian interests, in addition to the regional stability since the Western Sahara conflicts reached its highest level of antagonism especially between Algeria and Morocco, and also the Libyan crisis which both put Algerian government at the center of these conflicts.

These bilateral efforts-strategic dialogues- benefited both countries in the field of security. For Algeria, they provided additional knowledge of how to improve counter-terrorism techniques and strategies, and also they legitimized Algeria’s war against terrorism which weakened both the government and society. In addition, to change the world views, especially the American, about terrorism that it is related to Islamic people, or states. For the United States, their cooperation and working side by side with Algeria in global war on terror enhanced their intelligence and improved their strategies to fight terrorism at worldwide level.

3.2.2 The Global Security Initiatives between the US and Algeria

Under Bush administrations, there was a kind of intentions for collaboration between the two countries and focus on the security aspect by reviewing many US bilateral and multilateral initiatives such as the initiative to combat terrorism across the Sahara known as TSCTP and other methods that the two countries adopted for security and stability of the region.

3.2.2.1 The Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP)

An initiative that was previously known as the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), it was created by the US government in 2002, to fight terrorism in the African continent especially after the 9/11 events in the Sahel region. When the threat of terrorism reached the Maghreb region particularly in Algeria and Morocco, a new method was needed to gain the stability in the region and declare a global war on terror.

In 2005, to increase the relationship between the USA and the Maghreb region countries, the US government funded an initiative that would include the countries of the Maghreb region including Algeria and Morocco and the West of Africa to generalize the fight against terror in the African continent. It is known as TSCTP which is a multi-year program established to counter the terrorism violence and attacks in the region. This partnership tries to increase capabilities of the governments to challenge and fight terrorism. It is led by the Bureau of African Affairs at the U.S. State Department to facilitate the cooperation between the US government and those countries in intelligence sharing and regional stability (Program on International Law and Armed Conflict- Harvard Law School).

The TSCTP improves the capabilities of the Maghreb region countries to counter AQIM operations, activities, as well as preventing AQIM from expanding its activities in other regions in Africa. This military program brings together resources and expertise from the Department of State, the DOD, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to help governments under the threat of terror to improve security services, enhance the effective control over the locations of the terrorist organizations (U.S. Department of State, “Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) U.S. Foreign Assistance Performance Publication Fiscal Year 2009”).

3.2.2.2 The US African Command (AFRICOM)

Giving the importance of the countries of the Maghreb region and their military forces in the global fight against terrorism, and for the goal of increasing the rapprochement between the US government and the countries of the region, the US decided to establish another initiative called AFRICOM on February 6th, 2007. Where this region did not have any military command, the President Bush announced its creation to be responsible US military operations, including maintaining regional threat, fighting terrorism through joint military forces, and most of all enhancing military ties with its partners in the Maghreb region. It composed of civilian and military personnel from USAID and officers from the State Department (Volman 738). What it looks like a program dedicated to fight terrorism and keep stability to the region, it is actually a tool created by the US to expand its role in the Maghreb region and reinforce the militarization of foreign engagement.

Where many countries of the African continent wanted to host the headquarters of the AFRICOM which would benefit the hosting country at many levels especially financially, Algeria denied hosting it for security purposes and other reasons since it would create a permanent US military presence in the country. Therefore, in 2008, the US government declared that AFRICOM would be located in Stuttgart, Germany.

According to the Guardian, Mr. Ryan Henry who is a principal deputy under-secretary of defense policy argued that US' aim in the region was not to replace local government's military or security policies but rather to support them. For that matter, President George Bush stated that AFRICOM would improve "our common goals of peace, security, development... democracy and economic growth" (Tisdall). Such a facility could result domestic instability and conflicts since it would be targeted by the terrorist organizations which ultimately increase the US military intervention in the host country, therefore in the region. Even Morocco, which is considered to be

as Washington's closest and a Major NON-NATO ally declined hosting it.

In addition, in his visit to African countries among them Algeria, Mr. Henry Ryan confirmed that "AFRICOM is not going to be a base of security operations in Africa but to help African countries efforts to cope with terrorism" (Kedadra and K). As a sign that the US attempts to build a long-term partnership with African countries, including Algeria, and assure that their security interests and the fight against terrorism are best served.

In an attempt by the Bush administration officials to insist that the real purpose of AFRICOM is misunderstood by the African leaders, Theresa Whelan, who is Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, argued in her congressional testimony that "Natural resources such as oil represent Africa's current and future wealth, but all we seek is a fair market environment where all can fairly compete and benefit along with other participants in the global market" (Skinner). In other words, the AFRICOM is not just to a military facility for security purposes, but also it expands to get a full and direct access to the oil energy resources by protecting it.

The question that must be raised is that: why the AFRICOM is being established? Since the terrorist organizations were operating the in the African continent, particularly the Maghreb region, years before the 9/11 events. Besides, Algeria is never considered to be a priority for the US foreign policy or attracted the US strategic interests due to the historic encounter when Algeria sided with the USSR. Instead, the US foreign policy makers focused their attention on Morocco to reinforce their relations for security purposes and the stability of the region.

We would argue the answer to this question is that it has two sides; to begin with, the US always attempts to increase its military programs in the region, therefore, more intervention in local governments and their politics. Second, the wealth that the countries of the Maghreb region have mainly natural gas and hydrocarbon, which presents a good opportunity to fight the growing

influence of both Russia and China in the region and expand their investments and access to the energy supplies.

3.2.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Military Programs and Exercises

The USA shortly after the 9/11 events started to provide joint military training to its African partners, including Algeria, to improve military tactics and enhance the security cooperation against terrorism. Most notably exercise is: Flintlock 2005, which is Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) managed by US army special forces and other units from different African countries. It was held in June 2005 when many US military personnel were sent to North and West Africa to counter terrorism in Algeria and other countries. Its aim was to provide training experience for both American troops and its partners. Small European troops were also involved in these exercises (Volman 740).

In addition to other US-Algeria bilateral efforts which include:

1. Training and equipping for security forces: Algerian military forces benefited from US military academies training. Concerning the equipment, Algeria demands only symbolic arms sales mainly night sight equipment.
2. Concerning the intelligence sharing: Algeria has a strong knowledge of AQIM networks in the region, and has shared information with US intelligence agencies many times.

Algeria is also an active participant in US multilateral efforts with the support of the United Nation which include:

1. U.S. technical support to the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (CAERT), which is hosted by Algeria and is considered as an active participant. This project aims to establish better operational African strategies against terrorism in the Maghreb region and over all in Africa. For instance, the

US was a participant in the forum that was organized by the center in Algiers 2005 to discuss terrorist threats (Berkouk).

Algeria is actively involved in international and regional efforts or initiatives to fight the terrorist organizations and stop their threat. When it comes to defeating terrorism, Algeria is a very capable and reliable partner due to its successful experience with such a threat during the black decade. This made the USA to start cooperating with Algeria in military programs, strategic dialogues to benefit from its experience to achieve stability in the region.

While collaboration between the USA and Algeria is improving through time, it is not enough. The two countries need to work on their ties at all levels, mainly the security one since the United States is not providing much support to Algeria in comparison to other regional neighbors such as Morocco due to Algeria's orientations and decisions regarding world issues that would not serve the US interests mainly; the Palestine cause, the Western Sahara conflict and many others.

Beyond Algeria's decisions about the world issues, the USA needs to pay more practical attention to Algeria's importance and capabilities in the Maghreb region and enhance their cooperation against terrorism. In order to expand such a relation, the USA should to take a more steps forward about the Western Sahara conflict and review its decisions along side with Morocco about the situation. Without solving this issue alongside with the Libyan crisis and assisting Algeria's efforts with other border issues such as in Mali, Algeria will always still reluctant about cooperation with the USA especially in keeping peace and stabilizing the region. The US-Algeria relation is affected by mistrust; where the two countries experienced a historical misunderstanding and disagreement about many issues, the USA turned its intensions to Morocco to expand its foreign policy and have a representation in the Maghreb region and fight the Chinese economic presence.

That being said, whatever the differences between the US-Algeria relations in world politics, it is marked by mutual respect and diplomatic assistance; especially when Algeria interfered in releasing American hostages in Iran in 1981(Zoubir 23). Algeria is located at the center of the Maghreb region which gives it a strategic position as gateway to Europe. It is among the major supplies of hydrocarbon to the USA. This presents a continuing challenge for the US policy makers to determine the fundamental factors that make them to enhance the US-Algeria ties not only in counterterrorism or economic, but also other fields that could assure them to build long-term friendly relations.

II. Case of Morocco

The relations between Morocco and the United States started shortly after 1777 during the American Revolutionary War, when the sultan Mohammed ben Abdallah became the first monarch to help the United States and then Morocco become the first country in the Maghreb region to recognize the US independence . Since then the two countries maintained a close ties and Morocco become one of the best US allies in the region.

Despite the fact that the Maghreb region has gained a great importance in the US foreign policy especially after the 9/11 events, the US relations with Morocco remained stable. Unlike the US relations with Algeria in which it experienced antagonism and mistrust for the reason that it never considered as priority for the US policy makers and only recently when it has witnessed an evolution, those with Morocco are closer and higher since they started the diplomatic relations and evolved more when they signed a Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1786, and on the other hand when US recognized the Moroccan independence which provided an opportunity for future bilateral and regional working relations.

Therefore, the second part of this chapter deals with US military ties with the Morocco and emphasis on their collaboration in fighting terrorism and provide the stability to the region. Before that, it briefly tackles their economic partnership. Then, it moves to discusses about their security cooperation. For better understanding, it deals with their military deals, strategic dialogues and other military programs. Finally, it highlights the Western Sahara crisis featuring the both the American and the Moroccan view about it in contrast to the Algerian view which results successful intervention from the United States to pave the way for normalization between Israel and Morocco that would consequently pose a threat to the stability of the region, particularly the Algerian government.

1. Brief Background about the US-Morocco Relations

The United States of America and Morocco maintained a close and stable relations from the early years of their friendship; unlike Algeria when it experienced periods of antagonism with the US, Morocco aligned with USA in many occasions. For instance, Moroccan forces aided the American forces and its allies to land in the North Africa region in the fight against the Axis powers (U.S Embassy and Consulates in Morocco). In addition to that, during the cold war Morocco remained non-aligned but it had some orientations towards the West when it signed an agreement with USA for bilateral military forces.

After many years of friendship and support, Morocco gained a great importance especially after the 9/11 events, when the USA declared a global war on terror it was part of its strategy in the Maghreb region to build effective programs for counterterrorism, and countering violent extremism leading the US AFRICOM to designate Morocco as “Africa’s premier security exporter” (Cogbill). Labeling Morocco as a model partner in fighting terrorism since it is also experienced terrorist attacks that posed a threat to the stability of the country and the Maghreb region as a whole which will affect the US presence and its interests in the region.

Before tackling the security field between the two countries, the economic partnership is also a major factor that contributed to advance the relations between them; yet it is not as much as Algeria with the USA especially in the hydrocarbon sector, but it improved the economic condition despite the challenges that the country is facing. Notably, these trade agreements and different investments aimed to reinforce the Moroccan economic situation since it went through different barriers to develop the human quality life of the Moroccan people, and to expand their bilateral ties for future benefits.

2. US-Morocco Bilateral Economic Relations

Morocco and the United States signed a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) in 2006. Moroccan exports to the US have more than doubled, while US exports to Morocco have more than quadrupled since Morocco wants to establish itself as a center for economic sector in the region. As a result, Moroccan exports to the United States climbed from \$446 million to \$1.582 billion between 2005 and 2019, whereas US exports to Morocco increased from \$481 million to \$3.496 billion. The FTA has prepared the door for more foreign direct investment, by helping to enhance Morocco's economic climate, and offer legal assurances for investors by reducing and eliminating trade barriers and assure their safety, and as for the USA it improves their commercial opportunities for their exports (U.S Department of State). This deal benefited both countries to improve their economic environment and enhance their cooperation not only with each other, but also with other countries such as European or neighboring ones to diverse the economic relations.

Unlike the Algerian economic ties with USA that focuses mainly on gas energy and hydrocarbon sector, the Moroccan ones is a bit diverse such as infrastructure, renewed energy and different goods. Consequently the Moroccan economic relations with the USA has grown but it was not a major success to the country, since it experienced different crisis that affected the development of the country, which allowed some US agencies to be the main providers for direct investments such as USAID, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that developed and implemented different successful projects to reinforce the economic situation in the country (Patrick 25).

3. The US Security/Military Ties with Morocco

Before moving to the US military ties with Morocco and the military programs, training exercises, deals and strategic dialogues they both implemented to fight the growing influence of the terrorist organizations in the country or in the region as whole, terrorism in Morocco must be

introduced since it posed a real threat to the stability of the country, its neighbors, particularly Algeria, and other western or even European countries which they have strategic interests and bilateral cooperation for their development.

3.1 Terrorism in Morocco

Similar to Algeria, Morocco also went through difficult times due to the attacks of the terrorist organizations that threatened the stability of the local government. However, it is the only country in the Maghreb region that did not suffer from a major attacks that resulted critical situations of the government despite the several injuries and deaths that have been occurred.

After 9/11 events, the terrorist activities in the region, mainly in Morocco, increased due to the great influence of Jihadism, which advocate the use of violence. A number of radical Islamists were involved in many attacks in different targets. What characterizes those attacks is the use of suicide attacks, and tactics that are shaped by the international factors. For example, this method of attack became popular among the terrorist organizations to urge their terrorist cells or individuals to blow themselves up (Alonso and García Rey 572).

The best example of such a method is the multiple synchronized suicide bombing in Casablanca on May 16, 2003, which killed 45 people including the bombers and injured many others including foreigners. This attack demonstrated the strength of the terrorist organizations and also how far they are willing to go to achieve their goals and destabilize the country. This attack became a serious problem to the efforts of King Mohammed VI since he wanted to integrate Islamist parties into politics (Botha 90). Those kind of efforts that are made by the King Mohammed VI did not success due to the country's economic situation that prompted the unemployed people, particularly young, to be recruited and exploited by the terrorist organizations.

To sum up, this new method of terrorism pose a real threat to the stability of the country as it is a domestic activities which work as incentive for other organizations to recruit individuals taking the advantage of their social life, mostly are poor people. So, a domestic military response would not be enough to stop that threat since they are not only from Morocco, but also from all over the Maghreb region due to the development of the Al Qaeda and their influence to pose the Islamic institute. The world cooperation is required especially with the United States as it also experienced the terrorist threats and then they become allies in the face of terror when the USA declared a global war on terror.

3.2 The US-Morocco Counterterrorism Cooperation

Due to its strategic position in the Maghreb region, Morocco always attracted the attention of the US policy makers as an important gateway to Europe and Africa. This also makes it a key gateway for radical organization to expand their activities in the region or Europe which rose to security concerns for both governments and act on it.

Morocco and the United States have similar priorities and work closely together on many issues including the security ones. In 2004, Morocco was designed as a Major NON-NATO ally by the US government. The tow military forces conducted cooperative exercise and training programs. In terms of countering terrorism, Morocco is a strong partner and it effectively collaborates with US law enforcement to protect both countries' national security interests (U.S. Department of State).

In order to promote regional stability and defeat terrorism, both countries started to coordinate their efforts through strategic dialogues including global terrorism forum, military deals, and training exercises which benefited both countries to enhance their security and military ties.

3.2.1 The US-Morocco Strategic Dialogues

The 9/11 events are the main factors that enhanced the rapprochement between the two countries since they both went through critical situation which urged both of them to cooperate against terrorism. The two countries met at what is known as the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) which is a partnership forum, launched in 2004, aims the relations between its partners and while contributing to the security of the NATO's Mediterranean and the Maghreb region. Through the years it evolved to respond to the threats in the region and any other increasing security changes of its stability. This forum includes many countries such as the USA, Morocco which is an effective partner of this forum by contributing of the MD's security processes and affairs. Algeria also joined the forum in 2000 (NATO).

Moreover, another strategic dialogue was made in 2014, when US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Morocco to discuss the bilateral ties between the two countries along with the regional and international issues of their mutual interests mainly combating the radical Islamist ideology, also to boost their bilateral economic. This is considered to be Kerry's first visit to the Maghreb region which also included Algeria to further their strategic interests (Sakthivel). Concerning this visit, it also aims to review the regional antagonism between Morocco and Algeria since their regional border was formally closed 1994, in addition to other issues that they disagree about especially the Western Sahara crisis.

Furthermore, to expand future interests and cooperation between the two countries the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita met with the Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo at the State Department and discussed their partnership concerning many issues. Within the framework of the US-Morocco Strategic dialogue, the two leaders highlighted their mutual support of their common interests such as regional peace and stability to defeat the terrorist groups among them AQIM and ISIS. They also tackled joint efforts to fight

terrorism in the region by enhancing the security services and cooperation (U.S. Embassy Rabat). It appears that both countries are satisfied with this meeting and tackling security issues after what the region been through including regional crisis, peace issues. This meeting is also a reminder of their historical long-term relations that dates back to the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1787, and also expressed their commitment for expanding peace and stability in the region in addition to developing their bilateral economic relations and promote their Free Trade Agreement.

In addition, in the recent years another meeting was held in Morocco when the US Secretary of defense Mark Esper visited the country and met with the Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita which resulted a signing an accord that aims to enhance the military cooperation between the two countries. The two officials signed a ten-year military deal to serve their common interests in the region to fight terrorist organizations, which is demonstrated in a statement by the Moroccan Foreign Minister when he stated that the military agreement “serves as a road map for defense cooperation and aims to strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries and support shared security goals” (The Associated Press). A prove that the US foreign policy makers pays more attention to Morocco than any other country of the Maghreb region since he similarly in his tour visit met with the Algerian officials and no deal was made, only to expand their security cooperation, which puts Morocco as a US major NOT-NATO ally in the region that satisfies the US interests.

This deal is also serves as a counter attack to the Algerian policy makers and their orientation towards the Russian military cooperation and weaponry trade since the US-Morocco military agreement will further their engagement and as a result will increase the military trades between the two countries as Morocco interested in US military materials to bolster its military gears and modernize their weapons and air forces including F-16 jets and M4A1. As in 2019, the

US government made a \$10 billion deal in new arms sales to Morocco including upgrade and new F-16s, 36 apache attack helicopters and Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided missiles (TOW) and a missile launcher (Arieff 10). Compared to Algeria, Morocco is a very close and prestigious ally due to their strong partnership and profitable sale deals and agreement which is the reason that the US government always puts the Moroccan government at priority of its regional interests mainly facing terrorist threats and maintaining the stability of the region.

3.2.2 Multilateral Joint Exercises and Training Programs

After 9/11 attacks, the US government promoted its military cooperation with the Maghreb countries especially with Morocco, where both forces participated in different training programs in the region alongside with other partners provided by the US forces. These include: Flintlock 2005, 2007 which witnessed the participation of the Moroccan troops and other African and even European troops were involved in this educational program. Second is the TSCTP, where Morocco is an effective partner in this initiative which involves training exercises conducted by the US army forces. As it is mentioned before, they are created to enhance military capabilities for future terrorist activities.

In addition, Morocco is also an important partner in the African Lion initiative organized by the AFRICOM, this exercise aims at promoting regional stability and interoperability between its partners, as AFRICOM commander Army Gen. Stephen Townsend said that “The safety and protection of all of our forces — U.S. and partner nation — is a priority. Modifying the exercise still improves readiness while minimizing risk to protect both U.S. and partner forces.” However, the US and its allies were not able to perform this joint exercise in Morocco due to COVID-19 outbreak which had to be canceled (Correll).

Morocco is very active and capable US partner in the region. It is involved in many regional or international initiatives such as the US Led Global Coalition to defeat the AQIM or

ISIS, also the Global Terrorism Forum and other initiatives that are formed to fight terrorism, spread peace and stability of the region and keep both countries' national security safe.

This excessive attention from the United States towards the Moroccan government can be described as Zoubir stated that Morocco is “the pillar of the American presence for US policy in the Maghreb.” Reflecting to the high position that the Moroccan has in the US foreign strategies that dates back to the Moroccan formal recognition of the US, and the close ties that they were successfully able to maintain and develop through continues military support, trade and investments, while Algeria at the same time is increasing its ties with Russia and even China for its strategic interests.

Morocco and the United States have built a strong military ties that benefited both countries in many aspects mainly; the fight against terrorism, regional stability through military training engagement such as the African Lion, military deals, and strategic dialogues to reinforce their military capabilities. There are many reasons that prompted the US government to expand it ties with Morocco some of which are:

1. The US recognition of the Moroccan military abilities for keeping the stability of the region due to its support in the Gulf War in 1991 and many other occasions.
2. The instability of the Algerian government during the nineties when it experienced terrorist attacks, the Moroccan government at that time took a major role to fight anti-Western extremist forces.
3. To stop the Russian and the Chinese influence in the region due to their close bilateral ties with Algeria.
4. Algeria's orientations and views about world issues such as: the Palestinian cause and the Western Sahara conflicts and many other that do not go in line with the US foreign policies and interests.

To sum up, the relations between Morocco and the United States is a very special, in contrast to the Algeria-US relations that is mostly economic and in a lesser degree military, Morocco on the other hand continues to insist its ties with the USA and establish a strong ties which exceeded to expand its relations with Israel to reinforce its position in the Maghreb region as a major leader challenging the Algerian influence and its ties with Russia by becoming the American pillar in the Maghreb and improve its presence.

In regards to the Western Sahara conflict, the Moroccan relations with Algeria will always still full of antagonism and disagreement as long as the Western Sahara issue remains unresolved since both countries are dealing with it from two different approaches; while Morocco aims to claim the territory, Algeria on the other hand aims to support the Polisario Front to achieve independence and stability to the country and the whole region as a result.

Concerning the Moroccan normalization with Israel, Morocco seems to be having some security and economic gains. However, it is considered to be a risky move because if we look at it from a historical angle we will find that those Arab countries which normalized their ties are suffering from internal conflicts. For example, the normalization agreement between Jordan and Israel did not achieve improvement of the country's economic situation; to the contrary it worsened the situation. In fact, those normalization agreements will achieve more strategic interests for both the USA and Israel than the Arab countries interests because most of people are rejecting these agreements which create a domestic disagreement between the people and their governments. Morocco is most likely to fall under that category and face the same fate.

Conclusion

This dissertation deals with the US military ties with the Maghreb region. Particularly it focuses on both Algeria and Morocco as case studies on their relations with the USA. The US military ties are based on numeral issues such as the strategic dialogue and formulating security initiatives to fight terrorism in the region. It is also based on some economic efforts that represent a strategic national interest.

Before the 9/11 events, the US did not recognize the importance of the Maghreb region in its foreign policy and the relations with the Maghreb countries was unstable especially with Algeria when both countries experienced some antagonism and disagreement about many issues but it did not reach military interference. However, with Morocco, the relations were close with mutual interests.

For sure, after the 9/11 events, the US recognized the importance of the Maghreb region and carried out its plans and established its military presence in the region. It used the global war on terror to justify its presence in the region and thus making itself as a major power in the region which transformed it into a terror zone which stressed the existence of terrorism organizations. Also, the USA faces a global competition from other major powers mainly China and Russia especially in the economic sector where trade and investments are in their highest levels mainly with Algeria.

As a result, under the notion of fighting terrorism and achieving stability in the region the USA became able to justify its presence since it launched some military initiatives particularly the AFRICOM in 2008, and also the TSCTP which later involved other countries including Algeria and Morocco. However, those programs were viewed as a potential threat especially the AFRICOM, had devastating results, political instability, internal crisis, regional conflicts and spread of terrorism that posed a real threat to the local governments. It can be argued that those

programs clearly destroyed not promoted peace and security in the Maghreb region which was its intentions to secure its needs.

Due to the regional rivalry between Algeria and Morocco, those countries became enemies since they disagreed about many issues especially the Western Sahara crisis since the two countries took two different views about the issue, the tension raised to the point that Algeria had stop diplomatic ties with Morocco. This was the result of the US support of the Moroccan claims of sovereignty of the Western Sahara territory in exchange of normalizing with Israel. From the first look, we can say that this trilateral agreement benefits all the three countries and it can assure stability of the country and the region overall. However, this is not the case since this agreement would enhance more the US presence and influence in the region and would increase the instability because from a historical view those normalizations caused domestic conflicts and worsened the situation when it was supposed to be an agreement of mutual interests and development. Plus, this agreement will not benefit Morocco as much it will do to both the USA and Israel at all levels since it provides them a huge presence on the African continent and access to the Middle East and Europe.

So, in order to achieve stability in the region, both countries should enhance their methods of governing in order to prevent the domestic conflicts and exploitation of youth by the terrorist organization. Also, they should develop the regional cyber security field. Due to the development that this sector is witnessing where everyone can connect to the internet, it becomes easier for the terrorist organization to recruit them. As for regional stability, Morocco should denounce its agreement with the United States since it is not the most democratic solution to solve this issue. Also, the western countries such as the USA should not neglect the importance of Algeria as a dominant country in the region, and should look for other ways for cooperation without its regional representation for mutual benefits.

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