

Rassemblement National Démocratique *démocratique*

[National Democratic Rally]

RND

Address by Mr

Abdesselam BOUCHOUAREB,

***International Relations Officer and Person in
Charge of the National Community Abroad***

***Topic: "Algeria's experience in the fight against terrorism
reframed in the light of new international threats"***

*Address by Mr. Abdessalam Bouchouareb, Rassemblement National démocratique [National
Democratic Rally]*

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09-10 July 2015

Mr. President of the CDI:

Honoured guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would first of all like to thank the organisers of this summit for inviting me here and for this opportunity to share my country's experience in fighting terrorism, as well as to explain our analysis of, and our approach to recent developments in this regard, particularly in our regions.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the final decade of this past century, as it began its irreversible journey towards democracy before any other country in the area, Algeria was struck by an exceptionally violent wave of terrorism which we were forced to confront despite the indifference of the

international community, sometimes even under its embargo.

While we never doubted the rightness of choosing democracy, we were also quite aware that our country was being used as an "experiment" for so-called fighters returning from Afghanistan.

Now why would I be going 25 years back in time to try and explain a phenomenon that has since become global, and which the whole planet became aware of in the wake of the shocking events of 9/11?

There are two reasons. The first is that it we need to define the phenomenon we are talking about. It is deplorable that to this day, we are unable to agree on a common definition of terrorism. In my opinion, it is essential to define what it is we are talking about.

This naturally leads us on to the second reason: it is the ideological matrix that fosters the maintenance, propagation and prosperity of transnational terrorism.

The kind of terrorism we experienced in Algeria, and which we keep witnessing in all these other places is partly rooted in its pernicious ability to adopt a stance of

victimhood to build a false argument of "political violence" which is then used as a justification to legitimise the use of violence.

However, if we analyse the progression of terrorism and its message, there is no "political project" to be distilled in terms of the people it is so hell-bent on slaughtering, killing, raping, pillaging and forcing into exile.

This is also obvious from a semantic perspective. Because of media amplification, we no longer talk of "terrorism", but of "Islamism" and "jihadism".

Associating terrorism with a particular religious minority or majority, civilisation, nationality or ethnic group, whether deliberately or not is a slippery slope which should be avoided just as much as the call and incitement to terrorism, because by stigmatising part of the population, we are actively contributing to its exclusion, and hence to its radicalisation.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Aside from the security aspect, from the outset, Algeria's approach in the fight against terrorism has been to deprive terrorists of their political argument by finding a way out of the transitional phase with elected and representative institutions.

While the Algerian approach did indeed recommend the use of security, it also advocated political, economic, legal and cultural approaches in order to foster social cohesion and improve the living conditions of its citizens.

The implementation of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, initiated by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2005 breathed new life into the Algerian strategy against this transnational scourge.

In parallel, Algeria worked hard to strengthen its defence capabilities by training Special Forces across all of its armies (land army, air force and navy) who were thus capable of fighting terrorism effectively while preserving national unity and territorial integrity in the face of every threat.

The authorities supported this process through economic and social development schemes in order to raise the standard of living and by overhauling the

education system, the effect of which was to avert entire segments of the young population from the appeal of terrorist groups while simultaneously improving the social conditions, raising prospects of hope and fighting ignorance.

All the intelligence of this policy of peace and national reconciliation resided in its appropriation by the Algerian people, who made it into a national reference.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fight against terrorism and extremism is one of the major challenges of this new century. The movement known as the "Arab spring" which began in 2011 sparked widespread chaos which devastated entire states and obliterated governing institutions.

This situation weakened vast territories, particularly in border regions, placing them within the reach of the terrorists groups who, in the absence of any authority have therein thrived.

It is no secret that these regions have witnessed the development of all kinds of trafficking, and the connection between terrorism and the smuggling of arms, oil, drugs and human beings, not to mention racketeering and blackmail are irrefutable.

Terrorism is mutating to new, uncertain and considerably adaptable forms.

It is no longer about an organic affiliation to a particular group, but increasingly about individualised terrorist action.

The digital revolution, social networks especially, with their analyses and algorithms which cluster profiles based on their interests are spinning webs that are not as virtual as we would tend to believe. With a mere click, any young indoctrinated individual can find out where to get weapons, how to make a bomb or carry out an attack from a computer screen.

The fight against radicalisation should focus on pooling efforts to fight cybercrime as a vector of terrorism.

Terrorist groups understand the impact of image and communication. They also understand the codes of the societies in which they live and, more broadly, of those they target.

No country is immune from indoctrination; people from all nationalities join terrorist movements or attempt to pledge their allegiance. War is also waged through education and the media.

The international community is gradually becoming aware of the importance of taking in-depth and sustainable action against terrorism.

Both civil society and the media must likewise become key players in the fight against terrorism, and citizens must be convinced of the major risks their countries are exposed to.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The fight against terrorism requires a global approach based on the rule of law, social justice, the fight against poverty, and the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

It must be global, without prejudice to the sovereignty of states. This is why Algeria favours inclusive political dialogue over interventions by foreign armed forces whose horizon is all too limited.

While the response to terrorism must be firm, it must also be civilized. Algeria's approach to fighting terrorism complies with the principles of human rights. Therein lies part of its strength.

Sources of funding must also be cut off. There is an overriding need to morally refrain from, and legally criminalise ransom payments to terrorist groups in the event of hostage-taking in order to dry up funding sources.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Algeria has always lent its support to, and expressed its solidarity with the Sahel region and neighbouring countries, in particular in the fight against drought, famine, insecurity, terrorism and organised crime.

Algeria's actions are guided by the principle not to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbours, without however shirking its duty to assist these States in the event of a threat or major security challenges.

Building on its experience in fighting terrorism and leading political processes aimed at national

reconciliation, Algeria has become a natural and essential player in regional stabilisation, with a leading role in the resolution of crises in Mali and Libya thanks to its policy of solidarity and good neighbourliness, supported by a diplomacy recognised as much for its credibility as its effectiveness.

In Mali, Tunisia and now Libya, Algeria has spared no effort to promote peace and stability.

The inter-Libyan dialogue initiated in Algiers under the aegis of the United Nations has brought together political party leaders and Libyan activists to discuss a draft peace agreement able to end the crisis that has plunged the country into turmoil.

Algeria's immutable goal is to help its Libyan brothers, no matter what their persuasion, and to continue to pursue a unifying and inclusive dialogue, with the exception of terrorist groups recognized as such by the UN.

Algeria regards the security and stability of Libya and other countries in the region as its own.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the 22 and 23 July, Algiers will be hosting an international conference on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation. We are confident that this will yield important conclusions which will benefit our regions and the whole world alike.

Thank you for your attention