

**November 22, 1965**

**Hungarian Foreign Ministry memorandum on  
Algeria's political background after the coup in 1965  
(excerpts)**

**Citation:**

"Hungarian Foreign Ministry memorandum on Algeria's political background after the coup in 1965 (excerpts)", November 22, 1965, Wilson Center Digital Archive, MOL Küm, XIX-J-1-j, Algéria Tük, 1965, 12.d. 00888/6/1965. Translated by Sabine Topolansky.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/122513>

**Summary:**

This memorandum describes the political aftermath of the Algerian Coup of 1965. It concludes that the leader of the coup, Boumediene, seeks to continue the goals of the revolution, however he is beginning to lean to the right of the political spectrum.

**Original Language:**

Hungarian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Strictly Confidential!

Following the independence the government of Algeria and the National Liberation Front (FLN) – with the leadership of Ben Bella- named future functional duties that lied ahead substantially well, considering the Algerian realities and according to the program above.

The realization of the program, however could not be realized without a hitch. Despite Ben Bella's positive personality and good will he made several grave mistakes especially considering the realization of domestic affairs. The following elements made the successful coup of 29 June possible: poorly chosen tactics for a good strategy; not recognizing future challenges; the lack of execution of already existing resolutions that would have strengthened his position such as the agrarian reform; in many cases the replacement of these reforms with sheer command words; neglecting the leading party and lack of organizing economic life and most especially the defects in his manner of leading.

On 19 June 1965 intrinsically an unconstitutional military coup d'état took place in Algeria, during which Ben Bella was arrested who was elected president by the public and who was also elected as Secretary of Party by the congress of FLN.

The coup caused major confusion and shock amongst the working class, the peasantry, progressive intellectuals and their mass organizations, harmed the revolutionary upsurge experienced in Algeria and its international respect. Besides, the timing was especially unfavorable for the general anti-imperialist struggle.

Boumediene in order to succeed with the coup leaned on those who were on the right from Ben Bella, from those a few who were members of the last Ben Bella government and a few who had left it in the past few years.

The consistence of the new government and the Revolutionary Council, which was formed after the coup remains heterogeneous, amongst its members are well-known anti-communists and western-oriented negative individuals who do not behave in a friendly manner towards socialist countries (Bouteflika, Medeghri, Kait Ahmed, Cherif Belkacem). Those leftists who chose the legal struggle after the coup are also part of the government. According to our experience and knowledge so far and to his recent declarations we do not assume that Boumediene seeks to step up against the achievements of the revolution and we do not believe he seeks to establish an anti-communist, bourgeois system in Algeria. In his declarations, speeches he stood up for continuing the revolution, developing Algeria by socialist measures, preserving accomplishments of the revolution and carrying out the agrarian reform with certain austerity measures along with the development of self-administration. The following fact is also noteworthy: he isolated the individuals who openly claimed civil development, those who reported immediately after the coup and claimed they want to exclude socialism from the program.

Thus it can be stated that in Algeria after the coup – compared to the previous situation – an orientation to the right took place and currently the danger of further orientation exists, though the democratic and progressive attitude of the public, previous strong influence of progressive powers and the strongly organized army that represents potential power due to its social stratification will not make a quick orientation to the right possible.

[...]

According to the indications, it seems Boumediene is currently exposed to crossfire. As for the rightists, they consider him to be too much of a leftist, the left wing, however demonstrates an open or passive stand against him. It can be assumed that there will be a clash between the two parties sooner or later, when the well-chosen activity of the leftist powers will be of utter importance.

As it is known, there was no realistic chance for organizing leftist actions or resistance after the coup of 19 June, now there is even less chance for that. After the coup, the Algerian communist party immediately chose to go underground, the left wing of the FLN split into two parts: one started an illegal fight, the other chose legal means and takes part even in the work of the government. According to our credible sources, Boumediene asked to meet with leftist leaders of the ACP and the FLN after the coup and offered them a chance to cooperate and even expressed his wished to work together with them in the newly evolved situation. The leftists declined this offer. It is

a fact that the leadership actually did not take any steps directly after these events that we could see as giving up the path declared under Ben Bella, actual breaking with previous foreign and domestic politics and though with certain corrections, he fundamentally made a promise to continue on the same political path. This brings up the issue whether the fact that the ACP and the divided FLN lead by Zahouane chose to go into illegality, the formation of an illegal opposition and taking similar steps was truly the only solution at the time. It can be assumed that there could have been other methods for expressing the views of the political left that concentrates more on the balance of power and possibilities - a form that would not have given a legal ground for a counter-attack. This illegal activity that left the actual balance of power out of consideration, and in some cases the mobilizing activities against socialist and anti-imperialist countries (eg.: encouraging the sabotage of the II: Afro-Asian Conference), granted possibility, a legal ground and reference point for stepping up against leftist individuals and contributed to the division of the leftist powers. The leaders of the new system emphasize that arresting communists does not mean they are anti-communists since these people were arrested for behaving as anarchic individuals.

Considering Algerian domestic affairs the viewpoint of the army and the officer corps is also a deciding factor. This army and its officer corps are not classical military groups brought up in barracks, since its members are primarily recruited from the peasantry and the working class and essentially they grew up and became officers during the struggles to end colonialism and fights for Algeria's independence. The social base and standing up for preserving the accomplishments of the revolution, the army and officers could be of utter importance considering the prevention of further orientation to the right.